

# LIBRARY PLAZA IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



## Staff Notes from the Street Tree Advisory Committee Meeting November 3, 2011

Present: Karen Christman, Chair, Maury Treman, Vice Chair, Carol Bornstein, Ricardo Castellanos, Tim Downey, P&RD Staff to STAC, Lesley Wiscomb, P&RC Liaison, Phil Suding, HLC Liaison

Irene Macias, Library, Marck Aguilar, RDA, Peggy Burbank, RDA, Cameron Hunt, Campbell & Campbell

Public: Des O'Neill, Duke McPherson, Robert Burke, Victor Schumacher, Talli Larrick, (did not speak)

### **Presentation: Committee and Public Comments**

Lesley Wiscomb: Concerned that people will create informal traffic patterns across planted or grass areas in and out of plaza. Plants may be better than grass. Also glad to hear SWMP requirements have already been taken into consideration.

Phil Suding: What is being done to replace the skyline Eucalyptus trees if they are proposed for removal? Those trees are significant in their current location.

Robert Burke: Opposed to RDA funds used for the project.

Victor Schumacher: (Architect who attended both public workshops) commented that he was very pleased that the current concept design truly represents the consensus arrived at through both public workshops and was pleased that the findings of those workshops were incorporated into the design.

### **Site Visit**

#### Comments Reflecting General Agreement:

1. Retain *E. nicholii* at south end of paseo, though members are concerned about the cracks in its planter.
2. Widen paseo by reducing width of planter along wall of Art Museum to ~ 4 feet in width. Liked the idea of using the Museum wall for movies.
3. Not only should the two oaks along Anapamu Street be retained, they should be protected and their maintenance enhanced. The oaks are fully mature, possibly on the down side of their age curve, and could become more vulnerable to stresses. There should be no change in the grade under the canopies of the oak trees. Need to retain/improve permeability under the trees. Leaving the existing lawn growing underneath the oak trees does not send a good message to the public regarding sustainability, ecology, etc. Lawn under the oaks should be removed to promote the trees' health and long life. Consider removing grass, mulching and using other ground cover species. Carol recommends use of native species. Remove existing ivy at base of eastern oak tree.

4. The site design should discourage omni-directional pedestrian circulation underneath the oak trees. Root systems of these oaks should be protected by using a design that discourages people from wanting to “cut through” the area beneath the oaks. Ideas of how this could be achieved were the appropriate placement of seating within the plaza to discourage pedestrian access through the oak drip lines, placing seating along Anapamu sidewalk as a barrier to block people from walking into this area, planting of drought-tolerant natives to discourage foot traffic through this area. As a last resort, contain foot traffic by providing a prescribed pathway between the trees.
5. The concept should consider the art museum-side of the Anapamu entrance to the paseo, across from the oak trees. This area is connected to the museum property’s planted areas surrounding the museum loading area. Planting there could better signal the entry to the paseo. The plants would also screen the Museum utility yard. Carol suggested using Toyon. Others noted that the selected species will need to be able to grow beneath the oak tree.
6. Concern that at least some of the *Raphiolepis* be reused either on the site or elsewhere in the city. Maury suggested that some could be replanted along the entry walkway, or planted along the wall of the Art Museum toward both the north (to screen the Museum’s delivery area) and south ends, avoiding the center for showing movies.
7. Like the proposal to open up the view of historic library front door and creating a seating area with artwork. Question posed of doing something that complements La Jardin de Las Granadas across Anapamu Street. Phil suggested story of front door be mounted closer to the sidewalk (or providing a second plaque.) Lesley and Maury suggested a water feature here might mask traffic noise.
8. Like the proposal to move the Mediterranean fan palm (*Chamaerops humillis*) to the corner of Anacapa and Anapamu streets.
9. Remove all box hedges.

Non-Consensus or Individual Comments:

10. No consensus on removal of 3 lemon-scented gum trees (*Eucalyptus citriodora*) along west wall of library in front of doors to the Anapamu frontage entry foyer. Carol suggested retaining them. It was noted that more lemon-scented eucalyptus are planted on the south side of the library building. Phil was concerned that skyline trees would be lost. He offered that removing the eucalyptus nearest the entry foyer, retaining the two northerly eucalyptus’ and moving the entry door westward by one “archway” might also achieve the desired improvement. Lesley and Maury thought they should be removed, and commented that if one is removed all need to go.
11. No consensus on the suggested tree species for lining both sides of the entry walkway to the walkway. The comment was made that the proposed *Michelia doltsopa* (a relative of the magnolia) won’t emphasize the entry corridor very strongly, at least not by themselves. Maury suggested adding some of the *Raphiolepis* removed from the plaza area, to the entry walkway.

12. No consensus on the proposed Swan Hill olive trees (*Olea europaea* 'Swan Hill') to provide shade for the southwest corner of the plaza. Lesley noted they are having problems currently with die-off and they are hard to prune. Others questioned whether they would remain fruitless at maturity.
13. No consensus on the info kiosk's size, shape, location. It should not be for public postings; access needs to be controlled. The kiosk on the drawings appears way too big.
14. Like the proposal to expand sidewalk along Anapamu east of library entrance walkway. Some members were concerned that 3 more feet might impact root zone of pear trees. Carol suggested relocating book return vault, but traffic pull-off has been provided specifically for that purpose. Ricardo suggested removing pears planted in sidewalk since pears line the sidewalk on the library parcel. However, others maintained the sidewalk pear trees complement those on the other side of Anapamu Street.
15. It was suggested there might be a better variety plane tree than *Platanus x acerfolia* 'Columbia' for planting in the plaza.
16. Carol and Phil suggested finding a more suitable tree species to plant on either side of the historic entry than Nile Trumpet Tree (*Markhamia hildebrandtii*).
17. Phil would like the proposed trees to include species that are more reliable, that is, grow to their specified dimensions.
18. Lesley would like to see the Viburnum and camellias replaced with trees that are sculptural in form along the face of the building fronting Anapamu Street, on both sides of the historic entry. Maury suggested the camellias could be replanted to the east side of the library along Anacapa Street as a second, smaller rank of camellias to the ones planted there now. There was a divergence of opinion on this as placement of more tall shrubs in front of the east windows could further reduce the amount of light for the library, and shield sightlines between shrubs and building.
19. Carol suggested all grass areas be converted to planted beds, especially using native, water-conserving species. Duke disagreed and felt that the lawn along the Anacapa side of the library complements the Courthouse lawns on the other side of Anacapa Street.
20. Any shrub plantings should be "bullet-proof" i.e. low maintenance, low-water.