

COV - HMDAC March 29, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Present on the call for the City were James Olson and Rick Navarro, and **for HMDAC**, Byrne Conley, Chris Brittle, Bob Schussel, and Kathy and Allen Wildermuth. Also present was Brian Kilian, landscape architect retained by the City.

Brian circulated updated “95%” plans (attached) which we discussed.

We asked Brian if any of the current planting could be saved. He said it was a subjective call, some areas had plants that might look OK on the exterior right now but had dead parts internally, in some areas it was a “mish mash” of save-able vs. non-save-able plants. He kept in mind our desire to keep what we could, so where some were large enough and fit, he made the call to save them. The bid price will be the reality check, in some cases it may cost more to save existing plants and work around them than to install all new material, but if they were big enough to save, he marked where he thought we could do so.

Rich indicates there could be some minor tweaks in the plans as we go from design, to irrigation plan, to planting plan. James Olson of the City would be the construction inspector. Brian indicated that on a project of this scale, the contractor is not worried about minor variations relating to individual plants.

We went through the pages of the 95% plans. Page 1 covers the whole parkway and notes where the subsequent pages fill in.

We went backward from L-12 first, the area “past” the Welcome Center as one drives in. Most of the lawn will come out, in favor of native grasses and a large holiday tree near the large utility box. Such a tree could cost \$1000 to \$4000 depending on the initial size and cost to transport. We favored the 8 foot tree, at about \$1K to \$2K, mounded up a couple of feet to give it sufficient height from the first year. Alan pointed out we would need to include plans for power to the spot for lighting.

Going back to the entrance, page L-2, we will remove 75% of the lawn. We will clear the upper slopes but keep the trees intact. There will be native grasses installed, but not wisteria or shrubs (Kathy noted). We will add cobble in front of the Hiddenbrooke sign, and refurbish it. Wing walls will provide a more stately entry feeling.

L-3: cobble and DG around light poles. Keep trees, infill. Rows of native grasses, blue oak, and “lamandia” (sp?) alternating with low juniper borders with center accent shrubs. On the East side, ginko trees 50 feet apart center to center, tame fall colors, yellow and orange. Understory lantana (yellow), toriaster, vase shaped juniper. [*I was writing this down as quickly as I could, but Brian was using a lot of terms of art for landscaping that I was not familiar with.*] At the turnouts, crepe myrtls. (Sp?)

L-4 continued along median, cobble at light poles.

L-5; end of first 1/3 – end of ginkgo street tree planting. Different trees, so different infills on median.

L-6; sycamore trees on median, 60 feet apart center to center, infill trees shown, putting back in more sycamores where needed to fill gaps. On the median, 3 bold fernium shrubs, mourovian red alternating with radianoto yellow/green. [*Again, this is phonetic, he raced through the terms.*] On the West side, double row grasses adding selecting grouping of shrubs, crepe myrtles. Not using fragile ornamental grasses, but native type plants.

L-7; demolition not shown, will be on construction plans. “Jumble” will be cleaned out, let trees carry more visual weight. No planting on drop-offs (as hill drops away and plants would not be visible to drivers).

L-9 (marked as L-5 erroneously): Crepe myrtles 40 to 50 feet apart establishing a rhythm.

L-10 more densely planted and colors as we approach the Welcome Center

L-11 (marked as L-5 erroneously) scaling down plants, coming into existing landscaping, might fill in 1-2 trees. Maybe replace individual trees if dying out.

L-12; take out the Redwood tree right in front of the Welcome Center. Add seasonal color in the median, through edge too. Brian explained the Redwood is a 90s design, meant to be a coastal tree, would never exits naturally in our valley, and blocks the view of the Welcome Center. He is not taking other redwoods out, only this one because it is out of place.

We asked about landscape maintenance work going forward, and if this plan would generate maintenance cost savings going forward. Brian noted that the Parkway will need seasonal attention going forward, especially the fountain, main entry sign and Welcome Center. The rests are perennials, not meant to be sheared. The sycamore leaves will still be a maintenance issue. There will be yearly fertilizing. Landscape maintenance will need to trim and clean up the crepe myrtles each January if we want them to pop. Carpet roses will need a little fertilizer and extra maintenance, clipping to get flowers, if we want them to look “spectacular.”

We discussed the overall price, which Rick had estimated at \$1.3 million, though he would allow 20% overage that could bring the number to \$1.6 million, but these are preliminary estimates, the bid itself will determine what we spend. The City will likely add overhead charges for administering the contract and inspections, which are not included in those numbers.

We discussed phasing. The committee members all though this would be better done as a single project. We would like it to be funded with HID funds, instead of putting pressure on the HMD budget, which adjusts from year to year. HID funds are, after all, for capital projects. This is a 28 year old irrigation landscaping system, and upgrading it now should extend its life and reduce maintenance costs and water costs going forward, as well as greatly improving the Parkway appearance. Traffic will be affected during construction; but better to do this all at once than have traffic interruptions year after year for a project that is seemingly never completed. We need to explain to HOA members that this is an aging irrigation system and deteriorated

landscaping due to the droughts, and that this project will refresh the Parkway for years going forward. There is maintenance funding in the HMD budget, but this can be used elsewhere (for example, on Bennington after the Welcome Center, heading toward the golf club) beyond the scope of this project.

We discussed putting a DG path to the mailbox near the Welcome Center; there is no sidewalk now, and the road itself is not safe to walk on, with somewhat heavy traffic at times. Brian agreed that a DG path would be helpful, and better than concrete as in keeping with the design overall.

We will report to the Board. Rick Navarro indicated there might be minor tweaks going from the 95% plan to 100%, but not a lot. He will meet with Jason Lacey to talk about dollar numbers and soft costs. They might try to calculate seasonal savings in expected maintenance costs. Lighting for a holiday tree will be kept out of this contract.

Our next HMDAC call with the City will be Monday April 26 at 10 a.m.

HMDAC meeting by Zoom with City of Vallejo

By Zoom call on 3/3/2021

Present for the call were Byrne Conley, Chris Brittle and Bob Schussel for HMDAC, with Rick Navarro for the City and Brian Kilian, landscape architect.

We reviewed a “65% Progress Print” prepared by Brian. Brian proposes to reduce the height of plantings on the median at the entrance so the Hiddenbrooke sign is more visible to incoming traffic. He would get rid of the arbor, which is dry rotted anyway, and have the sign enhanced to “pop out” visually. Upgrade to the sign and lighting it should cost about \$5K. He would also extend walls at the front, coming from right behind the fountain to the street, with a matching wall on the other side, with embedded stones, to match the look of the ones further back. This would also serve to shield the utility boxes on the right as one drives in. This would cost an estimated \$2K to \$5K.

We all agreed that it is “worth it” to spend money on the areas near the fountain and near the Welcome Center, since they have the most visual impact. If the bid price is out of line with these estimates, we can consider dropping the wall extensions, for instance. The final plans will show demolition of the arbor and additions.

Page 3 shows a stretch with light poles. They will have decomposed granite at the base for 6 feet, either side, then 6 feet of cobblestone. There are 35 light poles in all and the estimated cost is \$1K per pole. This is a one-time cost, however, and would not require later maintenance.

Along the front side of the road edge, we will have native grasses, low shrubs, and ginko trees spaced 50 feet on center from each other. On the back side of sidewalks, they will mostly be left barren unless visible to drivers; the plans show where they are penciled in as barren vs. landscaped. We will not landscape areas that are “downslope” from the sidewalk edge as these will not be visible from the street.

There will be some planting at the area designated for the entrance to the “Grove” but no trees or anything that would be difficult to pull up if construction ever begins there. [The entrance is not depicted specifically in the plans.] It will just be edge planting on this area, presumably the developer will be tasked with relandscaping the entrance when work is done on the Grove. This only involves a 100 foot easement out of 5400 feet of street-front, total.

We are going to keep all trees, with a few exceptions. We advised Brian that we opposed clear cutting the trees, making the area into a construction zone again, but if individual trees were diseased or conflicted with the design plan, we were not opposed to them being replaced.

Brian indicates the design would increase in “rhythm” as a driver approaches the Welcome Center (see page 6 of the plan). There would be blocks of 7 plants, with more formal planting. Less native, more ornamental, flowering. The landscaping along the West side is existing. He would redo the edge planting. A little more of the flowers, more color, less native plants.

The goal is to preserve the sycamores and add “large, bold plants.” If we remove some sycamores near the Welcome Center, it would be to replace them with more flowering trees. He

would take away 2-3 sycamores on either side of the Welcome Center and replace them with crabapple or plum trees, in tighter spacing. There might be one sycamore in the center median to open up the view of the Welcome Center, replacing the current Redwood. Brian noted the Redwood tree near the Welcome Center is out of place. It is a coastal tree that lives best in clusters, in foggy areas, needs a lot of water, and out of place where it is placed now. It is “old style” landscaping more popular 30 years ago than now. He would like to replace it with a tree more consistent with the design plan.

We noted that near the Welcome Center, some thought should be given to planting a more mature tree even if more expensive, vs. a sapling that might be installed along the long stretch stretch of the Parkway.

Bob Schussel noted that it is most important to upgrade the appearance near the fountain and near the Welcome Center, those are the most important views to drivers.

Brian indicates that from visual inspection, he sees that there are lots of leaks in the old landscaping system, and with a replacement of laterals and replanting, there could be a 50 percent reduction in water use.

Near the fountain and Welcome Center would be annual flowers than would need seasonal replanting, everywhere else the plants would be perennial. Once planted, the latter would be given time to rest and grow, and Brian would not even want them pruned initially. The design includes geometric spacing so the plants can grow out. Maintenance costs should go down from the current situation.

We talked about the area past the Welcome Center as one drives in. The Committee members felt it would be best to address that area as well, as long as this major project is to be done. In particular, the design of that area should complement the design Brian is proposing for the rest of the Parkway. For example, there is a large grassy area near the mailbox that literally no one uses, except to walk to the mailbox. It may be a good idea to landscape that are similarly to the rest of the parkway, leaving an off-street walking path to the mailbox, but otherwise with low maintenance design.

Rick Navarro indicated that his engineer’s estimate of the cost of these plans is \$1,369,543, with contingencies of 20% for a high estimate of \$1,643,451. This did not include adding work on the “inside” portion past the Welcome Center. We discussed whether to phase the work or do it as a single capital project. The Committee members felt it would be better to fund this as a capital project out of the HID surplus, and do it all at once, rather than a piecemeal approach. The funds are already available in HID, and we would like to avoid pressure on the HMD budget, with a resulting tax increase on homeowner annual HMD payments.

Brian indicates that “save our water” rebates from the State were touted at one time, but his clients’ experience has been that they were miniscule or non-existent in practice.

Our next call will be to review the plans at the 100% stage, to be held on Monday, April 29 at 10 a.m.