



## Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: March 10, 2010

Case No.: 3.3377-MAA (APPEAL)

Type: Appeal of Director's Decision/City Hall Parking Lot Reconfiguration

Location: 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way; Palm Springs City Hall

APN: 502-150-005

Applicant: City of Palm Springs

General Plan: Public/Quasi-Public

Zone: C.C.; Civic Center District Zone

From: Craig Ewing, Director of Planning Services

By: Marcus L. Fuller, Asst. Dir. of Public Works/Asst. City Engineer

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

On January 25, 2010, the Director of Planning Services approved Case No. 3.3377 – MAA, a Minor Architectural Approval application submitted by the City of Palm Springs of schematic landscape plans of the City Hall parking lot and surrounding areas. On February 8, 2010, a group of interested persons filed an appeal of the Planning Director's decision with the City Clerk. The appeal was forwarded to the Planning Department on February 22, 2010. The Director's approval letter is included as Attachment 1, and the Appeal is included as Attachment 2. In accordance with Section 93.04.E.2.b of the Palm Springs Zoning Code, the Planning Commission shall review and act on the appeal of a decision of the Director on Architectural Approvals.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Planning Commission reject the appeal and uphold the decision to approve Case No. 3.3377 – MAA for rehabilitation of the front parking lot at the City of Palm Springs City Hall.

### **BACKGROUND:**

### Early Plans for Improving the City Hall Parking Lot

For many years, Public Works has repaired the City Hall parking lots within its annual Capital Improvement Program. The south (or front) City Hall parking lot has experienced tree-root damage, similar to other city sites, but has not received any major maintenance or repairs since its initial construction in the late 1950's.

Similar to improvements made at the other city-owned lots (Mizell Senior Center, Sunrise Pavilion, and Palm Springs Library) Public Works proposed to reconstruct the City Hall parking lots with concrete "whitetopping", where a new 3½" layer of concrete is installed over the existing asphalt. The Department's prior experience with this method of reconstruction has been positive, but it is expensive. Approximately the same cost as a complete repaving, concrete "whitetopping" has a longer life.

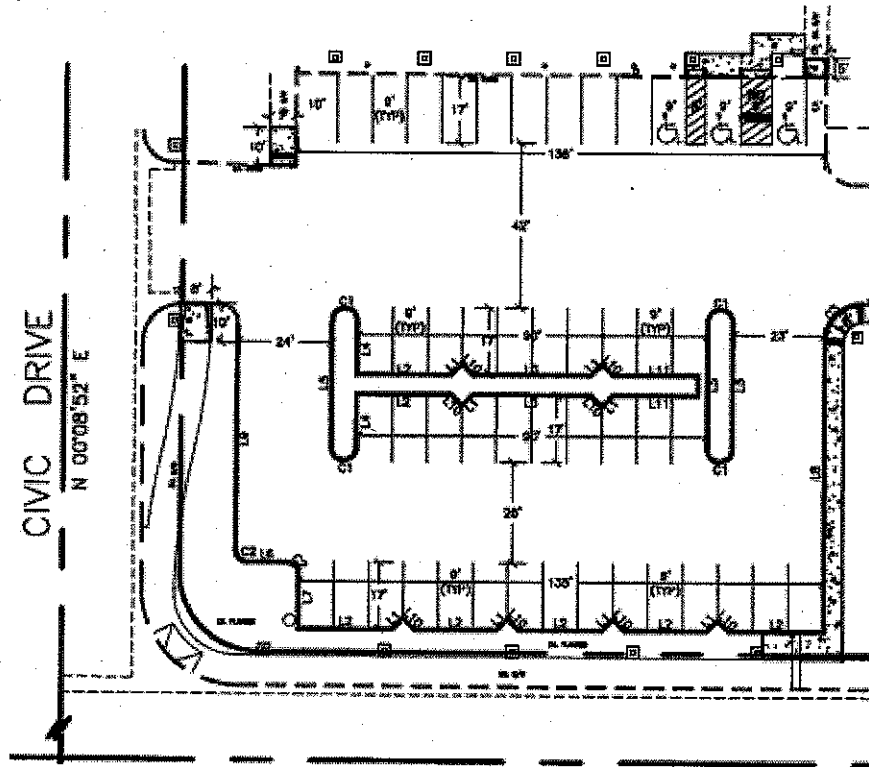
In 2001, staff began preparing plans to reconstruct the City Hall parking lot, including removal of the existing parking lot landscaping (comprised mainly of carob trees that have caused damage to the surrounding curbs and paving). Staff was concerned that the high visibility of the City Hall facility would warrant a closer review of any proposed re-landscape plan.

The City Council was also concerned about the appearance of City Hall, and directed staff to complete the parking lot reconstruction design, but postpone bidding until further direction was provided by the Council on the issue of re-landscaping. The first reconstruction plans for the parking lot did not include any major revision of the parking layout. Only a slight realignment of angled parking to perpendicular parking at the southwest corner of City Hall (near Civic Drive) was contemplated:

Existing Condition:



Originally Proposed Condition:



No immediate action was taken in 2001, but reconstruction of the City Hall parking lot was included in the 2007/2008 budget. Public Works coordinated with Sharon Heider, Director of Parks and Recreation (also a registered Landscape Architect with the state of California), to develop a plan for landscaping around the parking lot. Staff also met with Paul Ortega, a member of the City's Architectural Advisory Committee ("AAC"), to review the landscaping plan prepared by staff, which he generally supported<sup>1</sup>. This landscaping plan proposed installation of replacement trees within the existing planter islands (Palo Verde and Mesquite), as well as other typical drought tolerant desert landscape plants (red yucca, century plant and agave). A copy of the original landscape plan is included as Attachment 3.

On April 16, 2008, the Department presented plans and specifications for reconstruction of the City Hall parking lot to the City Council for consideration of approval, and authorization to bid<sup>2</sup>. The Council determined that the landscaping plan did not adequately address the other areas of City Hall. The Council postponed the project until a comprehensive landscaping plan for City Hall could be developed.

<sup>1</sup>At the time, Paul Ortega was the only appointed member of the AAC with a specific background in landscape architecture and design. It was on this basis that staff consulted with Mr. Ortega to review the originally prepared landscape plan. The predominant comment received at the time suggested using only one species of tree, rather than a mixture of two species.

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter, reference to the "City Hall parking lot" shall mean the "front" or "south" parking lot adjacent to Tahquitz Canyon Way.

### A "Sustainable" Landscape Plan

On May 29, 2008, Mayor Steve Pougnet issued a call to the citizens of Palm Springs to join him on "The Palm Springs Path to Sustainability", and promoted "20 First Steps on Sustainability" including: agreed upon by the Palm Springs City Council on May 21, 2008<sup>3</sup>, including:

2. Complete a comprehensive water audit of all public buildings and facilities and develop an action plan that will reduce City water usage by 50% by 2012; and
5. Identify City Hall as a showcase for public sustainability efforts and a model for energy, water and waste conservation; and
9. Implement a model re-landscaping project showcasing the Tahquitz Median from the airport to downtown by the end of 2009.

In response to these provisions. Public Works prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) in October, 2008 to seek professional landscape services to convert the existing Tahquitz Canyon Way median landscaping to a desert-landscape, drought tolerant, and sustainable landscape, and develop concepts for landscaping the Palm Springs City Hall and Riverside County Administrative Offices complex:

*This project is a highly visible, important architectural project for the City of Palm Springs. A well conceived, "Palm Springs" design for the landscaping is expected. The project will require collaboration with the community, City staff, as well as, the Architectural Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Processing the schematic landscape architectural plans through the City's Major Architectural Approval process is required.*<sup>4</sup>

On December 3, 2008, the City Council appointed Councilmember Mills and Mayor Pro Tempore Hutcheson to the Tahquitz Median Landscape Design Subcommittee. Subsequently, staff met with the Council Subcommittee to form an Evaluation Committee to review the proposals submitted in reply to the Department's RFP; the following were appointed:

- Mayor Pro Tempore Hutcheson
- Councilmember Mills
- Planning Commissioner Doug Donenfeld
- Sustainability Commissioner Mark Nichols
- Michael Buccino (Owner, Michael Buccino Associates)
- Director of Parks and Recreation, Sharon Heider
- Asst. Director of Public Works, Marcus Fuller

<sup>3</sup> These points were agreed upon by the Palm Springs City Council on May 21, 2008

<sup>4</sup> The Department's RFP misstated that their project is subject to the Major Architectural Approval process. A further discussion of the processing of this project is included in the "Analysis" section of this report.

The Evaluation Committee ultimately evaluated the proposals received in reply to the Department's RFP, and recommended the most qualified firm for award to the City Council: RGA Landscape Architects.

#### City Hall Parking Layout Revised by City Council

At this time, Public Works and the Council Subcommittee developed a revised layout of the City Hall parking lot which would eliminate most of the parking area at the southwest corner (shown on Page 3), and construct new parking spaces extending along the south side of the drive aisle between the west and east sides of the City Hall parking lot. The revision was proposed in order to provide a much greater landscape setback area along the entire frontage of City Hall, as opposed to having parking spaces immediately adjacent to Tahquitz Canyon Way. The revised parking lot configuration is attached.

With the support of the Council Subcommittee, the Department presented the revised parking lot configuration to the City Council at its January 7, 2009, meeting. At that time, the City Council approved the revised parking lot reconfiguration and authorized the Department to move forward with its project. A copy of the City Council staff report and minutes are attached.

On March 25, 2009, the City Council awarded a contract to RGA Landscape Architects ("RGA") to provide the City with a professional schematic landscape plan for the Tahquitz Canyon Way median, the Palm Springs City Hall and the Riverside County Administrative Offices complex.<sup>5</sup> The principal landscape architect from RGA assigned to the Department's project is Rob Parker, a recently appointed member of the AAC.<sup>6</sup> A new Steering Committee was formed out of the previous Evaluation Committee.

Subsequently, RGA developed preliminary schematic landscape plans for the Tahquitz Canyon Way median, which is divided into four different segments, with the segment between Civic Drive and El Cielo Road defined as the Civic Plaza. The Civic Plaza includes a proposal for landscaping treatment of the revised City Hall parking lot configuration previously approved by City Council.

With the Steering Committee's approval of preliminary schematic landscape plans, Public Works submitted the Civic Plaza portion of its project for review by the AAC at its August 6, 2009, meeting. Comments received from the AAC focused on the revised City Hall parking lot configuration and the impact the new parking spaces in front of City Hall may have on the site, and the AAC was unable to provide the Department with a recommendation, having voted 2-2 on the matter. A copy of the August 6, 2009, AAC Staff Report is included as Attachment 6.

<sup>5</sup> Case 3.3377 – MAA only includes that portion of the project located within the Civic Center property; the schematic landscape plans for the Tahquitz Canyon Way median (which is located in public right-of-way and are not subject to Architectural Approval) are not the subject of the appeal, nor were they included as part of the Director's approval of January 25, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Rob Parker, as a member of the AAC, has abstained from and not participated in any of the AAC's actions.

Thereafter, following public review<sup>7</sup> of the preliminary schematic landscape plans prepared by RGA, Public Works presented to the AAC on January 11, 2010 the entire project, including the medians (see attached staff report, Attachment 7). The AAC's comments were largely directed at the Civic Plaza landscape plan:

- No physical change to the layout
- Focus on changes to landscaping to include sustainability

The AAC voted 5-0-1 (Parker abstaining) to send the plan back for re-study.

Staff then consulted with the Council Subcommittee on the AAC's recommendation that there be no reconfiguration of the City Hall parking lot, given that the City Council previously approved the lot reconfiguration. The Council Subcommittee directed that the Civic Plaza plan be submitted one more time to the AAC. A copy of the January 25, 2010, AAC Staff Report is included as Attachment 8. The AAC repeated its opposition to a revised parking lot reconfiguration.

Staff noted that a motion to re-study on that basis would be accepted as a recommendation to deny the existing plan. The AAC, by a vote of 4-1-2 (Kliendienst, No; Parker, abstaining; Sahlin, absent) approved a motion to re-study based its opposition to the lot reconfiguration. On January 25, 2010, the Director of Planning Services approved the proposed landscape plan, including the revised parking layout. An appeal of this approval was timely filed on February 8, 2010.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The appellants have cited "numerous serious concerns" in their appeal of February 8, 2010, each of which is presented and analyzed below:

#### **Issue (Complaint) #1:**

*"Historical": Failure to gain the approval of the city's Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) for a significant site change to a properly designated Class I Historic Site (the Palm Springs City Hall). This failure is a violation of local ordinances and CEQA responsibilities (see attachments (1) and (2)). Documented evidence that the proposed reconfiguration of the parking lot will negatively affect the City Hall's historic view shed.*

#### **Response #1:**

The Palm Springs City Hall is designated a Class I Historic Site; however, the approving Council resolution indicates that only changes to the building are subject to HSPB review:

<sup>7</sup> Public Works also posted the draft schematic landscape plans on the City's website; solicited comments from the public through the website; disseminated the opportunity to review the preliminary schematic landscape plans via the Downtown Merchant's Association ("Main Street") and the Office of Neighborhood Involvement ("ONI"); and held a public workshop on October 29, 2009) at City Hall to review the preliminary schematic landscape plans.

*No permits for the **exterior alteration** to the...Palm Springs City Hall...shall be granted without the prior approval of the Historic Site Preservation Board and/or the City Council, pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; approved alteration shall maintain the historic architectural integrity of the building.* (emphasis added; City council Resolution 18907, October 2, 1996).

By this action, the City Council determined that the parking lot and landscaping are not part of the historic designation. Further, the matter of the site's status under the City's Historic Resources ordinance is outside the authority of the Planning Commission.

The appellants also claim that the City failed to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). However, as noted above, the Class I Historic Site designation, as defined by Chapter 8.05 of the PSMC and as adopted by Resolution No. 18907, does not include a designation of the parking lot and other areas around the City Hall structure itself. Therefore, the historic value of the parking lot and landscaping has already been evaluated by the City, with a decision that there is no significant historic merit to these features.

The project, like all of its projects, is subject to CEQA. This project, like most of the Department's projects, is exempt from CEQA by falling into either a statutory exemption or categorical exemption. In this case, the Department's project is "Categorically Exempt" from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Article 19 "Categorical Exemptions", which states:

**15301. Existing Facilities**

*Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The types of "existing facilities" itemized below are not intended to be all-inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use.*

There are exceptions to the Categorical Exemptions authorized by state law. Paragraph (f) of Section 15300.2 "Exceptions" states: *Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.* Given the fact that the Class I Historic Site designation of City Hall does not include the parking lot or landscaping in front of the City Hall building, staff does not believe that the parking of cars in a different location yields a "substantial, adverse change in the significance" of City Hall. With the proposed parking lot, the City Hall building remains the modern, low-rise structure that it was when first built. A revised parking lot or new landscaping does not change that condition.

The claim that the revised parking lot layout "...will negatively affect the City Hall's historic view shed" (as stated in the appellant's letter) requires a determination that the City Hall view shed itself is "historic". There is no indication in any of the records that a clear or established view of City Hall is the basis for its historic value. Viewing City Hall is certainly important, but viewing it across only one type of parking arrangement is not a historic value associated with the building's Class 1 designation.

**Issue (Complaint) #2:**

*"Procedural": Characterization of the subject project as a Minor Architectural Addition (MAA) thereby effectively circumventing Planning Commission review. A city government-wide pattern of failure to address negative public comment concerning a project.*

**Response #2:**

The distinction between a Major and a Minor Architectural Approval is found in the Palm Springs Zoning Code:

*Section 94.04.E.2.a. Staff-Level Approvals.*

*Minor architectural applications which are acted upon by the director of planning services, or designee, shall include repaints, reroofs, walls, fences, entry features, signs, sign programs, landscaping plans, minor grading plans, exterior lighting plans, and additions which do not increase existing floor area by forty percent (40%) for single-family residential and twenty-five percent (25%) for all other development subject to this section. The director of planning services may consult with the planning commission architectural advisory committee in review of minor architectural applications.*

*Section 94.04.E.2.c. Planning Commission Approvals.*

*All other projects subject to this section shall be subject to planning commission review and approval after review by the planning commission architectural advisory committee without the need for appeal. Architectural applications may be placed on the planning commission consent calendar unless other discretionary actions are required.*

Neither the City Hall parking lot remodel nor the proposed landscape plan involve any increase in floor area. The project is therefore a Minor Architectural Approval, subject to action by the Director of Planning Services. As allowed by Code, the Director consulted with the AAC prior to making a decision.

The appellant also claims that there is a "...city government-wide pattern of failure to address negative public comment concerning the project" does not acknowledge the actions by the City Council to consider the parking lot in a public meeting (January 7, 2009); the City's efforts to gather comments from the public through the Steering Committee and workshop (described above); or the three opportunities afforded the AAC to comment on the landscape plan<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Although certain AAC members did provide general comments regarding the Civic Plaza portion of the Department's project at its January 11, 2010, meeting, the formal action taken by AAC was for restudy,



**Issue (Complaint) #3:**

*"Fiscal": The unnecessary expense associated with the design and implementation of a parking lot reconfiguration during a period of fiscal crisis. Decrease in the number of available parking spaces (the reconfiguration eliminates five spaces).*

**Response #3:**

The appellant's appeal of the Director's approval based on it being granted "...during a period of fiscal crisis" is not relevant to the Director's responsibilities to review architectural approval requests. For public projects, only the City Council has the authority to establish funding priorities, and the Council previously authorized this project for bidding at its January 7, 2009, meeting.

**Issue (Complaint) #4:**

*"Design and Sustainability": A widespread perception that the current landscape architecture proposal is "over-designed" and "over-planted" and seriously detracts from the simplicity and sophistication of City Hall site, one of the city's most important architectural resources. Despite our strong support for the creation of a sustainability garden next to or near city hall, placing such a garden in front of one of our most beloved architectural resources is both inappropriate and unnecessary.*

**Response #3:**

The appellants argue that the proposed landscape plan as "over-designed" and "over-planted", and detracts from the look of the City Hall site as a simple and sophisticated. They further oppose the placement of a sustainability garden in front of City Hall.

Staff has long recognized the significance and symbolism of City Hall's "front yard", beginning with the language of the Request for Proposals noted above. The building's historic value as a mid-century modern design is not in question. However, there are added considerations which have also become important to the City in recent years. In addition to preserving historic resources (including the City Hall building) the community has embraced and adopted other values, including coordinated design of gateway corridors, providing on-site retention of storm run-off, conserving water, reducing energy use, and promoting desert-friendly landscaping.

The Circulation Element of the Palm Springs General Plan designates Tahquitz Canyon Way as a 4-lane divided Major Thoroughfare, and as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor under the Community Design Element. The Community Design Element stresses the importance of transportation corridors, and states:

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without direction to staff other than to eliminate any changes to the parking lot layout. At the January 25, 2010, AAC meeting, member William Kliendienst provided specific comment to staff on the proposed landscape plan and recommended approval as submitted, however, the motion failed for lack of a second to the motion.

**Transportation Corridors.** Residents and visitors view large parts of Palm Springs only by travel along corridors. Thus, these roadways provide excellent opportunities to create a design identity throughout the City. They should contain consistent design features such as formal landscaping, distinctive lighting elements and signage and specialized paving at key intersections to create a unified sense of place and identity throughout the City. Unique treatments along secondary and tertiary roads will strengthen the individual characters of the neighborhoods they serve.

The Community Design Element refers to Tahquitz Canyon Way as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor, and states:

*Tahquitz Canyon Way serves as a primary east-west corridor, connecting downtown with the Civic Center and airport. In Section 14, Tahquitz Canyon Way has a well-defined, although somewhat dated streetscape identity due to its consistent landscaping and lighting and signage features. These design themes and elements should be adapted with appropriate changes along the entire length of the corridor.*

To implement the goals, policies and actions of the Community Design Element, the General Plan identifies Goal CD4, which states:

*Design attractive and visually unified corridors that strengthen the City's identity while retaining their own unique design identities.*

Specific to the designation of Tahquitz Canyon Way, as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor, the General Plan identifies Policy CD4.2, which states:

*Allow design variation of special sections along corridors (such as the section of Tahquitz Canyon Way in Section 14) as long as they are compatible with the design intent of the corridor and fit into the overall design theme and hierarchy of the City's streets.*

The General Plan further identifies Action CD4.4, which states:

*Analyze the impact and feasibility of converting the landscaping along Tahquitz Canyon Way and other lushly landscaped areas to a desert plant palette.*

In addition to being identified as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor, each end of the Tahquitz Canyon Way corridor is identified as a Node/Activity Center. The Community Design Element stresses the importance of Nodes/Activity Centers, and states:

*Nodes are recognizable areas with a high intensity of social/cultural or commercial/retail/industrial uses that attract many users and serve as hubs of activity within the City. Often nodes not only serve as public gathering places, but also act as economic focal points within the City. Nodes should be attractive and visually unique places that are well connected to each other and to other parts of*

*the City, facilitating the movement of residents and visitors between these areas of activity. Primary nodes tend to draw visitors and residents for specialized goods, services, activities, and events, while secondary nodes are typically used only by residents and are visited on a more frequent basis for everyday goods and services.*

The General Plan identifies Goal CD3, which states:

*Establish strong and clearly defined nodes that add to the visual quality of the City and provide activity areas/gathering places for the City's residents and visitors.*

The General Plan further identifies the following Policies, which state:

**CD3.1** *Ensure that development in the above nodes is appropriate to the character and identity of the area through the use of specialized architectural styles and treatments, landscaping, signage, and other design elements at an appropriate scale and height.*

**CD3.3** *Encourage the creation of a consistent design theme within each node that will differentiate the node from surrounding areas.*

**CD3.4** *Create a sense of arrival at nodes through the use of specialized paving, landscaping, architectural treatments, signage and lighting.*

The three Community Design elements cited above (CD3.1, CD3.3, and CD3.4) directly relate to the concept used in preparing the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan.

Also, locating the demonstration garden in the area of the existing parking lot to be removed (near the southwest corner of City Hall at the intersection of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Civic Drive) was made for two reasons:

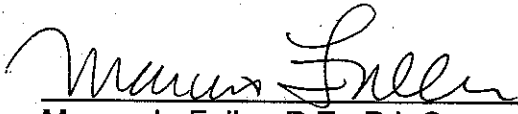
1. It directly addresses the Mayor's mandate that City Hall be identified as a showcase for public sustainability efforts and a model for energy, water and waste conservation; and
2. It allows stormwater runoff from the west half of the City Hall parking lot to be directed to the demonstration garden area, which has dual function as a retention area for percolation of the runoff into the ground in lieu of continued surface drainage to the street, furthering its importance as a sustainable element of the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan.

While the appellants may reasonably claim that the new landscape plan and revised parking lot alter the character of City Hall, staff believes that such alterations were consciously intended by the applicant. Specifically, the plan brings forward a new character for City Hall's front yard that is more coordinated in design, more effective in preserving the capacity of the City's stormwater system and more sustainable in the use of resources.

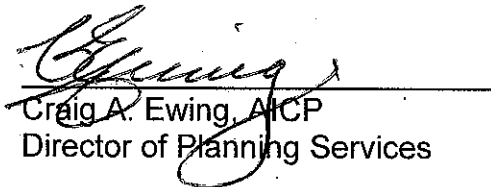
**CONCLUSION:**

Staff has considered the appellants' arguments and has concluded that they do not rise to a sufficient justification for overturning the Director of Planning Services' approval of Minor Architectural Approval Case 3.3377. Staff believes that the schematic landscape plan for City Hall, which incorporates the revised City Hall parking lot layout approved by the City Council, is appropriate given the required factors for Architectural Approval, and recommends that the Commission uphold the Director's decision and deny the appeal.

Submitted:



Marcus L. Fuller, P.E., P.L.S.  
Asst. Director of Public Works/  
Asst. City Engineer



Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Appeal dated February 8, 2010
2. Director's Approval Letter of January 25, 2010
3. Original City Hall Parking Lot Landscape Plan
4. Revised City Hall Parking Lot Configuration
5. January 7, 2009, City Council Staff Report
6. August 6, 2009, Architectural Advisory Committee Staff Report
7. January 11, 2010, Architectural Advisory Committee Staff Report
8. January 25, 2010, Architectural Advisory Committee Staff Report
9. City Council Resolution No. 18907

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF  
THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,  
UPHOLDING THE APPROVAL DECISION OF THE PALM  
SPRINGS DIRECTOR OF PLANNING SERVICES OF  
CASE NO. 3.3377-MAA; CITY HALL PARKING LOT  
REHABILITATION

WHEREAS, on January 25, 2010, the Director of Planning Services approved a Minor Architectural Application of the City of Palm Springs Department of Public Works and Engineering for the rehabilitation of the front parking lot of the City of Palm Springs City Hall; and

WHEREAS, on February 8, 2010, David Lee, Gary Johns, Mary Jensen, Brett Klein, J.R. Roberts (as Vice President of the Palm Springs Modern Committee), and Mark Nichols filed a timely appeal of the approval decision of the Palm Springs Director of Planning Services related to Case No. 3.3377-MAA; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2010, a Public Hearing was held by the City of Palm Springs Planning Commission to consider the appeal of the approval decision of the Palm Springs Director of Planning Services related to Case No. 3.3377-MAA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered all of the evidence, including public testimony heard, related to the approval decision of the Palm Springs Director of Planning Services related to Case No. 3.3377-MAA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Planning Commission hereby upholds the approval decision of the Palm Springs Director of Planning Services related to Case No. 3.3377-MAA.

ADOPTED this 10th day of March, 2010 .

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

February 8, 2010

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CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

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JAMES THOMPSON  
CITY CLERK

City of Palm Springs  
Department of Planning Services  
Attn: Planning Commission (Mr. Leo Cohen, Chair)  
P. O. Box 2743  
Palm Springs, CA 92263-2743

Subj: Case No. 3.3377-MAA; City Hall Parking Lot Rehabilitation

Ref: (a) Director of Planning Services letter of January 25, 2010

Pursuant to section 9314.04 (Appeals) of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, the undersigned hereby appeal, to the Planning Commission, the approval decision of the Palm Springs Director of Planning in reference (a).

This appeal is based on numerous serious concerns including:

#### HISTORICAL

- Failure to gain the approval of the city's Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) for a significant site change to a properly designated Class 1 Historic Site (the Palm Springs City Hall). This failure is a violation of local ordinances and CEQA responsibilities (see attachments (1) and (2)).
- Documented evidence that the proposed reconfiguration of the parking lot will negatively affect the City Hall's historic view shed.

#### PROCEDURAL

- Characterization of the subject project as a Minor Architectural Addition (MAA) thereby effectively circumventing Planning Commission review.
- A city government-wide pattern of failure to address negative public comment concerning the project.

#### FISCAL

- The unnecessary expense associated with the design and implementation of a parking lot reconfiguration during a period of fiscal crisis.
- Decrease in the number of available parking spaces (the reconfiguration eliminates five spaces).

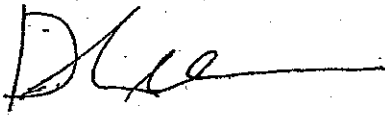
#### DESIGN and SUSTAINABILITY

- A widespread perception that the current landscape architecture proposal is "over-designed" and "over-planted" and seriously detracts from the simplicity and sophistication of City Hall site, one of the city's most important architectural resources.

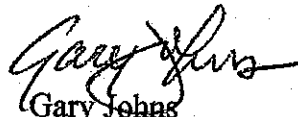
- Despite our strong support for the creation of a sustainability garden next to or near city hall, placing such a garden in front of one of our most beloved architectural resources is both inappropriate and unnecessary.

The applicable appeal fees (\$305.00) are enclosed. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Gary Johns at (760) 327-7290.

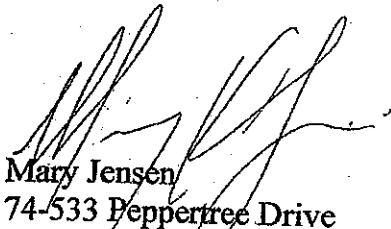
Sincerely,



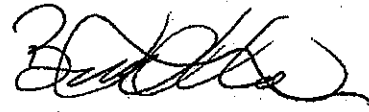
David Lee  
432 W. Hermosa Place  
Palm Springs, CA 92262



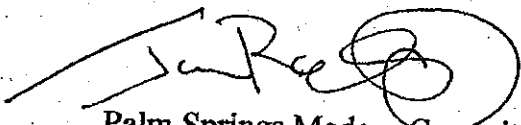
Gary Johns  
2428 S. Sierra Madre  
Palm Springs, CA 92264



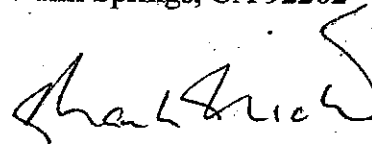
Mary Jensen  
74-533 Peppertree Drive  
Palm Desert, CA 92260



Brett Klein  
456 Bradshaw Lane  
Palm Springs, CA 92262



Palm Springs Modern Committee  
J. R. Roberts, Vice President  
P. O. Box 4738  
Palm Springs, CA 92263



Mark Nichols  
1502 E. Baristo Road  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**Attachments:**

- (1) PSPF letter of August 23, 2009 (with additional attachments)
- (2) McGrew Architecture letter of February 5, 2010



# PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

August 23, 2009

The Honorable Steven Pougnet  
Mayor of Palm Springs  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: CITY HALL PARKING LOT RECONFIGURATION

Dear Mr. Mayor,

The city's current proposal to reconfigure the parking lot of the Palm Springs City Hall (designed by Clark, Frey & Chambers (1952)) replaces a view of great architecture with a view of unsightly car grills. The proposed reconfiguration blocks sight lines that have been in place for more than fifty years and does not reflect well on the city's stewardship of this world-renowned modernist icon. Attachments (1) and (2) provide visual aids that amply illustrate our concerns.

To summarize, the proposal to reconfigure the parking lot was included as a "consent" item entitled "City Hall and Dog Park Parking Lot Repairs" in the January 7, 2009 city council meeting agenda. As you know, consent items are typically routine items of minor importance that do not receive a public hearing. However, far from being a mere repaving of the parking lot, the consent item included a wholesale reconfiguration of the City Hall parking lot.

Far more alarming has been an inexplicable decision by the planning department to not let the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) review the parking lot reconfiguration despite the fact that the City Hall (along with a host of other Albert Frey-designed buildings) was designated a Class 1 historic site in 1996. City Council Resolution No. 18907 of October 2, 1996 unequivocally states that the "Palm Springs City Hall...shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code." Further, an October 2, 1996 planning department memorandum to the city council on the designation clearly states that:

"The recommended Class 1 designation protects the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that the structures *and their sites may not be modified*, nor objects removed, without the approval of the city council; usage may also be limited to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site....The city Council's approval of modifications *is delegated to the HSPB* by Chapter 8.05 except that appeals of an HSPB decision are heard by the Council" (*emphasis added*).

Regardless of any perceived ambiguity in the "building versus site" distinction, such ambiguity should argue that the HSPB review the matter. I'm sure you agree that ambiguities in city



policies and precedent decisions should never be used as an excuse to circumvent review by a city board or commission.

On August 10, 2009 the city's Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) reviewed that portion of the Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Design Concept that featured the proposed City Hall parking lot reconfiguration. During that review AAC members were pointedly and repeatedly told by the contractor representing the city that a discussion of the reconfiguration was not within their purview. Nevertheless, some AAC members voiced serious concerns about the reconfiguration.

Because the parking lot reconfiguration has now been lumped into the Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Design Concept, at this date it is difficult for members of the public to register their concerns. Nevertheless, we will soon encourage our membership to state their objections to the reconfiguration (as provided for on the city's Sustainability web page).

Recognizing that "slip and fall" legal concerns may be driving the parking lot repaving project, we encourage the city to repave the parking lot in its current configuration. Not only will this save money, it should have no impact on the city's Tahquitz Canyon Way sustainability efforts.

While the city has a generally good track record of encouraging public input, the handling of this matter has served as a textbook example of what can happen when public input is not aggressively solicited. The obvious solution is to ensure that the review of such matters, by the city's duly appointed boards and commissions, be liberal in scope. A liberal review process not only brings specialized expertise to bear but provides the public with an opportunity to express their views.

I hope you will make a personal effort to rectify this matter and review the opaque (versus transparent) city processes that have allowed such a proposal to progress this far. The foundation can be contacted at (760) 837-7117 or via email at [info@pspreservationfoundation.org](mailto:info@pspreservationfoundation.org).

Sincerely,

*Ron Marshall*

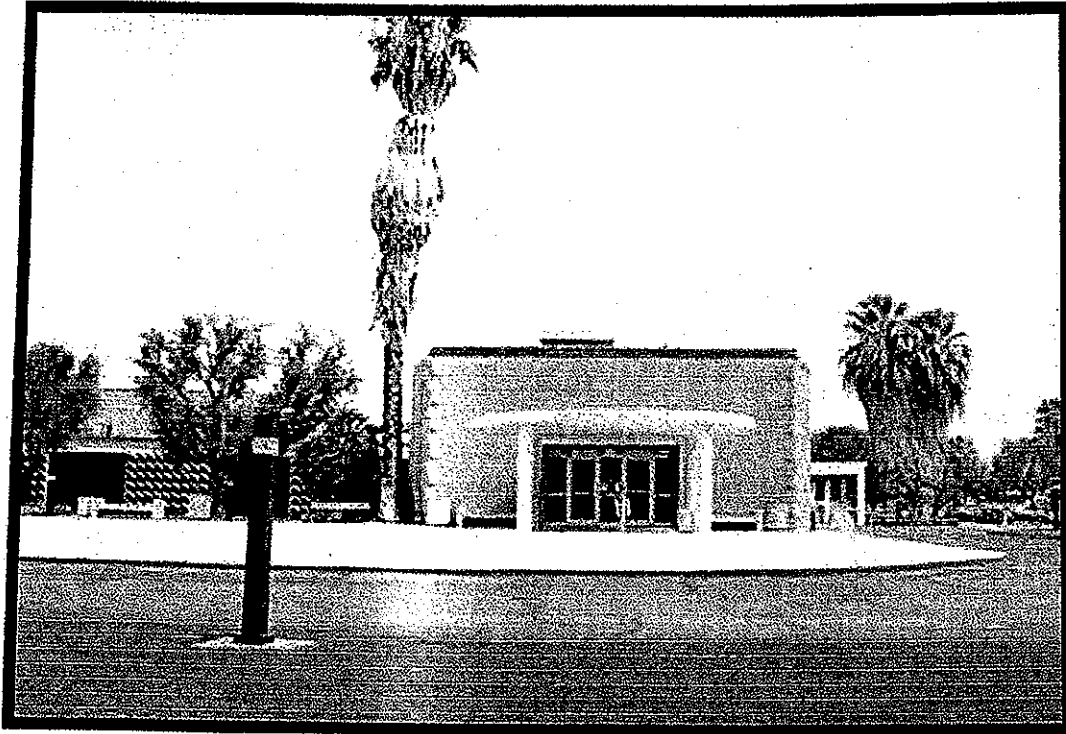
Ron Marshall  
President

Attachments: (1) Photographs of cars in proposed reconfiguration blocking sight lines  
(2) Overhead graphic of proposed reconfiguration impacting sight lines

Copy to (with attachments):  
City council members G. Foat, C. Mills, L. Weigel and R. Hutcheson  
City Manager (Mr. D. Ready)  
Chair, Planning Commission  
Chair, Historic Site Preservation Board (J. Gilmer)  
Chair, Sustainability Commission  
Chair, Architectural Advisory Committee  
PSModCom (Mr. P. Moruzzi)  
Desert Sun (Mr. M. Honore)

2

# Today

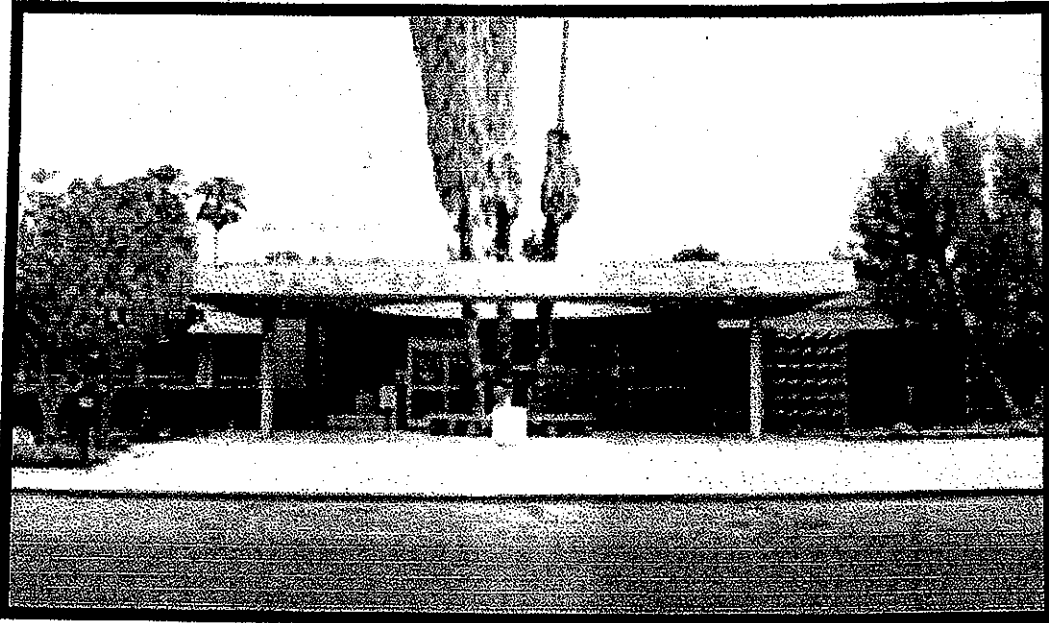


# Tomorrow?

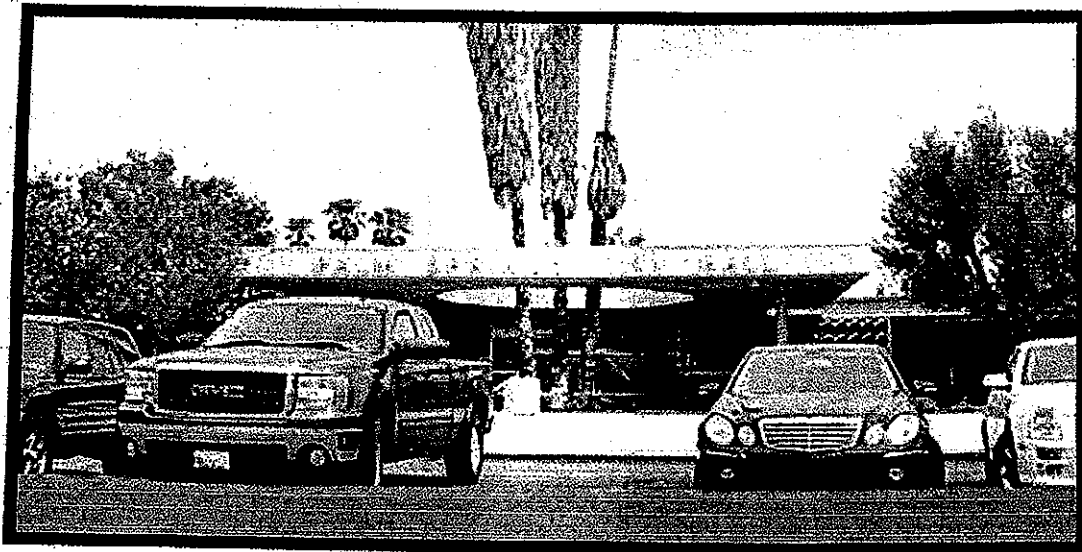


**Cars in proposed reconfiguration blocking sight lines**

# Today



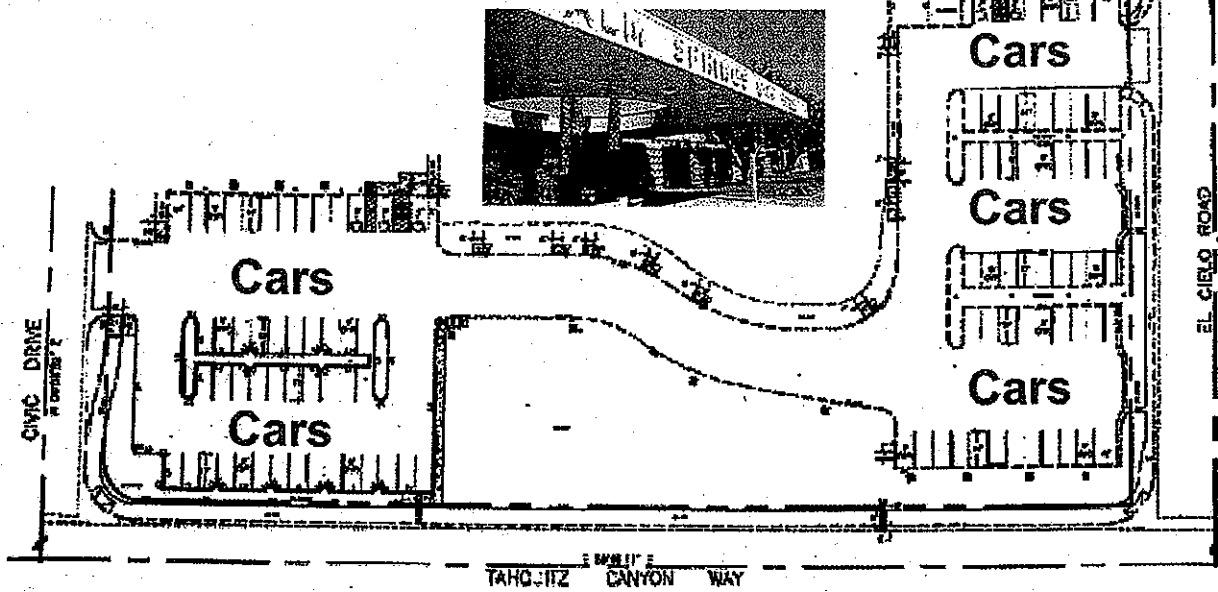
# Tomorrow?



**Cars in proposed reconfiguration blocking sight lines**

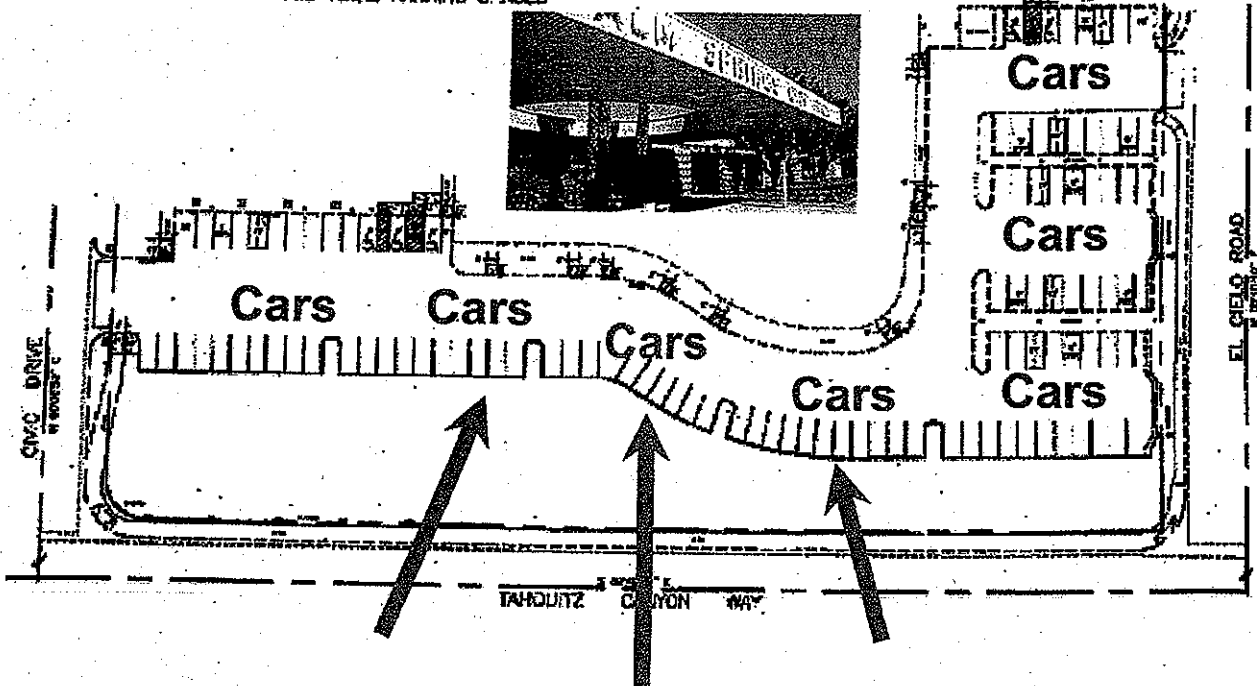
# Current

108 REGULAR PARKING SPACES  
5 ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES  
113 TOTAL PARKING SPACES



# Proposed

103 REGULAR PARKING SPACES  
5 ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES  
108 TOTAL PARKING SPACES



# Blocked sight lines

(Note that 5 parking spaces are actually lost in the proposed plan)

# City moved too quickly on City Hall parking lot



**gary johns**

Earlier this year, in a much publicized and highly debated 3-2 vote, the Palm Springs City Council designated Santa Fe Federal Savings & Loan a class one site. Class one status is the city's highest level of preservation protection. The council members voting in favor of the designation individually opined on the importance of preserving the site from encroachment; with the "open space" being recognized as an important element of the designation. Why then is the council allowing for the open space at the city's most recognized class one site, City Hall, to be violated?

City Hall, designated class one in 1996, is in the cross hairs of proposed changes to the site. A plan is working its way through the city that reconfigures the site. The plan will eliminate half of the existing parking lot to create landscape area, then, adds a parking lot where landscape already exists. As a part of the city's "20 First Steps on Sustainability" the intention is to reduce the amount of sod and create more area for drought tolerant, native, desert plants. Designed by Clark, Frey & Chambers (1952), City Hall, the open space and the parking areas are an intentional part of the overall design of the site. The proposed plan significantly changes his design. The city can still accomplish its sustainability goals by working with the existing site. There is no good reason to reconfigure it.

The plan was approved by the council as a consent calendar item titled "City Hall and Dog Park parking lot repairs, Phase 1." Consent calendar items, unlike public hearing items, are usually of a routine nature and are moved through the system quickly without public comment. A public hearing on the item would have benefited the council; hearing the public's views on the issue would have been important early in the process and more than likely the council would have been reminded of the class one status of the site.

Without a public hearing, residents were excluded from the process. Council members often rely on city staff reports for advisement. The class

one status of City Hall is not mentioned in the staff report for this item.

A city Tahquitz Canyon Median/City Hall subcommittee met several times over the summer and has approximately 12 members. The meetings are open to the public but there is no public representation. City Councilman Chris Mills is a member and at the July 22 meeting, notes on the city's Web site attributed to Mills state, "Obtain public comments on medians only. (City needs to move forward with parking lot work)." Mr. Mills' views on limiting public comment on the issue are interesting.

Many in the community feel the planned changes to the City Hall site should have been more transparent. The heading on the consent calendar item was misleading to the public. The use of the word "repair" implied routine work when in fact it is much more than that. Viewable on the city's Web site, the artist renderings of the new parking/landscape areas are romanticized, pretty pictures with lots of plants but no cars.

The council maintains the right to approve changes to class one properties and there is a procedure in place to aid them. Owners of class one properties requesting changes to their site must go before the city's Historic Site Preservation Board first.

City Hall, owned by the people, should go through the process too. As reported recently by The Desert Sun, City Manager David Ready feels there is no harm in having the board review the proposed changes. Already nine months into the planning, Ready might have considered the review process before the plan got this far along.

Gary Johns is a Realtor who lives in Palm Springs. E-mail him at [garyjohns@aol.com](mailto:garyjohns@aol.com)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANIEL CHAI

Preservationists are upset over a new design of the Palm Springs City Hall parking lot that, according to Preservation Foundation President Ron Marshall, "replaces a view of great architecture with a view of unsightly car grills."

## McGREW / ARCHITECTURE

February 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Recent approval of redesign for Palm Springs City Hall parking layout and landscaping

At the request of a group of concerned citizens, I have prepared a brief analysis on the CEQA issues relevant to this project.

### Background

Palm Springs City Hall was designated a Class 1 Historic Site by action of the City Council per Resolution No. 18907 as recorded on October 8, 1996. The resolution protects not only the building, but also the site as indicated in the Planning Director's recommendation:

"The recommended Class 1 designation protects the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that the structures and their sites may not be modified, nor objects removed, without the approval of the City Council; usage may also be limited to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site... The City Council's approval of modifications is delegated to the HSPB by Chapter 8.05 except that appeals of an HSPB decision are heard by the Council."

During a January 7, 2009 City Council meeting, a redesign of City Hall parking layout was placed on the consent Calendar and approved without a public hearing or prior review by the Historic Site Preservation Board, as would normally be required under Chapter 8.05 of Planning Code. Monday January 25, 2010, the City's Planning Director approved a new City Hall landscape design that incorporates the revised parking lot layout after the Architectural Advisory Committee voted to turn it down.

### When CEQA Applies

Resources listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register are resources that must be given consideration in the CEQA process. Historical resources are recognized as part of the environment under CEQA (PRC Sections 21002(b), 21083.2, and 21084.1). Properties of local significance that have been designated under a local preservation ordinance (local landmarks or landmark districts) or that have been identified in a local historical resources inventory may be eligible for listing in the California Register and are presumed to be significant resources for purposes of CEQA unless a preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise (PRC Section 5024.1, 14 CCR § 4850). Additionally, all projects undertaken by a public agency are subject to CEQA. This includes projects

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undertaken by any state or local agency, any special district (e.g., a school district), and any public college or university.

A project that has been determined to conform with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties can generally be considered to be a project that will not cause a significant impact (14 CCR Section 15126.4(b)(1)). In fact, in most cases if a project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties it can be considered categorically exempt from CEQA (14 CCR Section 15331).

#### Analysis of Project Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The following Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

(1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its environment.

*Analysis: The proposed project complies with this Standard.*

(2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

*Analysis: The proposed project removes historic materials and spaces that characterize the property, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes made to create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

*Analysis: The existing historic resource currently exists as a physical record of its time, place, and use. The proposed project would alter that record, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historical significance in their own right shall be preserved.

*Analysis: N/A*

CS. [unclear]

(5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

*Analysis: In this case, the distinctive features in question are the setting for the existing building. This setting maximizes the visibility of City Hall from Tahquitz Way. Under the proposed project, this visibility will be substantially impaired. The proposed project would alter the setting, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

*Analysis: The proposed project would replace deteriorated materials and features with new ones that do not match the old in color, texture and other visual qualities, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(7) Chemical or physical treatments such as sandblasting, that cause physical damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken by the gentlest means possible.

*Analysis: N/A*

(8) Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken,

*Analysis: N/A*

(9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

*Analysis: The proposed alterations and related new construction destroy historic materials that characterize the property, and are incompatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features that comprise the historic integrity of the property and its environment. The proposed project therefore does not comply with this Standard.*



(10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

*Analysis: The proposed project may comply with this Standard.*

#### **Compliance Summary**

The proposed project fails to comply with Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, & 9. Consequently the project may not be considered categorically exempt. Instead, based upon this analysis, the project will result in a significant negative environmental impact.

#### **Who Insures CEQA is Being Followed Properly?**

In a way, the people of California bear this responsibility. But, ultimately, it is the judicial system that insures public agencies are fulfilling their obligations under CEQA. There is no CEQA "police" agency as many members of the public mistakenly assume. Rather it is any individual or organization's right to pursue litigation against a public agency that is believed to have violated its CEQA responsibilities.

Although the Office of Historic Preservation can, and often does, comment on documents prepared for CEQA purposes (or the lack thereof), it is important that the public be aware that such comments are merely advisory and do not carry the force of law. Comments from state agencies and other organizations with proven professional qualifications and experience in a given subject can, however, provide valuable assistance to decision-makers as well as provide substantive arguments for consideration by a judge during CEQA litigation.

To whom it may concern  
Page: 5  
February 5, 2010

### Conclusion

The approval of this project without review by the HSPB constitutes a violation of the public trust and is in conflict not only with the local ordinance, but is also a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as detailed in the foregoing analysis. Based upon this analysis, it appears that the Planning Staff and/or the City Council have violated not only their own local ordinances, but their CEQA responsibilities as well.

Sincerely,

*Patrick McGrew*

---

Patrick McGrew

PM:bc w/ attachment

To whom it may concern  
Page: 6  
February 5, 2010

#### Historic Consultant Qualifications

**Professional Qualifications Standards:** The Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 defines the minimum education and experience required to perform historic preservation identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture. Patrick McGrew meets or exceeds all professional qualifications.

Patrick McGrew received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oklahoma in 1965. He has been actively engaged in the architectural profession, specializing in historic preservation, since then. McGrew has been a licensed architect in the State of California since 1970, as well as a holder of the NCARB (national licensing) certificate. He possesses an in-depth knowledge of all procedures and standards utilized in the identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties as evidenced by his lengthy career known for the depth and breadth of accumulated architectural / historical knowledge. He places a high value on the objectivity and completeness of his written works. He has several years experience in research, writing, practicing and teaching architecture with an academic and historical agencies and institutions. He has made a substantial contribution through research and publication of a body of scholarly knowledge in the field of California architectural history. His experience has included the preparation of numerous historic research reports, National Register nominations, and San Francisco and Palm Springs historic site nominations, as well as the preparation of plans and specifications for architectural preservation projects. He regulates his firm through the use of ethics standards developed by the Society of Architectural Historians.

Patrick McGrew's knowledge and reputation in the field of historic preservation provided the basis his public service as the long-time President of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, which extended over an eighteen year span beginning in 1978 when he was first appointed by then-Mayor George Moscone; he served the next ten years under Mayor Dianne Feinstein. Although he served less than a year under Mayor Art Agnos, it was Agnos who declared November 17, 1991 as "Landmarks of San Francisco Day" to honor the publication of McGrew's first book, *Landmarks of San Francisco* (Harry Abrams, New York, 1991). Reappointed in 1992 by Mayor Frank Jordan, McGrew served four more years on San Francisco's Landmarks Board. McGrew's second book, *Landmarks of Los Angeles* was published by Abrams in 1994. His acknowledgment by government and/or regulatory agencies, combined with Mr. McGrew's impressive list of publications on California's historic architecture, is a testament to his proficiency as a leading expert in California architectural history. He has received many awards for his work during a distinguished career. In 1995, his book *The Historic Houses of Presidio Terrace*, received an award of honor from the California Heritage Council.

Upon the occasion of Mr. McGrew's induction into the City Club of San Francisco's Wall of Fame, Mayor Willie Brown declared November 30, 2003 as "Patrick McGrew Day" in San Francisco, and a Commendation from the United States Senate was presented in recognition of McGrew's "distinguished career and outstanding contributions to the City of San Francisco." In 2005, Patrick McGrew moved to Palm Springs, where he recently completed a monograph entitled *Donald Wexler, Architect*.

#### Memberships and Affiliations:

Board Member & Lecturer: Architecture & Design Council, Palm Springs Art Museum  
Board Member: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation  
Palm Springs Architectural Advisory Committee  
Palm Springs Historical Society  
Society of Architectural Historians, Southern California Chapter  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

RECD BY: CR 01000032852  
PAYOR: PS MODERN COMMITTEE  
TODAY'S DATE: 02/22/10  
REGISTER DATE: 02/22/10 TIME: 17:11

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
OTHER CHARGES SVCS	\$305.00
CUST ID: APPEAL 1/25/10	

TOTAL DUE: \$305.00

CHECK PAID: \$305.00  
CHECK NO: 1850  
TENDERED: \$305.00  
CHANGE: \$.00



# City of Palm Springs

Department of Planning and Zoning

3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way • Palm Springs, California 92262  
Tel: (760) 323-8245 • Fax: (760) 322-8360 • Web: [www.ci.palm-springs.ca.us](http://www.ci.palm-springs.ca.us)

January 25, 2010

Marcus Fuller  
City of Palm Springs, Public Works Dept.  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**RE: Case No. 3.3377-MAA; City Hall Parking Lot Rehabilitation**

Mr. Fuller,

On December 10, 2009, the City received your Minor Architectural Application for the rehabilitation of the front parking lot of the City of Palm Springs City Hall. On January 11, 2010, the Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) reviewed the proposal at their regular meeting and with a vote of 5-0-1 (Parker abstained), recommended a restudy.

On January 25, 2010, the AAC reviewed the project as submitted; with a vote of 4-1-1 (Parker abstained) recommended another restudy with comments. Staff has received the second recommendation from the AAC as an action to deny the project as submitted.

Staff has further reviewed the request and the review comments provided by the AAC in accordance with Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Code (PSZC); and determined that the proposed rehabilitation will be compatible with the existing layout of the City Hall front parking lot.

From this analysis, your request is **APPROVED**.

Please note that this decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission within 10 working days of the date of this letter. The appeal must be filed in writing no later than February 9, 2010, with any applicable filing fee. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Edward O. Robertson at (760) 323-8245.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

cc: File





Direct the City Clerk to post a Notice of Vacancy for the unexpired term ending June 30, 2010. **Approved as part of the Consent Calendar.**

Staff Report Item 2.J.

**EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- 2.D. APPLICATION BY SOUTHWEST REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS, LLC, FOR A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND A CHANGE OF ZONE FOR A PARCEL AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SUNNY DUNES ROAD AND SUNRISE WAY; AND TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 28308 TO SUBDIVIDE A PORTION OF A 3.2 ACRE PARCEL FRONTING SUNNY DUNES ROAD INTO SEVEN RESIDENTIAL LOTS, CASE 5 1175 GPA, CZ, TTM 28308:**

Staff Report Item 2.D.

Councilmember Mills requested staff draft a resolution denying the GPA and the Zone Change and return with a Resolution approving the Tentative Tract Map.

**ACTION:** 1) Adopt Resolution No. 22415, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, DENYING CASE 5.1175 GPA CZ, A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE LAND USE DESIGNATION FOR A REMAINDER PARCEL OF APPROXIMATELY 1.57-ACRES AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SUNNY DUNES AND SOUTH SUNRISE WAY FROM VLDR (VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) TO NCC (NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL), A CHANGE OF ZONE FOR THE REMAINDER PARCEL FROM RMHP (RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME PARK) TO C-1 (COMMERCIAL-1), SECTION 23, TOWNSHIP 4, RANGE 4," *amending the Resolution to delete references to Tentative Tract Map 28308;* and 2) Direct staff to prepare a Resolution providing for the approval of Tentative Tract Map 28308 at the January 21, 2009, City Council meeting. **Motion Mayor Pro Tem Mills, seconded by Mayor Pougnet and unanimously carried on a roll call vote.**

**2.I. CITY HALL AND DOG PARK PARKING LOT REPAIRS, PHASE 1, CP 01-17:**

Staff Report Item 2.I.

Councilmember Mills commented on the revised layout and the space for a demonstration garden in the front of City Hall.

Councilmember Weigel requested staff address the reduction in the number of parking spaces.

**ACTION:** 1) Approve the revised parking lot layout; and 2) Provide advance approval of the plans, specifications, and working details for the City Hall and



Dog Park Parking Lot Repairs, Phase 1, CP 01-17. **Motion Councilmember Hutcheson, seconded by Mayor Pougnet and unanimously carried on a roll call vote.**

~~Councilmember Foat, Councilmember Hutcheson, and Mayor Pougnet stated they have a property ownership conflict of interest with respect to Item 2.G. Invoking the rule of necessity to reach a quorum, at the July 30, 2008 meeting, lots were drawn, and it was determined Mayor Pougnet would hear the Item. Councilmember Foat and Councilmember Hutcheson left Council Chamber.~~

**2.G. CHANGE ORDER NO. 2 TO AGREEMENT NO. A5700 WITH GRANITE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2007-08 ANNUAL ARHM OVERLAY, CP 07-17:**

Staff Report Item 2.G.

Mayor Pro Tem Mills requested staff address the reimbursement amount from DWA.

**ACTION:** 1) Approve Change Order No. 2 to Agreement No. A5700 with Granite Construction Company, in an amount of \$52,495.51 for a revised total contract amount of \$1,497,039.51 for the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Annual ARHM Overlay, CP 07-17; and 2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents. A5700. **Motion Mayor Pro Tem Mills, seconded by Councilmember Weigel and unanimously carried 3-0 on a roll call vote.**

**AYES:** Councilmember Weigel, Mayor Pro Tem Mills, and Mayor Pougnet.

**NOES:**

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Foat, and Councilmember Hutcheson.

Councilmember Foat and Councilmember Hutcheson returned to the dais.

**3. LEGISLATIVE:**

**4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

**5.A. BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION'S REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FEES:**

Withdrawn from the Agenda.

**COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS, REQUESTS, AND REPORTS:**

Mayor Pro Tem Mills requested the City Manager provide an update on the masonry wall for the construction project at East Palm Canyon and Camino Real.



## City Council Staff Report

January 7, 2009

CONSENT CALENDAR

Subject: CITY HALL AND DOG PARK PARKING LOT REPAIRS, PHASE 1, CITY PROJECT NO. 01-17

From: David H. Ready, City Manager

Initiated by: Public Works and Engineering Department

### SUMMARY

The construction documents are complete and in accordance with 7.03.040 of the Procurement and Contracting Code the Council is required to approve and adopt plans, specifications and authorize the bid request for all public projects in excess of \$100,000. Approval of this item will allow staff to proceed with this public project to "whitetop" the south City Hall parking lot for an estimated cost of \$425,000.

### RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Approve the revised parking lot layout; and
- 2) Provide advance approval of the plans, specifications, and working details for the City Hall and Dog Park Parking Lot Repairs, Phase 1, City Project No. 01-17.

### STAFF ANALYSIS:

For many years, the Public Works and Engineering Department has included repair of the City Hall and Dog Park parking lots in its Capital Improvement Program. Similar to parking lot improvements made at the Mizell Senior Center, Sunrise Pavilion, and Library, the Department recommended reconstructing the City Hall and Dog Park parking lots with Portland cement concrete "whitetopping", where a new 3½" layer of concrete is installed over the existing asphalt concrete. Our experience with this method of reconstruction has been positive, as can be seen at the three parking lots reconstructed in this way.

The Mizell Senior Center, Sunrise Pavilion, and Library parking lots had extensive cracking and needed major repairs. Much of the damage in these parking lots was the result of root intrusion from the carob trees planted in the parking lots in the 1980's. The roots had uplifted curbs and caused cracking throughout the paving. Therefore, the

Item No. **2.1.**

appropriate solution to repairing these parking lots included removing the existing trees and installing new irrigation and landscaping to ensure the new parking lot surfacing was not compromised.

The parking lot around City Hall is identified as the City Hall and Dog Park parking lot. This parking lot has similar damage as was seen at the others, and has not seen any significant maintenance or repairs since its initial construction many years ago. The primary reason for this is the limited funding available. The source of funding for parking lot construction and maintenance is limited to the City's General or other funding sources; Gas Tax or Measure A funding typically used for street improvements can not be used for parking lot construction or maintenance.

Reconstructing the parking lot whether with new asphalt concrete pavement or concrete "whitertopping" is expensive. Staff has compared costs to grind the existing asphalt pavement and install new asphalt concrete paving with installing 3½" concrete pavement over the existing asphalt paving, and found the cost to install concrete "whitertopping" is similar to re-paving, however, the concrete "whitertopping" has a longer life than typical asphalt paving.

In 2001, staff began preparation of plans to reconstruct the City Hall and Dog Park parking lot. At a size of 53,500 square feet, reconstructing the parking lot was estimated in 2001 to cost approximately \$200,000 (excluding landscaping and irrigation). However, the reconstruction would include removal of the existing parking lot landscaping, which is mainly comprised of carob trees that have caused damage to the surrounding curbs and paving. Staff pursued the issue of re-landscaping the parking lot, and was concerned that the high visibility of the City Hall facility may warrant a closer review of proposed re-landscaping of the parking lot as part of its reconstruction. Subsequently, staff was directed to complete the parking lot reconstruction design, but postpone bidding until further direction was provided regarding the landscaping.

Renewed interest in reconstructing the parking lot resulted in funding being budgeted as part of the 2007/2008 fiscal year budget, which made available \$200,000 from General Fund revenues, and \$400,000 from the Risk Management Fund. The Department coordinated with Sharon Heider, Director of Parks and Recreation, to develop the landscaping plan and plant palette for the parking lot. At the time, staff also coordinated with Paul Ortega, the appointed landscape designer to the Architectural Advisory Committee to review the suggested landscaping plan, which was supported.

On April 16, 2008, staff presented the plans and specifications to the City Council for consideration of approval, and authorization to bid. Upon review, a concern regarding the landscaping plan was raised, and ultimately the City Council directed staff to postpone the project until such time that a comprehensive landscaping plan for the City Hall complex was available.

On May 29, 2008, Mayor Steve Pougnet issued a call to the citizens of Palm Springs to join him on "The Palm Springs Path to Sustainability", and "20 First Steps on

"Sustainability" agreed upon by the Palm Springs City Council on May 21, 2008, including:

2. Complete a comprehensive water audit of all public buildings and facilities and develop an action plan that will reduce City water usage by 50% by 2012; and
5. Identify City Hall as a showcase for public sustainability efforts and a model for energy, water and waste conservation; and
9. Implement a model re-landscaping project showcasing the Tahquitz Median from the airport to downtown by the end of 2009.

In order to implement the Council's sustainability vision, staff prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) to obtain a professional schematic landscape plan to convert the existing Tahquitz Canyon Way median landscaping to a desert-landscape, drought tolerant, and sustainable landscape, and which also will include concepts for landscaping the Palm Springs City Hall and Riverside County Administrative Offices complex. The RFP was issued on October 17, 2008, and 17 proposals were received by the deadline of November 14, 2008. Staff is currently coordinating an Evaluation Committee to review the submitted proposals to determine a recommendation for award of contract to the City Council for the landscape design project.

Once a design contract is awarded, one deliverable to the City will be a schematic landscape plan for the City Hall parking lots, which could be used to prepare a final landscape plan as part of the parking lot reconstruction.

Staff continues to pursue reconstruction of City Hall and Dog Park parking lot. Given the deteriorating condition, it is important to appropriately repair and reconstruct the parking lot to avoid any slip and fall accidents. It has been on this basis that the use of Risk Management funds has previously been budgeted for the project as several claims have been filed against the City over recent years. An additional sustainability benefit of the "whitetopping" process is a 15% temperature reduction over asphalt concrete.

The final Engineer's Estimate, based on completed design plans for reconstruction of the original layout of the south half of the parking lot is \$525,000 (which includes landscaping and irrigation). The north half of the parking lot does not require a substantial removal of parking lot islands and landscaping as required for the south half. The north half of the parking lot is similar in size to the south half (approximately 53,000 square feet), and although no plans have been prepared for the north half at this time, staff estimates reconstruction of the north half of the parking lot may be in the magnitude of \$500,000.

It is possible to proceed with construction of the south half of the parking lot, excluding landscaping and irrigation which could follow at a later date as a separate project based on the approved schematic landscape plan for City Hall. The south half of the parking lot would be reconstructed with sleeves installed for future irrigation lines. However, this would leave the parking lot without any trees for shading during the interim period while

the schematic and final landscape plans are prepared, and a subsequent project is funded to install the new landscaping at City Hall.

Staff has prepared a revised layout for the south half of the parking lot, which eliminates half of the parking lot area in the southwest corner of City Hall, and adds new parking lot spaces directly in front of City Council chambers. The intent of the revised layout is to provide much more area for landscaping in front of City Hall, to be used as a demonstration project envisioned by the Council in its "20 First Steps on Sustainability". As a result of a reduction in the overall area of paving, the engineer's estimate for construction of the revised layout is \$425,000 (\$50,000 less than the original layout).

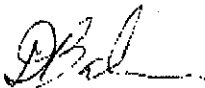
Staff recommends that the City Council review and approve the revised parking lot layout, and provide advance approval of the project for bidding (the completed plans will require some minor revisions to reflect the revised parking lot layout, prior to bidding).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The 2007/2008 fiscal year budget allocated \$200,000 from the General Fund and \$400,000 from the Risk Management Fund (Loss Containment) for construction of the south half of the City Hall parking lot. As the project was temporarily postponed, other issues required use of the Risk Management loss containment funding. Currently available funds in the 2008/2009 fiscal year budget include \$217,648 in account 261-1395-54060 (City Hall Repair Parking Lot), and \$95,109 in account 540-5904-48622 (Loss Containment), or \$312,757.

The Engineer's Estimate for the revised layout of the south half of the parking lot excluding landscaping and irrigation is \$425,000 (an estimated \$50,000 reduction from the original layout). To proceed with reconstruction of the south half of the parking lot using the revised layout (excluding landscaping) requires an additional \$87,243 in funding. The additional funding would come from available Quimby Fund Balance (152-29301).

Submitted:



David J. Barakian  
Director of Public Works/City Engineer

Thomas J. Wilson  
Assistant City Manager



David H. Ready  
City Manager

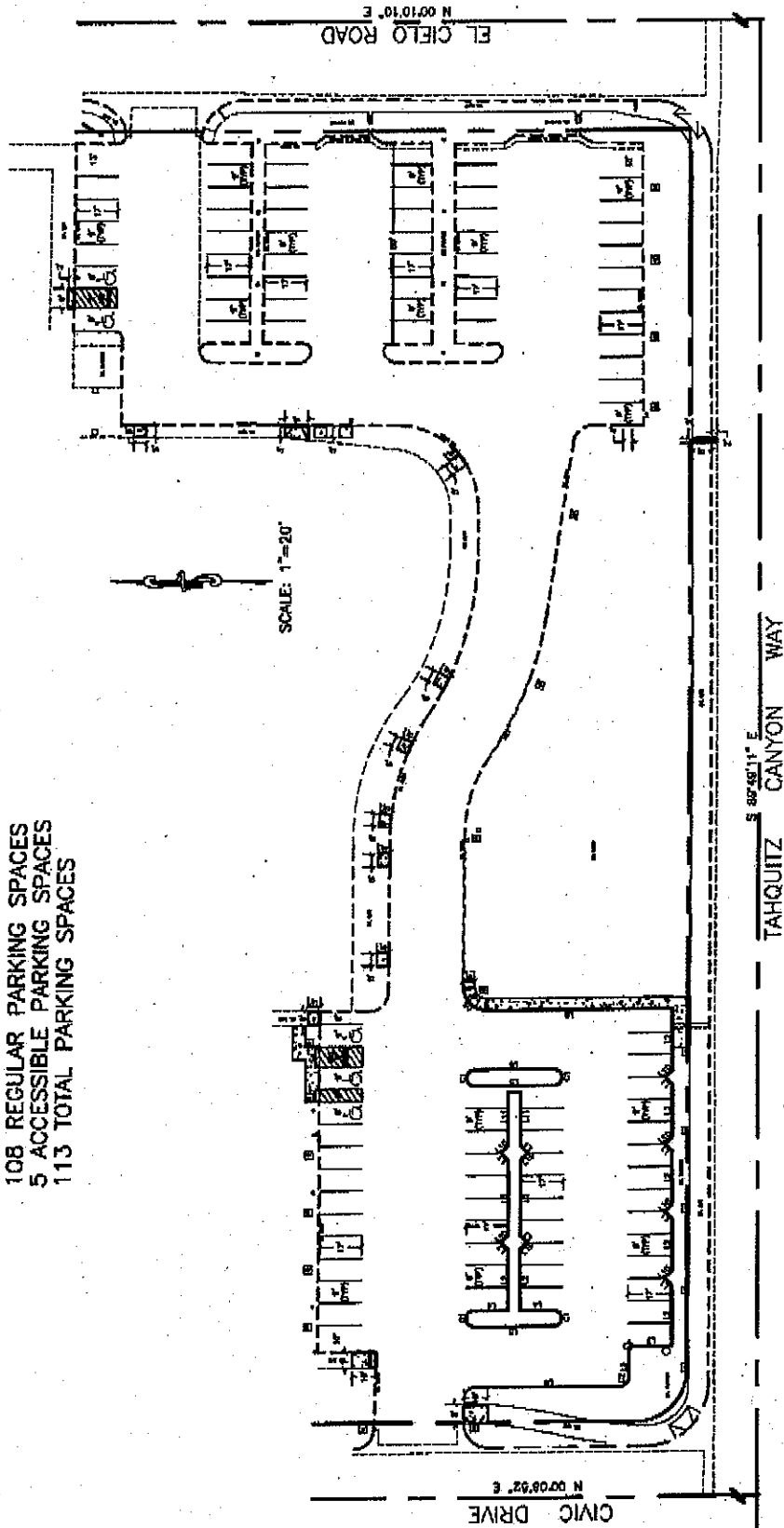
ATTACHMENTS:

1. "South" Parking Lot Plan Sheets

# ORIGINAL LAYOUT

108 REGULAR PARKING SPACES  
 5 ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES  
 113 TOTAL PARKING SPACES

SCALE: 1"=20'



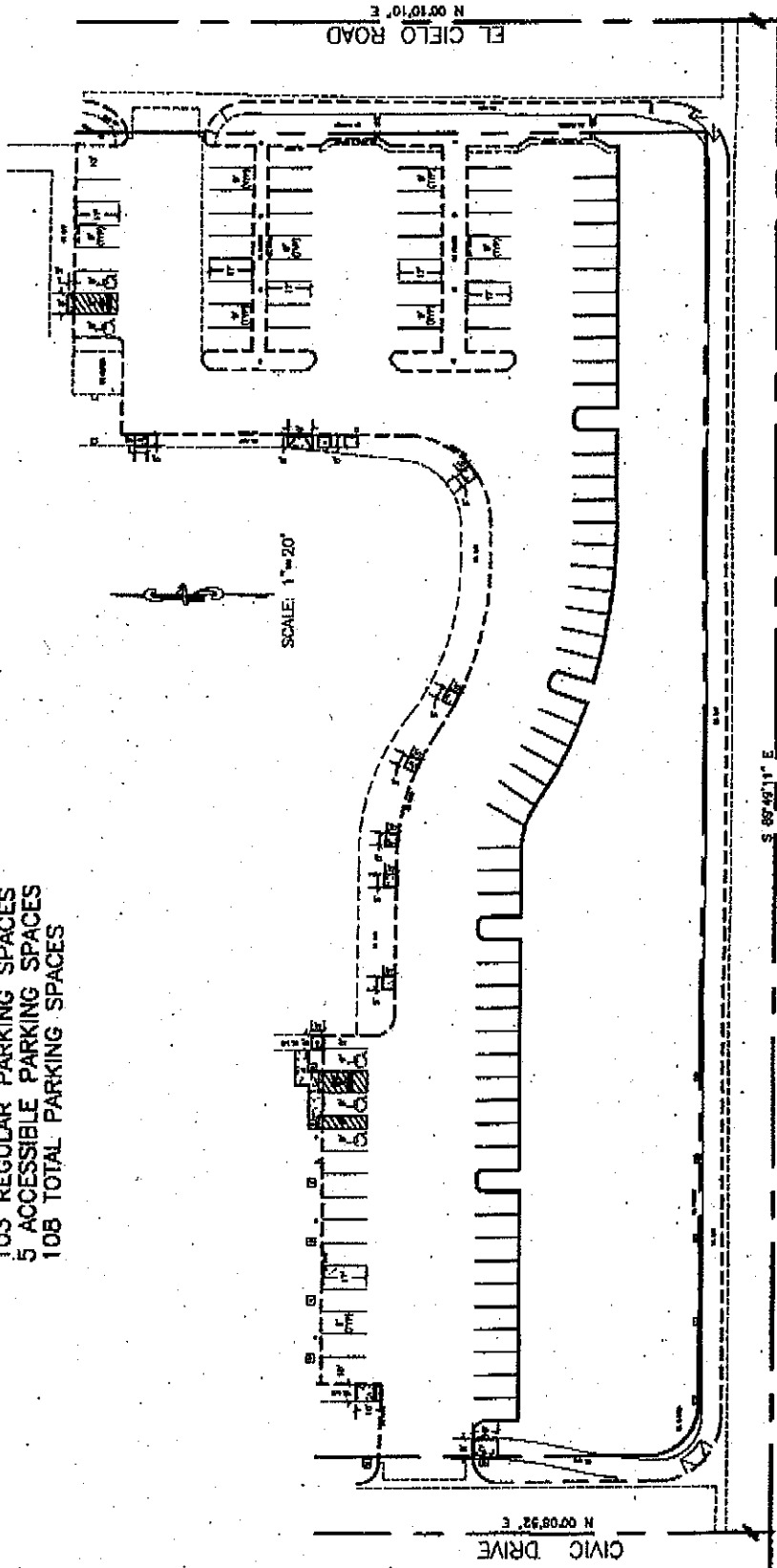
G.P. 01-17

Underground Service Alert  
 Call: TOLL FREE  
 1-800-227-2600

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA		3	
CITY HALL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS		HORIZONTAL CONTROL PLAN	
DATE	BY	DATE	BY
City of Palm Springs Public Works & Engineering Department			
PROJECT NO.	DATE	SCALE	
THE ENGINEERING SERVICE, INC. 1000 N. GARDEN AVENUE, SUITE 200 PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92262			

# REVISED LAYOUT

103 REGULAR PARKING SPACES  
 5 ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES  
 108 TOTAL PARKING SPACES



C.P. 01-17

Unauthorized Service Alert  
 Call 227-2600  
 1-800-227-2600  
 TOLL FREE

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA		DATE: 3
CITY HALL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS		SCALE: 1"=20'
HORIZONTAL CONTROL PLAN		PROJECT NO. 227-2600
DESIGNED BY:	DATE:	BY:
CHECKED BY:	DATE:	BY:
APPROVED BY:	DATE:	BY:
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT		



# City of Palm Springs

## Department of Planning Services

### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** August 6, 2009  
**To:** Architectural Advisory Committee  
**From:** Marcus Fuller, Assistant Director of Public Works  
**Subject:** Palm Springs City Hall Parking Lot Rehabilitation

---

#### **Introduction:**

The Public Works Department is prepared to move forward with a project to improve the south City Hall parking lot. Included as a part of the parking lot project is re-landscaping the southwest portion of the existing parking lot that will be removed, removal of the existing carob trees in the east side of the parking lot and replacement of new shade trees, and installation of decorative paving within the parking lot.

#### **General Plan & Zoning Designation:**

The General Plan designation of the site is Public/Quasi Public. The zoning designation is "CC" (Civic Center District Zone).

#### **CEQA Status:**

The City Hall parking lot rehabilitation project is considered "Categorically Exempt" under CEQA Guidelines.

#### **Staff Analysis:**

On December 17, 2008, the City Council approved plans for rehabilitation of the front parking lot of City Hall. The plans include removal of the existing parking area at the southwest corner of City Hall (adjacent to Tahquitz Canyon Way and Civic Drive). However, the Public Works Department delayed bidding this project as they coordinated a separate but related project, the Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Landscape Design. The median landscape design project is related to the Mayor's "20 First Steps on Sustainability" agreed upon by the Palm Springs City Council on May 21, 2008. Steps 5 and 9 of the 20 First Steps on Sustainability are: Identify City Hall as a showcase for



public sustainability efforts and a model for energy, water and waste conservation; and, Implement a model re-landscaping project showcasing the Tahquitz Median from the airport to downtown by the end of 2009.

On March 25, 2009, the City Council awarded a contract to RGA Landscape Architects to provide the City with a professional schematic landscape plan to convert the existing Tahquitz Canyon Way median landscaping to a desert-landscape, drought tolerant, and sustainable landscape that balances the Mayor's call for sustainability while maintaining the enduring vision of greenery and colorful annuals for Palm Springs tourists. The project also requires preparation of schematic landscape plans for the Palm Springs City Hall and Riverside County Administrative Offices complex. It is the preparation of schematic landscape plans for City Hall that overlaps and relates to the parking lot rehabilitation project.

A steering committee was formed to coordinate with RGA during initial preparation of schematic landscape plans. The steering committee includes Mayor Pro-Tempore Mills, Council Member Hutcheson, Planning Commissioner Donenfeld, Sustainability Commissioner April Hildner, and City staff. RGA's initial schematic landscape plans for the Tahquitz Canyon Way median project is broken into four different segments, with the segment between Civic Drive and El Cielo Road defined as the Civic Plaza. Currently, the initial schematic landscape plans are available for public review on the City's website, and a public meeting will be held to further solicit comments on the overall plans. The AAC will be reviewing the entire Tahquitz Canyon Way median project in the future, after the public comment process is complete and the formal architectural review process begins, anticipated later this year.

At this time, however, the steering committee has determined that the following concepts shown in the initial schematic landscape plan for the Civic Plaza should be reviewed by the AAC such that the concepts can be incorporated into the City Council's approved plans for the rehabilitation of the City Hall parking lot:

- Demonstration Garden with recessed turf area at the southwest corner of the City Hall parking lot (to be installed in the area of the existing parking lot removed near the corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Civic Drive);
- Decorative paving within the parking lot in front of City Hall; and
- New shade trees installed within the parking lot

It is necessary to advance these concepts ahead of the entire schematic landscape plan review by the AAC due to the fact that the Public Works Department requires guidance on how to address the area of the existing parking lot to be removed. As it may be a long time after the schematic landscape plans are approved by the City, and final landscape plans are designed and implemented (which will be determined if and when funding becomes available), after the southwest portion of the existing parking lot is removed there would need to be an interim plan for its condition. In addition, during construction of the parking lot rehabilitation project, it is prudent to remove the existing carob trees now to avoid damaging the reconstructed parking lot later. Removing the carob trees now

requires that a replacement tree species be selected. Finally, as the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan includes decorative paving within the parking lot in front of City Hall, it is appropriate to include its construction as part of the parking lot rehabilitation project.

The steering committee determined it would be appropriate to move forward and implement the concepts now. Implementing a demonstration garden, for example, will allow the City to showcase what's to come with the overall Tahquitz Canyon Way median project, and also fulfills Step 5 of the 20 First Steps on Sustainability identified above.

The Demonstration Garden includes re-vegetation with native, drought tolerant plants, and will provide the public with an example of sustainable landscaping, similar to the demonstration garden installed at the Desert Water Agency administration building on Gene Autry Trail.

Adjacent to the Demonstration Garden is proposed a recessed turf area, which will be used to show the sustainable method of directing stormwater runoff from parking areas into a bio-swale or retention basin where the runoff can be percolated back into the ground instead of released to the street. Turf is proposed in the retention area as the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan intends this area to be used as overflow for the outdoor public plaza proposed near the Bogert statue.

The decorative paving within the City Hall parking lot is proposed with contrasting colors, with darker paving surrounding lighter paving in a circular design to mimic the circles within the City Hall exterior canopies. Permeable concrete pavers are proposed within the decorative paving area, extending along the front of the City Hall and City Council chambers. Retractable bollards will be installed on either side of the decorative paving area to allow the area to be closed off to vehicles and used as a large outdoor public plaza and meeting space.

Prosopis "Phoenix" a hybrid thornless mesquite trees are proposed as shade trees to replace the existing carob trees within the east side of the City Hall parking lot. A total of 10 trees will be installed in this area. In addition, Tipuana tipu trees are proposed as new shade trees along the south side of the new parking lot, on either side of the decorative paving area. A total of 4 trees will be installed.

The existing turf extending along the front of City Hall adjacent to Tahquitz Canyon Way will remain in place after construction of the parking lot rehabilitation project.

Staff is seeking the Committee's input on the proposed concepts outlined above that will be included in the City Hall parking lot rehabilitation project.

Attachments:

1. Landscape plans



# City of Palm Springs

Department of Planning Services

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 11, 2010  
**To:** Architectural Advisory Committee  
**From:** Marcus Fuller, Assistant Director of Public Works  
**Subject:** Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Schematic Landscape Design

---

### Introduction:

On March 25, 2009, the City Council awarded a contract to RGA Landscape Architects ("RGA") to provide the City with a professional schematic landscape plan to convert the existing Tahquitz Canyon Way median landscaping to a desert-landscape, drought tolerant, and sustainable landscape that balances the Mayor's call for sustainability while maintaining the enduring vision of greenery and colorful annuals for Palm Springs tourists. The project also includes preparation of schematic landscape plans for the Palm Springs City Hall and Riverside County Administrative Offices complex.

### General Plan:

The Circulation Element of the Palm Springs General Plan designates Tahquitz Canyon Way as a 4-lane divided Major Thoroughfare, and as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor under the Community Design Element. The Community Design Element stresses the importance of transportation corridors, and states:

***Transportation Corridors.** Residents and visitors view large parts of Palm Springs only by travel along corridors. Thus, these roadways provide excellent opportunities to create a design identity throughout the City. They should contain consistent design features such as formal landscaping, distinctive lighting elements and signage and specialized paving at key intersections to create a unified sense of place and identity throughout the City. Unique treatments along secondary and tertiary roads will strengthen the individual characters of the neighborhoods they serve.*

The Community Design Element refers to Tahquitz Canyon Way as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor, and states:

*Tahquitz Canyon Way serves as a primary east-west corridor, connecting downtown with the Civic Center and airport. In Section 14, Tahquitz Canyon Way has a well-defined, although somewhat dated streetscape identity due to its consistent landscaping and lighting and signage features. These design themes and elements should be adapted with appropriate changes along the entire length of the corridor.*

To implement the goals, policies and actions of the Community Design Element, the General Plan identifies Goal CD4, which states:

*Design attractive and visually unified corridors that strengthen the City's identity while retaining their own unique design identities.*

Specific to the designation of Tahquitz Canyon Way, as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor, the General Plan identifies Policy CD4.2, which states:

*Allow design variation of special sections along corridors (such as the section of Tahquitz Canyon Way in Section 14) as long as they are compatible with the design intent of the corridor and fit into the overall design theme and hierarchy of the City's streets.*

The General Plan further identifies Action CD4.4, which states:

*Analyze the impact and feasibility of converting the landscaping along Tahquitz Canyon Way and other lushly landscaped areas to a desert plant palette.*

In addition to being identified as an Enhanced Transportation Corridor, each end of the Tahquitz Canyon Way corridor is identified as a Node/Activity Center. The Community Design Element stresses the importance of Nodes/Activity Centers, and states:

*Nodes are recognizable areas with a high intensity of social/cultural or commercial/retail/industrial uses that attract many users and serve as hubs of activity within the City. Often nodes not only serve as public gathering places, but also act as economic focal points within the City. Nodes should be attractive and visually unique places that are well connected to each other and to other parts of the City, facilitating the movement of residents and visitors between these areas of activity. Primary nodes tend to draw visitors and residents for specialized goods, services, activities, and events, while secondary nodes are typically used only by residents and are visited on a more frequent basis for everyday goods and services.*

The General Plan identifies Goal CD3, which states:

*Establish strong and clearly defined nodes that add to the visual quality of the City and provide activity areas/gathering places for the City's residents and visitors.*

The General Plan further identifies the following Policies, which state:

*CD3.1 Ensure that development in the above nodes is appropriate to the character and identity of the area through the use of specialized architectural styles and treatments, landscaping, signage, and other design elements at an appropriate scale and height.*

*CD3.3 Encourage the creation of a consistent design theme within each node that will differentiate the node from surrounding areas.*

*CD3.4 Create a sense of arrival at nodes through the use of specialized paving, landscaping, architectural treatments, signage and lighting.*

**CEQA Status:**

Preparation of schematic landscape design plans is considered "Categorically Exempt" under CEQA Guidelines.

**Staff Analysis:**

On May 29, 2008, Mayor Pougnet issued a call to the citizens of Palm Springs to join him on "The Palm Springs Path to Sustainability", and "20 First Steps on Sustainability" agreed upon by the Palm Springs City Council on May 21, 2008, including:

2. Complete a comprehensive water audit of all public buildings and facilities and develop an action plan that will reduce City water usage by 50% by 2012; and
5. Identify City Hall as a showcase for public sustainability efforts and a model for energy, water and waste conservation; and
9. Implement a model re-landscaping project showcasing the Tahquitz Median from the airport to downtown by the end of 2009.

In addition to implementing the above mentioned Goals, Policies and Actions of the Community Design Element of the General Plan, the purpose of this project is to implement the provisions of the Mayor's call for sustainability, and will provide the City with a professional schematic landscape plan to convert the existing Tahquitz Canyon Way median landscaping to a desert-landscape, drought tolerant, and sustainable landscape that balances the Mayor's call for sustainability while maintaining the enduring vision of greenery and colorful annuals for Palm Springs tourists. The project also requires preparation of schematic landscape plans for the Palm Springs City Hall and Riverside County Administrative Offices complex.

In October 2008, the Public Works and Engineering Department prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP), to solicit proposals from landscape architects interested in working on this project. In the RFP, staff emphasized the following:

*This project is a highly visible, important architectural project for the City of Palm Springs. A well conceived, "Palm Springs" design for the landscaping is expected. The project will require collaboration with the community, City staff, as well as, the Architectural Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Processing the schematic landscape architectural plans through the City's Major Architectural Approval process is required.*

On December 3, 2008, the City Council appointed Councilmember Mills and Hutcheson to the Tahquitz Median Landscape Design Subcommittee. Subsequently, staff met with the Council Subcommittee to form a Steering Committee to participate in reviewing the submitted proposals, which consisted of the following individuals:

- Councilmember Mills and Hutcheson
- Planning Commissioner Doug Donenfeld
- Sustainability Commissioner Mark Nichols
- Michael Buccino (Owner, Michael Buccino Associates)
- Director of Parks and Recreation, Sharon Heider
- Asst. Director of Public Works, Marcus Fuller

Ultimately, the Steering Committee recommended award of a contract for this project to RGA, which was awarded by the City Council on March 25, 2009. Subsequently, the Steering Committee met periodically with RGA during development of the initial draft schematic landscape plans. Public review and comment was solicited early in the process of preparing the schematic landscape plans, with the project being posted on the City's webpage and an opportunity to review draft schematic landscape plans being made available to the Office of Neighborhood Involvement and the downtown merchants association "Main Street". On October 29, 2009, a public meeting was held at City Hall providing another opportunity for the public to review the preliminary draft schematic landscape plans prior to initiating the formal Major Architectural Review process. Comments received from the public were reviewed and considered by the Steering Committee, and ultimately the Steering Committee recommended moving forward with the final draft schematic landscape plans included with this report and presented to the Architectural Advisory Committee for its formal review.

### **Schematic Landscape Design Vision and Concepts:**

**Tahquitz Canyon Way Median:** The goal of the redesign of the median is to convert the existing Tahquitz Canyon Way median landscaping to a desert-friendly, drought tolerant and sustainable landscape that balances the Mayor's call for sustainability while maintaining the enduring vision of greenery and colorful annuals for Palm Springs tourists and visitors. Drought tolerant landscaping will be dominant, but it won't be the only landscape concept. The redesign will encompass the entire median island within

Tahquitz Canyon Way from El Cielo Road at the airport west to Indian Canyon Drive near the Spa Casino Resort. Some sustainability features will be:

- Reduce the amount of sod and increase the use of drought tolerant native plants.
- Reuse some of the existing palm trees in the median.
- Look into using the median as storm water retention for irrigation purposes.
- Incorporate native images and art pieces that reflect the culture of the ACBCI, and integrates existing pieces like those at Tahquitz and Indian Canyon.

**Riverside County Administrative Offices:** Plans will include re-landscaping the parking lot facing Tahquitz Canyon Way. Some sustainability features will be:

- Reuse and reposition some of the existing trees and plantings on the new landscape layout.
- Reduce the amount of sod and increase the amount of drought tolerant native desert plants.
- Integrate a landscape design that reflects the Mid-Century architecture of the County building.

**Palm Springs City Hall:** There are plans currently under the design phase to repave the front parking lot of City Hall facing Tahquitz Canyon Way. Some sustainability features will be:

- Recycle the existing asphalt concrete and use it as part of the compacted base material for a new concrete parking surface.
- Reuse and reposition the existing light bollards on the new site layout.
- Reuse and reposition some of the existing trees, plantings, and boulders on the new site layout.
- Reduce the amount of sod and increase the amount of drought tolerant native desert plants.
- Integrate a landscape design that reflects the Mid-Century architecture of the City Hall.

RGA's charge was to develop a new landscape and landform along Tahquitz Canyon Way conveying an unforgettable visual experience extending all the way from the airport to Indian Canyon Drive. The schematic landscape plans express the Palm Springs "Brand" while also distinguishing the Tribal land in Section 14. The plans are unified by sustainable practices and a continuity of appropriate plant materials. The plans will be the framework within which the geological and environmental uniqueness of the region will meld the heritage of tribal culture, the art and architectural excellence associated with Palm Springs, and address tourist experience.

The entire 2.25 miles of the Tahquitz Canyon Way median is organized by four zones with special emphasis placed on the gateway at the intersection of El Cielo Road and Tahquitz Canyon Way, the entries into Section 14, the Tribal land, and the high pedestrian-use urban zone between the Renaissance (formerly Wyndham) Hotel and Indian Canyon Drive. The iconic architectural significance of City Hall is enhanced by a

revised parking layout, an extension of the existing heritage landscape themes, a new emphasis on a plaza-like space in front of City Hall: all working together to create a "set piece" for City Hall. In addition, sustainability principles and a demonstration garden will round out the project for the civic area.

Balancing the need for continuity and specialness, the plan links all zones by a landform with subtle changes that reflect the special character of each zone and to reinforce its uniqueness. Changes from one zone to the next may include artwork, plant material selections, variation in texture, materials and lighting. Emphasis has been given to native and non-native desert adapted plant materials. Particular attention is paid to plants within Section 14 that have cultural significance to the Cahuilla Indians. The schematic landscape plans achieve this combination of goals through a number of means, including:

- Integration of bio swales / rain gardens
- Irrigation system re-design
- Use of locally sourced materials
- Use of multi-species plantings to avoid massed monocultures
- Reinforce the image of the existing Mexican Fan Palms silhouetted against the mountains and sky as the iconic "image" of Palm Springs
- Employ native California Fan Palms as part of a design palette demonstrating sustainable practices and a powerful symbol of our unique ecology and Tribal heritage
- Use of theme plant materials to tie mid-century modern architecture with sensitivity to sustainable landscape design

In addition to the schematic landscape plans for the four zones, two plant palettes have been identified:

**City of Palm Springs Plant Palette: Civic / Neighborhood Zones**

**Large Trees:**

- Fever Tree
- Sonoran Palo Verde
- Blue Palo Verde

**Small Trees:**

- Chihuahuan Orchid
- Desert Willow

**Palms:**

- California Fan Palm
- Mexican Fan Palm



**Shrubs:**

- Summer Star
- Winter Gold
- Pink Beauty
- Easter Egg Bush
- Cimarron
- Coral fountain
- Valentine
- Cascalote Smoothie

**Accents:**

- Agave Varieties
- Hesperaloe Varieties
- Yucca Varieties

**Section 14 Plan Palette: Resort -Tribal / Downtown Urban Zones**

**Large Trees:**

- Ironwood
- Honey Mesquite
- Blue Palo Verde

**Small Trees:**

- Cat's Claw Acacia
- Desert Willow

**Palms:**

- California Fan Palm

**Shrubs:**

- Desert Verbena
- Four-Wing Saltbush
- Desert Milkweed
- Wild Grape
- Jojoba
- Creosote Bush
- Chia
- White Dalea
- Brittle Bush
- While Evening Primrose

**Cacti:**

- Agave
- Cotton Top Cactus
- Barrel Cactus
- Teddy Bear Cactus
- Prickly Pear Cactus
- Western Prickly Pear

In addition to the plantings, iconic planters, public art, native designs, sculptures, monuments, enhanced pavement/pavers, and lighting will be incorporated into the Tahquitz Canyon Way median. Placement and type of art, pavers, planters, lighting, and monuments will be part of final landscape plans under a separate contract with the City.

**Prior Architectural Advisory Committee Action:**

On August 6, 2009, the Public Works and Engineering Department brought forward for separate advance review to the Architectural Advisory Committee that portion of the schematic landscape plans affecting the Department's direction from City Council to move forward with the final design of a project to upgrade and reconstruct the south City Hall parking lot, adjacent to Tahquitz Canyon Way. Included as a part of the parking lot project is re-landscaping the southwest portion of the existing parking lot that will be removed, removal of the existing carob trees in the east side of the parking lot and replacement of new shade trees, and installation of decorative paving within the parking lot.

The intent of taking this sub-set of the schematic landscape plans forward was to complete the final design which would include approved landscape elements from the Steering Committee's recommended draft schematic landscape plan for the Civic Center Zone. At that time, the Steering Committee had determined that the following concepts shown in the draft schematic landscape plan for the Civic Plaza should be reviewed by the Architectural Advisory Committee such that the concepts can be incorporated into the City Council's approved plans for the rehabilitation of the City Hall parking lot:

- Demonstration Garden with recessed turf area at the southwest corner of the City Hall parking lot (to be installed in the area of the existing parking lot removed near the corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Civic Drive);
- Decorative paving within the parking lot in front of City Hall; and
- New shade trees installed within the parking lot

The Architectural Advisory Committee ultimately voted 2-2 on the matter, and subsequently, the Public Works and Engineering Department elected to postpone the City Hall parking lot project to allow the entire schematic landscape plans to be

reviewed through the formal Major Architectural Review process by not only the Architectural Advisory Committee, but Planning Commission and City Council prior to incorporating into final design plans for the parking lot project.

The Public Works and Engineering Department requests that the Architectural Advisory Committee review and recommend approval to the Planning Commission the schematic landscape plans for the entire Tahquitz Canyon Way corridor, including all four neighborhood zones and the suggested plant palettes.

**Attachments:**

1. Schematic Landscape Plans



# City of Palm Springs

Department of Planning Services

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 25, 2010  
**To:** Architectural Advisory Committee  
**From:** Marcus Fuller, Assistant Director of Public Works  
**Subject:** Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Schematic Landscape Design

---

### **Introduction:**

At the January 11, 2010 Architectural Advisory Committee ("AAC") meeting, the AAC reviewed the subject project and voted 5-0-1 (Parker abstaining) to generally approved the schematic landscape plan for the Tahquitz Canyon Way median, and for a restudy of the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan.

### **General Plan:**

Please refer to the January 11, 2010, staff report for a discussion of the General Plan policies that relate to the subject project.

### **CEQA Status:**

Preparation of schematic landscape design plans is considered "Categorically Exempt" under CEQA Guidelines.

### **Prior Architectural Advisory Committee Action:**

On August 6, 2009, the AAC voted 2-2 (taking no action), on recommending approval of the proposed landscaping and other features for the City Hall parking lot reconstruction.

On January 11, 2010, the AAC voted 5-0-1 (Parker abstaining) to generally recommend approval of the schematic landscape plan for the Tahquitz Canyon Way median, and for a restudy of the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan.

**Staff Analysis:**

Please refer to the January 11, 2010, staff report for a complete staff analysis of the subject project.

The AAC's review of this project has focused most of its attention to the revised City Hall parking lot layout. Prior AAC discussion revealed that a majority of the AAC members would not recommend approval of any change to the City Hall parking lot, and therefore, the AAC was not receptive to the proposed Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan.

The last AAC action taken on this project requires staff to return to AAC with a revised Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan that shows no changes to the City Hall parking lot. Following the AAC's action, staff discussed the direction given by the AAC with the City Council sub-committee appointed for this project (Mayor Pro-Tem Hutcheson and Council member Mills). The Council sub-committee directed staff to report back to the AAC as follows:

On January 7, 2009, the City Council approved the revised City Hall parking lot layout (see attached City Council staff report), and as such, it is not subject to AAC review as part of this project. Therefore, staff is seeking the AAC's recommendation on the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan proposed for the City Hall and surrounding areas. Staff welcomes specific comments from the AAC with regard to the Civic Plaza schematic landscape plan within the parameters of the direction given by the City Council sub-committee as stated herein.

Following the AAC's review of the project and consideration of any comments provided, a final recommendation for approval will be made by the Director of Planning Services may take final action on the Minor Architectural Approval application.

**Attachments:**

1. January 11, 2010, AAC Staff Report
2. January 7, 2009, City Council Staff Report
3. Civic Center Schematic Landscape Plans

Recorded  
10-8-96  
# 38625

RESOLUTION NO. 18907

OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS,  
CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING THE FREY HOUSE II, THE  
VALLEY STATION OF THE PALM SPRINGS AERIAL  
TRAMWAY, THE LOEWY HOUSE, PALM SPRINGS CITY  
HALL, AND THE CAREY-PIROZZI HOUSE AS CLASS 1  
HISTORIC SITES.

\* \* \* \* \*

WHEREAS the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey House have contributed substantially to the historic architectural diversity of the City of Palm Springs; and

WHEREAS the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House have long been landmarks of the City of Palm Springs for residents, architectural students and visitors; and

WHEREAS the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House together constitute a significant portion of a body of work designed by the architect Albert Frey, FAIA, along with various partners; and

WHEREAS the life and work of Albert Frey, FAIA, has been well-documented, and his work is recognized world-wide as significant toward the development of the International style and other modern movements of architecture, especially as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment; and

WHEREAS the Palm Springs General Plan provides for the long-term preservation of significant architectural and historic buildings; and

WHEREAS Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code provides for the designation of sites with architectural and historic significance; and

WHEREAS on September 10, 1996, the Historic Site Preservation Board held a public hearing to recommend the designation of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House as historic sites and unanimously recommends to the City Council designation of said properties as Class 1 Historic Sites; and

WHEREAS the City Council concurs in the recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board regarding the architectural and historic value of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House; and

WHEREAS the designation of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House shall further the purposes and intent of the General Plan and Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS the designation of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House shall promote the sensitive preservation and restoration of said sites.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, as follows:

- Section 1. The Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey House were constructed during the period 1946-1965 and have since contributed to the historic architectural diversity of the City of Palm Springs.
- Section 2. The Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey House are excellent examples of the Modern architectural movement in the City of Palm Springs as designed and adapted by the renowned architect Albert Frey, FAIA.
- Section 3. a. The Frey House II, owned by Albert Frey ("Owner"), and located at 686 Palisades Dr., shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on Lot 10, and a portion of Lot 8, of Palm Springs Palisades, M/B 19/23, Riverside County, California; APN 513-110-020.
- b. The Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, owned by Mount San Jacinto Winter Park ("Owner"), and located at the westerly terminus of Tram Way, shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on a portion of Sec. 7, T.4S., R.4.E., Riverside County, California; APN 505-020-012.
- c. The Loewy House, owned by James Gaudineer ("Owner"), and located at 600 Panorama Rd., shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on a portion of the SW1/4 SE1/4 of Section 3, T.4S., R.4E., Riverside County, California; APN 504-292-014.
- d. Palm Springs City Hall, owned by the City of Palm Springs ("Owner"), and located at 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on Lot 16 of Palm Valley Colony Lands, MB 14/652, San Diego County, California; APN 502-150-005.
- e. The Carey-Pirozzi House, owned by Vincent & Karen Pirozzi ("Owners"), and located at 651 W. Via Escuela, shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on Parcel 1, R/S 27/75, Riverside County, California; APN 504-193-002.
- Section 4. No permits for the exterior alteration to the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House shall be granted without the prior approval of the Historic Site Preservation Board and/or the City Council, pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; approved alterations shall maintain the historic architectural integrity of the building.
- Section 5. The Owners shall permit the City to demark the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House as historic sites with a plaque of the City's choosing.
- Section 6. This resolution, and the historic designation put in place by it, shall not affect title to the subject properties.

Section 7. The City Council hereby directs the City Clerk to submit this resolution to the county recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.

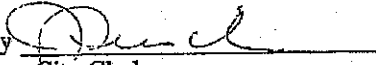
ADOPTED this 2nd day of October, 1996.

AYES: Members Barnes, Hodges, Oden, Spurgin and Mayor Kleindienst  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

By

  
City Clerk

  
City Manager

REVIEWED & APPROVED: 