



San Francisco Public Library

Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Branch Library Community Meeting

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5TH, 2017

6:00 – 7:30 PM, EUREKA VALLEY/HARVEY MILK BRANCH LIBRARY

Attendees

San Francisco Public Library: Michael Lambert, Deputy City Librarian; Cathy Delneo, Chief of Branches; Roberto Lombardi, Director of Facilities; Anne Vannucchi, Branch Manager; Ruby Yu, Resident Engineer; Katie Lee, City Hall Fellow

San Francisco Public Works: Edgar Lopez, City Architect; Julia Laue, Principal Architect; Jasmine Kaw, Landscape Architect; Julia Groat, Architectural Associate

Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Jeff Sheehy; Bill Barnes, Legislative Aide

Coalition on Homelessness: Kelley Cutler, Human Rights Organizer

Welcome and Introductions

Cathy Delneo, Chief of Branches

Introduction of SFPL, SFPW, and guests:

The Library is grateful for your continued engagement around the process of improving the landscaping at the Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Branch Library. I want to especially thank those members of the community who have attended our many morning meetings, the members of the Castro Neighbors Action Group, and Eureka Valley Branch's representative to the Council of Neighborhood Libraries, Penni Wisner. We appreciate your patience in working with us throughout this process.

I'd like to thank the City and County of San Francisco partners who are in attendance at this evening, including:

- Sandra Zuniga, Director of the San Francisco this fix it team.
- Captive Bill Griffin, of the Mission Police Station.
- Deputy City Librarian, Michael Lambert.
- Roberto Lombardi, Facilities Director at the Library.
- Eureka Valley Branch Manager, Anne Vannucchi.
- Bill Barnes from Supervisor Sheehy's Office

This evening, Penni Wisner, the Eureka Valley Branch's representative to the Library's Council of Neighborhood Libraries, is in attendance. Penni has been at most, if not all, of the meetings we have

convened around safe and welcoming libraries at Eureka Valley and is doing a great job of representing your community on the Council.

The Library is strongly committed to maintaining access to library services for **all** community members, including those currently experiencing homelessness. That is one of the prime reasons that I am pleased to let you know that the Library will be expanding from 45 to 55 open hours each week at the Eureka Valley Branch in June of this year. The increase in open hours will provide community members with more access to library services and more opportunities to connect with services City-wide.

To quickly recap our process so far, the Library convened a series of 8 community meetings on Wednesday mornings here at the Eureka Valley Branch. We worked a group of community members to identify key areas of concern and to develop consensus around some possible improvements to the branch's landscaping that would foster the safe and welcoming environment that we strive to maintain at every San Francisco Public Library.

Library staff then engaged our colleagues at Public Works in developing a two-phased plan to improve the landscaping at the branch. The goal of the landscaping improvement plan is to provide safe, welcoming, and attractive grounds that are easy to maintain for the Library and our City partners.

We hosted community meetings in October and December to share initial drafts of the landscaping improvement plan and to gather your feedback. During those meetings, we came to the consensus that we'd break the improvements into two phases and would begin work on phase 1, which was budgeted for this year.

Tonight you'll hear from the Public Works team about the finalized Phase 1 design, focused on 16th and Prosper Streets.

Then we will shift the focus to Phase 2, focused on the parking lot area on 16th and Pond Streets. You'll then have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Phase II plans.

I'd like to introduce our colleagues from San Francisco Public Works: Deputy Director Edgar Lopez, Julia Laue, Julia Groat, Ruby Yu, and Jasmine Kaw. Edgar will share opening remarks from Public Works.

Welcoming remarks by Edgar Lopez, Deputy Director Public Works:

We strive to develop a design that enhances the library, one that is easy to maintain, accessible and beautiful. We share a lot of the concerns that many of you have and we are comfortable that the designs we show today address the concerns we've heard in the past from community members.

Proposed Phasing Plan

Jasmine Kaw, Landscape Architect, Public Works

Phase I: 16th & Prosper Street

At this point, we are almost ready to implement Phase I. For Phase I schemes, we are looking at 16th Street and Prosper Street frontage landscape. The scope of Phase I is to look at improving landscape areas so that it creates a welcoming, safe, and accented entryway for the library's frontage. The goal is

for the face of the library, as well as the sides around it, to be a beautiful space for neighbors, pedestrians, and patrons.

Phase I on 16th Street will include a “cobble paving” element. This means that the ground plane is going to have a look of undulating cobble stones, with 2 – 3 feet tall rocks/boulders interspersed in the landscape along with hardy ornamental planting such as agave. The strategically-placed shrubbery that will have a sculptural look and will be easy to maintain. There will also be a low ornamental railing at the curb to separate the pedestrian spaces from the planting areas.

On Prosper Street, the same elements will be included. One difference is that because Prosper is a narrower street we will use smaller-sized plants and boulders that are to scale with the street.

The ornamental railing we will be using is about 18 inches high. It will help delineate the pedestrian realm and the plant landscaped area. It will be easier to maintain than the present plantings and mulch and will better keep the plantings separate from the sidewalk.

A review of Phase 1 elements:

- Cobble paving that will include a combination of cobbles of different textures, shapes, and colors and will be mortared into concrete ground that will be somewhat undulating.
- Ornamental railing will go on top of existing concrete curb.
- The boulders and sculptural plants will enhance the building design and work with the clean lines of the building and give the grounds a cleaner, crisper look.

Question: On the picture shown (Page 7 of the PowerPoint slides), there is a person there to the very left. Is that person within the fence? Is that intentional?

Answer: The person in the picture is shown outside of the fence lines, on the sidewalk. They’re just an example of someone using the space appropriately and walking a dog. (scrolled to show image more clearly.)

Q: How high will the fence be?

A: The fence we’ve chosen is quite low, just about 18 inches tall. The fences will give the space a new look.

Q: Is the cobble paving all continuous? Could someone pick a cobble up?

A: Yes, that’s correct, the cobble paving is continuous and single cobbles will be cemented in place.

Q: Will the cobble paving be permeable?

A: That’s a good question. We’ve learned that soils are not very permeable here, it’s more of a silky, clay soil rather than sandy soil. Since the soils are so close to the building foundation, we don’t want to put permeable materials so close to the ground as they might lead to damage to the building. The way it will work is that plants will be set into lower set of the ground and where there openings, the water will percolate through those and go down to surface drains.

These spaces will have to be irrigated for the plants; they are dry-tolerant and low-maintenance in the long-term. Once established, they won’t need regular watering. A manual quick coupler system will be used to tap into existing irrigation systems. Gardeners will tap into openings where the plants sit. The

cobbled paving requires we look at the drainage and sub drain systems that will be tied into the main sewer main.

Q: Will the undulating pavement have drastic contours? How big will the undulations be?

A: At its lowest, the cobbled paving will be 0 inches. At its highest point, roughly a foot high. These differences in height will be very gradual.

Q: What about accessibility?

A: The idea is for the planting area to be just for plants and sculptural rocks, not to be a path of travel.

Q: What is the width of sidewalk on Prosper side?

A: Less than 4 feet.

Phase II: 16th & Pond Street

We will first review the existing conditions of the parking lot and phase II areas on Pond and 16th Streets, and the plaza. From prior meetings, there has been lots of discussion on how this particular open space functions and is used. One overwhelming piece of feedback we've heard is that there is a safety concern as pedestrians can currently move through the plaza in any to get to the library. So pedestrians are entering into the parking lot suddenly and are in danger from vehicle traffic. We'd like to see the safety conditions around the driveway to the parking lot and entrance to library improved.

One comment from community members and library staff is that the driveway is too tight (driveway from 16th Street next to entrance) and that the circular paving juts out and makes the driveway more narrow than is desirable. We've explored these ideas to improve the driveway.

Another community concern that our plans address is visibility looking out from inside of the library and seeing the grounds and entryway clearly from the street, including visibility of the main entrance from all directions and visibility of the plaza from all directions. We are aiming to improve sight lines in general in the redesign of the space.

The next few slides show 2 proposes, with different design options in Phase II.

- Option A: Expanded Sidewalk Option
 - The vocabulary we established in Phase 1 to this side of the library grounds.
 - Option A extends the existing sidewalk so that the corner becomes a part of the sidewalk realm. This signals to pedestrians that this is a nice, large, spacious area similar to the existing plaza. It could be used as a gathering spot if pedestrians may be waiting for others, or it could just be walked through by patrons. It signals "you've arrived at the library."
 - For the expanded sidewalk option, instead of directing traffic of pedestrians *through* the parking lot, there is more room at the corner to walk on the sidewalk to the appropriate entrance of the library. This will help eliminate the dangerous situation we see now, with people crisscrossing the parking lot to get into the library.

- The plan will improve sight lines to and from the library because there will no longer be a large trellis.
 - To better define the parking lot, the parking spaces, and the exit to Pond Street, we are proposing using the same lower sculptural landscaping we used in Phase 1 made up of boulders, large agave plants, and the same cobbled paving.
 - A larger driveway will be developed in Phase 2, it will be about 14 feet wide.
 - An added planter, which can be viewed from bird's eye view picture on slideshow, is at the other end of the parking lot and helps define what is more of the interior, library realm (as opposed to public sidewalk).
 - The low, eighteen inch fencing from Phase I would continue across up until the taller fencing.
 - The bike rack would move from its current location to the area nearest to the ADA parking spot.
 - The existing brick planter will remain with an accent tree that anchors the corner and makes the vertical entrance welcoming.
 - The existing light pole and flagpole would remain as is.
- Option B: Expanded Landscaping Option
 - Option B is very similar to Option A. The primary difference is that instead of expanding the sidewalk, the landscape is expanded. An expanded landscape rounds off the library grounds so that on the corner of Pond and 16th Streets, there property is incorporated into the library landscape.
 - There would be rock, cobbled paving, and plant scape similar to what was seen in Phase I.
 - This plan includes a net gain of 1 parking space.
 - As in Option A, the bike rack would move from its current location to the area nearest to the ADA parking spot.
 - As in Option A, the existing brick planter will remain with an accent tree that anchors the corner and makes the vertical entrance welcoming.
 - The existing light pole and flagpole would remain as is.
 - The rounded corner directs pedestrians around instead of through the parking lot into main entrance.

To recap, both schemes incorporate similar materials and design elements as those we'll be implementing in Phase I. They both incorporate similar draining and irrigation systems. Both Option A and Option B would both include the cobbled paving, large rocks/boulders, large visually interesting plants, and the low ornamental railing that we will be installing in Phase I. So that same look will be carried into Phase II on the parking lot side leading to one cohesive design that enhances and highlights this mid-century library building nicely, and promote a safe and welcoming space. Jasmine concludes presentation.

Questions/Feedback:

Q: What are the main pros and cons of the two options?

A: The main difference is that Option A has an extra sidewalk area and Option B has extra plantings.

Option A's expanded sidewalk include more sidewalk space, a place you can chat with a neighbor and plenty of space for people coming around the corner. It can get crowded on city sidewalks and this design would provide people with more space. The additional sidewalk signifies a more clear approach and gateway to distinguish the library, and it might also serve to highlight that the corner is dedicated to Jose Sarria, an important neighborhood figure.

Option B's expanded landscape doesn't make the sidewalk too narrow, it maintains the nice wide sidewalk we have along 16th Street and provides ample sidewalk space. The landscape concept helps guides pedestrians aesthetically. Neither option removes the plaque.

Q: What about the engraved bricks?

A: Great question! There are some named bricks along the bricked entryway and patio. These fundraising bricks were associated with Branch Library Improvement Program (BLIP) and they're important to the community and the donors named on the bricks. We will move these bricks to another location on the property such as the back patio or the front entrance area and continue to honor the significant contribution generous donors made to support this neighborhood branch library.

Q: Will a bikeshare station be installed on 16th Street near the trees, on the curb?

A: The Library is aware of the plan to install Bikeshare rental stations near the branch, and is supportive of any activity that brings more people to the area. These stations are usually installed on the curb; their exact location is not definitive yet, but the Library is happy to work with the Bikeshare group on this project.

Q: Can you explain the space under the eaves of the branch on the parking lot side?

A: In both Option A and B, we will continue the cobbled surface in that area, which will tie the space together.

Q: Does the parking lot back area with the tall fence delineate the property line? Are you going to address that little section?

A: Correct, the property line does extend past the tall fence near the edge of the parking lot and is not delineated by the tall fence. While it is not addressed in Phase II, we hope do some more plant maintenance there and are working with Rec/Park on that now.

Q: In regards to bike parking: if you can't see it from the street and don't know it's there, you don't know it already exists. The bicycle worm rack type of parking area does not maximize the amount of space that can be used. The worm rack is inconvenient especially when people have cargo bikes (bikes with extra seats for children for example) can only park on ends of the worm.

A: Good points. We will take this feedback into consideration as we develop the plans and will look for a bike rack that is user friendly.

Q: When I'm driving, parking is tight. The loss a parking space to a planter is not good for me.

A: In terms of net parking space, we lose one spot for planting but are gaining one.

Q: Wouldn't the library be good to have a net 2 parking spaces?

A: Do other people find this resonating? Please give us a show of hands if you would really like to see 2 extra parking spaces. 5 people raised their hands in support of 2 net parking spaces. 7 people raised their hands in support of 1 net parking spaces as drawn.

Q: At drawings of the parking spaces, there seems to be some white concrete near them, are those walls or just curbs? Recommend using less of a curb and more of cobbled paving/rocks for this purpose.

A: It's a bit of a retaining wall and it goes from a little taller than a 6 inches to a bit higher as we get closer to what's now the plaza area. We will definitely explore the ideas you suggested and design options for the retaining wall, which is necessary in this area due to grade changes.

Q: Won't any area that appeals to be a good place to sit down lead to unwanted behaviors?

A: The designs we're showing encourage people who want to sit together into the courtyard behind the branch instead of the parking lot where sitting can be dangerous due to vehicle traffic. We don't want people to be injured. We welcome community members to use the seating area in the back of library and hope patrons will come into the library building itself.

Q: There doesn't seem to be enough attention to the entranceway of library in these options for Phase II, that area is still too open. Library personnel are confronted by people who are camped out in that area when they come in in the morning and so on. That area will continue to attract people congregating after-hours, particularly when it rains due to the overhang. Isn't there a way for the fencing or gating to block off that area and walkway/front leading to the main entrance of library?

A: The feedback you provided is something that we've thought about. We want to make sure the library is welcoming to everyone in the neighborhood. We have empathy towards the concerns you're raising. We are focusing on the planting areas in these phases and hope that they'll lead to appropriate use of the grounds. We're also addressing after-hours use of the grounds through lighting adjustments which are all LED and more reliable will help to save money, electricity, and maintenance time. The old lights tend to burn out. These lighting adjustments will stay on reliably and will help our colleagues in SFPD to address any criminal behavior on the library grounds, which is, of course, of concern to the Library.

Q: I like that the plants are featured in the plans, which restores the design intent to when the building was built.

A: Yes, it complements the mid-century design nicely and carries on the feel from 16th Street, helping to show the library has a unified design.

Q: In Option A's Expanded Sidewalk, that corner has no space to sit – is that wasted space? It would be nice to sit down with neighbors or when waiting for someone. People who do wish to sit will sit on the ground. Could we incorporate seating into the design in that sidewalk area?

A: Previous plans proposed in October/December display a design that has seating. If there is consensus tonight that people do want to see a seat, we can consider that too.

Q: I like how Option B's Expanded Landscape helps funnel people more toward the library. But the fencing on everything makes it feel like a fortress. No matter how ornamental it is, fencing creates an unwelcoming sense. How many options did you look at for metal fencing that will keep people from sitting on those curbs?

A: The reason for a fencing element is to delineate that “this is the sidewalk, the space where you walk” versus this is where the plants and decorative design elements are. It’s really to delineate rather than specifically to say not to sit anywhere. The fence is meant as a visual architectural decoration like a border.

Q: By mincing words and ignoring the facts of the last 18 plus months, we are doing ourselves a disservice. I thought the reason why the little menacing fence is around the tree is that we don’t want people sitting there. I thought we do want to discourage people from sitting there?

A: From the Library’s perspective, there are a number of reasons that we’ve come to these particular proposals, including pedestrian safety, clear access paths to the library, clear sidewalks around the branch, not having to constantly replace trampled plants, etc. One important reason for the fencing relates to pets - we really want to discourage a number of people who don’t curb their dogs or who allow their pets to go to the bathroom in the planting area, as that’s unsanitary for the entire community and for our staff. It is confining to say that this is for one specific reason. The fence is something that we have in the Phase 1 plan right now. If we find that the fence feels too fortress-like in Phase I, we will take this into account and it will help inform Phase II. We are flexible and can make adjustments as we see how the space is utilized by the community. We believe this design will contribute to our goal of providing a safe and welcoming library.

Q: There was mention of watering, where will those hose bibs go and how will be secured? Also, how often will the gardeners come?

A: The plants we are placing are drought-tolerant and don’t need much water after the first year, once they are established. There are a small number of plants that are of good size. That first year is key for plant’s health. There will be a manual watering system with no garden hose bib sticking up. The hose bib will be in the ground in what looks like just a utility box in the ground. From a maintenance point of view, gardening teams prefer this system of hose bibs. The plants will help make service and maintenance better and will look nicer. The accent agave plants will be colorful and of different types suitable for this environment.

Q: Can we consider putting in a bench similar to the one in place at Western Addition Branch?

A: We can consider that, and the Expanded Sidewalk option does include a space where we could easily install a bench. The Library does have some great outdoor seats already, on the back courtyard. We really want to increase awareness that we have the courtyard, which is a beautiful but underutilized space at this library. We want to draw people into that area, and have them think of it like a big community living room. At our morning meetings, we discussed the idea of making that area reserve-able by community members as the community meeting rooms are at other libraries. But out front, site furnishings can be added easily once we see new landscaping works and how the community uses it. It is something we can consider as an add-on.

We would now like to see a show of hands that support **Option A’s Expanded Sidewalk:**
No hands were raised.

And a show of hands that support **Option B’s Expanded Landscape:**
All hands were raised. Option B garnered unanimous support from community members in attendance.

Closing Remarks – Cathy Delneo

We are grateful to all of you for your participation and time. There is a list of site achievements that you can pick up on your way out if you like. We appreciate your attendance and feedback and look forward to implementing the plan.

Notes respectfully submitted by Katie Lee of the Facilities Office team.