



# Information Item

Date: April 12, 2011

To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Martin Pastucha, Director of Public Works  
Subject: Update on Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square Project – Site Preparation

## Introduction

This report is to update the City Council on the current status of Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square project.

## Background

On [December 14, 2010](#), Council approved the Schematic Design and the design direction of the Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square park. The park's design consultant, James Corner Field Operations has incorporated public input from numerous community workshops bringing the design to the halfway point of the design development phase.

## Discussion

### SOIL

The design of the Palisades Garden Walk calls for four distinct “hills” ranging in height from six feet to eighteen feet. These were features that were included in the City Council review of schematic design on [December 14, 2010](#). Each of these four hills has a distinct character: Garden Hill contains an intimate network of smaller pathways that meander through garden plantings; Discovery Hill is dedicated to integrated play features; Gathering Hill overlooks the Grand Bay where events may be planned; and Grand Hill is the highest hill with an overlook that captures the Pier, the ocean, and Palisades Park. A large amount of earth will be required to create this dramatic

topography. The opportunity to achieve significant cost savings for the soil procurement requires some site preparation prior to the anticipated start of construction.

The construction schedule for the Village Housing Development, which is directly adjacent to the park, has excavation occurring in Fall 2011. The soil from this excavation is suitable for the Palisades Garden Walk project. Although the construction for Palisades Garden Walk is not scheduled to begin until Summer 2012 and stockpiling soil now is out of sequence of a regular park construction, not having to import clean soil from other sources will save the park project an estimated \$2.8 million.

The Palisades Garden Walk project will need approximately 55,000 cubic yards of clean soil in order to create the topographic features that are part of the new park design. The Village project will be excavating approximately 120,000 cubic yards of soil, which has been tested and shown to be clean. The work to prepare the park site to receive this soil includes the relocation of several trees including the "Three Amigos" (the three giant Ficus trees that are intertwined) to locations in the new park where they will permanently reside, the demolition of the asphalt on the site and numerous above ground site features (signs, light pole, parking kiosks, security gate arm, wheel stops, bollards, etc.), and the relocation of underground utilities that must be moved to both improve functionality as well as protect underground structures from the weight of the imported soils. This site preparation work is a component of the construction that would have occurred in Summer 2012, but must occur sooner to take advantage of this significant cost saving opportunity.

## TREES

On the Palisades Garden Walk site there are 28 existing trees (including the Three Amigos Ficus trees) that are to be relocated within the park. Additionally, 58 existing palms trees will be retained and protected in their present locations as part of the future park landscape. The 33 Washingtonia robusta palms currently within the park site will either remain in place or be relocated off-site. Four Sweet Shade shrubs, six feet in

height that are in the northern staff parking lot will be relocated to another City park. Finally, two ficus trees that were part of the original RAND Corporation landscape are in a state of serious decline and have been planned for removal. The ficus trees were evaluated by an independent consulting arborist who determined that they are suffering from Oak root fungus and have a large quantity of dead wood in the canopy. There is no known treatment for Oak root fungus, thus making removal a necessity.

On the Town Square site, the proposed design provides greater visibility of historic City Hall and accommodates a new landscape scheme. The current design renderings introduced at the last community workshop indicated that a number of trees would be removed to achieve the design goals of the historic site. The current design shows three trees removed from the north side of the site to allow for the proposed bosque of trees. Two recently planted Tipu trees would be relocated within the City and one Carob tree would be removed. An evaluation of the Carob tree has indicated that it is not a candidate for relocation. Additionally, the Junipers adjacent to City Hall's entrance and along the walkways would be removed to expose the historic façade of City Hall. This design will be presented as an information item to the Urban Forest Taskforce and the Landmarks Commission in April and May. Because Town Square requires review and approval by the Landmarks Commission the design is subject to further refinement.

The City is issuing for Palisades Garden Walk, three Requests for Bids for site preparation work, which includes site demolition/tree relocation, utility relocation, and grading. All site work will be occurring over the Summer and Fall 2011, when the Village project is scheduled to begin its excavation. Award of these site preparation contracts will be presented to Council for approval between May and July 2011.

The final design of the project will be presented to Council on June 14, 2011. Moreover, a Request for Bids has been issued for a Design-Builder for construction of the project. James Corner Field Operations will complete the park design under the oversight of the

Design-Builder. Bids are due at the end of April and a recommendation of the Design-Builder will also be made to City Council on June 14, 2011.

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