



DATE: March 22, 2017

AGENDA ITEM #4

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Historical Commission
FROM: Margo Horn, Historical Commissioner
SUBJECT: Civic Center Apricot Orchard

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Recommend that City Council authorize the installation of the City of Los Altos Historic Plaque and interpretive signage for the Apricot Orchard.
- B. Recommend that City Council authorize staff from the Department of Public Works to maintain the orchard to ensure that is beautiful and a point of pride for the City of Los Altos.

BACKGROUND

1. At its April 24, 2017 meeting, the Historical Commission considered ways to protect the landmark status of the Civic Center Apricot Orchard and increase public awareness of this city treasure. The Commission recommended further research on the installation of the City Historic Plaque and interpretive signage for the Orchard, leading to recommendations to City Council.
2. Commissioners Margo Horn and Larry Lang met with Elisabeth Ward, Executive Director of the Los Altos History Museum to discuss ideas for the design, content and installation of interpretive signage for the orchard.
3. Commissioners Horn, Lang and Ms. Ward also walked through the orchard to make recommendations for the placement of the City of Los Altos Historic Plaque, and the interpretive signage throughout the orchard.
4. Elisabeth Ward offered to provide the Museum's expertise and project management to design signage of the orchard, using the text of interpretive signage written by her predecessor at the Museum. Ms. Ward proposes installing interactive signage throughout the orchard with QR Codes for iPhones.
5. Commissioner Horn consulted with Susanna Chan of the Department of Department of Public Works on maintenance of the orchard. Ms. Chan stated that 100 new apricot trees have been ordered for planting in late 2017 or early 2018. In addition, the Department of Public Works is currently conducting a citywide tree inventory, including the apricot orchard trees, to assess current conditions and make recommendations for future tree maintenance.

DISCUSSION

1. The Commission should review the following attachments as it considers its recommendation to Council:

- A. Letter from Elisabeth Ward supporting the installation of the City Historic Plaque and interpretive signage in the orchard.
 - B. Quotes on the cost of signage provided by Staff. These quotes are examples only, since Ms. Ward will provide costs for her proposed signage.
 - C. Power Point by Commissioner Larry Lang on the placement of the City Plaque and interpretive signage throughout the orchard.
2. The Commission should therefore recommend that City Council install signage and ensure the beautification of the Civic Center Apricot Orchard, since we have excellent text for interpretative signage and willing staff at the Museum to work on its installation. In addition, efforts are already underway by City Staff to enhance the maintenance and beauty of the orchard.

Attachments:

- A. Elisabeth Ward letter of support
- B. Quotes from Staff on cost of signage.
- C. Larry Lang Power Point on placement of signage in orchard.

ATTACHMENT A



51 S. San Antonio | Los Altos, CA 94022

May 16, 2017

Historical Commission
Los Altos CA

Dear Madame Chair of the Historical Commission,

In 2015 and 2016, the former Executive Director of the Los Altos History Museum worked with museum members, educators, and historians to draft copy for signage around the Civic Center Apricot Orchard.

As the new Executive Director, I'd like to fulfill our duty and obligation in regard to that recognized Historical Resource, the Apricot Orchard, and a California State Point of Historical Interest, the J. Gilbert Smith House and the acreage around it.

As a museum professional, I understand it is important to convey information to visitors in context-appropriate and engaging ways. Placing signs in areas where people's curiosity is most likely to be piqued and where traffic flow and other usages of an area are unimpeded are critical to that endeavor. Designing signs that engage visitors through tactile, textual, and technological means will ensure that the information stays relevant and fresh. By drawing visitors into the orchard, an "encounter with the real" allows for understanding the processes behind managing an orchard. Such authentic teaching moments can be transformative, and I'm excited to contribute to that effort.

If the Commission so chooses, and with the City's support, myself, the staff of the museum, and volunteer Board member(s) can provide our expertise and project management to ensuring the signage project begun by my predecessor is successfully installed by the end of 2017.

The signage I am envisioning will include: the Historical Resource designation plaque(s); a simple wooden sign with the name of the orchard in a visible location; overview panels at key pedestrian routes; and various "virtual signs" keyed to a map available on a downloadable application. Numbered locations and an invitation to download the app will encourage interaction.

This effort dovetails with an "in-house" effort to improve the signage around the J. Gilbert Smith House and around the California Aggies Courtyard exhibition. As the museum sits on Civic Center property, and as Historical Resource designations covers both the J. Gilbert Smith House, which is under the care of the Los Altos Historical Association, and the Historical Orchard also on Civic Center property, it makes sense to offer visitors to our complex an integrated, thoughtful, unobtrusive but holistic experience.

If you agree, I would make every effort to keep the Commission apprised of the project as it develops and offer opportunity to review design and copy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elisabeth I. Ward

ATTACHMENT B

Quotes on signage provided by Sean Gallegos, May 11, 2017

1. **Enviro Signs** at <https://envirosigns.com/>

a. Their prices are reflected at this website

<http://store.envirosigns.com/interpretive-signs-bases/low-profile-exhibit-bases/>

Frameless Pedestals

Our interpretive pedestals are made for use with our 1/2" DuraReader Interpretive Panels. pedestals are made from up to 10% post-industrial recycled aluminum extrusions. Pedestals are available as surface mount or in-ground mount, and in our standard Black, NPS Brown, NPS Green, or NPS Dark Brown durable powder coat finish, as well as other custom finishes and colors. All mounts have holes which match up to the inserts in the back side of the DuraReader. Steel pedestals are also available as a custom item. Most pedestals are available in 30 and 45 degree angles, but 45 degree is our standard angle. Please request a custom quote if you need a 30 degree angle. Made in USA. To maximize the life and durability of your interpretive panels, framed panels are superior to frameless pedestals, but in cases where panels are double sided upright, custom sized or shaped, pedestals are the best option.

· [<image001.jpg>](#)

Low-Profile Pedestals (with frameless panels)

\$431.97

[<image002.png>](#)

Compare

Low Profile Exhibit Bases

Our NPS Style Exhibit Bases and DuraFrames have a full metal backing, and are made from 10% post-industrial recycled aluminum, for use with our 1/8" interpretive sign panels. Standard powder coat finish is available in Black, NPS Green, NPS Brown

and NPS Dark Brown, but several custom finishes and colors are available. Custom exhibit bases are also available. NPS Style Exhibit Bases are available in 30 and 45 degree angles, but 45 degree is our standard angle. If you want a 30 degree angle, please request a custom quote. Made in the USA.

· [<image003.jpg>](#)

DuraFrame w/Post(s)

\$520.63

<image002.png>

Compare

· [<image004.jpg>](#)

NPS Low Profile Cantilever Exhibit Base

\$535.94

<image002.png>

Compare

· [<image005.jpg>](#)

NPS Low Profile Traditional Exhibit Base

\$535.94

<image002.png>

Compare

· [<image006.jpg>](#)

Pedestals only

\$0.00

<image002.png>

Compare

2. **Interpretive Graphics** at [--www.interpretivegraphics.com](http://www.interpretivegraphics.com)

- No prices were provided on the website

3. **Vacker Inc.** (Signs for Parks and Trails) at

<http://www.vackersign.com/interpretive2.htm>

4. No prices were provided on the website

Los Altos Civic Center Apricot Orchard
Historic Signage Planning



Planning Process

May 9, 2017

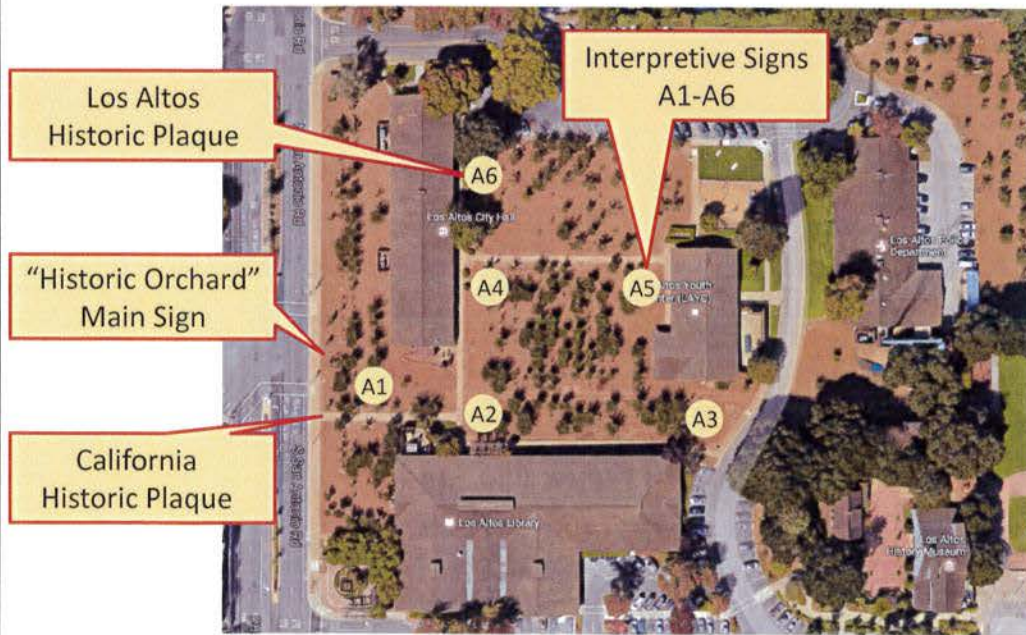
5/17/2017

DRAFT

1



Civic Center Orchard Signage



5/17/2017

DRAFT

2



“Historic Orchard” Main Sign

- Main “announcement” of orchard presence
- Visible to motorists and pedestrians at intersection of San Antonio, Main, and Edith
- Comparable signs:



Village Park (across San Antonio)




Heritage Orchard (Saratoga)



Orchard Heritage Park (Sunnyvale)



Interpretive Signs

- Content and design under development with Los Altos History Museum staff
- Some printed text and photos, plus interactive mobile content via app and/or QR codes 

Key	Located Near	Engaging	Possible Themes
A1	Main sign on San Antonio	Passing pedestrians	Historical context
A2	Library back door	Library visitors	Main narrative
A3	Path toward history museum	History students	Processing and marketing
A4	Center path	City hall visitors	Seasonal changes
A5	Youth center	Youth events	Orchard work
A6	Council chambers	City hall visitors	Gilbert Smith legacy

5/17/2017

DRAFT

4



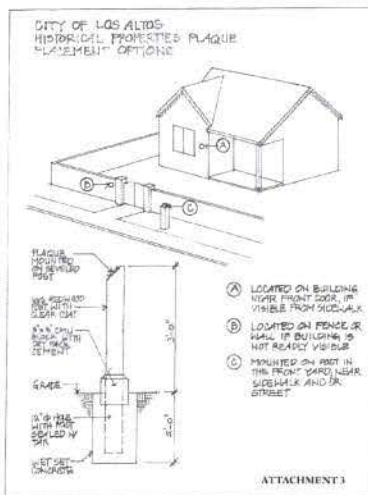
Los Altos Historic Plaque

Example plaque
For orchard, correct date
"Circa 1901"



SUGGESTED PROFILE
ATTACHMENT 2

Example plaque placements
For orchard, post mount
near interpretive signage



ATTACHMENT 3



California Historic Plaque

- For official state plaque information, see http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1056
- State status pending
- Text TBD