

# OLD TOWN ROUND 1 - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP AND OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

*Weldon Elementary School, Clovis, CA  
May 01, 2014 – 6:30pm-8:30pm*



## SUMMARY

On Thursday, May 01, 2014, staff from the City of Clovis and PlaceWorks facilitated a community workshop aimed at introducing the City's Urban Greening Plan process and getting feedback from participants on their concerns and interest in developing the Plan in Old Town. Approximately 40 (23 signed in) members of the public attended the meeting, which began with a brief overview introducing the Urban Greening Plan, including the Proposition 84 funding provided to develop the Plan, common features found in greening plans in other areas, and draft goals and strategies identified for the Urban Greening Plan in Clovis.



Following the presentation, participants independently visited four urban greening stations facilitated by staff from the City of Clovis and PlaceWorks. The interactive stations were developed to gain feedback on preliminary urban greening features and community concerns. These stations included:

- **GOALS AND STRATEGIES** presented the draft goals and strategies developed by the City as guidelines for the Urban Greening Plan. Participants were encouraged to read through the goals and provide feedback by writing directly on the list or highlighting components that they agreed or disagreed with.

The station also included an interactive board where participants used stickers to vote on the environmental issues that they considered to be most important to themselves or their community.



The final interactive board of the station presented urban greening strategies from other areas. Using stickers, participants voted on which features they wanted to see in their community.

- **CIRCULATION** invited participants to mark a series of maps showing how they move through their neighborhood. The exercise involved three identical maps of the neighborhood, showing streets, schools, community amenities, and major landmarks. On the first map, participants marked areas that they considered dangerous or unsafe in red. On the second map, participants marked the areas where they currently walk or travel to in green. On the third map, participants marked the places where they would like to see improved connections in orange.



- **URBAN GREENING NEEDS ASSESSMENT** displayed a draft map of greening opportunities in Old Town, as well as separate board of greening precedents corresponding to the types of potential opportunities in the neighborhood. Participants were asked to mark the sites that they liked or disliked, as well as mark any sites that were not presented but should be considered for greening opportunities.

A second interactive feature at this station asked participants to brainstorm words that they considered to represent their neighborhood and write them inside a blank map of the community. Since implementing urban greening efforts requires community support and endorsement, each neighborhood within the Urban Greening Plan will have a unique character tailored to the community it represents. This free-form activity was intended to provide a way for Old Town residents to start to define their neighborhood in their own terms and provide City Staff with a better understanding of how to shape the plan to match the character of the community.



- **PLANT PALETTE** encouraged participants to think about the style of plant features they wanted to include in their neighborhood, as well as the layout of their streets. The station included one board representing qualities of different tree types. The exercise did not present specific trees, but rather the general shape and look that the participants wanted to see in the area. Using stickers, participants voted on the qualities that they preferred.

The station also included a second set of boards presenting different views of streets trees and asking participants to vote on their preferred look, including large trees versus small trees and consistent plantings versus diverse species.



The final board at this station presented different configuration of a conceptual four-lane street in the neighborhood. The new configurations presented opportunities for new plantings and bike lanes. Participants used stickers to vote for their preferred street layout.

In addition to completing the scripted exercises listed above, facilitators at each station also encouraged participants to write comments directly on the boards or recorded their feedback on the exercise. In some situations, participants' responses fell beyond the scope of the exercise; however, this input was recorded as a means of tailoring future workshops to residents' concerns.

There were two additional stations presenting other planning efforts impacting Old Town other than the Urban Greening Plan. One station presented the site design concept for Centennial Plaza. The other presented an update on the Central Clovis Specific Plan and offered community members the opportunity to sign up as members of the technical advisory committee for this plan.





Participants used orange to show the areas where they would like to walk or areas that could be enhanced to improve the pedestrian experience. In addition to some residential streets, participants identified irrigation canals that are not currently being used for urban trails as well as access points to trail to the north. One participant identified the need for a buffer to reduce freeway noise from SR168.

Some other circulation issues and recommendations were addressed at the urban greening needs assessment station. See below.

## Urban Greening Needs Assessment

Utilizing the map of the urban greening needs assessment, participants identified plan options that they liked or other greening opportunities, including transforming the irrigation canal trail along Letterman Park into a paved trail and a new paved trail along the irrigation canal in the center of the neighborhood. Participants also identified an opportunity for residential street tree plantings in the southeastern part of the neighborhood and an opportunity for a entry gateway along Clovis Avenue as people enter Old Town.

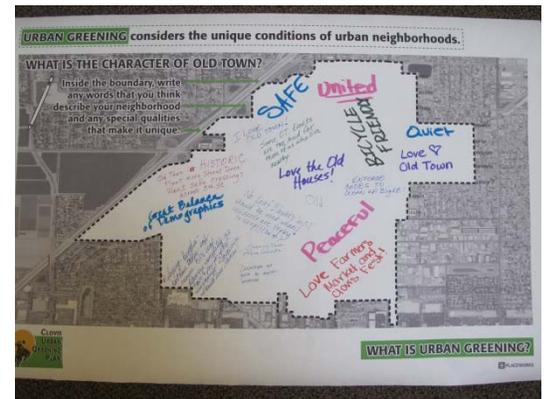
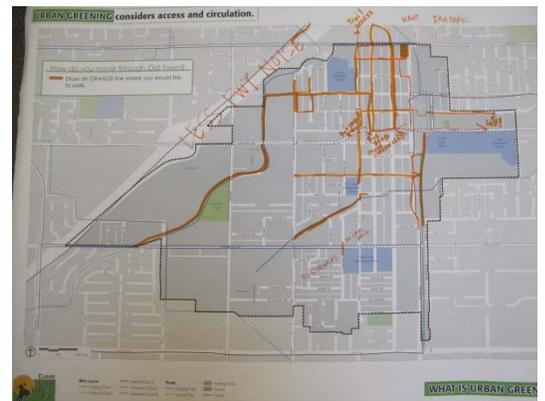
Participants also used the map to list amenities that they would like to see in Old Town but did not identify a space for them. These included:

- Places to eat [outside] downtown
- Places to rent for parties/reunions

Some participants also identified some circulation issues on the urban greening map including new sidewalks throughout the community and safer street crossing on Sierra Avenue between Dewitt and Wentworth.

For the brainstorming exercise for words that represent Old Town, participants wrote the following:

- Safe
- I love Old Town!
- Old Town is HISTORIC. Plant more street trees. Want safe crossings across 5<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Some O[lid] T[own] events are too loud for those of us who live nearby.
- Love the old houses
- Great balance of demographics
- No leaf blowers in O[lid] T[own] should be used when residents are trying to sleep (3am)
- Cleanup the Post Office grounds
- Downtown not quite so tourist oriented
- Relaxing- benches- outdoor tables – safe – music. Ban leaf blowers completely. We have and pay for street sweeping. Gardeners should use rakes!
- Peaceful
- Love farmers' market and Clovis Fest
- Bicycle friendly
- United



- Enforce codes to clean up blight!
- Quiet
- Love Old Town
- Old

## Plant Palette

Most of the participants indicated a preference for larger tree on the streets in Old Town, with a number of participants providing anecdotal information about the importance of trees to provide shade and make their yards more hospitable in the summer months. Many participants indicated that their large trees or the large trees on their streets have been removed recently and replaced with younger, less developed trees, providing less shade benefit. They indicated the need to stagger planting of large trees to provide a more consistent coverage over a longer period of time. One participant did indicate that they thought smaller sized trees are more appropriate for the business areas since they provide more of an urban feel.

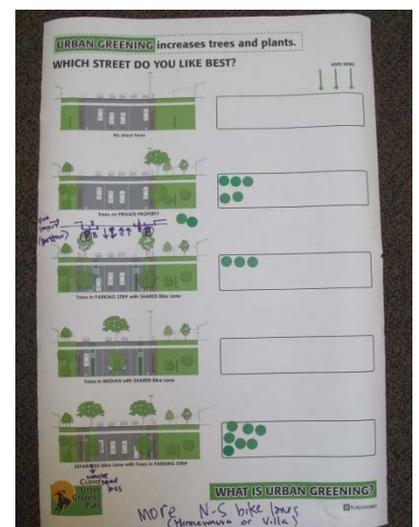
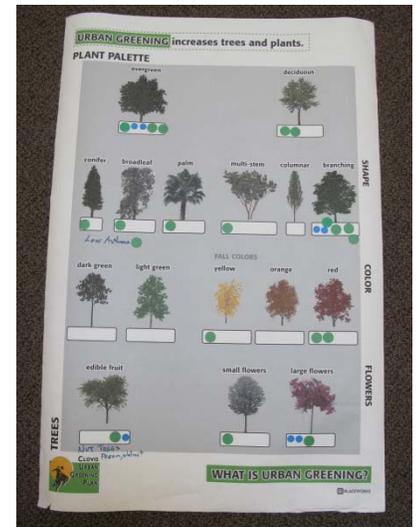
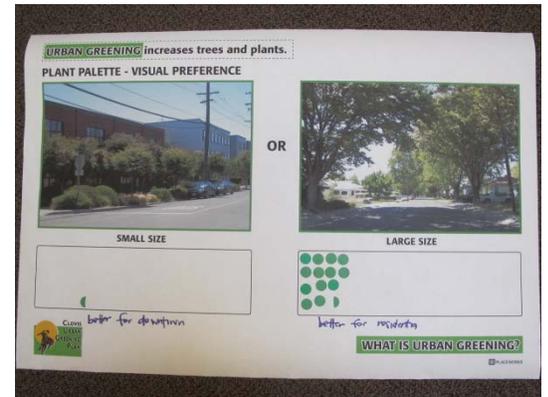
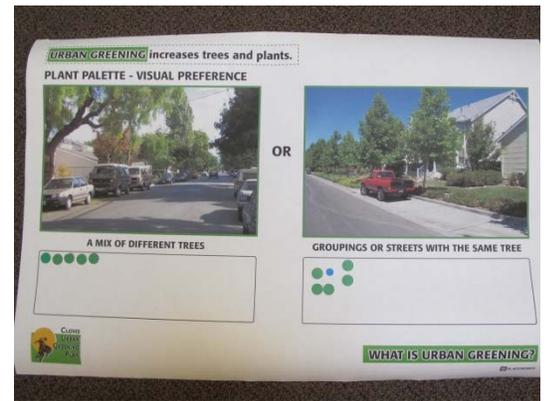
Participants did not show a preference for having a mix of different trees as compared to having the same type of tree along a corridor.

In terms of tree style and form, participants showed the most support for evergreen trees with large, branching shapes. Some participants expressed interest for trees with large flowers and nut trees, such as pecan or walnut. One participant pointed out the need to consider low-pollen trees that are less problematic for people with allergies or asthma.

Many participants expressed interest in a streetscape layout with separated bike lanes. One participant who does not bike indicated that they preferred the separated option because they felt like they were more likely to hit cyclists who used the street with cars and that this was a safer option. While another participant who bikes frequently indicated that they found the on-street bike lanes to be perfectly suitable for biking, and indicated that there was no need for separated lane. The participant who bikes frequently did indicate that there was a need for more north-south bike connections, other than the Old Town Trail, which is difficult to connect to from all arterial streets. Participants also indicated that they liked the option with increased trees on private property.

In the discussion of plants and trees in Old Town, participants also brought up the following issues or interests:

- Lack of maintenance of new city trees (particularly on Cherry Lane [where the participant lives]) and there need to be a process for getting the trees established and healthy,
- New trees have been planted on top of the roots of dead trees which has caused structural issues for the new trees, which seem to not be growing well,
- Since this is an older neighborhood (1950s), many of the city trees are at the end of their life. It is time to phase in new drought tolerant trees to replace the ones that are dying out,
- There should be no trees or bushes on the corner that may block drivers' vision of street signs or traffic,



- Tree trunks seem to be getting “strangled” by those iron grates at sidewalk level,
- Low growth (“suckers”) often need trimming on trail trees and others around town.

ISSUES (plant palette & street trees)  
 + lack of maintenance  
 of NEW CITY TREES (cherry Lane)  
 → need process for establishing  
 + new trees planted on top of  
 roots of dead tree  
 ↳ need better planting  
 strategy.  
 Old  
 1950s city trees at end of  
 life — phase in new drought tolerant  
 trees.

**NO trees on corners that  
 may block a drivers vision.  
 or bushes.**

Tree (trunks) seem to be getting “strangled”  
 by those iron grates at sidewalk level.  
 Low growth (suckers) often need trimming on  
 Trail Trees and others around town.

PLANT PALETTE & STREET TREES