

Courthouse Square Reunification
Attendee Comments – Written by Attendees on “Sticky Notes”
Public Workshop #2 – January 9, 2016

The comments below are taken directly from Sticky Notes turned in by meeting attendees. Every effort has been made to correctly interpret illegible handwriting. Emphases are those of the commenter.

Sticky notes

Trees

- Don't cut the old trees
- Leave all current trees
- Leave all old trees
- Come up with a design that keeps all the trees
- No side streets (Exchange & Hinton)
- Leave all original trees + more
- Leave original trees
- Leave the redwoods
- Leave old trees, don't need parking except lots
- “Heritage tree” meaningless term?
- Save more trees!
- Don't cut trees
- You need to find reasons to stop cutting down trees, thanks
- Save the beautiful, big, old trees—observe the Healdsburg Plaza
- There is a way to preserve the old trees and have your square! Make it so both can co-exist. The logic of Mr. Nutt is specious & a “command & control” fallacy. Tx will be safe with old trees!!
- The larger trees are more valuable—better shade & shelter cut nothing over 2” diameter
- Are any of these the original trees? Tall trees take a long time to grow. We need shade, critters need homes!
- All these ideas can be accomplished without losing any heritage trees. Please—redesign a project that allows the redwoods to remain here, better air & water quality, historic value for the city.
- I'm proud of being a tree hugger!
- Global warming?
- Trees protect from climate change
- Trees are more important than money
- Cutting down mature trees will be a problem
- Leave all evergreen unique beauty
- Save heritage trees
- Redwoods provide regular shade and oxygen
- Mature trees should never be removed. In these days with the knowledge of the effects of climate change the millions should be spent combating global warming at this time
- Redwood provide 1600 tons of carbon sequestration
- What would Luther Burbank say? Keep the beautiful flavor of old-growth trees!
- 5th generation Sonoma County person. I would like the old redwoods to stay.
- Redwoods, cedars & oaks are superior to poplars from China
- No need for diagonal parking leave old trees
- Keep more of the beautiful older redwoods. Can the new roads!
- Poplars create blowers & mess
- Noise comes with blowers for leaves from poplars
- Plant more redwoods! Don't tear them down! To: Stupidheads from: an 11-year old
- You non-redwood people are soooooo stupid! – an 11-year-old
- Don't kill redwoods for cars
- Redwoods are not urban trees
- But beautiful
- Save the trees, way too auto-centric
- People aren't native to area either—should we remove?
- Protection from heat/noise, climate change
- Leave all trees—climate change is real
- They are thriving and sequestering carbon
- None of these choices

Miscellaneous

- This is stupid, this stupid voting (in my opinion)
- Create housing for homeless
- Need housing—redirect \$\$
- This is greed motivated
- You're turning SR into a dump!

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- Process is too short
- Pick another job
- What happens to our precious peace pole?
- Need all new options
- We know this is rigged—by money. We won't stand for it.
- Where are the public bathrooms?
- Are restrooms still being considered?
- Rushed design and rushed decision making
- Need to spend \$ to make parking garages feel safer & therefore be used
- Where are the Latino voices?—This room is full of older white people. We need all at the table.
- Don't rush design. Honor our botanical history by working around trees, not a picture of trees. What would Luther Burbank do?
- We know this is all about the business interests. We want trees, beauty, people!
- Please go back to the drawing board. All these designs are unacceptable.
- I do not like any of these designs. I love the plaza as it is. The most beautiful plaza I've ever seen.
- Who is and where is the new community engagement director?
- Go to Europe to learn!
- All the options are lousy
- I do not like anything about the plans. We need access to Mendocino Ave for buses to go through. There will be too much traffic on side streets!
- How can we vote for something incomplete
- Need all new options
- Leave it as it is
- None of the choices
- Leave the square (& the throughway) alone
- No—no flavor; get international ideas
- Take a look at the Boston Common & public gardens for a model

Advertising/Miscellaneous positive comments

- Definitely kids' play areas
- Where are the students? Contact SR Moms' clubs
- What courthouse? Rename it “Redwood Square”
- Access from train?
- Let the JC & state know
- Get the schools involved!
- SR population 170,000 +/- online survey participation 2000. 1/3 +/- of 1% of the population
- Advertise more = more input
- We need large garage signage

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The comments below are the writer's understanding of the various comments, thoughts, and concerns expressed by attendees and recorded by presenters during the workshop. Some ideas have been paraphrased for clarity.

General comments

- Trees were planted for a reason
- Don't remove trees for parking lots
- This is not pedestrian mall promised
- Mendocino Ave has hurt our town, moving to a better plan
- Mind has been changed, R.W. w/decid. is best, this not forest
- K St. in Sacramento died when streets removed
- Like streets, lighting, uplighting
- Want people in S.R. want to be proud, current square depressing
- This is my town & want to see something great, not what is there
- Preserve R.W. that can be saved
- Process is flawed & backward
- Thought a city was designing ped. mall
- Parking & streets too wide
- Mendocino Ave thru middle was mistake
- Mind changes – plan going in right direction
- Keep some redwoods, add other trees, reunite
- Hardscape in center good
- Want people to come to S/R
- Need good change
- Redwoods are calming, important to climate change
- Older redwoods should remain, daughter likes to play around them
- Keep traffic out of square
- Trees belong to us
- Like single lane
- Santa Rosa is safe
- Parking on square is same as one block of 4th
- Timeline is short. Can't do effectively in this time, _____ to cut trees now
- New trees do not replace mature re: sustainability, don't cut mature trees
- More curves, softer foot traffic on grass will create path
- Light is _____
- No permanent structures
- Respect heritage trees
- Buffer 3rd Street more
- Luther Burbank names Redwood Empire
- Imp. of creating civic space is most imp.
- Work w/what is here more—less parking, more R.W.
- Birds & bats use trees year-round
- Need more time
- S.R. City for leaving, not for living
- Carbon analysis not adequate in EIR
- People appreciate R.W. not parking
- Like historic part of CH Square, keep history
- Like Option B design team heard comments
- Need compromise on trees
- Keep RW on east like "A"
- Use seating at base of light features
- Like trees, but have site lines
- Keep maintained
- Add interactive water
- Appreciate past timeline
- Don't need parking at expense of trees
- Sequestered carbon in redwoods should be evaluated
- This is Redwood Empire
- Wonderment, magic, awe from redwoods
- Concern that more traffic congestion will result
- Trying to reunite square for 20 years
- Need place for children to play
- Why no option with no streets & save trees
- Appreciate compromise; one option
- Seating important—include with lighting features
- How do wide single lanes work to allow vehicles
- View barrier at 3rd St
- Don't agree that stage at 3rd not good
- Redwoods don't belong downtown, gorgeous deciduous instead
- Keep stage at 3rd

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- Redwoods have been here longer than people
- Fewer cars when Hinton/Exchange existed
- Not shopping square
- West side of SR is dead zone
- Need to restore vitality & safety
- This type of plaza design has worked for hundreds of years
- Why do we need to remove trees for streets & parking
- Trees belong to all of us
- Existing plaza is beautiful—don't change
- 3 designs too similar
- Giant lawns not sustainable
- Like single lane
- Don't like lighting elements
- 11 redwood trees being removed being replaced with more trees
- Timeframe too short—need more time
- Permanent stage shouldn't be facing sun
- Permanent structures at both ends not good
- Need curves
- Lawn will invite worn
- Level/flat circle
- Need space for temp art
- Light features too phallic (distract from art)
- Slow down—don't remove trees
- Outside dining—will it be encouraged?
- All 3 plans create tunnel w/traffic views
- Oppose parking on both sides
- Stage should be at north end
- Keep the trees—do not put in parking. Thanks
- Turning pedestrian walks into streets w/parking diminishes the charm of today's plaza
- Why was this divided years ago? What has changed? Juilliard Park is 2 blocks!
- Hinton/Exchange too wide
- Is there a budget to maintain the final project/
- All the designs are very similar. Why are there no options including the saving of trees, or other design modes?
- Misrepresenting the size of trees being planted

Streets

- Bikes not cars
- Don't kill downtown to save a tree
- Parking on one side only
- Don't put streets around park and keep the trees. This will make for a larger park. Traffic can go to the next existing streets.
- Diagonal parking on only one side of Hinton & Exchange to increase plaza size
- Free use areas? For yoga, tai chi, traffic flow. This changes our business areas
- Not much character
- When were we given a chance to vote on the reunification? The square is surrounded by banks (1 or 2 per corner) so what are we using this space for on a daily basis certainly 0 shopping?
- Don't need parking
- More benches, more trees
- Parklets
- Needs room for outdoor dining
- For people, not cars
- Too much cement
- Hinton & Exchange designs will result in congestion; people will avoid downtown

Option A – Perspective views

- Ugly
- Save trees, less parking, walkways instead
- The elephant in the room is the Mall. Downtown is not going to become better with unifying the square
- Use Art Deco lights in slides #A
- Parking on Exchange & Hinton is not important
- Water refill station upgraded fountains for canteens
- Water elements for design—fountains, etc.
- Need central water feature for kids
- Stage placement at terminus is bad—safety, lighting, noise

Option A – Plan views

- Eliminate 1 row of parking (save some trees—curve roadway when needed)
- Instead of re-inserting Hinton & Exchange St, utilize N-S streets one block farther

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- east & west. Use the space for people, not cars & parking
- It is not necessary to have the two new streets going through the park. Make the whole area a park and keep the trees
 - Parking is critical to the economic success of the businesses on the square
 - Too much allocated for parking—one row more than enough
 - Bike parking
 - Children’s play space
 - Disagree with modern design of performance stage and lighting feature. We should capitalize on historic classic design features of SF (Empire Building, Old Courthouse, etc.). Elegant not trendy design. Classic not fleeting. Too much asphalt with parking on both sides. More trees, less parking.
 - Parking should be off-street—use existing lots & garages. Provide frequent shuttle service
 - Use Art Start artists
 - Redwood sculptures out of trees cut down
 - Play structure for kids = more families & more \$ spent downtown
 - Study the Boston Common & Public Garden for a model of beauty and landscaping
 - Eating in outdoor restaurants best if no cars passing; close Exchange & Hinton
 - The future of Santa Rosa is more important than a tree
 - “Contemporary” metal stages are ugly
 - Misrepresenting the size of trees being planted
 - Establish a shelter service that regularly circulates from already built parking areas & shuttles people to the plaza & downtown shops
 - This means less smog, shade, birds, green
 - Grass/people needs shade
 - All way too car-centric
 - Prefer single loaded parking; like retaining redwoods
 - We need a play structure for kind!
 - Interactive kid & adult friendly art from some of removed trees—see Wells Fargo Center
 - Public art opportunity [pointing to interactive feature @ north end]
 - Plan A with Plan B stage
 - Provide access to power at stage [pointing to stage]
 - Keep as many trees as you can but don’t be bullied by the “green at any cost” crowd. Please keep or make as many parking spaces as you can so that the less mobile can access the new configuration
 - Trees should look random; de-emphasize mid-century architecture surrounding square—don’t need more parking. Whole plan looks too square/regimented
 - More grass under trees at sides of square
 - Make is back-in angle parking
 - Add decorative tall, monument element in center visible from north & south
 - Installing lawn in a dry climate is just stupid!
 - No “park green” w/out trees, please
 - Would like corner paving for sculpture at center; downplay lights
 - Hinton/Exchange too wide
 - Rosenberg Fountain needs to be acknowledged
 - Optimize the sidewalks for dining al fresco—on both sides!
 - A unified surface would be better; keep it simple; rotate the trees to east-west alignment
 - Snake the roads around the redwoods on the west side
 - I like the more architectural light—but it would be nice to have it express Northern California more—more arts & crafts
 - I like the elements in #1 but the landscape design of #2, more open space
- Option B – Perspective views**
- Children’s play space or water feature
 - Lights not attractive
 - Ugly!
 - A vocal minority are trying to derail a great project
 - Leave the trees! Ugly
 - Fear-based lighting!! Unattractive
 - Bikes?
 - Tiny houses will fit here for homeless

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- Space for meetings—not just performances
- Place stage on another side so sun won't shine in your eyes while watching
- Water elements in design
- Water filling stations, aka drinking water available for canteens
- Lawn? Water?!!
- Town green in Windsor isn't popular!
- Trees would provide shade cooling of green space

Option B – Plan views

- Consider no project! Spend the millions on actions to combat global warming, like incentives for solar, more conservation measures, etc.
- Parking on one side of streets; not both sides
- Prefer parking one side only on side streets
- Center is ugly—we need native & shade in center
- Provide access to power at stage location
- Yay, bike parking on all plans!!
- Single lane traffic—thank you
- I think the portable stage is a nice option that could allow for versatile events (as long as there are enough suitable places to put it), however I am concerned that there may be an extra cost for event producers to place & remove a stage. It should be affordable to use a stage, if at all possible
- A little goes a long way [pointing at special art painting]
- Would like interactive feature as intermittent fountain jets
- Trees can be part of the square
- Coast redwoods in groves not individual trees
- This is better—be sure the surface is porous so water recharges the underground
- Dedicate a spot for an Xmas tree (and ceremony) & install electrical infrastructure. (Not a living tree.) Artificial. Remove the electrical vault on the west side of square which is now confined space & in need of repair

- Are any of these the original trees? Tall trees take a long time to grow
- Ugly
- Be creative & make plan around trees. Santa Rosa will be known for that. What would Luther Burbank do
- Great project for Santa Rosa
- Water feature for kids
- Too much space allocated for parking
- Children's space
- No big grass!
- Provide option with parking on one side
- No
- Why spend \$ & energy to move stage in & out??

Option C – Perspective views

- Tables to eat lunch & benches!
- Ugly – hot
- After the courthouse left, Mendocino was made a thru street—it is needed—leave it & the trees!
- No movable stage!
- Safe at all times
- Pedestrian walkway colored distinctly
- Light cost logs of money
- Lights are not attractive
- No need for so much parking
- Healdsburg & Sonoma Plaza have trees in middle
- Plant oak trees
- These huge lights are grotesque! Pun in old-fashioned gaslight fixtures with efficient light bulbs
- Consider homeless occupation—need this to be a very well-used square—by all
- Ugly
- The reunification project will create daily traffic jams—blocking the only straight way to get N → S and S → N – scrap the project, save the trees
- Forget the phallic lights!
- Too many right angles; needs curved walkways/circle instead of square
- Too much hardscape, not enough green

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Option C – Plan views

- It's very important to have a permanent yet flexible performance "stage" w/permanent utilities—elect provided & rain protection
- There are two parking lots nearby (across from Macy's and another near the post office) that could be transformed into a new square
- All of the plans involve level ground. Thumbs up!
- Too busy; keep it simple; minimize water use
- We need power for vendor booths and street musicians
- Can we place tents on the grass. Some tents need _____, which is the main concern. This open space is great, and would be great for events, but it would be great if we could easily place tents on grass.
- Move stage—sun issues for viewing stage
- Juilliard Park is 2 blocks away
- Incorporate native plants and edible landscaping
- Save the fountain
- Parking is critical to the economic success of the businesses on the square
- Leave trees & make creative plan around trees. Then Santa Rosa will be a leader. Instead of honoring "botanical" history with art, leave the botanical history. What would Luther Burbank do?
- Are any of these the original trees? Tall trees take a long time to grow. We need shade, critters need homes!
- No water wall—we're a water-stressed climate
- This lawn needs pesticides and fertilizers
- No big grass!
- How long for new areas to grow majestic like original trees
- You must not assume everyone wants to stop at courthouse square. Let them travel thru without added congestion
- Play structure please!
- Move the stage to be opposite of Empire Building
- No
- Water-waster [placed on lawn]
- Redwoods are not urban trees

- SR doing great job w/market & events already; don't sacrifice any more trees! Please!!
- Provide option with trees not all in rows
- Now we have many mature trees. Global warming/climate change should be the highest priority. Keep 90% of the trees—no cutting of mature trees
- I'd like to see interactive sculpture (kid friendly) in the landscape areas—under trees
- Bike parking
- Water feature for kids
- Prefer parking one side only each street
- Why grass & no trees? We need summer shade!
- Installing lawn in a dry climate is positively foolish!!
- Provide access to power [pointing to stage]
- Public art opportunity [pointing to interactive feature]

Stages – General comments

- Stages need visual barrier behind it—shrubs? trees?
- All the stages are ugly! We want beauty
- Better publicity needed for more public input thru-out!

Stages – #1

- Be original
- Awful retro
- Don't put up "Santa Rosa" – too distracting, too commercialized
- The structures don't need to be branded "Santa Rosa"
- Not sure about the loud "Santa Rosa", is that necessary? Don't need the city affiliated w/everything that happens on the stage
- Stage needs a back "wall" of trees or shrubs!
- Car lights & traffic noise problematic
- Looks like a bus stop
- The pillars are ugly—they should match the lighting

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- Deck within rails should be a dumb waiter like ability to temporarily put spotlights on plants grass/flowers
- Needs backing for night concerts
- Like garage door that rolls down in back

Stages – #2

- Be original
- Too modern—will be out of style in 10 years
- Poorly executed contemporary
- Performance stage looks like Transit Mall structure
- I am concerned about easy load-in for the stage. Can we park cars/trucks here to load gear?
- This stage rooftop needs to be weather/water proof!
- Want more Railroad Square station style design—w/stonework
- I think it looks like the airport
- Ugly

Light Features – General comments

- Install lights in trees. These fixtures are ugly.
- Please don't seriously consider any of these solutions for lighting
- Less energy on light design (fancy) and more on nature!!
- Lighting should be "timeless"
- Provide old fashioned street light features to tie in history
- Can you incorporate Art Start?
- It's 2016 not 1916; think to the future
- These will take away from public art components
- None of the above
- Combine lighting w/stormwater catchment element
- All over-designed—incorporate simple, modern lighting
- More seating; benches around all of these

- Need permanent seating
- Be careful about light pollution in the sky; no uplighting
- Simplicity is an art
- Put more time into designing the square and less into designing the light fixtures
- Attractive art please
- Provide simple light option
- Solar light _____
- More seating
- Make normal lights and use artists to make structures
- Local artists
- Love the bench around any light
- Create downward lighting—protect birds/sky
- Why not regular park light
- Need designs to reflect 2016 → future. Scale is good. Ambition is good → we have looked back to our "Victorian" & "Simonized" eras for too long

Light Features – #1

- Ugly
- I prefer this one, but needs to look more Northern California
- Good—historic
- Love this one

Light Features – #2

- Narrow base for light structure
- Like motion sensor idea
- I love (?) your metallic botanical (what?)
- Ugly

Light Features – #3

- Ugly
- Too fancy
- Yes if it has benches