

# ***Chico City Plaza***

## Master Plan Update and Recommendations for Enhancement



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For the City of Chico

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September, 2002

# Executive Summary and Report Contents

## Project Background

Chico's City Plaza is a classic – both in the tradition of great public squares at the heart of communities across continents, cultures and centuries - and in the particular history and tradition of Chico. In the tradition of the great town founders, Chico's city fathers reserved and designated this place at the town center for the civic life of the community from its very birth. To the present day, the plaza plays a vital role in the historic, cultural, and economic life of the town. One might say it is the city's 'parlor'. It welcomes our guests, hosts our ongoing civic dialogues, and gathers us for celebration and commemoration. Sometimes it is a place just for a stroll, a rest in the summer shade or the winter sun, a place to meet a friend or watch the world go by.

It is the very fact that City Plaza serves these numerous civic functions so well that initiated this project to update its master plan. Both time and an increasing intensity of use by a growing community have taken their toll, and the community's 'parlor' is beginning to look in need of rehabilitation. This fact has been easier to overlook during the excitement and enjoyment of big community events, or while the elms provide the grand canopy overhead. However, its worn appearance has begun to significantly detract from its day-to-day function and integrity -- and the loss of the declining elms will compound this effect.

Therefore, the design challenge is to update City Plaza in a way that not only respects its great tradition, but proceeds in the spirit in which the Plaza was gifted to Chico by John Bidwell. This requires a new investment of time, money and energy to re-construct the Plaza, to insure that it retains its place of importance, as originally intended and for Chico's future generations.



Chico's City Plaza is the community's gathering place for important events in the life of the city, like the recent memorial for the victims of the 9/11 terrorism attacks.



## City Plaza History P. 2

130 years ago, Chico founder John Bidwell designated the City Plaza block to be preserved as a civic center for the new town. One year later, the City began to develop the plaza, and Bidwell is said to have planted the elm trees. The diagonal walkways between the elms were the first element of the design, with the remaining features added subsequently.

Historically, the plaza was mostly an informal gathering place, an elegant community 'living room' and sitting place for picnics and visiting with neighbors. For downtown parades and Christmas festivities, it became the formal gathering place for a growing community. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and especially in the last decade – the Plaza's use for large, organized community events has grown at a rapid pace, and this new intensity of use has begun to take a toll.

**A note on the name "City Plaza":** In recent times, City Plaza has sometimes been referred to as "Plaza Park" – in fact, it was referred to with this label by this project until it was recently pointed out that it was called "City Plaza" from the beginning and throughout historical records. This has been verified with research through the Chico Enterprise-Record newspaper and by local historian, John Nopel. From its inception, it has been the City's 'plaza' rather than 'park'.

## Existing Conditions and Planning Context P. 3

City Plaza has become an ever more popular and more heavily used venue for a wide range of community performances, gatherings and events. Since the original design was not constructed for this level of intensive use, in recent years the condition of the Plaza has deteriorated markedly in recent years.

Throughout the Plaza, and especially at the center, the lawns are trampled down to bare dirt. The City is approximately halfway through a 20-year program to remove and replace the elms. Many of the perimeter orange trees have outgrown their narrow parkways.

While City Plaza is a well-loved and enjoyed place during planned community events, many in the community feel that public safety in the Plaza has become a concern in recent years. While consistent law enforcement in such public spaces is always critical, design can play a crucial role in efforts to make a space that is safe and feels welcoming to the whole community every day.

Today this beloved and important civic place faces challenges that are critical to its future. If the current intensity of use is to continue and even grow - as appears to be the strong desire of the community – an updated plan for City Plaza should address this continued public use.

The existing Master Plan for City Plaza was approved in 1992, and as yet has not been fully implemented. This current project effort seeks to revisit elements of that plan and to augment them with current community input to develop an updated plan and implementation strategy.

## Public Planning Process P. 6

In order to determine the desires of the community for City Plaza, the design team used a public workshop planning and design process. Interested Chico citizens participated in an initial input workshop, and then came together again after the alternatives were developed to review and offer comment.

## Community's Priorities, goal and Objectives P. 7

Based on the input received from the public process, the following overarching community values, goals and priorities for the future of City Plaza were identified:

1. Improve functionality for community activities
2. Increase safety and sense of security
3. Re-invigorate daily use by a wider cross-section of the community
4. Repair its deteriorating, 'shabby' appearance

## Principles, Precedents of Good Plaza Design P. 8

Classic civic places and town plazas across the country and the world were studied and referenced for their applicability to the enhancement of Chico's City Plaza. Broad principles of successful plaza design were researched and identified, and fell generally under the following headings: History, Tradition and Character; Activity and Sociability; and Comfort and Appearance.

## Chico City Plaza Design Setting P. 10

To discuss potential changes to the existing Master Plan, the historical design of City Plaza was also broken down into its essential elements. These include its perfect square layout, the diagonal pathways, the circular path within the square, the square plaza within the circle, the tree-lined pathways, and the trees at the edges.

## New Design Alternatives, Recommendations P. 11

Initially, three design alternatives were developed to explore how the simple geometry and perfect symmetry of the original design could be retained while the Plaza is upgraded to respond to its current and future use. The goal of exploring these options responds to City Plaza's importance to the social and cultural life of the city, and to the greatly increased frequency of use of the Plaza. While each of the alternatives responds in a different way to community input, all three retain the essential features of the existing Plaza.

After the follow-up public meeting and presentation of the proposed alternatives, a 4<sup>th</sup> 'Composite' alternative was developed in consultation with City staff. To create an alternative that will best serve the community, the design team ultimately chose to use the middle-ground of the public comment and what seemed to be the most well-received features of the existing proposals to develop the 4<sup>th</sup>, 'composite'-type alternative that is presented in this report for public review and discussion.

## Design Elements and Details P. 20

The final section of this draft report includes options and recommendations regarding specific elements and details of the new design proposals. These include the integration of public art into the new design, site grading, paving materials and patterns, site furniture such as seating (benches) and trash receptacles, water elements, lighting and the provision of public restrooms.

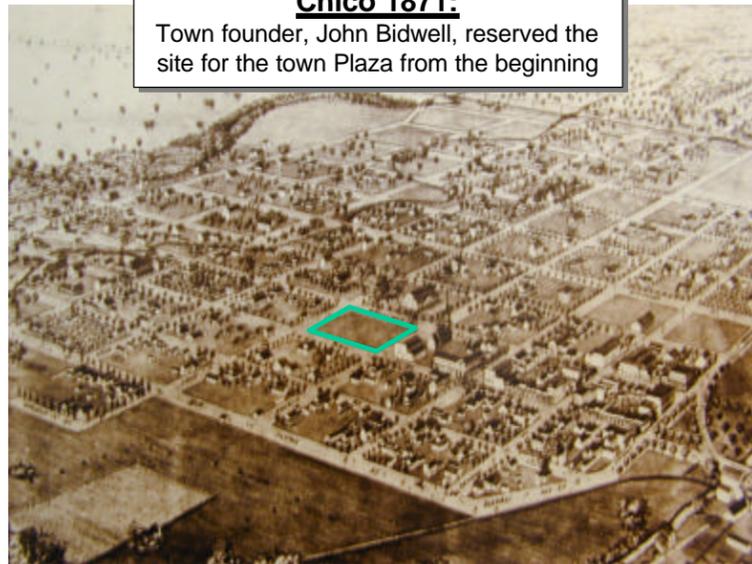
## Conclusion and Next Steps P. 25

Next steps in this Master Plan Update process are briefly outlined at the end of the report.

# City Plaza History

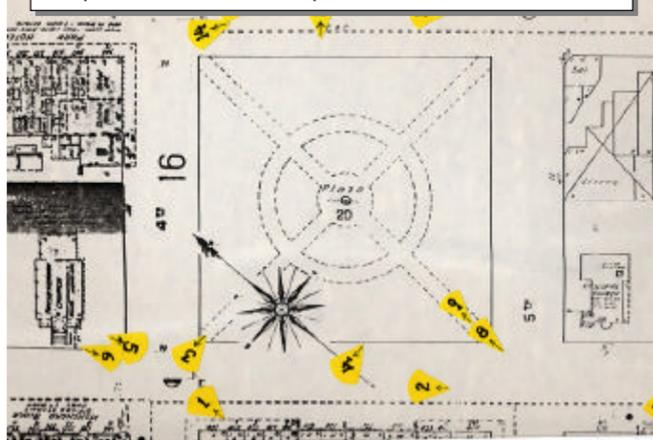
## Chico 1871:

Town founder, John Bidwell, reserved the site for the town Plaza from the beginning



## 1902 Plan:

Early plans show the Plaza with the diagonal cross paths, circular center path, and center fountain



## 1900-1910 Photos:

Below: Families coming into town would picnic in the Plaza.  
Below, Middle: The classic fountain at the center of the Plaza  
Below, Right: A warm-weather community gathering in the Plaza.



## City Plaza History

- 1860 – John Bidwell, owner/founder of Chico Rancho, hires the County surveyor, J.S. Henning, to lay out Chico; Bidwell directs the size of blocks and streets, forming relatively generous streets and approximately square blocks from 1<sup>st</sup> Street on the north (then called Front Street) to 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, and from Wall Street (one block east of Main) to Normal Street (one block west of Broadway - originally called Sycamore, until the Chico Normal School was built). The first street laid out was Main; it had formerly been the stage road connecting the area up to Oregon and down to the rest of California.
- 1872 - According to local Chico historian John Nopel, Bidwell designated the site to be preserved for the City Plaza from the beginning. However, shortly after Chico was incorporated (against Bidwell's wishes) in 1872, Chico entered into a fight to acquire the county seat from Oroville, and Bidwell offered the City Plaza site for the County Courthouse Square to support this. The County Seat move was not approved, so the site remained designated for the town square plaza.
- 1873 – Bidwell planted the elms (the ones now undergoing replacement), and the City began the first development of the Park. The diagonal walkways between the elms were first, with the remaining features added subsequently.

## Historical Notes:

- Chico has always been a city of parades, and City Plaza was a central gathering place.
- There has been no permanent structure or active recreation facilities (e.g. ball court/field. etc.) on the site - just bandstands, children's play equipment, and the gazebo.
- Historically, City Plaza was mostly an informal gathering place:
  - Mining, logging and homesteading took place in the foothills and outlying areas, and Chico was the commercial center; when folks needed to do major shopping, the whole family would make an all-day trip into Chico, pack a picnic lunch to have in the Plaza.
  - Miners and lumbermen would come down from the hills for winter and stay in boarding houses in Chico, using the Plaza as their informal 'living room' and sitting place
- The City Plaza space developed as a small town's central Plaza. BIG gatherings, like the regional 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic/gathering, did not take place in the Plaza because it was too small – they took place out at a large open area west of town by the Railroad tracks, since people would come in by train from outlying towns for the celebration.
- As Chico grew, spaces like Bidwell Park and the other larger community Parks took on the function of the large, natural – or at least green – oases needed in a larger urban area.

## 1910-1920 Photos:

1. Elm trees already quite tall, and the Plaza lined by important civic buildings
2. Community Christmas tree lighting tradition that continues to this day.
3. Plaza was a gathering place for Chico's many parades.
4. Elm tree canopy already significant, and orange trees still healthy.



# Existing Master Plan and Elm Replacement Program

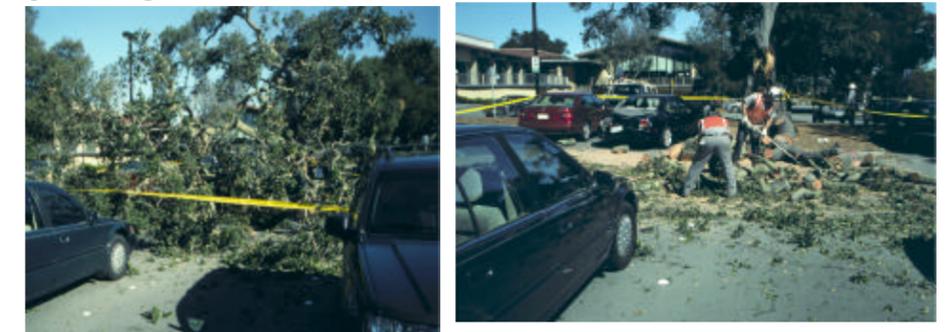
## Considering This...

2002 photos show hollow trunks and branches on removed elms, illustrating what tree experts warned about and what led to the recommendation and approval of the tree replacement program.



## ...And, to Avoid This...

A sudden branch or trunk failure such as this recent large tree failure at a Stanford parking lot could be devastating in a Plaza that is so often full of people.

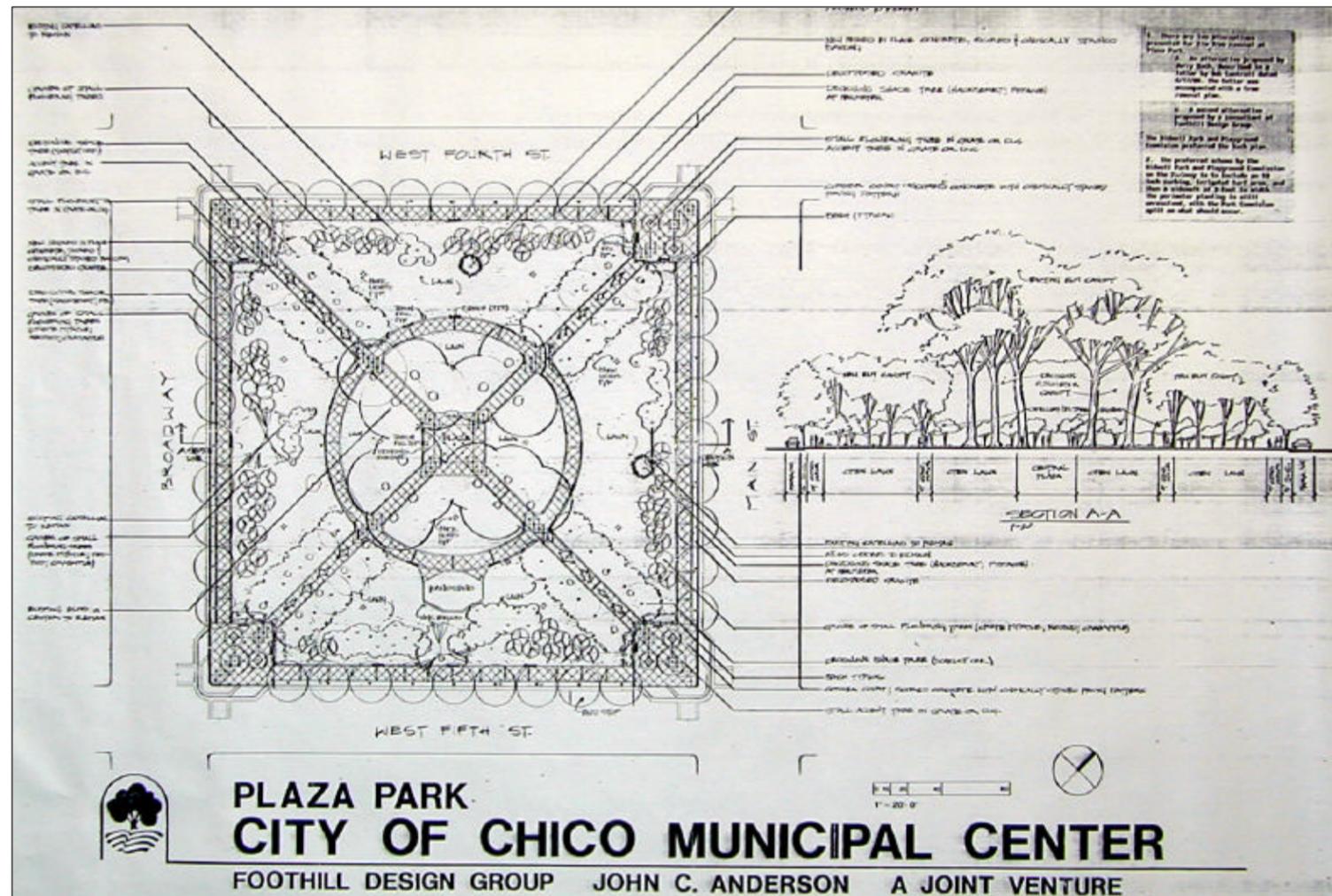
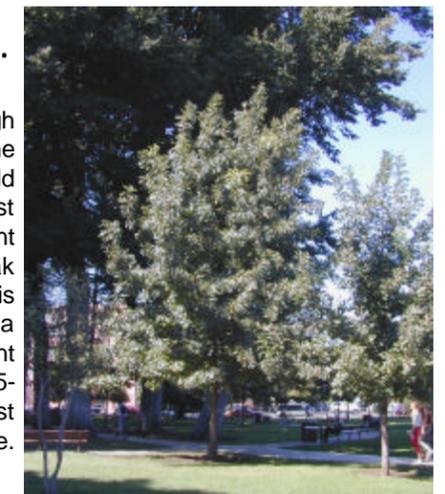


## ... The City is Planting New Trees.

One of the brand new burr oak trees planted to replace the dying elms.



Though dwarfed by the 130 year-old elms, the first replacement burr oak planted is already a significant height of 25-30' after just one decade.



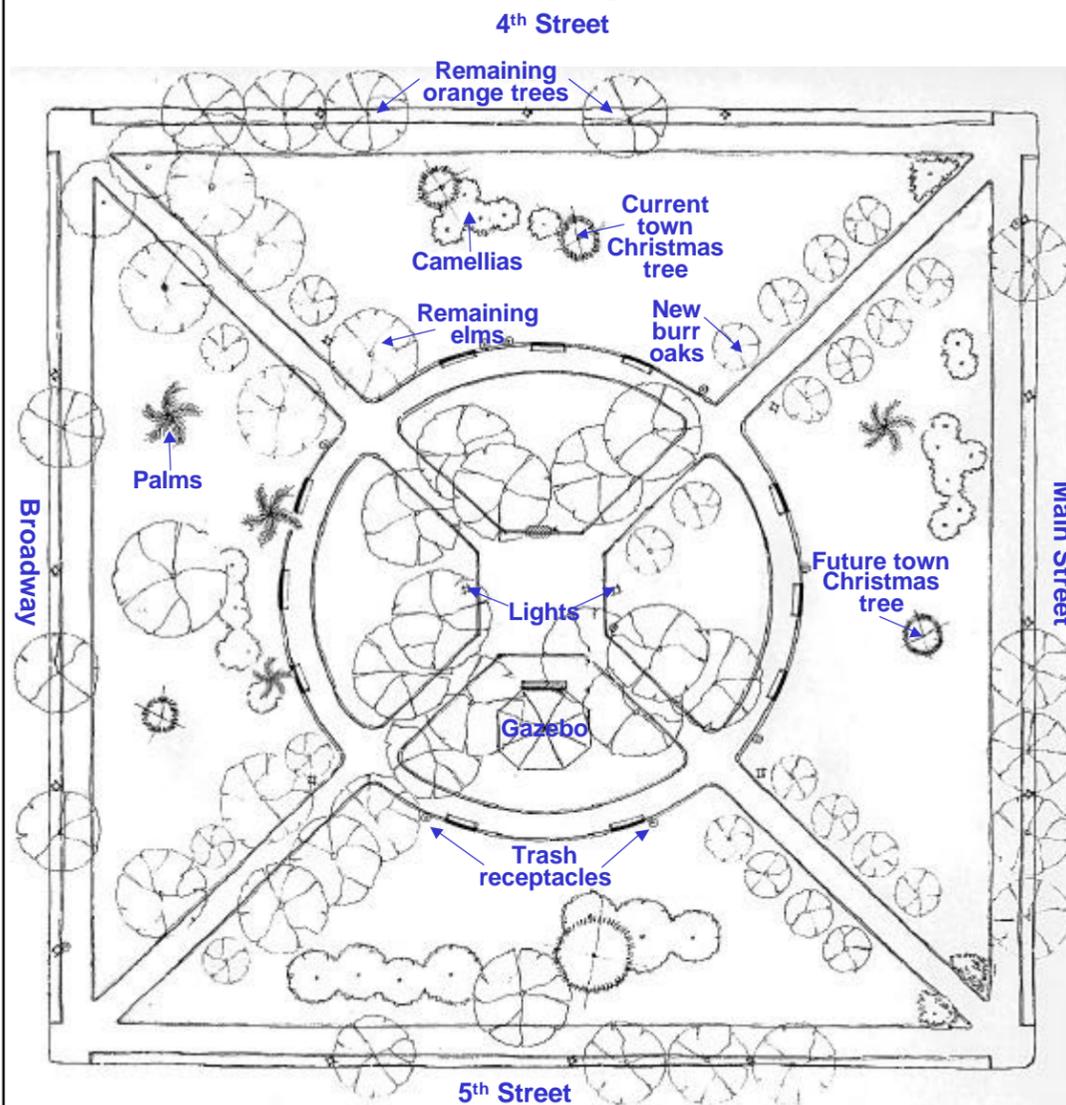
### Existing Master Plan and Elm Tree Replacement Program (plan above-1992)

The existing master plan for City Plaza was reviewed and approved by the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission and then adopted by the Chico City Council in 1992. The plan retained the original elements of the diagonal and circular pathways and square central plaza, while adding corner bulbouts and depicting the removal of the existing gazebo from within the circular path and the establishment of a new bandstand fronting the outside edge of the circular path.

The plan approval included the removal and replacement of the existing elm trees in the plaza over a period of approximately 20 years, to protect the safety of plaza users. The Plaza's majestic elms were mortally damaged, first by infill of significant amounts of dirt over their rootzones early in the Plaza's history, and later by their unfortunate 'topping' in the 1940's, 60's and late 70's. The elms are also planted too close together, forcing them to grow diagonally away from each other, further weakening their stance. The growing danger these trees presented led the City Council to make the difficult decision in 1992 to begin the removal and replacement program. The elms are being replaced with burr oaks, another large, majestic tree that has proven to do very well in local conditions.

**Please note: Since this elm tree replacement program has already been reviewed, approved and is significantly underway, this issue is outside of the scope of this current master plan update project.**

# Existing Conditions, Challenges and Opportunities



## Current Base Conditions (map above)

The base map above shows the approximate current location and state of flux of the elements within the plaza:

- Plantings are a mixture of the original elms along the diagonals and in the center quadrants, other 'exotic' and garden-type trees and shrubs (palm trees, camellias) planted subsequently, and evergreen trees and new burr oaks planted more recently.
- Many of the perimeter orange trees have been crowded out by too-narrow planting strips and the impacts of adjacent parking.
- Corner treatments vary – small trees, bushes or lawn.
- Current center plaza hardscape area is approximately 1,500 s.f.
- Current performance stage area (gazebo) is approx. 600 s.f.



The more intense use of the Plaza coupled with areas of deep, almost-constant shade leave vast swaths of the lawn areas bare and muddy.



## Existing Conditions, Challenges and Opportunities

### Impending Significant Change

As described on the previous page, one of the Plaza's current defining characteristics – the grove of huge elms – is undergoing dramatic change. Until now, the elms' majestic presence has helped disguise the increasingly 'shabby' (as one participant in the public process put it), deteriorating condition of much of the rest of the Plaza. Since the new replacement trees cannot achieve this size and grandeur for some time, it is now crucial to implement design enhancements to beautify and improve the entire Plaza to alleviate the effects of this upcoming period without the very large trees.

As of summer 2002, almost half of the elms have been removed and replaced with burr oaks, another large, majestic tree that has proven to do very well in local conditions. The following sections outline some of the other existing challenges and opportunities identified in an analysis of the current conditions of the Plaza. It is crucial to address these issues to preserve City Plaza's beloved status for generations to come.

### Intensity of Use

In the last half of the 20th century, City Plaza has become an ever more frequently and intensively used venue for a wide range of community performances, gatherings and events, with the greatest increase in use in the last decade:

1800's to mid

1900's: Strolling, sitting, picnicking, watching parades, Christmas-tree lighting

1960's: 20-30 planned events per year

1999: 70 planned events, approximately

2000: 80+ planned events

2001: **100+ PLANNED EVENTS** -- all-day or multi-day, drawing up to 2,000 people.

Since the original design was not constructed for this level of intensive use, in recent years the condition of the Plaza has deteriorated. Throughout, and especially at the center, the lawns are trampled down to bare dirt and do not get sufficient sunlight to revive, a problem that renders regular maintenance inadequate.

The elms' beauty has helped define the beauty of the Plaza, and more recently helped disguise the increasingly distressed condition of much of the rest of the Plaza. New trees cannot achieve this grandeur for some time, so it is even more crucial now to beautify the entire Plaza to compensate for the upcoming period without very large trees.



Historically, mostly informal uses, such as family picnics



Currently, over 100 major, planned community events per year, sometime attracting up to 2,000 participants!



# Existing Conditions, Challenges and Opportunities (cont.)



The lawn areas within the central circle have become almost completely bare



A steady stream of large community events means porta-potties are an almost permanent fixture in the Plaza during the warm seasons, detracting from the Plaza's aesthetics and adding to the muddy scarring.



Visually separated from informal supervision because of 1) its seclusion from the Plaza's more active perimeter, and 2) the raised, contained feel produced by the elevation, railing and roof, the deteriorating gazebo has become somewhat of an attractive nuisance when it is not being used for an event.



Unattractive 'furnishings' and details contribute to the Plaza's shabby appearance.

## Orange Trees

The orange trees around the perimeter of the Plaza have also been outgrowing their narrow parkways, such that only a few stunted trees remain.. Also, their planting strips have been trampled by intense use of adjacent parking.

## Sense of Safety and Welcome

While the Plaza is a well-loved and enjoyable place during formal community events, many in the community do not enjoy the space at other times because it no longer feels as safe and welcoming as it once did in its day-to-day condition. While law enforcement in public spaces is always critical to their success and enjoyment, design can also play a crucial role in enabling and supporting efforts to make the Plaza a space that feels safe and welcoming every day. City Plaza should welcome a cross-section of the community – parents with children, retirees, downtown workers and neighborhood residents.

## Pedestrian Safety

Traffic signals at intersections adjacent to City Plaza lack pedestrian signals. Under current conditions, pedestrians can find themselves only partway across the wide 60' pavement of Broadway or Main when the light turns, exposing them to through traffic.

## Details

The deteriorated and unattractive condition of lighting, benches, trash bins and aging historical pavement in the Plaza have also greatly contributed to the current overall worn look of the Plaza.

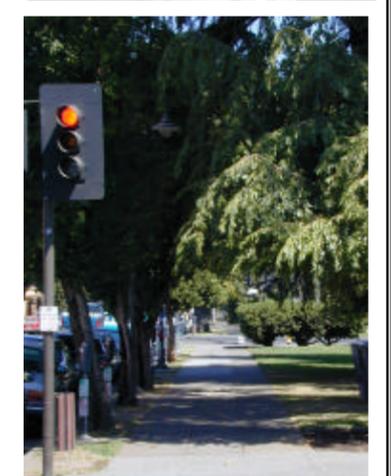


Grass planting areas become trampled and bare when immediately adjacent to parking, and orange trees have died out.



Left: Signs are not enough. Using design to increase the visual and physical permeability into the Plaza, and augmenting this with focused enforcement efforts, are crucial to making this feel like a more welcoming and safe environment on a day-to-day basis.

Right: Lack of enforcement of leash laws and laws that make it illegal to damage public property could prevent damage to new trees caused by dog assaults.



Without pedestrian crossing signals, traffic lights at adjacent intersections can turn from green to red without sufficient warning to crossing pedestrians.

# Project Public Process and Input

Community Vision



Values



Brainstorming



Priorities



Current Master Plan and Design

## Chico Citizens: Please participate in an update of the Chico Plaza Park Master Plan!



Chico Plaza Park -- in the heart of downtown Chico -- is truly a jewel of this community. The City of Chico has hired Heritage Partners, a local planning and design firm, to coordinate an update to the design and Master Plan for the Plaza. Assisting Heritage Partners will be Landscape Architect and designer Scott Sebastian. Mr. Sebastian brings broad experience and expertise, including extensive work on the Stanford University campus.



As Chico residents who care about this precious resource, your views and opinions are very important to the effort. Please join us in the City Council chambers for the initial project workshop on Saturday morning March 2. The follow-up presentation of designs recommendations will be the evening of Wednesday, April 10. And pass on the word!

## Plaza Park Design!



### Events Schedule and Locations:

Opening Workshop	Follow-up Presentation
Saturday, March 2	Wednesday, April 10
9:00 AM to Noon (refreshments will be served!)	7:30 PM
City Council Chambers (4 <sup>th</sup> & Main Streets - see map above)	City Council Chambers (4 <sup>th</sup> & Main Streets - see map above)

For questions, please contact Mary Van Buskirk at Heritage Partners, at [mvbuskirk@heritagepartners.com](mailto:mvbuskirk@heritagepartners.com) or 891-8962.

Advertising flyer for public meetings, posted around downtown and in public buildings.

Project Landscape Architect, Scott Sebastian, kicks off the meeting with a short presentation on the principles of Plaza design.



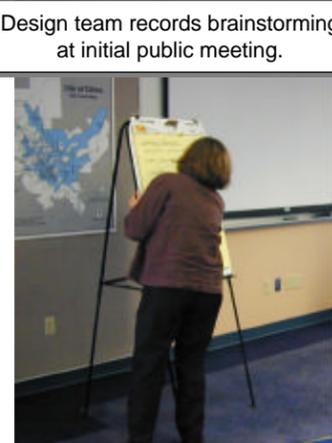
Participants share their ideas.



Participants filled Conference Room 1 for the initial meeting.



Design team records brainstorming at initial public meeting.



Feedback is recorded after proposed alternatives are presented at the Follow-up meeting.



The analysis of existing conditions on the previous pages shows that City Plaza faces challenges that are critical to its future. If the current intensity of use is to continue and even grow, and the Plaza is to once again become an attractive and lively civic space filled with day-to-day activity, the Plaza needs to accommodate the community's vision and values. For this reason, the current Master Plan update was begun, and utilized a public workshop process to articulate the community's vision and values with regard to the future of the Plaza.

### Initial Public Meeting

The design team held an initial public workshop to initiate the planning and design update process. Approximately 25-30 interested citizens watched a presentation on the history of the Plaza and on some proven principles of designing successful, attractive and enjoyable public spaces. Participants were then asked to help establish the values, goals, and priority problems and solutions specific to City Plaza so that these could be addressed in the design process.

Each participant first wrote a single phrase or sentence describing their overall vision for the Plaza. Then participants were asked to write one- or two-word values they held for the Plaza, each on a separate adhesive note. Taking turns, they posted these on the walls of the meeting room, grouping their notes with others that were similar, so that it would be visually apparent which values were most widely shared in the community. Finally, the microphones were opened for a 'brainstorm' session, where participants identified the problems and solutions they saw for the Plaza, and design team members recorded these on large sheets of paper tacked to the walls. After everyone had a chance to say whatever they wanted to say, each participant was given 7 dot stickers with which they could 'vote' for their priority problems and solutions by sticking them next to the recorded item on the wall.

### Design Development and Follow-up Public Meeting

The design team then took this recorded input from the participants and added its own design expertise and experience to develop and propose three updated plan alternatives. These new alternatives were presented at a subsequent, 'follow-up' public meeting for participants' review and feedback.

There seemed to be more consensus at the initial public meeting about the goals and vision for the Plaza than at the follow-up meeting. At the second meeting, input ranged from a desire to leave the Plaza exactly as it is (even to go back 150 years to restore it as Victorian park museum piece), all the way to scraping most of the site to install an amphitheater-type performance venue -- and many more points between.

In consultation with City staff, and to create what is believed would best serve the community, the design team ultimately chose to use the middle-ground of the public comment and what seemed to be the most well-received features of the existing proposals to develop a 4<sup>th</sup>, 'composite'-type alternative that is presented in this report.

Participants group their values with others.



Participants use dot stickers to vote for their top 7 priorities.



# Values and Priorities from Initial Public Meeting

## Community's Values and Priorities

The input received from community members at the initial public meeting is summarized on this page. The complete records can be found in Appendix A, along with the feedback and comments received at the follow-up presentation of initial design alternatives.

### Values (top five):

1. Active/Planned Community Activities
2. Safety and Security
3. Everyday/Daily Activity
4. Attracting, Welcoming
5. History and Tradition

### Problems (top Vote-getters):

1. Curb/sidewalk seam is just mud
2. Turf is a problem -- functions as ashtray, attracts bees
3. Existing landscaping is a hodge-podge of greenery -- pull together

### Solutions (top Vote-getters):

1. Provide bathrooms or porta-potty storage area
2. Keep/ open line of sight into Plaza
3. Install better lighting
4. Provide more hardscape for large groups
5. Traditional design but modern function
6. Small curbs to delineate walkways / level changes in the ground plane
7. Water/fountain(s)
8. Sculpture art for kids to play on instead of trees
9. Not wood benches (perhaps stone?)
10. New gazebo / performance stage
11. Encourage pedestrian access & attractions; pedestrian signals at all adjacent intersections

### Synthesis and Summary of Overall Goals:

1. *Improve City's Plaza's **functionality** for community activities*
2. *Increase the sense of **safety and security** in City Plaza*
3. *Re-invigorate the **daily use** of City Plaza by a wider cross-section of the community*
4. *Repair City Plaza's deteriorating, 'shabby' **appearance***

# Principles of Good Plaza Design

Lots of choices for sitting – low or high, formal or informal, secluded or in view, in groups or in solitude, in the sun or in the shade...



Mix of users and activities, young and old, single and in groups, men and women, sitting or strolling, eating or talking, watching or participating.



## Principles of Good Plaza Design

Every successful public space must respond to:

- Its physical context – adjacent buildings and uses
- Its local climate – sun, shade, wind, rain
- Its own history
- Its users

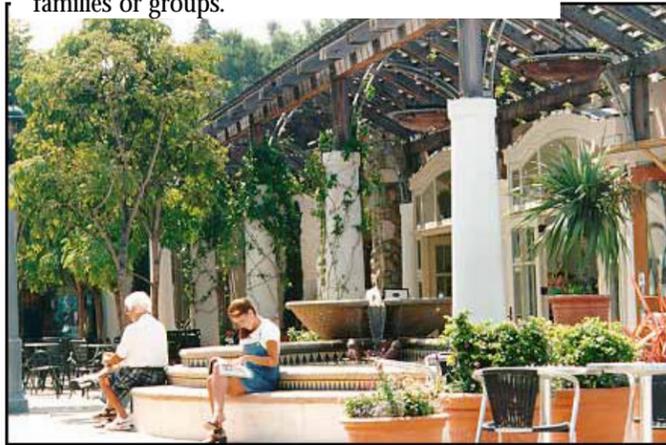
It must include the elements that are attractive to people – activity, beauty, safety, focal point(s).

## History, Tradition and Character

- Certain forms and patterns have appealed to humans universally over time and place, and these form traditional design.
- The form of the town *square* is a significant historical artifact.. The pattern and interaction of multiple strong geometrical elements - squares, circles, diagonals – traditionally forms the structure and foundation for important civic spaces.
- Creating a sense of procession through different stages of a space, with visual and physical focal points, is another universal design principle.
- In an existing, historical civic space, it is important to respect the essential elements of the historical form and order while updating the elements to make them relevant to the present and future (just as their original, historical founders did at their creation).
- Design elements should inject local character and flavor – local landscape, local industry, local art and craft. both historical and contemporary.

## Activity and Sociability

- Create intense use, both formal and informal.
- Offer lots of seating – some that can be in the sun, some that can be in the shade.
- Provide elements and activities that attract a varied cross-section of people – young to old, singles, families or groups.



- Provide elements and activities that give people reasons to be there at all different times – passing through, meeting up or taking a break during work or school hours, socializing or enjoying events and entertainment during off hours, evenings and weekends.
- Offer many choices – for solitude or for gathering, for relaxing or for watching or participating, choices to be in the open or to be in a secluded area (to view or to be in view).

## Comfort and Appearance

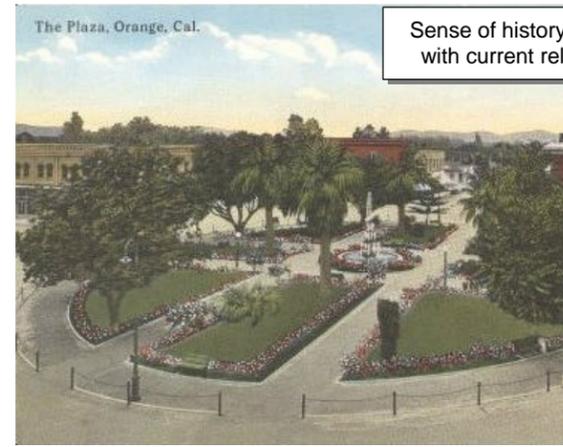
- Access and linkages are essential to the success of a public space. Easy and safe physical and visual access should be provided from all perimeters..
- Function and appearance are linked, but are not identical, as in a home's living room. Therefore, to create the best whole, each detail should be measured against both function and appearance.
- Successful public spaces find opportunities to create beauty and visual interest, which in turn attract people. Construction materials should also project an image of value and durability.
- Maintenance and Operations: Even if all of the other elements of a successful public space are present, without the look and feel of safety and cleanliness, a place will fail or fall far short of its potential. The space must be well-maintained and cared-for, with a maintenance plan that is realistic and sustainable. There must be an obvious sense of continuous informal surveillance from a critical mass of users and from the surroundings, and regular law enforcement should be used to minimize anti-social behavior bold enough to continue despite this surveillance.



Geometric pattern, spatial procession, focal points, beauty and artistry.



In warm climates, people of all ages and interests cannot resist the attraction of water.



The Plaza, Orange, Cal.

Sense of history blended with current relevance.



# Design Precedents



**New Haven Green (above):**

- The village green or “commons”
- Grass and scattered trees, usually informal plantings
- Important buildings usually face it ( here extreme example perhaps)



**Arcata, CA**

**Classic North American Town Squares (Above and Below):**

- Chico’s City Plaza shares many similarities with the central square plazas built in almost every town across Mexico for the last 500 years: multifunctional, heavily used, space – balance of “soft” and “hard”
- Typically, it is a simple square removed from the grid, with public buildings on some sides
- From above, it looks almost like a forest (from a desire for shade, the feeling of enclosure, as with a roof)
- On the ground, it looks like a plaza because of the need for abundant paving for intense use - events, ceremonies, gatherings
- In each corner is a fountain, and in the center is the bandstand



**Lake Forest, IL (Above):**

- The central square as part of the city’s original plan (Lake Forest)
  - Consciously laid out, usually in a simple rectangle or square
    - Embedded in a street system, usually a grid
      - More often “formally” planted
- Important buildings face, often in a formal/axial way



**Bryant Park, NY (Above):**

- Lots of seating – some in sun, some in shade, located to provide choices to be in the open or to be in a secluded area (to view or to be in view)
- Intense use at all times of the year and throughout times of the day and evening
- Design for visibility from surrounding areas – feeling of safety, security and comfort
- Places for eating lunch – even purchasing and serving food



**Morelia Mexico**

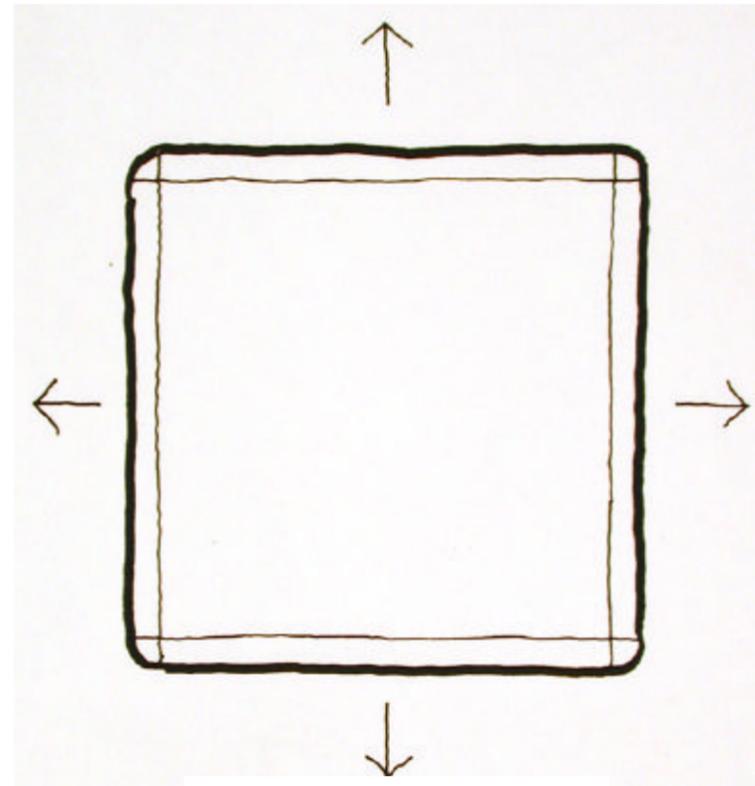


**Savannah Squares (Above and Right):**

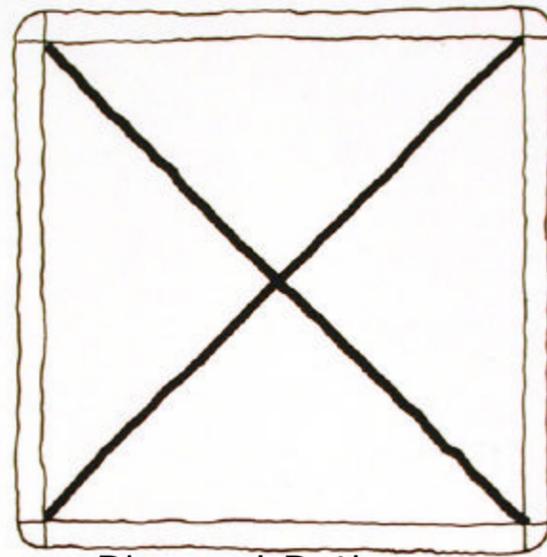
- Focal point at the center, usually a fountain of monument
  - Balance of green space and decorative paving
  - Elegance and dignity – a civic space of which to be proud



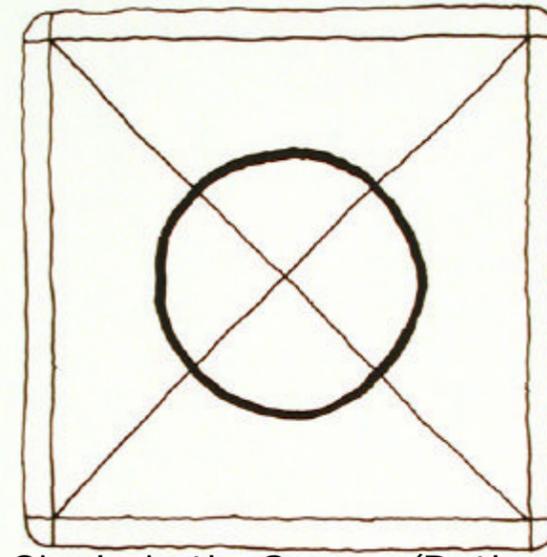
# Chico City Plaza's Design Setting



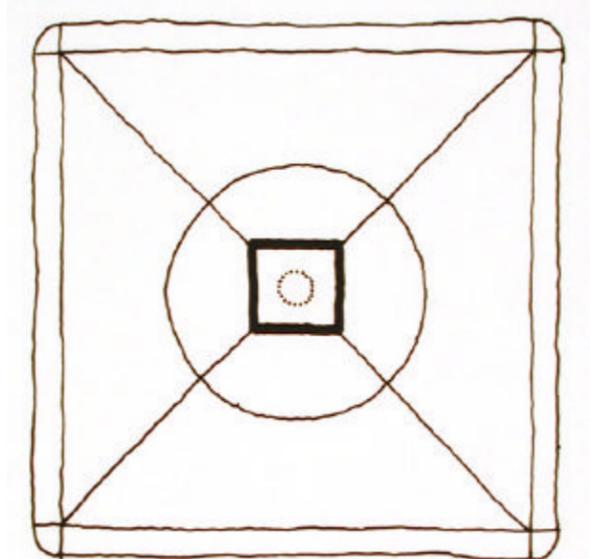
Perfect Square



Diagonal Pathways

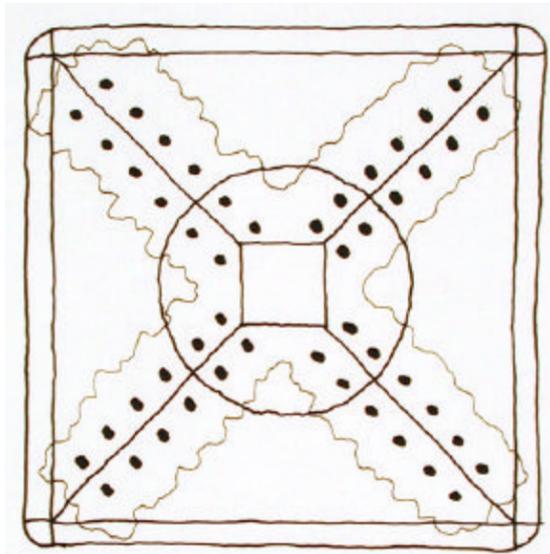


Circle in the Square (Pathway)

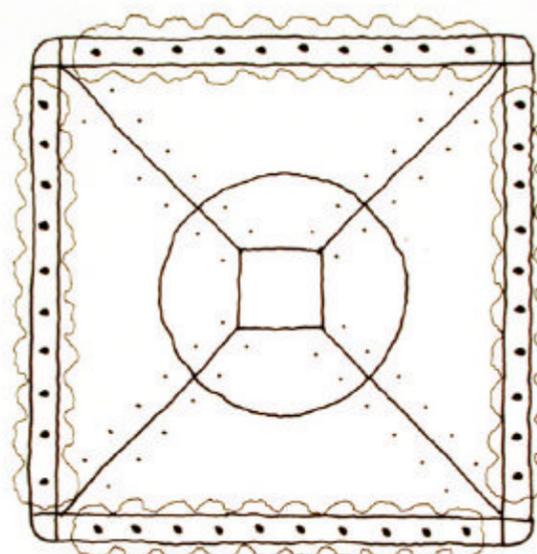


Square in the Circle (Plaza)

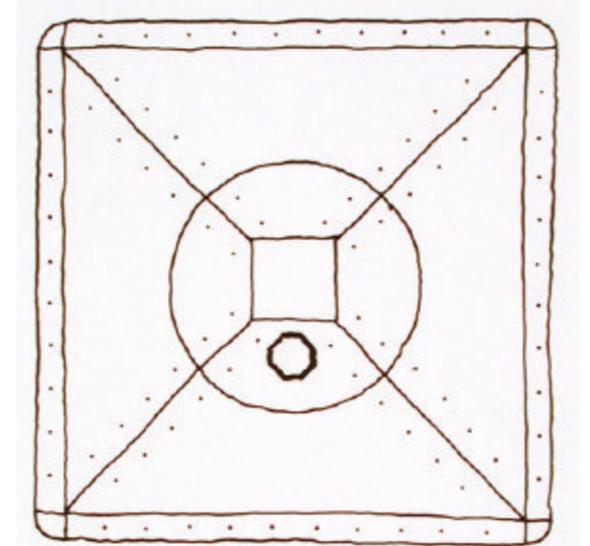
One of the most compelling aspects of the Chico City Plaza is the great simplicity of its design. In plan it is a perfect square with two diagonal paths linking the corners, a very small square plaza at the crossing of the paths, and a circular walk set halfway between the central plaza and the surrounding streets. Originally there was a decorative fountain in the center of the plaza. The original planting was equally simple: double rows of trees lining the diagonal paths and regularly spaced street trees along the edges. The Plaza was intended as a kind of formal centerpiece for the town – a place more to be viewed than to be used. Over the many decades since the plaza was established the only significant modifications to the design have been the removal of the central fountain and the addition of an octagonal wooden bandstand next to the central plaza.



Trees Lining Pathways



Trees at the Edges



Bandstand – An Added Element

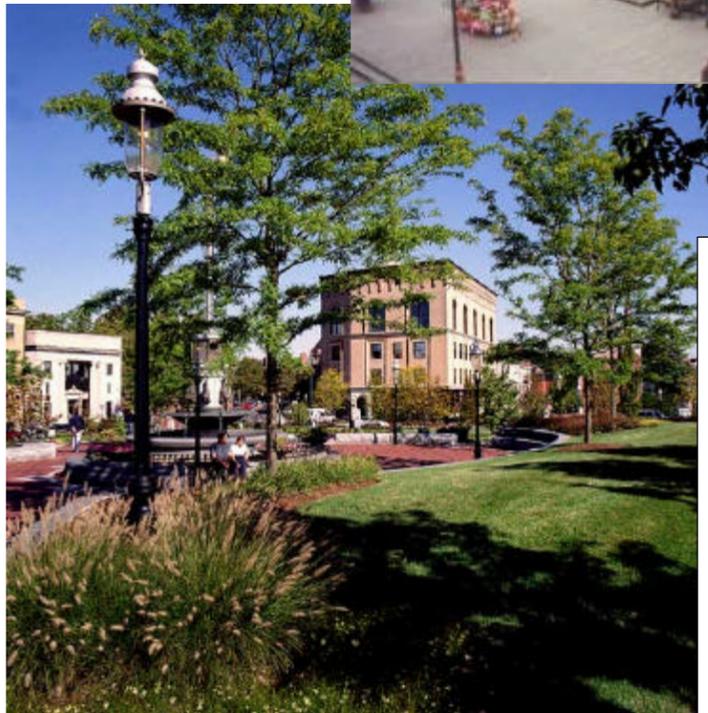
# Proposed Universal Design Elements



Raised lawns define spaces, provide a low, informal seating edge, and help protect from unintended cut-across paths that damage grass.

Quality, decorative paving looks beautiful, durable and well-kept.

Tree wells give trees adequate area to grow and protect them.



Bringing the elements together:

Hardscape – paving, seat walls and fountain;

Softscape – lawn, trees and landscaping;

Center focal point – fountain with seating;

Choice in seating – center or edge;

Decorative, pedestrian-scaled lighting for safety.

Sun and shade.

## Elements Shared by All Proposed Alternatives

1. Retention of the basic existing geometric forms and layout of the square, circle and diagonals.
2. Retention of the current location of diagonal walkways.
3. Retention of the current location of perimeter sidewalks, to line up with the sidewalks that continue from here and go throughout the blocks of the historic Chico grid.
4. Replacement of existing muddy planting strips with adequate perimeter planting areas protected from adjacent parking to ensure the growth of healthy trees.
5. Reconfigure adjacent street to provide diagonal parking on Main and Broadway in order to retain the existing amount of parking while accommodating other desired design features.
6. Option to preserve existing large trees on the four sides (e.g. existing and new Christmas trees, palms etc.).
7. Expanded central plaza (hardscape) area.
8. Rebuilt, raised tree lawns, reduced in overall size.
9. Public restrooms provided convenient to, but outside of the formal Plaza space.
10. Abundant seating choices:
  - Benches, stairs, seat walls and raised lawns
  - At the edge and in the middle
  - In shady and in sunny areas
11. Increased 'permeability' and safety - opening up for improved physical and visual access, to increase security and comfort:
  - Bulbed-out corners with pedestrian signals for safe and easy crossing into and out of the Plaza
  - Removal of low-growing bushes that block views into and out of the space
  - Open-air performance platform(s)
  - Opened-up, expanded central plaza area
  - New, human-scaled and high-quality lighting
12. Focal point(s), water, and art to attract people:
  - Fountain or other central feature
  - Special features at edges or corners
  - Public art integrated into elements of the design
13. Space and facilities for different uses and activities:
  - Raised lawns for day-to-day or events seating
  - Hardscape for strolling, events seating and dancing
  - Performance platform(s) for day-to-day seating or for events staging, with the option to attach a covering
  - Adequate number and location of electrical outlets for events
14. Beauty, quality and durability in all elements:
  - 'Furniture' – benches, trash receptacle
  - Construction elements - paving, planters, stage(s)
  - Trees and plantings



Corner bulbouts reduce the crossing distance to the Plaza and help open up views and access into the site. Combined with decorative paving, they create a more inviting entrance.

Benches offer seating at the edge or corners, good places to gather or meet up with others.



Water fountains are always great people-attractors in warm climates – and people are the essential ingredients for a successful, activated public space!

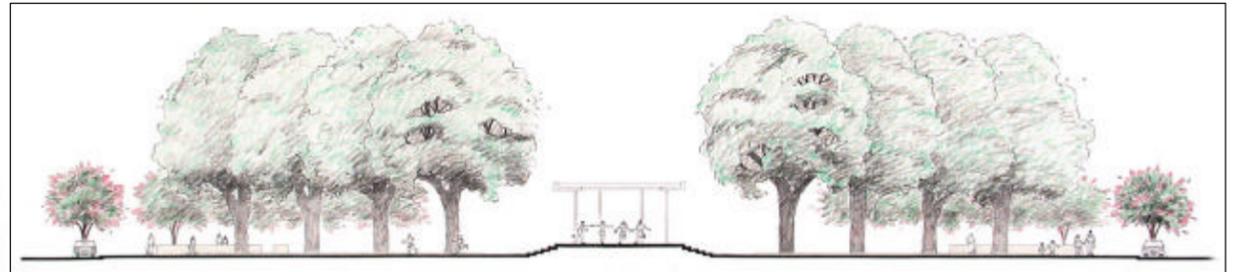
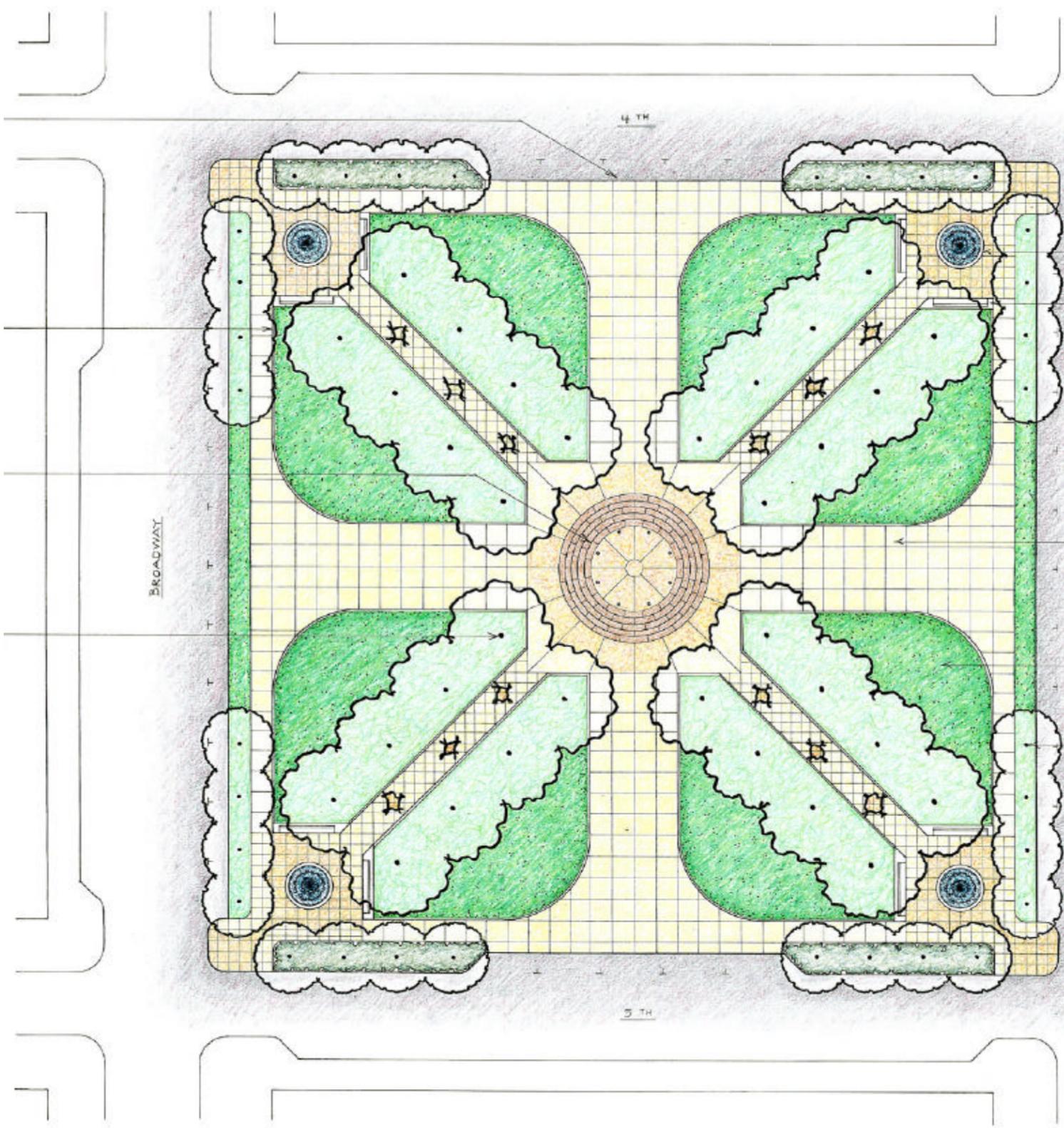
They can be more formal and set apart, providing beauty to see, hear and feel; or they can be interactive, providing a bit of refreshment to attract kids and adults alike – or they can be designed to be a combination of both!

Additionally, they provide great opportunity for public art.



# New Design Alternative 1

Cross Section



## Alternative 1

The original focus of the Plaza was an ornate fountain located at the intersection of the diagonal paths. This was an extremely important design element, and this alternative proposes to create a new, modern fountain at the center. This fountain would be designed so that the water could be turned off so that it could also function as a pavilion and stage for the many performances and events which are now held in the Plaza. The precise design of this central feature might be commissioned of an artist or it might be the subject of a competition.

Instead of entirely restoring the planting of street trees at the edges of the Plaza, a wide gap is left on each side to improve views of the pavilion. There are generous paved areas on all four sides of the pavilion where audiences could be seated for performances and events.

At all four corners of the Plaza, where pedestrians typically cross the street, there are smaller, more intimate plazas, each with benches and a small fountain. These are the natural points for people to run into each other and have informal conversations, or to bring their lunch to the Plaza and watch the activity along the street.

### Measurements (approximate):

- Plaza (hardscape in center): 4,000 s.f.
- Central fountain/stage: 900 s.f.
- New walks/side plazas (hardscape in 4 quadrants): 12,000 s.f.
- 4 Corner 'plazas': 3,500 s.f.

*(For scale and comparison, the current central plaza hardscape area is approximately 1,500 s.f., or about 2% of the block. Overlay base map transparency for comparison.)*

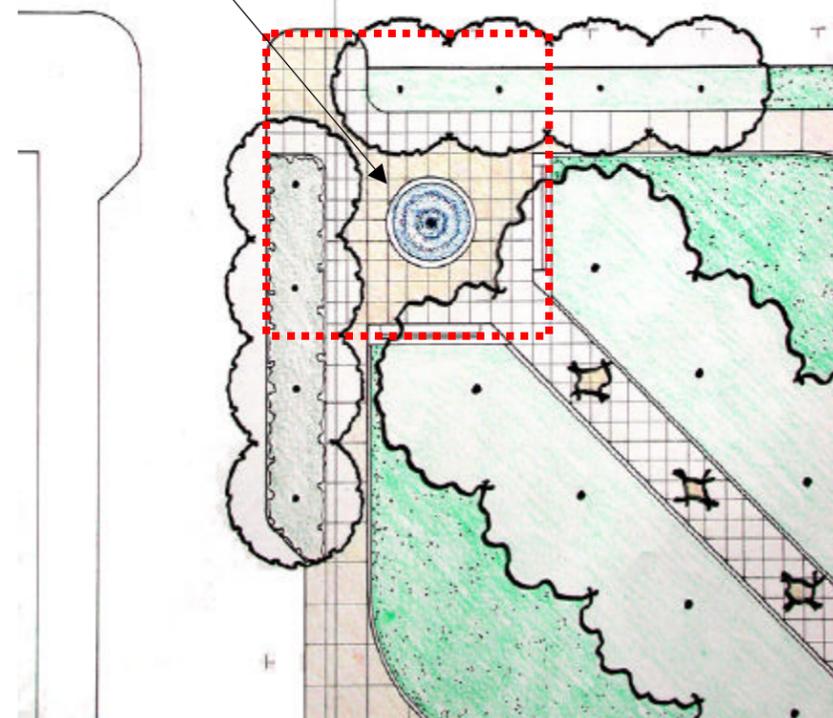
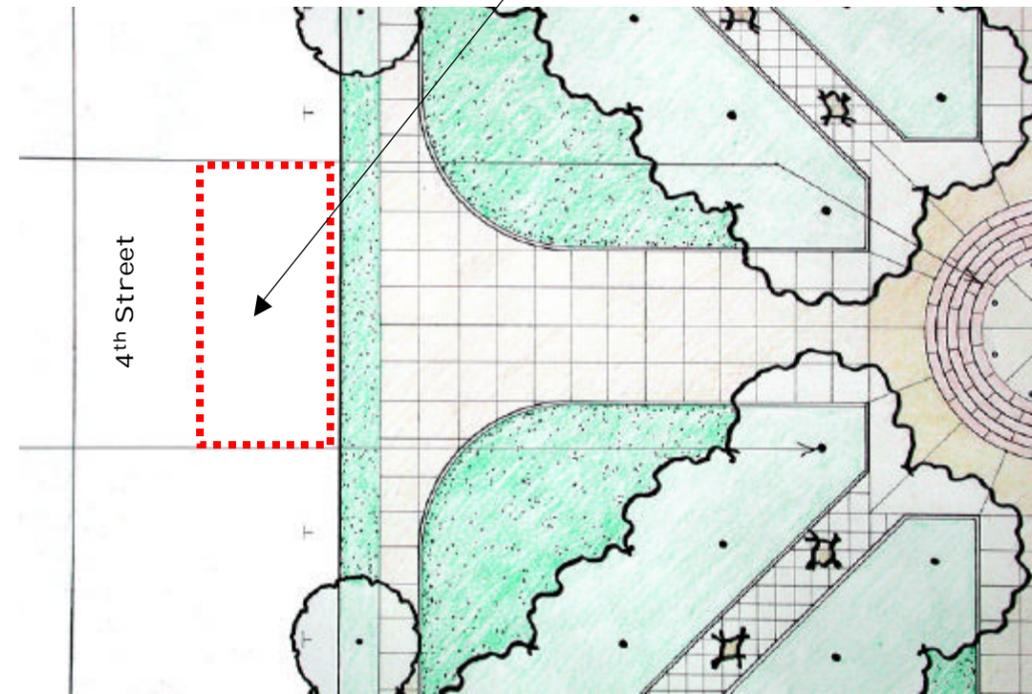
**A Note on Fountains:** Historically, fountains have been prevalent in important civic spaces and, originally, Chico's City Plaza also enjoyed a formal central fountain. Well-designed civic fountains can add beauty, liveliness and refreshing sight, sound and feel to a space. This makes fountains and other water features natural people-attractors - especially in warm climates such as Chico's - and many of the community goals identified in the public process involve increasing daily activity in the Plaza. It should be understood that fountains also involve a commitment to regular, sustained maintenance, and can actually end up detracting from a space without this.

# Elements - New Design Alternative 1

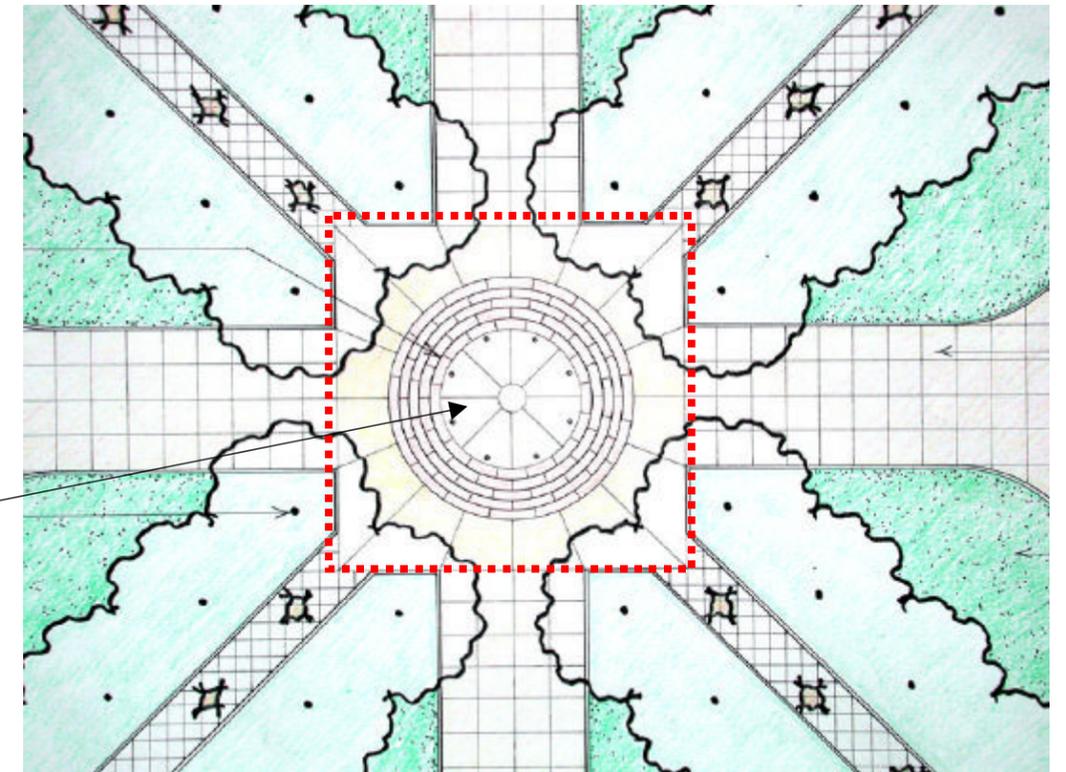
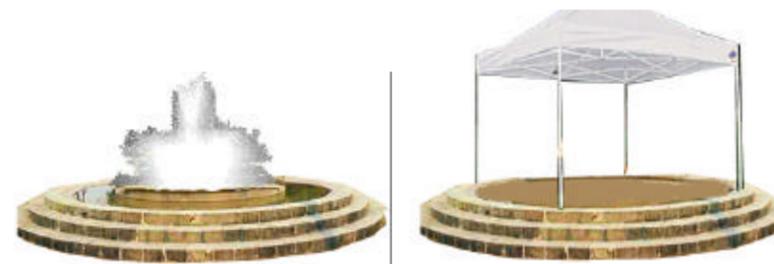


Fountain and Gathering Places at Corners

For Large Events, 4<sup>th</sup> Street is Closed and Performance Larger Stage Set up adjacent to curb



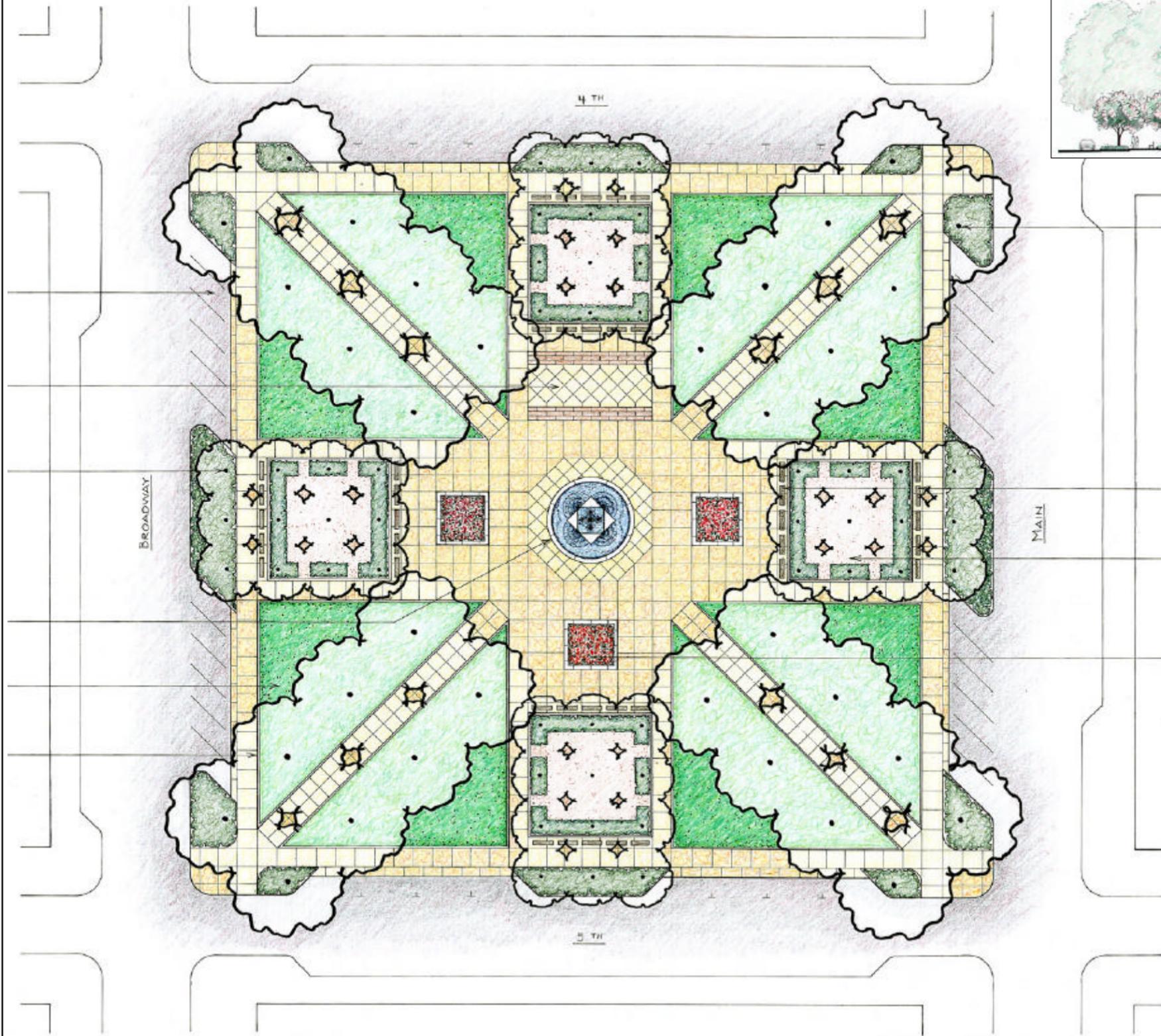
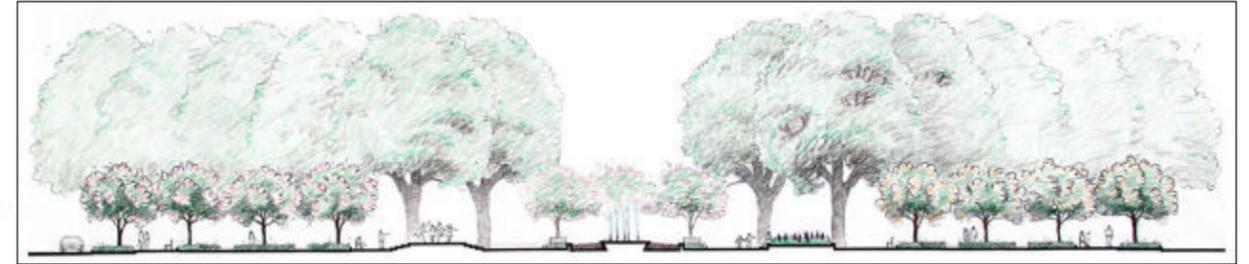
Center Fountain that can be Converted into Small Performance Platform



Central Podium / Fountain

# New Design Alternative 2

Cross Section



## Alternative 2

The central focus of this design is a traditional fountain set in the center of a large central plaza. The diagonal rows of big trees are pushed toward the periphery, with the outside trees actually planted in the parkways at the street corners, so that they are quite visible from a distance as people approach the park along the adjacent streets.

Along each side of the park, instead of a line of street trees there is a grid of flowering trees – reminiscent of the orchards that are a part of the local landscape. Under the grids of trees would be raised planter gardens, each of a different design and each surrounded by hedges. Rows of benches under the canopy to the flowering trees face both outward toward the street and inward toward the fountain.

In addition to the four peripheral planter gardens, the central plaza contains four raised flower beds where the plantings could be changed to respond to the seasons. The sides of the raised planters and the outside edge of the fountain are all about 18 inches above the paving and wide enough to provide lots of comfortable informal seating. On one side of the plaza is a raised platform that would serve as a bandstand or a performance stage. The platform could have a permanent roof, but it is suggested that a removable awning might be sufficient to protect performers from the sun, depending on the season and the time of day.

*(Note: It is envisioned that various local groups - such as a garden club, rose society or audobon group - may like to 'adopt' the planting and maintenance of individual planter gardens within this plan. If this is not the case, these elements of the plan should be revisited to determine how they could be adapted to a lower-maintenance set-up to avoid comparatively high maintenance costs.)*

### Measurements (approximate):

- Plaza (hardscape in center): 3,650 s.f.
- Central fountain: 900 s.f.
- Performance stage: 1,400 s.f. (50' x 28', plus steps)

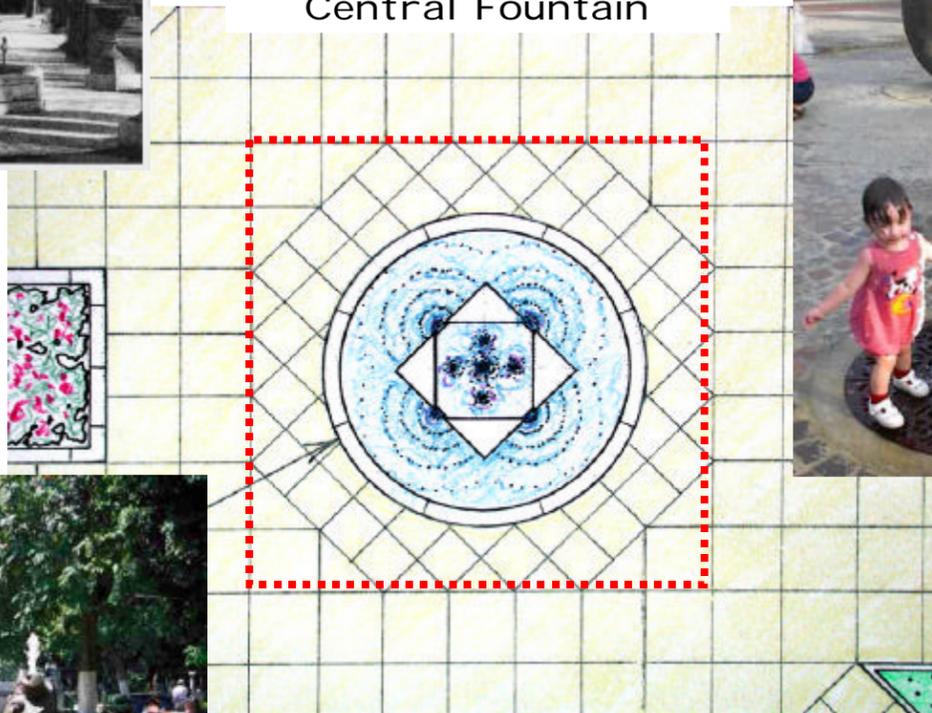
*(For scale and comparison, the current central plaza hardscape area is approximately 1,500 s.f., or about 2% of the block. Overlay base map transparency for comparison.)*

# Elements - New Design Alternative 2

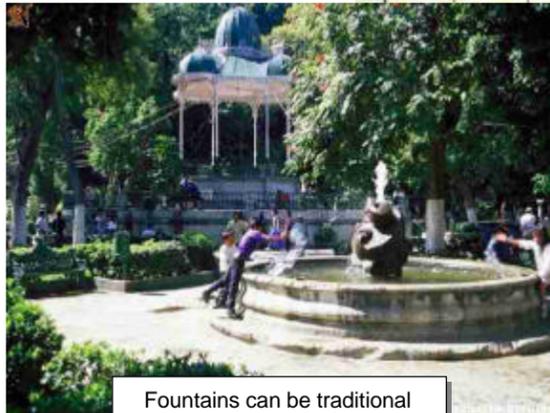


Original fountain in City Plaza

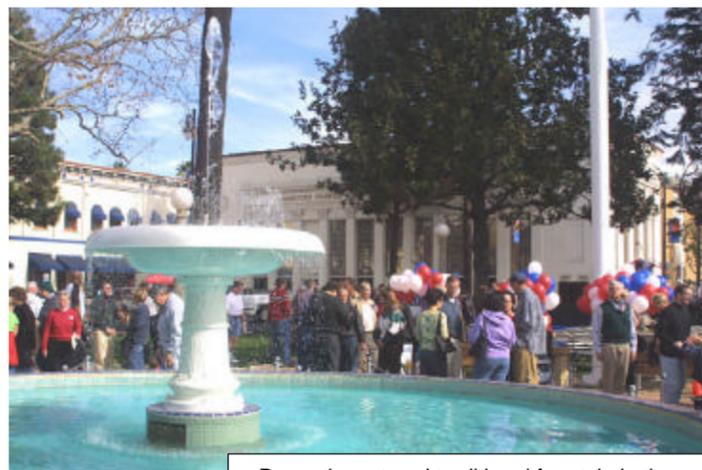
Central Fountain



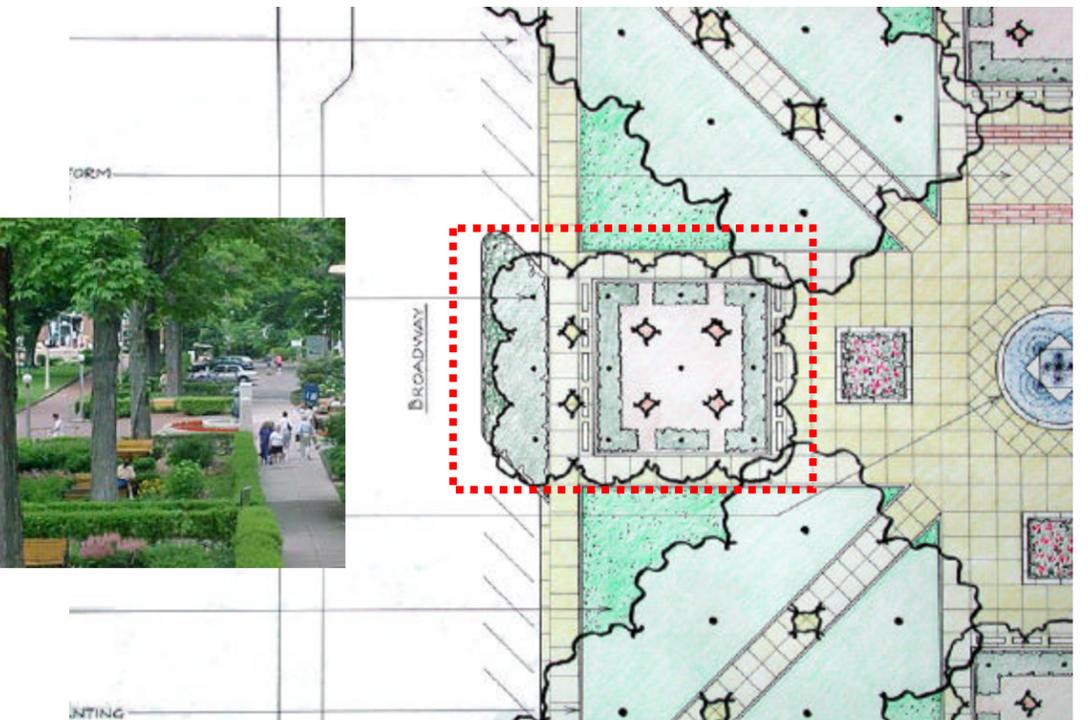
Interactive fountains are magnets for children



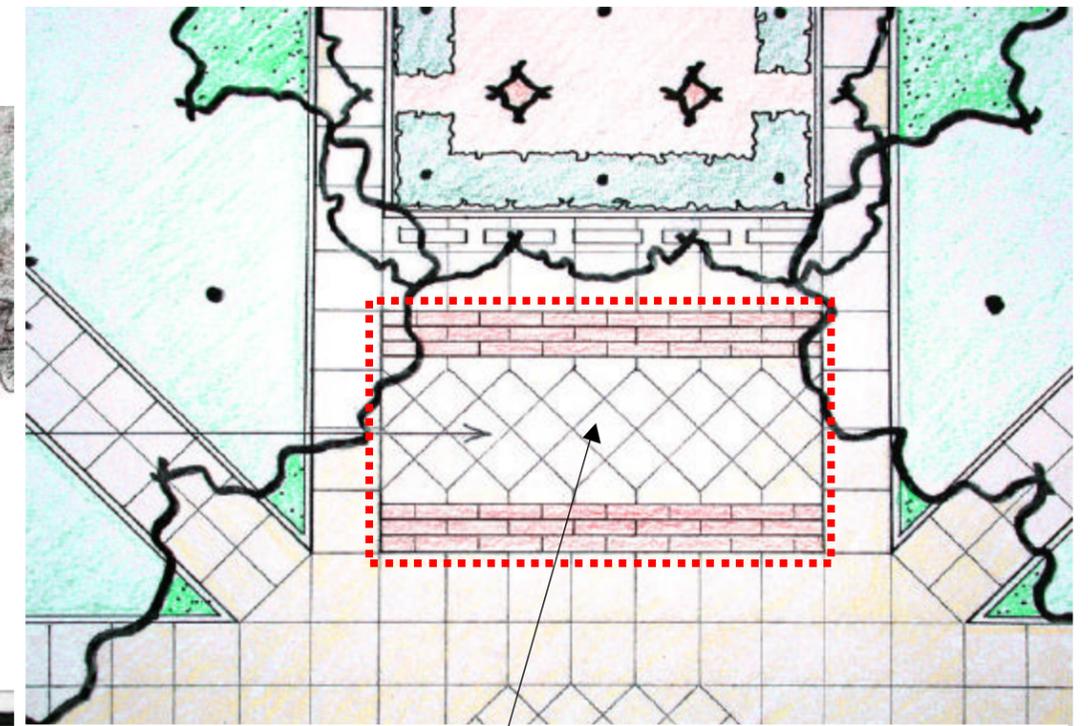
Fountains can be traditional and interactive



Recently restored traditional fountain in the recently rebuilt town plaza in Orange City, CA



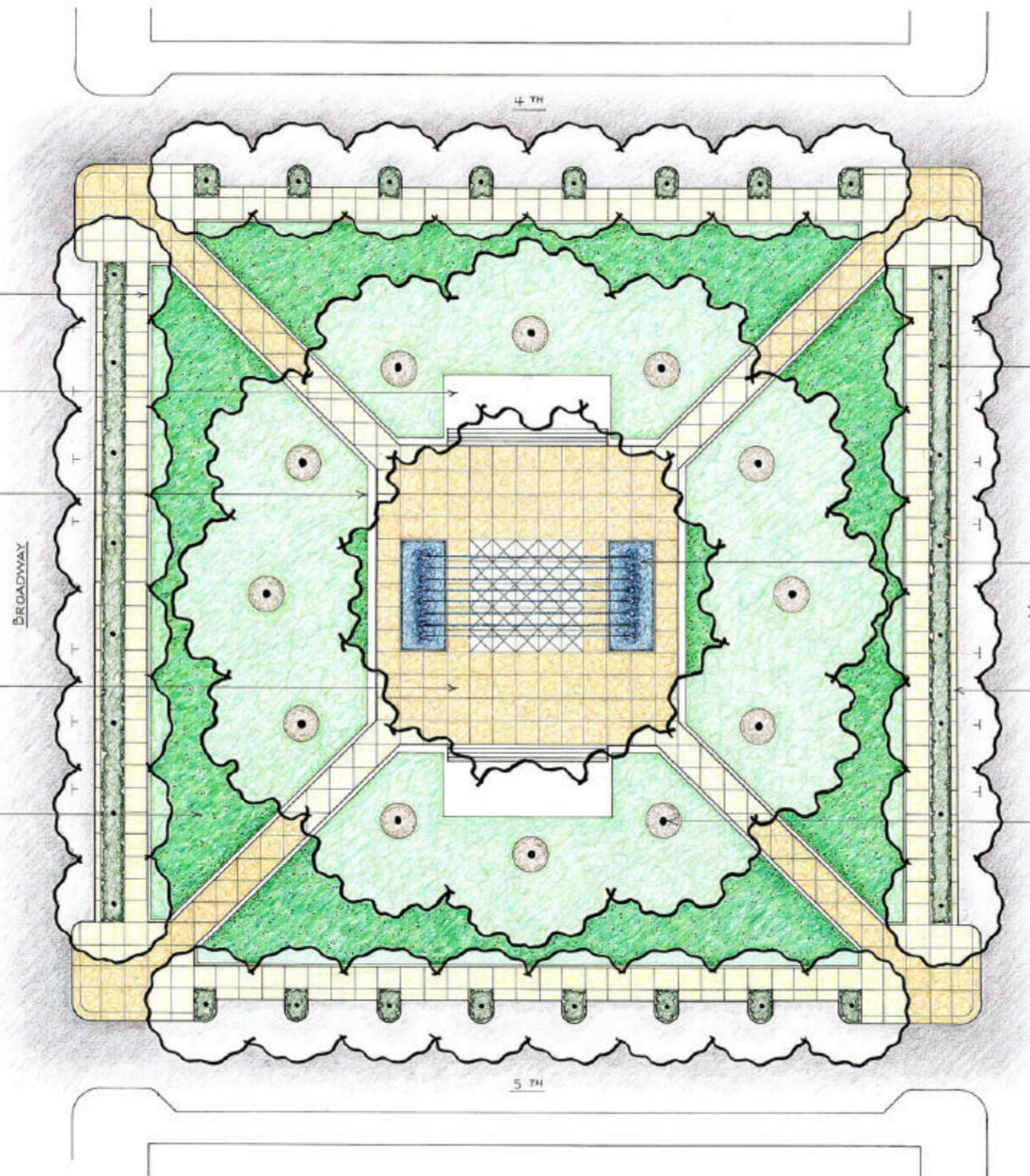
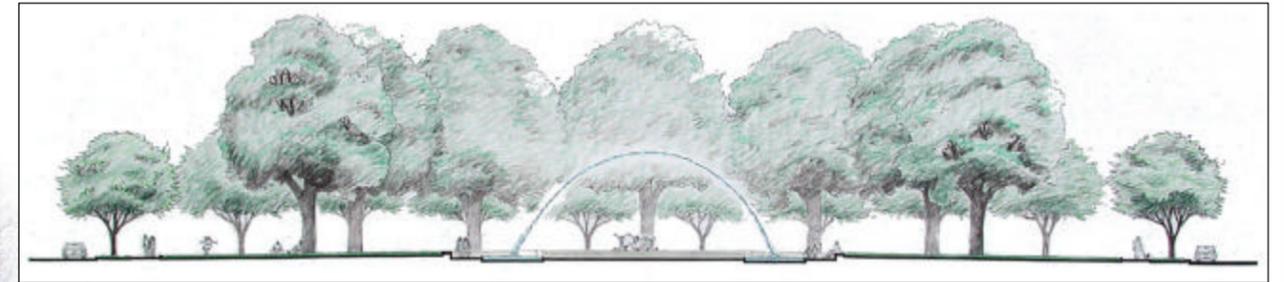
Tree Bosques in Formal raised Planters



Performance Planting Platform (50' x 28')

# New Design Alternative 3

Cross Section



## Alternative 3

This design is perhaps the closest to the simplicity of the original layout of the park. All four sides are lined with regularly spaced street trees, but these are now provided with sufficient room for their root systems. The only entries to the park are along the four diagonal paths, which define four very large, simple lawn areas. The lawns slope gradually upward from the edge and end in 18-inch seatwalls which completely surround the central plaza. Thus, the park looks very green from the outside but nonetheless has a substantial paved area in its center. The central plaza is a perfect square. There are performance platforms on two sides, so depending on the season and/or the time of day, performances can be either in the sun or in they shade.

In the center of the plaza, a dramatic water feature is envisioned. It is composed of two rows of special nozzles that shoot streams of water that create an arch under which people can walk without getting wet. This kind of water use – called “laminar flow” – does not work if the wind speed gets very high. So, in windy conditions, a wind sensor would shut down the main nozzles, and a set of conventional nozzles would cut in to create a row of vertical spouts along each side of the plaza.

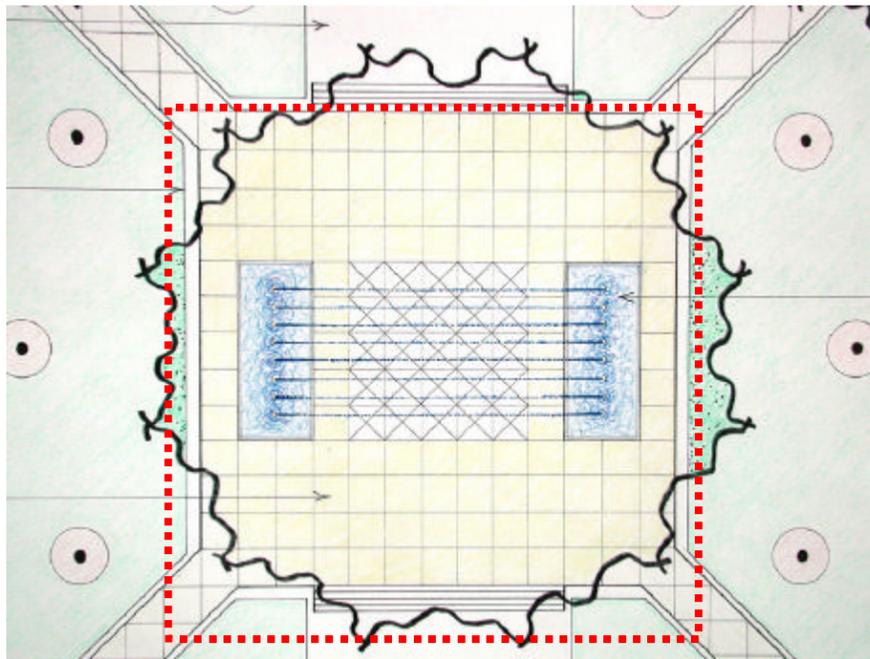
In order to permit very large trees – perhaps as big as the existing elms – eventually to become the dominant element of the park, a spacing of at least 50 feet apart is recommended. This scheme is the only one that actually achieves this spacing, and the plan shows the trees planted in a great circle surrounding the central plaza. In this way they would have sufficient room for their roots and their branches would not crowd each other.

### Measurements (approximate):

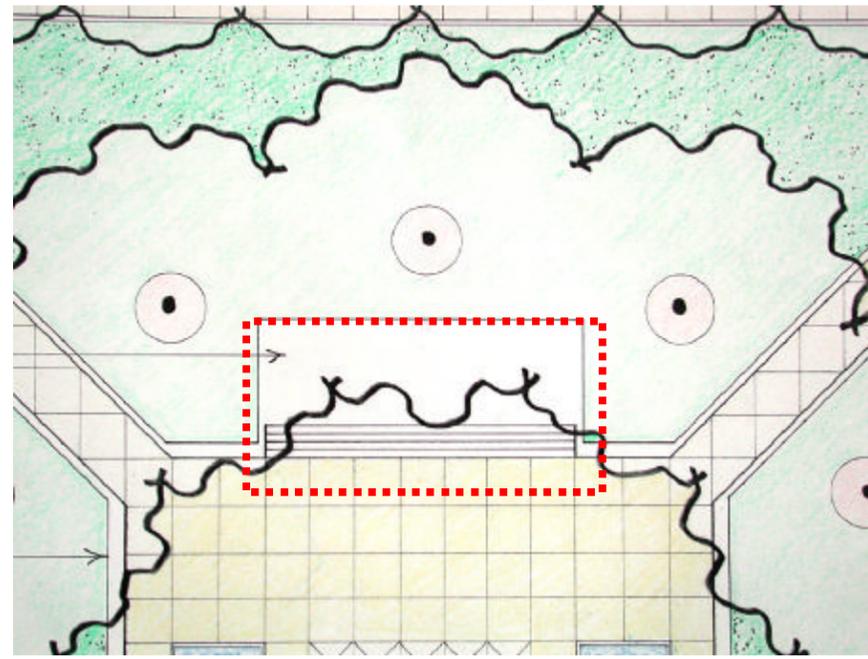
- Plaza (hardscape in center): 10,000 s.f.
- Fountains area: 1,360 s.f.
- Performance stages: two at 1,4200 s.f. each (60' x 20', plus steps)

*(For scale and comparison, the current central plaza hardscape area is approximately 1,500 s.f., or about 2% of the block. Overlay base map transparency for comparison.)*

# Elements - New Design Alternative 3



Square Central Plaza



Two Performance Platforms (60' x 20')



Sloping Lawn Panels



An Archway made of Water



Archways of water using laminar flow jets.

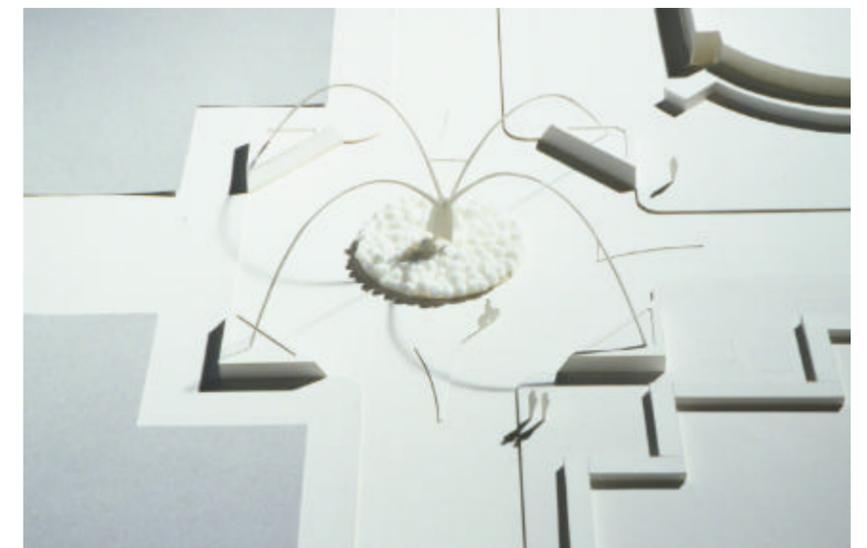


Laminar flow archway in a children's garden in Camden, NJ.

Laminar flow jets within fountain in Lincolnshire, IL town plaza.



Laminar flow jets create archway of water within a fountain.



Laminar Flow Jets for Fountain (example from another Design Project)

# New Design Alternative 4: A Composite



## Alternative 4: A 'Composite'

After the follow-up public meeting and presentation of the three initial proposed alternatives, this 4<sup>th</sup> 'Composite' alternative was developed. The design team used the more middle-ground of the participant comment and what seemed to be the most well-received features of the existing proposals to develop this 4<sup>th</sup> composite alternative.

### Retained Elements of Existing Plaza Design (similar to 1992 Master Plan):

- Diagonal pathways and circular path in the center
- Diagonal tree planting
- Retain large and/or significant trees in the four orthogonal quadrants (as long as desired): the large tree in the middle of Broadway side, the new Christmas tree on the Main Street side, and the large trees along the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street sides (retain in new side planting areas, similar to Alternative 2)

### New elements:

- Corner bulbouts (similar to existing 1992 Master Plan)
- Diagonal parking on Main and Broadway sides
- Street tree configuration that eliminates the planting strips adjacent to parking and provides ample room for trees to thrive and be protected (parking spaces eliminated by street-tree-planting areas are made up with additional spaces enabled by using diagonal parking on Main and Broadway)
- Expanded central plaza (hardscape) area for current, more intense uses
- Restoration of water feature to the center of the plaza
- Two large, 18"-high rectangular performance platforms/stages located in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street quadrants, with rear colonnade backdrop to provide a permanent attachment structure for non-permanent coverings that could be erected as desired, and steps that provide informal seating
- New access walkways opened up on all 4 block sides (similar to Alt. 2), forming raised (approx. 12-18"), hedge-defined planting areas on each side
- Drain wells in corners and lawn grading to enable adequate drainage
- Slightly-raised lawn panels (approx. 6")

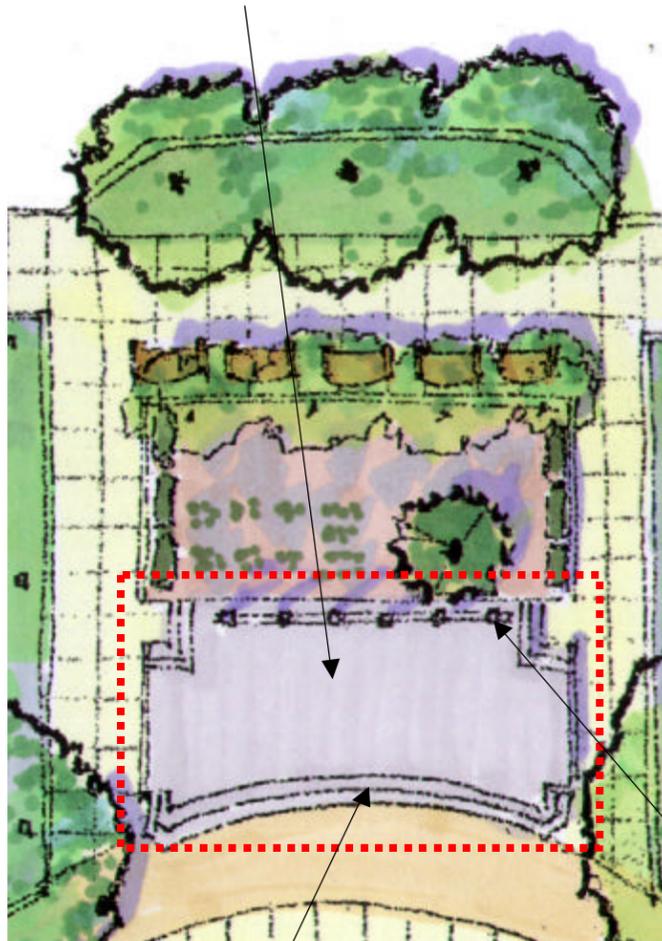
### Measurements (approximate):

- Plaza (hardscape in center): 17,500 s.f. (about 20% of the block)
- Center fountain area: 500 s.f.
- Performance stages: two at 1,100 s.f. each (45' x 25' each, plus steps)

(For scale and comparison, the current central plaza hardscape area is approximately 1,500 s.f., or about 2% of the block. Overlay base map transparency for comparison.)

# Elements - New Design Alternative 4

Performance Platform on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Street sides (45' x 25')



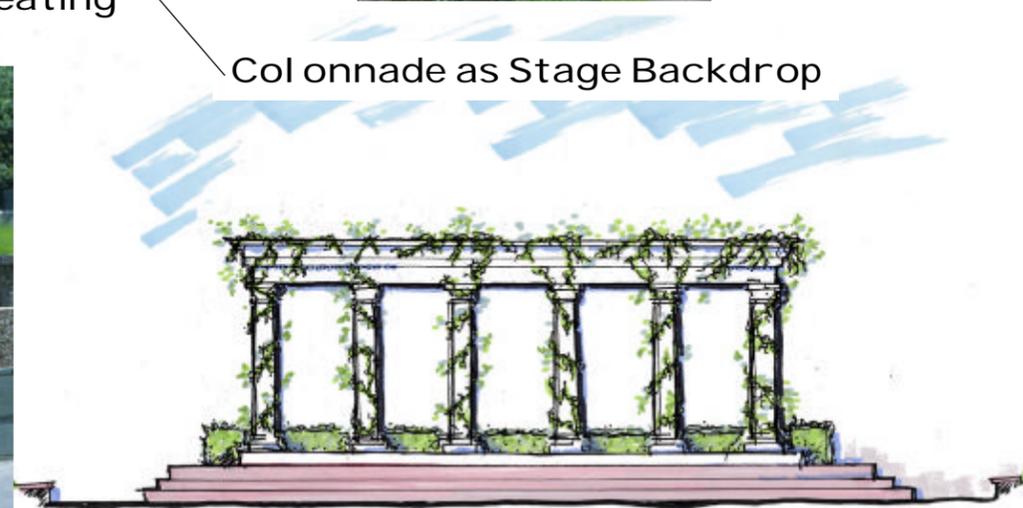
Platform Steps Offer Informal Seating



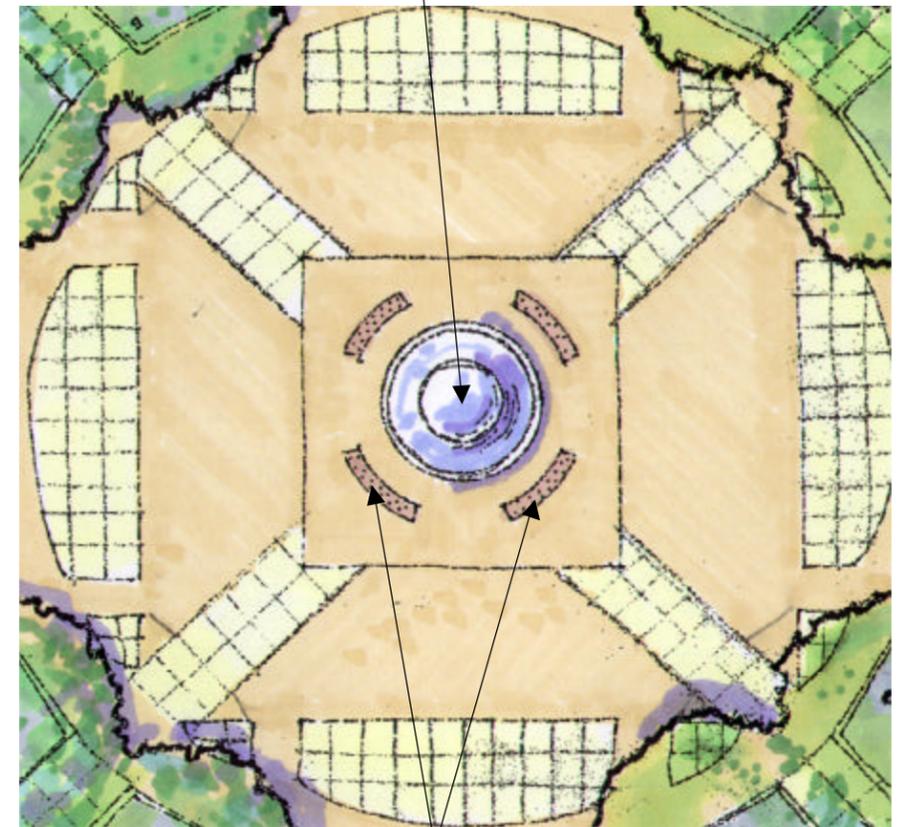
Raised Platforms on Main and Broadway sides (and behind stages on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> street Sides)



Colonnade as Stage Backdrop



Traditional Fountain at Center



Interactive fountain Features around It



# Public Art

Fountains and Lighting



Interactive and Play Sculpture



## Integrating Public Art into City Plaza

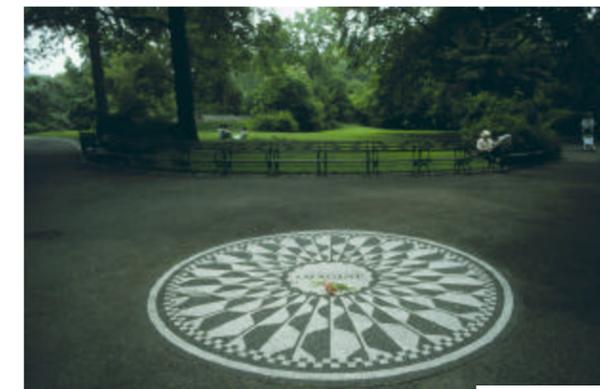
Public art has become increasingly important to most communities. It is an integral element in the design of almost all important civic spaces. Therefore, a small budget was allocated to include two local artists as public art consultants to the design team at this very earliest stage of the City Plaza master-planning design process.

Their work was intended to be just a beginning to the discussion and process of integrating public art into this very important public space. It was not intended to involve any actual design of art 'pieces', but rather just research and presentation of *approaches* to how public art has been integrated into other similar project, and how it might be integrated into such a space as City Plaza. The artists were specifically requested to research how public art can and has been integrated successfully into town center plazas, parks and squares, in both contemporary times and historically. Their research was compiled into a presentation to the project consultants and City Parks Dept. and Public Art staff, and these images presented as a sampling of that presentation.

A formal process for integrating, commissioning and developing public art for this space would begin after the preferred master plan is solidified.



Sculpture and Environmental art



'Functional' Art and Paving



# Design Elements



## Plaza Design 'Elements'

*Elements contained in illustrations throughout this report:*

**Grading** – Subtle differences in height should be used to achieve adequate drainage, and to define areas of use (e.g. lawns separate from hardscape).

**Water** – Water is a classic and universal draw!

- Can be combined with seating and art
- Can be traditional center fountain (e.g. classic American town squares)
- Can be interactive (e.g. many new fountains in civic spaces across the country)

*Elements contained in illustration throughout this report, and further described and on this page:*

**Seating** – An important element of every urban plaza – for rest, visiting and watching the surrounding activity.

- Benches – wood or cast iron
- Site walls
- Stairs

**Trash Receptacles** – A necessity for keeping any public space clean and well-kept. These should be made of durable materials of an elegant design.

# Design Elements: Paving

## Paving

More intense uses of public space require more durable paving. The important place of Chico's City Plaza also requires beauty. The Plaza's 'floor' can be made of various materials throughout or applied to specific areas:

- Brick (e.g. Savannah)
- Stone (e.g. Quincy Market)
- Gravel or decomposed granite (e.g. Bryant Plaza; advantages - cheap and somewhat porous for tree roots)
- Granite setts (e.g. typical in Europe)
- Artist-designed



Brick



Stone



Granite Setts



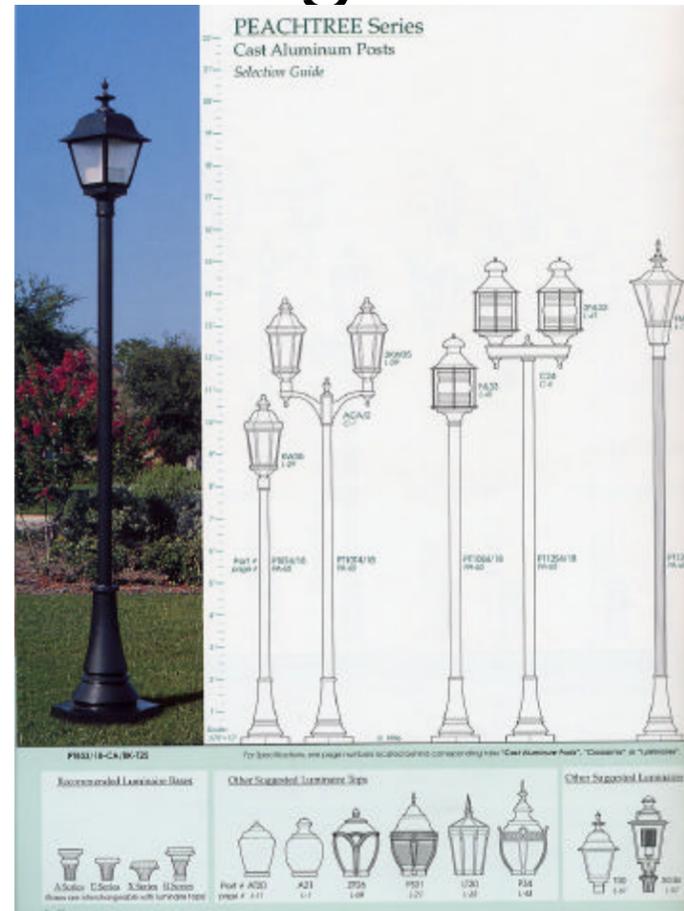
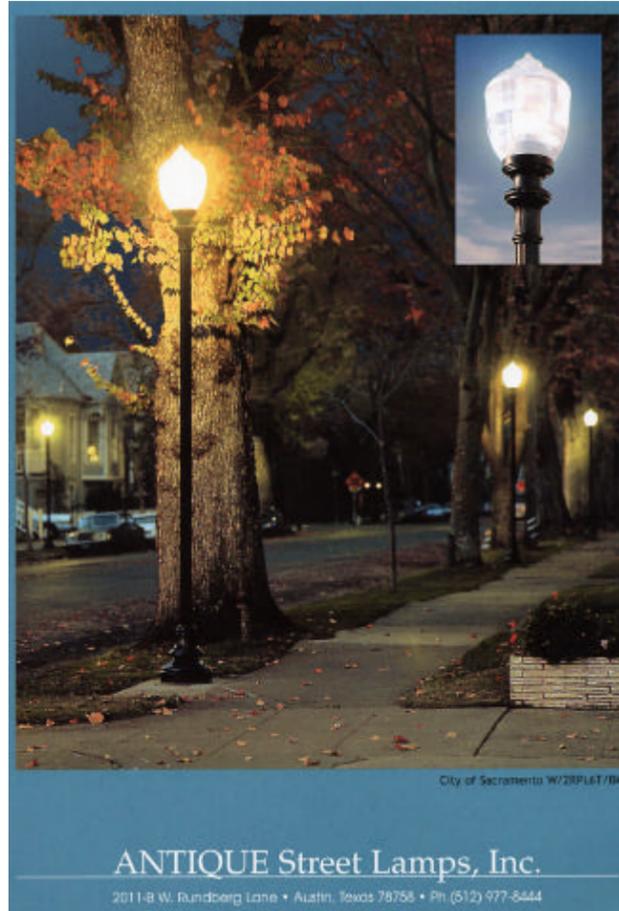
Artist-Designed



Decomposed Granite



# Design Elements: Lighting



## Lighting Design for Plaza Park

City Plaza – and the whole Downtown – is often used in the evening, as it should be to create an active, safe area. But lighting is also not just for safety – like in a home’s living room, it is for ambience, as well.

Effective lighting in City Plaza is essential to 3 of the 4 main goals for the redesign of the space:

- Improve functionality for community activities
- Increase safety and sense of security
- Repair its deteriorating, ‘shabby’ appearance

Lighting for a pedestrian space needs to be lower, more human-scaled, and more closely spaced than conventional street lighting. If chosen with care, decorative light standards can help beautify and distinguish the Plaza area.

Lamps should be placed every 20-30 feet along pathways to provide warm, radiant, continuous light. This sort of effective use of pedestrian lighting provides both safety for pedestrian movement and security by removing dark hiding places.

Light elements can also be used to highlight specific features such as fountains, stages and trees.

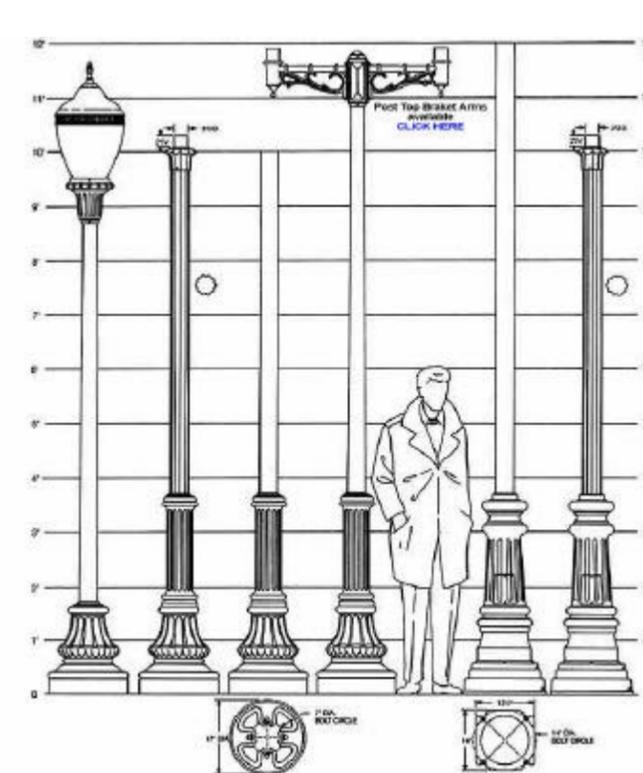
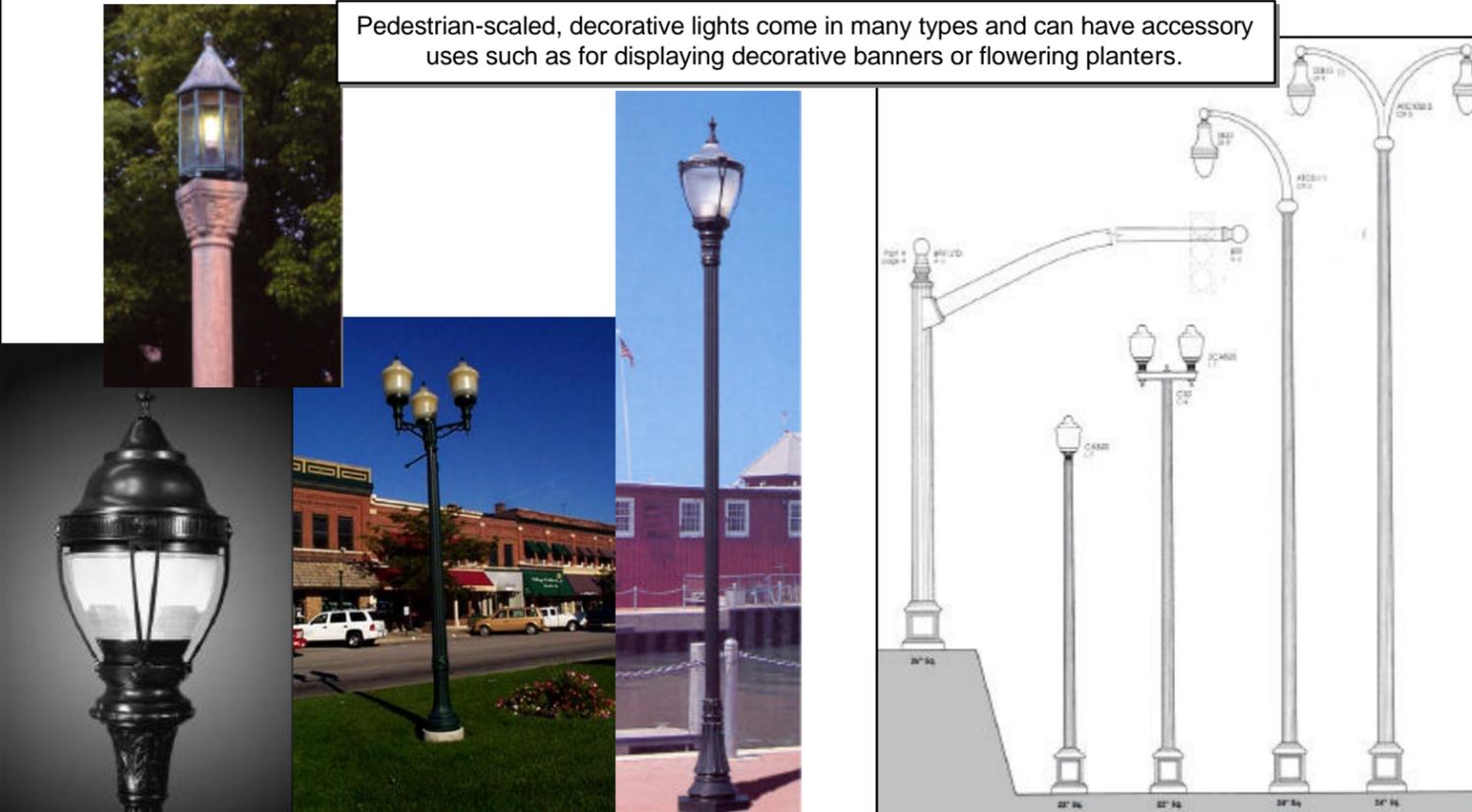
## Light Fixtures

Lamps - or "bulbs" – should be mercury vapor (a blue-white light) or metal halide, which is close to a balanced white. Low pressure sodium vapor lamps have a monochromatic yellow-orange light, which generally leaves an unsettling prison-yard-type glow in the area. The high pressure sodium vapor lighting generally used in Chico is less monochromatic, but still very yellow-orange. Metal halide sources used to be expensive, because short-lived, but they are now much more reasonable and are usually chosen where aesthetic criteria are of some importance - as in the case of City Plaza.

Luminaries (the objects that sit on top of the posts and hold the lamps) should be in some historical, traditional or decorative form: round, hexagonal, octagonal, square, or as globes or acorns (the latter can have frames attached; acorns are rarely glass, but rather some sort of plastic, and some are extremely vandal-resistant). Inserts, which can skew the distribution of the light in various ways (e.g. mostly down, or mostly to one side, etc.), can be considered for directing the light to appropriate areas (note that inserts tend not to work well in acorn or globe luminaries because they can create strange patterns on the face of the plastic and thus contradict the traditional/decorative look, so this should be taken into account).

Cast iron or steel (instead of fiberglass or cast aluminum) are the recommended materials for lamp posts because they are of highest quality. Light post height should be human-scaled (approximately 12-14'), since they are to be used for pedestrian-oriented lighting.

Pedestrian-scaled, decorative lights come in many types and can have accessory uses such as for displaying decorative banners or flowering planters.



Fountain lighting can provide a dramatic and beautiful effect at night.



# Public Restrooms

## Restroom Location Options



## Public Restroom Alternatives

The current porta-potty use for events at City Plaza is not a long-term restroom solution for this important public space. They are unsightly, many people will not use them because they believe they are unsanitary, and they kill the grass under and around them, turning the area into mud. Further, though they are meant to be temporary, because of the frequency of events they remain for long stretches of days during the sunny season.

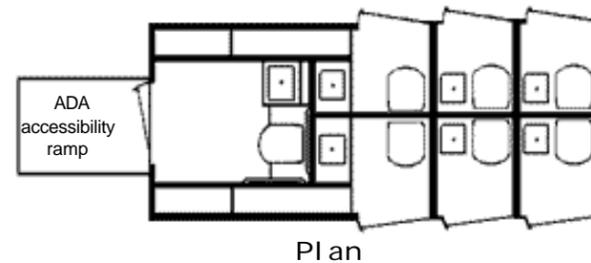
A permanent restroom structure within the Plaza was considered, and upon analysis is not recommended. Just as different numbers of porta-potties are set up for different-sized events, a single facility size could not accommodate the vast range of events sizes hosted in the Plaza. Furthermore, a permanent restroom structure/use would be quite foreign in the beautiful and classic design of this important civic space – analogous to not wanting to locate a restroom in the living room of one's home.

However, there are a number of other very good options for providing safe, convenient, clean and comfortable restroom facilities for Plaza events:

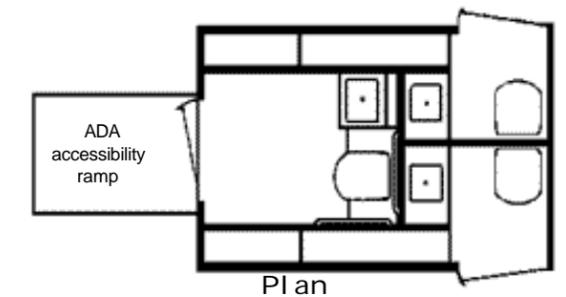
- Alt. 1:** Purchase and install freestanding restroom buildings in nearby parking lots. These would be convenient to event attendees who come and go from these lots.
- Alt. 2:** Open the existing City Hall building lobby, and provide a security guard to staff the location during events.
- Alt. 3:** Purchase a portable restroom trailer to park along the Plaza for events. A less-desirable but acceptable temporary variation of this alternative would be to replace a parking space along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, near a corner, with a semi-permanent 'porta-potty platform' - well-designed and landscaped such that it is well-camouflaged and unobtrusive both when porta-potties are and are not present.

## Alt. 3: City-Owned Portable Restroom Trailer

### Trailer - Larger Option



### Trailer - Smaller Option



## Alt. 1: Restrooms Built in Parking Lots



Alt. 2: Existing City Building

## Restrooms' Interior



# Conclusion and Next Steps

## **In Conclusion**

Following John Bidwell's example in bestowing this civic jewel to the community 130 years ago, the community now has the opportunity to revitalize, renew and even enhance this legacy both for today and for generations of the next 150 years. While this is a challenging undertaking, City Plaza has such a strong symbolic and historic meaning for Chico and its citizens that preserving and enhancing this cherished community icon is a most worthy endeavor.

## **Next Steps**

1. Public discussion and recommendations by the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission on this report and proposal.
2. Refinement to the existing proposal based on Commission input.
3. Review and approval by the Commission.
4. Development of preliminary construction and maintenance cost estimates and phasing plan for preferred alternative.
5. Presentation to the Chico City Council.
6. Initial Study of environmental impact.
7. Implementation: funding, engineering drawings, and construction.

# Appendix a: Public Planning Process Records

## Introduction

On these pages are the complete records of the input received in the initial public planning meeting for the City Plaza design update project, and the review and feedback received at the follow-up public presentation of the proposed design alternatives

## 'Visions' from Initial Public Meeting (3/02/02)

Each participant first wrote a single phrase or sentence describing their overall vision for the Plaza to be collected and reviewed by the design team as they began the design process.

- A reflection of Chico's past, present, and future--dedicated to Chico and its children.
- I hope to see no building tops towering above the tree line.
- 1) Large trees providing shade for most of the Plaza; 2) facility for public gatherings--concerts, etc., 3) public restrooms, and 4) benches or other areas for sitting/relaxing.
- I would like to see healthy, big shading trees, and lush grass. Update the gazebo. I love the diagonal walkway - colorful - two tone? Transfer the old fountain design to replace the one outside this building--not the spitting fish.
- 1) A solid and sound structure in the design of the Plaza. No randomness or placement of trees, sidewalks, or structures. 2) Signs the trees are continually replaced. 3) Larger trees on the periphery to better shade the surrounding streets and to distinguish a block that is different from the other trees on the other blocks.
- Would like City Plaza to be fundamentally unchanged in its layout with the deep shade that makes it a refuge during Chico's summer heat. I'd especially like it to be welcoming and safe for families and people who work Downtown.
- City Plaza would be the real heart of Downtown and the activity center of Chico. Several major events every week and lots of people doing lots of things every day--picnic, chess, other games, lots of benches.
- Native trees and shrubs (other than Oak), play areas, seating for concerts, removal of porta-potties.
- No looking over shoulder at questionable gatherings.
- Significantly preserved in general appearance.
- Clean, well-maintained, healthy gathering space. No more mismatched concrete. Vibrant community frame.
- An active space during the day, above and beyond planned events; where people choose to eat lunch, pass through, read books, etc.
- Continue tradition of Plaza Plaza being the city's gathering place and create nice hardscape areas at the four corners tied into "building" of sidewalks. Use these areas for Downtown support functions, mobile vendors, etc.
- I envision City Plaza surrounded by unique (historic, restored, and new) buildings -thriving with business and civic purposes. I envision a safe, secure environment that is covered by a canopy of trees, lined with a carpet of grass. I see people, concerts, people, picnics, children, gatherings, people, and community. I see the center hub of our Downtown that looks cared for, appreciated and used.
- I would hope to see a "family atmosphere"--picnics, etc. I would love to see business people Downtown using the Plaza for breaks/lunches/even meetings. The Plaza would provide a venue for community events and gatherings and be able to maintain a clean, well-groomed appearance.
- Center of community activity, crossroads of our city life, able to withstand and accommodate large groups of citizens partaking in civic events.
- A space where people could comfortably congregate for conversation, post-shopping rests -- smaller, subdivided areas for sitting, reading, talking, etc. Decorative additional pavement - more clearly defined corners (i.e. mild enclosure at corners).
- The lush green active heart of Chico -- constantly used.
- A place of reception.
- A summer-shaded, winter-sunned city commons. An open space, welcoming foot-borne people to stroll or pause and relax.
- A gathering locale for community social events and activities.
- A place of brief shady refuge while passing through the city retail blocks. A place that reflects the cultural identity of a historic location.
- Used by everybody -- all ages, economic strata, race, etc. Welcoming, graceful, restful; vibrant with community activity, of all corners of the community.

## 'Values' from Initial Public Meeting

Then participants were asked to write one- or two-word values they held for the Plaza, each on a separate adhesive note. Taking turns, they posted these on the walls of the meeting room, grouping their notes with others that were similar, so that it would be visually apparent which values were most widely shared in the community.

### Value # Similar

#### **Active/Planned Community Use: 19**

Community Gathering Place / Center	6
User/event friendly	5
(Exciting) Activity Space	3
Funcional/Utility	2
Conduct Business	1
Performing Arts	1
Recreation	1

#### **Safety: 16**

Safety	13
High Visibility	2
Lighting	1

#### **Everyday Use: 14**

Encountering People/People Watching	4
24 Hour/Well-used	2
Conversation	1
Playground	1
Multi-Use	1
Family-Oriented	1
Leading Lives	1
Best Use of Space	1
Picnic	1
Activities that Draw Positives	1

#### **Attracting/Welcoming: 12**

Inviting/Welcoming	8
Comfort	3
Accessible	1

#### **Expressing History and Tradition: 11**

Historic	2
Respect Tradition/Responsibility	2
Diverse Cultural History of Chico	1
Farm History	1
Natural History	1
Traditional	1
Veteran History	1
Chico's Foundation	1
Pioneer Days Style	1

### Value # Similar

#### **Elements: 10**

Fountain/Water	2
Shaded	3
Durable/Hardened	2
Lots of Nice Seating	1
Sunny Places	2

#### **Landscape: 10**

Greenery / Natural	4
Native Landscape	2
Seasonal & More Color	2
Landscape Orientation	1
Birds	1

#### **Local character: 9**

Local Culture/Character/identity	4
Sense of Community/Civic Ownership	4
Uniqueness of Place	1

#### **Character: 9**

Artistic Flair, Design, Value	3
Playful & Fun	1
Urban Respect	1
Romantic Refuge	1
Open Space	1
Balance	1
Whimsy	1
Soft	1

#### **Beauty: 7**

Beauty/Aesthetics	3
Clean/Fresh	2
Well Designed/Beautiful	1
Pleasant Outdoor Community Space	1

#### **Sanctuary: 6**

Respite/Sanctuary	2
Personal Space	1
Meditate	1
Peaceful Nature	1
Peaceful Reflection	1

#### **Other/Misc: 3**

NOT Taco Bell/Jack in the Box	1
Zero Tolerance for Deviant Behavior	1
Environmentally Friendly	1

# Appendix a: Public Planning Process Records (cont.)

## Brainstorming and Priorities from Initial Meeting

Finally, the microphones were opened for a 'brainstorm' session, where participants identified the problems and solutions they saw for the Plaza, and design team members recorded these on large sheets of paper tacked to the walls. After everyone had a chance to say whatever they wanted to say, each participant was given 7 dot stickers which they could use to 'vote' for their priority problems and solutions by sticking it next to the recorded item on the wall. This enable the community's priorities for the plaza to become immediately visually apparent, as well.

### List of Problems and Solution Brainstorms and Priority Votes:

Problems	Number of Priority Votes
Curb/ sidewalk seam is just mud	7
Turf is a problem (functions as ashtray, attracts bees)	6
Existing landscaping is a hodge-podge of greenery - pull together	5
Too many 'dead spaces' surrounding Plaza: parking lots, drive-through food places	1
Problems/concern with unintended use of covered structure	-

Solutions	Number of Priority Votes
Need bathrooms or porta-potty storage area	11
Install better lighting	10
Keep line of sight into Plaza	10
Provide more hardscape for large groups	9
Traditional design but modern function	9
Sculpture art for kids to play on instead of trees	8
Water/fountain	8
Not wood benches (perhaps stone?)	8
Small curbs to delineate walkways / Level changes in the ground plane	8
New Gazebo	7
Encourage pedestrian access & attractions; pedestrian signals at all adjacent intersections	7
Traffic-calming along Broadway and Main	6
Brick inlay in walkways	5
Public Safety; Perimeter is problem - need security & activity	5
Keep bandstand covered (roof)	4
Durable material for band/gazebo structure	4
Circular steps around round platform/stage for seating	4
Sub/ area into smaller zones for smaller gatherings	3
Interactive art and games for various ages (chess example)	3
Dance floor designed into floor of plaza	3
More formal/consistent (cohesive) tree planting	3
More beautiful garbage receptacles	2
Tie to fountain across the street (reconsider design)	2
Permanent seating for concerts	2
Feature like at One-Mile - Grass slope w/ cement platform at top	2
Insist Post Office remain downtown	2
Plan/design to encourage & create use/traverse of Plaza by city employees	2

## Solutions (cont.)

Solutions	Number of Priority Votes
Relocate / replace 2 cheap fast food places w/ family friendly businesses	1
Extend Plaza Watch	1
Gazebo works well where it is	1
Place an additional stage in another quadrant	1
More electricity near Christmas Tree for more lights	-
Possible band shell	-
Need access into Plaza for vehicles but don't allow access to be too easy	-
Consider moving Yule tree to original location	-
Spark curiosity	-

## Input and Feedback from Follow-up Presentation (4/10/02)

The design team took all of this recorded input from the community and added their own design expertise and experience to develop and propose three updated plan alternatives. These new alternatives were presented at a subsequent, 'follow-up' public meeting for participants' review and feedback.

There seemed to be more consensus at the initial public meeting about the goals and vision for the Plaza than at the follow-up meeting. At this second meeting, input ranged from a desire to leave the Plaza exactly as it is (or even go back 150 years to restore it as a sort of Victorian park museum piece), all the way to scraping most of the site to install an amphitheater-type performance venue -- and many more moderate points between.

(Subsequently, the design team used the public comment, staff input, and what seemed to be the most well-received features of the existing proposals to developed the 4<sup>th</sup>, 'composite'-type alternative presented in this report.)

### Follow-up Presentation Input:

- Fountain noise - turn off for events?
- Restrooms – San Luis Obispo trailer restrooms - \$20,000; but no ADA access
- Provide more power outlets for events
- Need to keep people out of fountains?
- Christmas tree retained?
- *Yes...leave in significant trees (let them 'interrupt' design)*
- Introduce playful anomalies to plan
- Add more 'clean' hardscape
- Provide for new elements to be added over time (e.g. public art/expression)
- Provide enough space for audience facing event area (e.g. performance area in corner with diagonal pathways diverting around.)
- Keep traditional design (keep it as-is & just refurbish)
- Move large events to Children's Plaza
- Add Victorian fountain in center
- Use lighting to add beauty & emphasis (creative lighting heights, orientations, etc.)
- Is this the right place to have events?
- Central Business District does not have enough parking
- Have other venues (use these for events)
- Make it the most beautiful space in the community (use as a pattern of beautification, especially of the Central Business District)

- Create demonstration garden
- Community gathering place for: 1) Informal meetings/uses, 2) Events
- Make it inviting for "living", comfortable
- What is process? How is it going to look during that process?
- *Use phasing (e.g. perimeter first)*
- *Disruption of construction necessary even with restoration*
- Maintenance concerns: lowest bidder chosen; realities of implementation
- Propose design that is not so expensive
- 'Front porch' rather than living room
- Don't make people hike to next block for restrooms
- Can you 'landscape in' public restrooms? (Example: Pioneer Square in Portland)
- Events are becoming new tradition
- Both Plaza and plaza events can co-exist
- Turf idea (re-constructed and slightly raised) is good
- Keep it more plain & open (less discreet/individual plantings)
- Would comfortable gathering/sitting places work at corners?
- It is worth paying for larger trees
- For funding, ask City to increase development fees
- The community values trees and green space, also loves gatherings - can have both
- Also can have tradition & modern function
- Due to elm disease, almost have blank canvas
- Use grade changes & terraces to create amphitheatre (10' change corner to corner, below and above grade)
- Can break with tradition to create new traditions
- Have 'plaza'/events in one corner & 'Plaza' in other three
- Keep traditional look (e.g. oranges) - use innovation elsewhere
- Need parking (and toilets) downtown - how about under City Plaza?
- Close street(s) on multiple sides of City Plaza
- Close off adjacent street(s) to use for events (to preserve City Plaza from use impacts)
- Designate diagonal parking (on Main and Broadway)
- Neighbors around Children's Plaza will not allow amplified sound (the precluding having events there)
- Downtown bathrooms already exist near Children's Plaza
- Shuttles could help bring people in for events, instead adding parking for each car
- Design should have no straight lines
- Nothing wrong with what is there
- Keep greenness, tradition (it adapts well to events)
- Keep it the way it is, it adapts well, is multi-purpose
- Orange trees need water system
- Reclaim space from street lanes for planter strips
- Why not move sidewalks in?
- *Continuity of sidewalks from surrounding blocks/downtown*
- How long will implementation take? What about the interim?
- If restored to original, what prevents same problems from coming back?
- *Upgrade*
- *Tree roots are a problem (with original spacing of such large trees)*
- Maintenance is key – find private funding / creative financing