



## **PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE**

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To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email [PublicComment@losaltosca.gov](mailto:PublicComment@losaltosca.gov)

**From:** [Elizabeth Beattie Li](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Patio expansion to Los Altos Library  
**Date:** Monday, June 26, 2023 7:18:42 PM

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Hi,

I am writing, as a Los Altos resident , to request that the City Council send the plans for the addition of a 7700 square foot patio to the Los Altos Library to the Development Services Director, Nick Zornes, for review and approval.

I would like to know that there had been secondary, and local, review of this project. I don't see the need for a large patio, and feel that it wouldn't add to the library and would divert funds better spent elsewhere.

The Los Altos library is lovely and has wonderful staff, but I have never seen it overused to the extent that it needs expansion. Bigger isn't necessarily better.

Elizabeth Lu  
718 Terrace Ct.  
Los Altos, CA

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [John Reed](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** I support the library patio expansion  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 27, 2023 4:35:04 AM

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I am in favor of expanding the library patio to create an inviting natural outdoor space for residents to do whatever they came to the library to do, especially when most of the inside tables are in use. I find it nice to have a place to have conversations with other residents/parents without disturbing those inside the building.

John Reed, 1545 Wistaria Ln, Los Altos

**From:** [Mary Popek](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM #17, 6/27/2023  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 27, 2023 10:16:10 AM

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I support the Library Patio project on the agenda of the City Council, Item #17. Not only will this expansion aid the library, but will give the community a beautiful view of our Heritage Orchard.

Respectfully,

Mary Popek

(a 49 year resident of Los Altos)

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**From:** [Packard, Jane M](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 17 - JUNE 27  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 27, 2023 3:05:40 PM

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In the spirit of collaboration, I recommend that the Los Altos City Council consider an ancient story, the [Tragedy of the Commons](#), in deliberation over the dilemma posed by the conceptual plan to construct a Library Reading Patio partially within the boundary of the Heritage Apricot Orchard, a City Landmark. As this project is at a conceptual stage, I will outline three possible scenarios of how it might unfold. In conclusion, I recommend that the Planning Services Director initiate a process to develop a Comprehensive Site Plan for the Civic Center landscape.

The Tragedy of the Commons story illustrates how individual rational decisions about the use of a communal resource can lead to degradation that no longer serves the community. In tangible terms, loss of 5% of the trees in an orchard may not be considered a negative impact by one individual. However, if the case is repeated five times, then experts likely would consider the community resource to be degraded. Generally, the Commons dilemma is resolved by placing the resource in the trust of a governing body that encourages mutual restraint by consensus. In this case, City Council established the Heritage Apricot Orchard as a City Landmark in [Resolution 81-23](#) and defined the boundaries in [Resolution 91-31](#). The conceptual plan for the patio extends within the boundary of the City Landmark.

#### Scenario 1. Current Conceptual Design- construction inside the Landmark boundary

The responsibility of the City Council to protect historical assets is established in Ordinance 90-22513. Relevant statements are:

- “(a) Safeguard the heritage of the City by providing for the protection of irreplaceable historic resources representing significant elements of its history”
- “(c) Encourage public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the City’s past, and foster civic and neighborhood pride and sense of identity based upon the recognition and use of the City’s historic resources”.

One of the duties of the Historical Commission (established in Ordinance 78-16) was specified in Ordinance 90-22513 as

- “(c) Recommend to the appropriate City agencies or departments, projects and action programs for the recognition, conservation, enhancement and use of the City’s historic resources, including standards to be followed with respect to any applications for permits to construct, change, alter, remodel, remove or otherwise affect such resources”.

Logically, if the permit application for the patio project includes construction within the boundary of the City Landmark, then this will trigger a process involving the duties of the Historical Commission. As with any construction project, there also is a wider footprint involving soil compaction by heavy equipment, materials storage, construction debris and risk to existing trees. The combined impacts of the construction and construction footprint would need to be considered.

#### Scenario 2. Design a transitional softscape between the hardscape and greenscape

If the permit application specifies a transitional softscape between the existing hardscape of the plaza and the greenscape of the orchard, then a separate set of issues would need to

be considered by experts in landscape design and maintenance of historical apricot orchards. Standards for care of the living assets within the Historical Landmark would be needed.

Decisions will need to be made regarding tradeoffs between “enhancement and use of the City’s historic resources” and “conservation” of said resources. By establishing clear guidelines for weighing the risks and benefits of construction in this case, City staff will be setting a precedent for analyzing future permit applications for construction within these landmark boundaries.

A major challenge for City staff will be consideration of the cumulative effects of construction within the boundary of this City Landmark. Since expertise in maintenance of an historic apricot orchard may be beyond the experience of current staff, I recommend engaging expert opinion available within the networks of this extended community.

- Scenario 3. Design a hardscape outside the boundary of the City Landmark

If the permit application is for construction outside the boundary of the City Landmark, then the sole consideration would be the potential impacts of the construction footprint. For example, existing procedures specify that a certified arborist would be identified to prepare the tree protection plan for the construction phase.

During construction, a monitoring procedure would be needed to ensure compliance with the tree protection plan. Decisions would need to be made for effective compliance monitoring and consequences for non-compliance.

In summary, I want to see this proposal through to a successful conclusion that is embraced by advocates for protection of historical assets and urban green space as well as advocates for expansion of library services. A key question will be:

**“How does this project fit into the bigger picture of developing a comprehensive landscaping site plan for the urban green space at the Civic Center?”**

Sincerely,  
Jane Packard

Jane M. Packard, PhD  
[Associate Professor Emeritus](#)  
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979-220-4115

**From:** [Jay Singh](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 17 - JUNE 27.  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 27, 2023 4:20:54 PM

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Dear Members of the Council,

I am writing to express my support for keeping 10 producing apricot trees alive & for the City in honoring its explicit commitment to maintaining the Los Altos Heritage Orchard & with that, J. Gilbert Smith's legacy.

Thank you, & I look forward to working together & in sharing service to the city of Los Altos & its community.

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Best,

Jay Singh