

VWCA Placemaking Workshop Recommendations for: 'plaza'; Russell Street Island and Skinner Road Median February 28, 2012

Introduction:

As noted in the Placemaking Workshop report, the Victoria West Community Association (VWCA) Transportation Committee has worked for many years with the City of Victoria Transportation department in developing the Victoria West Transportation Plan. The 2012 stage of implementation of this plan involves the South and West side of Skinner Street and Craigflower Road from Catherine Street to Styles Street, including the streets and sidewalks in front of the commercial operations along and adjacent to Craigflower Road. The City agreed to the VWCA providing recommendations on the details to be incorporated into the works so as to customize the look and feel of the improvements. To obtain community input, a series of Placemaking Workshops were held, with enthusiastic input from a diverse range of stakeholders, that have resulted in the following consensus recommendations.

A. Pavement:

Recommendation 1 – see “plaza” drawing:

Note: “plaza” was only the working title used during Placemaking for the area in front of the commercial operations on Craigflower Road between Raynor and Pine Streets, and should not be considered the long term name for the space.

It is recommended that:

- A series of rectangular sections be created in the sidewalk, as per the “plaza” drawing. NOTE: The overall structure and location of rectangular shapes of exposed aggregate pavement should reflect the architectural elements and proportion of the building (i.e. long narrow rectangles line up with doors to apartments).
- Within those rectangles, a curved pattern be created as shown to represent the flow of people and refer to the water that surrounds us.
- The flow avoids the two hydro poles and phone booth and location of new pedestrian lamp pole.
- The design mesh with the existing sidewalks at either end to permit easy continuation of the design at a later date.
- There should be three distinct textures/greys (i.e. brushed concrete outer frames and two shades of exposed aggregate within the frames. One exposed aggregate lighter and one darker, with pieces of glass being “seeded” into the lighter pattern, as noted on the drawings (i.e. in the spiral and in other areas to represent water sparkle or foam).

Recommendation 2 – see Russell Street Island drawing:

It is recommended that:

- The design of Russell Street Island visually link to the “plaza” by using the same exposed aggregate/broomed concrete flow, with two distinct textures/greys (i.e. brushed concrete and exposed aggregate).

B. Enclosure:

Recommendation 3 – see “plaza” drawing:

It is recommended that:

- The City integrate footings, anchors and electricity into the sidewalk to accommodate the future installation of six (6) lamp posts, three (3) of which will have lighting fixtures installed on them, and therefore require the electricity. The concept from the Placemaking Workshops was to create a sense of enclosure and provide a place to hang banners and seasonal decorations and lights.
- The City provide a bike rack, in the location noted on the drawing, large enough to accommodate eight (8) bikes. NOTE: The VWCA would like to be consulted on the type of bike rack and the potential for creating an “artful” bike rack.
- The City install one (1) trash cans, in consultation with the VWCA, and support a recycling receptacle in partnership with the VWCA and business owners.

Recommendation 4 – see Russell Street Island drawing:

It is recommended that:

- The City, in consultation with the VWCA, provide electricity and a light pole footing in the Russell Street Island so that in future the community has the ability to visually link the Russell Street Island to the “plaza” by the installation of lighting fixtures.
- If it is not possible to install a lighting fixture, then anchors be provided for the installation of poles, for banners, to visibly link the island to the “plaza”.

C. Seating:

Recommendation 5 “plaza”:

It is recommended that

- The City, consultation with the VWCA, provide portable seating in lieu of permanent seating that several of the adjacent businesses have committed to store in their operations when they close.

Recommendation 6 – see Russell Street Island drawing:

It is recommended that

- A concrete pad be built beside the sidewalk that would be the site for future community created seating (exact location to be determined at a later date).

D. Crosswalks:

Recommendation 7 – Raynor Street Crosswalk

It is recommended that:

- The City install whatever might be necessary for possible future signalization of the Raynor/Craigflower pedestrian crossing.

E. Plants:

Recommendation 8

“plaza”:

It is recommended that

- A hose bib be installed somewhere along “plaza” to enable easier maintenance, by the community, of community supplied and installed planters. Note: The above ground planters are a change from the original concept of in ground planting which are necessitated due to underground utilities. Thus having easy access to water is essential.
- A water fountain be installed on the “plaza”.

Recommendation 9

Russell Street Island:

It is recommended that:

- Shrubs be planted (not turf) in the Russell Street Island, perhaps combined with grasses.
- Plants from the plant list at the end of this document be used in the Russell Street Island and the adjacent bulbs.
- Similar plants be used for both Russell Street Island, Skinner Street median and the green bulb areas either side of Russell island and in the Russell Street green space across the road.
- extra soil depth be provided to support future non-turf plantings in the bulbs next to Russell Street Island.
- A tree, or small tree sized shrub, be planted in the South end of the Russell Street Island

Recommendation 10

Skinner Street Median:

It is recommended that:

- Plants from the plant list at the end of this document be used in the Skinner Street Median.
- Turf NOT be installed on the median but rather some alternative native shrubs be used with preference to grasses to provide some graceful motion or native or beneficial or edible plants.
- Evergreen plant cover be used.

Recommendation 11

Plant Preferences & Plant List:

It is recommended that:

- The City use the plants preferred by the Placemakers, which are judged to be attractive, native, flower or are evergreen, and provide forage for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies. In addition, they are drought tolerant, pest resistant, provide beneficial insect habitat, require minimal pruning. They are hardy because they are adapted to our local region, and support natural ecosystems.
- Plants from the following plant list be used since they are native, drought tolerant, flower or are evergreen, provide forage for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies:

VWCA Placemakers Plant List

Tree sized shrub:

Philadelphus lewisii - mock orange, fragrant white blossoms

Shrubs:

Gautheria Shallon - salal, evergreen, edible berries

Mahonia aquifolium 'compacta' - Oregon grape (medicinal), evergreen, flowers in February, attracts hummingbirds, (on Parks' plant list)

Ribes sanguineum - red flowering currant, attracts hummingbirds

Rosa rugosa 'alba' - hardy, pest/disease-free, compact, fragrant, does not need pruning, best hips

Rosa nutkana - Nootka rose

Spiraea 'magic carpet' colourful foliage, flowers (on Parks' list)

Vaccinium ovatum - evergreen huckleberry, edible (on Parks' list)

Ferns:

Blechnum spicant - deer fern (evergreen)

Polystichum munitum - western sword fern (evergreen)

Evergreen ground cover:

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi - Kinnikinnick - edible berries

Perennials and bulbs (attract beneficial insects):

Achillea millefolium - yarrow

Allium acuminatum - hooker's onion, mauve florets

Aquilegia Formosa - red columbine

Columbia lewisia

Camassia leichtlini & quamash - large and small camas

Delphinium menziesii - Menzie's larkspur

Erigeron speciosus - showy fleabane

Eriophyllum lanatum - woolly sunflower, silver foliage, long blooming

Lilium columbiana - native lily (like tiger lily but more delicate)

Penstemon seerulatus - cascade penstemon

Other PLANTS to consider:

Many participants suggested Lavenders, and herbs such as Rosemary. Both attract pollinators.

Also, tall ornamental grasses such as those along Harbour Road are encouraged.

During our workshops, participants often celebrated the plantings in the medians along Esquimalt Road in Esquimalt.

Esquimalt Parks' PLANT LIST includes:

Rosa Meidiland-red, an Explorer hybrid with the benefits of the Rosa rugosa above

Hebe Albicans-red edge, attracts beneficial insects

Lavandula agustifolia-munstead, attracts beneficial insects

Verbena Venosa, attracts beneficial insects