## General Public Comment

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<th>Name of Sender</th>
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<td>1. Bob Drews</td>
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Commission secretary,

Having recently back to Santa Barbara where I grew up, I wanted to comment on the proposed redesign of the plaza. I have only read the above article and have no other information about the redesign. My background is 38 years in municipal, public works, and wetland landscape projects for the counties of Marin, Napa, and Sonoma in Landscape Contracting.

I want to show some similarities and describe to another historic downtown park in size and scope to that of De la Guerra Plaza. In 2017 with much anticipated public comment and criticism, the City of Santa Rosa completed the Courthouse Square landscape renovation project. The intent was to increase community gathering and public events.

Some of the elements of the *initial* design included:
Removing several large historic redwood trees. A symbol to the community, eliminating welcomed shade, and visual interest for the surrounding businesses.
Removing all lawns and various concrete seat walls throughout the Square. Installing new decorative concrete, 48" box trees, and inadequate amount of park benches.

After much public comment the *revised* design included:
Adding lawn irrigation with reclaimed water. Adding additional benches and increasing the sizes and quantities of trees.

The reason for comparing the two projects is noting how the community reacted (Courthouse Square) and importance of the cooling effect and texture that lawn brings. The project benefits by minimizing storm water run off and adding ground water. With the amount of trees shown in the rendering, adding lawn provides a practical compliment. Trees take years to grow and mature in order to provide shade and visual interest next to the tall buildings. Families with small children can experience a more relaxing environment. Graffiti, concrete cracking and staining, tends to be reduced with less hardscape. Skateboarding may be an issue in the area with greater hardscape.

We all recognize how important lawn reduction is with needed water conservation. However with reclaimed water when available or new subsurface (Netafim) irrigation the demands are greatly diminished.

If you have the opportunity look up the Santa Rosa project and see the images. In
closing I believe there can be a beneficial balance between the two elements with both lawn and hardscape.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Robert Drews
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