

**CITY OF ALBANY  
PLANNING AND ZONING AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: 2/10/09

Prepared by: LJ

Reviewed by: JB

**ITEM/**

**SUBJECT: Amendment to Civic Center Design Review Approval to Incorporate Landscape Plan**

**SITE: 1000 San Pablo – Albany Civic Center**

**APPLICANT/**

**OWNER: City of Albany**

**ZONING: PF-Public Facility**

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Open public hearing and continue to date certain of February 24, 2009.

**BACKGROUND/PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

As per the action of the Planning and Zoning Commission in the 2006 approval of the design for the Civic Center project, landscaping plans are to be submitted for design review of the Albany Civic Center retrofitting project.

*A public notice was sent on January 30 based on plans submitted by the landscape designer. At the request of the designer, revised plans will be submitted and forwarded to the Commission on Monday, February 9. (The current plans have confusing errors)*

**Bay-Friendly Landscaping**

The “Stopwaste.org” Bay-Friendly Landscaping Program has provided funding for the Albany Civic Center landscaping project. New plantings will be incorporated into the existing landscaped area, and will utilize native and drought-resistant plants to ensure that the landscaping is ecologically safe and efficient. By implementing the Bay-Friendly guidelines, the proposal reduces waste and stormwater runoff, conserves topsoil, energy, and water, and minimizes chemical and fertilizer use. The project has met the specific requirements to be eligible for the Bay-Friendly Grant by implementing such measures as using 3 inches of mulch in all planting areas, diverting a minimum of 50 % of landscape construction and demolition waste, using non-turf plants that require little or no summer water, and including an automatic irrigation control system with rain shut-off devices. The plans include a Bay-Friendly Scorecard with a list of the specific requirements met.

## Design Review

### Public Art

Although the Civic Center project is not subject to the Art in Public Places Ordinance, it has been recognized that public art should be incorporated in the project. The proposed placement for the art project will be in a raised circular bed at the southern entrance from the parking lot into the administrative wing of the building. This is the most heavily used entrance into City Hall, and as pedestrians approach the steps they pass by the raised bed, which is approximately 13' in diameter. In recent history, this bed was landscaped, and the original 1960's architectural renderings of the building show a fountain at this location. Irrigation will be installed to the circular bed so that landscaping can be incorporated into the public art installation if desired. Additionally, three new benches will replace the existing deteriorated ones at this southern entrance. The Arts Committee will determine the specific artwork to be installed at this site.

The landscaping plans are designed with the intention for art installation to be focused solely at the southern entrance. However, the Arts Committee has recently proposed that additional artwork be spread throughout the entire Civic Center site. Staff recommends that the landscaping plans remain as proposed, and that future installations of public art can be determined after the project is complete (public art could also be included inside City Hall).

### Tree Proposal

The plans include the removal of six mature pine trees. Three of these trees are towards the center of the site, directly next to the administrative wing of the Civic Center. The other three are at the western tip of the property. These trees are not native to the area and require extra maintenance work to clean the pine needles off the roofs of the buildings. Because landscaping work is being done at this time, it seems appropriate to remove these trees as part of the new design. This will ensure a cohesive appearance, and the proposed plantings will provide more efficient and ecologically sound landscaping around the site.

New trees are proposed to be planted as part of the Bay-Friendly Landscaping program. These trees are native to the area and include Red Maple and Strawberry trees, which require occasional watering. The Red Maple trees will line the eastern edge of the property along San Pablo, and the southern edge along Marin. One will also be installed at the eastern tip of the property and a few will be installed at the center of the parking lot in improved planter islands. Two Strawberry trees will be planted along the southern edge of the property, and one in a planter island in the parking lot. The existing Red Maples at the southeastern tip of the site (San Pablo and Marin) will remain. Other forms of shrubs and small trees such as Wild Lilac and Toyon plants will be installed along with the larger trees.

### Additional Notes

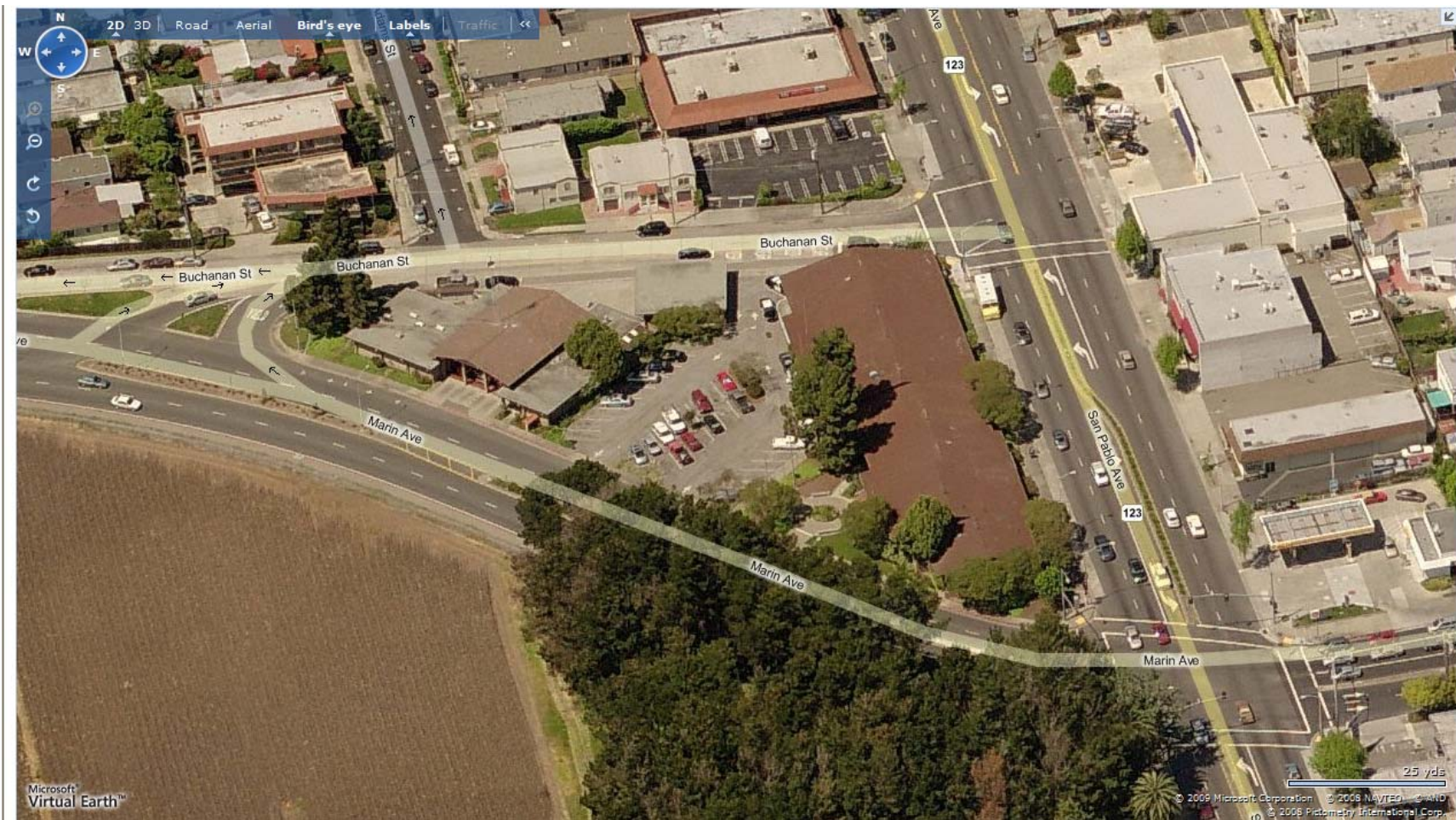
Staff will be working on the placement for a new sign for the City of Albany to be installed at the eastern tip of the property, near the merge between Buchanan Street and Marin Ave. This sign could serve as a replacement for the existing “service club” sign at the corner of Marin and San Pablo along the fence of University Village. The design and specific elements of the sign are to be determined at a later date.

### Appeals:

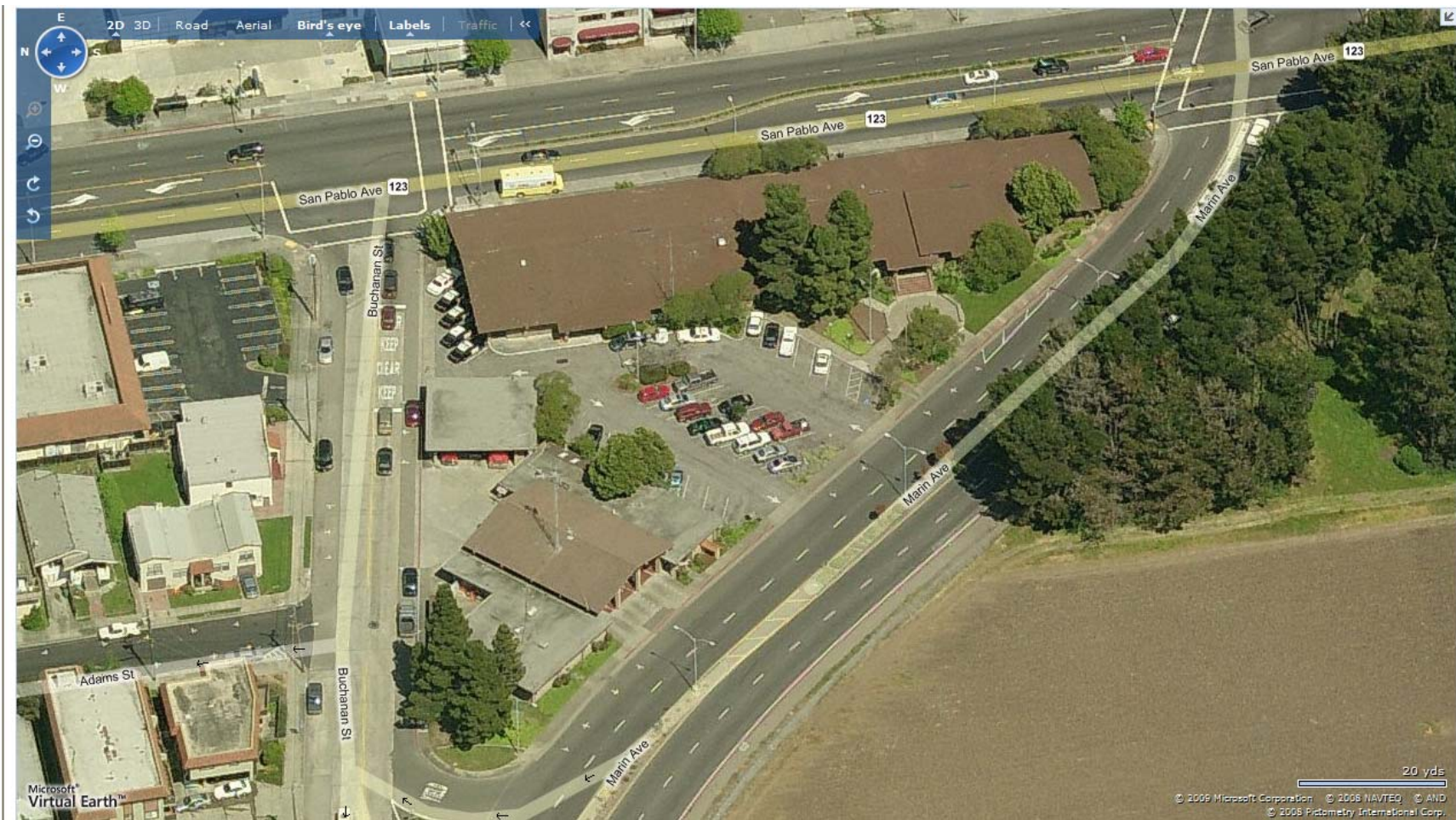
The Albany Municipal Code provides that any action of the Planning and Zoning Commission may be appealed to the City Council if such appeal is filed within 14 days of the date of action. Appeals may be filed in the Community Development Department by completing the required form and paying the required fee.

### Attachments:

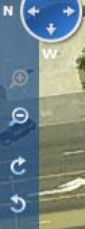
1. Application, Plans, Photos







E 2D 3D Road Aerial Bird's eye Labels Traffic <<



San Pablo Ave 123

San Pablo Ave 123

San Pablo Ave 123

Buchanan St

Main Ave

Adams St

Buchanan St

Main Ave

Microsoft Virtual Earth

20 yds

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