

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Environmental Commission](#)
Subject: Support for Strengthening Natural Features in the Comprehensive Plan
Date: Thursday, May 22, 2025 11:34:13 AM
Attachments: [Green Team.jpg](#)
[Mural.JPG](#)

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Good morning, my name is Jeff Crockett. Since 1980, I have lived at 506 E. Kingsley and have been the Communications Officer of the Old Fourth Ward Historic District Association. In 2021, I helped to form a group called the Green Team to create native plant gardens downtown to attract pollinators and address our concern that the downtown was a native plant desert. We approached the DDA and got permission to create two gardens on plots of land that bordered the Library Lot. In 2022, we got permission to expand to four gardens. See attached map. It was meant to help begin the transition to an urban park that was promised to voters in 2018 with the passage of Proposition A. In the Spring of 2023, we added murals to the gardens. See attached mural photo.

This year, we have followed the development of the Comprehensive Plan, hoping that the Library Lot would be included in the Plan. There are some references to natural features in the plan, but the references are primarily aspirational. For example, Goal 10 in Infrastructure and Services:

1. Balance development with protection and integration of critical natural features to foster a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem
2. Protect, enhance and manage critical natural features or open space that provide ecological benefits
3. Encourage tree cover and landscaping to help mitigate the urban heat island effect

There is also a reference to the Pros Plan (2023-2027), which clearly indicates that the downtown is significantly underserved with 4.11 acres per 1000 residents compared to the city-wide ratio of 17.96 acres per 1000 residents.

Unfortunately, if passed in August, Ballot Proposals A and B would eliminate the native plant gardens and replace them with huge residential towers on top of a rebuilt library and a vaguely worded public space. The result would be a massive heat island in combination with the residential tower on top of the old credit union site and the residential tower planned for the Y-lot. So, on the one hand, we have a few lofty aspirations in the Comprehensive Plan calling to protect natural features, but then providing no credible protection for natural features as a result of increased density. This is also true of trees that will be cut down when multiplexes get erected in the newly created Residential and Transition Districts.

In conclusion, there needs to be much stronger language in the Comprehensive Plan to save natural features from getting eliminated by the measures to increase density, including the perennial gardens at the Center of the City. Thanks for your consideration,

Jeff Crockett

