

Trees

Downtown committee will let experts choose trees

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SANTA CRUZ — Picking trees isn't as easy as you'd think.

Members of the downtown Streetscape Committee voted Wednesday to let the experts choose the final two species of trees to be planted along Pacific Avenue.

After several weeks of choosing a tree — only to find out at the following meeting that it wouldn't be good for this climate or could pose maintenance problems — the committee opted to look at the forest instead of the trees.

The general guidelines they issued for picking specific trees were:

- London plane trees likely will

be planted on the east side of Pacific in a staggered pattern (one in the street near the curb between two on the sidewalks).

The spacing remains every 25 feet.

- Some kind of flowering tree — or one with nicely colored foliage — is to be planted on the west side as a contrast to the plane trees.

- A line of palm trees will be at the head of Cooper Street in front of the proposed cinema/retail business at the old Gottschalks site.

- In the median strip along Pacific south of Cathcart Street, there will be a fourth species that can grow to stately height.

The sides of the street there likely will be lined with the same kind of flowering tree as chosen elsewhere, but the committee left that

up to the staff and consultants.

Although the full streetscape report will be presented to Vision Santa Cruz members Monday, and then the City Council on June 11, committee members likely will conduct a special meeting after that to finalize tree selection.

The Vision Santa Cruz meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. in the Downtown Information Center, 1543 Pacific Ave.

Public testimony of the plan will be accepted at that time.

Other streetscape issues decided Wednesday included:

- Flower beds in a 5-foot square will be planted around each tree on the east side of the street (the wider sidewalk side).

On the west side, the planted ar-

eas around the trees will be in a 3-foot square. Some kind of ornamental wire barrier will protect the beds.

- The sidewalks will be made of colored seeded-concrete with a sandblast finish. It will be cut into squares. The color has yet to be decided, but it likely will be an earth-tone.

- The asphalt street paving will be interrupted at crosswalks with a different material.

The intersections also will be graded higher to meet the sidewalks if Public Works Department officials find no flaws in that idea.

- There will be 54 wooden benches, 55 bicycle racks, 71 trash containers (one every 50 feet), four kiosks and 12 sets of newspaper boxes.

Two kiosks will be at the end of Lincoln Street, and the other two will be at the end of Locust Street.

There will be plaza areas at the end of Walnut and Lincoln streets. At the tip of Cooper Street, there will be an art and sculpture garden.

The Locust Street intersection into Pacific may be the site for a Sister-City garden.

At Soquel Avenue, there will a "colorful garden" at the entry to Pacific.

How many newspaper machines is a question that concerned the committee. Member Jim Pepper said "these things breed like coat hangers and they become things people secure their bicycles to."

Councilman Scott Kennedy said

that is a free-speech issue that may have to be addressed at the council level.

- The north end of Pacific Avenue will have a "town square" look featuring the veterans memorial statue in a new location at the head of the square.

A colorful garden will be planted at the tip of the triangle that is formed by Front Street and Pacific Avenue.

- Single-headed old-fashioned light fixtures will be placed every 50 feet. Two triple-headed ones will be placed at the tip of the avenue.

Each of the intersections from Cathcart north will have double-headed ones.

All these ideas will come close to the \$4.2 million budget allocated for the project.