



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

STAFF REPORT

DATE: May 7, 2021

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission and De La Guerra Plaza Revitalization Advisory Committee members

FROM: Anthony Grumbine, Chair, Historic Landmarks Commission
Kristen Sneddon, Chair, De La Guerra Plaza Revitalization Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: De La Guerra Plaza Revitalization Concept Design Joint Work Session

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of the joint work session meeting between the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) and the De La Guerra Plaza (DLG Plaza) Revitalization Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) is to review, discuss, and develop an understanding of design topics and features in order to help guide the design for revitalizing DLG Plaza.

Based on comments received by the HLC at the concept review meeting for the DLG Plaza Revitalization Project (Project) held on February 17, 2021, and a subsequent Advisory Committee meeting on February 24, 2021, staff will present the revised conceptual plans at the joint work session. The presentation will also include several design components not previously reviewed by the HLC, including the lighting plan, the public restroom, the underground trash enclosures, and the landscape plan for City Hall, among other items.

Advisory Committee Chair, Kristen Sneddon and the Historic Landmarks Commission's Vice Chair, Steve Hausz determined that all attendees need to have a common baseline understanding of the Project design objectives prior to the work session. To facilitate this review, the links for the meetings are provided below.

The joint work session will provide a collaborative public format for the discussion of the current concept plan and its design components. The HLC is the governing body for this Project, so it is imperative that the design team and the Advisory Committee better understand the perspective of HLC members. It is the intent of the Advisory Committee to meet as needed with the design team in order to reach a consensus on several outstanding design issues, such as art and cultural representation in the DLG Plaza, site furnishings, and parking. Having this discussion will be beneficial to the process and will result in a better design.

There are multiple design features included in the concept plan that have been proposed by the Advisory Committee, which will be detailed in the staff presentation. These are:

- Arcade (East side of DLG Plaza)
- Interactive Water Feature or Cooling Feature
- Public Restrooms
- Underground Trash Enclosures
- Surface Materials
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Details
- Lighting
- Utilities
- Water and Storm Water Management Compliance
- Landscaping
- Artwork
- Kiosk

HLC Chair Grumbine and Chair Sneddon will lead the discussion of the group. The goal of this joint meeting is to discuss and reach consensus on general design direction regarding every topic in the list above for the design team to pursue. The presentation will be given and then each topic will be discussed, one at a time.

Preparation:

As noted above, the following are links to the previous meetings:

[November 20, 2020, Advisory Committee Meeting](#)

[December 18, 2020, Advisory Committee Meeting](#)

[February 17, 2021, Historic Landmarks Commission Concept Hearing](#)

BACKGROUND:

On January 15, 2019, Council directed staff to begin work on the Project. The Project was reinitiated after it was placed on hold after the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency in 2012. For the renewed Project, the City secured the services of RRM Design Group (RRM) to assist with public outreach and design for the Project.

Public Outreach

On January 15, 2019, Council also approved an Amendment to an existing contract with Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services (SEPPS) to assist the City with public outreach for the Project. The scope of the outreach included multiple meetings with stakeholders and related interest groups between January and March 2019. In addition, the outreach included noticing to tenants and property owners surrounding DLG Plaza. Leading up to a public workshop for the Project on March 9, 2019, SEPPS assisted with a media release, print advertising, development of workshop format and materials, and coordination of venue details with City and RRM staff.

The public workshop was held at Casa De La Guerra, facing the DLG Plaza. The purpose of the workshop was to gather community input and ideas to improve the DLG Plaza. The workshop was well attended with over 150 participants. The workshop was facilitated by City staff, SEPPS staff, and RRM staff. The workshop format allowed community members to give specific input and provide ideas for their vision of DLG Plaza. All information and comments gathered at the workshop and afterwards were summarized and presented by SEPPS to Council and is available on the Project website – [Public Outreach Summary](#).

At the time of the workshop, staff was in discussions with the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers’ Market regarding their interest in potentially relocating the Saturday market to DLG Plaza should the Cota Commuter Parking Lot be the selected location for the new Police Station. While DLG Plaza is no longer of interest to the Farmers’ Market as a permanent relocation site, the concept of making DLG Plaza one uniform surface from building to building came from those discussions. This concept has generally been supported by public comment and has served as a baseline for the design team and the Advisory Committee throughout the concept plan process.

Over the course of this Project, staff reached out to many in the community, specifically the businesses and stakeholders that surround DLG Plaza and those within the immediate area. In addition, staff reached out to organizations that have expertise with particular segments of the community to better understand how DLG Plaza can be better designed for all to visit this space. The following businesses and organizations were contacted:

Organization/ Business/Stakeholders

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation	Blue Mercury
Old Spanish Days - Fiesta	Starbucks
Santa Barbara Certified Farmers Market	Lovebird
Pearl Chase Society	Riviera Towel Company
The Chamber of the Santa Barbara Region	Ironwood Designs
Hospitality Santa Barbara	Wine Therapy
American Institute of Architects (AIA) Santa Barbara	Bibi Ji (Indian Restaurant)
Downtown Santa Barbara	NandS Expressions
News Press	Kai Sushi Shabu
Santa Barbara Beautiful	Lulu Lemon
SB Act	Truong Jewelers
CityNet	Jaime Sloan Wines
Parks and Recreation Commission	Divinitree Yoga Studio
Historic Landmarks Commission	Robert Rickard
Planning Commission	The Box
Mental Wellness Center	Insamco Holdings

Organization/ Business/Stakeholders

Our Lady of Sorrows Church	James Main Fine art
Sima Property Management	Kyle Irwin Design
Lynx Property Management	Katie Grassini
Access Advisory Committee	Edith Caldwell abode
Citizens Planning Association	Cebada Winery
The Braille Institute	Balboa Building
Santa Barbara Police Department	Blenders in the Grass

Archaeology:

Applied Earthworks (AE) prepared a Phase I Archaeological Resources Report in 2011, which included limited subsurface testing within DLG Plaza. The Phase I Report concluded that given the level of planned disturbance extending between one to ten inches in the area of grading, three feet in depth for utility trenches, and up to six feet for planting of new palm trees, the DLGR Project proposed at that time had the potential to significantly impact important and/or unique historical archaeological remains. The Phase I Report was accepted by the HLC on August 17, 2011.

In 2019, after a competitive Request for Proposals process, Council awarded a contract with AE to complete a Phase 2 investigation at DLG Plaza. During excavation in April of 2019, resources were discovered, and a Phase 2 Report was prepared by AE and accepted by the HLC.

On-going collaboration between the design team and AE is expected throughout the development of the conceptual design, and in coordination with the Advisory Committee. AE will conclude the current scope with the development of a Phase 3 work plan that details mitigation efforts to protect cultural resources during construction of the Project, based on the conceptual design. The Phase 3 work plan will require review and approval by HLC as well.

Advisory Committee:

At the request of staff, Council formed the Advisory Committee for the Revitalization of DLG Plaza, and the first meeting was held on November 8, 2019. The Advisory Committee includes two members from Council, the Planning Commission, the HLC, and the Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as the Executive Director from the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, and the General Manager from the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers' Market. The current roster is as follows:

City Council

Kristen Sneddon, Chair
 Meagan Harmon

Planning Commission

Lesley Wiscomb, Vice Chair
 Barrett Reed

Parks and Recreation Commission

Beebe Longstreet
Roger Perry

Historic Landmarks Commission

Michael Drury
Steve Hausz

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

Dr. Anne Peterson

Santa Barbara Farmers' Market Assoc.

Sam Edelman, General Manager

Once it was clear the Farmers' Market would not be relocating its Saturday market to DLG Plaza, the General Manager for the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers' Market Association did not continue to attend the meetings. Since that time, however, the other nine members of the Advisory Committee have met and guided the conceptual design process. The Advisory Committee met 10 times over the past 18 months.

The Advisory Committee is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act, and all meetings have been open to the public for participation via public comment. Recordings of the meetings, except the first two held at City Hall (Room 15), are available on the website.

The Advisory Committee created a purpose statement and a framework to provide grounding for decisions and frame the concept plan. The purpose statement reads as follows:

"De la Guerra Plaza celebrates and honors the historic heart of our city and provides the flexibility to serve our community's diverse social, cultural, historic, economic and environmental vitality."

From this statement, the Committee evaluated each design element for whether it met the five vitalities expressed: social, cultural, historic, economic, and environmental.

Concept Design:

Through the development and refinement of the concept plan over the course of the ten Advisory Committee meetings, the Advisory Committee maintained the primary goals for the Project. These goals state:

- DLG Plaza is a place that incorporates the history of the City as it is surrounded by four historic buildings;
- is a place that facilitates activity, meetings, dining, and gatherings, and yet also can be a place of respite; and,
- needs to be aesthetically improved and consistent with the downtown area, and should assist in bringing vitality to the downtown corridor.

To help guide the path of the concept plan, several key elements were discussed and selected early in the design process. First, access by cars and vehicle circulation needed clarification, as they profoundly affect the overall direction of the design. At the second meeting on January 23, 2020, the Committee unanimously decided that DLG Plaza and a portion of De La Guerra Street between State Street and Anacapa Street would all be one uniform level from building to building, and that DLG Plaza itself would be pedestrian only. This decision by the Committee

provided a vision for both present and future use of DLG Plaza knowing that the uniform surface will increase the flexibility and use of the space for events and the community. The uniform surface and expanded area is in keeping with the plaza concept. Further, the right of way of De La Guerra Street would continue to exist, but would be used as foot traffic primarily. With the status still uncertain of State Street remaining closed, the portion of De La Guerra Street between Casa De La Guerra and State Street will be designed as if it will remain closed, and the portion between Casa De La Guerra and Anacapa Street will remain undetermined until a more accurate parking demand analysis is completed. Some loading/unloading and short term parking spaces for the businesses on Anacapa Street and for those that drop off bills at City Hall will be required.

Other design elements that gained unanimous support from the Committee included: the arcade on the East side of DLG Plaza; public restrooms in Storke Placita; improved lighting throughout; trash enclosures for the surrounding businesses on DLG Plaza; and public art throughout DLG Plaza that is culturally representative of Santa Barbara and the history of this space.

Consensus and Statement from Advisory Committee:

At the December 18, 2020, meeting, the Advisory Committee concluded that the concept plan was ready to be submitted for City development review. The design review process began with the HLC Concept Hearing on February 17, 2021. Feedback from the HLC was varied, and it was discussed at the next Advisory Committee meeting on February 26, 2021. It was determined that due to the different perspectives, a joint meeting between the Advisory Committee and HLC would greatly benefit the process.

As the design is not complete, there are still some issues that require direction. These topics are listed below for discussion in the joint work session so that the Advisory Committee can provide input without being in conflict with the role of HLC. These include:

- Artwork
- Cultural Representation
- Site Furnishings
- Public Outreach
- Connectivity and Integration of State Street and De La Guerra Street
- Parking
- Front of City Hall (Anacapa Side)

We look forward to the joint work session and anticipate a very positive outcome.