



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 10, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Consideration of Adopting a Resolution Endorsing the Downtown Advisory Committee's Recommended Street Design as part of the Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan Project and Direct Staff to Proceed with Technical Analysis.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution endorsing the Downtown Advisory Committee's recommended street design as part of the Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan Project and direct staff to proceed with technical analysis.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fiscal impacts associated with receiving a presentation and adopting the Resolution endorsing a street design to allow the project to move forward with technical analysis. Funding for this project (C2105) – Downtown Planning Initiative (Specific Plan) has been previously appropriated. Although the preparation of the Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan is fully funded, financing for the construction of future street improvements has not been established at this time.

BACKGROUND:

Item Purpose

The goal of this item is to present the DTAC's recommended street design to the City Council with a request that the Council adopt a Resolution endorsing the DTAC's recommended street design and directing staff to proceed with traffic and parking analysis. This is not a final decision on the street design, but rather a firm commitment to proceed with the direction of the street design in its current configuration for further testing and modeling. Once the testing and modeling analyses are completed, staff will return to the Council to review the outcomes and tradeoffs before proceeding with further work and continued drafting of the Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan in preparation for adoption in 2025.

City Council Strategic Objective

"The City of San Carlos will work with residents, property owners, business owners, committees, commissions, the Chamber of Commerce, and all other interested members of the community to develop a plan to understand and ensure that the downtown meets the needs of the community and businesses now and into the future."

Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan Study Area

The Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan Study Area (Figure 1) is framed by Holly Street to the north and Greenwood Avenue to the south, with El Camino Real to the east and

Walnut Street to the west. The Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan will also address the streets around the Civic Center: San Carlos Avenue, Cherry Street, Elm Street, and Chestnut Street as indicated by the green dotted line in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan Study Area



Milestones Since the Council's last Study Session on the Downtown Specific Plan

During a Study Session on April 24, 2023, the City Council confirmed its support to transform the 700 block of Laurel Street into a permanent public plaza. Four months later, on August 28, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-108 to establish a pedestrian mall on the 700 block of Laurel Street. Shortly thereafter, staff met with downtown property and business owners, and the project team collaborated to refine ideas for a new public plaza plus additional street designs for the remainder of the downtown plan area.

A workshop with the Downtown Advisory Committee ("DTAC") was held in November 2023 to gather their feedback on the refined ideas. This was followed by Downtown Ideation Workshops and Open House with the community, an online survey, and input from City commissions, which altogether led to a DTAC recommended street design on March 19, 2024. The Planning and Transportation Commission reviewed and provided input on the DTAC's recommendation on May 20, 2024 (Attachment 2) and it is now ready to be presented to the City Council.

Civic Engagement and Public Comments

The civic engagement process for Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan executed a robust strategy to bring people together. This strategy included working closely with the City Council appointed DTAC and inviting input and feedback from the community at large. Working with the community, City staff invited participants to share their stories, concerns, ideas, and inspiration for what the future of downtown could be. Participants walked away with a better understanding that they can positively influence the quality, character, vibrancy, and health of the downtown where they live, work, and enjoy their time.

Since the beginning of this project, staff worked closely with the City's Communications Division to carve out a process that would be inclusive and widespread. Outreach methods are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Outreach Methods

Email distribution list (sign-up on project website)	Downtown Specific Plan Project Website ¹	City Calendar of Events	City Council Newsletters	Announcements to City Commissions/ Committees
Social Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Twitter • Next Door • LinkedIn 	Government Access TV Channel	Flyers (sent to 9 targeted audiences/locations)	Newspaper Display Ads	Adult Community Center Newsletters
Chamber of Commerce	San Carlos School District Newsletters	ACC Digital Board Sign	Farmers Market	E-Notify
Spotlight Newsletters	City of Good Living Newsletters	Collaboration with City of San Carlos' Communications Team	-	-

As part of the community engagement strategy, the planning process sought and continues to engage many key audiences through varied platforms to receive input; these are identified in Attachment 11, Civic Engagement Summary to Date.

ANALYSIS:

Vision and Guiding Principles

The evolution of the designs for streets and plazas were based on a shared Vision for Downtown and Guiding Principles. These were developed by the DTAC and refined based on communitywide feedback received during the Downtown Ideation Workshops and Open House and accompanying online survey. The Vision for Downtown San Carlos reads:

¹ www.sancarlosedowntownplan.com

“Downtown is the **heart of San Carlos** that provides a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, safe, charming, futuristic, and accessible destination for the community. It is a **place for celebration and gathering** that offers **diverse and authentic experiences** through a draw of food, retail, services, art and music in a visually attractive environment for the growing community. Downtown is an **inclusive place** with easy access for all, opportunities for housing and businesses of all types, and **inviting spaces for all users**. Downtown San Carlos is a **sustainable district**, with landscape that **supports ecological and community health and well-being.**”

Figure 3.

Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan Guiding Principles



From Community Input to a DTAC Recommended Street Design

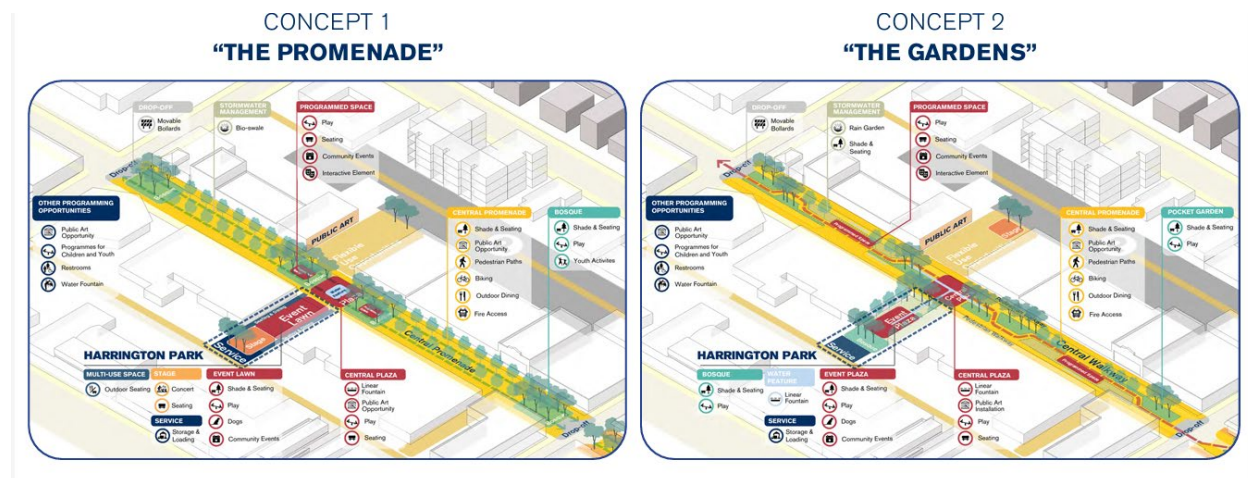
Based on the input received from the DTAC on November 14, 2023 (Attachment 9), City staff and the consultant team further refined street design concepts (Figure 2 below) and presented these to the community for feedback through three different civic engagement options:

- 1) Downtown Ideation Virtual Workshop – December 6, 2023
- 2) Downtown Ideation In-Person Workshop and Open House – December 9, 2023
- 3) Online Survey – December 26, 2023 through January 22, 2024

Street design concepts presented at these three venues included:

- A. Two design concepts for the 700 block of Laurel Street (see Figure 2 below)
 - a. Included design ideas for Harrington Park
- B. Two design options for the 600 and 800 blocks of Laurel Street
 - a. Included design ideas for the new plaza along the 600 block of Laurel
- C. Redesign of the 1100 and 1200 blocks of San Carlos Avenue
- D. Redesign of Arroyo Avenue
- E. Redesign of Brittan Avenue

Figure 2. Concept Alternatives for the 700 Block of Laurel Street, Between Cherry and Olive Streets



These ideas above were then further refined based on the communitywide feedback received during the Downtown Ideation Workshops and accompanying online survey.

Additional refinements were also developed from input from the City of San Carlos' Economic Development Advisory Commission; Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission; and the Youth Advisory Council. For a detailed account of input and feedback received, please see:

- Attachment 4: Downtown Ideation – Community Feedback Summary Dec 6 and 9, 2023
- Attachment 5: Online Survey, December 26, 2023 through January 22, 2024
- Attachment 6: Economic Development Advisory Commission Input, January 23, 2024
- Attachment 7: Parks, Recreation & Culture Commission Input, February 13, 2024
- Attachment 8: Youth Advisory Council Input, March 13, 2024

Staff and the consultant team thoughtfully considered how to conceptualize all the input and feedback into a proposed design for the streets within the downtown core. This also included

considerations from citywide staff that were gathered during an interdepartmental meeting on February 29, 2024. The street designs were then brought to the DTAC on March 19, 2024 for their consideration. The DTAC considered a comprehensive design for the 600, 700, and 800 blocks of Laurel Street as shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Streetscape Design for 600, 700, and 800 blocks of Laurel Street



At the end of the meeting, the DTAC endorsed the street design concepts (see Exhibit A to Resolution).

The DTACs endorsed street design includes the following features:

- Diagonal to parallel parking
- Wider sidewalks/active pedestrian friendly environment
- Defined 8 ft wide outdoor dining/retail zone (i.e. parklets removed/replaced with traditional outdoor dining appearance)

- Lane diets/traffic calming/pedestrian friendly
- Protected bicycle lanes
- Curbless streets
- Public seating areas
- Uniform street trees and groves for shaded gathering areas
- Uniform theme (i.e. "the sway" carried throughout the downtown core along Laurel Street)
- Plaza features on all 3 blocks of Laurel Street
- Emergency vehicle access provisions
- Passenger pick up and drop off (PUDO) locations
- Retractable bollards for access and programmatic closures
- Provisions/space for public restrooms and drinking fountains
- Design that would accommodate all existing program offerings (e.g. Farmers' Market, Art & Wine Festival, Goblin Walk, Hometown Days, Night of Holiday Lights, etc.)

The DTAC also gave clear direction to the project team to further study the following topics:

- Public Space Design: public plaza and the Harrington Park design elements
- Mobility and Street Design: all the streets in the project area
- Parking Strategy: on-street and off-street parking
- Alley Strategy: integration of alleys into the public space design
- Programming: temporary and permanent programs to activate public spaces
- Strategies for Businesses: policy changes for thriving businesses

For a detailed account of the DTAC's input from their March 19, 2024 meeting see Attachment 3.

Following the DTAC's endorsement, the project team met with the City's Parks, Fire, and Public Works Departments, the City Council Downtown Subcommittee, as well as members of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and staff from SamTrans. City departments were supportive of the proposed street design concepts and offered additional details and key considerations for the project team to address as the plan progresses. The Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and SamTrans were generally supportive of the proposed street designs.

Public Input Since DTACs Recommendation on March 19, 2024

The City received an email from the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, in support of the street designs. The City also received an email from Peter Hartzel. See Attachment 10.

Next Steps

Should the City Council adopt the Resolution endorsing the DTAC's recommended street design, the project team will proceed with technical analysis to test traffic and parking outcomes and tradeoffs. This analysis will be brought back to the full City Council for consideration to moving forward with the endorsed street design and continue drafting the Downtown Specific Plan + Streetscape Master Plan in preparation for adoption in 2025.

ALTERNATIVES:

The options available to the City Council include:

1. Adopt a Resolution endorsing the Downtown Advisory Committee's recommended street design and direct staff to proceed with technical analysis; or
2. Do not adopt the Resolution; or
3. Provide staff with alternative direction.

Respectfully submitted by:

Al Savay, Community Development Director

Approved for submission by:



Jeff Maltbie, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
 - Exhibit A to Resolution - Draft Street Design Diagrams – as Endorsed By DTAC, with Refinements from the Project Team
 - a. 1100 & 1200 San Carlos Avenue
 - b. 600 Laurel
 - c. 700 Laurel
 - d. 800 Laurel
 - e. El Camino Real
 - f. Other Street Sections within the Downtown Specific Plan Boundary
2. Planning and Transportation Commission Input from May 20, 2024
3. Downtown Advisory Committee (DTAC) – Endorsement and Comments, March 19, 2024
4. Downtown Ideation Workshops and Open House – Dec 6 and 9, 2024
5. Downtown Online Survey – December 26, 2023 through January 22, 2024
6. Economic Development and Advisory Commission Input, January 23, 2024
7. Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission Input, February 13, 2024
8. Youth Advisory Council Input, March 13, 2024
9. Downtown Advisory Committee (DTAC) – Meeting Notes, November 14, 2023
10. Public Comments Received via Email Since March 19, 2024
11. Civic Engagement Summary to Date
12. Case Study – Street Redesign from Grass Valley, CA