

June 10 – City Council Meeting Notes

CM Venkatesh wanted to see the financial behind the DTSP.

CM Collins inquired about traffic safety in a curbless sidewalk environment. He inquired how drivers would navigate parking along curbless sidewalks? Would drivers primarily rely on color schemes or other markings to indicate where parking is allowed?

CM Collins also inquired if the changes in El Camino would need State approval.

CM Rak inquired the amount of parking that the City will lose from the streetscape design. He wanted the total number of parking lose.

He also inquired why the design stopped at the 1100 block and why not go with the full 1200 block on San Carlos given it is a tie in from the Civic Center to the downtown. CM Rak stated that it is currently confusing the way it is presented.

CM Rak expressed concern that the completion date seems to be getting pushed out with each new presentation and in that event, the reason was due to the General Plan. He shared his frustration.

Due to the plan delay, Mayor Rak asked if the City could expedite a portion of Phase 1 ahead of the General Plan.

Vice Mayor McDowell wanted to know why the General Plan was not flagged to the Council before. She also inquired how the cosmetic changes to the downtown streetscape design relates to the General Plan.

City Manager Jeff Maltbie clarified the timeline to the Council Members.

Vice Mayor McDowell compared slide 28 & 29. She stated that in the proposed changes, it appears that businesses are losing sidewalk space along San Carlos from 11ft to 9ft. She inquired how the City is going to explain to the businesses/restaurants. She also wanted to know if there are rooms for tables. Vice Mayor McDowell shared that the new street design is a huge loss to the businesses.

VM MCDowell stated that it would be very difficult for people to parallel park on the block of San Carlos Ave between Laurel St and El Camino Real. She recommended doing a study in that block since she is unsure people would feel safe parking parallel along San Carlos Ave.

Mayor Rak referred to Slide 29, highlighting the 1100 and 1200 blocks of San Carlos. He suggested that reducing the median from 16 feet to 9 feet would create more space. He also agreed with Vice Mayor McDowel that parking on the south side of San Carlos Avenue might need to be removed.

Mayor Rak mentioned that he liked the idea of parking-protected bike lanes. He also appreciated the downtown street design, with its gentle curves while still maintaining an orderly promenade feel. He inquired whether similar street designs have been implemented elsewhere.

Mayor Rak inquired about the level of detail staff is seeking in their input. He expressed support for the stage design in Wheeler Plaza and encouraged staff to continue experimenting with different offerings for the community. He also suggested that they consider how well existing events like the Goblin Walk and the Art and Wine Festival are functioning, where the city brings in temporary elements like pop-up stages and generators.

CM Collins wanted clarification on the parking loss. He also shared his concern of reducing the San Carlos Avenue from 4 lines to 2 lanes as it is such a heavily used thoroughfare, and he envision a major backup along Walnut.

Mayor Rak sought clarification on the potential parking loss if the parklets were removed. He suggested that it might result in a zero net change in parking, and there could even be a potential increase in available spaces if the parklets were eliminated.

CM Rak asked whether the 800 block is intended to be a permanent plaza with special pavers. He also sought clarification on whether a designated pickup/drop-off and foods delivery area would be added on Laurel.

CM Rak is concerned eliminating the parking along El Camino as there are many businesses there.

VM McDowell inquired how outdoor dining would work in the sway. She also wanted to know if the sidewalk dinning would look like the photo in slide 35, bottom middle picture.

She shared that her original understanding of a widening slide up was more than get small tables against the building. VM McDowell commented that the community grew to enjoy the outdoor dining, and she was saddened that the new plan is restricting outdoor dining.

VM McDowell shared that Charlottesville Virginia has a beautiful Pedestrian Mall with trees in the middle, and that would be a good example.

She inquired about whether the outdoor dining tables would be delineated with iron rods or some kind of barriers. She also inquired if there would be outdoor dining on Arroyo, specifically referring to Broiler Express' outdoor dining.

VM McDowell asked Lisa Porrás if the City would be reaching out to individual businesses.

Mayor Rak requested confirmation regarding the 40-foot spacing between trees on Laurel Street.

CM Venkatesh asked about the maintenance requirements for the proposed plant species.

Public Comment

- Brian Perkins, resident, cautioned Council of the cost of the plan and recommended a robust communication plan.
- Amy Lynn Herman spoke on the importance of stakeholder involvement and provided several suggestions
- Arley Lewis, resident and member of San Carlos Bikes, spoke in support of the proposed plan.
- Barbara Anderson, resident, spoke in opposition to the proposed plan.
- Nathan Conte, resident, proposed a dining delivery project for the downtown.
- Giuliano Carlini, resident, spoke in support of the proposed plan.
- Joe Fimiani, resident, urged Council to ensure the American Disability Act (ADA) is a component of the new downtown.
- Soloman Liu, resident, spoke in support of the proposed plan and provided suggestions to make the plan even more pedestrian-friendly.
- Lauren Obenshain, resident, spoke in support of the proposed plan and suggested additional steps to make it more bike-friendly.

Council provided the following feedback on each segment of the downtown:

Laurel Street 600 Block Concept.

- optimize outdoor dining
- incorporate space for seasonal/pop-up activities and entertainment, e.g. roller skate, mini golf, etc.
- engage Paris Baguette and local businesses
- Council spoke for and against a permanent stage at the plaza

Laurel Street Blocks 600 & 800

- confirm that the areas around tree strip can accommodate extra dining

San Carlos Ave Blocks 1100 & 1200

- reduce the median turn lane
- flip the parking and bike lanes so that the bike lanes become protected
- research if there's enough space to travel each way and consider eliminating parking at least on one side
- remove parallel parking on these blocks

Laurel Street 700 Block Pedestrian Plaza

- use this area as flexible space
- include a central fountain and pavilion up front to Laurel Street
- move the stage out further into the plaza
- begin referring to the plaza by its newly adopted name - Centennial Plaza
- incorporate public art in various areas of the downtown

Arroyo Ave

- be mindful that it'll be pedestrian-friendly coming from the west side as well

Brittan Ave

- confirm where the merge would occur after the El Camino intersection

El Camino Real

- rethink El Camino plans altogether; concerns expressed for the loss of parking
- consider that parking on El Camino may not be needed as much in the long-term
- consider parking protected bike lanes
- work with Caltrain for possible double bike lanes on east side and trees on Caltrain property

Council provided the following additional feedback:

- provide examples of cities that have sway streets – on future presentation slides, include which blocks we're referring to
- study creative ways to incentivize the turnover of parking
- provide more detailed renderings from the pedestrian's view
- be thoughtful with which trees to plant in the downtown