

Agenda Report

June 18, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CIVIC CENTER TASK FORCE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3);
2. Receive the recommendations of the Civic Center Task Force (Attachment A) and consider whether to adopt the proposed recommendations as they relate to:
 - a. Setbacks/Open Space
 - b. Building Height
 - c. Land Use
 - d. Public Improvements, and
 - e. Additional Recommended Actions
3. Direct staff to initiate a selection process based on the parameters adopted by the City Council in response to the recommendations of the Civic Center Task Force and additional items requested by staff as further described in the Background section of this report; and
4. Thank and excuse the Civic Center Task Force.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report summarizes the creation, activities and recommendations of the Civic Center Task Force related to the rehabilitation of the YWCA building and potential new construction adjacent to the YWCA and YMCA buildings. Following direction from the City Council regarding the recommendations of the Task Force, staff is prepared to undertake a new selection process related to the City-owned property in the Civic Center, and take any additional actions requested by the Council.

BACKGROUND:

Creation and Scope of Civic Center Task Force (CCTF)

On July 17, 2017, the City Council directed staff to commence the creation of a 15-member Community Task Force to provide recommendations to the City Council regarding the future development of the portion of the Civic Center adjoining Centennial Plaza, including the YWCA and YMCA sites and adjacent City-owned properties east of those buildings. The specific scope and purview of the Task Force was identified as the development of recommendations related to the following topics (language repeated directly from the July 17, 2017 agenda report):

1. "New construction/development and land-use standards for the YWCA and YMCA blocks and that these standards be consistent with the existing Specific Plan;
2. An examination of possible programming of public rights of way within Centennial Plaza, Holly Street and Garfield Avenue;
3. Potential landscape/hardscape improvements."

The scope of review was recommended to include:

- Allowed Uses: An examination of all desired uses for the area, both public and private.
- Building Envelope: Identification of the key development standards:
 - Maximum Floor Area Ratio/Density
 - Maximum Height
 - Appropriate Setbacks
- Parking/Loading
 - Identification of the appropriate range of options to consider the overall needs of the Civic Center as well as development of individual sites as they relate to parking and loading.
- Public Accessibility
 - Identification/discussion on the appropriate locations and amount of public space and the accessibility of public spaces within the area.
- Public Improvements
 - This would include landscape and hardscape improvements, revisions to streets, sidewalks, or other areas including Centennial Plaza.

During the review process, these topics were further distilled into the following four areas:

1. Setbacks/Open Space
2. Building Height
3. Land Use
4. Public Improvements

Parking was not considered by the Task Force as it did not find this to be appropriate to discuss without a defined land use.

The City Council also determined it appropriate for a meeting moderator to be hired to lead the meetings and ensure completion of the Task Force's work within a period of six months.

Civic Center Task Force Process:

All appointments to the Task Force were completed on September 11, 2017. Staff engaged a meeting facilitator, Patrick Ibarra of The Mejorando Group, to lead the meetings and the first meeting of the Task Force was conducted on October 26, 2017. Below is a general outline of the work that was conducted at each meeting of the Task Force:

1. October 26, 2017:
 - a. Discussion of purpose and mission of Task Force
 - b. Discussion of Task Force procedures and ground rules
 - c. Introductions and goals/expectations of Task Force members
 - d. Presentation on the background and chronology of Kimpton Hotel project
 - e. Discussion of meeting schedule and topics for discussion

2. December 2, 2017:
 - a. Presentation on City financial challenges related to redevelopment/rehabilitation of the YWCA building
 - b. Presentation on the Bennett Plan and all other Civic Center planning efforts since that time, including current land use regulations that apply to the sites
 - c. Presentation on the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District
 - d. Conducted a guided walking tour of the interior of the YWCA building and the Civic Center

3. January 20, 2018:
 - a. Presentations were made in response to information requested by the Task Force at the December 2, 2017 meeting, including:
 - i. Current business/development climate in Pasadena
 - ii. Public/Private Partnership ("P3") projects
 - iii. Miscellaneous other information requested by Task Force members

- b. A break-out session was conducted to gauge Task Force members' initial opinions in each of the four topic areas, followed by reporting of the results.
4. February 3, 2018:
Two break-out sessions were held at which Task Force members and members of the public discussed each of the topic areas, followed by presentations from each group regarding items on which the group reached consensus.
5. February 15, 2018:
Consensus building among the Task Force was initiated. At this meeting, the Task Force determined that before attempting to reach consensus on recommendations regarding the four topic areas mandated by the City Council, on which it was generally understood to be difficult to reach consensus, it should first identify a series of "guiding principles" on which full consensus could be reached. Following development of these guiding principles, more specific actions to achieve the principles would then be discussed, followed by discussion of the four Council-mandated topic areas.
6. March 15, 2018:
The Task Force continued its consensus building efforts regarding its Guiding Principles and recommended actions.
7. April 19, 2018:
The Task Force continued its consensus building efforts regarding its Guiding Principles and recommended actions, followed by initiation of discussion of each of the four Council-mandated topic areas.
8. May 3, 2018:
The Task Force finalized its recommendations.

It should be noted that each meeting was publicly noticed to an email list of interested people, including all individuals that provided public comment during the review of the Kimpton Hotel project and any others requesting to be added, and posted on the City's website. In addition, any written or graphic information provided by staff, Task Force members or the public before and at each meeting was also posted on the City's website and is available for review at www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/civic-center-task-force (hard copies available upon request). Verbal public comment was taken at each meeting, often at multiple times during the meeting.

CIVIC CENTER TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations of the Civic Center Task Force are set forth in Attachment A. As outlined in the attachment, the Task Force provided recommendations in regard to each of the four Council-directed topic areas outlined above. Additionally, the Task Force

developed and reached consensus on six “guiding principles,” as well as 20 actions that the Task Force recommends be taken to achieve those principles. The following discusses the Task Force recommendations.

Setbacks/Open Space:

The Task Force had divergent views on this issue of setback. At its April 19, 2018, meeting, the Task Force took a straw poll with the following results for the recommended setback from the back of the Garfield Avenue sidewalk for any new construction east of the YWCA or YMCA buildings:

- 52.5' (based on the 1923 version of the Bennett Plan): 6 votes
- 98' – 108' (based on existing west property line of open space parcels): 3 votes
- 25' (based on 1925-1926 version of the Bennett Plan): 2 votes

This topic area was arguably the most controversial throughout the review of the Kimpton Hotel project and the split vote of the Task Force is a reflection of the difficulty of this issue. To support the work of the Task Force, staff provided extensive information regarding the history of planning for the Civic Center, most notably the various versions of the Bennett Plan which are an important, lasting vision for the Civic Center. Staff believes that a setback of 25' would be more consistent with a symmetrical relationship to City Hall and a full realization of the version of the Bennett Plan that more closely resembles the existing conditions. Nonetheless, the Council must balance this with other considerations such as, the desire to maintain open space, as it makes the final determination.

Building Height:

The Task Force unanimously agreed that the Council should limit the building heights on both the north and south parcels to a maximum of 54 feet along Garfield (to align with the cornice height of the southern wing of City Hall), stepping down to a more compatible lower height next to the YWCA building. Staff agrees that the Task Force's recommendation is the most appropriate solution.

Land Use:

The Task Force unanimously recommended that the City implement Actions 3 and 18 of the Additional Recommended Actions contained in Attachment A:

3. The City should consider a mix of public and private uses in the Civic Center area to ensure rehabilitation of the YWCA, with a priority on public access.
18. The City should consider public/private amenities and land uses that go beyond a 9-5 office use to increase foot traffic to the area, including uses that draw diverse segments of the community (ages, ethnicities, races, etc.) on evenings and weekends. These could include a coffee bar, a restaurant, gatherings, art shows, farmers markets, music concerts and other civic-oriented public events. Any commercial land uses established in this area

should be subordinate, supportive and ancillary to civic uses in the Civic Center.

Staff's primary concern is the restoration and rehabilitation of the historic YWCA building; ideally, not at further City expenses. Beyond this staff agrees with the Task Force's recommendations which are aimed at enlivening the Civic Center and providing public access to the building.

Public Improvements:

In addition to focusing on the development envelope for the YWCA building and the corresponding parcel on the north side of Holly Street, the Task Force also considered possible future public improvements in the Civic Center. An overwhelming majority of the Task Force recommended that the City address the expanse of pavement in Centennial Plaza, which members felt posed a danger to pedestrians, it is confusing and unattractive. The Task Force also addressed more general suggestions for public improvements. Among the ideas discussed and voted upon at the April 19, 2018 meeting (note that some members voted for more than one of the options listed below) were the following:

- Design improvements to slow traffic, enhance ability to have public events and make safer and more attractive: 8 votes
- Close off Centennial Plaza to vehicular traffic: 5 votes
- Do nothing: 1 vote
- Install landscaped medians within Garfield Avenue north and south of Centennial Plaza: 11 votes

There was general consensus for the following improvements:

- Preserve the double row of Englemann Oaks on Holly Street
- Install public art on the north side of Holly Street to balance with the Robinson Memorial
- Consider installing a central feature within Centennial Plaza, which could be low-lying landscaping (except grass) or alternative, permeable paving, with bollards to control traffic and retain usability for events

Staff believes that many of these concepts are worthy of future study in an Urban Design Plan as suggested by the Task Force, as resources, both staffing and financial are identified and made available.

Summary of Recommendations:

For ease of reference, below is a summary table of the Task Force recommendations. The City Council is asked to provide direction to staff as to whether it accepts these parameters with or without modification.

Topic Area	CCTF Recommendation
Setback/Open Space	52.5' (majority) 25' & 98-108' (minorities)
Height	54' stepping down adjacent to the YWCA
Land Use	Mix of public and private uses
Public Improvements	Majority recommend safety and beautification improvements to Centennial Plaza and landscaped medians in Garfield Avenue. All agree that Engelmann oaks on Holly Street should be preserved, a public art installation should be established on the north landscaped parcel, and a central feature should be established within Centennial Plaza.

Recommended Studies:

The Task Force also recommended that the Council direct preparation of five additional studies, at various times in the process of developing potential projects on the sites, as summarized below and as detailed in Attachment A:

- Cultural Landscape Report for the Civic Center area to work in concert with the National Register nomination
- "Rough order of magnitude" cost study to determine the cost of preserving and seismically upgrading the YWCA, as-is, independent of a proposed new use
- Independent analysis of the cost of developing any new project that may be proposed
- Independent study or studies of the cost of developing the YWCA building for use as (i) City offices, (ii) community recreational use, or (iii) such other uses as may be recommended, to determine what the City may be able to fund under its own power and identify other funding sources for any shortfall
- Urban Design Plan to address both the potential historical significance of the existing open space and setting surrounding City Hall as well as future issues of climate change, sustainability, pedestrian experience and safety, preserving the grandeur of City Hall, continued ability to host events and identifying potential areas for additional landscaping

At this time, staff does not believe that additional studies are warranted in advance of initiating the recommended process outlined below. Sufficient analysis of the historical significance of the landscaped open space areas on the west side of Garfield Avenue

was conducted in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that was prepared for the proposed Kimpton Hotel project and certified by the City Council on August 15, 2016.

The EIR concluded that these areas are not historically significant and that the construction of the project would not have a significant impact on historic resources. If the Council concurs with the CCTF recommendation, more of the open space areas would be preserved versus the previously approved project, which had a varying setback between 30' and 40.' The City has also studied and presented to the City Council cost estimates of both closure and protection (i.e., "mothballing") and core and shell rehabilitation of the YWCA (both based on independent analyses conducted by Architectural Resources Group and Pankow Builders) as well as development of the site for City offices.

Moreover, it has now been more than six years since the City acquired the building at a cost of \$8.3 million. Since that time, the City Council has appropriated an additional \$500,000 towards securing the building. Nevertheless, intrusions into the building continue, despite added fencing and boarded-up doors and windows and the overall condition of the building continues to deteriorate. A recent bid for building closure and protection was offered in excess of \$800,000. This higher than expected amount was due to the ongoing deterioration of the building.

Consequently, staff recommends that the City Council direct staff to initiate a process at this time based on the parameters adopted by the Council in response to the recommendations of the Civic Center Task Force. In addition to the Task Force recommendations, to better inform the selection process, staff is requesting City Council direction on other additional elements, as discussed below.

ADDITIONAL STAFF CONSIDERATIONS:

Return on City Investment/Additional Financial Support:

When the City undertook the first developer selection process, in July 2012, the stated goals were to rehabilitate the historic asset; fulfill the vision of the Central District Specific Plan; provide direct economic benefit to the City (i.e. return on General Fund investment) and identify a project that would serve as a catalyst for continued economic growth.

As part of the many public discussions concerning the project, both prior to and during the Task Force process, a number of people voiced support for some sort of "public" or other use that provides the community a general benefit. Operating on the assumption that such proposals are unlikely to generate cash flows sufficient to repay the City its investment into the building, staff recommends that if the City Council is desirous of encouraging such proposals, any City-issued Request for Proposals (RFP) should indicate that proposers may offer "public/community benefits" in lieu of compensation back to the City. Nonetheless, given the City's current and projected future financial condition, staff recommends that proposers demonstrate how they will rehabilitate the

YWCA building to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards without additional City financial support.

Parking:

The Civic Center Task Force deferred any discussion of parking, believing it to be premature until a use is identified, however, staff believes it important in the selection process to indicate what the City's position on parking will be. Staff recommends that the City be open to proposals that provide for off-site parking. There are several parking resources in the Civic Center and allowing this flexibility may broaden the range of proposals.

Sale or Long-term Lease:

Finally, staff is seeking City Council direction as to whether it would be open to proposals that involve the outright sale of the YWCA building and other City-owned parcels in the Civic Center. Openness to a sale may expand the universe of proposals but a long-term lease arrangement increases the level of control the City is able to exercise. Staff recommends accepting proposals either way, as they can be evaluated on their overall merits without committing the City at this point.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Pending direction from the City Council on the recommendations of the CCTF and the additional items presented by staff, City staff would develop a new RFP that would incorporate these approved parameters and include as background the report of the Task Force. As with the original 2012 solicitation, proposers would have the option to propose on the YWCA parcel as well as the City-owned parcel to the north adjacent to the YMCA building. It should be noted that the northern parcel is owned by the Water fund and any non-Water and Power Department project on that site would necessitate purchase of the property from the Water fund.

Staff further proposes that a selection team comprised of City staff as well as three members of the Civic Center Task Force, as selected by the City Manager, would evaluate the proposals. The selection criteria set forth in the RFP and drafted by the selection team, would be broad so that various factors such as, design excellence and community benefit could be taken into consideration when recommending an overall best proposal/proposer to the City Council.

The 2012 solicitation, which resulted in the selection of Kimpton Hotels, (KHP Fund III, LP) received some criticism for being done "in secret" meaning that some portions of the process specifically, negotiations with proposers and the proposals themselves were not subject to public disclosure. While every effort will be made to keep the public informed of the process, it must be recognized that it is in the public's best interest that confidential portions of proposals not be released and that City negotiators not be compromised in their ability to negotiate with potential proposers.

Should the City Council wish to undertake a different process, staff is prepared to proceed as directed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

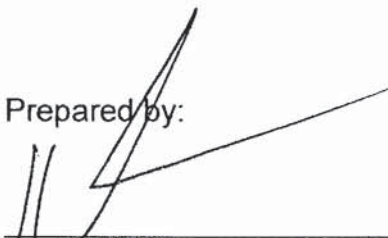
There is no direct fiscal impact as a result of the proposed action. The City acquired the YWCA building for \$8.3 million and since then has appropriated an additional \$500,000 towards securing the building. The estimated cost of rehabilitating the building for any use is expected to run into the millions of dollars, likely exceeding \$10 million.

Respectfully submitted,



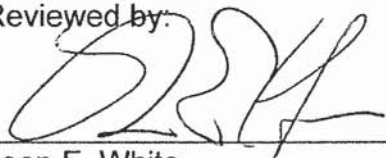
DAVID M. REYES
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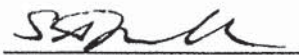
Kevin Johnson
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Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Recommendations of the Civic Center Task Force

May 3, 2018

The City Council directed the Civic Center Task Force to provide recommendations regarding the following five general topics related to the Civic Center Area:

- **Setbacks/Open Space**
- **Building Height**
- **Land Use**
- **Public Improvements**
- **Parking/Loading not addressed because it was not felt to be appropriate without a defined land use**

In order to inform our recommendations on these five topics, the Task Force unanimously agreed on the following six Guiding Principles:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. Preserve/restore/rehabilitate the YWCA.
2. Preservation of public open space is a high priority.
3. Planning should be symmetrical across the YWCA and YMCA sites.
4. Bring life to the Civic Center.
5. Preserve and enhance the pedestrian experience.
6. Inspire a sense of civic pride.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on these Guiding Principles we recommend the following actions:

Setbacks/Open Space:

The Task Force had divergent views on this issue. At its April 19, 2018, meeting, the Task Force took a straw poll with the following results for the recommended setback from the back of the Garfield Avenue sidewalk for any new construction east of the YWCA or YMCA buildings:

- 52.5' (based on 1923 Bennett Plan): 6 votes
- 98' – 108' (based on existing west property line of open space parcels): 3 votes
- 25' (based on 1925-1926 Bennett Plan): 2 votes

Building Height:

The Task Force unanimously agreed that the Council should limit the building heights on the west side of Garfield to the cornice height (approximately 54 feet) of City Hall wings on both sites, stepping down to a more compatible lower height next to the YWCA building.

Land Use:

The Task Force unanimously recommend that the City implement Actions 3 and 18 in the 20 Actions to Achieve the Guiding Principles listed below:

3. The City should consider a mix of public and private uses in the Civic Center area to ensure rehabilitation of the YWCA, with a priority on public access.

18. The City should consider public/private amenities and land uses that go beyond a 9-5 office use to increase foot traffic to the area, including uses that draw diverse segments of the community (ages, ethnicities, races, etc.) on evenings and weekends. These could include a coffee bar, a restaurant, gatherings, art shows, farmers markets, music concerts and other civic-oriented public events. Any commercial land uses established in this area should be subordinate, supportive and ancillary to civic uses in the Civic Center.

Public Improvements:

An overwhelming majority of the Task Force recommended that the City address the expanse of pavement in Centennial Plaza, which it found to be dangerous, confusing (i.e., pedestrian and automobile conflict) and unattractive. The Task Force also addressed more general suggestions for public improvements. Among the ideas discussed and voted upon at the April 19, 2018 meeting (note that some members voted for more than one of the options listed below) were the following:

- Design improvements to slow traffic, enhance ability to have public events and make safer and more attractive: 8 votes
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- Consider installing a central feature within Centennial Plaza, which could be low-lying landscaping (except grass) or alternative, permeable paving, with bollards to control traffic and retain usability for events

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

In addition to the recommendations related to the four topics discussed above, the Task Force further recommends that the City Council pursue the following 20 Actions to achieve the enumerated Guiding Principles.

ACTION
1. Comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The City should commission a Cultural Landscape Report for the Civic Center area to work in concert with the National Register nomination.
2. Appropriate adequate funds to complete stabilization (i.e., "mothballing") of the building while new uses are being contemplated. This would include ensuring the building is weathertight, secured and that further deterioration is halted.
3. Recommend the City look at a mix of public and private uses in the Civic Center area to ensure rehabilitation of the YWCA, with a priority on public access. The City should consider housing for the homeless, transitional housing, housing for emancipated youth and other populations of need within the YWCA, the parking lot adjacent to the YWCA, and/or the vacant lot adjacent to the YMCA, taking into account the priority for public access to the YWCA.
4. Before a project is proposed, the City should commission an independent "rough order of magnitude" cost study to determine the cost of preserving and seismically upgrading the YWCA, as-is, independent of a proposed new use. This would include addressing the building structure, fire/life safety issues as well as mechanical systems.
5. The City should commission an independent analysis of the cost of developing any new project that may be proposed, including both rehabilitation and new construction costs, to verify cost estimates provided by a developer.
6. The City should commission an independent study or studies of the cost of developing the YWCA building for use as (i) City offices, (ii) community recreational use, or (iii) such other uses as may be recommended, to determine what the City may be able to fund under its own power and identify other funding sources for any shortfall. If an independent study is commissioned to evaluate developing the YWCA as city offices, that should be evaluated through an independent analysis of facility space needs and current leasing costs, with the goal of improving efficiency and making City services more accessible to the public.
7. Maintain view corridors to Hale building and back of Post Office within open space areas.
8. To determine appropriate modifications to this area, an Urban Design Plan should be prepared by a team of professionals, including landscape architects and urban designers with historic expertise, to address both the potential historical significance of the existing open space and setting surrounding City Hall as well as future issues of climate change, sustainability, pedestrian experience and safety, preserving the grandeur of City Hall, continued ability to host events and identifying potential areas for additional landscaping.
9. The setbacks from Garfield Avenue should be equal on both the YWCA and YMCA sites. Development on the sites should be balanced, but not required to match in architectural character or height.

ACTION
10. If anything is built on the Garfield Avenue side of the YMCA or YWCA sites, they should have entrances that faces Centennial Square and City Hall. City Hall should face a building front, not a building back as it does now. Any entrance and facade across from City Hall should reflect City Hall in scale and a sense of monumentality. These entrances should not take away from existing historical entrances to the YWCA or YMCA buildings, which should remain the primary entrances to the buildings and should be restored and preserved.
11. Any architect, landscape architect or urban designer for any changes to or new construction within the Civic Center should be chosen with great care. Outside professionals/experts with design expertise should be included in the review/selection process for the both designers and the proposed designs developed.
12. New buildings must be of superior design and materials and reflect the high quality of existing historic buildings in the Civic Center.
13. Ask Pasadena Heritage or other groups to provide tours of the Civic Center with its history.
14. Keep the public informed as any new plans for the Civic Center develop. This includes selection of developers, architects and design plans.
15. There should be a high level of maintenance of the public landscape in the Civic Center.
16. The rehabilitated YWCA should allow for it to be open to the public, on some basis, to areas of note so the public can appreciate one of Pasadena's architectural gems.
17. Reduce the expanse of concrete in front of City Hall, without detracting from the setting of City Hall. This may include enlargement of the sidewalk area directly in front of the entry steps. Any removal or replacement of hardscape should consider use of environmentally friendly and water-permeable materials and water collection systems.
18. Consider public/private amenities and land uses that go beyond a 9-5 office to increase foot traffic to the area, including uses that draw diverse segments of the community (ages, ethnicities, races, etc.) on evenings and weekends. These could include a coffee bar, a restaurant, gatherings, art shows, farmers markets, music concerts and other civic-oriented public events. Any commercial land uses established in this area should be subordinate, supportive and ancillary to civic uses in the Civic Center.
19. Plan more city/private functions in the plaza.
20. Study the concept in the Bennett Plan of installing two fountains in the center of Garfield Avenue flanking Centennial Plaza.

If desired, upon completion of the recommended studies the Task Force is available to reconvene to review the studies and offer additional comments.