

Agenda Report

July 17, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Economic Development and Technology Committee (June 20, 2017)

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: CIVIC CENTER IMPROVEMENTS – ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Approve the Economic Development and Technology Committee's recommendations related to:
 - a) The creation and composition of a task force focused on the future development of the Civic Center (the Civic Center Task Force);
 - b) The scope and purview of the task force;
 - c) An overall process to implement the City's desired vision for the Civic Center; and,
2. Direct staff to commence the process of organizing the Civic Center Task Force.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EDTECH:

On June 20, 2017, Ed Tech received and supported staff's recommendation with modifications and with direction to bring the matter to the City Council for approval.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In response to a proposed hotel subsidy report for the YWCA site, on May 22, 2017, the City Council directed staff to prepare a report for the Economic Development and Technology Committee (Ed Tech or Committee) regarding the creation of a community Task Force focused on the future development of the Civic Center.

Given the extensive discussion on the prominence of the Civic Center in recent public meetings and various reports and communication provided to the Council by staff and community members, this report provides a brief background on previous planning

efforts for the Civic Center focusing on the following issues for the Council's consideration:

1. The creation and composition of a community based Task Force to consider potential improvements to the Civic Center including the rehabilitation and development of the YWCA site
2. The scope and purview of the Task Force, and
3. A process to implement the City's desired vision for the Civic Center

BACKGROUND:

The City Council's direction on May 22nd reflects an acknowledgement of the importance and prominence of Pasadena's Civic Center which cannot be overstated. The design and construction of its buildings are a legacy of the City's commitment to build a City that would regard national prominence. City leaders adopted a plan created by Edward Bennett (the Bennett Plan) on April 25, 1925 that exemplifies excellence in City Planning and Urban Design. Moreover, the creation of the City's Planning Commission was borne of its desire to implement key components of Bennett's Plan, including a 1923 city bond that was issued to finance the construction of the Central Library (opened on February 12, 1927), City Hall (opened on December 27, 1927) and the Civic Auditorium (opened in 1932). However, despite national and international recognition for the design and plan for the Civic Center, its full build-out has never been realized and opportunities for improvements and new development within its boundaries remain today.

Over the years, the City Council has reinforced the importance and sensitivity of new development within the area and has directed planning efforts focused on the issue. These include the "Civic Center Specific Plan (March 1990; amended July 1994)", "Civic Center/ Mid-town Programming Effort Report (April 1998)", and the "Pasadena Civic Center/Mid-town District Design Project; Refined Concept Plan (April 2001)". In 1997 as part of the Civic Center/Mid-Town Programming Effort, the City Council authorized the creation of a task force comprised of property owners, community leaders and representatives of key advisory bodies.

CREATION OF A TASK FORCE

Consistent with City Council's recent direction, and in recognition of the City-wide significance of the Civic Center, staff recommends a Civic Center Task Force be established that is comprised of a diverse cross section of community members with specific consideration to: affiliations to key advisory bodies; professional expertise, and the number of members.

1. Commission/Organization Representative: Membership should include consideration of representatives affiliated with a City Commission, Advisory Body or Community organization.

2. Expertise/Professional Background: Consideration of member's professional background and expertise, which may include:
 - a. Urban Design/Planning/Architecture
 - b. Historic Preservation;
 - c. Landscape Architecture;
 - d. Transportation Planning;
 - e. Economic Development;
 - f. Development/Construction; and
 - g. Community Advocacy.

3. Number of Members: The size of the Task Force is important given the Council's direction for the Task Force to complete its work within six months. The Task Force needs to be large enough to include a diverse representation of community members with relevant expertise, but small enough to avoid potential impediments to reaching consensus and completing its mission within the directed time frame.

While many other viable and legitimate options exist for membership of the Task Force, in consideration of the above factors and consistent with staff's recommendation, Ed Tech recommended that the Task Force be comprised of 15 members as follows:

One representative from each of the following organizations/commissions, as selected by that organization/commission:

1. Planning Commission
2. Design Commission
3. Transportation Advisory Commission
4. Historic Preservation Commission
5. Pasadena Heritage
6. Downtown Pasadena Neighborhood Association

In addition to the six members identified above, the Committee recommended that each Councilmember appoint one Task Force member (which may or may not be affiliated with any of the above commissions/organizations) and the Mayor be afforded two appointments.

In addition to the composition of the membership described above, Ed Tech recommended that a moderator be hired to lead the discussions and complete the task within the 6-month time frame prescribed.

SCOPE AND PURVIEW OF THE TASK FORCE

Based on the City Council's May 22nd discussion, Ed Tech recommended that the purview of the Task Force include development of recommendations related to:

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 is 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.

The Committee underscored that the above recommendations should be consistent with the regulations contained within the development regulations identified within the existing Central District Specific Plan.

PROCESS

Following completion of the Task Force's charge and City Council approval of its recommendations, staff would proceed with the solicitation of proposals from interested developers to fulfill the vision set forth by the work of the Task Force. The following outlines the proposed major milestones of the overall effort:

- *City Council approves Task Force composition, purview and process*
- *City Council creation of Task Force: establishment of work scope and process*
- *Initiation of Task Force work: the Task Force will gather data, convene public meetings, and ultimately develop recommendations (Planning staff will support*

the Task Force – providing information and technical data as needed, meeting logistics etc.)

- *Planning staff will forward the Task Force recommendations to City Council*
- *City Council review of recommendations. City Council direction to staff to amend the Code to establish the new regulations and developments standards.*
- *Staff will develop and release an RFP for the project consistent with the new vision*
- *Selection of proposer*
- *City Council approval as needed for the project (contracts for work, approval of lease, etc.)*

CONCLUSION:

In summary, the importance and prominence of Pasadena's Civic Center cannot be overstated. Establishment of the Task force and approval of their charge to regulate and create development standards for the YWCA and YMCA blocks, establishing programming for the right-of-way within the Civic Center, and developing recommendations for new landscape/hardscape improvements will result in a plan that facilitates the appropriate build out and implements the City's desired vision for the Civic Center.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The action proposed herein is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 21065 of CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378. The proposed creation of the Task force only and there is no work proposed at this time that would cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact at this time. Costs associated with retaining the services of a moderator are available in the Department's FY18 budget.

Respectfully submitted,



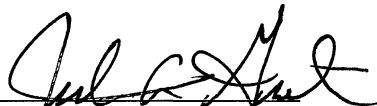
DAVID M. REYES
Director of Planning & Community
Development

Prepared by :



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Approved by:



for STEVE MERMELL
City Manager