

Downtown Specific Plan & ULI Recommendations Status Report

The purpose of this memo is to provide the status of the “Low Hanging Fruit” recommendations from the ULI Report and Downtown Specific Plan.

Downtown Streetscape Improvements

On September 8, 2015, the City started construction on the Downtown Crosswalk Replacement and Slurry Seal project. This project includes replacing all of the blue granite tiles with a stamped colored asphalt pattern similar to the existing 2” x 2” tile pattern and color, reconstruction of damaged and uplifted sidewalk, curb, gutter, and minor street repair and slurry sealing in the Downtown area. Much of this project can be considered pre-work towards a future comprehensive project following the completion of the Downtown Specific Plan. Staff has been working closely with the Downtown Business and Professional Association (DBPA) to coordinate scheduling and outreach for all construction related activities. The project is expected to be completed by the second week in November, just in time for the Downtown Holiday Open House and Pier Lighting event.

Parking System Improvements

One of the parking systems improvement recommendations is to expand the valet hours and days, as well as add valet drop-off locations, particularly near restaurants of a certain size, to benefit all residents, visitors and customers. In July 2015, the City Council approved expansion of the Downtown Valet Parking Program which includes added valet locations, expansion of daytime hours on Saturdays and Sundays, valet service on all days at three locations and an increase in valet rates. Augmenting the valet service leverages 130 underutilized private parking spaces for use by the general public and provides some relief for public parking lots and on-street spaces by increasing the overall parking supply to the public. The private lots are not typically used during the valet hours, so parking would not be displaced.

Following City Council approval of the additional valet locations, the item was appealed to the Coastal Commission. The existing valet program will remain as-is until a final decision is made by the Coastal Commission. At their September 10, 2015 hearing, the Coastal Commission took staff’s recommendation to hear the item at a future meeting. Staff will continue to work closely with the DBPA on other valet options within the existing valet permit as well as reaching out to the Coastal Commission to resolve their concerns before the scheduled hearing.

Outreach to Businesses

Community Development staff continues to attend the monthly Downtown Business and Professional Association (DBPA) meetings to provide progress reports and updates on the Downtown Specific Plan project. In July, Ms. Lani Lott with the Downtown Specific Plan Consultant Team attended the meeting to provide an overview of her role on the team, her strategies to gather retail/merchant information, survey results, and to encourage participation and feedback from the merchants in the Downtown. Ms. Lott also met with the DBPA's Executive Director and several other Downtown merchants as well as with members of the Manhattan Beach Commercial Property Owner's Association (MBCPOA). In addition to meeting with several stakeholders, Ms. Lott had the opportunity to spend two full days immersing herself in the Downtown as part information gathering process.

Downtown Specific Plan Project Update

Informal Downtown Residents' Group

At the June 16, 2015 City Council Meeting, the City Council directed staff to re-form and facilitate the Informal Downtown Residents' Group. The boundary for the group was defined as one block beyond the "Downtown Area". 1500 postcard notices were mailed to all property owners and residents/occupants within the defined area inviting them to a meeting that was held on Thursday, August 13, 2015 at Joslyn Community Center. Mayor Burton and Community Development Department staff attended the meeting and provided a brief introduction on the direction that was given by City Council for the group, as well as the group's purpose and how it relates to the Downtown Specific Plan project. Following the introduction, staff left the meeting to allow the group to continue without any City involvement.

Open City Hall - Intercept Survey and Public Outreach

On Sunday, August 9th, Staff and members of the Consultant Team hit the streets of Downtown in their bright colored t-shirts and electronic tablets to promote, educate and gather data for the Downtown Specific Plan project. The Team spoke to over 100 respondents and provided information about the project as well as administering surveys that were linked to the City's public engagement platform, Open City Hall. Later that afternoon, the Team traveled to Polliwog Park for additional outreach at a very well-attended and popular City event—Concerts in the Park.

With the intercept surveys being such a success, City Staff performed additional outreach at the Farmer's Market on August 18th to continue promoting the Downtown Specific Plan project and the use of Open City Hall for community engagement opportunities. The project topic remained available on Open City Hall for a month, and a total of 172 responses were received via in-person intercept surveys, surveys

completed at the Community Development counter and those completed online directly through the Open City Hall platform. The survey results are available online and can be accessed directly through the City's website.

Additional Parking Study

Staff is working with Watry Consulting, one of the current sub-consultants on the DTSP project for an additional parking study to be conducted for the Civic Center site. Staff will provide more information about the study as it becomes available.

Upcoming Important Dates

With the Downtown Specific Plan project's aggressive timeline, please save-the-date for these upcoming Community Engagement Workshops.

Tentative Meeting Dates

Community Engagement Workshop #2: Monday, November 16, 2015