



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 24, 2023

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Community Vitality Initiatives Division, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: State Street "Create State" Master Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive a progress report for the State Street "Create State" Master Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Major work efforts over the last six months associated with Create State (the State Street Master Plan) include analyzing existing economic, transportation, utility, and land use conditions downtown; confirming the community's vision for the project area; developing a project website that more than 5,200 people have visited; releasing a community survey that over 5,500 people have viewed and 4,000 people have taken; and engaging more than 1,500 people during in-person community outreach events in the project area and throughout Santa Barbara.

Create State is a long-term vision and implementation plan for downtown Santa Barbara — one that prioritizes pedestrians and the public realm and benefits residents, visitors, and the local economy through the creation of public space designed for people rather than vehicles. The project area includes Anacapa to Chapala Streets and State Street from Sola Street to the Highway 101 underpass. The final product for the Create State project will include a preferred conceptual design concept and implementation plan that the City will use to construct the downtown capital improvement project. Create State remains on schedule for completion between December 2023 and February 2024.

This report highlights the work efforts undertaken over the last six months, including existing conditions analysis, the various opportunities for public engagement, and the next steps to determine a design concept and implementation plan for State Street and the downtown area.

DISCUSSION:

Existing Physical and Economic Conditions

The Create State team is analyzing economic trends, mobility patterns, and land uses in downtown Santa Barbara to determine what considerations should be made in the conceptual design, what opportunities exist for redevelopment, what is economically viable, and what infrastructure to consider in a future design. The team conducted existing conditions analysis because staff wants to ensure that the designs we put forward for the community to react to are realistic and achievable given constraints in the right-of-way.

The block structures in downtown Santa Barbara allow for a unique pedestrian experience and the potential for further variation along the street frontage, with over 20 doorways on each block and a concentration of multistory buildings along the 700–900 blocks of State Street. Given the existing concentration of retail (50 percent more retail per capita on State Street than retail per capita regionally), State Street has opportunities for growing experiential-based activities, mixed use, and food and beverage businesses. State Street sales tax data show that restaurants generate the most revenue, food services and drinking establishments have recovered from the 2019–2020 pandemic low, and retail steadily increased in share pre-pandemic and during the pandemic. Additional economic analysis is being conducted, including case studies related to retail retention and expansion. Interconnected market support between retail and other uses, office space, and business and employment trends by industry and location are also being studied. These analyses will help determine the economic feasibility of the future conceptual design and proposed closure location. A future design will also need to consider utilities, including water, sewer, traffic signal and conduits, fiber optic, and stormwater infrastructure.

Initial transportation data shows that the State Street closure created a safer environment than pre-pandemic conditions due to the reduced number and severity of accidents. Collision analysis indicates that before the State Street closure, between October 2018 and April 2020, there were 17 total collisions along State Street, with a maximum of six crashes at one intersection. After the State Street closure, between June 2020 and December 2021, there were 10 total collisions, with a maximum of two crashes at one intersection. Other transportation data analysis currently being finalized includes review of mobility patterns on State Street, Anacapa Street, and Chapala Street; analysis of the transit system and parking supply; and percentage of the right-of-way on each block used for pedestrians, bicycles, parking, and vehicles. This information will help to refine a conceptual design and ensure that various modes of transportation connect to the project area.

Create State Outreach and Engagement

Over the last six months, the Create State team has focused on extensive and inclusive outreach on State Street, at community events, at locations throughout the community, and in English and Spanish, to try to maximize community response. Understanding

community members' preferences and needs before beginning the design phase was key to ensuring that the City maintains the community's interests at the center of the project. The Create State team listened to concerns and priorities about mobility, economic development, activation, and design, which helped establish emerging trends and provided ideas for future conceptual designs. The Create State team also encouraged community members to take the survey, which launched on November 3. By expanding community outreach, the City reached a variety of demographics throughout the City and regionally, and heard from frequent users as well as community members who do not currently visit State Street but might if different amenities were available. The team also created a website with approximately 400 email subscribers, launched an Instagram account for the project, and marketed events through social media channels and the website to try to engage people in different ways.

The City reached over 1,500 people during in-person outreach events, 4,000 people took the survey, and over 5,200 people visited the project website. Although survey participants live and/or work all over Santa Barbara area, the majority of respondents live and/or work downtown. Those who took the survey ranged in age from 10 to 75+, with varied gender, race, and ethnicity backgrounds.

To date, outreach has been one of the most important aspects of the project, because it helped the team understand what types of transportation opportunities and activities make people believe that State Street can be a community space for all to experience and enjoy. The Create State team attended numerous events to reach community members where they work, recreate, and learn. (See Attachment 2 for the full list.) Some of these community events include:

Outreach in Community	Date	Location	# of People	English/Spanish
Community Open House	November 13	Our Lady of Guadalupe Church	50	Spanish
Participants engaged in poster exercises, answered survey questions, shared what they hope to see downtown, and staff was available to answer questions in Spanish.				
School Outreach	November 14	Monte Vista School	30	English
The 5th grade class heard a presentation and shared their ideas for downtown.				
General Outreach	November 17	Foodland	25	Spanish
Participants engaged in poster exercises, answered survey questions, shared what they hope to see downtown, and staff was available to answer questions in Spanish.				

School Outreach	December 1	Santa Barbara Charter School	70	English
All 5th and 6th grade classes heard a presentation from staff, shared what they hope to see downtown in the future, and took the survey.				
General Outreach	December 6	Neighborhood Navigation Center	20	English
Individuals experiencing homelessness shared what they hoped to see downtown in the future.				
School Outreach	December 7	Harding Elementary	50+	Spanish
This event included Spanish posters outside, with questions similar to those in the survey, for caregivers to interact with as they picked up their children.				
School Outreach	December 14	Santa Barbara Junior High School	100+	English
Students spoke with staff during lunch, shared what they hope to see downtown in the future, and took the survey.				
Community Open House	December 18	Our Lady of Guadalupe Church	30	Spanish
Participants shared what they hope to see downtown, and staff was available to answer questions in Spanish.				

In addition to community-wide outreach, the Create State team also held events on State Street. The table below identifies some of the State Street events:

Outreach on State Street	Date	Location	Attendance	English/Spanish
Create State Open House	November 3 & 4	1230A State St.	500 people	English and Spanish
Participants shared current experiences downtown and identified elements that the community would like to see integrated into the long-term State Street design. Participants took the survey and engaged in poster exercises.				
Canvassing	November 3 & 4	State Street	30+ people	English and Spanish
During hours outside of the Open House, the project team spoke with individuals on State Street and encouraged them to take the survey.				
Community Design Workshop + Open House	December 9 & 10	821 State Street	200+ people	English (Spanish available)
During the three-hour workshops, attendees were grouped into teams to design how they thought the transportation network should operate throughout the entire project area, what character areas should be defined, and which specific activities and transportation elements should be included in a two-block section of State Street. The teams presented their designs to the other attendees.				
Design Professional Workshop	December 9	821 State Street	100+ people	English
This event was geared toward those who work in architecture, land use planning, or a related field. The same exercises occurred at this workshop as the community design workshops.				

To encourage participation in the workshops, the City provided free onsite childcare and collaborated with The Arts Fund to host a pop-up art show at the workshop space. The Open House and Community Workshop events were advertised and marketed via the Create State website, Create State subscription e-blast, "City News in Brief," digital and print ads in the *Santa Barbara Independent*, the *Montecito Journal*, *Noozhawk*, "The Brief" (utility bill insert), and continuous coverage via social media. The event also received media attention from *Voice Magazine*, KEYT, Siteline, and K-LITE.

State Street Advisory Committee

On August 15, 2022, the State Street Advisory Committee (SSAC) met the City's consulting team, MIG, Inc. and discussed what the SSAC hopes Create State (the State Street Master Plan) will include, the community engagement plan, and the overall project schedule.

During the October 27, 2022, SSAC meeting, the MIG team presented initial stakeholder feedback and an emerging analysis of the existing economic, mobility, land use, and utility conditions. The SSAC members also discussed future public engagement opportunities.

SSAC members participated as facilitators during the November 3 and 4 Open House events and as facilitators during the December 9 and 10 Community Design Workshop events, so that they could hear the community conversation and report back to their peers during the December SSAC meeting.

At the December 14, 2022, SSAC meeting, SSAC members were divided into two groups and participated in the community design workshop activities, which included discussions of how the transportation network should operate throughout the entire project area and which specific activities and transportation elements should be included in a two-block section of State Street. The teams presented their designs at the end of the SSAC meeting. Attachment 1 includes the agendas for the SSAC meetings from August through December 2022. The SSAC will review and provide feedback on the draft conceptual designs, implementation plan, and Master Plan in 2023. The next SSAC meeting will be held on February 16, 2023.

Other Commission and Committee Meetings

Staff presented the Create State (State Street Master Plan) process and sought feedback at various City Commission and Committee meetings. On October 14, 2022, the Historic Landmarks Commission and Planning Commission held a special joint meeting to receive a presentation on Create State and discuss the past, present, and future condition of State Street. On December 15, 2022, the Downtown Parking Committee and the Transportation and Circulation Committee held a similar special joint meeting to discuss Create State (State Street Master Plan). The team will present the Create State Master Plan process and seek input at the Access Advisory Committee meeting on January 25, 2023.

Create State Activations

Currently closed to motor vehicles, downtown State Street has become a testing opportunity for various types of programming. The Downtown Organization has led efforts to activate State Street through programming such as the monthly block party series held on the 700–800 blocks of State Street and the candlelight concert series, held on the 1100 block of State Street.

The Community Development Department partnered with the Santa Barbara Public Library to activate State Street in November and December with the Library on the Go van. The Create State team wanted to better understand the best locations for programming on State Street, how to manage programming with the pedestrian and bicycle use of State Street, and what types of activities would bring people downtown.

Events took place on Friday, November 4, from 3:30 to 6:00 pm on the 700 block of State Street; Friday, December 9, from 3:30 to 5:00 pm on the 800 block of State Street; and Friday, December 16, from 3:30 to 5:00 pm on the 800 block of State Street. Free activities during each event were provided for members of the public to participate in, such as stamp making, tie dying, and lawn games, and staff tested different configurations on the 700 and 800 blocks of State Street for activities. Staff estimates that each event had approximately 50–100 people participating in the activity or engaging with the Library on the Go van. Future State Street activations are anticipated in early 2023.

Emerging Trends

Based on outreach efforts to date, including survey responses, Open House events, and design workshop trends, responses consistently favor closing State Street to private vehicles, incorporating a curbside street in the design, allowing for flexibility, analyzing the ability to curve a multipurpose lane where possible, incorporating children’s play areas into the design, and ensuring the design is family friendly.

Of the survey responses, 79 percent indicated that they would like to keep State Street closed to cars. From the total responses, 18 percent stated that they would like State Street to be a slow, shared street, which would allow for limited vehicle use.

Survey responses showed a clear desire for art and performance spaces, with 76 percent of responses requesting additional temporary and permanent art spaces along State Street. The responses also showed an interest in additional public seating areas and parks and open space, with over 70 percent in favor of these items.

Multiple designs from the community design workshop events identify three districts along State Street, including arts, activity, and nightlife, and participants indicated that programming was most desired along the blocks in the center (700–900 blocks). There is a trend from responses encouraging an improvement in the aesthetics of outdoor dining areas. Community responses in all outreach events also consistently emphasized families, and 90 percent of survey responses indicated a desire to see street trees along State Street.

Transportation on and around State Street

Data showed less agreement about mobility patterns along State Street, including bicycles and transit services. Participants in the design workshops indicated that a bike path that was controlled and slow on State Street could be acceptable, but that bicycle traffic was generally preferred on parallel streets (Anacapa and/or Chapala); however, 62

percent of survey responses indicated that they would like to see dedicated bike lanes on State Street. Of the survey responses, 34 percent indicated that they would prefer no bikes on State Street.

Additionally, design workshop responses were divided on providing a shuttle or other transit service on State Street versus on parallel streets. Of the survey responses, 81 percent indicated that they would prefer transit services on parallel streets instead of along State Street; however, during the design workshops, designs indicated an interest in small, slow shuttles on State Street.

The Create State team will continue to analyze the 100+ sketches from the workshops, survey data, and additional community feedback received at outreach events. Recognizing that space is limited on all downtown streets within the project area, the community and staff will need to evaluate tradeoffs that the future conceptual designs will illustrate.

Looking Ahead

Outreach efforts and existing conditions analyses will create a preferred urban design framework as the basis for three preliminary design concepts. The urban design framework, anticipated to be complete in February or March 2023, will analyze existing stormwater and utilities, transportation and mobility, sustainability, economics, housing, strategies for the unhoused, historic resources, and equitable universal access. This analysis, along with the community input from the Open House, Community Design Workshops, survey, and in-person and digital engagement events, will establish a framework for design strategies downtown.

In April or May 2023, three preliminary design concepts will be released to the public for input. At that time, a second community survey will ask community members to describe what they like or dislike about each proposed concept. The survey and concepts will create an opportunity for the community to choose the types of activities and infrastructure they want to see on a future State Street and throughout downtown. Feedback throughout the process will help refine the community design concepts, and a preferred conceptual design will be released in August 2023.

Additional outreach opportunities will take place at workshops, public meetings, and open house events held in public meeting spaces, along State Street, at community events, in neighborhood meetings, and online. Staff will also seek input and guidance on the preliminary community design concepts from the State Street Advisory Committee, Historic Landmarks Commission, Planning Commission, other City committees, and City Council. The next major public outreach event hosted by the City will occur in April or May 2023, in coordination with the release of the preliminary community design concepts and the second community survey.

The anticipated completion date for Create State continues to be December 2023–March 2024. Additional information on upcoming meetings and events related to Create State, can be found at: <https://statestreet.santabarbaraca.gov/>.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Create State (the State Street Master Plan) is a multi-year work effort aimed at revitalizing and rethinking downtown Santa Barbara. In July 2022, Council approved a contract for MIG, Inc. in the amount of \$709,156, with an additional \$70,915 for extra services. Funding for the contract came from Measure C (\$480,071) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA, \$300,000). Consulting fees from MIG, Inc. for work conducted from August to November 2022 are \$126,081.37. These consulting fee charges are within the contract amount. There will be no impact to the General Fund as a result of continuing to fund this contract.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Create State will address sustainability downtown through sustainable design approaches. Design efforts may lead to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, an improved downtown microclimate, stormwater management and improved water quality, and/or decreasing airborne pollutants.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. State Street Advisory Committee Agendas, May 2022 through December 2022
 2. List of Recent Outreach Efforts, August–December 2022

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APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office