



City of Santa Barbara
Community Development Department

Memorandum

DATE: August 17, 2023
TO: State Street Advisory Committee (SSAC)
FROM: Tess Harris, State Street Master Planner
SUBJECT: August 21, 2023, State Street Advisory Committee Meeting

State Street Advisory Committee Members,

This memo provides a preview of the August 21st meeting and highlights the guidance that we are seeking from the Committee.

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the State Street Advisory Committee meeting on August 21, 2023 is to discuss the visions, concepts, and thematic placemaking interventions for the State Street Promenade, with a focus on three districts.

The agenda item will include a presentation from MIG, Inc. and City staff that will set the stage, using key themes heard during the community engagement process and prior SSAC meetings, to define an overall vision, concept, and key design moves for the entire State Street Promenade. Three distinct districts with unique identities and design moves that support the overall vision for the Promenade will be highlighted in detail.

While all concepts incorporate a 20-24ft corridor for the fire lane that could support a range of transportation modes, specific transportation options for district concepts and the associated trade-offs will be discussed in future SSAC meetings likely to occur in September and October, to ensure that the vision and place-making elements guide discussions on how people move to and through the space, rather than the inverse.

Following the presentation, the SSAC members will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and provide comments on the district identities.

Promenade Vision & Districts

State Street Promenade / The Grand Paseo

Vision

Create State is about creating a central gathering place for community – people centric, focusing on community connections, liveliness, and the space as the venue.

It is: the healthiest, most thriving part of Santa Barbara; the defining place of Santa Barbara's identity; accessible to all types of people, families, generations, income levels, abilities, and diversities; a place memories are made; a place to see people and experience community, a gathering place, the spine of Downtown, the Grand Paseo, a must experience and re-experience; sustainable; fun for everyone!

It feels: safe, inviting, accessible, bustling, local, clean, and sophisticated.

It provides: dining; retail activity that will ensure the success and economic stability of Santa Barbara; music; art; local culture; play spaces; open spaces; a place for walking, for biking, for people with all abilities to move up and down the street; a spine for downtown; recognized districts; a park-like experience; a gathering place for the community; connection to side street businesses; connection to the beach.

It represents: Santa Barbara's sustainable values and experiences that are unique to Santa Barbara; Santa Barbara as an innovative space and model community.

It reflects: our history; the Chumash and other indigenous people; the diversity of our community and is welcoming to them all.

Key Design Moves

- Support additional housing units through the design, assuming that hundreds to thousands of new units could be built in the future in the Master Plan project area. Maximize neighborhood serving design elements.
- Ensure that each district accommodates all age ranges, from a young child to a retiree and provides amenities that are free and accessible.
- Focus the largest interventions in the areas that need the most support and build from the successes in other areas by emphasizing, through public space design, what is working well.
- Emphasize three distinct districts that have a unique sense of place, look and feel, and site layout to break up the linear nature of the promenade. Include at

least one central plaza/gathering area in each district that serves as a central identity of the district.

- Accentuate connections to the paseo network and subtly highlight paseo connections providing multiple ways for people to experience downtown.
- Celebrate the El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District and historic resources.
- Connect the Promenade to key destinations and institutions downtown in addition to the Funk Zone, Waterfront, Institutions, and other key destinations.

Old Town

Vision

Old Town is a vibrant entertainment district full of lively bars, restaurants, and experiential activities that energize the street, day and night, and is enhanced with street performers and interactive games that provide additional life and activity. Old Town is the gateway for the Promenade and provides a critical link to the Funk Zone and Waterfront areas. This portion of the Promenade features a typically linear site design that provides balanced space for activation, like outdoor dining, and programming. Restaurant patios are highlighted, interspersed with flexible rooms for public seating, games, and street performances. The block is sheltered by a consistent large tree canopy arching over the space, accented by creating lighting. At the center of the block, the trees open and a small plaza room with interactive lighting projection highlights street performers, etc.

Potential Design Elements

- Gateway / entrance feature on 400 block
- Games
- Immersive lighting
- Playful and moveable seating
- Plaza ground treatment
- Restaurant patios
- Rotating interactive installations
- Small outdoor stages and other facilities for busking
- Social seating / community tables
- Tree canopy

The Civic Center

Vision

The Civic Center is the heart of civic and community life in the City. It invites all Santa Barbarans, with an emphasis on locals and families. Play is emphasized, with small “moments of joy” and iconic features throughout the district. Neighborhood-supportive design is featured throughout; open space and greenery soften the palette and community plazas provide space to linger and congregate. This portion of the Promenade is characterized by a series of articulated rectangular plazas and spaces that emphasize the institutional and historic nature of the district, and rhythmically shift in location as one navigates throughout the space, with concerted connections to the paseo network and key anchors, like City Hall, De la Guerra Plaza, Paseo Nuevo, El Paseo, and the Santa Barbara Historical Museum. This core area to the Promenade incorporates unique play elements and is home to many of Santa Barbara’s celebrations, civic engagements, and various other opportunities for congregation.

Potential Design Elements

- Areas to linger and relax
- Areas to walk and stroll
- Children’s play areas
- Festival or concert stages and facilities (farmers market, art fairs)
- Greenery and shade trees
- Informal sports facilities (frisbee, catch etc.)
- Interactive water feature
- Kiosks – local food and businesses
- Lawn games
- Lighting
- Outdoor dining
- Patio and public seating
- Plaza ground treatment
- Spaces to congregate

Arts District

Vision

The Arts District is the epicenter of arts and culture in downtown Santa Barbara. It inspires creativity, serves as a playground for artistic and cultural exploration, and celebrates existing institutions on State Street, like the Santa Barbara Museum of Art,

Arlington Theater, and Granada Theater, Community Environmental Council Headquarters, numerous art galleries, as well as the nearby Santa Barbara Courthouse, Santa Barbara Public Library, The New Vic, and the Lobero Theater. This portion of the Promenade is defined by a meandering and organic site design that emphasizes the whimsy and encourages introspection. In this District, art is used as a means of expression in a variety of forms – storytelling, curated retail, through food, with nature, and by emphasizing an event or activity.

The heart of the arts district is a performance zone that acts as a venue for music, art, dance, and other gatherings outdoors, adjacent to the various destinations in this District, making arts and culture an active part of life on State Street. Engaging performances, classes and exhibitions invite people to the street; larger performances use the canopy as a stage, with people populating the plaza and social steps as an amphitheater and dance floor. Smaller performances, classes, and exhibitions occur under the pergola. When there aren't events programmed, community tables, playful seating or swings create a magnetic day and night destination for residents.

Potential Design Elements

- Artistic elements that invite play
- Immersive installations
- Increased tree canopy and garden spaces
- Lighting
- Outdoor dining
- Plaza ground treatment
- Public seating and amenities
- Retail kiosks
- Rotating art installations
- Sculpture garden
- Shaded seating
- Spaces for performances, art classes, lectures, and temporary exhibitions

Discussion

The project team is seeking input from the Committee on the following:

- The vision for the overall State Street Promenade
- The three unique districts and their boundaries, identities, and potential design elements
- Amplifying the existing successes in Old Town and the Arts District

- Catalyzing the central core of the City with the greatest design changes and programming
- Designing the 400 block as the gateway to the Promenade from the Waterfront / State Street underpass
- Creating a large-scale community / event space in the Civic Center
- Enhancing the connection along Anapamu St. between State Street, Library Plaza, and the Courthouse