

City of San Carlos

Downtown Specific Plan



May 24, 2023

Downtown Businesses Stakeholder Meeting

Feedback Summary



Overview

The purpose of the May 24 meeting was to have a meaningful dialogue with the downtown business community following the community's support for, and the Council's decision, to permanently close the 700 block of Laurel Street. To invite business owners, managers, and employees to the May 24 Business Focus Group meeting, City staff went door-to-door to all 150 businesses within the Downtown Specific Plan area. During the invitation process, staff received the following comments:

- The design of parklets and the Farmers' Market set up blocks visibility to shopfronts
- No space for Uber eats/DoorDash takeout/pickup
- When will parklets be removed? Loss of business during construction
- Parking signage doesn't work (no enforcement) Need a diversity of businesses in downtown
- City does not care about retail businesses Feels unsafe to park in SamTrans garage
- Diagonal parking along San Carlos Ave. is unsafe (several cars were hit)
- Feels uncomfortable and unsafe to dine in parklets along San Carlos Ave.

The Downtown Business Focus Group meeting on May 24th was hosted by **Stamp Bar and Grill** with **23 representatives** from the business community in attendance: 11 from the retail, 11 from restaurants, and 1 member from the Chamber of Commerce. Staff from the Community Development department gave a presentation, with members from the Planning, Economic Development, Public Works and Engineering departments, and the San Carlos Police Bureau in attendance to answer questions.

Considering transformation of the 700 block of Laurel, along with the potential to modify other blocks and streets in and around the downtown area, City staff posed the following questions to business attendees:

- What can the City do to support businesses in the meantime [while the Downtown Specific Plan is developed/implemented]?
- What should the priorities be?
- What is most important for the success of your business?
- What is most important to employees?

Summary

At the meeting, top priorities were shared by attendees from the business community. Concerns that were strongly emphasized included:

- The different blocks should have the same economic opportunity as the 700 block of Laurel; improve all the blocks. The 700 block seems to be most favored, while the 600 block is struggling.
- Parklets block visibility to shopfronts, take up parking; some parklets are taking up much more space than others; no standards for parklets; parklet costs are not equitable and are not based on square footage of space; e.g. "I have a tiny parklet and I am paying as much as [a much larger restaurant] is paying - how does that makes sense?"; remove parklets that are not being used.
- Is the City going to continue to allow parklets? They were meant to be temporary during the pandemic, which is now over. If the City wants to support businesses, take the parklets away now.

- There are no clear signs to show where patrons can park; the City needs to improve the placement of signage.
- Place more bicycle racks where they are needed and visible for safety so they are not stolen or vandalized.



Picture of Downtown Focus Group Meeting

Comments by Themes:

Equity concerns around closure of 700 block

- The participants strongly felt that the different blocks should have the same economic opportunity.
- They found it unfair that businesses on the 700 block are booming and other blocks have become invisible as people don't think there is more to downtown than the 700 block.
- This is seen as a "huge equity issue". Street closure will affect some businesses in detrimental way than others.
- Economic Benefits of Plaza: It was observed that the economic benefits of the plaza predominantly favor restaurants over retailers, particularly with regards to outdoor dining. The suggestion was made to explore the possibility of funding the plaza implementation costs from those who benefit the most.
- Case Studies: The idea of examining case studies from other cities that have created public plazas was proposed to understand the economic effects such initiatives have had.
- Supporting Data for Closure: The need for data to support the closure of the 700 block vs 600 block was emphasized.

- Objective Data for 700 Block: Questions were raised about the objective data used to determine the preference for the 700 block, as it was considered inequitable.
- 600 Block vs. 700 Block: There were conflicting opinions regarding the closure of the 600 block and the favoritism shown towards the 700 block. The business owners expressed disapproval of street closure, but the reasons behind this sentiment were not clear.
- Space Inequality: It was pointed out that even if the sidewalks on the 600 block were expanded, there would still be a lack of equitable space compared to the 700 block.
- Restaurant Feedback: A restaurant owner stated that the non-closure of the 600 block negatively affected their business, arguing that the situation is not equitable compared to the 700 block. The owner claimed that their parklet costs were similar to those of the Town.
- It was noted that businesses didn't sign up for a downtown with middle block being closed and they are for either closing entire downtown and making it walkable or have dedicated walking spaces.
- The participants wanted to see a plan to make opportunities equitable for all businesses as closing only 700 block has created a huge inequality. There was also a need expressed to see economic case for closure and its projected impact.

Parking

- The 600 block expressed concerns about losing parking, emphasizing that it is their biggest priority.
- It was noted that parking signage doesn't work and if there is a way for people who park in business spots to get ticketed? There is no enforcement right now. (A City staff recommended more signage can be added in the meanwhile.)
- It was noted that due to lack of signage many people don't know there is a parking structure and where to find parking. (A City staff noted that wayfinding signage is underway).
- Biking racks were discussed as a solution for bike parking in the downtown area.
- As an immediate need, bike parking was requested near yoga center. Bikes get stolen from the garage, so closer open bike parking is desirable.

Parklets

- The perceived lack of equity between the 600 and 700 blocks was raised due to differences in parklet opportunities.
- It was noted that recently a business took down their parklets, which positively affected businesses around.
- It was suggested to have parklets not block the views of other businesses, such as the curtains.
- It was suggested to change parklets so it's waist high and it's a pleasant view. (Redwood City's parklet program and Europe shared as an example)
- An owner noted that his parklet (which doesn't have a structure built) was hit in the middle when someone drove into it. There needs to be consideration of safety in street/parklet design.
- A business owner expressed their intention to remove the parklet if mandated by the city, highlighting the need to consider how the closure of the 700 plaza would impact neighboring

businesses. Another noted they put roof as they are “required” to and no one sits when weather is not good anyways.

- It was suggested by some to get the parklets off right now as quick fix as they are blocking opportunity for other businesses.

Events and local businesses

- It was noted that city events involving business participation (from outside) have incurred costs for local businesses.
- The opinion was expressed that community events should not include pop-up restaurants, such as food trucks or if they do, only limit participation to local businesses.

Sales Tax Revenue and indicators of business performance

- Sales Tax and Increased Cost of Goods: It was noted that the increase in the sales tax mandate along with rising costs of goods has skewed the data towards an upward trajectory. This factor needs to be taken into consideration when analyzing the data. Some participants wanted to see the split of retail vs restaurants in sales tax.
- Sales tax data was not perceived as a good representation of the upward trend since taxes have increased and cost is higher. Profit might be a better indicator which business noted is down.
- Comparing to 2018 and 2019, a business owner, mentioned that comparing current growth to 2018 and 2019 is not a milestone. The goal is to surpass the growth achieved during those years.

Additional Comments

- A business owner felt that those who filled out the survey do not have a good representation of the community - “What about people who live in Crestview, have they filled out the survey?”
“Why do community members outside of the downtown get to decide what happens here?”

Downtown Business Survey

A Downtown Business survey was launched on May 11, 2023 to learn more about business operations, parking and transportation priorities, customer considerations, employee needs, and business preferences. City is hoping to receive a robust feedback from the survey to inform the downtown plan.

Attachments

1. Door to Door outreach tracking sheets



Pictures of Downtown Focus Group Meeting

Attachment 1

Door to Door outreach tracking sheets

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

Staff Person Name: Eliza & Jamie

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
Brimmers	500 El Camino	Y	2 employees + gave flyer
The floor store	850 El Camino	Y	2 employees + gave flyer
880 Auto Wash	880 El Camino	Y	1 owner ③ Flyer
Bob & Kevin Bob & Kevin	900 El Camino	Y	2 employees ④ Flyer
Rustic House	920 El Camino	Y	employee ⑤ Flyer
Birders garden	924 El Camino	Y	owner & employee ⑥ Flyer
Brew bird	930 El Camino	N	
Lia Hotel	950 El Camino	Y	10 employees ⑦ Flyer
One Life	1001 Laurel El Camino	Y	⑧ ⑨ 2 Flyers left
heel strength	1028A El Camino	Y	mailbox ⑩ Flyer
Liffy lube	1030 El Camino	Y	manager ⑪ Flyer
Isarn Thai	1050 El Camino	Y	employee gave to manager ⑫
Yao's auto service	1098 El Camino	Y	employee flyer ⑬
Britten Steel	1098 El Camino	Y	manager flyer ⑭
Thrift center	1060 El Camino	Y	manager Flyer ⑮
Buy area endodontics	1178 Britten	Y	owner Flyer ⑯
City Dental Group	1186 Britten	Y	3 employees flyer ⑰
The Studio	1051 Laurel	Y	1 employee flyer ⑱
Bellomy nails	1045 Laurel	Y	2 employees flyer ⑲
Noelans	1037 Laurel	Y	1 employee flyer ⑳
One life	1033 Laurel	Y	dropped flyer ㉑

800 ECR
 700 ECR
 1000 ECR
 1000 Laurel

1000 ECR
 1000 ECR
 800 ECR

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
McLonnay Security	1055 Laurel	Y	employee (22) flyer
Edward Jones	1001 Laurel	Y	employee (23) flyer
San Carlos Inn	1140 Morse Blvd	Y	employee (24) flyer
The LV bar	977A Laurel	Y	2 employees (25) flyer
Animal dental clinic	987 Laurel	Y	1 employee (26) flyer
Abacus wealth partners	973 Laurel	Y	mailbox (27) flyer
The Arsenal	971 Laurel	Y Y	employee (28) flyer (29) employee
Jay Nails	969 Laurel	Y	manager (28) flyer
Refuge	963 Laurel	Y Y	owner (29) flyer
Associated Podiatry	961 Laurel Suite A	Y	(30) flyer
Fidelity National Title	939 Laurel	Y	receptionist (31) flyer
San Metro County Dental Society	939 Laurel Suite D	Y	mailbox (32) flyer
Buy Wealth Legal group	909 Laurel Suite C	Y	employee (33) flyer
Boon docks	1152 Arroyo	Y	2 employees (34) flyer
membership level 10 studio	1156 Arroyo	Y	receptionist employee (35) flyer
Broiler express	895 Laurel	Y	manager (36) flyer
Naneys Tailoring & Boutique	889 Laurel	Y	owner (37) flyer
Yans Garden	885 Laurel	Y Y	mailbox flyer (38) flyer
Falk Barrot & Associates	865 Laurel Suite 4	Y	employee flyer (39)
Law Offices and Mentors	865 Laurel Suite 2	N	no - appeared closed down
Jess Business	865 Laurel Suite 1	Y	Flyer (40)
County Approval Reports	825 Laurel	Y	Flyer mailbox (41)
Shiki Bistro	825 Laurel	Y	employee flyer (42)
Chase bank	845 Laurel	Y	employee flyer (43)

1000 Laurel

900 Laurel (13)

800 Laurel

923 008
923 009
923 001
923 002

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
Bianchini's	810 Laurel	Y	shift lead flyer (43)
The Crepes	852 Laurel	Y	2 employees flyer (44)
White Sage	851 Laurel	Y	owner flyer (45)
Laurel Station	868 Laurel	Y	flyer flyer (46)
Nothing But Cakes	864 Laurel Suite 100	Y	flyer (47)
Expedit Crisps	864 Laurel suite 200	Y	flyer (48)
Starbucks	856 Laurel	Y	flyer (49)
Laurel Station Lulus	876 Laurel	Y	flyer manager (50)
Custom Kitting	878 Laurel	Y	flyer employee (51)
Ristorante #1	888 Laurel	Y	mail box flyer (52)
Bike Guys	872 Laurel	Y	employee flyer (53)
Wine Gallery	890 Laurel	Y	mail box flyer (54)
Edward's	891 Laurel	Y	employee flyer (55)
muscle	900 Laurel	Y	employee flyer (56)
Lous	902 Laurel	Y	employee flyer (57)
Animas dry spz	904 Laurel	Y	flyer (58)
Pravati Construction	939 Laurel	Y	2 flyers & spoke w bus. owner (60)
Terence Ckney DDS	970 Laurel Suite D	Y	1 flyer (61)
Joid Alvsrad DDS	970 Laurel #C	Y	mail box 1 flyer (62)
Sara Andrews DDS	970 Laurel #A	Y	mail box 1 flyer (63)
Dirk Hony DDS	970 Laurel #B	Y	1 flyer (64)
Weed eye care	1000 Laurel	Y	receptionist office manager (65) flyer
Digestive Care Associates	1000 Laurel		receptionist 1 flyer (66)

800 Laurel

900 Laurel

1000 Laurel

1000 Laurel

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

Staff Person Name: Molly

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
Golden Gate Financial	1395 A ETM SAN CARLOS	Y	
Pacific Hacienda Psychotherapy	1375 San Carlos	N	closed?
Marcos + Marcos DDS	1375 San Carlos	Y	
MA private Wealth	1355 A San Carlos	Y	mailbox
consulting Service	1355 B San Carlos	Y	mailbox
Therapy House	1335 A San Carlos	Y	mailbox
Domestic Match	1335 B San Carlos	Y	mailbox
one life	1303 San Carlos	Y	mailbox
Sukhotnai	656 A Walnut	Y	
Office Space	680 Walnut	Y	mailbox
center for the whole person	1350 Cherry	Y	mailbox
John's creations Nails	1161 Laurel	Y	+ some survey
Tony Agency Uccelli Agency	1153 Laurel	N	closed + no mailbox
XXXXXX		Y	
Onivo esthetics	1149 Laurel	Y	mailbox
Soyla's hair salon	1147 Laurel	Y	
* My Breakfast House	1137 Laurel	Y	closed - will go back
* Chow + Ysac family dentistry	1125 Laurel	Y	closed - will go back
Big Lou's liquors	1117 Laurel	Y	
Dimensions skincare	1113 Laurel	Y	left flyer
Ziba salon	1111 Laurel	Y	

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
William's BBA	1109 Laurel	Y	+ survey
Millberry's Garment care	1161 Brittan	Y	
Jack In the box	1100 El Camino	Y	
Antiques Unlimited	1128 El Camino	Y	+ survey
Antiques + More	1148 El Camino	Y	
Law Offices	1156 El Camino	Y	mailbox
Studio PT	1160 El Camino	Y Y	mailbox
AIDAS European beauty	1164 El Camino	N	closed
Stheby's	1168 El Camino	Y Y	
Peninsula gymnastics	1171 Laurel	Y	
Oxford St. Chinese restaurant	1195 Laurel	N	closed
* Rebecana Day Spa	1199 Laurel (A)	Y	
Steel Magnolia Salon	1199 Laurel	Y	
Justina's Salon	1199 Laurel	N	>?
Beauty Queen Salon	1197 A Laurel	N	>?
Family Acupuncture center	1185 Laurel	Y	left flyer
* Pazzo	1179 Laurel	Y	
Quest Diagnostic	1100 Laurel (unit F)	Y	mailbox
Acupuncture + Herbs	1140 Laurel (unit C)	Y	
* New Canton Restaurant	1160 Laurel	Y	
* Creative Image Salon	1176 Laurel	Y	mailbox
Grand Tile and cabinet	1191 Laurel	Y	mailbox
San Carlos paint +	1177 Laurel	Y	mailbox

Body

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D

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B

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Quest

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

Staff Person Name:

Linnet Kwok

5/12/23

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes <i>Dana Name</i>
1 Chic Fashion	1245 S.C Ave	Y.	
2 Tierman Opticians	1225 S.C Ave	Y	Knows Ab Saway
3 Groovy Goose	1221 S.C Ave	N	Not open yet.
4 Gordon Aatto	1217 S.C Ave	Y	
5 Blue Line Pizza	1201 S.C Ave	Y	
6 Paris Baguette	622 Laurel	N	Not open yet
7 Wells Fargo	632 Laurel	Y	
8 Comerica Bank	644 A Laurel	Y	
9 Gelateria	644 B Laurel	Y	
10 Sneakers.	644 Laurel	Y	
11 Sereno	662 A+B Laurel	Y	
12 First Impression	662 C Laurel	Y	Only drop off flyers. Spoke to BUSY with customers Manager
13 Peninsular Prime	672 Laurel	Y	
14. Clock Tower Realty. Music	676 Laurel	Y.	
15. Orchid Room	678 Laurel	Y	
16. Rainbow Ruby.	680 Laurel	Y	(570) 219-2880 (John Lee) 4:30 - 9pm 11:30 - 2:30pm Closed (left message) + text.

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

Lisa P.

Staff Person Name:

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
			only 2-3 employees on site too busy to take survey.
Peet's	677B Laurel	Y	spoke w/ shift manager: will leave flyer in back for main manager
Living Room	677C Laurel (650) 232-7965	N	closed. 4-10 pm T, wed, Th Sun = 9 4-midnight Fri) Sat = 2-midnight Mon, closed
Paxti's		Y	Talked to Shift manager. Donovan
Joey Rae		Y	Allie. 10 yrs. not renew lease.
Dynasty	665 Laurel	Y	Barry wasn't there. staff. dropped flyer.
Number 5 Kitchen	663	N	
Graped Leather	661 Laurel	Y	41 Years; Spoke w/ Kay who is the owner/mgr.
The Perfect Rose		Y	Ulla Pironi
Pravirie	655 Laurel	Y	Staff
Olive Crush	653 Laurel	Y	Staff
Susie Cakes	649 Laurel	Y	staff
Bloomington's		Y	owner
Jamie Belen Design	643 Laurel		Meghan Staff
Lark		Y	Angela) owner
Siamese Kith		N	
Lood		Y	Staff
Cabinet		N	closed?
Shelby's Garden	629 Laurel	Y	
Dylos		N	through door
Poppio zero		N	under const.
House of Bagels		N	through door

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

Staff Person Name:

Christian P

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
Diddams	700 Laurel St.	Y	Manager on Lunch Dropped off flyer
Town	716 Laurel St	Y	Dropped off flyer w/ host
Footwear	730 Laurel St.	Y	Spoke w/ manager
Nick the Greek	732 Laurel st	Y	Only dropped off flyer
Salon Vivo / Blow Out	736 Laurel St.	N	Door locked
Sarrtori Fine	740 Laurel St	Y	Busy on phone couldn't take survey
Sakura	744 Laurel St	Y	Talked to assistant manager
Bank of America	760 Laurel St	Y	Flyer drop off only
US Bank	780 Laurel St	N	Line too long w/ customers
Cask	782 Laurel St	Y	Bank Flyer drop off only
Plantation	784 Laurel St	Y	Talked to owner
West Park Bistro	788 Laurel St	Y	Flyer drop off only
Arranged 4 Comfort	790 Laurel St	N	Closed
San Carlos Massage	790 Laurel St	N	Closed
Citi Bank	796 Laurel St	Y	Flyer drop off only
Little Learners	785 Walnut St	N	No one opened Door Flyer Drop off (Mail box)
Emily Kates Designs	777 Walnut St	N	Closed. Dropped off flyer
Chong General Dentistry	751 Walnut St	N	Closed. Dropped off flyer (Mailbox)

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

San Carlos Ave (north)

Staff Person Name: Akanksha Chopra

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
King Chuan	1188 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Went in 2 times. Manager not available. Staff was busy and only collected flyer.
UPS	1180 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to owner/manager.
Carlos Lighting company	1156 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to staff and dropped flyer
Special FX Salon	1178 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to staff and dropped flyer
Tamari Cuisine	1152 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	N (dropped flyer)	Closed
Toot Sweet Frozen Yogurt	1148 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to owner. Dropped flyer.
Coldwell Banker realty	San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Manager not available. Dropped flyer with staff.
I'm Faded Barbershop	548A El Camino Real, San Carlos, CA 94070	N (dropped flyer)	Door closed
Q INUB	El Camino Real	N (dropped flyer)	Door closed
Paloma Salon	538 El Camino Real suite a, San Carlos, CA 94070	N (dropped flyer)	Door closed
EmKay Diamonds	El Camino Real	N	Refused to talk or take flyer.
Lawyers Title	El Camino Real	Y	Spoke to staff and dropped flyer
Circle K station	500 El Camino Real, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to manager and dropped flyer
VCA Animal Hospital	501 Laurel St, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to staff and dropped flyer
Cal West Realty	569 Laurel St, San Carlos, CA 94070	Y	Spoke to staff and dropped flyer.
Rosai's Fine Jewelry	577 Laurel St, San Carlos, CA 94070	N (dropped flyer)	Door closed

DOWNTOWN SAN CARLOS: Business Outreach Sheet

Staff Person Name: Adam Aronson

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
Holly Hill	701 Laurel St	Y	
Therapy Stores Inc	705 Laurel St	Y	
Tea Hut	711 Laurel St	Y	
Dona's Hallmark	717 Laurel St	Y	
Taurus Steakhouse	727 Laurel St	N	No mailbox
Laurel Street Arts	733 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Bow Wow Meow	737 Laurel St	Y	
Seiya Restaurant	741 Laurel St	N	No mailbox
The Cobbler	745 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Guy's Barbershop	747 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Blind Tasting	749 Laurel St	N	
Mama Coco	753 Laurel St	Y	
Faith & Spirits	765 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Spasso	769 Laurel St	Y	
Stamp Bistro Bar & Grill	773 Laurel St	Y	
Pranzi Italian Bistro	777 Laurel St	Y	
Kids Company	781 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Nordic Nest	781 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Reading Bug	785 Laurel St	N	Left flyer in mailbox

Business Name	Business Address (street number, street name)	Outreach status (Y/N)	Notes
Union Bank	799 Laurel St	Y	
Gilman Dental	796 El Camino	N	Left flyer in mailbox
Pizza Guys	796 El Camino Suite E	Y	
PNC Bank	796 El Camino Suite C	Y	
Skin Care by Sally	796 El Camino Suite A	N	
Mountain Mike's	774 El Camino	Y	
Leslie's	770 El Camino	Y	
Budget Auto Glass	760 El Camino	Y	
Allstate Insurance	742 El Camino	Y	
Subway	744 El Camino	Y	
Rita's	740 El Camino	Y	
San Carlos Eye Care	750 El Camino	Y	
Bynder	734 El Camino	N	
VCA San Carlos	718 El Camino	Y	
Dumas Real Estate	700 El Camino	Y	
Veritas Homes	1132 Cherry	Y	