



San Carlos Downtown Specific Plan
Workshop 1 Breakout Room Notes
August 31, 2022

Breakout Room 1

Facilitator: Jami Williams (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Aden Ferillo (*RRM*)

Breakout Room 2

Facilitator: Abe Sheppard (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Debbie Jewel (*RRM*)

Breakout Room 3

Facilitator: Brady Woods (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Bret Stinson (*RRM*)

Breakout Room 4

Facilitator: Brian Hannegan (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Erina Shimanuki (*RRM*)

Breakout Room 5

Facilitator: Debbie Rudd (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Debora Pearson (*RRM*)

Breakout Room 6

Facilitator: Diane Bathgate (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Sajuti Haque (*City*)

Breakout Room 7

Facilitator: Liz Ocampo Vivero (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Aaron Aknin (*Good City Co.*)

Breakout Room 8

Facilitator: Pam Ricci (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Linnet Kwok (*City*)

Breakout Room 9

Facilitator: Lisa Porras (*City*)
Notetaker: Andrea Mardesich (*City*)

Breakout Room 10

Facilitator: Brian Canepa (*W Trans*)
Notetaker: Rucha Dande (*City*)

**Pages for notes are included
below.**



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PROMPTS

Notetakers would be taking notes on the google doc but that they would not be sharing their screen while doing so.

Facilitators will have a slide they can share (includes study area and additional links/info).

Please welcome everyone, share your screen with the slide/map provided, and review the following guidelines:

- We have about **30 minutes** for the discussion.
- We would like everyone who wants to speak to have an opportunity to so please limit your first round of **comments to 1-2 minutes**.
- Use the **reactions button to raise your hand** and wait to be called upon. If you're calling in via Zoom dial-in call please dial *9 on your phone's dial pad to raise your hand, and do the same to lower your hand.
- This is an **opportunity to share your thoughts and we ask that you send all questions** to the email shown. The city will be reviewing and responding to questions by developing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet that will be posted on the website.
- Remind them that they can stay on as long as they like or **leave any time**, but we will not be going back into the larger workshop setting.
- Respectfully move on if someone is going on too much or not being constructive. You may say that you will call on them again if there is time but assure them that there are plenty of ways to share their thoughts throughout the process.
- If it is quiet or there is a lull you can lead with a few prompting questions:
 - a. What is something you like about Downtown?
 - b. What is something that you think could be improved?
 - c. Please share one big idea for Downtown

Email to put into the breakout room chat: AdvancePlanning@cityofsancarlos.org

Project website to place in breakout room chat: <https://www.sancarlosdowntownplan.com/>



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Breakout Room 1

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4 attendees

- Lena: At what point do the local businesses or chains, anchor stores or other revenue generating uses get involved? What about the impact to our taxes / how is this being paid for?
- Al Savay: Funded by the General Fund. The City Council assigned funds to this project from the General Fund.
- So no referendums, local measures, bond measures?
- Al Savay: No. That's a possibility down the road but for this study, the money has been allocated already. But if we get new sidewalks, funding will be determined in the future. We have an economic consultant to help determine funding for those improvements.
- Sarah: Why does the downtown plan not include the south part of Laurel Street?
- Al Savay: The idea, when the Council first started looking at this, Laurel goes all the way to Eaton. This area is considered the downtown core area, while there is a central area of Laurel. It was too much to do at one time. The City will be pursuing a Specific Plan for that area to tackle it in pieces.
- Karen: I like the idea of redesigning our alleyways for other purposes and I would love to see them used as almost a loop for cycling and move the parking off of that and behind and all of that. I'm definitely a supporter of turning Laurel Street, or portions at least, into a pedestrian thoroughfare.
- Page: I was curious why this is a two-year process? There is no money allocated to making changes as Al said, we'll probably have to have a referendum which I'm not happy about. Why are two years allocated when there is no change?
- Al: This is a Specific Plan which has specific requirements. The goal is to put together a plan to do something, that the community understands, that there is agreement on what to do, and how to do it. The State of CA has state laws that govern plans like this. You have to do certain analyses like traffic, environmental, you may have heard of CEQA, you have to do studies and things like that. It also requires a lot of dialogue within the community. This is the first of meetings you can attend. A steering committee, DTAC, has been established. The goal is to talk to as many people as we can. Two years may seem like a long time but it actually goes by really fast. Hopefully at the end of the two years, we will have an action plan representing what is important to the community and how we get there.
- Jami: This won't result in a referendum or tax increase. This will result in a roadmap for the City to receive grant opportunities. Like this project supported by the General Fund,



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this SP will earmark projects for future allocation by the City. The ideas will come from this community and all involved. It's a mistake to think this project will cost citizens money. CalTrans is starting to become progressive and think bike lanes, walkability is important. They are not providing funding for Cities to help implement things like this. This is a great example of opportunities for the City to obtain funding for in the future.

- Paige: How long did it take for Burlingham to get the way it is? We all like it.
- Jami: I don't know. This plan is setting the stage for the future. The public realm is on how much the decision makers decide to invest in downtown. It's very much reliant on what private property owners want to do. This is establishing opportunities and constraints. It's up to property owners to decide what they want to do. Have had lightning speed projects and 10-year projects.
- Sarah: My question about Laurel Street - if this is visioning what should be done, to set an arbitrary cut off at Greenwood maybe doesn't make sense because to see continuity of the street would be good in street trees, design of the overall streetscape. Visual continuity is good for pedestrians. The streetscape of Laurel ends at Arroyo. You have more businesses between Arroyo and Morse, Brittan and Greenwood. To think about the big picture, it would be good to have a picture that stretches out Laurel to increase the commercial value for real estate further down. It would make it more viable if it looked like it was downtown. I feel like setting an arbitrary line at Greenwood, it misses the question of what defines downtown and our overall vision for San Carlos. When you talk about Caltrans and El Camino, I have two intersections that I feel like are super problematic that I feel like are out of control because they are on El Camino. The timing of the light on El Camino is terrible. To make a left turn, you have to wait an exceedingly long time. To turn left onto Arroyo, the light is not timed to the flow of traffic. I understand this is a Caltrans thing, but I end up going on Cherry Street because it is not impacted by travel. I think this will change a lot about traffic patterns and deviations from downtown. We should influence Caltrans. The timing of the lights at El Camino and Old County Road is continually a problem because the timing of the light is so terrible. Lots of backup. Those two lights regularly cause the most traffic backup. If we had control over the light timing to give priority to traffic passing on Holly Street, backup could be relieved because no one is going on El Camino. I feel like it's a serious issue, also, with pedestrian safety. I worried about my husband crossing that everyday. People turning right do not pay attention. A serious accident could happen there. It's a shame the City allows people to die to make traffic improvements for pedestrian safety. A big problem waiting to happen. I've always been told it's out of our hands because of Caltrans. I feel like it would change traffic and uses in downtown.
- Jami: A traffic study will be a part of this study.
- Karen: Understanding what a downtown SP is, is an opportunity for the community to come together to develop guiding principles that will lead development of the downtown



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in a consistent manner. It's our community's opportunity to share what they would like to see going forward. Like Sarah said, consistency up and down Laurel would be great. We should be future oriented and that would be great to have that consistency. As someone born and raised here, I have seen lots of changes in the town. I like what we were trying to do on El Camino from town to town. I'm frustrated by Samtrans and City pointing fingers at each other on bus stations. If we could figure that out that would be great. Would love to see increased pedestrian safety crossing El Camino. Buldbouts help to reduce length to pedestrians crossing but it pushes bicyclists into traffic.

- Sarah: The parking area on Laurel Street near the back of blueline pizza is listed as Future Plaza. That would be a great thing for the downtown, not just in the area, would allow people to meander, to have more public spaces even to meander. My teens end up leaving downtown and go to the park without feeling safe, even when patronizing businesses. It's not really socially comfortable with adults giving side-eye so they end up going to Burton, but for the interest of the businesses themselves, it would be better for middle schools and high schools to be able to work further up and down Lauren to spend more money and businesses and have somewhere to sit. There's not many benches and places to have a seat. I don't have senior relatives here but I know it makes a difference to provide a place to sit after walking a few blocks. When you go to those long stretches of Laurel Street without any public places to sit, it's not welcoming for people to stroll in that way.
- Karen: Concern of mine for years. Having places and opportunities for young people to hang out. When I grew up in San Carlos, it was easy and safe to get pizza on one side of Laurel and ice cream on another. I get the reality but I think it would be good to have another opportunity for young kids to have a place to 'hang out'.
- Jami: We are trying to engage people of all ages so looking for what they would like to see is an important part of the process.
- Sarah: Wants to provide comments into a detailed document regarding intersections to provide input to Caltrans.
- Karen: Would be great to provide opportunities for young people to provide input. My teenager works downtown. Would be great to have teen-oriented opportunity for input. Even a pop-up, kids could write post-its on.
- Al Savay: We have a local teen advisory committee we could try to engage.



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Breakout Room 2

Facilitator: Abe Sheppard (*RRM*)

Notetaker: Debbie Jewell (*RRM*)

7 attendees

Debbie - 18 year resident

Carissa - 2012 moved to Sc and lives within walking

Adam - lived 20 years walks everywhere

Rebecca

Why now what are we doing?

Would be helpful to move things forward now vs far in the future.

Carissa

- Since street closure, spending more time visiting Downtown since safer and better community feeling now
- Use data to inform decision making including outdoor seating and making safe family friendly spaces with a small community feeling
- Closure has helped

Rebecca

- Long walks with parking configurations now
- Sometimes don't want to walk as far to the destinations

Debbie

- Business on Laurel are experiencing dynamic changes
- Upzoning proposed for the Housing Element
- Could not honor leases and could need to have renegotiations
- Described previous retail space that was remaining but now sold and tenant needs to locate retail elsewhere
- Look at upzoning before decisions are made

Adam

- Laurel cluster for skateboards - What do with this space?
- Restaurant and businesses primarily - house or sneakers restaurants mentioned
- Mixed perspective on the city



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- Retail/ restaurants/ hotel and art needed to draw people to Laurel
- El Camino retail and restaurants make it hard for parking - Offices better
- San Carlos Ave by Drakes traffic lights have shorter timing - One side takes 30 seconds on left side but right side does not go as fast
- El Camino Real bus stop by Drakes is good
- CalTrans Depot - restaurant or cafe would be good to eat after train use

Carlie Ceng

- Moved to San Carlos in 2011 small children
- Chose San Carlos due to quaint downtown
- Lives close to downtown
- Like the closure - not worried about cars and feels family friendly
- Like San Carlos more than Belmont because walkable downtown
- Plan city around walking - not driving
- Air quality and pollution not good with cars
- Don't mind walking to the downtown
- Farmers Market - miss Thursday night markets
- Weekends in San Mateo college and other locations in the Bay Area - Fighting for vendors on the weekend
- Need a nice gathering event like Farmers Market for Thursday evenings

Adam

- Wine fest could be used on Laurel closure in Oct?
- South Laurel private businesses mostly - not retail or restaurants
- Not a defined area currently

Rebecca

- Frequent South of Laurel but only for specific uses
- Versus wandering around in the Downtown area north of Britan
- Encourage more businesses in the South Laurel area

Debbie

- Like to see more housing in the Downtown
- Likes retail with housing over - Especially on Laurel
- Good to include parking underneath



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Rebecca

- Like housing over retail, but costs to rent the space will skyrocket
- Affordable housing but also need affordable retail too

Adam

- San Carlos Museum is in a weird spot - Behind King Tron San Carlos Avenue
- Need more green spaces downtown
- Undecided on housing in the downtown



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Breakout Room 3

Facilitator: Brady Woods (*RRM*)

Notetaker: Bret Stinson (*RRM*)

Helen Mickiewicz: Long-term resident from 1989 - This is the 2nd redo for Laurel St (1st about 20 years ago), there are many other retail uses besides restaurants to have downtown, downtown is already a culinary destination, there were bakeries/auto supply stores/hardware stores/others, having only restaurants will be disappointing, she hopes we don't invite big chain stores into downtown (Apple store as example) -

David Crabbe: Long-term resident from 1989 - Great opportunity to combine need for housing with downtown except for area around Holly and El Camino where there could be parking use or plazas, loves parklets on Laurel St but they need aesthetic help, add more pedestrian on Laurel - could be 100% pedestrian, Laurel is a slow street and pretty safe to cross, difficult to have a recreational destination downtown to encourage visiting, goes downtown for restaurants, project area is excluding other side of El Camino (Caltrans property) - should look at improving El Camino with bike lanes/other improvements -

Mike Pardini: Long-term resident (60 years), back in the day San Carlos had more diverse uses (theaters, miniature golf, bowling alley, outdoor trampoline!), now there is very little retail downtown, may need to have chains to get retail, stores have closed since pandemic, the area from Holly St to San Carlos Ave proposed to add housing, ATT won't allow below-ground parking - nothing under 10' below ground level, small parcels along El Camino not big enough to make a real plaza, surprised the downtown SP area was expanded to Greenwood Ave to the south (not much happening there), original plan for Future Plaza was to have cafes - paid 500k for the alley, San Mateo County has lowest employment in the state -



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Breakout Room 4

Facilitator: Brian Hannegan (*RRM*)

Notetaker: Erina Shimanuki (*RRM*)

Steve Fogel

- Amazon taking away retail business - There is an existing Amazon locker facility at 7 Eleven at Holly and ? across the railroad tracks, if there was one more in the walking area off Laurel, it will draw people in to the area and may stop at restaurants and shops
- Pedestrian blocked off area on 600 block on Laurel - may create confusion, suggest expanding to 800 block? But people may need parking on Bianchini
- More and better gathering spaces off of Laurel - currently there is a natural gathering in front of Diddams? on Cherry St below 700 block - a lot of teens gather there, can make the area more inviting to that age group. Find where people naturally gather, and enhance those even more and inviting
- Harrington Park - something about the space that is not very inviting, there is a lot more potential there
- Consider incorporating some festivals to cater towards teens, especially on Cherry St between El Camino and Walnut to block off to pedestrian only
- Make conscious efforts to provide shops and activities that teens would be more interested in

Liz

- Outdoor spaces - Laurel St. in front of the library is an opportunity
- Redwood City has an arts center with galleries and art exhibitions, might be nice to incorporate that in San Carlos
- Art that everyone can relate to, *all inclusive*, she does not feel represented
- Her daughter struggles to find places to study in downtown
- Restaurant on San Carlos Ave closes at midnight, which is nice, but on Laurel closes around 9/10 pm
- Laurel St pedestrian feels like they are imposing on the restaurants (not a clear distinction)

Maya Nayberg on Youth advisory council and DTAC

- Downtown is seen as a family location, not very oriented towards older teens and highschoolers
- Ways to integrate teens in the area? Study areas, hangouts
- People like the closed Laurel St to have a walkable area



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- Skate park project already started and had good feedback and the community is eager, but got shut down with Covid - would like to bring it back

David Pollack

- Southern Laurel (900 to 1000 block) needs possible rezoning, bring vibrancy, more mixed use (shops and restaurants on the bottom, housing on the top)
- There seems to be more of a clean slate in south Laurel to reimagine and incorporate more mixed use

Samina Ginwall on Youth Advisory Council and DTAC

- Coffee shops for teens, study area, skate parks, a place where kids can interact with each other
- Teens feel as if there is nothing to do in Downtown San Carlos



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Breakout Room 5

Facilitator: Debbie Rudd (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Debora Pearson (*RRM*)

4 Participants

In San Carlos since 2010. Likes downtown but not love it. Visit other downtowns more often for the dining options, but downtown is convenient, meet w/ friends to get ice cream, go to downtown events. Loved the idea of having a central place to go to w/ family, but doesn't meet all needs... what draws family away from Downtown. Such as more affordable dining options, budget eats, doesn't feel vibrant at night (some are, but not bookends), feels like an adult vibe at night. Felt more so at Farmers Market that recently moved to Sunday & had more family vibe. More retail options, goes to the reading bug (?), good w/ kids.

Agrees with previous comments. Friends come to visit & more often go to other downtowns for dinner. Not as many options. Also more of the retired are leaving but restaurants close early. See young people moving out of area to San Fran who want the nightlife that's not there. Family life not there either... bowling, movie theater, teenagers hang out, teenagers can be dropped off & enjoy. Have nice shops but most are unique and likes that but want to add more popular stuff there. Population in recent years, in last 10 yrs, sees a lot more families with kids. Makes sense for the City to think about how to attract those types of families & can spend their money in our downtown instead of going to other areas. Historical reasons, initially, retirement community, but now, most new people who move in are families with kids.

Street closure opinions

Likes to walk around, closed street w/out traffic works. Hears some business owners complain about parking spots being taken. Restaurants have more space, but other shops might not need the outdoor space and now customers can't just drive & park in front and may be losing customers. How can we keep those retail stores compensated for their inconvenience and not be impacted by losing parking spaces. When business applied for bus license, fees likely correspond w/ size of business. Now using more space, may feel like it's unfair the other businesses who aren't getting the additional space. Wants it to be fair to all businesses.

100% for the street closure. Going to attract and get people to spend money. Huge attraction to people from out of town. Hears about business struggles & mobility issues but doesn't understand the issues enough to have the opinions. Using the alleyways an option. How smaller downtowns are trending. San Carlos hasn't gone up on the trends which might cause lose out of customers.



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Taking into consideration the changing of demographics. Would like to see more diversity in the restaurant choices. All seem the same.

Parking - were a lot of spaces that were along tree track (?) that were not using. Has a lot of unique things to offer. Christmas lights, halloween people come here. Maybe if had a place to park would stay but didn't so go slow through the couple blocks streets & then move on to a different city to eat.

Huge believer in street closures, placemaking, pandemic where every city was forced in a great way to really see the value of downtowns and to see them differently. San Carlos not the small town it used to be. A lot like european style and it 's the way of the future. Early visioning stage. Love ballards - they are great, can close off streets in an aesthetic way

Public spaces? We need more. Need more public spaces. A lot of people mentioned Redwood city. Goes there a lot especially in summer. Movies/music on the square. Almost every night has something there & people come back year after year. We don't have that much space but...

If close one block, why not close both. Make a walking street. Preferred 2 blocks much more than one. More flexibility and options than walking.



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Breakout Room 6

Facilitator: Diane Bathgate (*RRM*)

Notetaker: Sajuti Haque (*City*)

of Participants: 7 people

- Someone who grew up in San Carlos, curious about the population for San Carlos in 20 years; longer term demographic projections
- Concerned about the empty storefront; does not want a street of just restaurants; how to keep the small businesses especially with all the high rents
 - Response: the Specific Plan will look at that
- Someone who works in DT and lives in San Carlos- don't make it look like Santana Row. Prefers pedestrian friendly environment. We must make it look better because right now is mish mash of parklets. We need more scooter and bike friendly infrastructure as well. Also surprised that so many people didn't know about Wheeler Plaza parking. A lot of people drive to downtown and look for spaces in Laurel Street or behind TOWN. We need to place a high value on wayfinding. Would love to see gathering spaces and making it comfortable for all ages. Support a diverse community. Sad to see so many shops close. Welcome more businesses and all kinds of businesses such as small businesses that need a small office space. Reinvasion how the spaces are used- would not mind seeing offices. Would love to be able to do all of their errands on Laurels Street.
 - Response: The economic market study will assess which options are viable for the downtown
- Work on the wifi in Downtown to make it more accessible and realizable
 - Response: Specific Plan will look into infrastructure issues
- We have such a nice climate to work outdoors if we have more plazas
- Community is the essence of Downtown and makes it different from other Downtowns.
- Fairly concentrated compared to other downtowns
 - Response: should it be expanded?
- Let's focus on making these few blocks vibrant as possible rather than expanding



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- If the ZO can be changed to mixed-use where you have office/retail below and residential above. If we had roof decks it would change the look of the street. Varied architecture that is cohesive and thoughtful. Santa Barbara is a different look and is not for San Carlos.
 - Response: all of that trees, streetscape, public spaces and etc. will all be addresses in the Specific Plan. In the next meeting there will be some alternatives for the community to evaluate.



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Breakout Room 7

Facilitator: Liz Ocampo Vivero (*RRM*)
Notetaker: Aaron Aknin (*Good City Co.*)

Allison Chang, Diana, Kevin Norma, Katie, Donna Lera,

Diana: Lived here for 39 years. Likes the way DT SC evolved. Likes the closures. Restaurants. Likes the idea of alleys being upgraded. She asked why are we doing the downtown plan now?

Donna: Likes the mix of uses downtown. Restaurants, offices above ground floor, salons, a lot of different places to go. Likes the variety.

Allison: Downtown Advisory Committee (lives in downtown condo). 13-year resident. Likes the variety downtown. She likes being able to walk everywhere. Likes the local feel, enjoy independent stores and not chains. Wants to make sure we are supporting these stores.

Diana: Alleysways can be improved. Wants to support downtown. Make sure we don't have to pay for parking. Grew up in Burlingame. Doesn't like the paid parking. She likes the ideas that we put out there in the presentation.

Donna: DTAC member. Would like to see improved frontages of certain stores. More open areas to go and sit. Wants to know what could happen to Harrington Park. She noted the survey looked at Laurel and ECR. ECR is fast paced, and Laurel Street is quieter. Would like to see medical uses consolidated into one area near Greenwood. Would like to see the Harrington Park be used as a connecting to the alley for peds. Asked what are we looking for in terms of feedback.

Diana: Community Foundation member. Having some type of event night where everyone in San Carlos can come together.

Diana: Wants to make sure there is event space. There are no theaters and other community spaces in SC. We should improve that.

Allison: Wants to think of the downtown area as a park. As you walk out of a store you feel safe. Parking should be tucked away. Doesn't always feel safe when mixing peds w cars. People like to go on vacation to older cities where people are prioritized. People want to live and visit in areas where people (not car) dominate. More human scale. It would be nice to get away from cars for a block or two. Kids walking from Central should feel safe. Visibility isn't great with covered parklets and cars.



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Diana: People say that downtown SC has a “European feel”. We should build on that.

Elizabeth: Focus on streetscape, human-scale development.

Donna: Focus on how the different forms of transportation can work better together.

Elizabeth: Areas for seating throughout, connected public space, people having better experiences in the public spaces.

Diana: Older generation may need to park closer. How can you accommodate that?

AA: You can prioritize ADA spaces towards the center of downtown closest to storefronts.

Allison: Private businesses have “expectant mom” parking morning. Can we have temp 10-minute or 20-minute spots? Could you do honor system type parking for these spaces? Have golf carts help bring people back to the car.

Diana: Bring back shuttle (SCOOT) funding. Find funding for shuttles downtown.

Allison: Have public restrooms. Helps people stay longer downtown. People use Peet’s now.

Donna: Continue to bring in and expand events downtown. Current events are wonderful draws, would like to have more all ages events. Bring people together as a community.

Diana: Similar to Los Gatos. Wants to keep it feeling unique. Independent stores give it the right feel, versus chains in Burlingame.



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Breakout Room 8

Facilitator: Pam Ricci (**RRM**)

Notetaker: Linnet Kwok (**City**)

Myles Kevin - Europe cities are entirely designed for people. Proponent for street closure. The DT does not look nice now. Replace the orange water filled dividers. Vehicles should be exception in DT. People are willing to walk 10min per survey, which means DT is for people and parking are on the perimeter. Parking is relatively safe. Myles go to DT 4 times a week. Keep Laurel street close, it will make DT a better place. Once Lauren Street is closed we can see how restaurants and retails do creative things. We are blessed with great weather.

Rajesh Krishnan - 9 years in San Carlos. Children 5-10, like to see where kids can learn how to bike, something for young children and family to enjoy instead of just restaurants. Want to learn more the impact on street closure.

Carline Bauhaus - 30 year resident, raised two children. The big basket is how to really live up to the motto, "City of Good Living". It is all about the people, people focus. How to design DT where it is welcoming and inviting. Where can children go safely and independently. Most DT conversation is about cars and parking, but want it to be more about the people. Types of businesses have changed throughout the year. There was a woolworth, now there is Diddams, something for everyone.

A persistent concern is safety. Pedestrian and bike safety. People are not as attentive. A big fan of pedestrian zone (for the people). Work out a systems to deliver to business on certain time of the day. Super Blocks, perimeter parking

The city can set Initial roll out and guiding principles. Every restaurant has created a barrier for their own area. Perhaps make it more open, no big walls and barricades. It will be more dynamic and inviting.

Need to think about activities, for example, once upon a time the Yoga Health Center did Yoga classes outside.

Tom Davids - Been in SC for 40 years. Served on the Council. Moved from Carmelita to DT. 7 years in DT. Spends a lot of time in Laurel St. Need to hear from the people. This is the great first step to make DT great.



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Breakout Room 9

Facilitator: Lisa Porras (*City*)

Notetaker: Andrea Mardesich (*City*)

Participants: Alex Kent, David Peng, K Goforth, Jim Bertram

- Lisa Porras provided a brief overview.
- Alex Kent- heard on news that Samtrans has a longer term plan to redevelop on San Carlos Avenue- what is the timeline? Where will temporary headquarters be? With electrification of Caltrain have had to end leases.
 - Lisa: Modification intervention with building. Don't know schedule yet. Will include in FAQ.
- Alex Kent- with the closure of a block or potentially more of Laurel (I walk my dog from Elm and Central to downtown and back) - majority of residents like it closed. As a commercial property consultant, could be considered a taking/ eminent domain action. Do any landlords or any of the retail tenants have expressed concern with taking away parking, and taken away access. Restaurants are given a major advantage. Retail business is driven by having a lot of parking. Probably not benefited by having the road closed.
 - Lisa: Yes there have been concerns from retailers, because they operate different than restaurants. How do we facilitate and promote these retailers? Need to address head on as part of plan. Some talk about role of alleys, can they be improved, parking cleaned up, beautified, and provide access to stores.
- Alex Kent- yes room for improvement- don't have to attract new businesses or developers- in a really good position.
- Alex Kent- in near term restaurants with parklets, want to make sure that sidewalk easements kept open for people to come through- ADA accessibility- sidewalks need to be respected in terms of staying open to walk through even if not going to a restaurant.
- Unknown (direct message to Lisa P) - hardware store helpful in downtown, more recreation and entertainment opportunities for adults and youth, and organic grocery store. Pedestrian plazas great to have but need to accommodate elderly and disabled.
- David Peng- Other downtowns around Peninsula- represent both competition and templates- a lot of Burlingame responses. Bigger cities (RWC and PA) hard to compare, more like Burlingame and Los Altos.
 - Lisa: Need to understand "why" these cities were chosen- what are best attributes?
- David Peng- Burlingame more vibrant- more people, is that a function of competition?
- Alex Kent- family lived in Burlingame- advantage to renovate infrastructure- change parking from diagonal to parallel. Lost spaces on Burlingame Ave- but widened



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sidewalks, renovated whole area, gives it much newer premier shopping destination. Paid for by City and landlords. More consolidation of spaces, easier to coordinate. Economically, 30% of visitors are from the regional area as opposed to Burlingame, and another 30% by hotels- because close to SFO- boosts economy.

- Jim Bertram- part of DTAC- great hearing everything- similar to what hear from family, neighbor and friends. Burlingame is very attractive, wide sidewalks, very coordinated- flow into crosswalks. One thing is parking is right there, waiting to park, humming in front of you. Like where don't have car in San Carlos. Similar to European city. Burlingame has some fantastic old building, fewer in San Carlos. Friend who is a landlord on San Carlos Avenue- many years- city came and partnered to make changes to facades - saw huge improvements with that. Is that worth considering as well? Many buildings haven't been updated in awhile- think it would be worth looking at again.
- Alex Kent- spoken to a lot of landlords on Laurel- remarkable how valuable some buildings in the downtown are when they are not updated- can generate solid rent. There is almost a disincentive to improve look because making a lot of rent money. Need the City proactively try to reach out. A lot of consolidation - may move things along. In terms of retail and restaurants- windfall for some of these as more of the office is built on the East Side. Could be negative in terms of traffic. All employees want to go downtown. Things may go more upscale, rents for retail will go up.
- Alex Kent- look at crime maps, armed robberies around Laurel, personally more police patrol on foot. Undercover police, or those not "armed up" useful to have police walk the block. A lot of room to improve safety, reduce crime, more presence, visible video cameras, specifically monitored by Police on Laurel. Bulk purchase to allow people to buy cameras for a private property. There is a program where you can register your camera and Sheriff's will know you have a camera if crime occurs and can come ask for help.



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Breakout Room 10

Facilitator: Brian Canepa (*W Trans*)

Notetaker: Rucha Dande (*City*)

Number of attendees: 4 attendees, Kristen Clements (does not wish to participate), Jennifer Cray, Josh Wallace, Christine Gray, Meghan R (City)

1. Christine - Child psychologist, lives and works in San Carlos for 7 years. Owns business above Red Hot Chilli Peppers, was doubtful about pandemic changes but really liked the new atmosphere with closed Laurel St.

Concerns: Agree alleys are a mess, but it would be really hard to get deliveries if not there. Alleys need maintenance and delivery access for packages. Hopes to maintain her office space as she loves it. Music from the restaurants shouldn't be blasting in the middle of the day. My biggest concerns with this plan would be to know if my patients can walk and park to get to my place? Most changes I like, the Downtown plan should not only plan to positively impact restaurants but should consider functioning of other businesses as well.

Intersection concerns: Samtrans garage is free, I park there. Need to cross the intersection twice making an L shape walk. That intersection is a nightmare. If that is part of this plan, there are multiple times the cars have run me over. Recently the timing was changed which seems to be helping. That intersection is very dangerous. Any right turn is dangerous.

Brain - we are going to take a global perspective while preparing this plan

Brian - What is your take on Laurel and El Camino corridor? I don't like walking on ECR and driving on Laurel. Either it needs to shut down or enforce Jaywalking.

Brian - citizens have complained that the Parklets and restaurants that have recently come up create a tunnel effect for peds, any thoughts?

It does feel that way, but also feels temporary. Something that should allow kids to bicycle and gather. Something I really like living here.

2. Jennifer - New to San Carlos, moved a couple of years ago. Used to live in Palo Alto for over 25 years. Pro pedestrian. Is both sides of El Camino Real part of the plan?

Brian: El Camino is Caltrans' jurisdiction, but we can talk to them to recommend ideas.



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Are design considerations part of the plan or only size and use?

Brian: Yes, we are considering everything we can.

I live close to downtown and walk a lot. I feel super lucky to be able to do that.

Concerns: The design choices of the architecture along El Camino are unfortunate and unattractive, not pedestrian friendly. Feel ECR cannot ever be part of the downtown because of the architecture. Buildings with no setbacks is very unattractive.

So many restaurants having so much outdoor space is great. Outdoor dining serves as a great public utility. I would be in favor of expanding the outdoor space and also allowing them to pay for it.

Brian - Can you elaborate more on the design features you find unattractive?

The new buildings that have come up along ECR have no architectural features to make them attractive. Townhouses, apartments, condos. The buildings look more institutional.

We like walking in the middle of the street because of the tunnel effect due to the outdoor seating of the restaurants. I don't like eating there too, because there handbags could be swiping through my dinner plate. The walking areas should be pulled out in front as it feels like walking through the eating area. The employees are back and forth across pedestrians – they would appreciate that separation. Hallmark store, how is that even in business? I wish there was more non-restaurant business presence. I would like the downtown feel more than restaurants, maybe a permanent plaza to have evening concerts and events. Public space should be carved down there. Harrington Park is too tiny.

The store owners I have talked to, they are worried about the economy. Empty businesses and spaces are very concerning. What can we do to get businesses back? I am really happy that the City is doing so much to make it walkable. Happy City, walkable city books are what I am reading.

Josh Wallace - San Carlos does not do enough to preserve its history. I hope this plan does that. San Carlos should be more proactive and advocate for preservation for the little that is left. Carlos Club.

3. Brian: Any specific buildings you think should be saved?



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Not much left except Carlos Club. Light house is gone, neon sign, I have tried to work with the City to do what they can to save this place.