



Downtown Advisory Committee Regular Meeting  
Library Community Room  
610 Elm Street, San Carlos, CA 94070  
November 14, 2023 5:30 PM

## MINUTES

### ROLL CALL

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Donna Lera, Downtown Business Owner  
Allison Chang, Downtown Property Owner  
Tom Davids, Downtown Property Owner  
Jean Dehner, Older Adults  
Mark Maxwell, PR&C  
Monette Meridith, At Large  
Cecile Lee, Alternate Member  
Joaquin Pedrin, At Large  
Samina Ginwalla, Youth Advisory Council  
Dylan Karmin, Youth Advisory Council  
Allie Board, Downtown Business Owner  
Anthony Kamm, Economic Development Advisory Committee

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

James Bertram, Alternate Members  
Amy Buckmaster, Chamber San Mateo County  
Sreecharan Chandrasekharan, At Large  
Tracy Massaro, Alternate Member  
Liz Min, Alternate Member  
Madison Blanton, Special Needs

#### **Advisory Present:**

Al Savay, Community and Economic Development Director  
Lisa Porras, Planning Manager  
Akanksha Chopra, Associate Planner  
Aaron Aknin, Strategic Advisor  
Sajuti Haque, Senior Management Analyst

1. MEETING KICK-OFF
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ATTENDANCE
4. PROJECTION DISCUSSION AND BREAKOUT SESSION

Activities involved presentation from the City of San Carlos, and WRT; followed by group discussions and hands on activity to provide feedback on the urban design strategies.



*James Stickley, Principal at WRT, presenting the urban design framework to the DTAC*

## GROUP 1

- **Facilitator:** Rohit Tak
- **Notetaker:** Akanksha Chopra

### ACTIVITY 1: Review and Confirm the Draft Vision & Guiding Principles

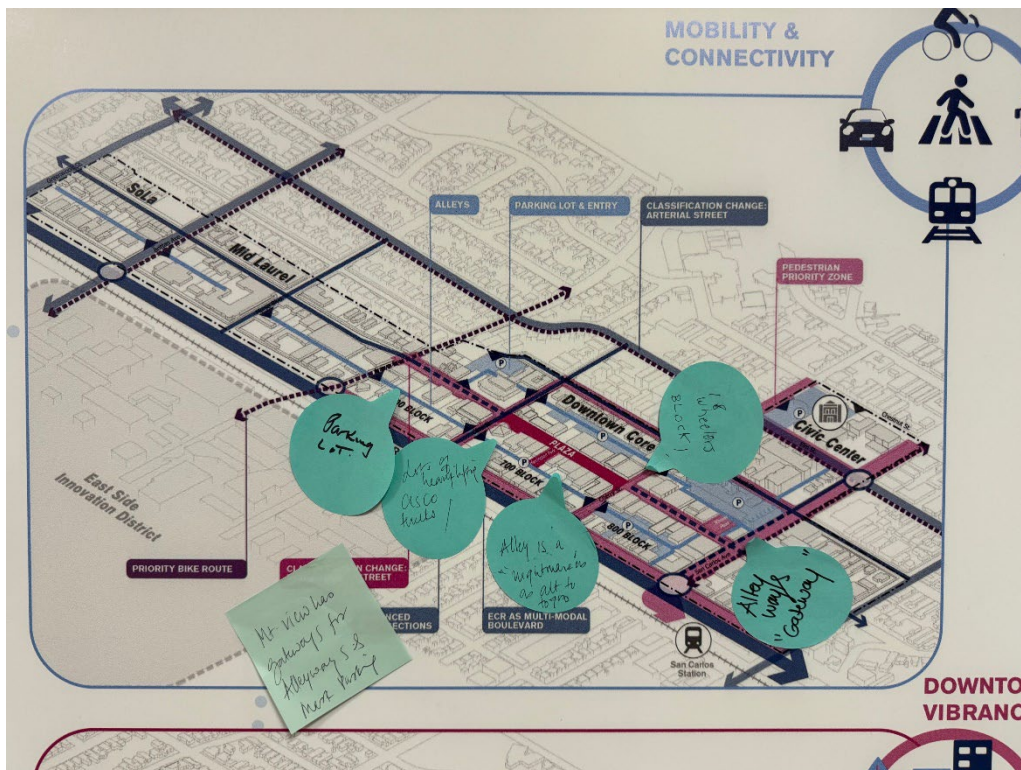
- Keeping the small-town feel
- Including “Pet Friendly Downtown”, in the vision statement;
- Downtown should be welcoming to people from all walks of life and backgrounds, for this, emphasis on inclusive and equitable strategies to revitalize downtown should be explored (since Peninsula has a reputation of being fancy and high profile);
- Character & identity – need to understand what we want, a local or regional destination;
- Plaza design – shall consider flexible programs and spaces, so it’s not specific to a purpose;
- Businesses – strategies for business growth with consideration of locally own businesses;
- El Camino Real – making it a mixed use corridor;
- Mobility –
  - Strategies to minimize auto-trips are a must, we don’t want to drive to the downtown on daily basis;
  - Providing affordable EV charging.

### ACTIVITY 2 - Discuss The Public Realm Concepts

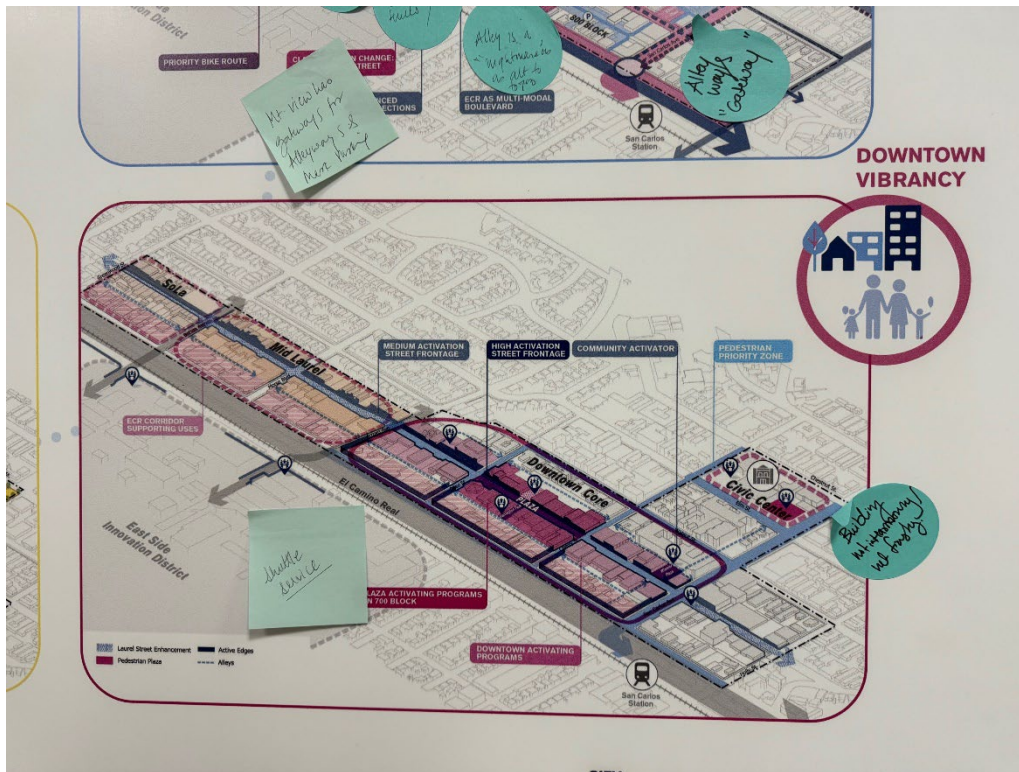
#### ○ Character and identity

- Need a consistent and harmonious style and feel
- Something is needed that celebrates identity of everyone . Programs and spaces accommodating activities as Yoga, tai-chi, community yoga – so people from everywhere can join;

- Fountain/Water feature of some kind is needed in the downtown to create some strong image;
- Something unexpected/element of surprise;
- Gateway elements at alley and parking entrances are encouraged.
- **Downtown Vibrancy**
  - Diversity of businesses:
    - We have a good mix of restaurants – how can we make them further diverse?;
    - Restaurants act as a magnet for people;
    - Many businesses are struggling to exist.
- **Mobility & Connectivity**
  - Public transportation “does not exist”;
  - There are no buses in neighborhoods anymore;
  - Shuttle pilot which the city implemented some years ago was a helpful to access downtown, between 4:00 – 8:00 PM, without driving cars, approaches like this are recommended;
  - If you are narrowing 600 block, please note that there is already a spillover in residential areas.
- **Equity and Resilience**
  - Local small shops are gone as landlords charge bay area rents;
  - We have a regulations that have kept out big businesses, but due to that we may be missing on some good ones;
  - Cooling zones in summer;
  - Apart from climate resilience, earthquake resilient strategies should be included.



Group 1: Specific Feedback Activity



Group 1: Specific Feedback Activity

## GROUP 2

- **Facilitator:** Poonam Narkar
- **Notetaker:** Sajuti Haque

### ACTIVITY 1: Review and Confirm the Draft Vision & Guiding Principles

- Affordable EV charging - do we need the word affordable?;
- If the City installs, do they have control over the costs?

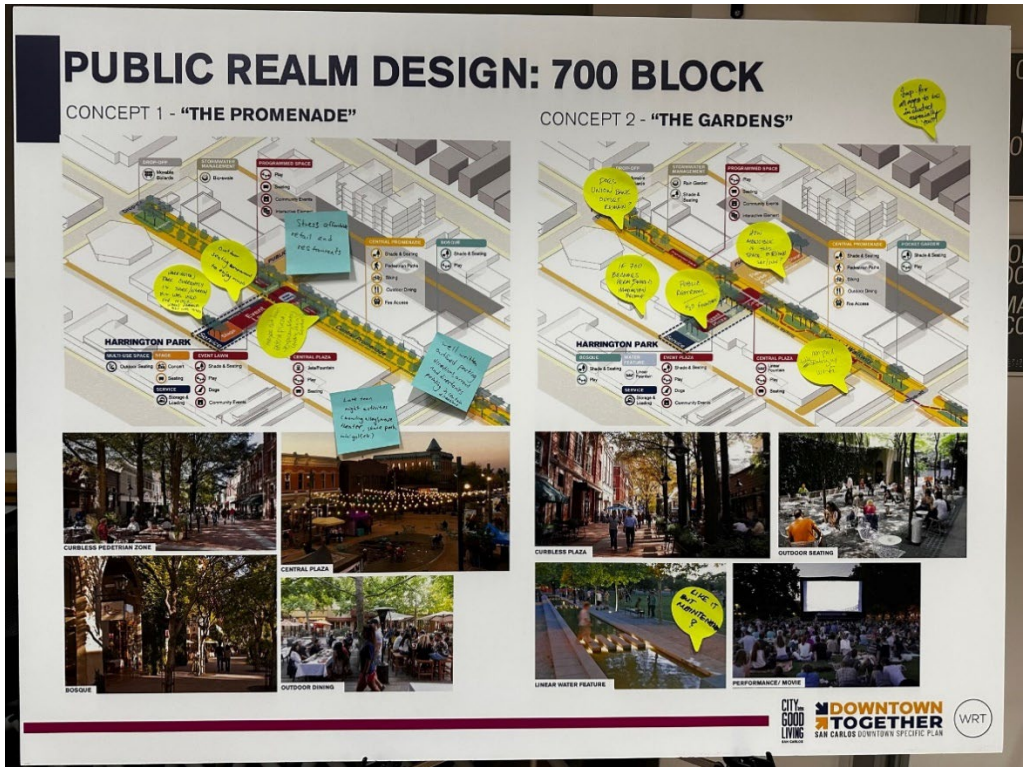
### ACTIVITY 2 - Discuss The Public Realm Concepts

- **Character and identity**
  - Preference of concept:
    - Everyone prefers Concept 1 because it's bolder and stronger because its consistent;
    - Everyone really likes the water play;
    - Perhaps we can add art installation like San Jose ;
  - How would the flow of seating work with tree lines;
    - The whole thing can be curb less and there is enough space for the seating;
  - The Union bank outlet- is that temporary or permanent?;
  - Outdoor reading in front of the Reading Bug should keep going.
- **Downtown Vibrancy**
  - Activation of uses: would that be broken down by ages?;
  - Prior to 6:00 PM - it's a very local space;
  - Not a lot of nightlife;
  - Question: what kind of downtown times do we want? That will dictate what kind of businesses we will attract?;

- 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM – errands time in the downtown;
- Weekends- very different feel/ attracting folks from out of town;
- Questioning the need for gateways because its already so popular;
- Do we actually need anything in mid-Laurel?;
- YAC member- consistent activities for youth is important:
  - This project doesn't cover the CalTrain Station plaza- but that's a great place for movies or other free activities;
  - EX: Hillsdale Shopping Center plaza;
- List of Preferred Uses:
  - Theatre;
  - Non-paid seating with wi-fi;
  - Skate park;
  - Non-traditional benches/ sturdy;
  - Bowling alley;
- Indoor or Outdoor Recreational space such as Urban Putt;
- Concept 2 is too zig-zaggy; perhaps do that at a smaller scale in a sperate space;
- The current reality of Harrington park – there are a lot of homeless people currently because it's narrow and dark; not well-lit;
- If we get music at the park how will that impact the music at Faith and Spirits Piano Bar?;
- Burton Park already meets the lawn need with the stage and community;
- Performances; in the downtown it would be better if it's paved with seating rather than a lawn;
- Does Harrington Park want to be an event space?;
- Can we extend Harrington Park through the back into the alleyway towards Mama Coco?;
- Have we confirmed that Wheeler Plaza is not going to be a parking lot and will be a plaza?;
- Wheeler Plaza should be facing towards the alley;
- For some programming- we can have cheaper food vendors/kiosks;
  - Urban Block- company takes shipping containers and builds them into restaurants;
  - Keep things flexible to change as the needs change;
  - Like a Food Hall like San Pedro Square Market;
  - Have the goblin walk parade there;
  - We want people to hangout without having to pay for things.
- **Mobility & Connectivity**
  - Could we only keep the 700 block closed and not touch the other blocks?;
    - Staff heard that there is a lot of focus on the 700 block and other businesses on the adjacent blocks also want the benefits of being in the pedestrian zone;
  - Circulation: is there a bigger plan to improve connectivity within the area?;
    - Response: we are looking into the circulation;
  - How will the businesses be impacted during all the DTSP improvement construction?;
    - While closed for construction- let's get the alleyways to be the entrances;
  - They would like to see the street sections next to the uses to see which one works better;
  - Can we expand the 700 block into the 600 block without changing the current parking?;

○ **Equity and Resilience**

- Have a public Restroom (perhaps in Harrington Park);
- Youth- the food is too expensive; need more casual and affordable restaurants and retail;



Group 2: Specific Feedback Activity

# PUBLIC REALM DESIGN: 700 BLOCK

## CONCEPT 1 - "THE PROMENADE"

## CONCEPT 2 - "THE GARDENS"

CURBSIDE PEDESTRIAN ZONE

CENTRAL PLAZA

OUTDOOR DINING

CURBSIDE PLAZA

OUTDOOR SEATING

LINEAR WATER FEATURE

PERFORMANCE/MOVIE

Group 2: Specific Feedback Activity

# PUBLIC REALM DESIGN: 600 BLOCK

### EXISTING STREET SECTION

#### PROPOSED CONCEPT 1

#### PROPOSED CONCEPT 2

WHEELER GATEWAY

BOULEVARD

PERFORMANCE AREA

Group 2: Specific Feedback Activity

## GROUP 3

- **Facilitator:** James Stickley
- **Notetaker:** Ashwin Nambiar

### ACTIVITY 1: Review and Confirm the Draft Vision & Guiding Principles

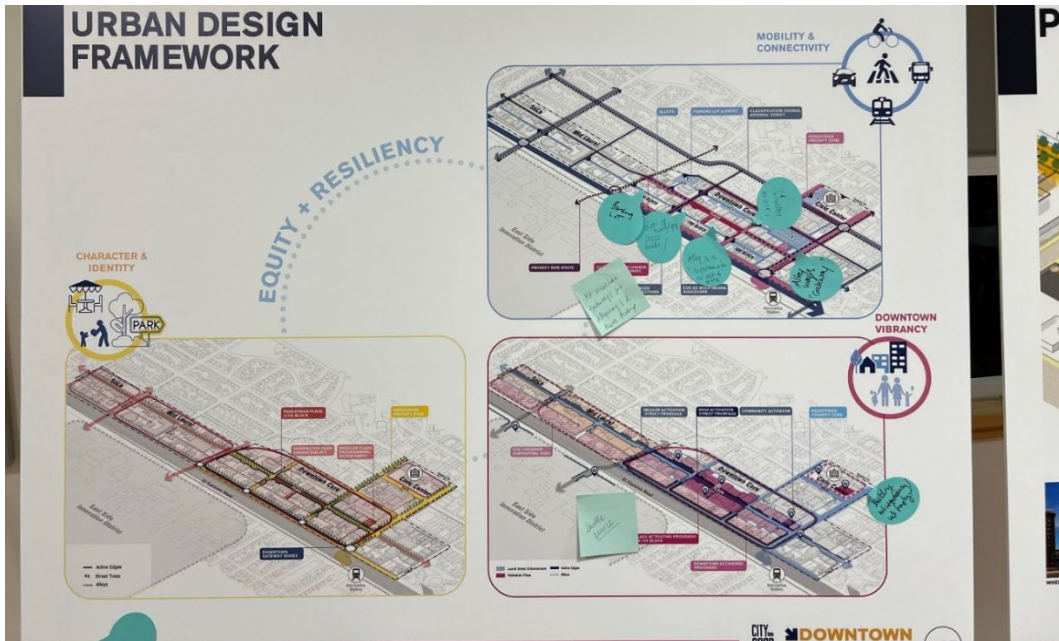
- Emphasize equity and affordability within the community;
- Higher rents leading to increased product prices;
- Review and potentially modify form-based codes;
- Consider seasonal variations in planning;
- Integrate events for both children and adults;
- Site next to Harrington Park as a potential housing element site;

### ACTIVITY 2 - Discuss The Public Realm Concepts

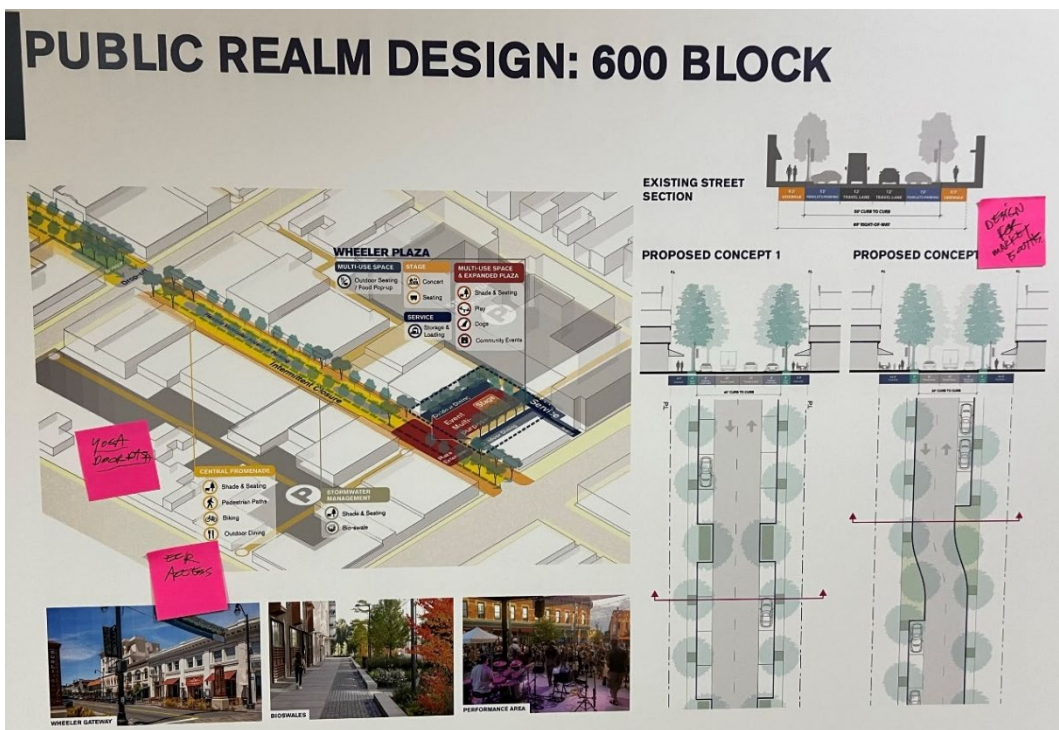
- **Character and identity**
  - Consider alleys as “gateways” with better wayfinding;
  - Assess why people may not be visiting downtown apart from specific restaurants;
  - Should San Carlos aspire to become a dining destination;
- **Downtown Vibrancy**
  - Create a distinct identity and character for the downtown area, strong opinion on not becoming another Burlingame;
  - Prioritize activity-oriented spaces, such as an ice-skating rink, lasermax, a bowling alley, art-bias;
  - Develop a decentralized Youth Center along the 600-700-800 block or a “youth activity cluster”;
  - Centralize the location for the farmers' market booth to increase visibility and access to retail stores on the 600 block;
- **Mobility & Connectivity**
  - Analyze the implications of stiff parking fines, particularly in alleys, and its impact on employees;
  - Look into making alleys pedestrian-friendly, drawing inspiration from Burlingame;
  - Develop Cherry Street as a pedestrian walkway from CalTrain parking lots;
  - Focus on improving the flow of parking and overall circulation, especially in relation to the Caltrain parking lot;
  - Consider ease of pedestrian circulation from restaurants and beer gardens near the Caltrain station to San Carlos downtown by improved accessibility and safety for crossing El Camino Real;
  - Show parking and circulation in alleys in the diagrams;



- Manage parking for the yoga studio on the 600 block to accommodate the needs of both patrons and delivery drivers who park there to access the restaurants on 700 block;
- Prioritize parking areas in alleys closer to El Camino Real to ease traffic on other blocks (18 wheelers blocking commuters in the morning in the downtown core).



Group 3: Specific Feedback Activity



Group 3: Specific Feedback Activity

5. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm