



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Consideration of Adopting a Resolution Approving the Final Design for the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Implementation).

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the Final Design for the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Implementation).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fiscal implications for approving the Final Design of Phase 1B, the 700 block of Laurel Street. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fund Project #C2215 sets aside funding for improvements in the downtown core, including:

Project C2215 – Downtown Renovation Plan Implementation	Prior Year Adopted Budget	FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget
Design/Engineering	\$1,800,000	
Election Campaign Consultants	350,000	
Phase 1.a Harrington Park	1,350,000	\$2,350,000
Phase 1.b 700 Block Laurel		\$3,900,000
TOTAL ADOPTED BUDGET	\$3,500,000	\$6,250,000

Within CIP project fund C2215, a total of \$1,800,000 is set aside for design/engineering (i.e. “shovel ready”) drawings and \$7,600,000 is budgeted for the construction of Harrington Park and the full span of the 700 block of Laurel Street, from Cherry Street to Olive Street.

Although the construction timing for the 700 block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B) has not been determined, the current construction cost estimates are \$9,423,000¹ (including the pavilion and the base of the water feature).

Final construction costs will not be known until the City publicly advertises and receives bids from qualified contractors to complete the work in each of the phases.

¹ The current estimate does not include the costs associated with selecting the vertical centerpiece for the water feature, nor does it include the cost of the centerpiece itself, its installation, or any construction management and design support during construction of the full span of the 700 Block of Laurel Street.

BACKGROUND:

Developing Shovel Ready Drawings for Harrington Park and the 700 Block of Laurel Street

The City's first step towards implementing the adopted Downtown Streetscape Master Plan includes creating "shovel ready" drawings for Harrington Park (Phase 1A) and the 700 block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B).

Completing shovel ready drawings requires two key decision points:

1. Approving the Final Design (defines what will be built)
2. Approving Construction Documents (detailed engineering and construction information)

On June 9, 2025, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2025-054, approving the Final Design for Harrington Park (Phase 1A) and further directed staff to prepare Harrington Park construction documents — the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E). These technical plans are scheduled to be presented to the City Council on November 10, 2025, along with a request to authorize the public bidding process to construct Harrington Park improvements. Construction is estimated to commence in spring 2026.

At its June 9 meeting, the City Council deferred the Final Design for the entire 700 block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B), as stated in Resolution No. 2025-054.

The purpose of this meeting is to approve the Final Design for the 700 block of Laurel Street, which will be transformed into a new pedestrian-oriented plaza, "Centennial Plaza." The Final Design represents the community-approved vision for the space; it defines what will be built. This includes:

- New plaza paving and sidewalk layouts
- Rain gardens and stormwater features
- New trees and landscaping
- Public seating, including custom benches
- Multi-purpose pavilion /performance stage
- Lighting
- Water feature
- Streetscape amenities such as bicycle parking and drinking fountains

This Final Design of the 700 block of Laurel Street focuses on the look, feel, and function of the new plaza. It includes drawings and renderings that help visualize how this new plaza will serve the public and enhance the downtown environment.

Should the Council approve the Final Design for the 700 block of Laurel Street, City staff and consultants will continue their work to develop technical construction documents (PS&E) for Centennial Plaza (700 block Laurel Street). These documents will provide detailed engineering and construction information that contractors will use to build the project should funding become available and pursuant to the City Council's direction.

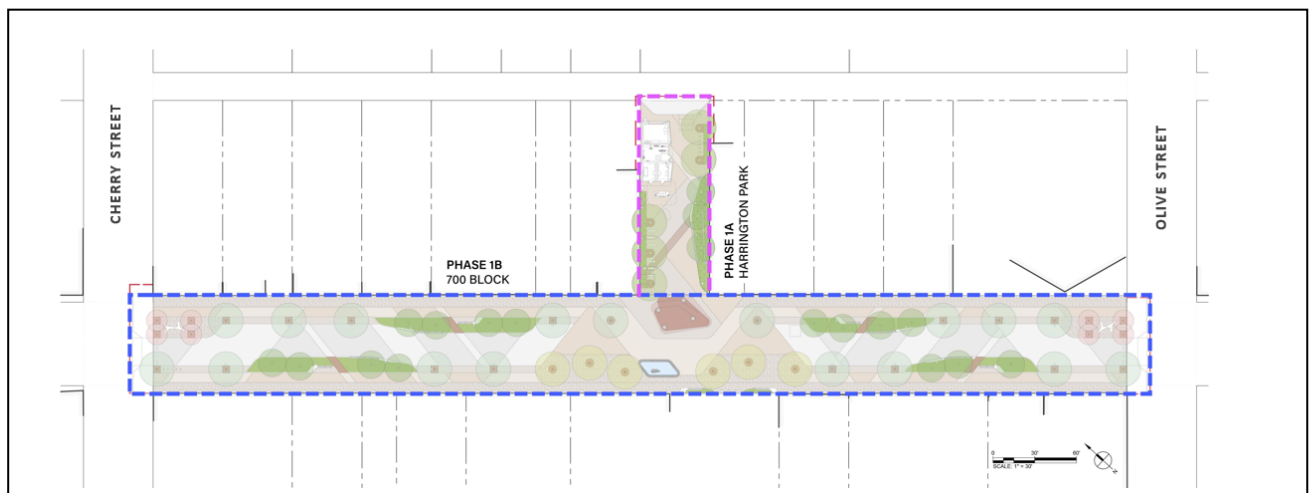
Project History

In 2022, the City commenced a planning process for a *Downtown Specific Plan*, aimed at enhancing the downtown core. A key component of the *Downtown Specific Plan* is the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*, which was adopted by the City Council on April 28, 2025. The *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* outlines a series of placemaking, pedestrian, environmental, community-oriented, and business-friendly improvements along several downtown streets (primarily along Laurel), with the 700 block of Laurel Street (including Harrington Park) operating as a pedestrian promenade and central community gathering point.

During the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* process, the City Council expressed a strong desire to begin constructing improvements in an area within the downtown. Given their prominence, the 700 block of Laurel and Harrington Park were identified for Phase 1 implementation. In October 2024, the City Council authorized a contract with design/engineering firm WRT to prepare design engineering (i.e. “shovel ready”) drawings for the 700 block of Laurel Street and Harrington Park, with the direction to begin construction on Harrington Park sometime in 2025.

Since that time, the City Council has met four times (see Attachments 3, 4, 5 and 6) with staff and WRT to refine the designs for Phase 1 (Phase 1A consists of the renovation of Harrington Park and Phase 1B consists of the entire pedestrianized zone along the 700 block of Laurel Street, spanning from Cherry to Olive Streets). The extent of each phase is mapped in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Phase 1 Downtown Implementation: Harrington Park (1A); 700 Block, Laurel Street (1B)



At its last meeting on June 9, 2025, the City Council supported the overall design for the 700 block of Laurel Street, and provided comments to address:

- Skateboard deterrence on custom benches
- Finalizing the design of the water feature is challenging; agreed to maintain the location/footprint, size/scale, base design, amount of recirculating water through a reflecting pool basin and overflow edge; and to use the City’s public art process for civic

engagement to determine the water feature's vertical centerpiece; and explore fundraising opportunities for construction

- Concern about adequate space for interactive play structures/elements
- Improve organization and design of newspaper racks
- Ensure adequate pedestrian flow throughout

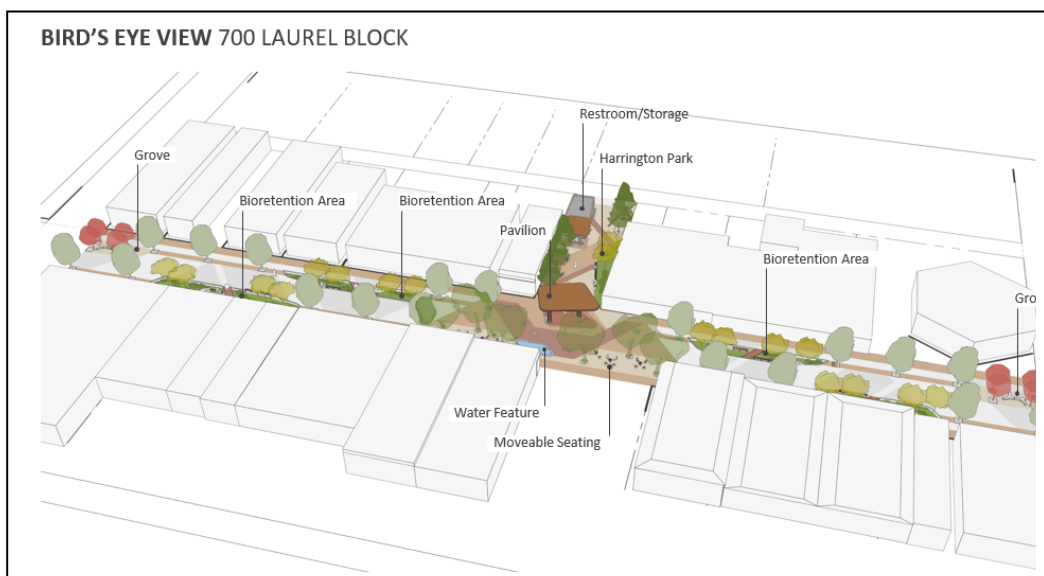
Tonight's discussion marks a key milestone in the process, as the City Council will review and consider approving the Final Design for Phase 1B, as shown in Exhibit A to the Resolution. Council approval will authorize staff and the consultant team to proceed with preparing "shovel-ready" design and engineering documents for public bidding, ensuring the 700 block of Laurel Street is ready for construction when directed by Council.

Revisiting the Final Design for the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B):

Phase 1B – 700 Block of Laurel Street ("Centennial Plaza"); See Exhibit A to the Resolution for Final Design Exhibit

Consistent with the vision outlined in the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*, the 700 block of Laurel will serve as a pedestrian promenade lined with trees and raingardens. The plant palette will include a mix of native plants as well as Golden rain trees and Crepe myrtles. The raingardens will help capture and filter runoff. The vacated street section currently running through the 700 block of Laurel will be filled in and raised to the height of the existing shops and sidewalks, creating a seamless experience for visitors. Smaller entry plazas will be added at either end of the 700 block of Laurel, near where the promenade intersects Cherry and Olive Streets. These small plaza areas will include bicycle racks for visitors. A mix of benches and moveable seating opportunities are integrated into the design.

Figure 2. Bird's Eye View of the 700 Block of Laurel Street



The winding (i.e. “sway”) pedestrian promenade running through the middle of the 700 block of Laurel is designed to double as an emergency access path for responder vehicles, with a minimum twenty-foot clearance running throughout. Retractable bollards will be installed at both ends of the promenade (at the Cherry and Olive Street intersections) to allow for access in emergency situations or to accommodate larger City-sponsored events.

The design includes space that could accommodate a variety of special or more unique elements, such as an oversized chess board and a digital wayfinding kiosk. These spaces are located near 784 and 786 Laurel Street and space for e.g. a digital kiosk could be located near the intersection of Laurel and Cherry Streets. As part of the final design, the Balancing Act (a.k.a. “Blue Man”) sculpture is planned to be relocated along the northern edge of the promenade, near 717 Laurel Street.

The lighting plan includes a mix of contemporary-style light posts, illuminated bollards, underlighting beneath benches, and catenary (string/market) lights near the central portions of the 700 block of Laurel.

Pavilion

The aspirational pavilion would rise to 16 feet in height at the low point and up to 22 feet tall at the high point. The pavilion contemplates a raised stage, 18-inches tall, that could be used to support a wide variety of activities and programs. The stage is designed to face three directions and host small-to-medium sized events. The current design includes a sloping path to allow accessibility to the stage; see Figure 3.

Figure 3. Multi-Purpose Pavilion / Performance Stage, Centennial Plaza



Direct and indirect lighting fixtures and speakers could be integrated into the columns. The stage could also include mounting points for artists and other performers to set up their audio equipment in support of City events.

The pavilion is positioned along Laurel Street to allow for – at its closest point – a twenty-one-foot pathway for emergency vehicle access. Meanwhile, a minimum of 20-foot area serves as the main promenade along the full span of the 700 block of Laurel Street.

Water Feature

The design of the water feature, shown in Figure 4 below, is based upon City Council input received during previous meetings.

On June 9 the City Council directed staff to maintain the water feature's location/footprint, its overall size/scale, the design of its base (to serve as additional public seating), and the volume of water in a reflecting pool with overflow edges, which shall be recirculated to conserve water. However, the Council directed staff to follow a public engagement process to determine the vertical centerpiece of the water feature and further directed staff to explore fundraising opportunities. Staff will return to the City Council and present options for establishing a process and timeline for public engagement to determine the centerpiece of the water feature.

Figure 4. Base of Water Feature as Presented on June 9, 2025; Centerpiece To Be Determined.



Technical documents for the 700 block of Laurel Street will omit the vertical centerpiece of the water feature, deferring it until a public engagement process is completed.

NEXT STEPS:

Should the City Council approve the final design for Phase 1B, staff and the WRT consultants will continue to prepare construction documents consisting of exact measurements, elevations, grading, utility connections, drainage systems, structural details for the pavilion and fountain base, materials and product specifications, and refinements to cost estimates for construction. The goal is to have construction documents ready for the 700 block of Laurel Street should funding become available, and pursuant to the Council's direction.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternatives available to the City Council include:

1. Adopt a Resolution approving the Final Design for the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Implementation); or
2. Do not adopt the Resolution; or
3. Provide staff with alternate direction.

Respectfully submitted by:

Al Savay, Community Development Director

Approved for submission by:



Jeff Maltbie, City Manager

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Resolution Approving the Final Design
Exhibit A to Resolution: Final Design Plans, Elevations, Renderings and Graphics
2. Construction Cost Estimates for Phase 1B
3. Council Input from Meeting of February 10, 2025
4. Council Input from Meeting of March 10, 2025
5. Council Input from Meeting of May 12, 2025
6. Council Input from Meeting of June 9, 2025
7. Council Resolution No. 2025-054
8. Downtown Streetscape Master Plan, Adopted April 28, 2025