



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** October 24, 2007  
**TO:** Park and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department  
**SUBJECT:** Plaza de la Guerra Concept Plan

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission provide comments regarding the conceptual plan for Plaza de la Guerra.

**DISCUSSION:**

The attached memorandum from the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) provides an overview of the project elements. RDA staff will present the preliminary concept plan and explain the various features of the project. As the Commission is familiar, for a number of years, the City has assessed a variety of options for improving de la Guerra Plaza. The current conceptual plan is the most recent approach and focuses on improving the pedestrian elements and aesthetic features. Parks and Recreation staff has reviewed the concept drawing and has identified a number of issues for the Commission's consideration. As noted in the attached RDA staff report, the Commission's comments will be combined with other City Commissions and Committees and play an important role in the development of a more detailed plan.

The following discussion outlines key elements of the conceptual plan as well as the anticipated maintenance impacts.

**Project Elements**

Street Trees

The conceptual plan proposes the addition of canopy trees. Canopy trees would provide shade for the sidewalk in the plaza and along De la Guerra Street where traffic is proposed to change to one way with angled parking. The number and species of the new trees has not yet been determined. The Street Tree Advisory Committee will play an important role in the identification of trees that are appropriate for the plaza. The existing California Pepper at the City Hall entrance will be preserved as will additional existing trees along the parking lot wall. Trees within the grass area of the plaza will also be maintained and there may be additional palm trees.

### Turf

With the expansion of the plaza area, the conceptual plan includes the addition of turf, although the actual area has not yet been determined.

### Pathways, Roadway and Concrete Sidewalks

A pathway dissecting the lawn area is proposed to encourage pedestrian use of the area.

The conceptual design proposes that the current asphalt roadway be raised to the level of the existing turf and be constructed of decorative/colored concrete. Use of the roadway by vehicles will be limited and pedestrian access enhanced. Access to the roadway is proposed to be restricted to delivery vehicles by installing removable bollards. It has not been established when or how the bollards will be removed to allow access.

Although they are within the plaza, the existing roadway and sidewalks are currently maintained by the Public Works Department. Since the Public Works Department has historically maintained the roadway and it will continue to be used for commercial purposes as well as emergency access, dedication of road right of way should be considered as part of the project.

### Sidewalk dining

The proposed conceptual plan expands dining into the plaza and Storke Placita. Outdoor dining will enhance the use of the plaza and encourage greater pedestrian activity. At the same time, if the area remains part of designated parkland, the Department will need to explore the feasibility of concessions to allow dining.

### Fountain

The concept proposal includes a fountain. While a fountain would provide aesthetic enhancements, it does raise a number of maintenance concerns if the fountain is impacted by regular park users.

### Events

The concept plan is intended to enhance the use of the plaza for special events. Staff believes that the conceptual design provides a better venue for events such as Fiesta due to the removal of the curb and lower roadway, enhanced utilities hook ups and removal the electrical box which stands in the center of the plaza.

### Trash enclosure

To alleviate the problem of restaurants and other businesses setting their trash cans on the narrow sidewalk adjacent to their business, the proposed design includes a trash enclosure behind the City Hall parking lot wall. If the trash enclosure is used by plaza restaurants, trash would have to be hauled across the park.

## **Maintenance Impact Statement**

Since many elements of the project are still under consideration, and the respective responsibility of each Department is not yet established, Parks and Recreation Department staff has not yet developed a detailed maintenance impact statement. However, the conceptual plan includes a number of elements that will require additional maintenance and additional staff resources. Funding for additional maintenance has not yet been established. While it is anticipated that this discussion will evolve and expand with revisions to the conceptual plan, some initial considerations include:

- Trees: The conceptual plan proposes the addition of canopy trees to the plaza as well as trees within the plaza interior. The number and species have not yet been determined. While the addition of trees would be consistent with the Department's urban forestry mission, it would also increase maintenance responsibility.
- Turf: The conceptual plan proposes the expansion of the turf within the plaza. The area of expansion has not been quantified.
- Hardscape: The conceptual plan includes the expansion of concrete hardscape which is more difficult to maintain than asphalt. The use of the hardscape for dining and trash transportation may increase maintenance requirements. Power washing will likely be the method used to keep the surface clean, raising the need to safely divert the water from impacting storm drains and creeks.
- Fountain: As stated previously, the addition of a fountain to the plaza has the potential to significantly increase maintenance requirements.
- Service delivery: The concept proposal includes allowing service deliveries. It is anticipated that deliveries would be confined to early morning hours. It has not been established how or when delivery vehicles would be authorized to enter the plaza.

**ATTACHMENT:** Memorandum dated October 12, 2007, from Marck Aguilar, Subject: Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure – Concept Design

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