



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

**AGENDA DATE:** May 23, 2018  
**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department  
**SUBJECT:** Louise Lowry Davis Center Renovation Project Status Report

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Commission receive a presentation and provide comments on the Louise Lowry Davis Center Renovation Project.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

The Louise Lowry Davis Center (Davis Center), located at 1232 De La Vina Street, includes a shared parking lot, a patio courtyard and a one-story structure. The 4,189 sq. ft. structure provides two large multi-purpose rooms, two offices, restrooms and a warming kitchen. Originally built in 1923, the structure housed the first public school building dedicated to vocational training. In 1933, the City of Santa Barbara (City) started using the facility as a community recreation center and was finally deeded the property in 1969. Louise Lowry Davis, an outstanding City Recreation Supervisor, raised a quarter of the funds to refurbish the interior to provide recreational activities for adults. In 1991, the property was declared a Structure of Merit. In 2005, the City completed deferred maintenance including heating and partial air-conditioning, roof replacement, electrical upgrades, code compliant restrooms and two exterior ramps.

The Louise Lowry Davis Center currently hosts a variety of activities for residents age 50 and older including bridge, chess, knitting, yoga, tai chi and several senior-focused informational lectures. In addition, the Community Action Commission uses the facility to provide free hot lunches to low-income seniors Monday through Friday. The facility also offers an affordable meeting space to non-profit organizations, and a venue for business functions and private events such as weddings, receptions and parties.

Renovation Project Objectives

In fall 2015, the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) developed a facility renovation concept to promote a more functional community building and address site

safety while respecting the historic integrity of the structure. The proposed interior improvements focus on enhancing the building's circulation, storage, temperature control, lighting and programming flexibility. The exterior improvements concentrate on defining the main entry, refining site safety, building aesthetics, signage, accessibility and drainage while maximizing use of the existing southeast patio. Once implemented, the building and site will be able to serve Santa Barbara for many years.

### Community Input

In 2016, stakeholder meetings were held with the project architect and local caterers, League of Women Voters, AARP, facility staff and seniors using the facility. The meetings further refined the project objectives and helped identify issues. Community input included the following:

- First time visitors have difficulty finding the main entry
- More flexible rooms are needed to increase programming
- Access to a private patio could maximize use
- Consistent misuse of the patio area creates site and building safety concerns
- Small lounge for users would be helpful as they wait for a room or to be picked up
- Air conditioning on the southeast side of the building is desired
- Table and chair cart storage is insufficient and difficult to maneuver into closet
- Kitchen functions poorly for bigger events

### Project Elements

In June 2016, the City contracted with Bildsten Architecture and Planning Inc. to develop conceptual and preliminary design drawings to identify the Project's full scope of work and estimated construction costs. As a historic structure of merit, special effort was placed on designing historically compatible improvements. After meeting with stakeholders who frequent the facility, the architect created a conceptual plan. The exterior changes include an entry pergola, sign, and modified kitchen roof to better define the main entry, converting the abandoned De La Vina Street entrance back into a window, fencing in the southwestern patio, creating two sets of doors and a ramp to connect the patio with the building, and providing a shade pergola on the patio.

The interior improvements enhance circulation, storage, and programming flexibility by replacing the two offices on the south side of the building with a smaller office and reception area, replacing the wall to the smaller multipurpose room with a moveable partition wall, remodeling the storage closet for efficiency, creating an open transition corridor between the two multipurpose rooms, and remodeling the kitchen cabinetry in response to caterer recommendations. The renovation improves energy efficiency and a better balance of scale by removing the drop ceiling in the two multipurpose rooms to expose the trusses, adding a skylight in the kitchen corridor, adding air conditioning to the

south side of the building, and replacing windows and doors. These building improvements will help the City better serve its growing senior population with a safe, accessible, inviting facility while maximizing the functionality of the community resource.

### Project Status

On September 28, 2016, the project was reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) with positive comments to move forward with final design and construction documents. A Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) meeting was held on November 16, 2016 for comments only. An interior yard setback modification was approved on June 21, 2017, for the patio pergola. On July 12, 2017, HLC granted Project Design Approval and on January 24, 2017, Final Design Approval was granted.

On April 11, 2018, the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) heard a presentation on the Project during its regular meeting at the Davis Center. In addition to its general meeting outreach, the Department invited building users, as well as Spencer Adams Lawn Bowls club members, to attend the meeting. The NAC asked a number of questions and voiced support for the Project.

It is anticipated that project construction drawings and permitting will be complete by September 2018. The construction start date will be contingent on funding.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Council appropriated \$100,000 of General Fund in FY15/16 for the design of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible projects. The Neighborhood Improvement Task Force prioritized this project for FY 16/17. Bildsten Architecture and Planning Inc. was contracted on June 7, 2016, to complete preliminary design for \$59,510 and the final design contract was approved on October 17, 2017, for \$103,660. The construction cost estimate is \$2,500,000. The eventual construction is anticipated to be funded by the General Fund and grants, including the CDBG program.

**PREPARED BY:** Justin Van Mullem, Project Planner

**SUBMITTED BY:** George Thomson, Capital Projects Supervisor

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director