



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

Staff Memorandum

DATE: February 8, 2021

TO: State Street Subcommittee

FROM: Jason Harris, Economic Development Manager
Rob Dayton, Transportation and Parking Manager

SUBJECT: State Street Vision Process

RECOMMENDATION: That the Subcommittee:

- A. Review community survey, AIA survey, and AIA charrette recommendations compared to summary vision themes;
- B. Review and finalize the summary vision themes; and
- C. Make recommendations to City Council related to the Master Planning of Downtown State Street.

In the last State Street Subcommittee (Subcommittee) meeting on January 25, 2021, the Subcommittee reviewed the vision themes summarizing the future of State Street feedback from the City commissions, committees, boards and stakeholder organizations. The Subcommittee directed staff to present the results of the Future of State Street Community Survey results, review the American Institute of Architect (AIA) Survey results and recommendations at the next meeting. The Subcommittee also stated an interest to review the City survey and AIA survey results and compare that information against the vision themes. The vision themes were generated by the fifteen City commissions, committees, boards and community stakeholder organizations representing over 125 individual interviews on the future of State Street. Each represented answered three questions posed by staff designed to help form their individual vision for the future of State Street:

1. What do you believe is the reason for redesigning State Street Downtown at this time?
 - This question was designed to answer "why now?"
2. If State Street is redesigned Downtown, describe what is going on when you visit. What are you experiencing?
 - The question was designed to answer what is the purpose will State Street fulfill?
3. What role does a redesigned State Street play in the vitality of Downtown? What is your goal for State Street?
 - This question is designed to answer: Why does redesigning State Street matter for Downtown revitalization?

Staff summarized the reoccurring vision themes that emerged from the group interviews and reviewed

that input with the Subcommittee. Because the vision theme summary is short and embodies so much consensus, staff suggested that the Subcommittee adopt the the vision themes as a set of guiding vision principles for the proposed Master Planning effort. The Subcommittee members added some additional themes to reflect the importance of honoring the past and recognizing equity and accessibility.

The City community survey was open to the public for two months and closed on Sunday, January 31, 2021. The City survey was also available in Spanish as well as conducted in person by Downtown Ambassadors on State Street. The City received nearly 4,600 response. Both the City and AIA community surveys achieved a large number of responses, the respondents were locals and represented a cross section of age groups. The City survey asked respondents their thoughts on what the reasons for improving State Street were and what they liked to experience on State Street in the future. Over 70 percent stated that the street needed to address the economic health of retail and restaurants and over 56 percent stated that the street should address the homelessness situation. The majority of respondents stated agreement that State Street is a key component of the City's overall economic growth. Lastly, there were slightly more respondents who thought that bikes should operate on State Street. The AIA survey was conducted in late summer 2020 and was more direct in asking respondents their opinion on closing State Street to vehicles of which 93 percent responded support and there was also a slight majority of support in the State Street being used by both cyclists and pedestrians. Also, the AIA survey respondents ranked strong support for dining and retail uses as well as incorporating art and seating.

These two community surveys highlight local interest and support for the closure of State Street to vehicles, the need for State Street to support the commercial district businesses and community interest to have a safe environment with amenities. These top line community survey results are consistent to the themes gathered from the City commissions, committees, boards and stakeholder organizations when asked the three questions:

Why Now?

- To revitalize the Downtown
- To create a safe experience
- For economic revitalization
- To be people centric
- To facilitate housing Downtown
- To recapture/re-establish Downtown's identity
- To bring people Downtown
- To design for locals

What purpose does State Street fulfill?

- It is: the defining place of SB's identity; accessible to all types of people, families, generations, income levels, abilities and diversities...
- It feels: safe, inviting, accessible, bustling...
- It provides: a range of commercial and cultural activities, a place for walking, biking...
- It represents: Santa Barbara's sustainable values and experience that are unique to Santa Barbara...
- It reflects: our history and indigenous people that lived before us; the diversity of our community and is welcoming to them all.

Why does redesigning State Street matter for downtown?

- Because it will create and define the identity of Santa Barbara
- Because it gives the Downtown revitalization a local focus
- Because it will renew our pride in our Downtown
- Because it will make Downtown a stronger destination for Santa Barbarans, the region, and the tourist industry
- Because it accomplishes the most significant part of Downtown revitalization

The Subcommittee members sought to include two additional themes to recognize and honor the history of Santa Barbara and ensure equity and accessibility were included.

In the meeting on Monday, February 8, the Subcommittee will review the results of the community survey and AIA survey in comparison with the summary vision themes. In addition, staff have proposed a set of recommendations for the Subcommittee's consideration to advance the State Street vision for the City Council. Staff suggests the Subcommittee adopt the following recommendations:

- Council adopt the recommended vision principles
- Direct staff to pursue the closure of downtown State Street to vehicles
- Identify the actions and resources necessary for the development of a Master Plan
- Establish a Master Plan advisory committee to oversee the master planning process

Staff proposes the Subcommittee consider recommending a scope of a Master Plan to include the area of downtown from the freeway to Sola Street, Chapala to Anacapa Streets to ensure all aspects of the downtown environment are taken into considerations and address the breadth of guiding principles or vision put forth from the community. Additionally, the Master Plan should address the

elements of:

- Streetscape Design and Amenities
- Transportation and Street Network
- Public Art, Homeless Services
- Operation and Maintenance Needs
- Housing and Redevelopment Influences
- Economic, Equity and Accessibility Needs

In addition, staff proposed the Subcommittee consider recommending the composition of an advisory committee to provide input into the development of the Concept Master Plan include the following:

- 2 Councilmembers
- 2 Planning Commissioners
- 2 Historic Landmark Commissioner
- Chamber of Commerce Representative
- Downtown Property Owner
- Downtown Business Owner/Downtown Santa Barbara Representative
- Downtown Parking Committee Representative
- Commercial Real Estate Broker

Attachments

cc: Paul Casey, City Administrator
Nina Johnson, Senior Assistant to the City Administrator
Josh Haggmark, Acting Public Works Director
Rebecca Bjork, Acting Community Development Director