

City Actions Taken To Address Downtown Concerns

5/31/2017

- **Presence of Uniformed Officers** – Responding to community concerns, stepped-up police presence includes downtown bicycle units, beat coordinators, two restorative police officers, and regular police patrols. The Restorative Policing program interfaces directly with unsheltered individuals to provide a link to social services. In the last 5 years, it has collaborated with more than 630 people in need of assistance. In addition, the Community Service Officer program will become the Downtown Ambassador Program, continuing the uniformed presence on State Street but with a different mission. This mission will include regular engagement with businesses and visitors to address issues encountered on State Street related to behavior, maintenance and aesthetics. Starting in August, there will be two Ambassadors scheduled to be on State Street from Victoria St. to Cabrillo Blvd. every day from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.
- **Neighborhood Policing Unit** – Earlier this month, the Police Department reorganized and created the Neighborhood Policing Unit. This new Unit will increase the Department’s capacity and align resources to ensure efficiency and maximize the effectiveness of problem solving. Lieutenant Dan McGrew will lead the newly established Unit that combines the Restorative Policing program, Beat Coordinators, Bike Team, Special Enforcement Team, and volunteer services. With these programs and resources aligned under the same Unit, communication and problem solving will be better coordinated citywide.
- **Engaging with Macy’s and Paseo Nuevo** – The City is working with Paseo Nuevo to make improvements to make the area more inviting and encouraging a high quality retailer or development for the vacant Macy’s space. The Paseo Nuevo improvements include new lighting to enhance dark paseo areas, accent paving, pergolas, landscaping water features, and new seating furniture.
- **101 State St. Underpass Revitalization Project** – The City is undertaking an exciting project to redesign the underpass as a safe and inviting destination area with active street and art elements, lighting, landscaping, and reconfigured lanes for vehicles and bikes. These enhancements will improve interconnectivity between the waterfront and downtown areas and draw pedestrians up State Street. A public design workshop is planned on July 15 to invite community artists, design professionals, and downtown stakeholders to create a vision to activate the underpass area.
- **Retail Study** – To address vacancies downtown, Downtown Santa Barbara hired a consulting firm to study the mix of businesses on State Street, evaluate how individual businesses are merchandising, and develop a retail strategy for the downtown area.
- **Vacant Spaces** – Efforts are underway to work with commercial real estate firms to reduce the amount and appearance of real estate signage that gives the impression of many vacancies. Art displays in vacant windows are also being explored with museums and art organizations.
- **Sculptures on State St.** – There is a focus on adding more art installations on State Street. Similar to the pianos on State St., kinetic art, or Steelhead Trout displays of previous years, sculptures will provide visual interest along the street.

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- **Smoking and Alcohol Enforcement Laws** – Council took a bold action to become a smoke-free city, banning smoking in outdoor public areas with few exceptions. This will make an impact on reducing cigarette butt litter. Another ordinance being developed is focused on preventing easy access to large alcohol containers that can lead to public intoxication and related inappropriate behaviors downtown.
- **Improve Connectivity Between Downtown and Waterfront and Encourage Parking Once and Use Shuttles** – New shuttles will soon debut and MTD plans to expand their marketing efforts and develop an app that makes it easier to find shuttle service. The City and MTD have negotiated an agreement for the next five years that includes exploring ways to encourage the public to park once.
- **Organizing Cruise Ships** – The City organized 31 cruise ship visits last year from September to June as off-season and mid-week visits. Visit Santa Barbara recently completed a Cruise Ship Economic Impact Study, showing the economic impact of each passenger was \$109 per party on meals, shopping, and tours.
- **Wayfinding Signage** will be installed this summer to help people find parking lots and points of interest.
- **Downtown Electrical Improvements** – Council and the downtown merchants have strongly urged Southern California Edison to upgrade electrical infrastructure to prevent power outages. Upgrades are now underway for the next few years.