



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

15-0111

Agenda Date: 2/24/2015

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Approval of the Community Engagement Plan and Range of Project Alternatives for the Civic Center Modernization Project

BACKGROUND

At City Council's September 2, 2014 Strategic Planning Workshop, modernization of the Civic Center Campus was one of the prioritized topics selected by Council for further discussion. Council discussed and approved a Civic Center and Main Library decision tree that outlined a two-phase community engagement process leading up to a decision by Council to select a preferred method of financing for a Civic Center project. Council reinforced its desire to conduct a robust community engagement process and to establish criteria for a successful project prior to making any decisions.

On October 28, 2014, staff returned to City Council with a request to appropriate \$400,000 for consulting services needed for the Civic Center Modernization Project (RTC 14-0746). The need for consultant assistance was outlined in three key service areas: 1) develop and implement a community engagement plan that would allow residents and stakeholders to develop a vision of a modernized Civic Center and to provide input on project alternatives and financing methods; 2) prepare a space plan that quantifies the amount of space needed for efficient service delivery and to meet the community's needs for library space, meeting rooms, and open space; and 3) complete a market analysis of the Civic Center property to further explore the concept of a public-private partnership that could help fund future Civic Center improvements. City Council approved the funding including authorizing the City Manager to award contracts up to the appropriation limit. Staff was directed to return to Council with a draft community engagement plan for approval before outreach efforts commenced.

EXISTING POLICY

The Council Fiscal Policy contains several policies related to infrastructure in section 7.1C, Capital Improvement Policies:

C.1.3 High priority should be given to replacing capital improvements prior to the time that they have deteriorated to the point where they are hazardous, incur high maintenance costs, negatively affect property values, or no longer serve their intended purposes.

C.1.5 Priority will be given to the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure as compared to the provision of new or expanded facilities

C. 1. The decision on whether to repair or to replace an existing capital asset will be based on which alternative is most cost-effective or provides the best value to the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 exempts projects involving only feasibility or planning studies from environmental review. Appropriate CEQA review will be conducted prior to construction of any facilities under the Civic Center Modernization Project.

DISCUSSION

The City published a Request for Qualifications seeking consulting firms interested in providing services in one or more of the three service categories outlined above. After considering statements of qualifications from interested firms and a thorough interview process, staff selected Anderson Brule Architects (ABA). ABA, along with a team of subconsultants, is able to provide the services needed by the City in all three service categories. The ABA team has extensive experience with similar projects and its approach was focused on developing an outstanding community engagement process.

Community Engagement Plan

Attachment 1 is the draft Community Engagement Plan for the project. It is designed to reach Sunnyvale's diverse community by providing a variety of ways to engage on the project. The plan includes focus group meetings, community workshops and new opportunities to engage with the City online. The City has selected a new civic engagement tool which will provide an online forum for residents to make suggestions, respond to surveys, and provide feedback on alternatives. This new tool will allow public comments to be transparently posted online so residents can express their opinions and see the opinions of other community stakeholders.

The recommended community engagement plan includes three community-wide workshops and one all-commission workshop. All City commissioners will be invited to participate in the all-commission workshop that will be noticed as a special meeting of the commissions that will be open to the public.

The community engagement plan also provides details on the number of City Council meetings needed and the topics that will be discussed. Six Council meetings are planned - three study sessions and three public hearings where Council will be asked to approve work products and ultimately make a decision on a preferred method of financing for the Civic Center Modernization Project.

Once the engagement plan is approved staff will prepare a companion communications plan that will outline ways to get the word out about various community workshops and online engagement opportunities. Staff intends to use its current public noticing methods, social media channels as well as its newly activated Next Door account to invite participation. Staff will contact all neighborhood associations and will reach out to community groups and service clubs to encourage broad participation. An email list of interested parties has already been started and will be used to provide project updates and information about meetings and outreach activities. Interested parties may sign up for the email list by simply sending an email to myciviccenter@sunnyvale.ca.gov <<mailto:myciviccenter@sunnyvale.ca.gov>>. The City will also provide postcard mailings to properties within 1,000 feet of the Civic Center for all community workshops.

Part of the engagement efforts will be creating a new project website that will provide more information about the project including meeting announcements and links to online engagement tools.

Range of Project Alternatives

As the engagement process begins staff wants to ensure that Council understands the range of alternatives that will be studied. Past Civic Center studies have examined a myriad of alternatives. The budget and schedule for the project preclude studying every alternative that has been looked at in the past. The process will require that a broader initial set of alternatives is developed and narrowed down through the engagement process to a few that will get more extensive evaluations such as preliminary cost estimates.

Attachment 2 is a proposed outline of alternatives that will be explored as part of outreach efforts. The Range of Project Alternatives document is organized by facility and includes sections for:

- Building Alternatives - should buildings be renovated, replaced, or added on to;
- Siting Alternatives - should the City move certain facilities to other City-owned properties; and
- Other - which includes notes that better define some of the alternatives.

Should new alternatives emerge during the community engagement process that are outside of the Range of Project Alternatives the City would not be precluded from studying them, but it could impact the project schedule and budget so City Council approval would be required.

Project Schedule

The Community Engagement Plan has been developed as a two-phased plan consistent with Council's approval of the decision tree reviewed at its Strategic Planning Workshop. Phase 1 is designed to create a community vision for the Civic Center and to develop success criteria for the project. The vision and success criteria will be used to evaluate alternatives that are developed in Phase 2. Phase 1 is scheduled to begin in March and be completed by the end of August 2015. During Phase 1, the vision and success criteria will be brought back to City Council for review and adoption.

In Phase 2, various alternatives will be formulated, refined and evaluated through the community engagement process. In this phase information from space planning efforts and the market analysis will be made available to inform the evaluation of site alternatives. During Phase 2, the community will see how different alternatives, such as remodeling existing buildings versus new buildings, will affect site planning and will be able to weigh in with their preferences. Parking options such as underground or structured parking will also get explored as alternative site plans are developed. Phase 2 is scheduled to begin in August 2015 and be completed by November 2015. At the end of this phase, City Council will be asked to select a preferred financing strategy - either a public-private partnership that would seek to redevelop a portion of the campus for private uses as a way of generating capital for civic facilities, or a City/community financing plan that would use debt financing where the debt is offset and retired through a combination of City funds and new taxes.

Upon determining a financing option, community engagement will continue in future project phases but will be focused on refining the site plan(s) and financing structure. Additionally, based on the outcome from Phase 1, the Council should consider whether a supplemental outreach effort, that targets specifically library services, be integrated into the broader Civic Center Modernization engagement plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds are available in Capital Project 831340, Civic Center Modernization, to implement the

community engagement plan as recommended. Future steps towards implementation such as design and environmental review will require additional funding.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Attachment 1, the Community Engagement Plan as presented.
2. Approve Attachment 1, the Community Engagement Plan with modifications as directed by Council.
3. Approve Attachment 2, the Range of Project Alternatives as presented.
4. Approve Attachment 2, the Range of Project Alternatives with modifications as directed by Council.
5. Other action as directed by Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternatives 1 and 3: 1) Approve the Community Engagement Plan as presented in Attachment 1, and 3) Approve the Range of Project Alternatives as presented in Attachment 2.

Approval of Alternatives 1 and 3 allows the City to begin a robust community engagement process that will define a vision for a modernized Civic Center as well as evaluate site alternatives and financing mechanisms needed to implement a project.

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Reviewed by: Robert A. Walker, Assistant City Manager
Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Engagement Plan
2. Range of Project Alternatives