



Task Force Meeting #2 Summary

9-14-05

The second Civic Center Task Force meeting focused on review of the community workshop results and selecting three alternatives to study. Areas of review and discussion included:

- Presenting initial analysis findings highlights;
- Discuss managers' meeting highlights;
- Review workshop results; and
- Discuss preliminary draft alternatives to be analyzed by consultant team.



Preliminary Draft Alternatives Summary

Based on the input from the community at the September 13, 2005 workshop, the consultant team prepared three preliminary draft alternatives to be reviewed and discussed with the Taskforce. Each alternative included a summary of key features, a massing diagram and program summary.

The preliminary draft alternatives included three concepts:

Alternative 1: Campus

This is a low-rise approach with an emphasis on courtyard, greens and paseos spaces.

Alternative 2: Government Complex Tower

Alternative 2 is a high-rise approach with a shared government building facing civic center park.

Alternative 3: City Hall Mid-rise

This mid-rise approach would result in a new Visalia City Hall with other government agencies located on adjacent blocks.

Alt. 1 - Campus

Block	Use	Square Feet
1	Public Safety	44,000 SF
2	Community Dev./Admin	38,000 SF
3	Admin/City Hall	46,000 SF
4	Other	72,000 SF
Total		200,000 SF



- .75 FAR
- Low-rise/open space focused
- Corner oriented
- Detached Public Service

Alt. 2 - Government Complex Tower

Block	Use	Square Feet
1	Public Safety	44,000 SF
2	Government Complex	200,000 SF
3	Other	100,000 SF
4	Other	100,000 SF
Total		444,000 SF



- 1.65 FAR
- Hierarchical building massing
- Government center
- Exterior spaces/ plazas

Alt. 3 - City Hall Mid-Rise

Block	Use	Square Feet
1	Public Safety	44,000 SF
2	City Hall	84,000 SF
3	Other	75,000 SF
4	Other	75,000 SF
Total		278,000 SF



- 1.0 FAR
- City Hall
- Public Safety on Burke
- Individual buildings/park orientation

Task Force Discussion

The Task Force discussed a number of issues and options related to the alternatives. Important areas of focus included:

- Park and access;
- Urban design; and
- Planning for partners in the development of a new civic center.

Parking and Access

The most discussion related to how to provide parking and support the evolutionary development of a mixed-mode and pedestrian-friendly district. The Taskforce wanted to see parking concepts that supports both the Civic Center but also downtown and future commercial development. A district approach to parking was viewed as an advantageous and consistent with the East Downtown Strategic Plan.

This evolutionary approach to parking included:

- Facilities that could be shared;
- Solutions that were feasible in today's market but anticipated a higher densities and real estate values in the future;
- Assuming a reduction in demand per square foot of development as downtown matures and other modes of transportation are included;
- Providing parking that supports businesses dependant on turnover for patrons;
- Long term day parking for employees; and
- Eventually being able to charge for parking.

The Taskforce also assumed there would be opportunities for mixed-mode access to the Civic Center including the use of busses, shuttles, rail transit, bicycles and walking. This approach could lead to a reduction of auto trips and make the areas more pedestrian-friendly.

Urban Design

The Civic Center is to be a regional destination. This was a popular idea from the community workshop the Taskforce wanted to underscore. In particular, buildings should be designed so there was “no rear”. Buildings should be seen in the round and connected to the parks and Mill Creek. They preferred a higher density and design solution to “give the Civic Center a sense of permanence” and to “demonstrate the level of quality” that reflects the community’s aspirations. And, the site planning should accommodate a larger gathering place/facility, such as an amphitheater.

Partners

The third area of discussion included how to plan a civic center to accommodate other public agency partners. As stated by the City Council’s Planning Principles, the Taskforce wanted to make sure the planning could allow other public partners, such as the school district and County, to co-locate. A master plan with partners could include:

- Over-building the initial phase to include space for another public partner;
- Share meeting spaces; and
- Shared maintenance and facility investments.

In every case the Taskforce wanted to make sure the plan could allow the partnership to evolve creating an atmosphere of collaboration that could lead to new ways of working together in the future to serve the community.

Task Force Direction

At the end of the meeting, the Taskforce gave the consultant team the following direction:

- Assume the parking solution will be part of a larger district to include areas beyond the Civic Center;
- Create a hybrid solution between Alternatives 1 and 3 at mid-rise density; and
- Replace Alternative 1 with an approach that is higher in density than Alternative 2.

Next Steps

Over the next month the consultant and staff team is to test the alternatives and make a recommendation to the Taskforce regarding a preferred preliminary concept. The preliminary concept would be used to prepare the master plan report once it is reviewed and discussed by the Taskforce.