

Weekly Downtown Stakeholders Team (DST) Meeting June 25, 2014 - Meeting #21

Team Members Present

Peter Kasaavan
SPARC

Paul Farmer
Chamber of Commerce

Doug Iwamoto
MKM Farms

Ariana Green &
Debbie Hale
TAMC

Benny Young
Robert Murdock
John Ford
County of Monterey

Salvador Munoz
Architect

Alan Stumpf &
Andy Myrick &
Jeff Weir
City of Salinas

Larry Bussard
Retired

Gary Petersen
James Serrano
City of Salinas

Jeanette Pantoja
California Rural Legal
Assistance

Kristina Watson
Farmhouse
Communications

Don Reynolds &
Hilda Garcia
City of Salinas

Marilyn Dorman
Salinas Downtown
Community Board

Mark Dorman
Mo & Salinas Valley Model
Railroad & Historical Society

Meetings are held on
Wednesdays
At
307 Main Street
12-1:30pm

For further information
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Recap May 7 Meeting

A Plan Outline was sent via e-mail by Don to all DST Members which identifies the status of the Plan chapters as of today. On July 7th Don will be talking to the Historic Resources Board. Also an invitation was extended to the Arts Council and Elizabeth Martinez so they could give more policy guidance on Art in Public Spaces.

People want to see recommendations more so each element brought forward will have a recommendations section at the beginning. One thing that was heard loud and clear was, "This is a waste of time", "I want to see the whole report", "Where's the meat?" "Where are the details?" Don stated that he does not want to bring forth something that is not finished, moving forward the focus will be on quality and digging down on the details that are expected. Feedback has been requested from other City departments and the County.

The 307 Main Street room is available until July 31st. Another meeting site is in the works.

Update on County Office Space Plans

Benny Young, County Director of Resource Management Agency explained the current plan for the government center. County is trying to figure out what to do with the vacant east/west wing and the old jailhouse. Benny provided in-depth information on the County's 5-year plan.

There's talk about **re-working the inside of the old courthouse into administrative offices**, with the major tenant of that facility being the District Attorney, who currently occupies the modular facilities to the north of the courthouse. Over time, the County would like to get the court-related functions out of the modulares.

Also there are a couple of options related to the **relocation of the Public Defender**. First, there's an option to build a stand-alone facility where the current modulares are (with the DA on one side of the court and the public defender on the other). The second option would be to house the Public Defender in the government center; or the County might buy and rehabilitate property somewhere in the vicinity of E. Alisal. In any event, the District Attorney and Public Defender need to stay downtown in close proximity of the courthouse.

Alan asked if the State has any plans on **expanding the current courthouse**. Benny spoke of several discussions with a fairly new presiding judge who is very anxious about the lack of courtroom space. One option for expanded courtroom spaces would be the vacancy area left once the modules are cleared. Or if the County finds a way to not rehab the old courthouse into administrative offices, then the old courthouse could be made available to the State and reverted to its original function.

The County became aware of the **opportunity to purchase the old Capital One** facilities in the southern end of Salinas. The County submitted an expression of interest and is currently undergoing a due diligence process with regards to the County's possible purchase of the facility. These facilities could be a potential option for some of the items in the current plan, or not depending on what the due diligence committee finds out. County staff is gathering information and will present to the Board for a decision. The Board is not committed to a decision; the opportunity is just being explored.

If the decision to purchase moves forward some of the items on the budget would not move forward. Potentially, some of the administrative staff could be cleared. At the most, **150-200 people would be pulled from downtown Salinas, but the County would not be abandoning downtown**. The County currently has around 865 employees in downtown. The County would still have a considerable presence in downtown even if they were to move personnel if the Capital One transaction was to materialize. At this point the County cannot say it will do that because there are substantial issues that need to be addressed, and then taken to the Board to recommend approval.

Does it make sense from a financial perspective?

Does it save money to the taxpayer over time? In the near term and over time?

Does it make operational sense? Will service to the public be improved?

Even if the purchase was to materialize, the County would still have a **full government center downtown** and would be committed to working with the City of Salinas and the Vibrancy Plan and making downtown healthy.

Don asked Benny **what departments were the County looking to relocate and why**. Benny responded stating he offered the Resource Management Agency (RMA) as one possibility. Another possibility would be to move records into the Capital One facility. Other functions that could possibly be moved would be Elections (currently occupying a leased space in South Salinas), Water Resources Agency (currently occupying a leased space on Blanco Road) an IT (currently in a leased facility on Moffett Street).

Paul asked what concerns the County would've had with using the **Californian building or the Ellis building**. Benny explained they haven't ruled those options out.

Peter asked if Benny had any idea **roughly how many employees** worked for RMA. Benny stated that 150 ppl from RMA, the other 50 that make up the total 200 come from discreet administrative functions that don't have to be in the government center (i.e. purchasing, human resources).

Benny also noted that one of the **functions that could not be moved due to its customer service intensity** was the social services programs currently housed on Main Street's Quadrangle.

Andy asked if any thought had been given to **relocating the Jobs Center currently on La Guardia** to another part of the City because they are also very customer oriented. Benny understands that they have asked to be considered, but if the decision comes through he is not sure the Capital One site would work better from a customer service perspective.

Alan asked what the **approximate timeline for decision making** is. Benny responded that due diligence needs to be completed in order for the Board to make a decision in late July or early August. The County is conducting a thorough building assessment, a traffic study, a preliminary space study and an appraisal to ensure the purchase of the facility supports the taxpayers' investment.

Sal asked what the County plans were for the next 5-10 years for the **parking expansion**. Benny stated that they have \$3million invested in a joint effort with the City. Some of the discussions are oriented toward the possibility of placing a facility where the police station currently exists. If the police station is able to be moved to 312 E. Alisal, then build a joint parking facility that serves that City and the County can be built there. What is working against that is the time it takes to consummate the planning work for 312 Alisal. This could take over 7 years. Other options that work sooner rather than later may need to be explored.

Economic Development Element Presentation

Following the County presentation, Peter presented several slides of describing both the existing conditions and SPARC's 2007 Government Center study. This study was followed by an MOU dated May 8, 2012 which outlined an agreement by the County of Monterey and the City of Salinas to cooperate in the planning and implementation of a Government Center including potential relocation of employees to the downtown. A slide was shown describing the capacity of various buildings, some vacant, and publicly held, others were private and currently for sale. These assets include nearly 4 ½ acres of surface parking or temporary modular offices owned or controlled by the County.

Peter pointed out that the concern is not the just 200 County employees that may be considered to leave downtown to a new County facility on the outskirts of town. It's the 600-800 County employees that could potentially be relocated to the Government Center in downtown rather than to the outskirts. The County would be missing the opportunity to be big a player in sparking Downtown Vibrancy by not bringing these additional employees downtown.

Several points that may be considered in the recommendations of the Vibrancy Plan: 1) if the City or County is seeking efficiencies, consolidating offices, and parking solutions, the opportunities best suited for these needs are downtown. The Government Center and its future development as embodied in the MOU is a critical component of the vibrant downtown; public money should be spent to house employee offices downtown before investments are made in various locations across the city.

Update on One Main Street

Don discussed CSUMB's expressed interest in purchasing the facility at 1 Main Street. He also informed the group of the high likelihood that the National Steinbeck Center will remain in the facility.

According to Gary, part of what drove this was a recent study that revealed that a large number of CSUMB students originate from Salinas area.

CSUMB will provide more details on the use of the building.

Update on Fast Track Accomplishments

Downtown received yesterday, festoon lights. These lights will be installed on existing cabling on pedestrian walkways between the Golden Fish and the Arts store. The first string went up this morning.

New Republic will be ordering new trash cans.

Gary explained the hurdles that were just cleared this week to paint PG&E and traffic control boxes.