



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 25, 2017

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín and Councilmembers Sophie Hahn, Kate Harrison, and Cheryl Davila

Subject: Study of Civic Center Revitalization, including the Veteran's Memorial and Old City Hall Buildings and Civic Center Park

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Direct the City Manager to merge the Old City Hall and Veterans Building Conceptual Design Projects approved for Phase 1 of Measure T1 implementation and add Civic Center Park to create a single, unified conceptual design project for these three Civic Center elements, at a cost of \$300,000, the combined amounts already allocated by Council. The project will focus on:
  - a. A retrofit study of the Veteran's Memorial and Old City Hall Buildings. The study should include, but not be limited to, an updated inventory of needed repairs, potential methods for seismic reinforcement and ADA accessibility, and strategies for making the buildings safe to re-occupy at a cost that is viable.
  - b. Design and uses for these three elements and also consider the context of other civic center buildings and features.
  - c. "Place-making," historic preservation/adaptation and the celebration and enjoyment of the public commons by all Berkeley residents will be central to concepts presented.

All proposals shall conform to the existing Civic Center Overlay zoning requirements and achieve the highest green building standards possible, with reference to the Berkeley Deep Green Building proposal and other local, state and national green building standards.

BACKGROUND:

The Veteran's Memorial and Old City Hall buildings are historic Berkeley landmarks, housing our men's shelter and City Council meetings, respectfully. Despite their significance in our Downtown and community, they have each been in need of seismic and ADA accessibility improvements for decades. In May 2002, a commissioned study on the Veteran's Building was released by the architecture firm Noll and Tam titled "Feasibility Study: Seismic and ADA Upgrades". The report included an assessment of

condition, and provided recommendations needed to make the building code compliant and seismically safe. Due to an estimated cost of \$12 million, no further action was taken at that time. Additionally, in November 2002, voters rejected Measure J, which would have provided funding for the retrofitting of Old City Hall. Since then, minimal maintenance has occurred in either building, resulting in further disrepair. A retrofit study is necessary for plans for these two important historic structures to be appropriately programmed and repurposed.

In addition, Civic Center Park, at the heart of Berkeley's Public Commons, is also in disrepair, and is significantly underutilized. Plans for the park's revitalization are outdated and should be integrated into a unified, well-designed, inspired vision for all Berkeley's most important public spaces and facilities.

Phase 1 of the implementation of Measure T1, recently passed by the City Council, includes two separate projects related to the Civic Center: an Old City hall Conceptual Design and the Veterans Building Conceptual Design. Civic Center Park was not originally included in these plans, but is an important, integral and unifying element of Berkeley's historic civic center and is also in need of redesign and revitalization. Combining the Conceptual Design Projects for Old City Hall and the Veterans Building into a single project that also includes Civic Center Park provides an ideal opportunity to program key elements of Berkeley's Civic Center simultaneously, at no additional cost.

Proposals for this combined conceptual design project must conform to the existing Historic Civic Center Overlay and incorporate state-of-the art green and environmental features.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Restoring these historic, yet seismically unsafe buildings prior to the next major earthquake will protect the public and Civic Center Park from a severity of impacts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs for retrofitting buildings will likely be less than the costs of repairing these structures, adjacent infrastructure, and loss of human life after a seismic event.

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