City Council Worksession

Berkeley Civic Center Vision and Implementation Plan

January 14th, 2020
Project Overview

What we’re covering today

1 Introduction
2 Research + Engagement
3 Vision
4 Design Opportunities
5 Next Steps
Scope and Process

Research + Engagement

- Existing conditions research
- Outreach
- Engagement
- Financial tools assessment

Vision

Present emerging Vision Statement that will continue to be adjusted to reflect the outcomes of the ongoing community engagement.

Design

Up to three conceptual designs for adaptive reuse of the park and buildings

Implementation matrix
Project Overview

Timeline

Research + Engagement

Vision

Design

Sept 2019
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan 2020
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
June 2020

Tour
PSPL
TAC
SSC
Historic Structures research
Focus group interviews
Community meeting
City Council
Concept design
Draft report
HSRs
Website
Final report
Community meeting
City Council

Berkeley Civic Center
Research / Design
Engagement
Deliverables
Vision

PUBLIC SPACE, PUBLIC LIFE SURVEY

HISTORIC STRUCTURES RESEARCH

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

POLICY RESEARCH

VISION

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES
Research + Engagement
Historic structures
preliminary findings
Berkeley Civic Center

Historic District

National Register and Berkeley Local Landmark #211
Listed in 1998

Contributing Resources

1. Maudelle Shirek Building
2. Martin Luther King Jr Civic Center Park
3. The Veterans Memorial Building
4. The Federal Land Bank Building / Civic Center Building
5. Berkeley High School Theater
6. Young Men’s Christian Association Building
7. United State Post Office
8. State Farm Insurance Companies Building
9. City Hall Annex
10. Hall of Justice (demolished)
Focus of Work

- 2 Historic Structure Reports
- Historic Landscape Assessment

Historic Structure Reports

- Understand and frame the historical and cultural **significance and context**
- Identify the **character-defining features**
- Verify that the resource retains **integrity** per the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards
- Record **existing conditions**
- Formulate an **approach to future rehabilitation**
Veterans Memorial Building

Historic Structure Report

**Existing Conditions**

The building **INTERIOR** shows signs of excessive water damage.

The building **EXTERIOR** has consistent cracking and staining.
City Hall
Maudelle Shirek Building

Existing Conditions

- Inappropriate building material
- Deferred maintenance
- Overgrown planting
- Damage

Historic Structures Report

Berkeley Civic Center
**Historic Landscape Assessment**

**Existing Conditions**

- Overall layout remains largely unchanged
- Changes to accessory functions over time (shuffleboard, playground)
- Plantings have matured

**Martin Luther King Jr Civic Center Park**
Public Space, Public Life
Understanding Civic Center today

The survey took place on October 15 and 19, 2019.
1 Civic Center is not in the center, it’s on the sidelines

2 Civic Center is not a destination

“I just come to this park because it’s here and right next to school, it’s nothing special.”
– Berkeley High School Student
3 Civic Center does not attract

4 During Farmers’ Markets, there’s not much spillover into the park
There aren’t many park activities in Civic Center Park.

A few dominant activities negatively impact the perception of safety.

It’s not very clean in here.

Careful of sharp objects in the fountain!
7 Civic Center is surrounded by a high density of life + legacy of gathering

8 Civic Center is surrounded by public buildings awaiting their next act

Lots of people moving around!

The architecture is interesting and varied!
A comfortable ledge to hang-out

With the right invitations, people do want to spend time here.

The magic of youth! It's pretty special there are so many teens here.

Civic Center is a multigenerational space.
Civic Center is not in the center, it's on the sidelines
Civic Center is not a destination
Civic Center does not attract
During Farmers' Markets, there's not much spillover into the park
There aren't many park activities in Civic Center Park
A few dominant activities negatively impact the perception of safety
Civic Center is surrounded by a high density of life + legacy of gathering
Civic Center is surrounded by public buildings awaiting their next act
With the right invitations, people do want to spend time here
Civic Center is a multigenerational space
Outreach and engagement – Insights to date
Engagement and Outreach Strategy
### Outreach and Engagement at a Glance

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<th>Count</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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<td>Community volunteers took part in the Public Space Public Life survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Focused engagement sessions</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Stakeholders interviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>150+</td>
<td>Flyers distributed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Postcards from the Future

- **30+** planned community sessions: First community session on Vision and Values took place in December 2019.

### Commission Meetings

- **3** meetings:
  - Parks & Waterfront, Public Works, Landmarks and Civic Arts – Sep and Nov 2019, and Mar 2020

### Site Tours

- **2** site tours

### Project Website

- **1** project website: Will be live in February and March 2020
Synthesis of findings

Today
Civic Center is not a destination and is not on people's mental map. There's not enough of a draw.

Concerns about the conditions and safety of the buildings.

The park is underused, uninviting and lacks the right infrastructure.

Future
A city needs a central civic space: this is our commons.

Everyone should feel comfortable at Civic Center.

The Park and the buildings should be used by the community.

City Council meetings should be in Civic Center.

The presence of youth is positive.

A place designed for civic participation, cultural events, community interaction, and where one can sit and relax.
Stakeholder Focus Groups

Youth

- Berkeley High School Principal
- Berkeley Unified School District Superintendent
- Berkeley Unified School District Director of Facilities
- YMCA

Arts + Culture

- Berkeley Cultural Trust
- Berkeley Symphony
- City of Berkeley, Civic Arts
- Freight & Salvage
- RLA Conservation (Arts Collection Assessment)
- Shawl-Anderson Dance Center
- Turtle Island Foundation
- Visit Berkeley

Community + Services

- Berkeley Community Media (OCH tenants)
- Berkeleyside
- City of Berkeley Clerk
- City of Berkeley, Special Events
- Dorothy Day House (VMB tenants)
- Downtown Berkeley Association
- Ecology Center
- Former Elected Officials of Berkeley
- Options-Recovery (VMB tenants)
- American Legion Post 7

Heritage + Built Environment

- Berkeley Architectural Historic Association (BAHA)
- Berkeley Design Advocates
- Berkeley Historical Society (VMB tenants)
- Landmarks Preservation Commission
- McGee-Spaulding Hardy Historical Interest Group (MSHHIG)

Elected Officials and/or Representatives

- Berkeley City Council Member, District 1
- Berkeley City Council Member, District 2
- Berkeley City Council Staff, District 3
- Berkeley City Council Member, District 4
- Berkeley City Council Member, District 5
- Berkeley City Council Member, District 6
- Berkeley City Council Member, District 7
- Berkeley City Council Member, District 8
- Berkeley Mayor's office staff
- Berkeley Unified School District Board Director
Key Takeaways: what we’ve heard so far

- An extension to the school, not always positive
- Concerns about homeless population, drug use, inappropriate interactions, safety of children and students
- Need School-City-Police to work together
- A positive kids culture around the Park: teen spaces that feels legit
- A better community shared space: involving kids in the design and stewardship
Outreach and Engagement

Key Takeaways: what we’ve heard so far

- Location! In central Berkeley and near: residences, schools, work, the Y, services, public transportation, strong cultural & arts institutions, downtown hotels
- A great opportunity to support and strengthen the local performing arts community. Not enough evening classroom spaces, and performance spaces (especially for smaller groups)
- An arts and cultural component needs strong management
- Concerned that people who are struggling will be displaced. No desire to push anyone out.
Key Takeaways: what we’ve heard so far

- Berkeley has been a place where things tend to begin
- Most people in Berkeley haven't been to Old City Hall and don't notice the Park
- Park and buildings should be used by the community
- Purpose and need of who occupies the buildings, mission alignment, creative focus
- We want everyone to feel comfortable at Civic Center: no matter who you are and where you're from, you fit in here
- The Farmer's Market is not just a place to buy food but a placemaking event
- It’s important to Veterans to be in the Veterans Building, ours has very low participation
- Civic Center Park is a key space during a disaster
Key Takeaways: what we’ve heard so far

- Everything could come together in this one space
- Civic Center Park needs a focus
- Old City Hall and The Veterans Memorial Building are jewels, must be protected and should be public buildings
- Landscape updates will attract people and pollinators
- Let's make a plaza that's brilliant from the recreation standpoint
Key Takeaways: what we’ve heard so far

- It is the heart of the city and it feels empty now
- Not a place to go or be, not enough of a draw
- Civic Center is the cornerstone of our democracy: a place that we should defend and also glorify
- We need better and more accessible meeting spaces
- Bring City Council Chambers back to Civic Center
- Huge potential, wonderful opportunity: this is our commons!
Outreach and Engagement

A Complete Civic Center

Community Meeting
December 12th
Vision
Vision

PUBLIC SPACE, PUBLIC LIFE SURVEY

HISTORIC STRUCTURES RESEARCH

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

POLICY RESEARCH

VISION

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES
A Vision for Berkeley’s Civic Center

Civic Center will be the heart of Berkeley’s community. Civic Center will be the prime space for civic life, culture, and the arts. It will reflect the city’s diverse identities, celebrating its history, and contributing to shaping its future. A place of shared resources and a platform for free expression accessible to all, Civic Center aims to manifest the city’s values, advance social justice, and demonstrate the power of true public space.
Three dimensions of the Vision

1 The Heart of Berkeley’s community

Civic Center will be an epicenter of Berkeley's public life—enlivened by activity day and night, and a preferred center stage for all important civic occasions. A place where all members of the community will have a chance to meet with one another, Civic Center will represent Berkeley’s diversity and foster social cohesion.
Three dimensions of the Vision

2 Prime Place for Civic Life, Culture, and the Arts

The Civic Center will concentrate some of Berkeley’s most important civic functions, it will harness the pulse of Downtown activity on Shattuck Avenue and connect with the adjacent Arts District through new art and culture programing. Heritage will be preserved while shaping the city’s future.
Three dimensions of the Vision

3 Expression of the City’s Values

Civic Center will respect and build upon the area’s natural systems, and demonstrate Berkeley’s commitment to environmental sustainability in all aspects of its transformation — from the energy consumption of its buildings, to the mobility patterns it will encourage. A true commons, the Civic Center will be both a place of collective assets, readily accessible to all members of the community, and a platform for self-expression.
Design Opportunities
Design Opportunities

VISION

1 BEYOND THE SITE
2 AT THE SITE LEVEL
3 HUMAN-SCALE
4 PROGRAMS
5 STEWARDSHIP
6 FUNDING

PUBLIC SPACE, PUBLIC LIFE SURVEY
HISTORIC STRUCTURES RESEARCH
COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
POLICY RESEARCH
1 Beyond the Site
2 At the Site Level

Existing Conditions

Facade Activation

- Active
- Inactive
- Highly inactive

Design Opportunities

- Customer service center (birth certificate, permits, complaints)
2 At the Site Level

Opportunity: Activated Buildings

Veterans Memorial Building

2180 Milvia St

Active Facade
Activity Spillover
Opportunity: Connected Edges

2 At the Site Level

Comfortable, friendly pedestrian crossings
2 At the Site Level

Opportunity: A dynamic Center
3 Human-Scaled
4 Programs
4 Programs

Design Opportunities

Existing Conditions

Civic Center Park

Arts District

to Campus

BART
4 Programs

Design Opportunities

Berkeley Civic Center

Berkeley Civic Center

Draft Deck

Work In Progress

Cultural Hub

Arts District

to Campus

Civic Center Park

BART

50
4 Programs

Design Opportunities

Cultural Hub

Arts District

to Campus

BART

Civic Center Park

Exhibition Venue

Shared Meeting Space

Canteen / Café

Theater

Studio Space

Shared
Meeting
Space

Cultural
Hub
4 Programs
Design Opportunities

4 Programs

- Cultural Hub
- City Offices
- Civic Center Park
- City Admin
- Arts District
- BART
- to Campus

Berkeley Civic Center
4 Programs

Design Opportunities

Berkeley Civic Center
4 Programs

Design Opportunities

Civic Center Park

City Offices

City Admin

Arts District

to Campus

Cultural Hub

BART

Civic Center Park

Design Opportunities

Civic Center Park

Café, Lounge

Flexible spaces

Gathering areas

Events, Picnic space

Teen, Youth hangout

Playspace

Playground
Design Opportunities

4 Programs

City Council meets offsite

Berkeley Civic Center

City Council

Today

Berkeley City Police

Maudelle Shirek Building

VMB

1947 Center St

2480 Milvia

Berkeley City Police

1947 Center St

2480 Milvia

VMB

Maudelle Shirek Building

City Council

Today

Berkeley Civic Center

Civic

Cultural
4 Programs
4 Programs
5 Stewardship

Active management and coordinated stewardship – a strong strategy for stewardship, operations and maintenance will play a central role in the success of Berkeley’s Civic Center.
6 Funding

- The Vision and Implementation Plan is a critical first step to developing a successful long-term funding/financing strategy.

- There will be many interim steps to implementing this Vision relying on a wide variety of funding sources, some strategic and others opportunistic.

- The long-term strategic financing sources could involve various forms of public/private partnerships.
Next Steps
Next Steps

Project website
February - March
Online engagement and project information

Community workshop 2
Tuesday, February 4, 1:30-3:00
Youth-Focused Design Charrette

Community Workshop 3
Saturday, March 7, 11:00-2:00
Pop up at the Farmers Market + Tour of Buildings and Park

Community workshop 4
Thursday, March 26, 5:30-7:00
Conceptual Design Options
Questions for consideration by City Council

Vision Statement

● What do you like about the emerging vision statement?

● What do you wish was different – what is missing or misrepresented?

Design Opportunities

● Of the design opportunities presented, what resonated with you, and why?

● Which concepts did not resonate, and why?
Thank you

The project website will be live in February 2020.

For questions and to add your email to the project mailing list please contact the City of Berkeley project manager: EHollander@cityofberkeley.info / (510) 981-7536
Project Overview

Timeline

Research + Engagement → Vision → Design

Sept 2019
- Tour

Oct
- PSPL

Nov
- TAC
- SSC

Dec
- Community meeting

Jan 2020
- Historic Structures research
- Focus group interviews
- City Council

Feb
- Concept design
- Draft report
- HSRs

Mar
- Community meeting
- Tour
- TAC
- SSC

Apr
- Community meeting

May
- City Council

June 2020
- Final report
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