



Planning for the Revitalization of

THE CIVIC CENTER **CORE PROPERTIES**

Civic Center Revitalization Committee

January 2023

January 31, 2023

Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers:

It is with great pleasure that the 22 members of the Civic Center Revitalization Committee (*Committee*) presents to you the final report summarizing our recommendations as you proceed with this historic effort to transform the Civic Core of Downtown.

The Committee was charged with gathering public input and presenting a vision for the revitalization of the Civic Center properties. The Committee held publicly noticed meetings on a bi-weekly basis between September 2022 and January 2023. Committee members attended both City Council information item hearings in October 2022 and January 2023 to gather Councilmember feedback. Committee members and members of the public also had the opportunity to participate in a walking tour of the Civic Center complex, including City Hall, City Operations Building, Civic Theater, and the underground utility network that connects each of these buildings. These opportunities were presented in the spirit of dialogue and public engagement.

This final report was approved unanimously after hundreds of hours of volunteerism and dozens of meetings held by the Committee and each of its four subgroups focused on the downtown community, tourism, design, and economic development. We are confident the City should proceed expeditiously to build a new Civic Center that ensures City staff can continue delivering world-class services while simultaneously addressing the city's housing crisis.

Thank you for the honor to serve as the Civic Center Revitalization Committee Chair in this historic moment. I, along with each subgroup Chair and Committee member, look forward to continued engagement with city employees and the public.

With gratitude,



Jaymie Bradford
Chair, Civic Center Revitalization Committee



LINCOLN CENTER: ALICE TULLY HALL — New York City, NY

Introduction

On September 14, 2022, Mayor Todd Gloria convened a group of civic leaders to gather public input and present a vision for the revitalization of six City-owned blocks in and adjacent to the Civic Center in San Diego, California (**Attachments A and B**). This Civic Center Revitalization Committee, (CCRC), was charged with developing and evaluating ideas to identify socioeconomic needs and opportunities for the city, ensure City staff delivers world-class services to the people, and shape the parameters for what will be a catalyst for the downtown civic core. Prior to being appointed to the Committee, members had to agree in writing that neither they nor their immediate family members or companies will participate in any future bid seeking the award of the redevelopment rights.

The CCRC consists of 22 volunteer experts (**Attachment C**) who represent a diverse range of community interests including arts and culture, tourism, housing and land use, architecture, mobility and transportation, environmental, labor and employees, and the downtown community. Committee chair, Jaymie Bradford, is the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Committee met bi-weekly from September 2022 through January 2023 and will continue to meet as necessary throughout the bidding process as prescribed by the State of California's Surplus Land Act (SLA). All meetings have been open to the public for participation, compliant with the Ralph M. Brown Act.



MOMA: COURTYARD — New York City, NY



To provide adequate focus in specific areas of expertise, the Committee established a Working Group composed of Committee members and informal stakeholder roundtables which were open for broader public stakeholder participation. These sub-groups met in addition to regularly scheduled CCRC meetings. Each sub-group developed recommendations which were presented to the full Committee for consideration and have been adopted by the full Committee and presented in this final report for consideration.

Since the Committee first began meeting, they have convened eight times, received five comment letters, approximately 30 public comments and 107 people have signed up for email updates. In addition, each sub-group met numerous times as they formulated their visions and guidance which are incorporated in this Report.

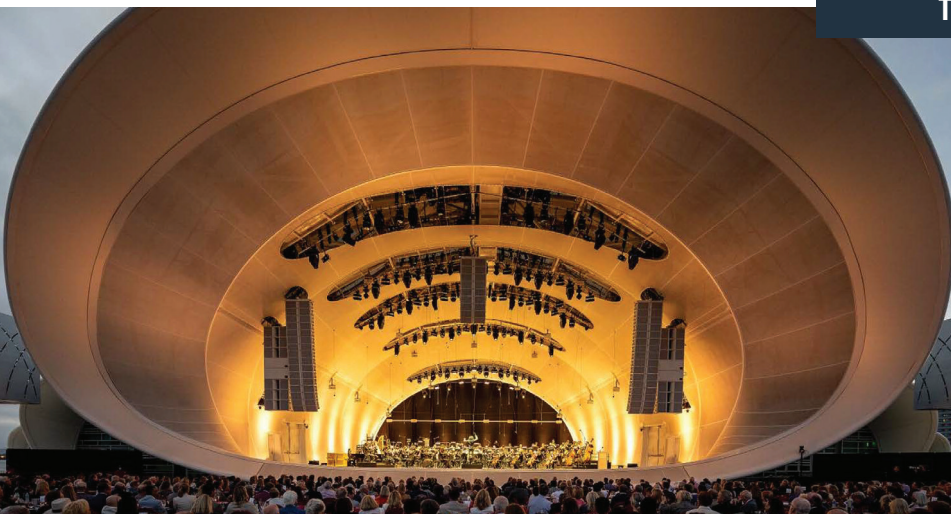
Consistent with the guidance provided in the State Surplus Land Act, the CCRC Design Roundtable developed a Manifesto for the revitalization of the six City-owned blocks.

In part, their statement reads as follows:

“We now collectively understand and acknowledge how historical racist land use and planning policies have overburdened low-income communities and excluded people of color. The new Civic Heart of San Diego must reflect the City’s commitment to a new era of justice and equity. Racial and social justice experts should be engaged at various points in the design and development process to guide intentional and robust engagement of Communities of Concern; and to ensure that design elements are reflective of the many diverse cultures in the area and welcoming to all.”

Our City is poised to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime transformation of the downtown Civic Center – giving us the proud heart and soul that we all deserve – a welcoming place of pride and dignity that will serve our next generations long into the future. A new City Hall will be the cornerstone of a five-block redevelopment for living and working. The time is now to carefully shape our goals and aspirations to create a remarkable place – and it is time to commit to those goals.

Now is the time for huge, audacious thinking, broad outreach, strong partnerships, and thoughtful planning to guarantee success. Now means it is time to remember how greatness is achieved – it is difficult and it is expensive – and it takes commitment from us all. Mayor Gloria has assembled a committee of San Diegans who have dedicated their careers to improve the lives of all who call San Diego home. This group brings together people who can guide the Vision for what this place can be – people who know how to pay for it and people who know how to take care of it forever.



THE RADY SHELL AT JACOBS PARK— San Diego, CA



The Vision for the **Heart of San Diego** demands that the City:

Demand Design Excellence

The buildings and outdoor spaces of the new Civic Center **MUST** be exceptionally well-designed, emphasizing a new iconic aesthetic that can inspire and influence the surrounding downtown neighborhood. The selected development team(s) must demonstrate a proven track record for design excellence on this scale – in ideas and delivery beyond construction. To earn an honored place in history, every aspect of design must celebrate our unique San Diego personality and climate. The Civic Center must be an authentic aspiration (*Appendix: Design for Civic-Ness*).

Celebrate Democracy

Our new Civic Center **MUST** provide a place for future generations of diverse San Diego citizens to actively engage in and protect our democratic system.

Build Trust

The reimagined Civic Center must nurture and strengthen the trust and partnership between those who govern and those governed, which is critical to a flourishing society. The design/build process must embrace the public first, welcome the diversity of our citizens, nurture healthy public discourse, engender civic pride, and facilitate a shared ownership in the outcome of public decisions.

Honor Public Service

A City Hall represents the noble commitment of thousands of public employees who dedicate their lives to public service. The offices, meeting rooms, break spaces, public spaces, and surrounding areas must dignify and inspire these workers and the members of the public who engage with government. Healthy environments created with appropriate design principles bring out the best in each of our City staff members and honors the public that we serve.

Take Risks

Bold Civic leadership is essential to any large-scale development success. Aspirations **MUST** be clearly articulated. Excellence takes time, dedication, and a commitment to bravery.

Create Dynamic Municipal Synergies

A Civic Heart, both physical and emotional, is most powerful when it is accessible – connected to urban transportation systems, housing, employment, schools, and cultural institutions – thus facilitating engagement in private/public initiatives. A collaboration with ALL LEADERSHIP in these systems must be initiated hand in hand with the Developer RFP's. Exponentially successful projects like Petco Park speak to the power of such collaboration.

Embrace Arts and Culture

Given its geographical position in the very center of our city, the new Civic Center **MUST** integrate Arts and Culture into its site design. Arts and Culture drive economic development in our largest, most international cities – a crucial element in attracting a dynamic work force, and in generating jobs and revenue. Arts and Culture play a crucial role in advancing social development including a feeling of belonging, fostering full engagement with our communities, and addressing the trauma we have experienced with COVID 19, racial injustice, homelessness, intolerance, and a widening gap of shared understanding.

Shift Paradigms

The new Civic Center **MUST** embrace an inclusive, future-forward global view to expand our cultural influence and impact. This shift champions all aspects of revitalization, housing, civic engagement, rebuilding of civic institutions, city hall, working spaces, public gathering and how our leaders inspire regional, bi-national community.

Center the Network

Our city's center is growing rapidly and is poised for more phenomenal growth as we build critical urban infrastructure and homes to address our housing crisis. San Diegans have been waiting for convenient, realistic, speedy, and direct public transportation to the City Hall, the Mexico border, the Airport, and to the entirety of San Diego County. Our region needs a sustainable solution to climate change caused by fossil fuel automobile consumption. A world-class, accessible transportation center must be located at the core of the civic center redevelopment to achieve our housing and climate action goals. A concurrent collaboration with SANDAG would ideally be a part of the City's work to solicit proposals from developers. Successful examples of municipal collaborations: Moynahan Station, Hudson Yard, World Trade and Grand Central Station in New York City.

Listen and Invest in Community Outreach

Effective community engagement leads to positive outcomes for residents, the private sector, and government alike. The City and its Developer/Design team **MUST** engage the people of San Diego through properly noticed discussions to inform how Civic spaces will benefit community and represent our beliefs and aspirations. **TRUST** all citizens to be articulate and clear. Note the powerful dialogue that resulted in a visionary Ballpark in our East Village neighborhood; one that came to fruition through community engagement (*see Appendix: Resident Questionnaire*).

Address Housing Scarcity

We must positively impact the region's housing shortage crisis through creative thinking and proper design. Housing must be located appropriately to provide for the health and wellness of residents – this project must consider local and regional plans to maximize opportunities for housing in the immediate site and surrounding downtown area. The Civic Center project must consider multiple

housing types in its planning, including Extremely Low Income, Low Income, and Moderate Income/Missing Middle housing. Different typologies should be explored, including co-living, micro units, SROs and family units. No single site can respond to all of the housing needs of our times – creative partnerships must provide a model for how we can think about housing development in our City as a whole.

Commit to Climate Action

The new Civic Center redevelopment **MUST** implement proven sustainability initiatives. Our city's future; our children's future; our planet's future depends on this commitment from Civic Leadership.

Ensure Safety and Inclusiveness

Through public design strategies such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (*CPTED*) the Civic Center core must create inspiring, well-lighted, visually focused public spaces and places that are safe and welcoming for ALL.

In the spirit of great civic endeavors of San Diego's past, we are inspired by the visionary tenacity of Civic Leaders who set aside the land for Balboa Park. Our new Civic Center MUST epitomize San Diego as a city of science, the arts, audacious courage, and bi-national, regional cooperation. Our recommendation is more than what the project looks like, or one that states which buildings to tear down, but an urgent call for holistic design in the broad sense. We have ONE CHANCE to get this right: a legacy project that is an opportunity to level up the city's economic, aesthetic, and societal value. Our leaders must engage the community and think big to develop an innovative Civic Center that will serve our City now and for our future.



PALEY POCKET PARK — New York City, NY

Guiding Principles

The Downtown San Diego Partnership has developed a set of broad principles it hopes will guide the City and potential developers moving forward.

1. Prioritize feasibility of the Civic Center Revitalization project by focusing scope on the six Civic Center blocks. Maximize density by utilizing a diverse housing development portfolio to include affordable and workforce housing, while still allowing for other uses as defined by the State Housing and Community Development Department (*HCD*). Other complementary uses to explore should include commercial, office and include space for arts and culture.
2. Ensure Downtown San Diego remains as the public gathering seat of the Federal, State, County and City government for our region by enhancing customer service and public service by allocating employees in Downtown, including City Council Chamber. The Downtown San Diego Partnership (*DSDP*) Developer's Roundtable understands not all city employees will be housed at the Civic Center site, and that the site will house a reasonable amount of city employee, and those necessary to ensure transparency and openness in city government to provide excellent customer service to the citizens of San Diego.
3. Create an active urban plaza and a robust vision for the public realm to encourage civic discourse and gathering. This includes a civic theatre. Encourage vibrancy and activation through high quality urban design including uses that attract and retain people in a work and live district through a vibrant performing arts and entertainment district, community serving uses, retail, and housing. This activated focus could include adjacent properties to the identified parcels.
4. Maximizing the connectivity to downtown and the rest of San Diego via a world class transit facility forming the epicenter for transit in our region is essential. Downtown is a major focal point for all modes of transportation including the headquarters for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, major links to the state and interstate system, a major link to the regional bike network, and major arterials leading into and from Downtown.

In addition, the proximity of the San Diego International Airport to Downtown, and the waterfront, are regional assets and attribute to our tourism industry, Convention Center and the business community.

5. Create a site plan diagram for the proposed city blocks to ensure developers meet public interests while identifying the connectivity to adjacent properties.

The Tourism Roundtable further adopted a slightly more specific set of principles based upon input from businesses across the tourism industry sector including lodging properties, restaurants, attractions, arts, and tour operators to provide insights into future development of the civic center core. All businesses have current operations in the downtown San Diego area and extensive experience across other communities outside of San Diego. The following is a summary of the key takeaways:

1. **Space Should be Mixed Use.** Serve the needs of residents, workers, and visitors to ensure the area is active and vibrant. Create an experience through programming, green space, arts, and amenities to attract visitors, too. Hudson Yards and Highline Park in New York were mentioned. The space should be holistic and cohesive with streets, landscaping, amenities, office space and residential mixed into a pleasing multi-purpose urban core.
2. **Be Aspirational with Architecture and Planning that Embraces San Diego.** Buildings and overall design should be aesthetically engaging, reflecting the San Diego character of recent success. (*Examples include the Downtown San Diego Library, The Rady Shell, Museum of Contemporary Art La Jolla and PETCO Park.*) This is an opportunity to create the heart of downtown and to link together neighborhoods.
3. **Think Iconic.** There is no icon for downtown San Diego like there is in Chicago with Millennium Park or London with the London Eye. There should be a major draw to the area that adds excitement and creates a sense of place.
4. **Vibrancy is Key and the Arts Should Play a Major Role.** There is a need to ensure that this is a place that is active and safe. Art should be a key programming factor, whether it's through a new Arts District, renovated Civic Theater, new museums, galleries, public art, etc. It is also important that there be attractions that draw people throughout the day and into the evening to again give energy and life to the area. This will attract restaurants, services, retailers, workers, residents, and visitors.
5. **Build Outward Versus Inward.** The past model was to build inward. This project should build outward to create inviting, light, vibrant spaces.
6. **Future Workspace Needs and Service Levels.** Align amount of office space to future state. How many workers need to be accommodated downtown? Is it best to consolidate government services or spread services around the city to best serve citizen needs?
7. **Housing.** Workforce Housing and not just luxury high-rises and affordable housing should be considered within the mix to champion diversity.
8. **Other Cities Have Attractive Transportation Solutions Built Into Their Urban Core.** The city should look holistically at the overall experience and bring together the Climate Action Plan, SANDAG Transportation Solutions and Green Space into one overall solution.



SAN JOSE CIVIC CENTER — San Jose, CA

Maximize the Success for Strong Economic Development of the Six Blocks

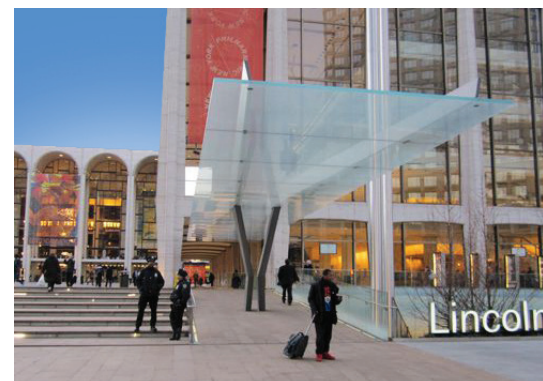
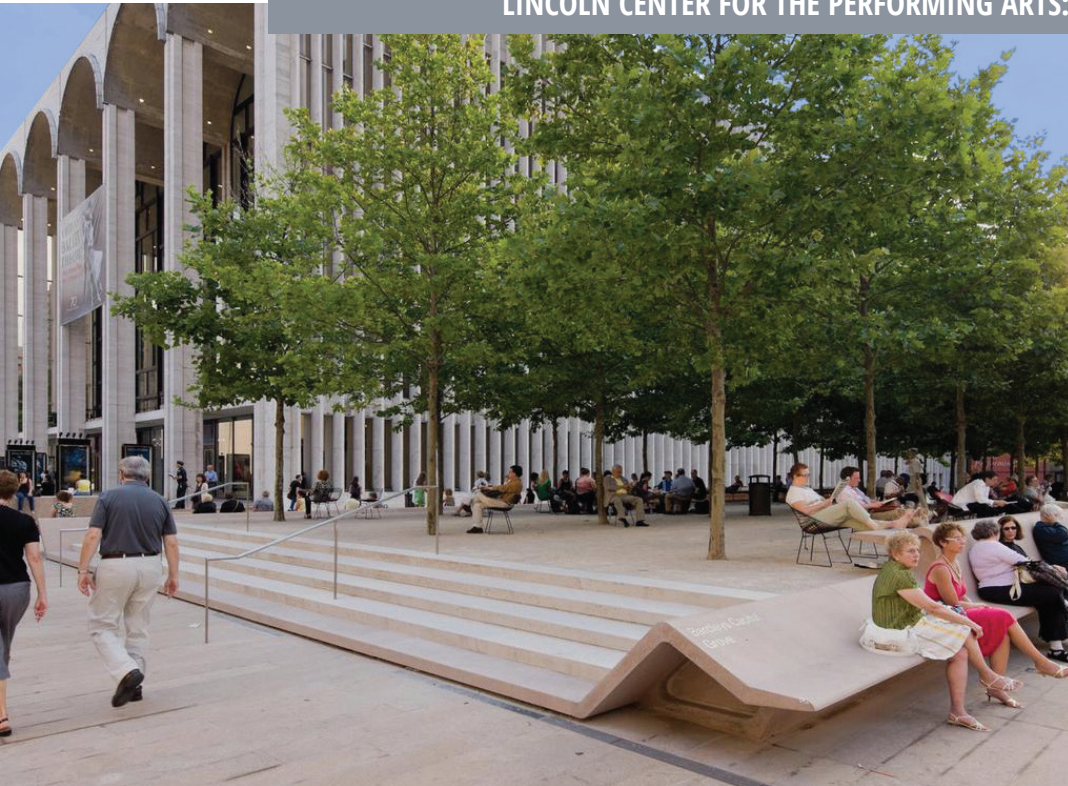
The Economic Development Working Group developed an approach that focuses on an approach that should ensure the construction of a new City Hall, as well as the development of desperately needed housing and prepared the following recommendations that have been adopted by the Committee.

1. Goals of the task force
 - a. Primary goal should be building a new City Hall.
 - b. Secondary goal is Housing: affordable, workforce and market rate.
2. Given the current downtown workforce and the potential for future growth, the new City Administration Building should be between approximately 500,000 and 600,000 square feet.
3. The new City Hall should be paid for through a combination of revenues generated by the results of the SLA process, existing City revenues and the redeployment of savings realized by the consolidation of the City's downtown workforce into a single new building.
4. A singular Notice of Availability should be used for five of the six blocks, excluding one block for the new City Hall.
5. The new City Hall should be built in conjunction with a fee developer on the existing site that currently houses the City Operations Building. Thus, no NOA would be necessary for this project as it would be retained for governmental use and not subject to the Surplus Land Act.
6. Outside consultant should be hired by City to advise and recommend development and disposition to Mayor and Council for the NOA. They would work on financing options for their response including public-private partnerships, and other possible structures including sale and lease options.

7. Work to maintain a theater presence within the Civic Center as a desired development outcome of the NOA. Any theater development should be in collaboration with San Diego Theatres and philanthropists, not primarily funded by the developer or the City.
8. The Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) contract approved by Council should look at public facing services and what services are appropriate downtown. The timeliness of the JLL findings and report is important.
9. The Committee received a presentation from State representatives regarding the Surplus Land Act. The State made it clear that affordable housing is the primary goal of the Act, but emphasized that “*additional local requirements*” are also relevant and appropriate. According to the State, “*deference will be given to a local agency determination*” to select a bidder that does not provide the highest raw number of units affordable at 80% AMI. Other considerations could include:
 - a. Provision of workforce housing at 80–120% AMI
 - b. Provision of other types of affordable housing (*e.g., replacement of “SRO” units at various AMI levels*)
 - c. Type of financing for affordable units (*units funded by the developer from for-profit aspects of project are preferred over units funded by vouchers and tax credits because that actually creates more affordable housing units rather than just proscribing where those units will be located*)

The Committee recommends that the City include this type of direction in the NOA and include these considerations in the ultimate selection.

LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS: PLAZA — New York City, NY



Public Comment Takeaways

The Committee received public comment over the course of eight Committee meetings. Some residents mailed the Mayor's office, others sent comment letters, and many participated during Committee meetings. Below are some of the common themes mentioned in public comment.

A record of written public comment can be found here:
sandiego.gov/mayor/ccrc/public-comments

Job Quality Standards

We received several public comments encouraging the redevelopment to proceed under a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) that creates local jobs and quality construction careers with apprenticeship opportunities for local San Diegans, and includes community benefits and economic benefits of investing funds back into the local workforce.

Learning from the Pandemic

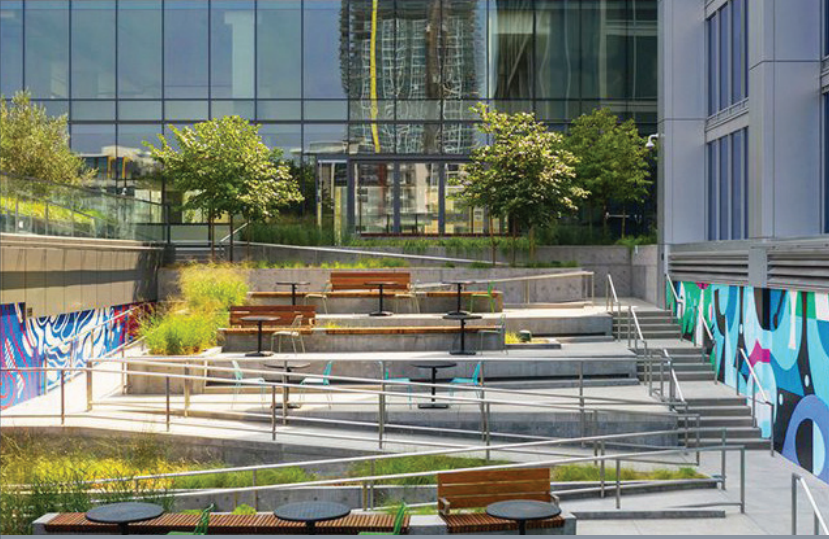
The COVID pandemic has taught us that work from home, online meetings, remote services, and other innovative tools are now integrated into business, educational and cultural practices. The Committee received public input that these concepts and technologies should be incorporated in redesign concepts, including hybrid work and shared workspaces in government office spaces.

San Diego Civic Theater

A broad range of participants asked for this redevelopment to include a theater. Over the course of a 6-year period in the early 2000s, a feasibility study for renovating the Civic Theatre was completed. The City was called upon to seize the opportunity to build on the success of the Theatre by incorporating it into this redevelopment, although the public had varied opinions on reconstruction or rehabilitation. Most of all, there was input to use the air rights above the Theatre to contribute to the housing needs of the redevelopment.

Small and Emerging Developers

Some participants asked the City to consider or require potential bidders to partner with small and emerging entities for any portion of their project, particularly those owned by women or people of color. This could include small or emerging affordable housing developers, homelessness service providers, or civic-oriented community-based organizations.



PARK AND MARKET — San Diego, CA



NORFOLK SOUTHERN HEADQUARTERS — Atlanta, GA

Conclusion

The City of San Diego is presented with a once in a generation opportunity to redefine and redevelop a significant area of its downtown. By replacing a City Hall and other City buildings that are outdated and inefficient, and the redevelopment of the adjacent five blocks to include the building of much needed affordable housing and civic spaces. The existing buildings cost the City millions of dollars annually to operate and maintain and have well over several hundred million dollars in deferred maintenance needs. It is also an opportunity to consolidate downtown operations into a single building saving on rent expenses, improve operational efficiencies and provide a safe work environment for its employees. Through these efficiencies, the public should receive much improved services without having to go from building to building or from place to place throughout the City. It is an opportunity to build a City Hall that is energy efficient and meets or exceeds the goals in the City's Climate Action Plan. It should be a City Hall and City Council Chambers that is more accessible and one that is representative of the eighth largest city in the United States.

To complement a new, more efficient City Hall, is the opportunity to build housing that is affordable and accessible to public transportation. Under the Surplus Land Act, at least 25% of the housing will need to be 80% of AMI or below. Beyond that, the City can require a certain percentage of the housing to be what is referred to as workforce housing which is defined as 80% to 120% of AMI.

Through the Notice of Availability process called for under the Surplus Land Act, potential developers will have an opportunity to reimagine the area including a revitalized theater and entertainment venue, restaurants, open space and much more.

The Committee thanks the Mayor for the opportunity to be part of this process, especially at the beginning stage and looks forward to working with the Mayor and City Council to provide input as appropriate, along the way.

ATTACHMENT A



ATTACHMENT B



ATTACHMENT C

Civic Center Revitalization Committee Members

- **Jaymie Bradford**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
- **Laurie Black**, President and CEO of LJ Black Consulting and President of RS Lawrence Development
- **Bridgette Brashear**, Former Building Maintenance Supervisor and AFSCME representative
- **Betsy Brennan**, President and CEO, Downtown San Diego Partnership
- **Mark Cafferty**, President and CEO, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp.
- **Julie Coker**, President and CEO, San Diego Tourism Authority
- **Julie Corrales**, Policy Advocate, Environmental Health Coalition and Barrio Logan Planning Group Chair
- **Stephen P. Cushman**, President of Cush Enterprises
- **Colleen FitzSimons**, Executive Director, SD Green Building Council
- **Denice Garcia**, Chief of Staff, Office of Supervisor Nora Vargas
- **Martha Gilmer**, CEO, San Diego Symphony
- **Alan Gin**, Economics Professor, USD
- **Joel Hermosillo**, Manager, Downtown City Centre BID
- **Donna Jones**, Land Use Attorney and Principal at Donna Jones Law
- **Jennifer Luce**, Principal and Architect, LUCE et Studio
- **Jack McGrory**, Former San Diego City Manager
- **Mark Nelson**, Board Chair, San Diego County Taxpayers Association
- **Bill Ponder**, Director of Community Engagement and Programs, Burnham Center for Community Advancement
- **Stephen Russell**, President and CEO, San Diego Housing Federation
- **Dr. Ricky Shabazz**, President, San Diego City College
- **Tony Young**, Former City Council President
- **Mike Zucchet**, General Manager, San Diego Municipal Employees Association

ATTACHMENT D

Civic Center Revitalization Committee Subgroup Chairs

Civic Center Revitalization Committee Working Group and Stakeholder Roundtable Chairs:

- **Downtown Partnership:** Betsy Brennan, President and CEO, Downtown San Diego Partnership
- **Tourism:** Julie Coker, President and CEO, San Diego Tourism Authority
- **Economic Development:** Steve Cushman, President of Cush Enterprises
- **Civic Center Design:** Jennifer Luce, Principal and Architect, LUCE et Studio

The City of
SAN DIEGO



sandiego.gov | [@cityofsandiego](https://www.instagram.com/cityofsandiego)