



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 9, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Consideration of Adopting a Resolution Approving the Final Design for Harrington Park and the 700 Block of Laurel Street (“Phase 1 Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Implementation”); and Consider Adopting a Resolution Directing Staff to Proceed with the Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E) for Phase 1A Renovation of Harrington Park.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend that the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution approving the final design for Harrington Park and the 700 block of Laurel Street (“Phase 1 Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Implementation”); and
2. Adopt a Resolution directing staff to proceed with the plans, specifications, and estimate (“PS&E”) for Phase 1A Renovation of Harrington Park; and
3. Provide direction on a series of design and implementation questions including temporary relocation of the “Blue Man” sculpture and the potential for wall murals at Harrington Park and on the roll-up door of the Harrington Park multi-purpose building.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fiscal implications for approving the final design of Harrington Park and the 700 block of Laurel Street. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project C2215 sets aside funding for improvements in the downtown core, including:

Project C2215 – Downtown	
Design/Engineering	\$1,800,000
Election Campaign Consultants	\$350,000
Phase 1 Construction	\$7,600,000
TOTAL	\$9,750,000

Within CIP project fund C2215, a total of \$1,800,000 is set aside for design/engineering (i.e. “shovel ready”) drawings for Harrington Park and the full span of the 700 block of Laurel Street, from Cherry Street to Olive Street; and a total of \$7,600,000 is budgeted to finance construction of downtown improvements.

Should the City Council direct staff to proceed with the construction of Phase 1A Renovation of Harrington Park, the current estimate for construction of improvements is \$3,672,000.

Construction cost estimates for Phase 1B, the 700 block of Laurel (including the pavilion and the water feature), are \$9,523,000. Therefore, the current estimate for Phases 1A and 1B combined would be \$13,195,000. Final construction costs will not be known until the City publicly advertises and receives bids from qualified contractors to complete the work in each of the phases. Award of a construction contract for Phase 1A is anticipated to be presented to the City Council at its October 27, 2025 meeting.

Should the City Council desire public art murals to be completed along with Harrington Park improvements, staff would return with a request for additional funding.

BACKGROUND:

In 2022, the City commenced a planning process for a *Downtown Specific Plan*, aimed at enhancing the downtown core. A key component of the *Downtown Specific Plan* is the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*, which was adopted by the City Council on April 28, 2025. The *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* outlines a series of placemaking, pedestrian, environmental, community-oriented, and business-friendly improvements along several downtown streets (primarily along Laurel), with the 700 block of Laurel Street (including Harrington Park) operating as a pedestrian promenade and central community gathering point.

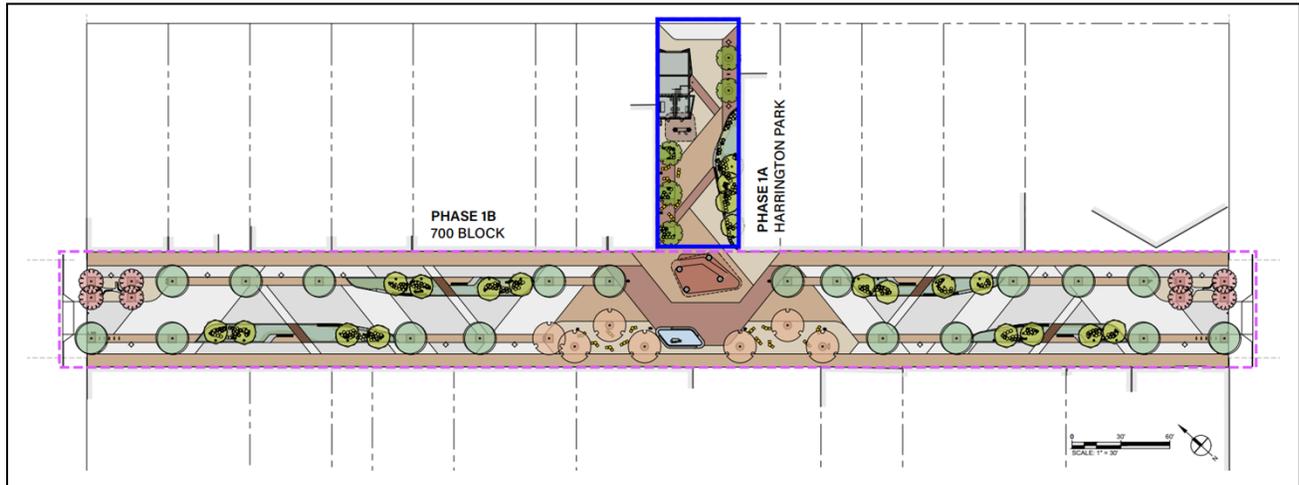
Key features for the 700 Block of Laurel Street and Harrington Park, as heard during the community engagement process and as set forth in the City Council's adopted *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*, include:

- ✓ Maintaining the “sway” design from the 600 block of Laurel Street
- ✓ A full pedestrian plaza experience (closed to cars and bicycle dismount zone)
- ✓ Room for outdoor dining
- ✓ Ample public seating
- ✓ Groves of trees for shading
- ✓ Raingardens
- ✓ New fountain
- ✓ Activated/programming areas
- ✓ Bicycle parking
- ✓ Public drinking fountains
- ✓ New public restrooms in Harrington Park (note: public restrooms also planned for 600 block of Laurel Street in the new plaza)
- ✓ New multi-purpose stage/pavilion

During the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* process, the City Council expressed a strong desire to begin constructing improvements in an area within the downtown. Given their prominence, the 700 block of Laurel Street and Harrington Park were identified as Phase 1 of implementation phases. In October 2024, the City Council authorized a contract with design/engineering firm WRT to prepare design engineering (i.e. “shovel ready”) drawings for the 700 block of Laurel Street plus Harrington Park, with the direction to begin construction on Harrington Park sometime in 2025.

Since that time, the City Council has participated in three Study Sessions with staff and WRT to refine the designs for Phase 1. Throughout these discussions, Phase 1 has been presented as two subphases: Phase 1A consists of the renovation of Harrington Park and Phase 1B consists of the entire pedestrianized zone along the 700 block of Laurel Street, spanning from Cherry to Olive Streets. Phase 1A and 1B have been designed as one complete project. The extent of each phase is mapped in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Phase 1: Harrington Park and 700 Block of Laurel



In 2025, the City Council met three times to guide the final design for Phase 1, including both the 700 Block of Laurel Street and Harrington Park. The sessions included meetings on:

- 1) February 10, 2025, where the City Council reviewed key program elements to ensure they were in the right place (see February 10, 2025, City Council input in Attachment 7); and
- 2) March 10, 2025, where the City Council provided input on site furnishings, paving design/materials, special elements, lighting, the planting palette, and design options for the water feature (see March 10, 2025, City Council input in Attachment 6); and
- 3) May 12, 2025, where the City Council reviewed updated designs for the pavilion/stage and water feature based on feedback received during the March 10 City Council Study Session (see March 12, 2025, City Council input in Attachment 5).

This process is culminating in tonight's discussion where the City Council will review the final design for Phase 1 and consider approving the final design either as is or with changes; and consider whether to proceed with constructing improvements to Harrington Park only (Phase 1A). Refer to Resolutions in Attachments 1 and 2 of this report.

PROPOSED FINAL DESIGN FOR HARRINGTON PARK (PHASE 1A) AND THE 700 BLOCK OF LAUREL STREET (PHASE 1B):

See Exhibit A of Attachment 1, representing the Final Design for Phase 1.

Phase 1A – Harrington Park

Frank D. Harrington Park (Harrington Park) is approximately 7,250 square feet and located near the center of the 700 block of Laurel Street. The park currently includes memorial benches, picnic and chess tables, landscaped areas, mature shade trees, a performance stage, a shade structure, the Balancing Act a.k.a. “Blue Man” sculpture, and a series of memorial bricks/pavers. It currently serves as both a respite for shoppers as well as a flexible event space for nearby activities (including weekly Farmers’ Markets, Harringtunes events, and the Art and Wine Faire). During these City-sponsored events, bands and other live entertainments often perform at the performance stage at Harrington Park.

Figure 2. Bird’s Eye View of Harrington Park, the New Pavilion, and New Water Feature



Feedback from the public and the City Council identified a desire for shade, restrooms, drinking fountains, and public seating within Harrington Park. The proposed improvements to Harrington Park include:

- New paving layout and design (existing memorial bricks/pavers will be retained but relocated in the overall new paving design layout)
- New trees and landscaping
- New public seating arrangement
- New multi-purpose building with restrooms, storage, and utility room

- New staging area/multi-purpose curb zone next to the alley

The Multi-Purpose Building

The new 710 square-foot multi-purpose building would be located along the northwestern border of the park (abutting 753 Laurel Street). This multi-purpose building is portrayed in Figure 2 below and would include two restrooms with one fully-accessible ADA restroom (including a universal changing station suitable for persons of all ages), a standard restroom, sink facilities, a plumbing/water pump room for a proposed water feature/fountain in the 700 Block (Phase 1B), and an overflow storage space for use by the City’s Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments. A drinking fountain with a bottle-filling station, and additional handwash station are featured just outside the restrooms. A ten-foot-tall canopy, or shade structure, to complement the building and provide shade is also included in the conceptual design. The exterior façade would include a mix of concrete and accent porcelain tiles.

Figure 3. Proposed Design for Harrington Park Multi-Purpose Building



The Planting Plan

Roughly 16 existing trees (including small trees) would be removed and replaced with five Engelmann Oak trees and four Shreve Oak trees (see Figure 4 below). Note: Some existing trees and benches within Harrington Park currently include dedication and/or memorial plaques. Parks and Recreation staff are reaching out to the community members

and families that dedicated these plaques and memorials to determine how to proceed. However, the existing memorial brick pavers will be relocated within the new design of Harrington Park.

Figure 4. Planting Plan - Harrington Park

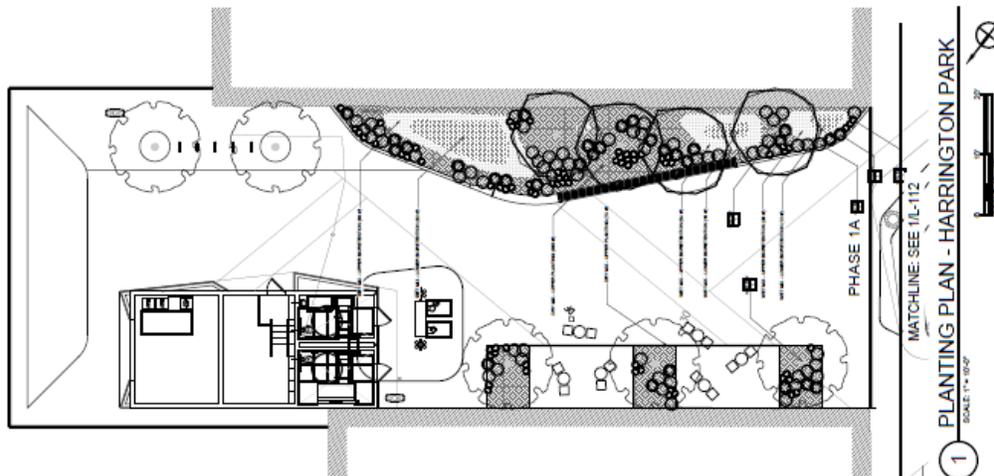
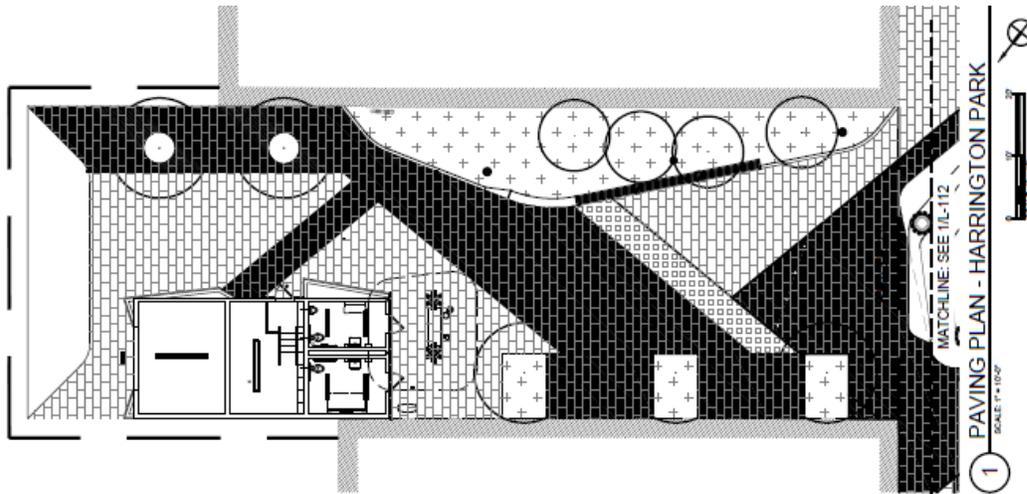


Figure 5. Paving Plan – Harrington Park



The paving is a diagonally banded paver design using a blend of colors. The pavers are colored concrete and range in size from 12" x 24" to 4" x 12", depending on the color blend. There will also be permeable pavers that match the color and texture.

The lighting plan includes a mix of contemporary-style light posts, underlighting beneath seating areas, and catenary (string/market) lights near the central portions of Harrington Park.

Other

Blue Man Sculpture

- Staff seeks the Council's direction on the temporary placement of the Blue Man sculpture. The final design for the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1B) proposes the Blue Man within the entrance of the 700 block of Laurel Street (near 717 Laurel). It is undetermined at this time when Phase 1B will be completed. In the interim, staff recommends that the Blue Man be temporarily placed somewhere within the 700 block of Laurel Street until Phase 1B is completed.

Phase 1B – 700 Block of Laurel Street

Consistent with the vision outlined in the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*, the 700 block of Laurel Street will serve as a pedestrian promenade lined with trees and raingardens. The plant palette will include a mix of native plants as well as Golden Rain Trees and Crepe myrtles. The raingardens will help capture and filter runoff. The vacated street section currently running through the 700 block of Laurel Street will be filled in and raised to the height of the existing shops and sidewalks, creating a seamless experience for visitors. Smaller entry plazas will be added at either end of the 700 block of Laurel Street, near where the promenade intersects Cherry and Olive Streets. These small plaza areas will include bicycle racks for visitors. A mix of benches and moveable seating opportunities are integrated into the design.

Figure 6. Bird's Eye View of the 700 Block of Laurel Street



The winding (i.e. “sway”) pedestrian promenade running through the middle of the 700 block of Laurel Street is designed to double as an emergency access path for responder vehicles, with a minimum twenty-foot clearance running throughout. Retractable bollards will be installed at either end of the promenade (at the Cherry Street and Olive Street intersections) to allow for access in emergency situations or to accommodate larger City-sponsored events.

The design includes space that could accommodate a variety of special or more unique elements, such as an oversized chess board and a digital wayfinding kiosk. These spaces are located near 784 and 786 Laurel Street and space for a digital kiosk could be located near the intersection of Laurel and Cherry Streets. As part of the final design, the Blue Man sculpture is planned to be relocated along the northern edge of the promenade, near 717 Laurel (as noted above, staff recommends that the Blue Man be temporarily placed somewhere within the 700 block of Laurel Street until Phase 1B is completed).

The lighting plan includes a mix of contemporary-style light posts, illuminated bollards, underlighting beneath benches, and catenary (string/market) lights near the central portions of the 700 block of Laurel.

The proposed designs for the pavilion and water feature were derived from the City Council adopted *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* with additional input from the City Council received on March 10 and May 12, 2025.

Pavilion

The pavilion would rise to 16 feet in height at the low point and up to 22 feet tall at the high point. The pavilion contemplates a raised stage, 18-inches tall, that could be used to support a wide variety of activities and programs. The stage is designed to face three directions and host small-to-medium sized events. The current design includes a sloping path to allow accessibility to the stage.

Direct and indirect lighting fixtures and speakers could be integrated into the columns. The stage could also include mounting points for artists and other performers to set up their audio equipment in support of City events.

The current conceptual design of the pavilion is positioned along Laurel Street to allow for – at its closest point – a twenty-one-foot pathway for emergency vehicle access. Meanwhile, a minimum of 20-foot area serves as the main promenade along the full span of the 700 block of Laurel Street.

Water Feature

The refined design of the water feature reflects changes based on the City Council input received during its May 12, 2025 Study Session to address concerns about safety. The proposed stone sculpture is proposed to reach a height of approximately 10 to 12 feet.

Figure 7. Redesign of Water Feature, Based on City Council Comments of May 12, 2025



PROCEEDING WITH IMPROVEMENTS FOR HARRINGTON PARK (PHASE 1A) ONLY:

Should the City Council direct staff to proceed with constructing improvements for Harrington Park (Phase 1A), staff will return to City Council on August 11, 2025, for approval of final construction drawings, or PS&E, and direct staff to advertise the project for bid. Staff anticipate returning to the City Council on October 27, 2025, with a recommendation to award the contract to a qualified general contractor. Final construction costs from the selected contractor will also be available at that time. The total construction period is currently estimated to take nine months.

OTHER DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY COUNCIL:

Potential Public Art Murals at Harrington Park and Multi-Purpose Building

The *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan* identifies Harrington Park as an opportunity site for public art murals. There are two building facades (one against 753 Laurel and the other against 765 Laurel) which face into Harrington Park and have the potential to host new public art pieces. Staff seek direction from the City Council as to whether murals may be desired on these façades.

There is also a roll-up door at the rear of the multi-purpose building (serving as access to the City storage room) that could be painted over with public art as a means of activating the space along the alley.

Should a mural or murals be desired, staff request feedback on potential next steps including engaging with the property owners, identifying an artist, and establishing a budget. City staff could lead an effort to identify and select an artist, or the City could complete an open selection process for a mural artist in which a request for proposals is published and the Public Art Subcommittee and Parks, Recreation, and Culture Commission make a recommendation for approval by the City Council. Attachment 9 outlines the potential timeline for either process, with the staff-led effort estimated to take five to six months and the open selection process estimated to take approximately eight to nine months. Although no funds are currently set aside for murals at Harrington Park, the City Council could offer direction as to whether a portion of the CIP funds in C2215 might be reallocated for public art purposes.

Consistent with the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*, themes for the mural(s) could include cultural or ecological influences on San Carlos, or the community's centennial. Should murals be desired, staff recommend a single artist (or single team of artists) be selected to complete the work at Harrington Park.

NEXT STEPS:

Should the City Council approve the final design for Phase 1 (both 1A and 1B), as presented or with changes; and should the Council further direct staff to proceed with PS&E for Phase 1A, staff will work with the consultant team to bring Phase 1A drawings to 100% completion (i.e. develop construction drawings) and return to the City Council at their regular meeting of August 11, 2025. At the August 11, 2025, staff will request that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving Plans and Specifications and direct staff to advertise to bid for Phase 1A, Harrington Park.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternatives available to the City Council include:

1. Adopt a Resolution approving the final design for Harrington Park and the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1 Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Implementation) and adopt a Resolution directing staff to proceed with the PS&E for Phase 1A Renovation of Harrington Park; or
2. Do not adopt the two proposed Resolutions; or
3. Provide staff with alternate direction.

Respectfully submitted by:

Al Savay, Community Development Director

Approved for submission by:



Jeff Maltbie, City Manager

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Resolution - Final Design for Harrington Park and the 700 Block of Laurel Street (Phase 1 Downtown Streetscape Implementation)
Exhibit A – Final Design Renderings and Graphics
2. Resolution - Plans, Specifications, and Estimate for Phase 1A Harrington Park
Exhibit A – Map of Phase 1A Construction Project Boundary
3. Construction Cost Estimates for Phase 1A
4. Construction Cost Estimates for Phase 1B
5. City Council Input from Third Schematic Design Meeting of May 12, 2025
6. City Council Input from Second Schematic Design Meeting of March 10, 2025
7. City Council Input from First Schematic Design Meeting of February 10, 2025
8. Downtown Streetscape Master Plan, Adopted April 28, 2025
9. Potential Implementation Timeline for Harrington Park Murals