



July 12, 2005

Civic Center Planning and Design Principles

Preliminary Draft Goals and Principles

The following summary incorporates the discussion in a set of preliminary planning and design goals principles to be used by the consulting team and Civic Center Subcommittee in preparing a master plan for the area. The preliminary draft goals and principles will be expanded and refined in the master planning process.

On February 22, 2005, the Visalia City Council held a study session to discuss desired features for a new civic center complex to be located in the East Downtown. The study session discussion covered a wide range of topics including image and design, land use, open space, and potential partners. On May 2, 2005, the City Council reviewed and commented on the principles. The following summary includes City Council's May 2 comments in **bold**.

Image and Design

Goal: To create a district and buildings reflecting Visalia's architectural and cultural heritage and aspirations to create an exciting urban place in the Southern San Joaquin Valley.

- Principle 1: The civic center should contribute to downtown's image as an urban center with multi-story buildings.
- Principle 2: Oak Street should become civic street of three to five stories.
- Principle 3: The design of the civic center should reflect Visalia's **variety of** architectural traditions while establishing a precedent for design quality.
- **Principle 4: The design should result in a pedestrian friendly civic center district.**
- **Principle 5: The civic center plan should have a clear circulation system.**

Land Use

Goal: To include a mix of uses which result in an active civic **hub** for the **greater downtown and** entire community.

- Principle 1: Land uses should reinforce the civic center as an important focal point for Visalia.
- Principle 2: The civic center should be part of a mixed-use urban district with public and cultural facilities, commercial office, retail services, residential and park uses.
- Principle 3: The civic center district uses should be synergistic, providing around-the-clock activity.
- Principle 4: Parking should be included in structures and hidden from view.
- **Principle 5: The civic center master plan should create strong visual and physical connections to Downtown, East Downtown and neighborhoods.**

Open Space

Goal: To develop a significant civic open space that is a destination and central gathering place for Visalia.

- Principle 1: The civic center should include a significant central park feature.
- Principle 2: Mill Creek should be part of a trail system that links the civic center to downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Principle 3: There should be a variety of open spaces that are connected, shaped and activated by civic and private development.
- **Principle 4: The open space system should include an art in public spaces program and provide a civic setting for future cultural facilities.**

Potential Partners

Goal: To create opportunities for other public agencies and private sector partners to benefit from co-locating in the civic center district.

- Principle 1: The master plan should anticipate including other interested public agencies in separate buildings or as tenants.
- Principle 2: Private sector investment should be anticipated as an integral part of the civic center district.
- Principle 3: Shared facilities, such as parking and infrastructure, should be featured in the civic center master plan.