

August 13, 2019

TO: City Council  
FR: Jeff Carlson & Pat Hood  
RE: Park Plaza Project

Rock Cove Design was honored to be chosen as the designers for Stevenson's Park Plaza project in early 2015. Our task was to design 3 conceptual community plaza designs varying in scope to be considered by the public for revitalizing the Courthouse lawn area. We worked with a design committee including representatives from the City, County, SBA, Chamber, and business community (members included Scott Anderson, Casey Roeder, Nick Hogan, Bonne Heemeier, John Mobley, & Joe Schlick). As the project proceeded, we met with the committee regularly during each stage of the design process. Additional public outreach was also an important part of the process, including both public and private meetings with interested citizens. Additionally, a city-wide survey was conducted in which the participants weighed in on various aspects of the 3 designs.

Once the 3 designs were completed and presented to the committee, the "Look to the Future" design was unanimously preferred. In both our public outreach as well as in the survey, by far the greatest support was for that same plan. While there were similarities in all three plans (i.e. restrooms nestled into the hillside with a public area above, a large seating area next to El Rio, water features, public art), the differences were rather bold: in layout, scope and potential cost with an effort made to create clear choices to be considered by all.

Two of the designs included a central "amphitheater". The chosen design was the grandest in scope - and the most ambitious - creating ADA access to the entire site from street level to the expanded courthouse patio. That access was achieved by siting the performance stage area to the west side of the plaza creating a buffered performance area. Protection from noise and other distractions is the result of elevation change and foliage, and it provides ample seating for performances. This positioning also allows for more varied activities to occur in other parts of the plaza while events are happening.

Moving large elements in the design would require significant re-design time and expense. Furthermore, the support already garnered for the project would need to be acquired once again. The design is strong as it is; would changing it at this point in the process be the right thing to do and would it be worth it? We don't believe so.

Thank you.

Enc: Plan description and plan view docs