

Hillview Community Center Project Task Force Insights, Themes, and Considerations

Notes from November 7, 2017 Task Force Meeting

Upon reflecting on the mission of the Hillview Community Center Project Task Force (TF), *to hold public meetings to gather community input and provide a recommendation on the interior space allocation and exterior design and layout of the Hillview Community Center*, TF members interpreted their true mission to be to serve as community representatives. As community representatives, their goal is to bring Los Altos to the architects, Noll & Tam, to help characterize the essence of the Los Altos community and help design a community center that will be relevant and valued by all. Through thoughtful discussion to foster creative thinking, the TF worked together to establish an alignment of their insights, themes, and considerations. Each member was given an opportunity to share their views and ideas. From this discussion, a few key themes emerged.

After nearly six months in existence, the TF has evolved from a fledgling committee to a strong, vocal group that is truly representative of the community it serves. TF members have been immersed in learning about community centers and their special role in the community. They have listened to staff, the public, and design experts. They have visited neighboring community and senior centers searching for inspiration. They are the area's experts on the Hillview Community Center Project. TF members are proud of the work they have done thus far and some may wish to remain engaged in the process. Some may want to serve as stewards of the design and continue to listen to the community during the 2-year development and construction cycle.

The key to a successful process will require input from a variety of sources- the TF, public comments, focused and targeted outreach and engagement, community center users and non-users, staff, and Noll & Tam. It is essential to be respectful of the TF process and the input from the community. Although the TF lifespan does not perfectly align with the conceptual phase of the design process, the TF believes the community center will be a success if City Council and the design team continue to source feedback from the community and allow Los Altans the chance to speak and be heard. The upside is in the details- during the design development we can define activities and fill in the blanks. Explaining the design process to the public and creating a design development group to serve as stewards of the design can help usher the TF and community preferences throughout the process and ensure the vision remains steadfast.

The 30,000-foot view of the new community center is a warm, welcoming, and inviting space. A community center that is aspirational, inclusive, flexible, multi-generational and that honors diversity will demonstrate a commitment to the future. Instead of designing the community center in a vacuum, it is important to consider the surrounding facilities and adjacencies and how they all interact on the civic center campus. Allowing users to help develop and define the space will ensure a building that is well-used and valued by the community. The community center should not be designed solely with program users in mind however, the TF desires a space that is welcoming to all- a place where anyone can come to have a cup of coffee, roam the inviting hallways and natural paths, sit quietly to reflect, meet old friends and make new ones, and just enjoy the feeling of community that emanates from the building.

Work with seniors, youth, teens, dancers, crafters, athletes, and yogis to design spaces that are inclusive, yet exclusive. Leveraging various groups will create spaces and features that are customized, unique, and defined, and will generate a sense of ownership, pride, and belonging among community members. Perhaps, call on current users to contribute interior design ideas and rely on the broader community to offer exterior preferences. It is impossible to satisfy every person's wants and needs, but the TF strives to strike a balance. Relying on diverse perspectives will create a catalytic site of community engagement with avenues and walkways for surprise.

The new community center should embody Los Altos- it should be warm, inviting, eclectic, inventive, diverse, aspirational, and lasting- it should be "the place where Silicon Valley lives."

INSIGHTS, THEMES & CONSIDERATIONS

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INSIGHTS

- Motto – Where Silicon Valley lives – happy, warm, inviting, welcoming
- Lesson learned – Brown Act
- Welcoming building with unprogrammed space for persons who show-up, taking a walk, coffee, study
- Mindful of connection to the library – noble library
- Process will be successful in end if there is use of comments from the community
- Aspirational – building for future, flagship for the community

THEMES

Space is Space:

- Space is limited; it's impossible to meet all demands and needs. Use of space should be flexible, multi-generational and also contain areas where space is personal and dedicated. Hence the balance of flexible and dedicated use of space is key.
- Use of space should maintain relevance as times and demands change. It should be built for current and future programming
- Space should provide for multi-generational gathering places and for placemaking
- Interior space is increased when coupled with outdoor space
- Space should create avenues and walkways for surprise
- Physical structure should demonstrate sustainability and commitment to future; honor diversity, eclectic in character
- Consider adjacencies; building is not built in isolation; consider LAYC, History Museum, Library

CONSIDERATIONS

- After the Task Force, there is a role for a Design Development team reporting to the City Manager to include community participants who can provide ideas and suggestions for program users in the design of interior space and the broader community for exterior elements. Design Development team participants can be from:
 - Staff and architect team
 - Task Force
 - City Commissions
 - Persons invited to participate for specific design expertise
- Convene community meetings to review building and design activities and provide community input during the design development and construction phases i.e. exterior and interior design, neighborhood impact
- Upside is in the details – Design Development; define activities; fill-in the blanks; listen to the comments from the community/constituents' speech to be successful