

Chair
Ken Miyagishima

Vice Chair
Kasandra Gandara

Board Members
Tessa Abeyta-Stuve
Becki Graham
Johana Bencomo
Becky Corran
Yvonne Flores

TIDD BOARD AGENDA

Monday, January 24, 2022 at 1:00 PM



City of Las Cruces®

**CITY HALL
P.O. BOX 20000
LAS CRUCES, NM 88004**

**700 N. Main St.
PHONE (575) 541-2067**

City Council Chambers

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City of Las Cruces®

MINUTES

Tax Increment Development District Board Meeting

Monday, October 25, 2021 @ 1:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall

PRESENT: Mayor Ken Miyagishima, Councilor Kasandra Gandara, Councilor Yvonne Flores, Councilor Tessa Abeyta-Stuve, and Councilor Johana Bencomo

ABSENT: Councilor Gabe Vasquez and Councilor Gill Sorg

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ACTION ITEMS

2.1 Approval of Minutes from July 26, 2021.

Councilor Tessa Abeyta-Stuve moved, seconded by Councilor Johana Bencomo, to accept the minutes as presented.

RESULT:	Carried
MOVER:	Councilor Tessa Abeyta-Stuve
SECONDER:	Councilor Johana Bencomo
AYES:	Mayor Ken Miyagishima, Councilor Kasandra Gandara, Councilor Tessa Abeyta-Stuve, and Councilor Johana Bencomo
ABSENT:	Councilor Gabe Vasquez, Councilor Gill Sorg, and Councilor Yvonne Flores

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1 Financial Update.

Chris Faivre, Destination Downtown Business Development Administrator, gave an overhead presentation.

3.2 Current Projects Update.

Chris Faivre, Destination Downtown Business Development Administrator, continued the overhead presentation.

3.3 Plaza Shade Structure.

Chris Faivre, Destination Downtown Business Development Administrator, continued the overhead presentation.

Chair Miyagishima said let me just remind Council that, as you recall, Sen. Mary Kay Papen had gotten a \$1 million for the parking garage and then she had suggested, after she left office, that if Sen. Carrie Hamblen would be

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willing to reauthorize that million for the shade structure, which I did reach out to her and she did agree to do that. I think staff will be bringing forward a resolution to give to Larry, perhaps, or even the Senator. I want to say it was at least four years ago, if not longer, staff presented to City Council a different set of plans for shade, a little bit less costly and a little bit easier to maneuver than these--because these are permanent. The other ones were not quite as permanent. I was just curious if you had access to those and if that was even a possibility to bring forward, so that Council can see those and they can see what was looked upon, say, six years ago versus now.

Chris Faivre said I did check in on that and I wasn't able to track down any of the previous designs. I did ask and all I really was able to locate was information regarding the criteria that was given to the consultants.

Board Member Gandara said I think what's most important is Chris and staff are asking for direction moving forward with the options that were given. I want to be clear that I think it's important to involve our Arts and Cultural District. I think that was one of the sticking points from their perspective. They didn't feel as involved as they felt they should. Whatever we pick, I would love to see it look like an art installation of some sort. I've always been in huge support of the solar panel option. I've also mentioned to you in our monthly meetings that I like the way the City of Albuquerque has put their shade structure. It's not consistently covered overall, but there's some elements that look like art, but they're also spread out, so that if people want shade they can get to that specific spot with chairs and such. As far as going back to the three ideas... For me, I think it's important to bring back the consultants. They were, actually, very well suited to assist us moving forward. I don't recall the name of the consultants, but they had a pretty sophisticated way of entertaining ideas and greeting, if you will, or taking surveys on the spot. I think it would be would be important. I'm sorry that I don't see anybody from the ACD here presently, but I think whatever we do, again, the ACD should be of a part of that conversation.

Board Member Bencomo said I appreciate you lifting up some of the next steps that need to happen. I feel like last time we were in this meeting we did have several organizations, advocates, people who are directly impacted, that help the Plaza and Downtown flourish, raise some concerns about this idea of shade and people feeling like this was going to have a huge impact on some of the holiday things you mentioned. I take that very seriously, because I love the Plaza. We were just at an event a couple days ago, very well attended and really incredible. It's such a great place and I would hate to do something that could impact that. I'm still very uncomfortable with the price tag for shade. \$1.3 million, to me, is very high for shade. The last time we had this conversation part of what I had recommended was that we wait out this surge in cost prices. Public Works said "We don't expect them to go down any time soon", but maybe in six months or a year? We've lived in a sunny place this whole time--one more year of sunshine won't hurt anybody. This is a really big price tag on shade and I think we should wait one more year. I would certainly like to hear more input from some of these organizations that you've put on here, Chris. I think that's really important. How old is this data from the public?

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Chris Faivre said it was definitely pre-Covid. I feel like it was early 2019 that that was conducted. Public Works might have an exact date. That's just what I was able to pull from the files.

Board Member Bencomo said 2019 is not too bad. It's not too old. I know that from what I've heard from Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem is that a lot of people have talked about this (to them at least, right?) and I think that's also an important consideration to make. Can you go back to the picture of the final potential recommendations? What I worry about with this is that when you have an event at the Plaza where there are speakers at the front and then four groups of people congregating in four different areas, as opposed to in the middle and center. Again, my two biggest considerations are price tag and have we really worked enough with organizations that do the most on the Plaza to be able to make a final decision?

Chair Miyagishima said former Councilor Greg Smith, representing the Arts Council, asked if, much like what you said, these other organizations can help design. They want shade. They understand that they need it. I was able to Google an old article dated January 2nd, 2018 where it says "City Funds Shade Structure, Kiosk for Plaza, and Welcome Signs for Interstate." But we really haven't. At that time, the cost was \$750,000 and one of the Councilors was concerned because we were told it wasn't quite permanent and you could take off different portions. They were supposed to give me a resolution or letter of support from those three organizations saying "We need shade." It was promised when we first built this Plaza and every year we found some reason not to fund it. We've got a State Senator who's willing to reauthorize the amount and if we turn her down---I just don't think that's the smart thing to do. It's going to be used one way or the other.

Commissioner Shannon Reynolds said I'm for shade. Looking at the three plans that you have--I'm not particularly fond of any of them. That's just my position. As far as the cost goes, I do agree that if we have the money and we have a plan that we can all live with, we should probably think seriously about trying to fund something.

Chair Miyagishima said I agree. I'm really not fond of these three either and that's why I circle back to the other one.

Board Member Flores said I do recall being at the charrette when it was presented by the architects. I don't know if it was January 2018, but it was probably 2018 that we saw the presentation, at any rate. Everybody participated. It was literally standing-room-only. There were so many people from the Community there. They had this electronic thing where you could vote. Chris, you just reported that the three that we finalized--the one that the Council liked was not the one that the public liked. Am I correct in understanding that?

Chris Faivre said the number one from the public was the retractive canvas, but that has its issues because of the weather around here. If you look you can see the difference between the ones on the Plaza. This would have canvas that stretched out across cables that went across, but that, obviously, has

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issues with the cables. The translucent one was the second most popular, based on the data I had, and that would be more off to the sides of the Plaza. Then the decorative metal one was the one that had the lowest amount of public support. What we could do is take all this data and all the input and get back with the consultants and see if they have some other options that take into consideration some of the art style that we're looking, maybe it's not complete shade on the Plaza, and just see if they can come up with something. Maybe there's a more affordable option we can have them look at, as well.

Board Member Flores said two concerns I have: number one, the public who attended what happens to how they selected their preferable design? As a matter of practice, why have these charrettes and then not follow the lead of what the people voted on? Those three designs we saw today--one is too expensive, one doesn't really give a lot of shade, and, as Councilor Bencomo pointed out, one of the designs actually separates people. We should go back to the drawing board, but I definitely agree with the Mayor that this is money that has been allocated and it looks like Sen. Hamblen is willing to pick up the ball to assure that that funding comes to the City. Is there any projection or any change in the estimated cost from the original? Things change a lot from 2018 or 2019.

Chris Faivre said all these prices on here I did adjust for the current prices. This final one here, the decorative metal, was actually a little under \$1 million when they presented to you last August. Working with Public Works and going with a 30% cost estimate-- that's where the \$1.3 million comes from.

Board Member Flores said so that's been adjusted. My question remains: what do we do with public input? It's true we're the final determinants here, but it seems to me that that's a big factor. Do you have the design that the public voted for, the number one design?

Chris Faivre said the one that ranks the highest was the retractable canvas option. In order for something like this to work, you probably need to add extra pillars in the middle and that was something that was one of the do-not-do's that we gave to the consultants.. This option here would, if you went with the cabling, the cabling would be across the Plaza and that would interfere with the Christmas Tree and Chile Drop.

Commissioner Shannon Reynolds asked is it possible to make the canvas disconnect-able, so that, when we want to retract it, we disconnect it from the west side and retract it back to the east side, thereby allowing us to continue with the Chile Drop and the Christmas Tree?

Chris Faivre said that's something we could certainly ask the consultants. I don't know if that was asked of them at the time or if that's possible. Are you basically suggesting that the cabling as well as the canvas all retract, so that when it's not in use there's nothing over the Plaza? We could certainly see if that's an option. I don't know if it is or not, but it can't hurt to ask.

Commissioner Shannon Reynolds said I would think it wouldn't add a lot to the expense of what we were looking at and would yet allow us to roll it up when

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it's gonna be windy or other events and pull it out when we want it. The other option would be to make the poles retractable, bring it all down, and then cover it so the posts are below the surface, just drop it into the ground, throw a plate over it to make it a normal surface, and then push it back up. That hasn't even been looked at yet. I would think this is a pretty good option for what we're looking at--retractable, disconnect, put the cables away along with the canvas--that's my recommendation.

Chair Miyagishima said okay, so, you're going to need a little bit of a direction from us, Chris, and I think the majority would like to move forward. We need to get this resolution from the Senator. It didn't seem like the Council was too enthusiastic with these options and whether or not we want to go back to look at something else-- it might be more of the suggestion the Commissioner had, see if that's even viable, and, if not, then, perhaps, look at something different. Is that what I'm hearing? This is what happened in 2018. It never really got approved back then. There was a discussion and then certain Council Members didn't want it because it was going to cover the whole amount. We could have bought half or the 3/4ths. I suggested then that we buy all of it and then put up only what we need. This really isn't a very difficult thing to figure out here. I think what we'll do is, if it's okay with you, we'll reach out to these three: Downtown Partnership, the Arts and Cultural District and the Art Council wanted to be a part of it, too? Let's put together an Ad Hoc Committee and let them come together. If you all want to appoint someone to this, we'll do that. They'll come up with some designs that might be beneficial to some of the events we have (whether it's the Chile Drop, whether it's the Christmas Tree) and just see what other options are out there. Perhaps we could find something a little bit cheaper. We'll just do that, then. I think we're going to move forward, Chris, but maybe not with this particular set. If you could find out whether it's retractable or not. I just took it for granted that that had already been looked into, but, if you haven't, that would be good.

4. ADJOURNMENT

4.1

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Councilor Johana Bencomo moved, seconded by Councilor Yvonne Flores, to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	Carried
MOVER:	Councilor Johana Bencomo
SECONDER:	Councilor Yvonne Flores
AYES:	Mayor Ken Miyagishima, Councilor Kasandra Gandara, Councilor Yvonne Flores, Councilor Tessa Abeyta-Stuve, and Councilor Johana Bencomo
ABSENT:	Councilor Gabe Vasquez and Councilor Gill Sorg