



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Mayor and Council Office

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** January 31, 2011

**TO:** Jim Armstrong, City Administrator

**FROM:** Mayor Helene Schneider  
Councilmember Harwood "Bendy" White

**SUBJECT:** Request to suspend and modify the State Street bench relocation project

Pursuant to Council Resolution 05-073 regarding the Conduct of City Council Meetings, we request that an item be placed on a Santa Barbara City Council Agenda as soon as possible regarding the current bench relocation project on the 800 and 900 blocks of State Street. Due to the costs associated with the design, planning and permit review process of this project, we are also requesting that this process be placed on hold until the Council holds this public hearing.

- Summary of information to be presented:

We request that Redevelopment Agency staff provide a cost breakdown of the \$50,000 allocated from RDA funds for this current project, including design contract, permit and processing costs, the public hearing at the Historic Landmarks Commission and the final construction cost. We also request information on the cost savings associated with simply removing most or all of the benches in the area for a period of time.

- Statement of Specific Action:

The specific action to be taken by the City Council at this meeting will be to consider suspending and/or modifying the current bench relocation project on the 800 and 900 blocks of State Street. The rationale for this action is due to the following:

- A high percentage of the \$50,000 cost towards this project is for design and permitting, not construction;
- While we agree with the intent behind this project, which is to discourage panhandling, there is no data or evidence to show that relocating benches will have this desired effect, nor is there any funding or plan to create such data and monitor whether the program will be successful outside of receiving anecdotal reports;
- The recent and unexpected elimination of matching funds from the Downtown Organization to provide additional restorative police presence along State Street requires the City Council to re-examine how to more effectively enforce against panhandling and increase coordination of efforts between the police department, local businesses and homeless outreach services providers.

• Statement of the Reasons Why it is Appropriate and Within the Jurisdiction of the Council to Consider this Subject Matter and to Take the Requested Action:

A Council discussion of this subject is appropriate and within the jurisdiction of the City Council as we are the funding authority for this project in our role as the Redevelopment Agency Board.

cc: Mayor and Council  
City Attorney  
Community Development Director  
Redevelopment Agency Program Manager