



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 31, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Planning Division, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Concept Review Of Santa Barbara Bowl Box Office Plaza Project
And Abandonment Of Lowena Drive

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council review the proposed Santa Barbara Bowl Box Office Plaza Project and provide comments specific to the proposed abandonment of a portion of Lowena Drive.

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of the hearing is to review the Santa Barbara Bowl Box Office Plaza Project improvements and discuss the related request from the applicant to abandon a portion of Lowena Drive. Given the importance of the abandonment to the overall Santa Barbara Box Office Plaza project and the extent of the information required for the abandonment application, staff suggested that Council have an opportunity to review the abandonment and the proposed development on a conceptual level prior to the applicant submitting a formal application. At this point in the process, it would be important to know if there are any objections to the abandonment (see Attachment 1 – Applicant Letter).

Constructed in 1936, the Santa Barbara Bowl is the largest outdoor amphitheater in Santa Barbara County with seating for approximately 4600 patrons. About 30 shows are produced each year with additional use by non-profit organizations. The Santa Barbara Bowl facilities are located on three parcels as shown below and on Attachment 2.

APN	Address	Acreage	Owner
029-110-023	1126 N. Milpas St.	15.16 acres	Santa Barbara County
029-202-001	1122 N. Milpas St.	1.66 acres	Santa Barbara County
029-201-004	1130 N. Milpas St.	0.66 acres	Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation

The majority of the Santa Barbara Bowl is located on County-owned property within the City of Santa Barbara. The County-owned parcels are leased to the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation, the organization that manages the facility. In 2005, the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation acquired the adjacent parcel located at 1130 N. Milpas Street.

DISCUSSION:

Public or quasi-public projects that are located on County-owned land within the City limits are not required to obtain City approvals, although the City often provides courtesy review of these proposed projects. Since 1993, improvements to the Santa Barbara Bowl facilities have been developed under a Master Plan approved by the County. Completed and pending improvements on County-owned parcels are described below.

Completed improvements on County-owned parcels

1. *Overlook Plaza*. Construction of new Overlook Plaza. Replacement of aging spotlight platform.
2. *Bowl Seating*. Replacement of bench seating with new fixed seating.
3. *Stage Area*. Reconstruction of stage and basement. Expansion of public restrooms. Concession upgrades. New performer's dressing rooms. Relocation and expansion of storm drain system. Expansion of parking area.
4. *McCaw Terrace and Concession Plaza*. Construction of lounge and terrace deck on upper level and beverage concession windows on lower level.
5. *Redding Gate and Glen*. Replacement of existing chain link fence with new Redding Gate. Renovation of the hardscape and landscape. New oak tree shaded pathway to amphitheater.

Pending improvements on County-owned parcels

1. New public restrooms at Overlook Plaza. Upgrade existing fire access road.
2. New stone walls, iron gate with Fire Department Knox Box, and pedestrian gate at terminus of Lowena Drive (adjacent to Redding Gate.) Other improvements on Lowena Drive are to be determined.
3. Restripe parking lot to increase passenger vehicle parking from 92 to 99 spaces with four handicapped spaces and five employee spaces. Increase large vehicle parking from three (3) spaces to six (6) tour buses spaces and four (4) semi-trailer truck spaces. New valet bicycle parking.
4. New stone retaining wall and oak trees on east hillside.
5. Remodel existing 1,400 sq. ft. ticket office (Dreier Building) into a security office and conference room.

Box Office Plaza Project requiring City Approval

The Santa Barbara Bowl Box Office Plaza Project would be located on the 1130 N. Milpas Street parcel owned by the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation; therefore, City approvals are required (see Attachment 3 – Proposed Site Plan).

In 2005, an existing residence, lath house and 2,500 square feet of greenhouses were demolished on the site. In 2006, the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation was granted a Conditional Use Permit to allow temporary placement of two storage containers and six employee parking spaces on the parcel. As part of the current proposal, this permit would be withdrawn and all existing structures onsite would be removed.

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide improved vehicular circulation and pedestrian access for concert patrons. Currently both vehicular and pedestrian access is provided along Lowena Drive. The proposed project includes:

1. New 2,210 square foot (net) administration building with box office services and public restrooms.
2. New pedestrian entrance plaza, pathway and security check areas. New landscaping with most existing oak trees to remain.
3. Removal of a portion of the stone wall along Milpas Street and installation of new stone walls.
4. Eight new bicycle parking spaces.
5. New shuttle bus stop to provide patrons with access to the upper Concession Plaza.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency: The subject parcel is split zoned R-3 (Limited Multiple-Family Residence)/E-1 (One-Family Residence). The proposed project would require a new Conditional Use Permit to allow a quasi-public facility to operate in a residential zone. Modification approvals to allow a new four foot high retaining wall within the front setback on Milpas Street and a 42" wrought iron railing on top of the existing stone wall within the setback along the upper portion of Lowena Drive would also be required. The new 2,210 square foot administration building would not result in the need for additional parking spaces because the required parking for the Santa Barbara Bowl is based on the number of amphitheater seats, not square footage of structures. Also, no new nonresidential square footage is requested because the proposed administration building has less square footage than the greenhouses that were demolished in 2005. Although a complete analysis of the proposed project has not yet been completed, with the approval of the Modifications stated above the project would appear to meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

General Plan Consistency: The subject site is located in the Lower Riviera neighborhood and, unlike the County-owned parcels that have a Land Use designation of Institutional and Related Uses, the subject parcel has a General Plan designation of Residential, three units per acre. The proposed project would provide improved vehicular and pedestrian access to the Santa Barbara Bowl, which is recognized as significant land use in the neighborhood. Initial analysis indicates that the proposed project could be found consistent with the policies of the City's General Plan.

Abandonment Request: An important part of the proposed project is the abandonment of a portion of Lowena Drive. Currently, Lowena Drive is a circular road that loops through the Santa Barbara Bowl facility. The northern portion of the road is used by the residents of Lowena Drive and would remain as is. The southern portion has the appearance of being part of the Santa Barbara Bowl parking lot, is closed off during events, and is rarely used by residents of Lowena Drive. This portion would be subject to the abandonment (see Attachment 4 – Abandonment Exhibit).

The City's easements for Lowena Drive, and many other streets, were set forth in City Resolution No. 2737, adopted by Council on February 24, 1955. At that time, the City accepted the responsibility to maintain the roadway already known as Lowena Drive, which was created as a private road. This was done in conjunction with many other existing poorly maintained private roads that were being used by the public.

The abandonment of this portion of Lowena Drive means that any existing City easements would be removed and the City would no longer be responsible for maintenance, although maintenance on this portion has generally been provided by the Santa Barbara Bowl. The County owns the real property underlying Lowena Drive; however, there may be other existing private easements in the affected area that the County and the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation need to address during the development process. One of the items to be submitted to the City as part of the abandonment application is a survey of affected owners and occupants to demonstrate support or non-objection to the proposed abandonment.

Once this portion of Lowena Drive is no longer a road, the setback requirement from the southerly property line of the subject parcel would change from a front setback to an interior setback. Even with this reduction in setbacks, modifications approvals would be required, as stated above. As shown on the proposed site plan, the abandonment of Lowena Drive is a critical part of the proposed project as parking and other improvements would be located in the abandonment area.

Public Works Department staff has reviewed the proposed project and supports the abandonment of the City's easement in concept. Discussions with the Santa Barbara Police and Fire Departments did not raise any immediate objections or concerns with the proposal.

Next Steps

If there is sufficient Council support for the abandonment concept, the applicant will submit the formal abandonment application and Conditional Use Permit application. After the abandonment application has been submitted and the initial procedures for the abandonment have been completed by City staff, a recommendation will be made to Council at two separate public hearings. The first would involve a Resolution of intention to abandon and the second a Resolution ordering the abandonment after all requirements have been met.

The proposed project improvements on 1130 N. Milpas will undergo the standard City review process with design review by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR), review of the Historical Structures Report (for the stonewall) by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), and approval of the project by the Planning Commission (PC). The ABR and PC will also provide input on the proposed improvements on the County-owned parcels. Additional coordination between the City and County will be required for environmental review.

ATTACHMENTS:

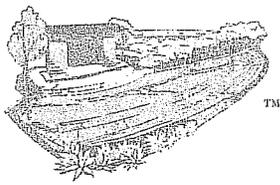
1. Applicant Letter dated October 31, 2011
2. Aerial Photo of Parcels
3. Proposed Site Plan
4. Abandonment Exhibit

NOTE: The project plans have been sent separately to the City Council. Project plans are available for public review in the City Clerk's Office and at the Planning and Zoning Counter at 630 Garden Street.

PREPARED BY: Kathleen Kennedy, Associate Planner

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Assistant City Administrator

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



SANTA BARBARA BOWL

ATTACHMENT 1

31 October 2011

Mayor and City Council
City of Santa Barbara
c/o Public Works Real Property Division
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Santa Barbara Bowl – Box Office Plaza project
and the Partial Abandonment of Lowena Drive – Concept Review

MST2009-00551. APN: 029-201-004
Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation Property
1130 N. Milpas Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

Dear Mayor and City Council:

The Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation (SBBF) with the acknowledgement of the County of Santa Barbara (County) seeks to vacate a portion of Lowena Drive in the vicinity of the Santa Barbara Bowl (Bowl). Given the importance of the request and the extent of information required, we are requesting that Council consider this matter at a conceptual level prior to our submitting the formal application. With the vacation of Lowena Drive and the proposed Santa Barbara Bowl Box Office Plaza project, improved vehicle circulation and pedestrian access for concert patrons entering the Santa Barbara Bowl facility will be provided.

The City's easements over Lowena Drive were set forth in City Resolution No. 2737 and adopted by Council on February 24, 1955. At that time, the City claimed the right to maintain the roadway already known as Lowena Drive, which was created as a private road, and was being used by the public. The City's Resolution did not extinguish previously existing private easements or imply City ownership of the land underlying Lowena Drive.

There are multiple lots comprising the Bowl and they are owned as follows:

County:	1122 N. Milpas Street	APN 029-202-001	1.66 acre lower parcel
County:	1126 N. Milpas Street	APN 029-110-023	15.16 acre upper parcel
SBBF:	1130 N. Milpas Street	APN 029-201-004	0.66 acre City parcel

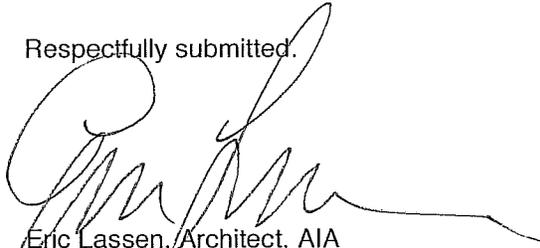
The Bowl is located on County owned property within the City of Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation has, for the last 20 years, been involved in a master plan development and upgrade of the Bowl facilities. To date, the SBBF has completed \$30M in improvements to better serve the Santa Barbara community. The SBBF is proposing a new Box Office Plaza project on property owned at 1130 N. Milpas Street, which is adjacent to the County property. The Box Office Plaza project will include a new 2,780 square foot administration building with box office services and a new pedestrian entrance forming an outdoor 'Lobby' space. It is anticipated that the proposed design will improve circulation flow between the pedestrians and vehicles that are currently sharing the same driveway access to the Bowl facility. It is planned that the existing Dreier Building that fronts Milpas Street continue to remain in service and be used for the Bowl's security operations.

Santa Barbara Bowl – Box Office Plaza/ Vacate Lowena Drive
City Council: Concept Review
October 31, 2011

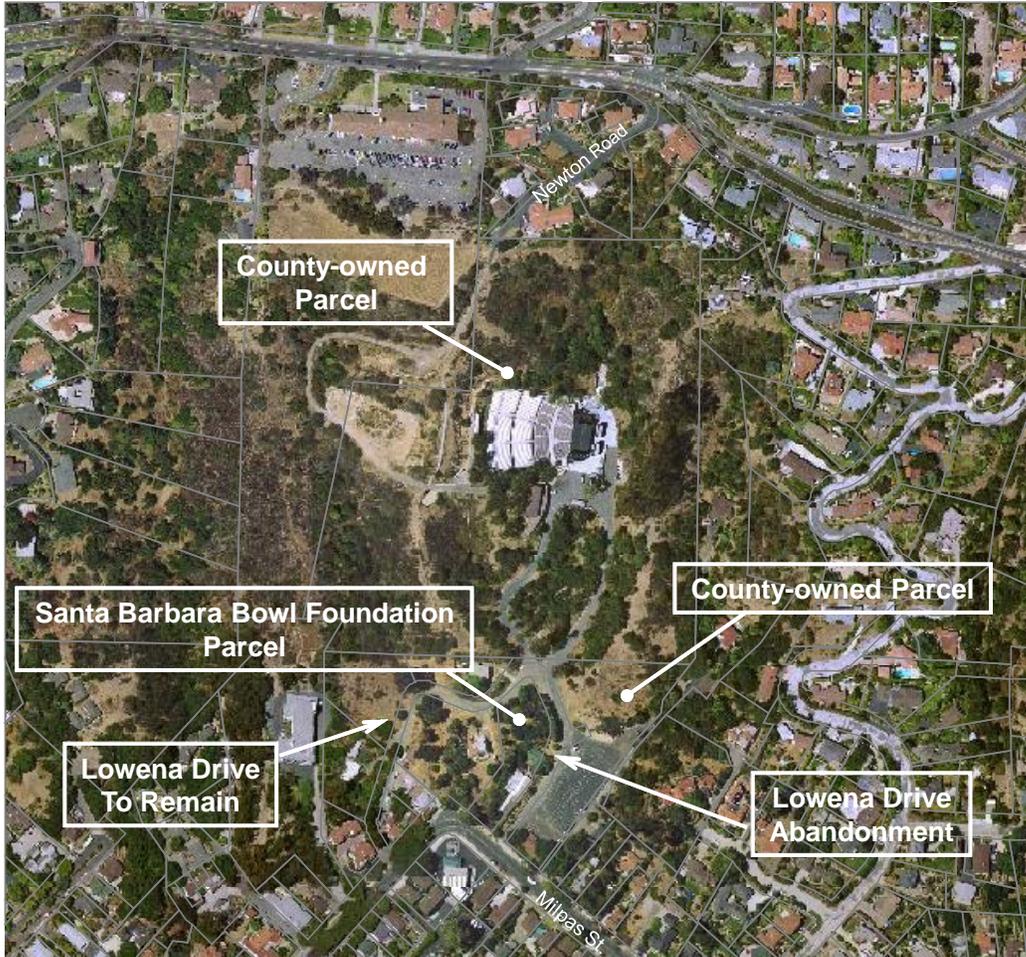
The Box Office Plaza project will provide better service and access for local concert patrons to the Bowl. The Bowl was built in 1936 and is the largest outdoor amphitheater in Santa Barbara County with seating for approximately 4600 patrons. There are about 30 shows performed a year in addition to use by non-profit community organizations. It has been determined by the Planning Division that the proposed new box office building is directly associated with the theater use of the site, and since no expansion of theater seating is proposed with this application, no additional parking is required. Due to the small size of the structure proposed, no Measure E development restrictions will be applicable. It is proposed that with the vacation of Lowena Drive a more efficient automobile parking layout can be proposed in addition to providing parking for the semi-trailer trucks and buses that accompany the traveling acts. Valet bicycle parking will continue to be used during events.

This application for concept review of the partial vacation of Lowena Drive by the City Council is the first step in the formal City review process. The Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation looks forward to working with the City Council to see this project through to fulfillment.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Lassen, Architect, AIA
Chairman of the Facilities Committee
Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation



Aerial Photo of Parcels



Lighting Legend

- Down Light on 8' Painted Steel Standards
- ▲ Bollard Lighting
- Pole Lighting
- ⊗ Canopy Mounted Down Lights

1'-0" = 1/16"

0 10' 25' 50'

design true

