MEMORANDUM

Date: April 9, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

Re: Opening of the Historic Courthouse: Regional Visitors Center, the January 8th Memorial, Dillinger Courtroom and the University of Arizona Mineral Museum

We are currently planning the opening of these facilities in early May, provided volunteers, staff and University of Arizona staff are fully vaccinated for COVID-19. A new small business coffee shop called Five To Oh is opening in April under the Historic Courthouse dome. They will be offering high quality coffee, tea and pastries sourced from local suppliers.

In addition, the County is in the process of implementing a variety of improvements to the El Presidio Plaza. The first phase of these improvements are nearing completion and the second phase will begin shortly.

Attached are concept graphics indicating various ideas for improvements that will be made on County-owned portions of El Presidio Plaza (Attachment 1). Such improvements will include Sonoran Desert plantings, seating and shade areas. The plantings will provide educational opportunities to learn about our native plant species.

The first phase of improvement substantially increased access and visibility to El Presidio from the surrounding neighborhood to the north and provided a clear access path from Alameda Street to the January 8th Memorial. The second phase (Attachment 2) which will be implemented in a few months, will remove grass/turf areas and will install plants that reflect the Sonoran Desert as well as the completion of the water conservation irrigation system.

As you can see, these improvements greatly improve the functionality of El Presidio Plaza making its landscape consistent with the Sonoran Desert and ensure the improvements are compatible with the January 8th Memorial.

It should be noted the Clement Fountain has been preserved. It is now isolated with construction fencing and screening as the restoration will be undertaken by the City of Tucson.

Attachments

c: Jan Lesher, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Francisco Garcia, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer, Health and Community Services  
Diane Frisch, Director, Attractions and Tourism  
Lisa Josker, Director, Facilities Management
Sonoran Seasons
Drifts of flowering cactus, succulents and other plants displaying color throughout the year. To be viewed from above. Anchor with large plants visible from chambers.

Shaded Seating Area
Create shaded area for break time/people watching
- Reference elevator arch and adjacent building architecture
- Create open feeling shadows with laser cut overhead or sails
- Install variety of seating options.

Plaza Seating
Create 'room' around fountain for seating using planters and other site furnishings

Memorial Garden
Add path through planting space. Hesperaloe, aloes, bulbine, agave massing. Add Ironwood as able to replace Rhus Lancea.
Sky Island
'Slope' with boulders, grasses, agave, sotol, coral bean. Large plant top of slope to be visible from below.

Yucca Forest
Yucca varieties around Mormon Battalion. Add mammillaria (pin cushion cactus) to battalion planter.

Add group of seedless Desert Willow trees for shade in area with new retaining wall. Desert adapted landscape anchored with columnar cactus. Move small sculpture from north hardscape to landscape south.

Seedless Desert Willow, Desert Diva: dark purple flowers.
25’ x 25’

Specimen Desert Willow, Desert Diva: dark purple flowers.
30’ x 30’

Seatwall, stabilization
Add concrete seatwall to hold soil. Clad with large rubble. Add understory plants.

Add understory plants to raised planters

Rose Garden
Species known to have been planted in White House Rose Garden, Kennedy rose, and on Tucson Rose Society recommended list.
El Presidio Landscape Improvements
- remove turf;
- install new plant material that reflects the Sonoran Desert;
- complete distribution of the new irrigation system that was installed in previous phase
- in areas highlighted in yellow