

From: Sahil Gandhi <sahil@bolourassociates.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 12:14 PM

To: Melanie Hall <mhall@hermosabeach.gov>

Subject: Bolour Comment Memo regarding Preliminary District and Design Standards of Comprehensive Zoning Code Update

Hi Melanie,

Please find attached our comment memo on the Preliminary District and Design Standards of the Comprehensive Zoning Code Update.

We would like to submit this memo in advance of the Special Meeting scheduled for this evening, June 7th 2022 at 6:00 pm.

We would appreciate if you could incorporate these comments into the meeting minutes and the discussion.

Thanks

-sahil-

Sahil Gandhi

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June 07, 2022

To: Planning Commission
City of Hermosa Beach
1315 Valley Drive
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Re: Comments for Special Meeting on Tuesday, June 7th, 2022 at 6:00 pm, regarding
Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update – Preliminary Draft of District and Design
Standards

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and City Staff:

We are very excited about the progress being made on the zoning code update. We believe this update will have a significant positive impact on the economic vibrancy of Hermosa Beach for many years to come, and we want to thank you for the time and effort that is being put into this update by the Planning Commission, City Staff and Consultants.

As the developer of the former Stand and Pier Hotel Project we are hoping that our experience during the past 10 years can bring some practical perspectives to the issues you have set forth in the Preliminary Draft of the District and Design Standards. The document is not very welcoming to developers, and it feels more prohibitive than inviting. If we want to improve our Downtown core, we are going to have to do it through smart development that promotes diverse uses on our ground floors. In particular, we want to point out two items in the report that we feel would be an unnecessary hinderance to smart long term planning.

14' Minimum Ground Floor Height in Downtown

Given that we have a maximum height limit of 30' in the Downtown commercial zone, a 14' minimum ground floor height combined with economic realities associated with different uses will make it economically impossible to construct certain uses like Hotel, Retail, and Mixed used projects. If the ground floor height is set at 14', this will force developers to build a 2-story building. With the current 30' height limit it is possible to still build 3 stories, hence making hotel projects and potentially mixed-use projects feasible as other issues like parking are worked out. The only development that is economically feasible with a 14' high ceiling is restaurant and bar space, and we have too much of this space as is. For years the 30' height limit has deterred development in downtown Hermosa. Adding a 14' height limit for the ground floor will continue to promote more of the same. It will deter change through smart development.

1.25 Maximum FAR in Downtown

Given the 30' maximum height limit in the Downtown commercial zone, and various other use restrictions already in place, the City may want to consider not having a FAR limit at all in the downtown core. The other restrictions already in place should adequately address what can ultimately be created. Every site is different in Hermosa and most of our lots are fairly small. We need to provide developers and property



owners with more flexibility during the design process, not less. Further restricting development will keep our Downtown Core exactly the same.

We understand this is a preliminary document that will continue to evolve based on analysis and feedback from all stakeholders, and we appreciate your consideration of our comments above. We are looking forward to doing a more robust and technical review of any future drafts of the District and Design Standards.

Sincerely,

Mark Bolour
President
Bolour Associates, Inc.