

City Council Hybrid Meeting (Closed Session - 5:00 PM and Open Session - 6:00 PM)

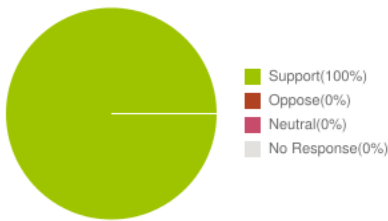
02-27-24 17:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
d) REPORT 24-0092 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT (Community Development Director Carrie Tai)	5	5	0	0

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

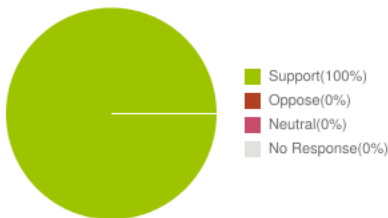
The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for d) REPORT 24-0092 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT (Community Development Director Carrie Tai)

Overall Sentiment



Jon David

Location:

Submitted At: 2:59pm 02-27-24

The downtown is the heart of the city. It creates a culture and a sense of place. What would life be like without our downtown? Without all the restaurants and shops, would residential property values go up or down? Would the resident's quality of life be better or worse?

Would residents feel as proud to be Hermosians?

My point is Hermosa needs a strong economic environment if we want a better future for the entire community. That individual businesses benefit is the side effect, but not the purpose. Hermosa needs to invest in its downtown to protect an important asset. Currently, this asset is very ill and is becoming worse. Many will find reason to disagree, but the numbers tell the truth. Our commercial rents are the lowest of the South Bay downtowns, which is a rather new situation. Our foot traffic is anemic, Sales numbers fail to keep pace with inflation. Most business, but the services businesses, report having really tough times.

There seems to be little clarity as to the cause of this. There is lots of finger-pointing and speculation. Is it a lack of retail? Is it a lack of good restaurants? Is it overregulation pushing away great operators? Etc etc. I have my opinions but this is not enough. We need to finally get clarity as to what is going on and how to reverse it. I highly recommend that the City bring in someone with expertise and focus on economic development, either as an employee or as a consultant.

Laura Pena

Location:

Submitted At: 2:43pm 02-27-24

PART I: I am submitting more than one comment due to character constraints.

Dear Mayor, Council Members, and Staff - As someone who has served in the Advisory Group, I'm very closely aligned with these Economic Development Strategies that our business community worked on with the city for two years. I appreciate Director Tai's third Progress Report that has outlined our city's efforts thus far.

These strategic actions were developed with a proactive stance in mind to not only assist in our recovery, but to help realize our economic vision and take control of our economic future. It is evident in this third progress report that we have limited staff resources to fully realize these strategies. As part of the long-term plan, city leadership identified the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to complement our city departments including subject-matter experts. Staff's recommendation to secure an outside Economic Development Specialist to project manage these strategies is in alignment with this long-term plan to ensure implementation of these strategies. If we can execute these strategies successfully, we should not only be able to measure progress but the city will be able to increase the tax revenue in our downtown that could positively affect the economic well-being of our community and thus, quality of life.

Since the scope of the strategic actions did not take into account allocating the necessary funding or competing staff workload demands, it is not a surprise that sufficient progress towards meeting our first year priorities let alone our second year priorities falls short of meeting expectations. We, as partners with the city would like to work together to provide feedback to improve the outcome and therefore see tangible, measurable results.

It is through this lens that I would impress upon city leadership to review the SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats) Analysis that is integral to its Economic Development success.

What are city's STRENGTHS?

- Our city leadership has created a pathway for permanency for our Outdoor Dining Deck Program (Strategy #14) as well as working towards allowing Outdoor Music in Business Locations (Strategy #15). We can do the same with a program to allow Outdoor Music in Public Spaces (Strategy #16) that is currently listed as "no funding or staff resources to initiate this item." What are the needs to create a parallel program in our public spaces?

- Our Community Development Department has held at least ten meetings with existing or prospective property owners / representatives to encourage reinvestment through regular communication (Strategy #17). If we already have these existing relationships, the city could benefit from holding an Annual Commercial Property Owners / Brokers Forum (Strategy #19) to engage these stakeholders as a group. We could exchange ideas and gather support for reinvestment on Facade Improvement (Strategy #2), Beautification Program (Strategy #3), Downtown Revitalization (Strategy #10), and a Property / Business Owners BID (Strategy #9). We could learn about potential incentives or disincentives that are affecting reinvestment. According to the progress report, there is "no funding or staffing resources" to have an Annual Forum. What is the cost estimate and/or resources to create this opportunity so we can learn how to improve and encourage investment?

PLEASE SEE PART II:

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration.

Laura Pena

Jessica Accamando

Location:

Submitted At: 2:19pm 02-27-24

Mayor and Members of Council,

We at the Chamber would like to thank the City and Director Tai for continuing to work at this long economic development plan. Hopefully it goes without saying that the Chamber deeply values these priorities as identified by the City and the ED process. We have done our best to assist and collaborate on many of these items and we are proud that is reflected on the report before you today. Although we too struggle with funding for these priorities, we regularly try and contribute and/or compliment the efforts.

The exciting addition of a potential Economic Development consultant certainly excites us. We hope that you give this serious consideration. We also hope that Council knows that resources invested in this plan (and a potential person) are well worth the spend for the whole community - residents and businesses alike.

At our walking tour of downtown this week, businesses highlighted way finding ideas and needs as well as a general overview of how business is doing in Hermosa, which for many is not great. We look forward to continued conversations with Carrie and her team (and others at the City) to try and forge through this list and make sure our economic vibrancy stays a priority for all. A thriving business community is critical to achieve a thriving Hermosa community.

Thank you.

Tara McNamaraStabile

Location: 90254

Submitted At: 1:22pm 02-27-24

Hi, thank you for your effort to achieve the agreed upon 30 Economic Development Strategies, designed by the Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Action Committee ("EDAC") to bring more economic vibrancy to Hermosa Beach. The progress made is much appreciated, but this report shows we still have a way to go. Hermosa business owners are struggling, some down 10% from last year, and foot traffic in Pier Plaza is 12.6% so far this year compared to last according to a recent analysis. Therefore, the EDAC Committee asks that our wise Council members support the Staff recommendation to hire an Economic Development Strategist to help implement the outlined concepts and methods. When our small local businesses are doing well, so is Hermosa. Thanks -- always appreciate you!

-- Tara McNamara Stabile, EDAC Chair, Hb Chamber of Commerce

Rosanna Savone

Location: 90254, Hermosa Beach

Submitted At: 1:15pm 02-27-24

I support the staff recommendation to hire an Economic Development Specialist to project manage our Economic Development Strategies. We need more focus on building up our business community.