



HERMOSA BEACH  
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE  
*and* VISITORS BUREAU

April 25, 2023

City of Hermosa Beach  
1315 Valley Drive  
Hermosa Beach CA 90254

RE: Permanent Outdoor Dining Program

Dear Hermosa Beach City Council,

It will be no surprise that the Chamber is writing to support the outdoor dining program permanence. The program has proven to be one of the few true benefits to rise from the pandemic and this community wants to keep it—71% of our survey respondents support it. The program promotes healthy lifestyles, attracts great businesses, brings curbside beauty to downtown, and creates a sense of community and meeting place which is a highlight of Plan Hermosa. For better economic activity and walkability of Hermosa, we need to distribute people beyond the Pier Plaza so they are drawn to places up Pier Ave and to North and South Hermosa. Dining decks are one of the best ways to pull people out to explore other parts of downtown.

We were grateful when the Economic Development plan of the City endorsed and supported outdoor dining and we know you recognize the unlimited potential with a permanent program to increase city revenue from prospering businesses. We believe this program is what makes Hermosa *the best little beach city* and will be what ultimately sets us apart from many other small destinations.

[The Living Streets Design Manual](#), created for the three beach cities, highlights the value and supports a thriving outdoor dining program which can activate the sidewalks and encourage economic development (pg 288). Activated sidewalks bring pedestrian activity and the program encourages private investment in ambiance and beautification of downtown.

The Roma Design Group study speaks to the value of Hermosa's commercial areas and states that they "should be designated as a pedestrian-oriented district, with special incentives and provisions to minimize the impact of parking and to encourage pedestrian and bicycle mobility" (pg 26). The study points out the potential to enhance the Downtown Core as a retail destination, not just for visitors, but also for locals. "A significant objective of many community groups within the City is to make the Downtown Core a stronger destination for residents and families as well as for visitors and nighttime entertainment" (pg 12). "Outdoor seating should be encouraged for the creation of a more sociable environment within the pedestrian oriented district."

In Plan Hermosa, the vision for the Downtown District, which includes Pier and Hermosa Ave as well as Pier Plaza, is to create a mix of community and recreational uses that serve our daily needs and attracts visitors to accommodate coastal-related recreation and commercial activities. We need to distribute the vibrancy throughout our corridors and not create barriers for economic vibrancy.

For all of these reasons and more, the Chamber makes the following more specific recommendations.

#### USAGE & HOURS

- At a minimum, to be open full hours of business operations (weather permitting).
- Encourage use across all-day parts, especially when parking demand is high, further optimizing the contribution to the City's vision of having living streets.
- Businesses that may be closed during busy daytime hours should be encouraged to find ways to minimize the visual of a closed business.
- Enhance outdoor green space and other CIP improvements that allow these outdoor spaces to be inspiring, even when closed. Decks should add value to the adjacent space and neighborhood.

#### AESTHETICS & SPACE

- Design and architecture of decks should be thoughtfully made, aesthetically pleasing, true extensions of primary indoor establishments, and in the spirit of the character of Hermosa Beach.
- Businesses with limited frontage (trees, emergency lanes and other obstructions) should be permitted to find space near their frontage with permission from adjacent business(s).
- Consider trying ideas before prohibiting them (ie. busing station on patio, tvs, etc).
- Explore public parklets, outdoor public tables, and other long-term ideas like San Diego, Berkeley, and San Francisco to enhance the program (both public and private spaces for outdoor enjoyment).
- Maintain the adjusted single lane in each direction on Pier Avenue and Hermosa Avenue in the downtown area for the safety of patrons on the dining decks.

#### ENCROACHMENT FEES

- On-sidewalk (non Pier Plaza) \$1/sq ft
- On-street \$2/sq ft
- On Pier (close midnight or earlier) \$3/sq ft
- On Pier (close after midnight) \$5.50/sq ft

#### THINKING BEYOND

- Continue the experimental period for long term decisions to allow for more thoughtful considerations based on data and feedback (ie. aesthetics, hours, etc).
- Request an Impact Report after a certain period to gauge success of plan and make further enhancements.
- Form an advisory group that includes economic development professionals, business owners, residents and other key stakeholders to develop best practices.
- Revisit guidelines annually to ensure the program is effective, valuable and thriving.
- Better communicate where free and more parking is, including 50+ free parking along Valley Ave, Ardmore, and top of Pier Ave east of Ardmore.

Most deck owners in Hermosa have already heavily invested in their decks, with a minimum \$10,000 building investment specifically for on-street decks. When we asked dining deck owners if they would invest more in their decks once the program is permanent, all raised their hand. We also believe a vibrant program can also be supported by the formation of a downtown Business Improvement District (BID) which is currently being explored and can address future aesthetics, improvements, and more.

It is also worth noting that with Hermosa's need to grow off-season foot traffic, an outdoor dining program will also speak to the larger Los Angeles community—visitors that we need to attract. [LA City's AI Fresco program surveyed the public](#) and there is vast public demand for outdoor dining—we can provide that!

Please continue to support the amazing outdoor experiences in Hermosa and keep them affordable so that our businesses can invest in their home, Hermosa Beach.

Best regards,

The Board of Directors and  
The Economic Development Action Committee (EDAC)  
Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau