



HERMOSA BEACH

---

## **Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy**

Prepared for the City of Hermosa Beach by ROMA Design Group and Economic & Planning Systems

JANUARY 2014

**Accepted by Hermosa Beach  
City Council on February 24, 2015**



# Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
The Downtown Core.....	3
Commercial Tenanting Strategy.....	7
Hermosa Avenue Streetscape Improvements.....	10
Pier Plaza and The Strand Improvements.....	12
Hotel Development Strategy.....	16
Parking Strategy.....	23



Overview of South Bay Cities

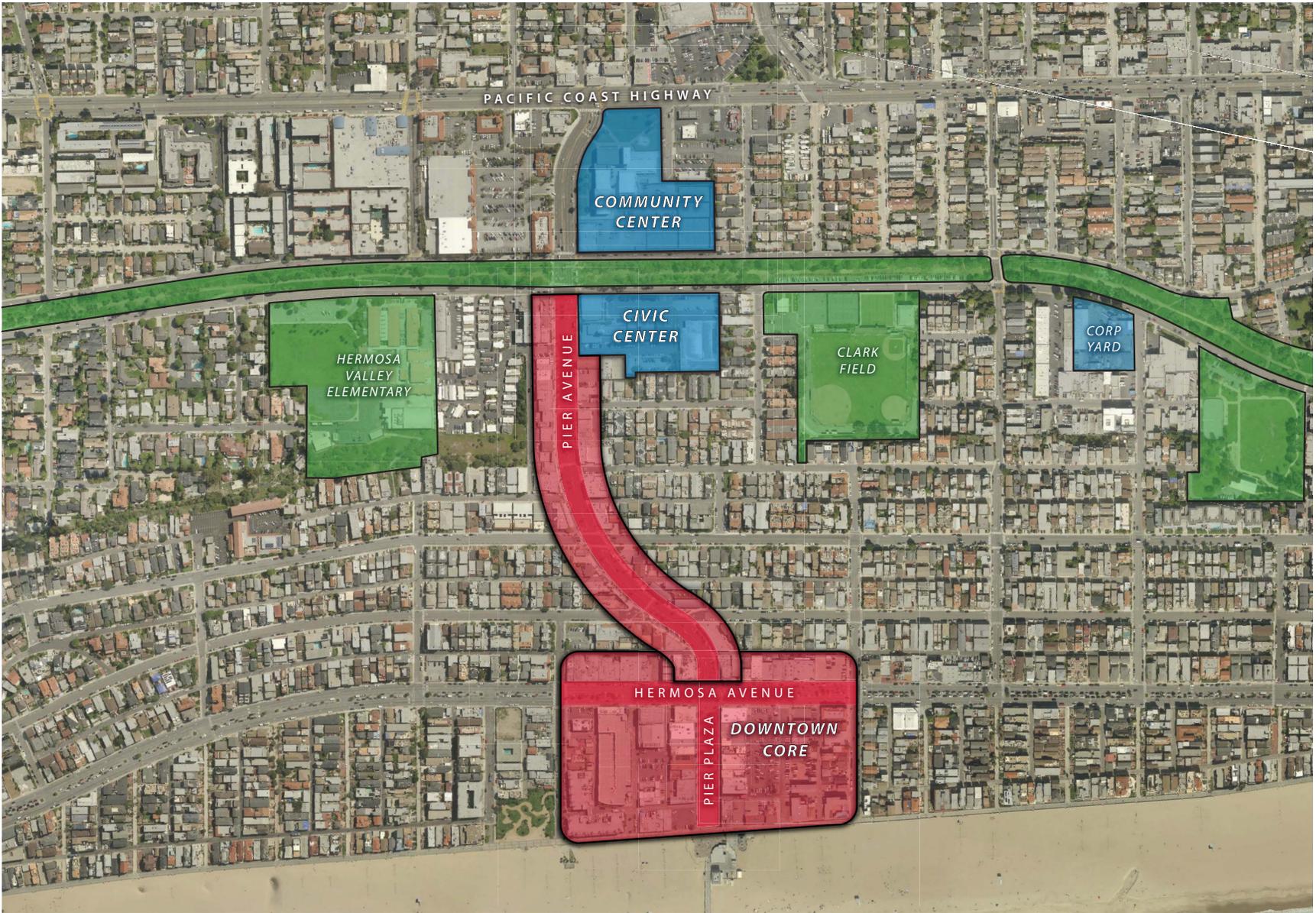
## Introduction

Hermosa Beach is one of three beach cities in the South Bay and together with Redondo Beach and Manhattan Beach, represents a resource of great value within the larger Los Angeles region. Established as independent municipalities more than one hundred years ago, they were originally resort and recreational settings, somewhat removed from the economic life of the land-centric city of Los Angeles to the north and east. Once only accessible by trolley and rail to the rest of the region, these cities are now very well connected to the metropolitan area and have become even more attractive places for residents. At the same time, they also serve as a regional open space and recreational resource for the metropolitan area and therefore have to contend with the surges of population on weekends and during the summer months. Historic census information reveals continuously upward trends in household income, educational levels, home ownership and land value. Upgrades and improvements to the building stock, which was built for shorter-term summer stays, have been undertaken. As the region has continued to grow and expand, the beach cities have become increasingly valuable places to live, work and play.

Hermosa Beach has many features in common with Manhattan Beach to the north and Redondo Beach to the south, and is closely linked to these communities by the continuity of the public beach,

the Strand along the beach and the Greenbelt. But, it is also a very distinctive place with its own issues, opportunities and challenges. Hermosa Beach is the smallest of the beach communities and it is also the one that is geographically most focused on the coast. It is also more of a bedroom community, with greater out-commuting of residents to work and a smaller daytime population. At the same time, historic economic data indicates resiliency in the real estate market and generally the market potential is good for a variety of different uses, particularly with the effects of the Great Recession waning.

Hermosa Beach has an attractive, small town character and a fine-grain urban fabric generally comprised of small lots and buildings. The urban pattern is oriented to the beach and the pier, connected by the Strand and the Greenbelt and punctuated by other parks and open spaces. As the City continues to change and evolve over time, and as growth occurs, there is an ongoing concern over the surges in population and the generally negative social behavior that occurs within the Pier Plaza area. These are important concerns, which may be best addressed by positive changes aimed at making upgrades and investments that will attract economic enterprises and activities that will ultimately overshadow the negative aspects.



Downtown Context

Over the past several months, ROMA Design Group has been working with Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), economic consultants, and the City of Hermosa Beach in developing strategies for the economic development of the Downtown and Civic Center areas. In the first phase of the work effort, options related to the leveraging of City-owned property were identified and evaluated. Based on direction from the City Council, the Phase 2 effort has focused within the Downtown Core. The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of the Phase 2 work effort.

## The Downtown Core

The Downtown Core encompasses the rectangle between 10th and 14th Streets and between the Strand and Palm Drive and is focused on Hermosa Avenue and Pier Plaza. It is part of the downtown district, which extends north to 15th Street, south to 8th Street and east along Pier Avenue to Valley Boulevard. While the upper Pier Avenue has an important relationship to the Downtown Core, it has already been the subject of a successful revitalization effort and is not the primary focus of the strategies described herein.

The Downtown Core is the oldest part of Hermosa Beach, which was originally platted in the early 1900's. Today, it has many of the characteristics of an older downtown, with buildings on relatively small parcels that have incrementally developed over time. Some

of the most notable older structures were built with clear civic intent and stature, attaining heights of 40 to 60 feet. Historically, these taller buildings with large windows and high floor-to-ceiling ground floor spaces were located immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Commercial uses were built to support the recreational nature of the beach community as well as to serve the small permanent and seasonal residential population. Landmark buildings reflect the early identity of Hermosa Beach, including the Biltmore Hotel (now demolished), the Bijou Theater and the Bank of America and a number of mixed-use buildings with ground floor shops with upper floor office and residential uses.

As the population increased, particularly after World War II, and as the pattern of shopping shifted to larger shopping centers, the nature of the downtown also underwent significant changes. Within the center of downtown at the foot of Pier Avenue, bars began to occupy buildings as commercial uses declined and relocated elsewhere. Now, it is important to create an environment that nurtures the increasingly stable, diverse and family-oriented population. Investing in improvements to the public realm is one of the first steps that can be made, and will signal the City's commitment to the area. Subsequent important steps will be to better manage parking and encourage a greater variety of businesses, including fine dining establishments, high quality hotels and upper floor offices that reflect the changing nature of the population and contribute to the overall downtown environment



*The Lighthouse, featuring jazz on Pier Plaza, the landmark Biltmore Hotel and the Bijou Theater, made distinctive contributions to the identity and activity of Hermosa Beach. After WWII the downtown underwent significant changes and now it is poised to change in a fresh new way.*

and quality of life in the city. In the future, downtown Hermosa Beach should become a place that appeals to a wide diversity of people – the surfer, the creative entrepreneur, the high tech businessman and the young family with children. It should be a place that allows a diversity of groups to mutually co-exist - not a place that is dominated by one group at the expense of another.

The downtown district is the heart of Hermosa Beach and should be enhanced so that it becomes, to an even greater extent than today, the focus of social life in the city. The betterment of the downtown will reflect positively on the quality of life in the community as a whole. In 2010, the City invested in improvements to upper Pier Avenue that have already had significant benefits on the character and quality of that street. This report addresses what further actions should be taken to nurture positive change.

As Hermosa Beach has matured as a community, the downtown has evolved as well. Still, the downtown businesses do not serve a broad cross-section of the population and provide less in the way of diverse retail and fine dining than would be expected, given the demographics of the community and the high quality assets of the area.

If we look at the downtown district in its entirety, and the core area more specifically, there is a significant amount of land that is now vacant, used for parking or is underutilized. Positive



*Pier Avenue Improvements*

redevelopment of these areas will help to enhance the quality of life in the city. Critical to the transformation of the area is achieving the appropriate mix of uses and quality of development that makes Hermosa Beach a more sustainable and livable community. From a land use point of view, there are certain types of uses that can contribute to a more sociable, publicly-spirited place and a more economically viable district.

Within the downtown as a whole as well as within the core, there is a need to increase the day-time population to add life and vitality that goes beyond the typical recreationally oriented uses that have been historically attracted to the beach setting of



Hermosa Beach. Office development, whether on upper floors or in stand-alone buildings, is an important activity that can build economic support for local-serving retail and quality dining establishments. Recent office development that caters to businesses in knowledge work fields, such as finance, real estate and information, has occurred within the city primarily within downtown along Pier Avenue. This reflects a larger trend in which knowledge workers are taking advantage of the flexibility afforded by communications systems for work closer to their homes and in areas offering a high quality of life.



Hotel development can also help to improve the vitality and economic viability of the Downtown Core by providing for overnight stay and longer visitation. There is strong market potential for hotel development on beachfront locations which are limited within Los Angeles County. Hermosa Beach is exceptionally well positioned for upscale hotel facilities on beachfront locations within the Downtown Core. In addition, if new hotel development includes an ample lobby, restaurant, spa, and other amenities, it will help to create a more sociable and attractive destination that will enhance its image and identity and contribute to its sense of security. Furthermore, high quality hotel development will, as with additional office uses, also provide greater market support for quality retail and restaurant establishments.

*A diverse family-friendly downtown environment*

The encouragement of office and hotel uses cannot come at the expense of creating a pedestrian oriented people place with active ground level uses on key corridors and adjacent to important public spaces. In addition, creating a more active, people-oriented place must also be pursued in conjunction with quality development that respects the scale and unique character of Hermosa Beach. To realize the potential of the Downtown Core will require the pro-active pursuit of appropriate infill development as well as public-private partnerships, implementation of public parking and streetscape improvements as well as some modifications to existing zoning.

### **Commercial Tenancing Strategy**

Within the Downtown Core, the prime commercial tenancing opportunities are located along Hermosa Avenue, adjacent to Pier Plaza and on the Strand. Strategic public investment and successful development of catalyst sites in these three areas – Pier Plaza, Hermosa Avenue and the Strand frontage – could dramatically enhance the appeal, sociability and security of the Downtown Core and help transform it into a vibrant center for Hermosa businesses.

Today, the quality and diversity of many existing retail establishments is not on par with expectations of residents or potential visitors from other Beach Cities. For example, the current retail tenant



*Examples of mixed-use buildings with office above retail*



mix along Pier Avenue and Hermosa Avenue appears to be over-represented in the health and beauty sector - uses more typical of a neighborhood center than a retail shopping district - and are under-represented in the apparel sector, where the City exhibits significant retail leakage. As previously discussed, uses that increase the day-time population and longer stay visitation will contribute to the market support for retail development. Streetscape improvements and public parking can also help to enhance the appeal, convenience and attractiveness of the area. In addition, zoning modifications that eliminate on-site parking requirements will help to create greater continuity and pedestrian interest.

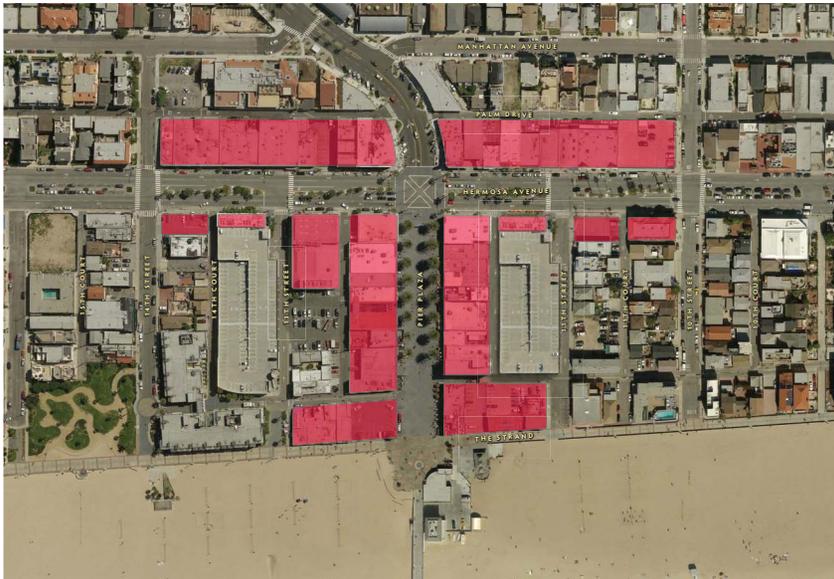


Creating a more distinctive and well-defined retail district will help to market the area as a destination and, at the same time, attract better quality shops and restaurants. Improvements to the public realm are key to the enhancement of the image and identity of the Downtown Core as a retail destination. Widened sidewalks and public plazas that create space for cafes and outdoor dining can also attract additional patrons. Activities that spill out and populate the public spaces communicate that this place is worth visiting - seeing people brings people. In addition, the provision of convenient on-street parking makes retail shopping appear more accessible and attractive. Furthermore, the current ever-increasing trend towards bicycling for both recreation and work trips needs to be recognized by the provision of convenient bicycle parking as well.

*Examples of active ground level uses*



*Lack of active ground level uses along the Strand*



*Ground Level Retail and Dining Opportunities*



*Streetscape improvements help economic vitality*

## Hermosa Avenue Streetscape Improvements

Just as Pier Avenue is the gateway to the downtown district from the east, Hermosa Avenue is an important north/south gateway into the City. It traditionally served as the “main street” to the community, providing essential goods and services for the local population. Hermosa Avenue has significant regional continuity but does not present a strong sense of arrival when it traverses the downtown core. Improvements that enhance this sense of arrival and provide a stronger sense of the downtown as a district should be considered.

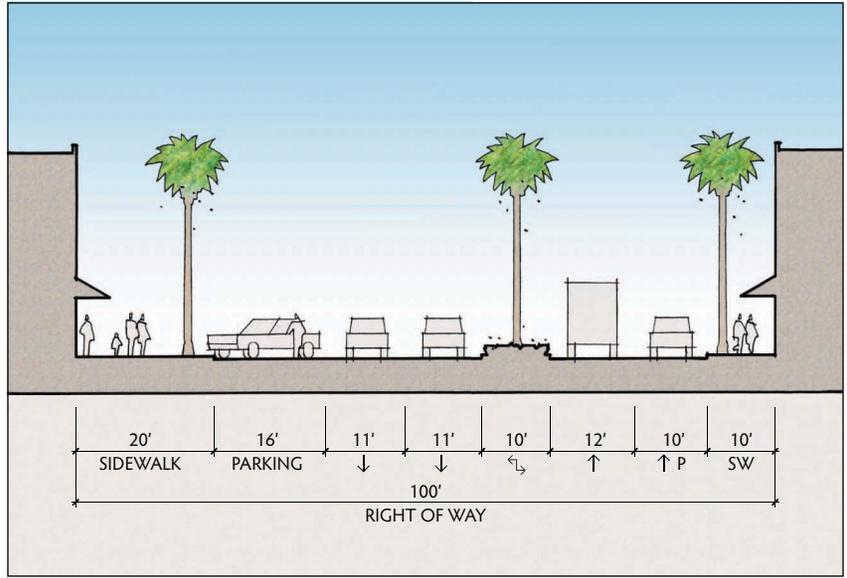
Just as the improvements on Pier Avenue have spurred reinvestment and positive changes, improvements to Hermosa Avenue between 10th and 14th Streets can strengthen the economic underpinnings of this part of the Downtown Core. A concept similar to what was successfully undertaken along Pier Avenue was favorably considered by the City Council at a recent study session in reference to the improvements planned for Hermosa Avenue. This concept would involve the provision of wider 20-foot sidewalks on the sunny east side of the street, where sidewalk cafes and outdoor seating should be encouraged, the addition of street trees and intersection and median improvements, as well as diagonal parking.

From a traffic point of view, the concept would allow for flexibility in operations. Within the curb-to-curb dimension of the street, there would be one wide 14-foot southbound sharrows lane

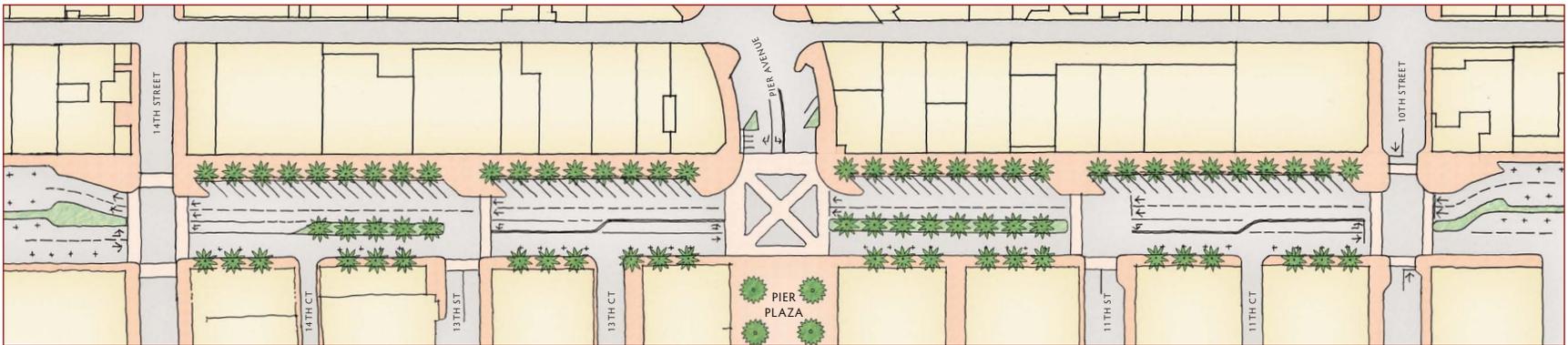
with 8 feet for parking, for a total of 22 feet. If needed, this area could also accommodate two southbound moving lanes during peak periods. In the other direction, separated by a 10-foot landscaped median or turn lanes, vehicles would travel along two 11-foot northbound lanes. In addition to movement down the street, it is anticipated that the curbside lane would be used for moving in and out of the parking spaces, and the median-side lane would accommodate bicycle movement.

On the east side of the street, diagonal parking would be accommodated within a 16-foot wide area. This could be configured as head-in parking that is preferred by retail shops or as back-in parking that is preferred by bicyclists since it offers greater visibility of motorists for moving bicycles.

The addition of diagonal parking directly adjacent to the east side of the street would provide 30 additional on-street parking spaces. Tighter traffic lanes would also have the additional benefit of calming traffic within the Downtown Core and allow it to be perceived as a destination rather than a place to move through on the way to somewhere else. Overall, the improvements would provide convenient parking that would help expand the market potential of the street, and in combination with the streetscape improvements and the widening of the sidewalk, would also provide for a more sociable pedestrian-oriented environment.



Hermosa Avenue today



Hermosa Avenue Streetscape Concept

## Pier Plaza and the Strand Improvements

The pedestrianization of Pier Plaza and the addition of Canary Island Palms undertaken in 1998 was a good first step towards reclaiming this important space within the community. Today, it is a unique resource within the City and South Bay, offering a place for people gathering right at the threshold to the Pier, the Strand and the beach. However, when it was redesigned, it was still envisioned for vehicular movement and therefore the scale and organization of the street works well for special events and when there are crowds of people using the space. The events that are planned for Pier Plaza should continue and be encouraged further, promoting activities such as a regular farmer's market once or twice a week, that bring residents to the area and create a greater sense that the place is not only for visitors but also for residents.

At the same time, the space of the plaza needs to be rescaled and made more attractive during times when fewer people are present. It should feel like a comfortable outdoor room that works when it is full of activity and when it is not. Currently the space is 450 feet long and, with a width of 100 feet, seems vacuous. Specific recommendations to benefit the scale and structure of the street would include extending the palm trees all the way to the Strand and adding elements that will make it more attractive, including lighting, landscape and banners.



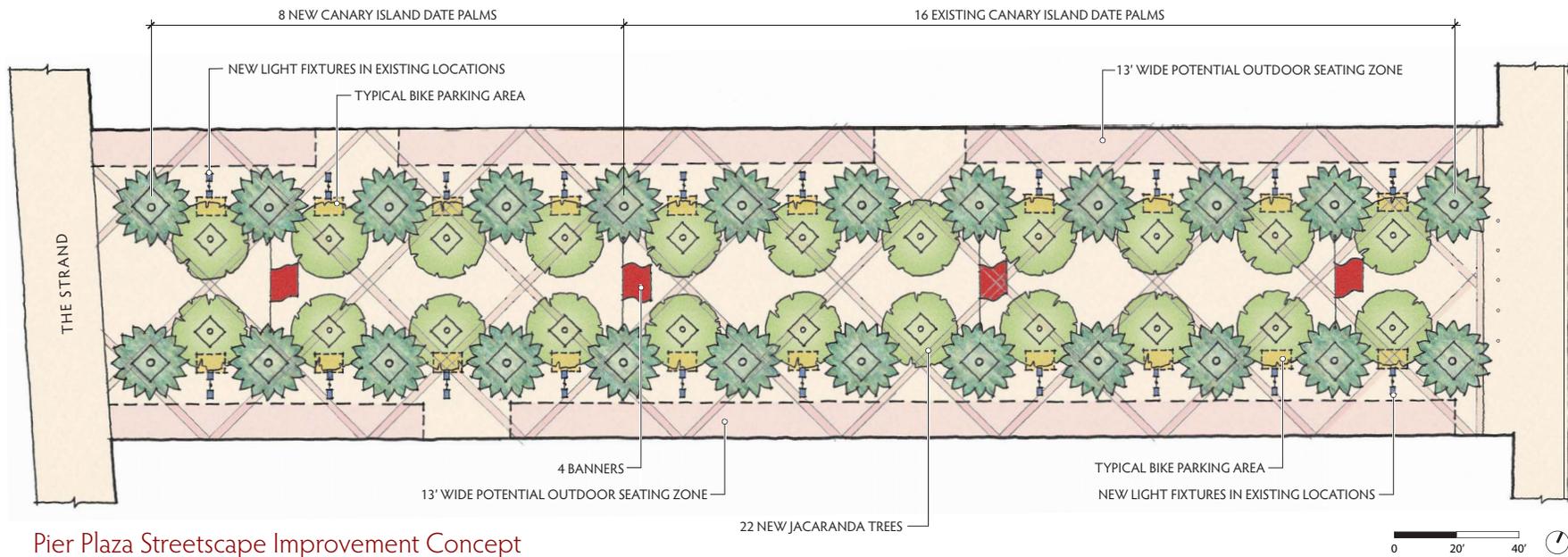
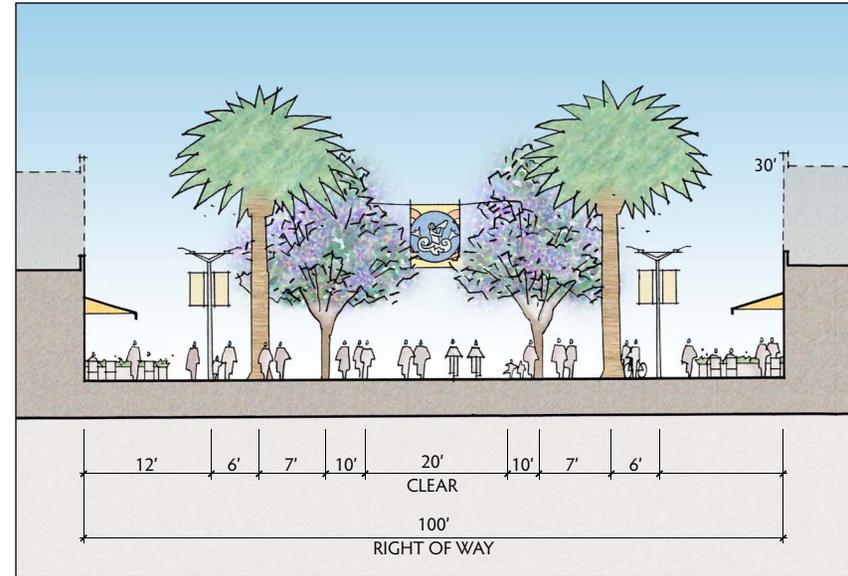
*Pier Plaza during a special event*

Furthermore, upper story uses would not only provide additional activity but provide a better scale to this wide space and additional support for the retail uses along it.

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. Since the City controls the beach and Plaza areas west of the Strand, consideration could be given to building a new and exciting children's playground that would serve a variety of age groups as well as adult fitness areas within view of the playground. Modern



Typical weekday at Pier Plaza



Pier Plaza Streetscape Improvement Concept

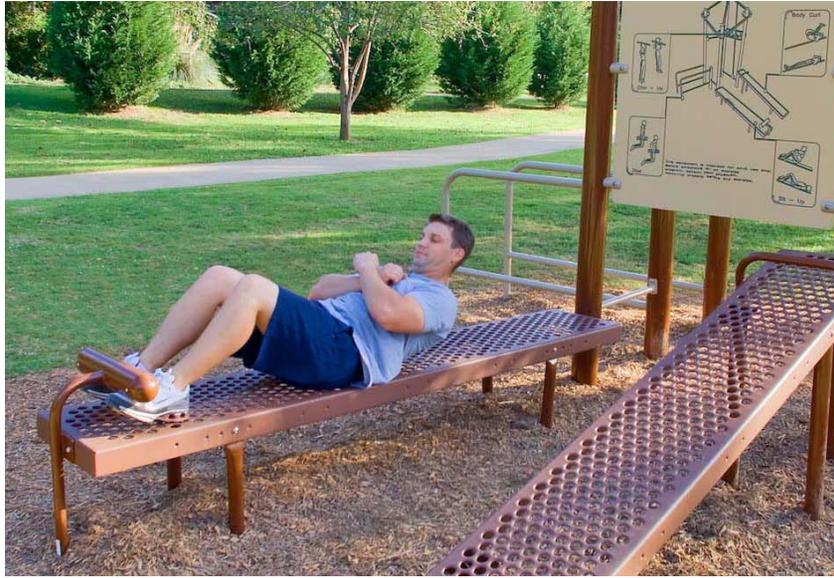
trends indicate that there is a demand for this kind of combination of recreational activities so that parents can exercise while their children are playing in close proximity and within view. These improvements would not only add to the activities in Pier Plaza to the east but would also enhance public access and enjoyment of the beach and the fishing and strolling activities on the pier.

The development of a bicycle facilities for repair, servicing, rental and sales, could be located on the west side of the Strand right at the entrance to the pier. This would reinforce the family biking that already takes place and the diversity and mix of activities that are part of the Pier Plaza area.



Public Space Improvement Opportunities

Examples of bike repair and rental kiosks



*Additional Pier Plaza streetscape improvements, a bike kiosk and playground can help make Pier Plaza a more family friendly place*

## Hotel Development Strategy

The Downtown Core is an attractive location for beachfront hotel development and historically, as well as in recent years, there have been a number of hotel projects of varying size and character and each with its own contributions to the city as a whole. The Biltmore Hotel, which has been demolished but began as the Surf and Sand Beach Club in the 1920's and later owned by the LA Athletic Club, is reflective of a landmark hotel that set the tone for the City. The six-story, 120-room hotel with its pool, ballroom, and rooftop setting for starlight dancing and daytime sunbathing, was the social center of Hermosa Beach for many years.



Hotel Opportunity Areas

Today, there continues to be a few hotels in the Downtown Core and more are planned. The Sea Sprite Motel offers the price-conscious visitor a place for a short or long stay. Each of the 40 rooms has some kitchen facilities for family visits and a pool. The more recently constructed 96-room Beach House is in fractional ownership and offers both short and long stays. It has limited common area, does not have a pool, and is not a full service hotel. Also, just beyond the primary core area on Hermosa Avenue, north of 10th Street, a 30-room luxury boutique hotel (the Clash Hotel) has been approved for construction. More recently, a critical site along the Strand and Pier Plaza, has been assembled for a hotel development and is in the process of developing specific proposals.

Hotel development is one of the uses allowed in the Coastal Zone, because it is in keeping with the objectives of making the coastal resources more publicly accessible. The City's Coastal Land Use Plan permits three-story development within a 45-foot height limit, while the City's zoning regulations limit any development to 30 feet. However, land values and operating efficiencies within the core area are such that it is difficult to develop the kinds of ground level uses that are desired along with upper level accommodations within the City's 30 foot height limit. In addition, these height limits not only restrict the height required for successful ground level publicly-oriented uses in a multi-story configuration, but they also restrict rooftop development of

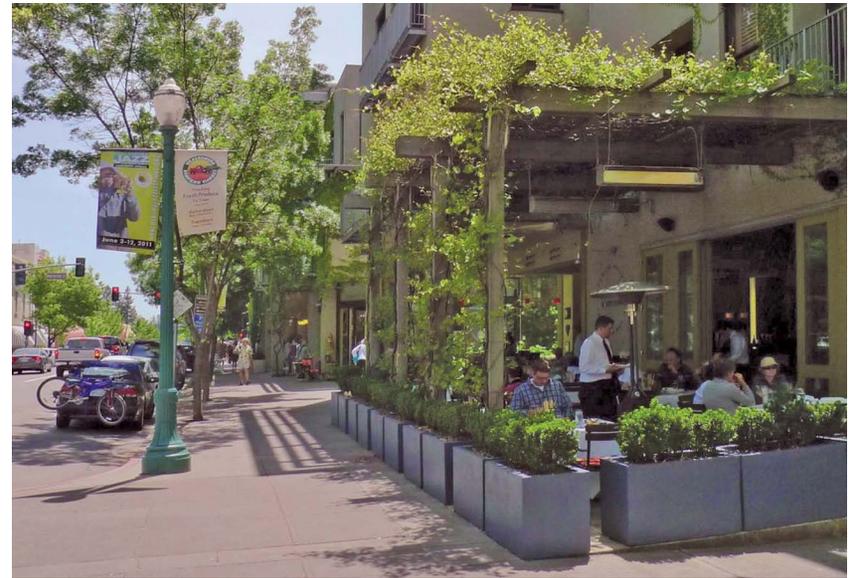
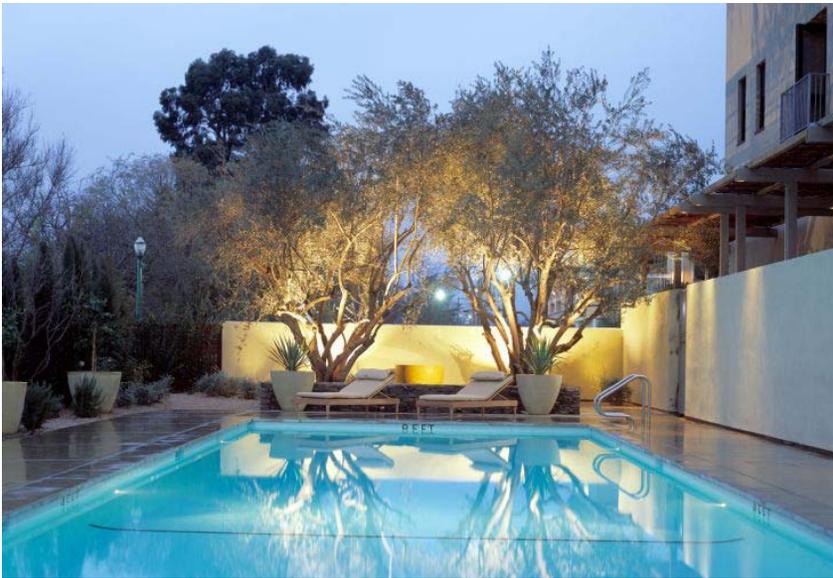
amenities and facilities which can take advantage of the significant beachfront location. Hennessey's Tavern is an example of the kind of rooftop amenity space that could be provided in conjunction with a pool deck in a new hotel. A three-story height within 30 feet is a significant constraint to the development of a quality hotel facility, particularly within the constrained parcel sizes in the Downtown Core.

The introduction of additional hotel accommodations is a critical component of creating a more diverse and inviting environment for residents and visitors. To achieve the greatest benefit from hotel development within the core, the qualitative aspects of the development of the public spaces, amenities and services that are provided must be addressed.

Hotels historically have been a key element in establishing the unique place-making qualities of recreational areas and making them more attractive for the community as a whole. Examples abound of landmark hotels around the country and the world that have successfully achieved these qualities. They have furthered the identity of the unique settings, making them more welcoming for everyone and providing amenities that have furthered the sociability, sense of security and hospitality that contribute to a sense of place.

Yosemite is a great natural environment that everyone wants to visit, but the Ahwahnee Hotel adds hospitality, comfort and identity that makes Yosemite an even more special destination. La Jolla, as a tourist destination, similarly benefits from the La Valencia Hotel, through its landmark qualities and the recreational and social activities that are open to the community. A more recent example of striking success is the role the Hotel Healdsburg in northern California played in the emergence of the Healdsburg Town Square as a center of the Wine Country. We are very familiar with the story of the transformative effect that this hotel provided to the community because of our involvement in the master planning of the downtown and the development of the project. To illustrate, when we began the master planning effort, Healdsburg had a Town Plaza that was an identifiable landmark in this small town, but many of the businesses, particularly the bars around the square, catered to a rough-neck crowd that made the area feel unsafe and unwelcoming to many people.

There were many elements of the Master Plan that were recommended to transform the nature of the area, but most importantly was the development of a hotel directly across from the Town Square on a key publicly-owned parcel. The goals of the hotel project were to not only provide for the lodging of visitors but to create a special place that would contribute to the life on the square and become a catalyst for further retail and restaurant development. That goal was achieved in the realization of Hotel Healdsburg which



*Hotel Healdsburg reinforces the small town scale of its setting and brings attractive buildings and activities that helped transform the downtown*



provided an architectural quality that heightened the identity and qualities of the Wine Country setting and provided a high level of amenity and a public spiritedness. The architecture is modern, but brings in and integrates landscaping in a manner that heightens the awareness of the unique qualities of the region. It also extends this approach to the public spaces by the introduction of tastefully selected local art that emphasizes those qualities. The Hotel Healdsburg and the unique qualities it provided contributed to making Healdsburg a key destination in the Wine Country and the Town Square the sociable heart of the community.



*Hotel Healdsburg amenities*

More specifically, the Hotel Healdsburg is a 3-story, 45-foot high hotel project that engages effectively the public environment of the street and the Town Square. It provides a massing and integration of public and quasi-public spaces that extend the public realm into the hotel and help to make it a more inviting place. It provides a diversity of active ground level uses, including the Dry Creek Kitchen, a fine dining establishment, with an extensive outdoor seating area along the street frontage, and a number of unique small shops along the streetfront that enhance the identity and experience of place. The project includes a gracious lobby and adjacent casual meeting and gathering spaces as well as other separate meeting and catered dining rooms and a spa, pool area and outdoor places for relaxation. Valet parking to a public off-site parking facility is also available from an attractive and well-integrated portecochere that does not diminish the urban qualities of the hotel.



*The landmark La Valencia Hotel is well fitted within its retail downtown setting and provides courtyard dining for visitors and residents*

Hermosa Beach is a beach community that has many different qualities than Healdsburg and the development of a hotel here needs to build on the unique qualities of this place. At the same time, there is an opportunity to learn from historical precedents and the transformative qualities that benefitted Healdsburg and interpret them more specifically for how they might be applied locally. It is important that an attitude is taken that looks to the achievement of the qualitative dimensions of place-making as of at least equal value to the achievement of the room count and yield of the hotel. There are different categories of hotels, motels and inns in Hermosa Beach at different price points that provide for a diversity of visitors to the area. What could be strengthened, however, is the creation of a distinctive, higher quality establishment that serves the more discerning visitor and that can also become a focal point for community life. The setting of the Downtown Core right at the beach and adjacent to Pier Plaza is ideal for such an establishment.

To develop a quality hotel that achieves the public purpose and the desired positive spin-off effect in the Downtown Core, there are many factors that need to be addressed and overcome. Sites are small and land assembly is not easy. The existing 30-foot height limit makes it very difficult to achieve a tall ground level that graciously provides for the public spaces of the hotel and a rooftop level that would be ideally suited for special amenities and open-air functions. On the roof level, there is a possibility of

outdoor dining, a pool deck and spa facilities. Currently, occupied rooftop space is counted as part of the height of the building.

If the quality of life in the city and the sociability of the Downtown Core are priorities, and a distinctive hotel that helps to further these objectives is desired, then the City needs to take a proactive role to help achieve these goals. The prospect of redevelopment of the Mermaid Hotel site, on the north side of Pier Plaza, has been identified, but a hotel developer and operator cannot achieve all of the public-spirited qualities and spin-off effects that are desired on their own.

To achieve these qualities, a public/private partnership is required. This partnership can include assistance in providing valet parking in the existing parking structure and replacing the public parking that is lost by constructing a large and efficient new structure on publicly-owned land on the south side of Pier Plaza. This new parking structure will not only replace the parking, but would create opportunities for other hotel and retail ventures on that side of the plaza as well. In addition, the City has land in street rights-of-way and in parking lots that could contribute to the creation of a more appropriately configured site for a quality hotel.

Increases in height may assist in facilitating quality public spaces consistent with the community objectives, provided the number of stories is not increased, on a limited basis and only for specific



*Without adding to the number of stories, a modest increase in height can help to improve the quality of hotel development in the core*

projects that clearly demonstrate achievement of public objectives related to architectural and site design, publicly oriented activities on the ground floor, rooftop amenities, etc. Voter approval would be required to change the height limit for such projects and a developer would be responsible for pursuing this course. (Modified by City Council 2/24/15)

## Parking Strategy

The parking strategy is intended to encourage small, independent, local businesses in the downtown district maintain the smaller scale, and small town character and manage the parking demand fluctuations more effectively, particularly since there are surges during the summer and weekends. There are two primary aspects of the parking strategy – first, the development of a public parking supply that is publicly managed with demand pricing to help control the distribution and availability of parking. The public parking can be provided for by using in-lieu fees and parking charges to help pay for the program and a specific financing plan for these will need to be developed. New public parking structures should be located to help alleviate peak loading on thoroughfares and for better traffic management. In addition to these, convenient, short term on-street parking, like

what was developed on Pier Avenue, should be encouraged on Hermosa Avenue, the other major downtown retail street. The second component of the parking strategy involves modifications to the existing zoning requirements for new development in support of a pedestrian-oriented district where the continuity and quality of the pedestrian experience is given a priority and a certain amount of walking to parking facilities is part of the experience of place.

## Public Facilities and Parking Management

The provision of centralized public parking facilities in the downtown district is an essential component of a successful economic development strategy. The need for additional facilities in Hermosa Beach to both intercept parking demand and provide for a successful Downtown Core has long been identified. This work effort reinforces the importance of meeting these needs and identifies two strategic locations for the placement of these parking facilities. One of these would be located in the Downtown Core potentially on City-owned property south of Pier Plaza. A facility similar in size and character to the existing parking structure on the north side of the Plaza with mixed uses along the frontage would be one Downtown Core option. Interceptor (remote) parking could also be located in the Community Center and/or Civic Center and would best serve the surge requirements of the recreational visitor, the beach-goer and parking for special events, civic and community functions, as well as facilitating Upper Pier Avenue retail and some employee parking for the Downtown Core. (Modified by City Council 11/25/14)  
It is anticipated



A Public Parking Garage is needed to the south of Pier Plaza, similar to the one previously built to the north side

that each of these structures might accommodate 300 to 400 parking spaces similar to the existing downtown parking structure.

The management of public parking facilities should include demand pricing and efficient parking information and control systems that provide a more effective distribution of the available supply.

The Downtown Core parking structures should provide for the required commercial and hotel development on underutilized properties and public parking for existing uses and beach visitors. Parking between the existing and the new parking structure within the core could be redistributed between the two facilities, depending on where development is taking place.

In addition to the provision of parking structures, it is important to maintain and augment, if possible, parking along the street. This parking should be time-managed and priced to emphasize short-term convenience needs and avoid being absorbed for long-term use and by employees. Street parking communicates a friendly and convenient environment and actually can help to contribute to a pedestrian-oriented environment, especially in combination with streetscape improvements. In Hermosa Beach, the parking and streetscape improvements that were implemented on Pier Avenue demonstrate the positive effect on retail activity that can be achieved.

## Zoning Modifications

Concerns were raised in initial discussions with developers, realtors and property owners about parking requirements in the existing Zoning Code and the deterrent that they impose upon economic vitality and the ability to maintain and further the small scale village environment of downtown Hermosa Beach. In particular, a significant concern is the effect that these requirements have on the ability to encourage office development on upper floors which would be beneficial in enhancing the daytime population and thus the market support for retail and restaurant functions.

Existing parking issues and requirements in Hermosa Beach were reviewed along with those of other selected beach cities. The conclusion of this effort is that there should be a greater emphasis on how parking solutions can help to create a more attractive and accessible pedestrian-oriented district, where a greater mix and intensity of activities are desired while still accommodating beach-going peak visitor demand.

The following provides a series of recommended actions that would help to encourage a more pedestrian-oriented district through changes in the Zoning Code.

1. Pier Avenue, from PCH to Hermosa Avenue and including the Community and Civic Center sites and Hermosa Avenue

and the Downtown Core from 10th to 14th Streets 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.

2. All parking in the pedestrian-oriented district should be provided off-site, rather than the current 25% of parking for buildings with greater than a one floor-to-area ratio (FAR). This is only currently allowed in the SPA-11 zone (Pier Avenue east of Hermosa Avenue to Valley Drive) as an incentive to conserve iconic buildings (Section 17.38.550(D)).
3. There should be a reduced amount of required parking for commercial (office and retail) uses within the pedestrian-oriented district. Currently one space per 250 SF is required for these uses, however, the Coastal Commission recently provided for a reduced standard of 1/333 SF, which is more consistent with other beach communities, contingent on a parking evaluation from the City which should be undertaken.
4. There should be a reduced amount of required parking for restaurant uses within the pedestrian-oriented district. Currently, one space per 1,000 SF is required. Cities such as Redondo Beach utilizes a one space per 250 SF for pedestrian-oriented districts, which should be considered in Hermosa Beach as well.
5. Outdoor seating should be encouraged for the creation of a more sociable environment within the pedestrian oriented district. The determination of the appropriate amount of outdoor seating within the public street right-of-way should be based on lot frontage length, maintaining adequate space for pedestrian circulation and considerations related to adjacencies and public safety. These are to be determined on a case-by-case basis at a staff level by the Community Development and Public Works Director. Parking requirements for outdoor seating should be reduced appropriately to encourage the diversity of types of establishments within the downtown district and in particular within the Downtown Core. For example, in Redondo Beach, no additional parking is required for the first 12 seats of outdoor seating.
6. Parking requirements should be reduced for mixed use buildings on a single lot that generate parking demand during different times of the day without the need for a discretionary action by the City. There are currently a variety of conditions upon which the amount of parking reduction may be allowed or a fee paid in lieu of providing parking, but a discretionary review is required.
7. Upper level office use should be encouraged to attract a lively downtown environment and provide a greater daytime population that supports retail and restaurant uses. Parking for

upper level office use should be reduced and located off-site in shared parking and public parking facilities.

8. Vehicular parking requirements should be reduced in exchange for the provision of additional bicycle parking, beyond what is already required by the City. This provision is currently limited to development along Pier Avenue. An equivalence of 4 bicycle spaces for one car space, up to 20% of the parking required for non-residential projects should be considered (which is the provision allowed in the City of Los Angeles and other cities' zoning codes). This includes the required bicycle parking and any additional bicycle parking.
9. For an existing non-restaurant use that is converting to restaurant use and whose parking requirements are met in common facilities within the pedestrian-oriented district, a credit against the future parking requirements should be allowed, based upon the zoning requirements of the existing use. Currently this is not allowed for some types of restaurants in the downtown district.
10. Parking requirements for commercial uses within the pedestrian-oriented district should be allowed in common facilities within a quarter mile walking distance. This is currently only allowed for second floor office space as an incentive to conserve iconic buildings in SPA-11 zone along Pier Avenue.

11. Parking requirements for commercial uses within the pedestrian-oriented district should be based on a net usable building square footage basis, that is, not including for example, bathrooms, hallways, lobbies, service, storage and mechanical rooms.