

Summer 2013 Celebration Recap: Intro to Planning Activities

The City of Hermosa Beach hosted a “summer celebration” event in July 2013 to encourage the community to begin thinking about the future of Hermosa Beach. All city residents were invited to participate in this event, which was the first opportunity for community members to learn about important upcoming planning projects in Hermosa Beach. The event was held from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

Participants started at the welcome table, where they signed in, were given a passport, and provided an overview of the stations and activities. The passport served as a guide for attendees through each project station. Attendees learned about long range planning activities including the General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan Update, the Community Dialogue, and the Strategic Economic Development Plan focusing on the Downtown area. They were able to participate in activities, ask questions, and learn about future opportunities to participate and stay engaged in each project. Upon visiting a station, participants were given stickers for their passport. Participants who collected stickers from each station were given the opportunity to turn in their completed passports in for a treat.

Education and Input Collected

Throughout the day, nearly 200 community members came out to learn about the planning process for each project, interact with City and project staff at each station, and provide initial feedback and ideas on the future of Hermosa Beach. The links below provide graphics and/or a summary of the input collected at some of the stations throughout the event.

- [What is a General Plan?](#)
- [Fun Facts About Hermosa Beach](#)
- [Walk Score Results](#)
- [Strategic Economic Development Plan](#)

Walkability in Hermosa Beach

WalkScore.com is a tool to assist residents, businesses, real estate professionals, researchers, and planners determine how walkable a community is by rating neighborhoods and locations based on their distance to daily goods and services and access to public transit. Walkscores range from 1 to 100, with 1 being the least walkable and 100 being the most walkable, and can be assigned to a neighborhood as a whole, or to a specific location or address within a neighborhood.

With the walkability of a community determined by the types of services located within close proximity, the land use policies of Hermosa Beach play a significant role in making the community more walkable. Research has increasingly shown how more walkable neighborhoods are beneficial to resident health and happiness, can improve local air quality, and enable residents to be more engaged in the community (walkscore.com, 2013). As part of the General Plan update, the City will be asking residents for input to identify land uses and infrastructure that improve the walkability of Hermosa Beach.

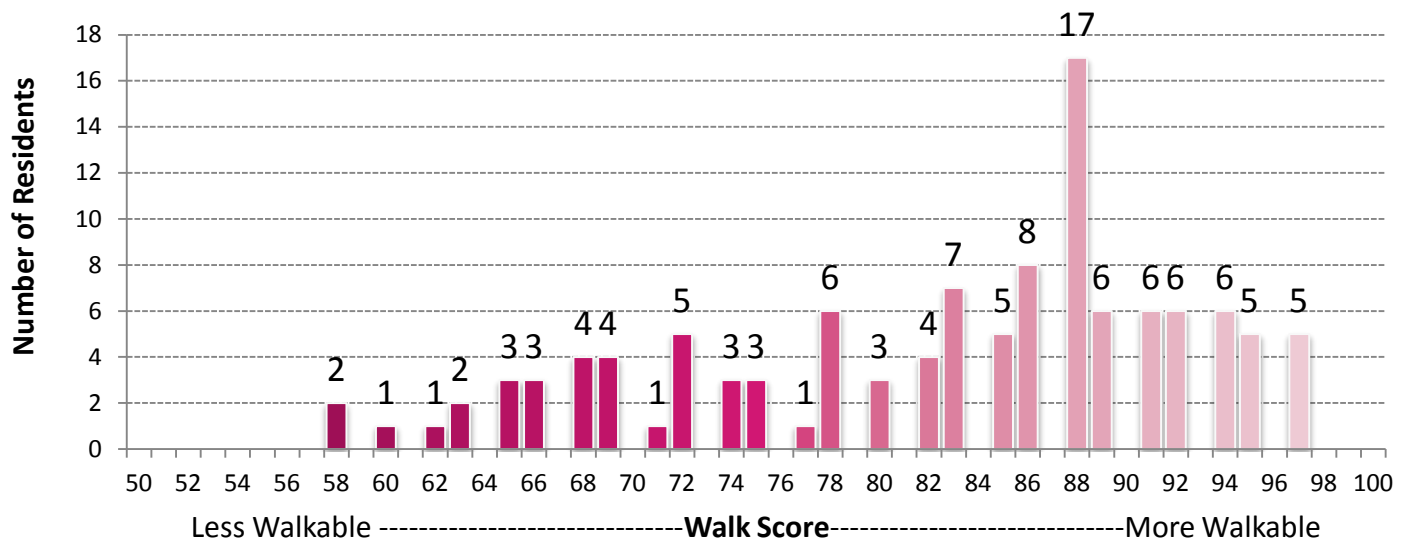
What is my Walk Score?

WalkScore.com can be used to determine how walkable a specific location is by determining how many amenities are within walking distance of the specified location. To determine a location's specific walk score, the Walk Score method assigns points based on the distance to each amenity, with those services ¼ mile or less receiving the highest points and no points awarded for amenities further than one-mile in distance. Using this algorithm, each address throughout the community is assigned a walk score of 1 to 100, with a score of 1 indicating the location is very unwalkable, or car-dependent, and a walk score of 100 is considered a walker's paradise, with the option to accomplish activities by foot.

During the July 13th Community Event, participants had the opportunity to understand the walkability of their neighborhood by participating in our live Walk Score mapping. In total 132 participants found out their walk score, with 89% of the participants indicating that they are residents of Hermosa Beach. The walk score of participating residents ranged from a low of 58 to a high of 97, with the most frequent walk score being 88 (17 respondents), and the average score being 82 (slightly higher than the city-wide average of 78).

Find out the Walk Score of
your home or business at
[walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com)

Participants by Walk Score



How Walkable is Hermosa Beach?

As a community, Hermosa Beach has a walk score of 78, meaning that most daily errands could be accomplished by foot. Most of Hermosa Beach is considered to be more walkable than other nearby jurisdictions, ranking first among the South Bay beach cities.

Rank	City	Walk Score
1	Hermosa Beach	78
2	Redondo Beach	76
3	Torrance	70
4	Manhattan Beach	66
5	Palos Verdes Estates	49
6	Rancho Palos Verdes	40

Source: Walkscore.com, 2013

The map to the right, indicates the areas of the community that are most or least walkable, with the downtown and Pier Ave areas of the community being considered the most walkable parts of Hermosa Beach. WalkScore.com indicates that there are approximately 350 restaurants, bars, and coffee shops in Hermosa Beach, with residents being able to walk to an average of 7 services in five minutes (1/4 mile) or less. Participants in the July 13th community event agreed with the walks score assessment of services, indicating they are more likely to visit restaurants, bars and cafes located in Hermosa Beach rather than leaving the City for these amenities.

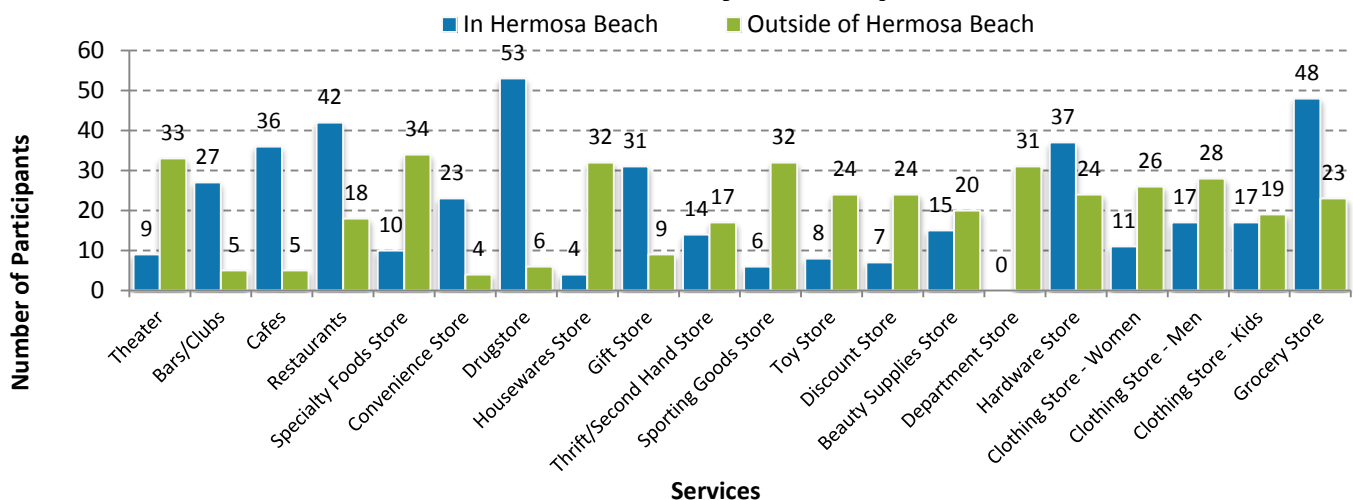
The chart below indicates participant responses to the services they are most likely to utilize within or outside of Hermosa Beach. The services most likely to be patronized in the City include grocery stores, drugstores, and restaurants, while most participants indicated that they left Hermosa Beach to shop at specialty food or department stores, and to head to the theater. These services patronized outside of the City may be important for the City to consider during the General Plan update process to attract additional visitors to the city and capture additional sales tax from local residents and visitors.

Hermosa Beach Walkscore Map



Source: Walkscore.com, 2013

Where do you Shop?



Strategic Economic Development Strategy for the Downtown and Key Opportunity Sites (Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy)

Objectives

A strategic planning process was initiated in 2013 to explore opportunities to increase the economic vitality of the downtown, focusing on how City assets, including the civic center property and downtown parking lots, could be leveraged in conjunction with redevelopment of key privately held sites and for increased economic vitality generally. The plan should evaluate (1) land use and development options to maximize the economic development benefit and value of city owned property in the downtown, (2) a conceptual plan for redevelopment of the civic center including opportunities to stimulate economic development in the surrounding area, and (3) parking strategies as a catalyst for increased economic development. Roma Design Group, teamed with Economic Planning Systems, was retained by the city to assist the City in preparing a strategic plan focusing on a plan of action.

Through the process a “Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy” and “Market and Economic and Market Analysis” were produced: [Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy](#) [Market and Economic Analysis](#) While interrelationships among various geographic areas and systems is recognized early work was refocused on the downtown core due to impending development projects on key sites, and the desire to define the Council’s and community’s goals for this area in order to shape near-term development.

Relation to Other Processes

The Strategic Plan will provide input to the General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan Update, while also providing a plan of actions that can be systematically refined and carried out. There is no legal requirement for this planning process. However, the City Council has identified this planning process as one of its objectives in its Strategic Plan.

Activities

November 13, 2014: The City Council is requested to provide direction on guidelines and implementation on the Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy relating to catalyst projects.

[Staff Report](#)

September 9, 2014: The City Council provided direction on guidelines and implementation on the Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy. Council generally agreed with the strategies and referral to staff and the relevant Commissions relating to Hermosa Avenue, Pier Plaza, amendments to the zoning code regarding parking.

[Staff Report](#)

[Council Discussion](#)

April 22, 2014: The City Council held a Study Session to provide direction on the approach to implementation and next steps in obtaining commission and public input on the Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy.

[Staff Report](#)

[Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy](#)

[Market and Economic Analysis](#)

[Council Discussion](#)

January 28, 2014: The City Council held a Study Session to provide comment on a revitalization strategy and market and economic analysis as a basis for implementation. The primary focus is on the downtown core between 10th and 14th Streets including improvement to Hermosa Avenue and Pier Plaza, emphasis on family-friendly activities, increased daytime population, catalyst private development, and supporting parking strategies.

[Staff Report](#)

[Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy](#)

[Market and Economic Analysis](#)

[Council Discussion](#)

July 13, 2013: The City of Hermosa Beach hosted a summer celebration event to encourage the community to begin thinking about the city's future. One project highlighted at the event was this planning process. The following display was provided and input gathered.

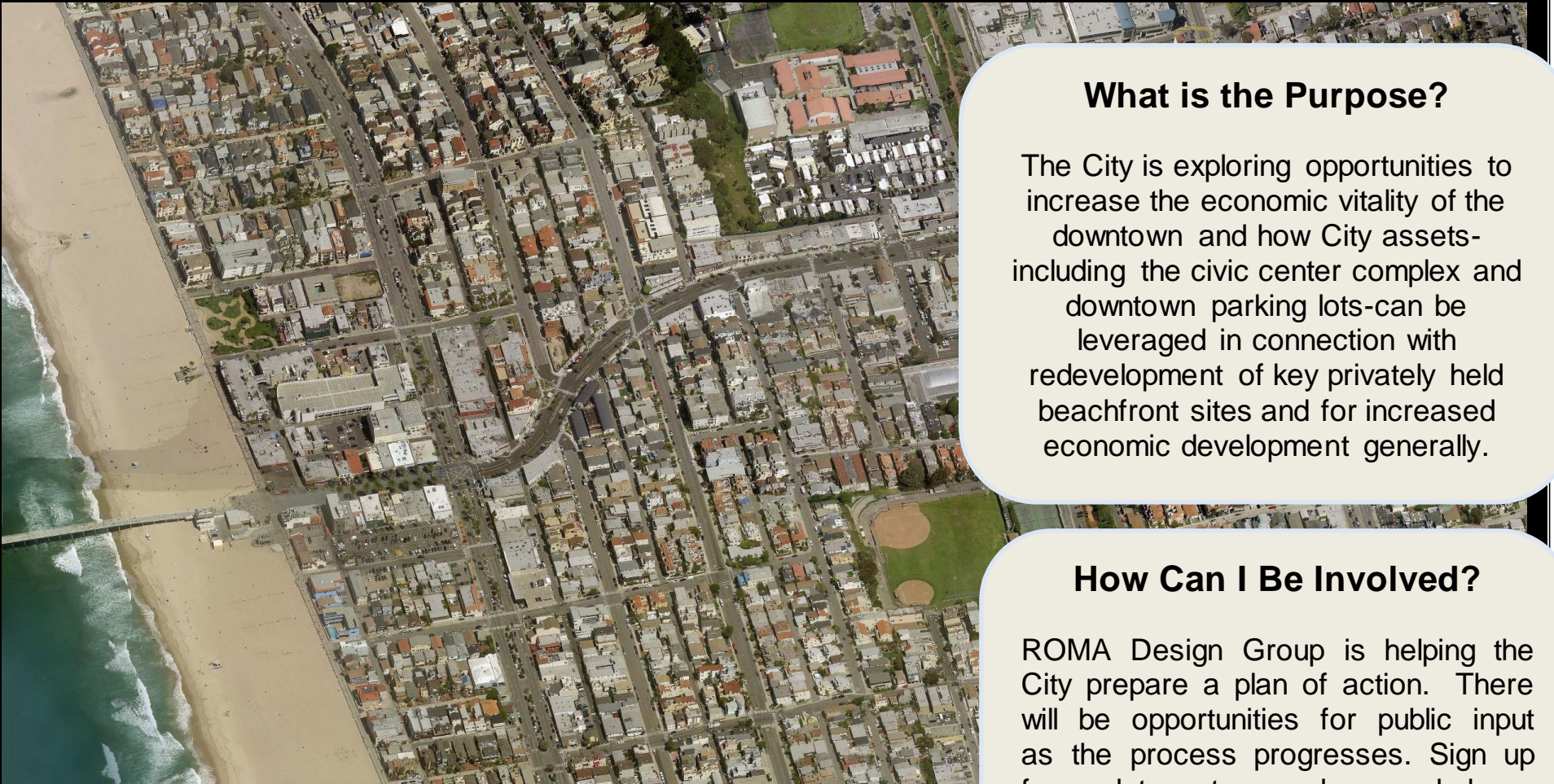
[Boards from the Strategic Economic Development Plan- Downtown Core Station](#)

[Summary of Input on the Strategic Economic Development Plan - Downtown Core](#)

June 11, 2013: A Study Session was held where Roma Design Group presented the City Council findings from its initial research and targeted outreach. Due to various factors, the Council determined that study should be first focused on the downtown area rather than the civic center.

[Council Report](#)

[Council Discussion](#)



What is the Purpose?

The City is exploring opportunities to increase the economic vitality of the downtown and how City assets—including the civic center complex and downtown parking lots—can be leveraged in connection with redevelopment of key privately held beachfront sites and for increased economic development generally.

How Can I Be Involved?

ROMA Design Group is helping the City prepare a plan of action. There will be opportunities for public input as the process progresses. Sign up for updates at www.hermosabch.org - click on E-Notification. This process started in March and should take about a year.

***Watch a Video of the June 11th City Council briefing
on the laptop at this station!***

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DOWNTOWN & CIVIC CENTER COMPLEX

Your Input Counts!

Downtown Core

Please provide input on one or more of the questions below on the cards provided.



The economic vitality and attractiveness of the Downtown Core (from about 10th to 14th Streets) could be improved to the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

Question 1. What should be done to improve the attractiveness of the Downtown Core for residents of the city?

Question 2. What can be done to improve the quality of development in the Downtown Core area?

Question 3. What can be done to improve businesses on Hermosa Avenue in the downtown area?



Your Input Counts!

Pier Plaza and Beachfront

Please provide input on one or both of the questions below on the cards provided.

Pier Plaza is a unique resource—providing a large public space adjacent to the beach. While the plaza and beachfront easily accommodate large events, much of the time these spaces are underutilized and lack attractions for local residents.

Question 4: What can we do to improve the quality of the improvements and daily activities on Pier Plaza?

Question 5: What activities or amenities can be added to attract residents to the beachfront adjacent to the Downtown core area?



Public Comments Summary

The City held the first Hermosa Beach- Moving Forward community event on July 13. During this open house event, written input provided on a series of questions yielded the following results.

Total number of responses: 112

Hermosa Residents: 84

Hermosa Business owners: 18

Other: 10

Common Comments

Question 1: What needs to be done to improve the attractiveness of the Downtown Core for residents of the city?

1. Downtown development should model the changes made to upper Pier Ave.
2. The cleanliness of the downtown area should be increased.
3. Fewer bars should be in downtown, instead allow more space for outdoor dining and pedestrians.

Question 2: What needs to be done to improve the quality of development in the Downtown Core area?

1. Parking should be more readily available and inexpensive.
2. More retail, casual cafes, and family friendly restaurants should be brought into the area.
3. Building height limitations should be maintained.

Question 3: What needs to be done to improve the business on Hermosa Avenue in the downtown area?

1. More restaurants, cafes, and retail should be brought in and less bars, financial firms, and realtors.
2. The parking situation needs to be improved.
3. Wider sidewalks and better pedestrian access could improve business.

Question 4: What needs to be done to improve the quality of the daily active life of Pier Plaza?

1. The area should be less focused on nightlife and invest in more family friendly attractions.
2. The area should be kept cleaner and the non-smoking regulation should be enforced.
3. More community events, such as open houses and daytime farmer's markets should be held in the Plaza.

Question 5: What needs to be done to improve activities that would attract residents along the beachfront adjacent to the Downtown Core?

1. Small concession stands or take out restaurants should be made available near the beach.
2. More bike racks near the beach to accommodate all the bicyclists.
3. More dog-friendly areas of the beach.

Specific Input

<p>Question 1: What needs to be done to improve the attractiveness of the Downtown Core for residents of the city?</p>

Aesthetics

- Keep the small beach town character of Hermosa, with the simple smaller buildings that are not too manicured and avoid Irvine-type refinement. Make sure new buildings fit with this Hermosa style.
- Minimize the number of neon signs and billboards in the area
- Increase the attractiveness of storefronts
- More green areas (grass, trees, hanging flowers)
- Concern for the development of the Mermaid project and the loss of the old brick building
- Approval for the Pier Ave redesign, model this idea for downtown and other renovations
- Take a consistent approach to new development (with regards to aesthetics, banners, billboards, and lighting)
- Keep building height restrictions to preserve the view of the ocean
- Work with blue zones for initiatives relative to resident health and incorporate the value of beauty, scale, walkability and safety in their analysis
- Remember property rights of owners when updating downtown
- Keep area cleaner, including parking lots, better trash pickup (especially near Pier Plaza)
- Figure out a solution to vagrants

Structure and design

- Expand sidewalks for more outdoor dining
- Increase the number of pedestrian and seating areas
- Improve medians and parking like on upper Pier Ave.
- Include carbon neutral solutions

- Use more solar power and sustainable innovations in our improvements instead of oil project

Store Types

- Fewer bars
- Fewer chain stores
- More retail stores

Question 2: What needs to be done to improve the quality of development in the Downtown Core area?

Process-based comments

- Host a community dialogue and brainstorm for this topic to stimulate the existing businesses
- Utilize a PR campaign for Hermosa Beach to change the perceptions of South Bay residents who still think of Hermosa as a crazy party city
- Enforce the liquor and other laws—lack of enforcement is hurting the downtown reputation
- Allow zoning or re-zone as long as it does not affect the property values of existing owners
- Alter zoning to address the mismatch between the village quality of downtown and the onsite parking requirements that encourage larger developments to accommodate cars on site
- Diversify development into different categories

Substance-based comments

Business

- Bring in high quality businesses
- Bring in more civic and entertainment areas
- Fewer bars and more family friendly businesses
- Outdoor family restaurants
- Bring in hotels (with a height limit)
- More casual businesses, such as donut shops, bookstores, cafes
- Draw in businesses Hermosa does not currently have

Parking

- Model parking after upper Pier Ave, utilizing diagonal parking on the east side of Hermosa Ave.
- Increase the amount of available parking
- Decrease the price of parking
- Add parking away from the beach and provide a trolley service to transport visitors to the beach
- Clean up parking structures (specific comment about one behind Starbucks)
- Construct multilevel parking structures

Question 3: What needs to be done to improve the business on Hermosa Avenue in the downtown area?

Business

- Bring in businesses that meet all resident needs (for instance, office supply store)
- More family friendly businesses
- More gift stores and markets
- Add a destination store, like J Crew, Banana Republic, and cater more to the middle age group
- Add a movie theater
- Increase the number of retail stores
- More dog friendly restaurants
- More casual restaurants and cafes
- Fewer realtors and financial firms
- More boutique shops and less tourist “T-shirt” shops
- A wine-tasting destination
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce to use more proactive marketing plans in South bay and adjacent communities
- Hire better professionals in the Chamber, like other beach cities in South Bay
- Hire economic development businesses to find small business that reflect unique aspects of Hermosa Beach
- Promote events more widely to encourage non-residents to visit Hermosa Beach
- Develop a brand identity for the city
- Develop a theme for Hermosa Avenue

Parking

- More available and cheaper parking
- Change parking meters—add credit card capability. Another comment that current meters are difficult to use and lighting is poor.

- Build a leveled parking structure near downtown
- Provide parking incentives for residents

Signage

- Limit commercial displays (example, in the past a huge Samsung display was considered a nuance)
- More information and signage on Pier Plaza about other businesses on Hermosa Ave.
- Better overall signage, lighting, and area and store maps

Structure and design

- Wide sidewalks and bike lanes
- More open air seating and outdoor patio seating at restaurants
- Make businesses accessible for everyone, even the disabled (broader sidewalks, audio walk signs)
- Construct an area in front of the civic center for outdoor gatherings, friendly to visitors

<p>Question 4: What needs to be done to improve the quality of the daily active life of Pier Plaza?</p>
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Transportation infrastructure

- Add more bike racks and benches along Hermosa Ave.
- Include a beach shuttle bus
- Improve bike lanes and/ or paths
- Consider banning biking and skateboarding in Pier Plaza, or make people walk their bikes and skateboards in this area—have police patrol this day and night

Events and Entertainment

- Provide more family friendly programming
- Host more community events, such as an open house, in Pier Plaza
- Consider an event like “LIVE.” on 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica
- Hold a weekly or monthly farmers market on Pier Plaza during the day
- Music is too loud late at night from Pier Plaza
- Enforce non-smoking regulation
- Keep Hermosa Beach “beachy” and not high end and maintain cleanliness

<p>Question 5: What needs to be done to improve activities that would attract residents along the beachfront adjacent to the Downtown Core?</p>
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Pier and beach

- Make the pier accessible by boat
- Add a kids play area or water feature similar to Metlox Plaza in Manhattan beach
- Kiosks along strand
- Cleaner restrooms and more beach showers
- Consider adding a dog area on the beach
- Too much volleyball right of plaza, blocks room for families
- Consider the construction of a wall built on north side of the pier to block sand from blowing down the plaza (drawing shows it curved and broken into sections to allow for pedestrian traffic)
- Include playground equipment for children
- Change perception of downtown as a “party zone”
- Attract an older crowd, not just young adults

Restaurant/ food amenities

- More walk up or takeout restaurants so residents can take food to the beach
- Snack bar and stands selling cold drinks and water
- More public seating for eating near the beach
- More lunch places nearby
- Have recycle bins on the beach