



Staff Report

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**Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council
Study Session of January 12, 2016**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOWNTOWN CORE
REVITALIZATION STRATEGY - PARKING STRATEGY**
(Community Development Director Ken Robertson)

Recommended Action:

Confirm Council's previous direction to continue to implement the Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy as a top priority, and provide input on the 11 proposed code amendments outlined in the Parking Strategy.

<http://www.hermosabch.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6059>.

Background:

The purpose of this study session is to provide an update on implementation of the Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy ("Strategy"), discuss the parking component of the Strategy, and confirm Council's previous direction to continue to implement the Strategy. The Strategy identifies ways to increase the vitality of our Downtown Core, which is the area of the downtown district located between 10th and 14th Streets and between The Strand and Palm Drive. Throughout 2014, the City Council reviewed and made changes to the draft Strategy, and on February 24, 2015, the City Council accepted the Strategy and a set of Guiding Principles to help guide its implementation. The Council's commitment to implement the Strategy is further strengthened by designation of the Strategy as one of the top six priorities of the City's Strategic Plan. The Strategy implementation paths include the following:

- The Hermosa Avenue and Pier Plaza improvement components were referred to Public Works to refine concept plans before seeking input from relevant Commissions (Public Works and Planning Commission for Hermosa Avenue; Public Works, Parks and Recreation and potentially Planning Commission for Pier Plaza). Public Works will be releasing an RFP for Hermosa Avenue Streetscape Design and Conceptual Design for Pier Plaza Improvements. Public workshops and meetings with Public Works Commission, Planning Commission and City Council are required prior to moving forward with construction.
- Catalyst hotel development should be guided by the Strategy and Principles and Guidelines.
- The City has begun implementation of demand pricing to better manage existing parking supply and its distribution and availability. A comprehensive downtown and interceptor parking supply discussion is pending.

- The zoning code related concepts of the Parking Strategy were referred to Community Development and the Planning Commission. Some of the other components also address private development and the public/private realm interfaces. This will be the focus of discussion at the January 12th City Council study session.

The following principles accepted by the Council reflect the Strategy and are referred to as staff and the Planning Commission evaluate various zoning amendments:

Principles:

1. **Proactive strategy:** The Downtown Core, between 10th and 14th Streets and the Strand and Palm Drive focused on Hermosa Avenue and Pier Plaza is the heart of Hermosa Beach, and should be enhanced as the focus of social life in the city. It is part of the Downtown District, bounded by 15th Street, 8th Street, extending along Pier Avenue to Valley Drive.
2. **Family-friendly, inviting to all:** Create an environment that appeals to the increasingly stable, diverse and family-oriented population and allows them to mutually co-exist, rather than being a place dominated by one group at the expense of another.
3. **Daytime district:** Increasing the day-time population will add life and vitality that goes beyond the typical recreationally oriented uses that have been historically attracted to the beach setting of Hermosa Beach.
4. **Pedestrian oriented:** Develop the Downtown Core as a pedestrian and people oriented place with an appropriate mix of uses and quality of development that contributes to a more sociable, publicly-spirited and economically viable place.
5. **Eclectic beach character:** Improvement of parking facilities and management within the Downtown Core is essential to increasing economic vitality and maintaining the eclectic character of a district with small local businesses anchored by catalyst projects that provide synergy and support.
6. **Distinctive retail district:** Create a distinctive and well-defined retail district with quality shops and restaurants on the ground floor that are pedestrian oriented, family-friendly and appealing to a wide range of people.
7. **Catalyst development:** High quality hotel development that respects the scale and unique character of Hermosa Beach and provides significant quality public spaces and benefits can enhance the hospitality, identity and economic viability of the Downtown District.
8. **Public investment:** Realizing the full potential of the Downtown Core requires investment in the public realm and public-private partnerships which signal the City's commitment to the area and further city goals, attract economic enterprises, and reduce the negative social behavior that occurs within the Pier Plaza area.

Parking Strategy:

During Spring 2015 the Planning Commission commenced consideration of potential parking-related code amendments to implement to Strategy, taking into account the results of the January 2015 Beach Access and Parking Study commissioned by the City <http://www.hermosabch.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=5440> . The most relevant

parking information from the Strategy is provided below.

“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.”

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 Strategy identified 11 potential code amendments to encourage a more pedestrian-oriented district.

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 allowed to 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 100 SF is required. Cities such as Redondo Beach utilize 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.”

At its special meeting of June 16, 2015, the Planning Commission provided input on some zoning-related approaches suggested by the Strategy. Based on feedback at that meeting, it became clear the Commission will be giving a great deal of consideration to various ways to implement the Strategy, possibly necessitating a number of amendments to the zoning code. Rather than undertaking a time-consuming attempt to produce numerous code amendments to address the entire Strategy all at once, it was suggested that it would be more manageable, logical and time-efficient for the Commission to focus on higher priority, as well as “low hanging fruit,” goals that could assist in attaining desired results. The Strategy includes four major components: 1) Commercial Tenanting Strategy; 2) Hermosa Avenue Streetscape Improvements; 3) Pier Plaza and The Strand Improvements; and 4) Hotel Development Strategy, and the Commercial Tenanting Strategy is a good starting point when considering zoning code updates to encourage changes needed to create a Downtown environment that nurtures a stable, diverse and family-oriented population. In November 2015, the Planning Commission reviewed two draft parking-related zoning ordinance amendments, continuing one to a future Commission hearing, and recommending City Council approval of the other (included on the Council’s January 12, 2015 regular meeting agenda).

Conclusion:

City staff and the Planning Commission will continue to implement the City Council’s direction to develop recommendations for City Council consideration regarding zoning code amendments to implement the Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy, unless alternative direction is provided.

As indicated in the Strategy, “Realization of any of these opportunities could yield economic growth & help positively transition the Downtown Core. However, it will take a combination of actions over time by both public and private sectors before a full retail transformation will take place, coupled with a refreshed perception of the Downtown Core as a great place to visit and hang out by day, by night, and for a broad range of users including tourists, locals, and families. Catalytic projects like new hotels, with or without the continued office development, will increase day population and demand for upscale retail and services. Public support through district parking strategies, reduced parking requirements, and possibly provision of subsidized parking can help underwrite a desirable range of new development and rehab projects. Additional changes to the built environment through streetscape improvements can upgrade the ‘sense of place’ and make the Downtown Core a more desirable destination for visitors. Under these improved conditions, retailers will seek to exploit the new market opportunity. And because retailers tend to follow retailers, successful early movers will quickly be joined. Certain categories of retail in particular could be a strong fit for a revitalized Downtown. Women’s apparel is an area of opportunity, along with athletic clothing and sports gear. Home furnishing stores are underrepresented in the city as well. Better restaurants as well as cafes that encourage gathering and lingering would broaden Hermosa Beach’s reputation as an entertainment destination and address residents’ stated desire for more options. Ultimately, once a

certain critical mass of change has occurred, an anchor retailer could be attracted to become a focal point for a fully revitalized Downtown.”

Attachments:

1. Downtown Core Revitalization Strategy - Council Actions and Consensus
2. Powerpoint presentation prepared for Planning Commission 6-16-15

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Concur: Ken Robertson, Community Development Director

Approved: Tom Bakaly, City Manager