



City of Pismo Beach, California

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

SUBJECT: Downtown Economic Development Strategies.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to schedule a series of workshops for the downtown core area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

During the City of Pismo Beach Council meeting of February 19, 12001 Council Member Rabenaldt requested Council to place on the next agenda a discussion relating to implementing a series of workshops on downtown economic strategies that were discussed in prior years.

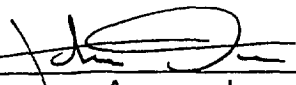
A scheduled series of workshops initially focusing on understanding past efforts and defining the area we call "downtown" will provide the foundation for discussion on such issues as; streetscapes, parking, redevelopment, beautification, zoning, and city participation in economic development. The goal of the workshops is to provide a format that the City Council, business community and the general public can begin to formulate a long-term strategic plan for development of the downtown. Attached is a workshop schedule with anticipated topics and some general thoughts on downtown revitalization.

The following Council options are available:

- ξ Direct staff to begin scheduling the workshops.
- ξ Direct staff on specific issues that should be addressed.

Prepared by: Randy Bloom, Community Development Director ^{RBL} Meeting Date: March 5, 2002

Attachments: Proposed Workshop Program, General Comments, Outline of Issues.


City Manager Approval

Agenda Item: 8A-1

PROPOSED WORKSHOP PROGRAM

The Pismo Beach downtown area has had a rich history of studies that have been done over time. It will be important for Council to understand and build upon the plans and policies that have been adopted for this area and review those efforts that have taken place in the past. Solutions to economic development in the downtown core area are heavily dependent on the private market place, so it is important for Council to understand what tools are available to complement or assist private re-investment. The workshops will initially focus on back history and current issues facing Council. However, it will be very important early on to have a general discussion and agreement on a vision for downtown Pismo Beach. An initial task of just defining the area is critical in recognizing what we call downtown. The workshops should begin to provide the foundation that will allow Council to move forward on a long-term work program for the downtown. Experience has taught us that downtown issues are very complex and brings out many diverse opinions and viewpoints and inevitably costs substantial amounts of money. Successful downtowns do not come by accident they are forged out of a constant commitment and yearly investment by the public and private sector over long periods of time. Climate and location alone are not strong enough motivators in developing a strong diverse downtown economy. Hopefully this process will refresh the community's commitment to the downtown. One of the keys to success is for Council to recognize and celebrate short-term goals and projects that are attainable within the City's budget constraints. It is through constant and continued celebrated steps that City's achieve ultimate success in their downtowns.

WORKSHOP NO. 1

ξ ***Historic overview of prior studies in the downtown.***

Pismo Beach Downtown Specific Plan
Downtown Specific Plan Traffic Study
Pismo Beach R/UDAT Study
Economic Development Strategic Plan
Economic Development Outlook: Potentials and Prescriptions
Pismo Beach parking district Study Working Papers 1,2 and3.
Pismo Beach Parking District Study Task II: (Land Use & Parking Inventory)

ξ ***Up-date on the 1998 Zoning Ordinance / Local Coastal Plan.***

Impediments and Impacts on the downtown.

ξ ***Defining Downtown Pismo Beach.***

Establish and adopt a map that defines downtown.

ξ ***Short-term attainable goals and projects.***

Price Street median parking design

WORKSHOP NO. 2

ξ *Vision for Downtown - Year 2020.*

Understanding our customer base.
Understanding the role of the downtown.
Recognizing of our image.
Pismo's role in the marketplace.
Importance of economic diversity.

ξ *The need for a Facilities Master Plan*

Understanding our long and short term facility needs such as:
Restrooms, Parking, Cultural Amenities, Governmental Facilities, City Parks, Pier, etc.

ξ *Redevelopment as a potential tool.*

Advantages and disadvantages of creating a Redevelopment Project Area.
Importance of a Feasibility Study.
Historical Fears – Condemnation.
Process to become a Redevelopment Project Area

ξ *Short-term attainable goals and projects.*

WORKSHOP NO. 3

ξ *Parking Facility financing from municipal viewpoint.*

Revenue sources.
Capitol and Operating Expenditures.

ξ *Parking Demand (Perceived or Real).*

Current Parking Inventory.
Merchant and employee parking needs.
Customer parking needs.
Public Perception.
Need for Parking Management Plan.
Increased parking enforcement.
Parking Meters (pros and cons).
Need for additional parking areas (location-location).
Parking Structures vs. surface lots.

ξ *Short-term attainable goals and projects.*

WORKSHOP NO. 4

ξ *Pedestrian Oriented Streetscapes.*

Downtown Circulation.

Increased sidewalk widths (patterns and design).

Outdoor Dining.

Landscaping – (Medians, Intersections, Mid Block).

Street Furniture – (Design, Advertising / Income).

Directional Signage.

ξ *Pier Pedestrian Activities.*

What are the needs of our tourists when they are at the pier.

Potential revenue opportunities from the Pier.

Potential lease spaces for vendors.

Special Events.

Police interface.

Organized Recreation.

ξ *Short-term attainable goals and projects.*

Downtown Pismo Beach
What Should be Done to Improve It
(Prefatory Comments, as We Commence Public Workshops on the Downtown)

First, as many Cities have discovered over the years, "bringing back" or revitalizing or strengthening their downtowns requires an agreed-to plan or approach, a concentrated effort over many years, and, usually, great expense. It also requires some foresight and agreement among parties that usually have different motivations, mainly, property owners, business owners and managers, the users or customers of the downtown, and City officials.

Lacking the components named above, the tendency is to drift, to accept negative aspects, and to avoid the problems of coming up with the "big plan", with its commitment of hard work, cooperation, money, sustained effort, and overcoming resistance against the plan or the implementing program.

So the "downtown" becomes like Ben Franklin's description of the weather, everyone complains about it, but no one does anything about it.

In regard to "improving downtown", one problem is that everyone looks at the problem and sees a different solution. One person would propose to put in a decorative sidewalk, another to plant flowers, another to increase parking, another to put in public restrooms, another to "spruce up" storefronts, another to tear down and rebuild buildings, and the list goes on. It's not that any one of these ideas is necessarily bad or misguided; in the collective these ideas reveal the problem, that the issues of downtown are multi-dimensional and that there needs to be an integrated, more comprehensive approach, rather than a single perspective or fragmented approach.

There has to be tolerance for those who suggest different ideas, for those who believe things are just great as they are, for those who are concerned with earning next month's rent and don't feel the need to develop the "big picture", and for those who will oppose a collective effort.

So, having said the above, what are some preliminary conclusions about initiating a renewed look at strengthening the downtown?

1. It has to be approached in a positive spirit, or the effort will not last.
2. It has to be approached with an open mind, for if the "different" ideas of others are projected without proper consideration, the effort will fail.
3. It has to be known up front that any initial effort is "one small baby step" and that any Olympian strides are years (and real effort, time and money) away.

4. A proper time dimension becomes important. While the past has produced the downtown of today, there is little profit in revisiting the past, but we must concentrate on what we in the present can do to bring about a desired future.
5. It must be realized that no one initially brings money to the table, and that some of the better ideas will require money, usually from some "partnerships" that need to be formed.
6. Developing a series of workshops built around diagnosing the problems and prescribing potential solutions, is only a beginning, and fortitude, patience, cooperation, persistence and organization and money are necessary to move from individual comments and ideas to genuine accomplishment.
7. Ideas and visualizations of what might be, however, are a great starting point, for without them, nothing will change.

Good luck to all of us!

JD/mc

8A-6

Downtown Issues An Illustrative Outline

1. Physical Design
 - A. Street pattern in downtown
 - B. Building layout and design
 - C. Street, sidewalk condition
 - D. Street, sidewalk surface texture, patterns
 - E. Planters (median islands, or sidewalk "bulbouts")
 - F. What you see – it's attractiveness and appeal
 - G. Re-look at RUDAC study?
 - H. Overall resident and visitor impressions (quality, tacky, funky, enjoyable?)
 - I. "Paint-up, fix-up" campaign necessary or desirable?

2. Operational Issues
 - A. Need for public restrooms
 - B. Garbage and recycling put-out and collection
 - C. Street sweeping
 - D. Sidewalk cleaning

3. Parking
 - A. Need (what areas, what times)
 1. Distinguish between merchant and employee parking needs, from customer parking needs.
 - B. Parking supply inventory
 - C. Parking controls
 1. Existing (enumerate those in place)
 2. Potential additional controls
 - D. Parking meters
 1. The case against
 2. The case for
 - E. Parking lots and garages

1. Need for additional parking areas
 2. Where should they be located
 3. Explore formation of parking district?
 4. Who pays: property owners, merchants, users, City contribution, or combo
- F. Increase parking spaces, within present street configuration?
4. Traffic and Circulation
- A. Some gridlock (when?)
 - B. Ways to alleviate
5. Marketing/Merchandising
- A. Who: the customer base
 - B. What are customer needs in terms of goods and services
 - C. Role of the downtown (vs. other shopping areas)
 - D. Promotions, Advertising (group efforts)
 1. What are they presently?
 2. Would there be benefit from more?
 - E. The "image", reputation and appeal of downtown
 1. "Funky beach town" appealing primarily to a certain type of tourist
 2. True downtown, meeting needs of residents and visitors, with some "comparison shopping" opportunities
 - F. What part of the market are we trying to reach
 1. Age: young, middle, old
 2. Income: lower middle, upper middle
 3. Kinds of merchandise: tourist, resident or mixed
 4. Quality of merchandise: low, higher, highest
 - G. Need for the development of a "marketing plan"

6. Public Safety (and Perceptions)
 - A. Crime - fairly minimal, some fights (youth and drunks), no prostitution, some drug dealing
 - B. Congregations of youth (Spring Break, some special events)
 - C. Feeling of public safety seems to be high

7. Redevelopment – should it be considered?
 - A. Historical fears, concerns
 - B. Can these be addressed
 - C. Process to become a redevelopment area
 - D. Advantages, disadvantages, "feasibility" of creating project