

considerations I discuss below are poorly considered. I've seen many ballot initiatives here over the years and believe it or not your recommendations and the council's resulting actions on this matter could very well result in a ballot initiative. Such initiative measure would well provide for everyone a final scientific survey result which could be contrary to what a lot of work-up surveys and discussions by those particularly interested in the subject thought, hoped, or believed were the will of the people.

So again it is my view that your work would best have as its underlying focus a careful review of density, that being the human, vehicle, traffic, and building density to be appropriate for future Hermosa Beach generations as with respect to Pier Avenue and especially with respect to how that density is going to fit with the residential that this single avenue is squeezed between. Everything else is, in my view, ancillary once the desired density limitations have been established as those being appropriate for the future viability, and especially the tranquility of this area as related to the adjoining residential. Currently this avenue leads to a not so tranquil downtown area given all the ad-hoc events added over the past dozen years, and of course the far too active late-night club, cab, and drinking district that's been created there.

The city has perhaps unintentionally created a costly to the treasury, chaotic, and potentially disaster-waiting-to-happen condition downtown. The costly public-safety and lawsuit requirements of this small downtown have been out of control for the past several years as a result of past and very significant council approval blunders regarding alcohol CUP approvals. I believe the city council of today is now recognizing that.

All of the committee members may not be aware that during the past 25 or so years there have been a most significant and beneficial series of density-reduction measures with respect to all of the residential and other non-downtown commercial areas in Hermosa Beach. These have included reducing the number of residential units that can be constructed on R2 and R3 residential parcels by increasing the parcel area required per residential unit. R2 and R3 parcels have also had their building height limits reduced from 35 feet to 30 feet. And, R1 25-foot height-limit single-unit residential parcels have gone through a series of council enacted ordinances which mandated over a thousand parcel mergings, a process that was controversial and painful for many of the effected property owners to accept in the late 1980s. Just recently a remaining number of such R1 parcels have also been mandated by the city council to be merged.

Commercial parcels along PCH have also seen their former 45-foot permitted height-limits reduced to 35 feet and a Specific Plan Area (SPA) established. This having been accomplished after the city came to realize that 45 feet was resulting in too-large, overly intensive development such as displayed by Hotel Hermosa, the Pavilion as with its prior theatres, the former bowling alley that is now a church, and additionally, an aesthetically-devoid office building at the north-west corner of Gould and PCH. Also with respect to residential density there have been additional density reduction modifications made to require more open space, greater setbacks for vehicle garages, and more careful review of residential projects requiring conditional-use-permits or other public review. This has resulted in the residential population falling to the area of 18,000 and maintaining it there.

Interestingly though, the downtown has magically escaped any meaningful density reduction such as which has occurred in every other part of town --- density reduction that had been a prime direction after an advisory measure known as 'EE' was supported by a vote of the people back in the 1980s.

In the downtown however, and never intended by RU/DAT, daytime businesses have literally been driven out, only to be replaced and then morphed into visitor-intensive nighttime alcohol-dispensing businesses, and the ridiculous cab-district. In essence the vast community density has been significantly reduced over the last 25 years while the downtown's density has been insidiously increased in the nighttime with intrusive cabs, visitors from near and far, and a costly requirement for public-safety. The downtown has become a de facto factory producing drunks, and at a heavy and costly public-safety burden to the city treasury and thus the residential taxpayers.

However when you look at the downtown, which includes upper Pier avenue, RU/DAT itself was used essentially as little more than an excuse to do just about everything RU/DAT was trying to end. Read the RU/DAT report and you will clearly see this. RU/DAT desired less bar activity at night, to be replaced with upscale dining, but mostly a revitalized daytime business district for the community. Instead RU/DAT was used as an excuse to launder over a \$1 million of county parks money into an ugly three level parking structure filled on weekend evenings with people mostly from elsewhere coming here to essentially party and get drunk. The lower Pier Avenue street was removed and replaced with a black slab of concrete and 16 oversized palm trees. Some call it a work of art. It is little more than a slab of concrete encouraging endless crowds of drunks and bars and now even bar-expansions to be readily approved by a city council which to this day evidently still does not understand the negative future for the city that all these bars portend.

RU/DAT never in its wildest dreams desired or recommended such a disaster to occur. Many, many good small and low-impact daytime businesses have been since driven out due to the readily higher rents so-called restaurants/bars are willing to pay. The situation there still brings in minimal tax revenue while costing the city extra millions per year for public-safety to prevent death and serious injury from all the late night activity. The councils of the last 14 years have turned Hermosa's downtown into a massive cab, club, and alcohol-dispensing district. Some residents have been duped into believing this is a wonderful thing. It's all very sad as there is really very little in the downtown for the men, women, and children of this city anymore. It's an adult 21 and over area. It also reflects very poorly on the residents, the people, who over the last dozen years sat idly by while a handful of general-law-city elected council people systematically and ignorantly converted Hermosa's downtown into the adult drinking and cab zone it is today.

As an aside, the downtown cabs do little more than bring more people from outlying areas to the city so as to party and get drunk and then take them back to outlying locations where they have parked at friends homes, and from where they exit a cab, and then drive home drunk from that outlying location. The cabs have just extended the parking for these bar-hoppers to locations further out because it's cheaper to park in someone's residential

neighborhood and take a cab to the bar district from there. The bars have been raking in the cash, and evidently funding the campaigns of city councilmembers whom have perpetuated this disaster. These councilmembers will have a legacy not to be proud of if they ever have the intelligence to understand the long-term damage they have done to their city and the many small businesses they have thus indirectly driven from the city.

I would thus recommend that the committee recognizes that density reduction in all respects is the only sensible direction for Hermosa's downtown. Without density reduction all else is essentially meaningless and probably a waste of time because the quality of life with expanding density in the downtown commercial area will point to a very undesirable quality of life in the future for the men, women, and children of Hermosa Beach.

I recommend that the committee obtain all available data from Manhattan Beach and the City of El Segundo as to why their downtowns are maintained as they are. Why their streetscapes were accomplished without all the properties there being morphed into three story high density structures or bars lacking in parking.

Both Manhattan Beach and El Segundo have accomplished low-density downtown stabilization and success by recognizing that the types of businesses in their downtowns will never be significant revenue producers for the city, short of their covering the area with automobile dealers, or hotels.

The committee members should understand that the sales-tax-portion penny-on-a-dollar of 'reported' taxable sales that Hermosa Beach receives from retail, restaurant, and bar sales in the downtown, simply does not cover the cost of providing city services for the area and likely never will. (note: the other 7-1/4 pennies of sales tax per dollar of sales leaves the city.) In the case of this token sales tax as received from the tens of thousands of visitors coming to the city to drink alcohol, Hermosa's added public-safety cost required in the downtown due to this alcohol consumption is currently in excess of several millions of additional dollars per year over that token sales tax revenue this type of retail produces. Unfortunately this type of alcohol-dispensing retail is now entrenched in Hermosa's downtown more so then ever before due to incredibly dumb council approvals during the past 12 to 14 years. These approvals will take perhaps decades to reverse. It is extremely bleak any expectation of meaningful change anytime soon. The Pier Plaza looks to be a major public-safety cost drain on the city treasury for years to come.

The committee should thus understand that revenue from the downtown is insignificant when compared to city costs for the area. The committee could demand true accurate revenue figures and accurate true city costs of the downtown. Be not fooled by the merging of retail or hotel revenue with alcohol revenue. The smoke and mirrors of the city's finances and lack of easy and readily available true transparency have long been a disgrace.

Hermosa's city councils have also been approving more and expanded fun-loving events with next to no consideration of the true city impacts, costs, and degradation to the city of bringing into town tens of thousands of visitors over and above those number which would normally come to this beach community to use the public beach in the daytime. This may seem to be

a wonderful and generous thing for Hermosa's councils to have done, however it has been fiscally irresponsible and has resulted in the wasting of significant discretionary city funds to subsidize public-safety to keep these downtown visitors safe from injury or death. Minimal funds are left allocated annually to provide for proper infrastructure services and public-safety to the residents.

The city treasury is being continuously drained by the present downtown condition and the situation is getting worse. Each year the public-safety costs are taking a higher and higher percentage of the city's revenue. The city has been on a free ride with the expanding real-estate values of the past 8 years however as that trend flattens or even falls the city's financial situation could turn bleak. The committee needs to recognize that alcohol in all its forms upscale, downscale, whatever scale, is overdone in this city and is seriously affecting the economic viability of the city. Everything the committee does should be done with this in mind. The alcohol induced public-safety costs will eventually result in the city having to eliminate its city-operated fire department and contract for county fire services. This already happened in recent years over in Hawthorne. Our alcohol-business obsessed council members will have been responsible for this when it happens. Ultimately the people will have been responsible for electing these alcohol-business obsessed council members.

Above all else, the committee should arrive at a conclusion that absolutely nothing should be permitted to be constructed above the voters mandated downtown 30-foot height limit. That should include all parapets, towers, steeples, mechanical equipment, and so forth extending above the voter mandated 30-foot height limit. Further there should be an absolute limit of two stories of publicly accessible above ground structure in any new or remodeled building, whether that be for parking or other, and that for hotel, office and retail. Cramming three stories into a 30 foot height limit only encourages an obscene 50 percent increase in unneeded density and further results in flat-roofed boxes with ceiling heights within these commercial structures which are, for all practical purposes, too low. The Beach House Hotel itself has rooms with ceilings which are below a common-sense hotel room ceiling height for ventilation in a small sleeping room. There is no excuse for such unneeded 3 story density in Hermosa's downtown.

In Manhattan Beach's downtown the people enacted a 26-foot height limit over thirty years ago. It is that height limit which has preserved their downtown. And the same goes for such preservation of El Segundo's downtown where in recent years they completed a streetscape of their downtown which in many ways can be a model of what Hermosa Beach should accomplish.

The greatest threat to this city is the desire by a handful of people blindly believing that encouraging three-story office condo buildings with sub-minimal parking, and then having the city build parking structures is somehow "moving this city forward". This is just a dumb scheme to pack more people into the downtown who will supposedly work there and then do their drinking at the bars. It's that simple. That is absolutely blind thinking, nonsense, and a roadmap to the Hermosa's downtown being a super-high-density canyonized three-story flat roofed box-buildings area.

Attempting to solve parking shortages downtown by encouraging high density structures and then building parking garages on city-owned space, thus destroying open space, light, and air, is absolutely the reverse of what is needed.

What is needed is to preserve the existing small businesses, preserve the lower rents, the existing smaller structures, reduce the high-end restaurant/bar approach and return the downtown to a peaceful daytime environment, one which then goes to sleep after 9 PM. Anything that encourages activity after 9 PM is very much less than desirable. This is a 98% bedroom community. It is not downtown Los Angeles or Santa Monica. This was a daytime beach town. It's been turned into an insidious night-time bar, club, and cab district. You on this committee can set a direction to reverse that.

It is everything about maintaining the best of what is here now and reducing everything that is a net-negative to the community, especially to the city treasury. The downtown will never be a positive for the city treasury, thus wake up, smell the coffee and set a direction to return this downtown to a daytime retail area and at worst and early-evening dining place.

Please obtain all the data of the Manhattan Beach and El Segundo downtown districts that you can, including building standards, parking requirements and methods, and especially height and floor limits. And absolutely decide that all members are to visit and closely observe all aspects of those two downtown areas in the very near future. On doing such all should take note of the one and two story atmosphere. Don't let Hermosa's downtown be torn down and turned into a three-story flat-roofed box-building ghetto.

Density reduction, both building and visitor density, and daytime business preservation and encouragement would best receive the highest priority.

Thank you again for your time, consideration, and unpaid service on the UPAC committee.