



AGENDA STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 4/2/2024

AGENDA SECTION: STUDY SESSION

SUBJECT:

Presentation of the City's Downtown Strategic Plan, including its recommendations related to Policy/Administration, Tourism/Promotion, Economic Vitality and Design, and discussion about the reestablishment of the Central Parking and Business Improvement Area Advisory Board, as required by the City's Municipal Code, including its role in helping to implement recommendations provided in the downtown plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation: That the City Council review the matter and provide input on the City's Downtown Strategic Plan, including its recommendations related to Policy/Administration, Tourism/Promotion, Economic Vitality and Design, and provide additional direction regarding the reestablishment of the Central Parking and Business Improvement Area Advisory Board as required by the Hanford Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND

On November 15, 2022, the Hanford City Council authorized staff to enter into an agreement with Retail Strategies to develop a Downtown Strategic Plan (Plan) for Hanford. Over the course of the first year of the contract, staff worked with the consultant, who also hosted a meeting with downtown stakeholders, to develop a strategic plan for Hanford's downtown. The Plan focuses on "Five Pillars" to strengthen and encourage economic growth in the Downtown including Market Analysis, Policy and Administration, Tourism and Promotion, Economic Vitality and Design. Staff will provide Council with a presentation that includes the summary and recommendations associated with each Pillar.

In several cases, the City has already begun the implementation process for some Pillars found in the Plan. For example, the Plan includes several strategies to encourage public art, downtown improvements, and alley activation. Recently, Council approved an updated mural policy in the Downtown (MX-D Zone) that makes it easier for Downtown Businesses to install murals on their buildings. City staff have also started working with several community partners, including the Rotary Club of Hanford, to encourage mural projects in the Downtown. The City is currently in the process of coordinating a "kick off" meeting to help identify the location and themes of murals in the Downtown.

For several of the Pillars, the Plan recommends working with Downtown "stakeholders" and "community partners" to help advise and participate in the Plan's implementation process. The City's Municipal Code established a Business Improvement Area, which requires a seven-member board, comprised of business owners in the Downtown, that is tasked with making recommendations to Council on funding and other matters in the Business Improvement Area as it relates to the following:

- A. The acquisition, construction or maintenance of parking facilities for the benefit of the area;
- B. The decoration of any public place in the area;
- C. The promotion of public events which are to take place on or in public places in the area;
- D. The furnishing of music in any public place in the area; and
- E. The general promotion of retail trade activities in the area.

The Business Improvement Area Board may be the appropriate advisory group to provide recommendations on the Plan's implementation. To move forward with the implementation of the Plan, Staff is recommending that the Business Improvement Area Board be re-established within the adopted district boundaries. To insure that the BID has broad representation among the entire Area, City planning staff created a district map that includes seven districts (each district contains an equal number of businesses). Parcels zoned exclusively for residential uses were excluded from the district map since they do not pay a business licenses tax and cannot establish storefront businesses.

Staff is seeking direction on the proposed Business Improvement Area District map and is seeking input on the implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No impact to the General Fund

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Downtown Strategic Plan
- 2. BIA District Map