

**Retail Visioning Steering Committee**

**February 24, 2010—8:00am**

Yardhouse

401 West Shoreline Drive, Long Beach, CA 90802

**Steering Committee members / representatives in attendance:** Phil Appleby, Derek Burnham, Loara Cadavona, Ron Cole, Broc Coward, Steve Goodling, Susana Gonzalez, Joe Magaddino, Jerry Miller, Carl Morgan, Brian Russell, Ted Slaughter

**Steering Committee members absent:**

Amy Bodek, Robert Garcia, Suja Lowenthal, Tony Shooshani

**Other Attendees:** Kraig Kojian, Kris Larson, Vanessa McCollum

Meeting Notes:

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

**Kris Larson called the meeting to order at 8:05am**

**2. COMMITTEE FEEDBACK ON PROJECT**

The committee was asked to take a survey, identifying priorities and timelines for action items and strategies. The survey and its results and comments

- 1. Almost every transaction in downtown Long Beach is conducted on foot. The needs of pedestrians should come before those of the automobile. Develop a long-term public realm/pedestrian improvement plan and strategy that focuses capital improvements on creating a safe, attractive and well-maintained public realm in those areas targeted for retail developments.*

**4 Committee members felt that this action is a priority and should be included in the final plan.**

- 2. Create a uniform set of standards that provides businesses with more opportunities to utilize the public realm. Among those standards, explore repealing the requirement for fences that enclose outdoor cafes along the street. They waste space, create obstacles to movement and provide no real benefit. If this is a state level requirement – work with other cities to have it changed.*

**The committee agreed that this should be included in the final plan. Discussion included the close resemblance to the Pine Avenue Streetscape plan and the condition that the ordinances should be flexible, but clear.**

- 3. Permanent “tent” dining structures on the sidewalk reduces the space for pedestrian, prevents people watching, likely violate the ADA rules (when remaining sidewalk is less*

*than the minimum 5 feet wide – unobstructed) and severely degrades the quality of the public realm. Change the outdoor dining rules to prohibit any permanent structures on the public sidewalk.*

**The committee feels that this action should be included with action number two.**

**Discussion included the need to have uniform, transparent standards that are flexible, also changing the word “regulations” to “guidelines”.**

4. *Street crossings can create the most discomfort for pedestrians. Most pedestrian/vehicular accidents occur during a street crossing attempt. Create a standard pedestrian crossing design that gives the pedestrian priority over vehicles.*

**2 committee members felt that this was a priority, but could be included with action item number one.**

5. *Lighting is critical to the perception of safety at night. Distinct lighting can help to define a district. Establish a lighting standard that is scaled to the needs of the pedestrian – not cars (they have lights). Set lighting standards for private developments along the street edge. Private fixtures along the column line contribute more light and offer an opportunity to add interesting details to a façade*

**7 committee members felt that this is a priority. Discussion included a suggestion to break this action into two by specifying lighting for public safety and lighting for private developments. Regulations exist for lighting and outdoor media. Committee members expressed concern for legal issues that have targeted “LA Live”, and stated that research would need to be done to be ensure that any program was implemented with caution.**

6. *Within the Downtown business district, develop a parking management strategy that is weighted towards the needs of patrons (rather than focused on maximizing revenue). Such a strategy should also serve to create and reinforce the broader perception that parking in Downtown is easy and convenient, as well as incentivize the opening of new shops, restaurants and entertainment venues.*

**5 members of the committee felt that this item was a priority, and should be included. A suggestion was made to implement a plan for those actions included within the Carl Walker parking analysis.**

7. *To help in lowering costs as an incentive for prospective tenants, new shops, restaurants and entertainment venues should be exempt from all parking requirements in the Downtown.*

**5 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. The committee members stated that “exempt” was too strong of a word, and that the community plan would address some of this action item. A suggestion was made to reduce parking under PD-30 and make it more flexible.**

8. *Valet parking is a service that consumers are increasingly demanding, particularly when patronizing dining and entertainment establishments. Rather than see a proliferation of private stands throughout Downtown, the City and DLBA should explore the creation of a public/private “utility” that manages all of the valet parking there.*

**8 members felt that this was a priority. A suggestion was made to combine with action number 6. A portion of this action item will be covered under the Pine Avenue Streetscape project.**

9. *Transit is a key component of civic mobility. It expands access and increases the trade area of retail/restaurant/entertainment districts. The current transit systems should be evaluated for their potential impact on the designated retail/restaurant/entertainment districts. System operators, property owners and other stakeholders should implement any actions that result in a win-win for patrons, transit riders, residents and business owners.*

**7 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. Long Beach Transit provided statistics for removing busses on Pine Avenue, there has been no consensus reached that busses should be removed. There are other options to be explored, like the possibility of electric busses. This item will be addressed before the drawings for the Pine Avenue streetscape plan are completed.**

10. *Long Beach is positioning itself as the most bike friendly city in the nation. Bicycles are low impact, easy to park and serve to expand the trade area of downtown. A new bicycle plan for Downtown should be developed and implemented. Additional private bike-rental kiosks, rickshaws and other such initiatives should be evaluated.*

**Discussion included simply supporting the Bicycle Master Plan.**

11. *Effective wayfinding is critical for first time visitors to downtown, including tourists and conventioners. The existing system should be reevaluated and expanded, with more focus on the needs of: 1) visitors on foot; and 2) motorists searching for public parking.*

**9 members of the committee felt that this was a priority.**

12. *Document the current crime rates for the entire city. Compare downtown to other similar districts, both within and outside of Long Beach. If it's favorable – publicize the results, if not or if there is still room to improve – get all of the stakeholders to the table and develop a comprehensive strategy to bring the rate down.*

**10 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. There is some minor evidence of crime, window etching, graffiti. Educating the public and the community of the reality vs. the perception by documenting the actual crime rates and comparing them to other similar districts, both inside and outside of Long Beach.**

13. *Panhandling is an issue in every major city, perhaps worse in cities like Long Beach who have been favored with great climates. Search out successful strategies in other Californian cities for dealing with panhandling and implement the best of them.*

**11 members of the committee felt this was a priority. Discussion included development of a pan-handling task force, researching and implementing best practices, using references like San Francisco.**

14. *Making sure not to risk the cannibalization of one by the other, confirm the positioning of each of the three main Downtown sub-districts – the Core (including Upper Pine, the Promenade, CityPlace and Long Beach Boulevard), the Waterfront (including Lower Pine and The Pike at Rainbow Harbor) and the East Village. Develop a recruitment strategy to reinforce these positions, complete with recommendations on catalytic projects and tenant prospects.*

**7 committee members felt that this action was a priority.**

15. *Develop a “Shop Local Program” that educates new Downtown residents about Downtown shops, restaurants and entertainment venues, for example, through “Meet the Proprietor” events that allow for the sampling of merchandise and the formation of new resident-merchant relationships. This program should communicate to residents that every time they leave Downtown to spend money on a good or service that is available within the Downtown, they are weakening the case for Downtown retail. It must also impress upon Downtown merchants the importance of listening to their customers and developing new offerings that respond to the needs of the changing marketplace.*

**5 members felt that this item was a priority.**

16. *Coordinate the Retail Vision and Strategy with all future planning efforts, such as the Downtown Community Plan, new neighborhood planning efforts, key economic development initiatives, the long-term plans of local anchors (e.g. CSULB, County Courthouse), etc.*

**7 members of the committee felt that this was a priority.**

17. *To broaden the constituency for implementing the Retail Vision and Strategic Plan, continue the outreach to new people, interest groups and non-profit entities. Develop a power-point that can be continuously updated for future presentations to the City Council, neighborhood associations, non-profits, arts organizations, etc. Consider the use and development of social networking techniques like Facebook, Twitter, listservs, etc to keep the public engaged and ready to voice their preferences and concerns at meetings where key decisions are made.*

**The committee felt that this action would be better combined with action items number 21 and 25. Discussion included Downtown Long Beach Associates becoming the clearing house for Economic Development and vacant space listings.**

18. *Borrowing from “Best Practices” in comparable downtowns across the country, develop a transparent “Retail Incentive Program” to jumpstart the implementation of the recruitment strategy. Set a sunset date so as to encourage immediate action.*

**6 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. Discussion included linking**

**this item to item number 22, and possibly calling them “strategic incentives”. Must be sure to have a balance, demand for the supply.**

19. *Align on-going marketing and branding campaigns – and work with local media vehicles -- to better communicate each sub-district’s positioning to target markets as well as to relay news of positive change throughout Downtown.*

**5 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. The committee stressed the importance of “speaking with one voice.”**

20. *Create a regulatory reform task force to meet with proprietors, research how other cities have addressed these issues, uncover the regulatory impediments and make changes that remove barriers to opening new establishments. Look especially for those regulations that have a high private cost and low public benefit. Rather than take a piecemeal approach, bring a coordinated package of reforms to the Council for quick action. If possible, couple and coordinate this effort with the adoption of the new Community Plan.*

**6 members thought that this issue was a priority. Discussion included the positive change over the last three to four years.**

21. *Pursue tenant prospects from the list developed as part of the recruitment strategy (see section above on “Retail Tenant Mix”), and direct leads to the landlords of (or brokers for) the spaces in which they are most interested. Continuously update this list based on earlier outreach efforts, shifting market conditions, Downtown’s changing profile, etc.*

**The committee suggested combining this action with action number 17.**

22. *Coordinate economic development efforts to ensure that new Downtown projects and initiatives are programmed and sited so as to add to the “in-place” customer base for existing and new shops, restaurants and entertainment venues.*

**5 members of the committee stated that this was a priority. The suggestion from the committee was to include this action with action number 18.**

23. *Expand outreach to the visitor segment by offering a better introduction to the downtown Long Beach retail market. Conduct a study to better understand the visitor base to Downtown Long Beach. Use historic tourism, eco-tourism and Long Beach’s unique assets to leverage a deeper understanding of the city for visitors and residents alike.*

**1 member of the committee felt that this was a priority. A suggestion was made to work backwards from Bed Taxes, and or survey guests.**

24. *In an effort to retain Downtown’s (and the city’s) authenticity and distinctiveness, develop a “Heritage Retail Program” that works with local, long-time merchants to help them understand the positioning and strategy for their respective sub-districts, and adapt their businesses accordingly.*

**Discussion was that it should be included in the plan, with the understanding that some businesses will not be able to bounce back even with help.**

25. *Seek and promote private development, public investments and programming opportunities that would further augment the “in-place” customer base for these sub-districts – e.g. artist live/work spaces in the East Village, international food festivals on Upper Pine, etc.*

**The committee suggested that this action be included in action number 17.**

26. *Undertake an analysis of other business districts and shopping centers in Long Beach so as to detect un-served or under-served niches in the broader competitive marketplace, and then evaluate the potential for Downtown sub-districts to fill them.*

**1 member of the committee felt that this was a priority.**

27. *Work to secure “buy-in” to the recruitment strategy (see the section on “Retail Tenant Mix” above) from key implementers and stakeholders, including, most importantly, the landlords of and brokers for Downtown retail space.*

**3 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. Discussion included the need for clear definitions in regards to zoning. The importance of not taking away the right of residents to weigh in on zoning in buildings with Home Owners Associations, but resident’s expectations and zoning codes need to be aligned before possible retail tenants are pushed away.**

28. *Lobby the Mayor to take an active and high-profile role in recruitment efforts, including, for example, the pursuit of possible retail anchors at major industry events. Enlist both the Mayor and well-known merchants to provide testimonials on Downtown’s behalf that can be used in marketing collateral.*

**3 members of the committee felt that this was a priority. Suggestions included heightening the Mayor’s involvement, also including City Council members, Redevelopment representatives for larger prospective businesses.**

29. *Continue to promote Downtown Long Beach as a retail location at industry events, and consider advertising placements in industry media vehicles, not only for the purpose of luring new tenants, but also, raising Downtown’s profile more generally.*

**6 committee members felt that this was a priority. Discussion included the relatively low cost of a coordinated, collaborative presence.**

30. *Develop non-traditional entrepreneurship support methods such as business incubators or retail competitions for attracting retail tenants that will help to reinforce and fortify the positioning of each retail district.*

**1 member of the committee felt that this was a priority. The action item needs to be better defined, the one or two businesses chosen for this program must be given enough time to become a rent paying business.**

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

Larson adjourned the meeting at 11:05am.