

Downtown Vista Committee Meeting
March 7, 2025
Minutes

- Kickoff meeting reception 5:00-6:00pm

- Welcome and Introductions
 - Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm
 - Opening remarks by City Manager John Conley
 - Councilmember & Committee member Corinna Contreras provided an introduction
 - All Committee members were present and provided introductions:
 - Councilmember Corinna Contreras, City Council
 - Lisa De Jesus, Planning Commission
 - Sharon Larimer, Traffic Commission
 - Terry Woods, CVBID Advisory Committee
 - Nicole Halle, Community Safety Commission
 - Lev Gershman, Chamber of Commerce
 - Natalie Trevino, Business Owner
 - Mike Zane, Business Owner
 - Julie Lowen, Property Owner
 - Cassidy McCarthy for Clay McCarthy, Property Owner
 - Anne Pate, Resident
 - Deanna Faraone, Resident
 - Staff / Council Present:
 - Councilmember Jeff Fox
 - John Conley, City Manager
 - Imelda M. Huerta, Assistant City Manager
 - Joe Vacca, Community Development Director
 - Larry Vaupel, Economic Development Director
 - Chris Mitchell, Information Technology Director
 - Sam Hasenin, Engineering Division Manager
 - Fred Tracey, Communications Officer

- City Manager John Conley provided information regarding Brown Act Requirements and procedural rules for meetings.

- Selection of Chair and Vice Chair
 - Nicole Halle nominated Councilmember Contreras as the Chair for the Downtown Vista Committee. Anne Pate seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

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- Mike Zane nominated Terry Woods as Vice Chair; Deanna Faraone seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.
- Goals and Objectives for the Committee
 - City Manager John Conley presented draft goals and objectives based on Committee interview input and staff input.
 - Draft goals included:
 - Create a welcoming & comfortable community gathering space for the public to meet & socialize
 - Create a multi-functional open space for the public and for community events
 - Preserve, protect, and enhance the unique character and open space features of the downtown area
 - Create a sense of place through unique and thoughtfully designed streetscapes with ties to the community and its history through public art installations, historical markers, and themed landscaping
 - Create a more pedestrian-friendly corrido/plaza
 - Create a more vibrant downtown village area
 - Help encourage walking/biking/transit to and from the downtown area
 - Provide environmental, educational, and leisure-type opportunities in the downtown area for the community
 - Foster the health and well-being of the community through thoughtfully designed green and open public space planning in the downtown area
 - Increase business foot traffic
- Attendee Comments
 - Jeanette Bradshaw
 - Create a space where everyone can come. Have special events to bring families downtown.
 - Create a small park where kids can play, and adults can enjoy beverages.
 - Jim Ellis
 - Recommends a small park.
 - Maintain history.
 - Chad Baker
 - Connect to the transit center to attract visitors.
 - Councilmember Jeff Fox
 - Generate business for downtown and increase tourism.

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- Luis
 - Coffee shop
 - Create more spaces for film and music and make them accessible to the local community.
 - Touring and local artists perform at the AVO.
 - Activate underutilized buildings.
 - Examples – LA Forum, Fonda Theatre, etc.
- Lev Gershman
 - Attract people from outside of Vista
 - We are completing with other options in Oceanside, Carlsbad, etc.
- Sharon Larimer
 - Address accessibility for people with disabilities and senior citizens, while adding areas for children.
 - Add park benches.
- Lisa De Jesus
 - Construct a public amphitheater. The AVO is a good spot for events.
 - Connect to Santa Fe Senior Village.
 - Give people a reason to come downtown so they don't have to go to Oceanside.
- Janis Jones
 - Appreciates transformation
 - More public art downtown. Expand the public art program.
- Kyle Adams
 - Watched plays downtown
 - Provide opportunities for young people to perform at the AVO; there is not much for kids to do downtown.
 - Visual and performing arts
- Charles Bradshaw
 - Pedestrian-friendly spaces with landmarks
- Carol Jeffries
 - Feature art and music downtown.
 - Address the ADA issues with the AVO.
 - They miss watching plays at the AVO when Moonlight performed there.
 - More for kids to do downtown.
 - Connect the Civic Center and the library to downtown.
 - Traveling back and forth between downtown and the transit center isn't easy. Connect everything.

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- Sharon Larimer
 - Place plaques on historic buildings to provide historical context of the building.
- Shawnta Fleming
 - Honor the locals and the traditions of our residents. People are proud to be from Vista.
 - Incorporate cultural and art that folks are proud of
- Edith Guerrero
 - Has lived here for many years
 - Provide intergenerational activities and activities for Hispanic families.
 - Need more diversity downtown, including diverse music and art.
 - Focus on Vista residents to promote the downtown. People who live in Vista don't come downtown. Communicate to residents that downtown Vista has changed. Connect the community to downtown Vista.
- Cassidy McCarthy for Clay McCarthy (via text)
 - Fine with parking study depending on design
 - One way plan and gravel parking short term solution
 - Long term solution parking structure to replace existing parking
 - City savings account or fund for a parkin structure
 - Firsts floor of structure can be commercial or restaurant space on the street frontage so City gets rental income
 - Consideration for trees and blocking businesses signs
 - No additional taxes on property owners downtown because downtown is utilized by entire population and not solely for the benefit of property owners
 - Long term – middle school property taken over by City and utilized for downtown area and connectivity from civic center and historic downtown
 - Pavilion reimaged, or redone
 - Remove for more parking or proposed stage area
 - Goal of a functional esthetically pleasing destination location
 - Walking bridge over Satna Fe
 - Ease of access from public transit and for pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.

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- Presentations
 - A presentation was provided by Jason St. John with BW Design and Julie Lowen regarding a proposed project at 211/221 Main Street in Vista.
 - The proposed venue would include music, food, and dancing
 - Growth sector
 - Vista Jazz component
 - Bells & Whistles
 - Bells + Whistles is a California based hospitality design firm – specializes in restaurant design
 - Mission: Transforming the Vista bank property at Main Street into a thriving Southern California venue with live music, restaurant, bar and co-working space
 - Presented renderings of proposed project
 - Provided a case study on how Carlsbad’s economy grew by \$1billion in 2021, highlighting the rising appeal of the burgeoning restaurant scene
 - Proposing a music venue for music lovers all over San Diego
 - Two Floors
 - Floor 1 – music venue, restaurant, bar speakeasy, green room, patios
 - Floor 2 – retail store, coworking space, restaurant and bar, rooftop patio and bar and event space
 - Proposing a historical design with hand-worked designing
 - Proposing a membership co-working space with a social mission of creating community, a retail space, a restaurant and a rooftop bar and event space, networking opportunities, lounges
 - A presentation was also provided by Terry Woods regarding downtown parking
 - Provided a background and information on the following:
 - Historic downtown and past businesses in downtown (i.e. Juanita’s Taco Shop, Hennessey’s, etc.)
 - Visit trends
 - Hourly visits
 - Visit duration
 - Total parking spaces - 394
 - Showed a one-way proposal video

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- Provided information on the Parking Study 2025
- Funded gravel parking at Michigan and Vista Village – 30 spots
- Construct performance stage in gazebo area facing parking lot
- Future Meeting Dates
 - April 17 or April 29 as options
- Q&A / Open Forum
 - Julie Lown
 - Envisions similar to Santa Monica
 - Folks want to experience restaurants and eat & play
 - Noted the Junkyard Sports Bar in Oceanside
 - Partnership opportunities
 - Participation with Frontwave Arena
 - Partnership with City of Vista, nonprofits, collection of developers
 - Would like buy-in / assistance before permit process
 - Lev Gershman
 - Do this together
 - Noted competitiveness with the coast
 - Cosmic Bloom
 - Noted flow of traffic, parking, and public restrooms
 - Councilmember Contreras
 - Transit connectivity
 - NCTD & micro transit
 - Appreciates intergenerational comment
 - A healthier, interconnected community
 - Noted structure of future meetings and would like translation services available
 - Avo recommendations go to City Council March 11
 - Cassidy McCarthy
 - Use of middle school to use field space
 - Consideration for businesses & landscaping, trees
 - Walking bridge over S. Santa Fe
 - Lev Gershman
 - Discussed implementing meeting duration/strategies
 - John Conley noted hopefully a 6-month period for a vision or strategic plan
 - Lisa De Jesus
 - Recommends a map for the next meeting
 - Walking trail

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- Next meeting will be at City Hall in the Community Room at 6pm
- Other Public Comments
 - See what Cities of Orange and La Mesa have done
 - Scottsdale is a good example
 - Bring people downtown now
 - Local bands
 - Networking / partners
 - Don't forget about those in the 25-year age range
 - Some can't pay for a \$40 dinner
- Meeting concluded at approximately 8:00 p.m.