

BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HALF MOON BAY

AGENDA REPORT

For meeting of **January 19, 2021**

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

VIA: Bob Nisbet, City Manager

FROM: Matthew Chidester, Deputy City Manager
Karen Decker, Senior Management Analyst

TITLE: UPDATE ON LOCAL RECOVERY EFFORTS FROM COVID-19 AND DEVELOPMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD A MORE EQUITABLE, VIBRANT, AND RESILIENT COASTSIDE ECONOMY

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update on efforts to assist local businesses and the Coastside community in recovery from COVID-19 and in developing recommendations toward a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient Coastside economy and workforce.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this update.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT:

This recommendation supports all elements of the Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Following a series of community listening sessions, the City Council met for its annual Priority Setting Workshop for the FY 2020-21 Budget on March 10, 2020. Economic Development was one of the five major priorities identified for focus in the coming year, based on comments at the listening sessions as well as other feedback received over the past year. Typically, staff would prepare a workplan for each priority and present it to the Council as part of the budget hearings, along with funding needs and deliverables. Unfortunately, within a week of the Workshop, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic escalated to such an extent to warrant most of the state to issue shelter in place orders, including San Mateo County. City efforts for most of this past fiscal year have been focused on addressing the impacts of the pandemic and other emergencies that have and continue to affect the Coastside.

Although the severity and specifics of the health orders have varied throughout the year, each has had significant impacts on the community. City staff have monitored the changing orders and the wide range of implications to the coast as stressors continued to mount on businesses

and households - the impacts of which have been disproportionately felt by low-income residents, communities of color and women. Many individuals and families have faced compounding challenges related to remote work and learning, isolation, job loss, housing and food instability, illness, and loss-of-life. Businesses large and small have dealt with the stresses of lost revenue, increased expenses to comply with health orders, supporting staff through their own difficulties, and the overall lack of clarity of when and how the economy, and life as we once knew it, would get back to normal. Many businesses have failed through this period, and others remain on the precipice of failure.

The past year has tested everyone in the community, and the response to the impacts of COVID has been significant on the coast. Individual volunteers, non-profits, churches, businesses, and government agencies have stepped up and worked closely to help through fund-raising, grants, gifts, loans, and food distributions. Commercial and residential landlords have forgiven rent, showed compassion and understanding, and helped keep businesses and families afloat in the face of their own financial challenges. Inspiring stories have been shared of the collective support many in our community have given and felt through this trying time.

While the pandemic will continue to present challenges and impact lives for the foreseeable future, the administration of vaccines has begun, and there is light at the end of the tunnel towards overcoming COVID-19 and shaping the world beyond it. At the County level, the Board of Supervisors spearheaded a countywide recovery initiative made up of a leadership council, two advisory groups, and five committees tasked with key recovery issues. City staff and other representatives from the coast are participating in these efforts, and while there is power in leveraging the existing efforts taking place regionally, there is also value in taking a more localized approach that considers the unique cultural, environmental, social, and economic nuances, resources, opportunities, and challenges on the Coastsides.

DISCUSSION:

Staff has been working on a plan for local recovery efforts for some time, knowing that as the pandemic came to an end, the economic and societal impacts of COVID-19 would continue for an extended period. The timing appears to be ideal to start planning for recovery while continuing to navigate what we hope is the winding down of the pandemic.

The proposed Coastsides Recovery Initiative (CRI), will be a collaborative effort between the City, County, local business, non-profit, faith and community leaders. The Initiative will recognize that the Coastsides is a unified economy, spanning from Devil's Slide south to the County border, and east to Skyline Blvd. The CRI will use inclusivity and equity, community engagement, and innovation as guiding principles. Identifying and achieving short-term wins with a commitment to developing plans that serve the local community will also be key ensuring an effective process. The goals of the initiative will be to:

- Address the immediate needs of local business and Coastsides community to effectively recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19; and
- Advance strategies that lead to a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient Coastsides economy

To assist in facilitating the Initiative, the City has hired a local consultant with experience in advancing community impact strategies that reduce inequities and improve people's lives. Guiding the initiative will be an executive oversight committee consisting of the CEO of the Half Moon Bay Coastside Chamber of Commerce, and senior City and County staff.

One of the key components of the CRI will be to convene a diverse, multi-sector recovery task force. The purpose of the task force will be to provide research, data and recommendations that will assist government, business, and community leaders to develop and implement policies and programs toward short-term recovery and long-term prosperity. Task force membership will be designed to reflect cultural, socioeconomic, and industry diversity with representatives from local business sectors including agriculture, fishing, real estate, hotel and hospitality, finance, and IT, as well as small business owners and operators, non-profit leaders, and academia.

Key deliverables from the initiative will include a summary of key research, community outreach, expert informant and focus group findings, and a report on task force recommendations and implementation priorities.

The executive oversight committee has already begun meeting, and a community open house kicking off the taskforce will be scheduled in mid-February. Task force formation will take place in late February and will meet regularly through at least June 2021. Initial efforts will include better understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on the community and local economy, and determining unmet business and workforce needs. In the spring the focus will shift to analysis of the information gathered, and development of recommendations – including implementation strategies – to assist in both short term recovery efforts as well as long term economic and workforce development. Periodic updates to the City Council on the formation, membership and work of the taskforce will be provided throughout the initiative.