

From: [Peter Katz](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Letter to City Council re: Item 6.1 on 9-26-23 Agenda
Date: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 10:22:28 AM
Attachments: [City Council 9-26-11 - Item 6 - EV Strategy.docx](#)

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Please forward to City Council the attached letter, in advance of the City Council Meeting on 9-26-23.

Thank you very much

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Shop Safe, Support Local at *the MV Marketplace!*

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To: Mountain View City Council
Re: City Council Meeting 9/26/23
Item 6.1: Study Session - Draft Economic Vitality Strategy

Re: Dear esteemed members of the Mountain View City Council

The Mountain View Chamber of Commerce commends City Staff and their consultants on their hard work regarding the Economic Vitality Plan, and whole heartedly supports the Strategy Draft presented tonight. The Chamber has been working closely with the City on the plan, heavily leveraging our membership of over 750 diverse businesses, and we strongly agree with what's in it. We also are appreciative of the number and variety of stakeholders who were consulted. We have no doubt that even if more interviews were conducted, the results would be very similar, as the conclusions match up well with our members' experiences, as well as with a range of other reports from different agencies, departments, and consultants.

The five strategic themes listed on page 2 are accurate, clear, and should come as no surprise to anyone. Many businesses are still struggling to survive post-pandemic, large corporations are still experiencing unforeseen work at home numbers, and Downtown is beset by too many empty storefronts. We are losing our image as a center of innovation and falling behind other cities. These trends are alarming and acute, and must be curbed - starting now - if we are to avoid moving backwards and instead realize our City's vision for the future.

The Vision and Equity statement on pages 5-6 fully embraces the City's oft expressed desire for a thriving, accessible, diverse, and environmentally responsible community, and reinforces our commitment to social and economic equity. The Working Draft Goals are well-considered too, and spotlight at a high level the most critical action areas needed for vibrancy. In particular, it calls for ensuring the longterm success and viability of our existing and beloved small businesses as well as encouraging new growth. Both are needed to truly have vitality and sustainability.

What is critical now is to accept the Vision and Equity approach, and move from the strategy phase into implementation as soon as possible. We cannot afford to wait – our small businesses depend on our action now. While we agree with the contents and directions set forth in Table 2, the ensuing Action Plan (to be delivered soon) is where the rubber will meet the road, and we need to remove all barriers to complete it. We are grateful to be assisting Staff in developing the Action Plan, and excited that that both short term actions (a year or less) are being considered as well as longer term undertakings.

We note that tonight's Study Memo presents strategies and broad actions; these can be adjusted once implementation starts. We will need to be agile and creative. We must be willing to try new things, some of which will fail and need to be reworked. Witness the good that was done during the pandemic – the City got creative, minimized process, and responded quickly to provide life-saving support for our businesses in several ways. Some of the programs needed to be tweaked a few months after they were enacted, but changes were made and we all benefited. We need that same kind of attitude – where ideas get tried and new approaches are implemented instead of experiencing paralysis by over analysis.

The Chamber has long advocated for action in the majority of the areas noted, and supports many of the specific actions listed, such as 1.3 that directly targets vacant storefronts and 3.2 which activates empty corporate spaces with innovative public uses; 2.3 that encourages attracting leading edge technologies to our city, reinforcing our reputation - and heritage - for

ground-breaking innovation; and 4.1 which calls for revising zoning to allow a broader range of uses in retail areas. We encourage City Council to agree with the Goals and Strategies associated with the Economic Vitality Strategy as they are sound and sorely needed.

Webster defines "vitality" as "the capacity to live and develop". To do that effectively, we need to go forth boldly and thoughtfully, and be willing to take risks. We urge Council to define its vision for the City and delineate our values, and then empower City staff to be creative and make it happen. Reducing the number of items that need to come before Council speeds up the process, lightens the load, and moves the ball forward. The Chamber remains committed to assist the City in realizing its vision and making economic vitality a reality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Katz
President and CEO
Mountain View Chamber of Commerce.