

TO: City Council

FROM: Business Roundtable

DATE: June 23, 2015

SUBJECT: **Business Roundtable Work Plan (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017)**

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve continuance of Business Roundtable Work Plan, with proposed revisions, for the next two years from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. Indirect costs associated with staff time in preparation of this report are included in the Adopted FY 2014-15 General Fund Budget. Indirect costs associated with staff time in working with the Business Roundtable on its Work Plan are included in the Adopted FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17 General Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

On June 25, 2013, City Council approved the Business Roundtable's Work Plan for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015. On May 19, 2015, the Business Roundtable met and discussed its current Work Plan and is recommending revisions to the Plan.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS:

The Business Roundtable would like to continue addressing the following topics in support of the business community over the next two years:

1. Signage:

- Continue working with City staff in revising the City's Sign Ordinance as follows: 1) Evaluate existing allowances for number, size, and location of on-building and freestanding signs; 2) Allow more flexibility in the use of directory signs; 3) Consider changes to the sign permit requirements and process; and 4) Evaluate the criteria/ratios used to determine the size of on-building and other signage.

- Create a task force to review and evaluate the regulations pertaining to the use of temporary signs and provide comments to City staff for potential Code Amendment(s).

2. Entitlements and Permit Processing:

- Continue working with City staff to make the City's overall entitlement, development, and permit processes as efficient and user-friendly as possible.

3. Economic Development

The Business Roundtable has determined that the Economic Development and Small Business Support Subcommittees have overlapping duties in retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses and they should be combined into one subcommittee with the following tasks:

- Regarding attraction of new businesses, continue to examine and assess the City's business ecosystem for those elements that are attractive to business formation and for those that might be challenges to the formation of new businesses, particularly in high technology and life sciences.
- Regarding the retention and support of small businesses, continue to examine and assess City processes and procedures that either support small business operations and growth or may be challenging for small business operations and growth.

4. Green Business

- Review current marketing and recruiting materials for the Green Business Program and provide any comments to City staff.
- Improve outreach to the local business community to increase the number of participants in the Green Business Certification Program.
- Jointly develop and periodically review outreach tools to ensure they meet the expectations and engagement of small business owners.
- Review and evaluate the City's progress on its environmental actions to ensure support of Citywide Goals and Top Ten Priorities and provide comments to City staff.

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Currently there are five subcommittees of the Business Roundtable, each assigned a topic to evaluate in coordination with outside agencies and/or City staff. These subcommittees are: 1) Development and Planning; 2) Green Business; 3) Small Business Support; 4) Economic Development; and, 5) Signage.

As previously mentioned, the Business Roundtable recommends that the Small Business Support subcommittee be folded into the Economic Development subcommittee because of overlapping responsibilities, which will result in four subcommittees, each assigned a task.

The proposed work program continues some projects from the previous two-year cycle that are of particular value and interest to the business community. It should be noted that several of the proposed projects are currently active, including:

- Staff from Community Development and Public Works Departments have been meeting with the Development and Planning subcommittee to evaluate the City's entitlement process, and potential Municipal Code Amendment(s) will be proposed.
- This subcommittee, along with City staff, is also working on revisions to how certain uses could be streamlined and processed more efficiently.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE

Meets City Council Goal H:

- H. Maintain a strong local employment base geared toward retaining high quality businesses; Sustain a healthy business community; and, Diversify the local economy, with a specific emphasis on small businesses and high technology/biomedical jobs.

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