



DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION (DAO) and
HISTORIC RAILROAD SQUARE ASSOCIATION
Special Meeting of Executive Committees
Tuesday, May 30, 2023, 10am
coLAB, 427 Mendocino Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

AGENDA

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| 1.0 | CALL TO ORDER | Hugh Futrell |
| 2.0 | PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS
(limited to two minutes each)
Comments from the public will be allowed on all agenda items at the time each item is called. | |
| 3.0 | CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR ABSTENTIONS | Hugh Futrell |
| 4.0 | ACTION: CONSENT ITEM
4.1 May 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes (<i>Attachment 1</i>) | |
| 5.0 | ACTION: APPROVAL OF PLAN
Discussion, amendment and approval of plan (<i>Attachment 2</i>) to address issues related to crime and the impacts of the unsheltered transient population on downtown businesses and economy. | All |
| 6.0 | ADJOURNMENT | Hugh Futrell |

Attachment 1

DOWNTOWN ACTION ORGANIZATION (DAO) and HISTORIC RAILROAD SQUARE ASSOCIATION

Special Meeting of Executive Committees

Monday, May 30, 2023, 10am

coLAB, 427 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Downtown Action Organization Present: Hugh Futrell, Pauline Block, Joe Dietzen

Historic Railroad Square Association Present: Mike Montague, Paul Quattrocchi

Staff: Cadance Hinkle Allinson, Kris Wilson

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hugh Futrell called the meeting to order at 9:06am.

**2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS
(limited to two minutes each)**

There were no public comments at this time.

3.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR ABSTENTIONS

There were no conflicts of interest or abstentions at this time.

4.0 DISCUSSION: CRITICAL ISSUES AND IMPACTS

A discussion ensued about the issues that are present in the Community Benefit Districts, and the impacts to tenants and property owners within, as well as the overall economic vitality of Downtown and the city.

Hugh spoke about the need to support and push for the objectives already underway, including the ordinance around camping, ordinance around duty to maintain property, a new assistant city attorney and two added DET officers.

The need to engage neighborhood groups early in the process was supported.

There was agreement that the Executive Committees would meet again on May 30 at 10am to review a comprehensive plan that includes organized approach and strategy to address the relevant issues. A larger meeting will follow with other neighborhood groups and impacted organizations invited to attend.

5.0 ADJOURNMENT

Hugh Futrell adjourned the meeting at 10:30am.

Attachment 2

With the increase in crime, drug use and distribution, and the abuse of public space occurring downtown, businesses, employees and members of the public are deeply concerned about the future of the heart of the City. Businesses are relocating from – or avoiding -- downtown. Downtown employment is falling. The public is increasingly reluctant to consider downtown as a viable choice for shopping and visiting. In recent months a tipping point has been reached. Action, comprehensive, effective and urgent, is needed.

As city consultants have pointed out, Downtown is the economic engine of the City. The problems of downtown affect not only downtown, and not only the community generally, but also pose a direct risk to the City's budget and financial solvency.

The Downtown Action Organization and Historic Railroad Square Association are willing partners in addressing these issues. Historic Railroad Square is investing in evening security to protect the public spaces and private properties within the District and reduce evening crime. The Downtown Action Organization is increasing hours of the NexStreet team to better address the daily impacts of the unsheltered transient population on the public and private spaces within the District. Both organizations are investing the bulk of their budgets to address these negative street impacts. But the CBDs can only do so much.

Individual businesses themselves are also expending large sums for security, additional clean-up, and marketing aimed at mitigating public perceptions about the downtown. Here too, businesses can only do so much.

Here are the additional or in some cases accelerated interventions needed from the City:

Issue: **Public spaces and recreation areas (Jeju/Comstock/Greenway/Depot Park) are/feel unsafe for residents to use and enjoy. Graffiti, trash and human waste are pervasive.**

Impacts: Relocation of retailers outside of Downtown due to ongoing challenges with unsheltered transient population and corresponding complaints from customers
Heavy attention from street level services on cleaning human waste/trash/bulk clean-up
Reduction in hotel occupancies and Transient Occupancy Tax receipts
Negative comments and responses in news/social media, reinforcing public perceptions

Action: Ordinance focusing on camping/misuse of public space/excess belongings (1)
Police foot patrols and more visible enforcement – increase DET staff to ensure permanent presence downtown (2)
Increased pedestrian level lighting and paths of sight (3)
City Attorney's office enforcing misdemeanor violations to create accountability (4)

Issue: **Increase in overdoses, deaths, and untreated mentally ill downtown**

Impacts: Death and overdoses; wandering and visibly ill and threatening
Third degree trauma on Downtown workforce
Further reinforcement of negative public perceptions

Action: Increase of mental health caseworkers, including with InResponse, to utilize legally allowed requirements for holding individuals under stress (5150) and providing services for those most in need (5)
Proactive and regularly scheduled visits from InResponse (6)

Improvement of Catholic Charities intervention and placement model, and accountability for Catholic Charities (7)

Issue: Abuse of Mall Parking Lot/Facilities/Staff – crime, waste, harassment

Impacts: Loss of current tenants and prospective tenants (6 national retailers)

Reduction in shoppers

Employee fear

Shoppers fear of parking in certain areas

Action: Work with Catholic Charities staff to ensure clientele are not pushed into surrounding streets when services close for lunch and end of day; active Catholic Charities enforcement program with Mall, DAO and police (8)

Enforce rigorous good neighbor policy --- Service Center, Caritas housing, Railroad Square centers (9)

Proactive and regularly scheduled visits to Mall from inResponse (10)

Issue: Residents at Burbank Housing / Caritas Villages needing high level of support and services than can be provided

Impacts: Potential increase in issues Downtown and at Mall

Action: Develop clear good neighbor policy with ramifications for abuse off-site (11)

Burbank Housing to strengthen detailed intake and selection process (12)

Burbank Housing to provide 24/7 security on site (13)

Service provider to provide 24/7 on site mental health services (14)

Increase in foot patrols and more visible enforcement (2)

CBD leadership to host regular meetings with Catholic Charities, Burbank Housing, and DET to address any challenges that arise (15)

Issue: Vacant Buildings attracting criminal behavior and creating

Impacts: Heightened amount of cleaning and sanitation work

Complaints from citizens and community

Arson and infestation

“Broken Window” impacts triggering other crimes

Direct effect on businesses, neighboring properties and potential development

Action: City-wide ordinance to address vacant properties and require owners have a duty to maintain (16)

Assistant City Attorney to address code violations (4)

CBDs to play supporting role to minimize impact to City staff (17)

Issue: Increase in impacts of transient population since Catholic Charities drop-in center reopened

Impacts: Street services spend majority of time supporting unsheltered transient community and cleaning up after them

Burden lies on business community

Action: Commitment from Council for no further services to be opened in the Downtown (18)

Catholic Charities to provide support for closed hours as well as transportation to shelter at end of day (19)

Issue: Transit Mall has become center for criminal behavior
Impacts: Spillover into adjacent areas and Downtown
Action: Full-time Transit Mall security (20)
Regular police foot patrol/visible enforcement (2)