



**REPORT TO CERES DOWNTOWN
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
OCTOBER 21, 2013 • 6 PM**

At the request of some downtown business owners, the Chamber participated in an informal discussion with these business owners on October 16th. At their request, the City was not asked to participate in the discussions, allowing them to speak more freely. As a result of that meeting, Chamber staff began to contact other downtown business owners to ask their input on the 5 main questions asked during the initial discussion. In preparation for the Downtown BID Meeting of October 21, 2013, the Chamber has prepared this document to share the following responses.

Is there a particular process or requirement of the City that you do not agree with or object to?

- The Ceres Street Faire is not business friendly for downtown businesses.
- Limited parking is an issue. If you have downtown employees parking, there is not enough parking for customers, clients
- The City has hired at least 4 consultants over the span of 20 years to address the downtown and nothing has ever come of it.
- Yes, I've had issues with the City allowing my delivery vehicles parked in front of my building.
- I don't participate in the Street Faire because it is unfair that I can't have a booth in front of my business. Plus I have to close my business and lose money.

If there are issues that affect your business, what are those issues? Have you even raised them to the City?

- The entrance to downtown needs to be more attractive - we've told the City that several times
- Downtown signage was requested back in 2009 and nothing ever came of it
- There is no handicap parking on 4th Street - No, I've never raised the issue.
- There is no handicap accessibility to the 4th Street businesses, except at the end of the street. My clients have to ride their wheel chairs to the end of the street, in the middle of the street to get onto the sidewalk. - No, I personally have never addressed the City about this.
- There's no foot traffic downtown.
- There is a lack of foot traffic downtown.

Do you see value in your association with the Downtown Business Improvement District? If yes, why? If no, why not?

- No - we've been paying quarterly dues for many years and nothing has been done to improve the downtown
- No - we don't see where our money is going
- No - I feel the City doesn't listen to us even when we do ask for things - like signage
- No - they keep pulling events away from Downtown, like the Christmas parade that is now at Smyrna Park.
- No - the spirit or fellowship of community is lost. They keep moving things away from downtown.

Are there particular improvements to downtown that you would like to see that might help your business? What type of improvements would those be?

- Crosswalk at the middle of 4th Street with handicap accessibility to the sidewalks
- Building facades need to be cleaned up, painted and they all need to flow
- I'd like to see an arch downtown that reads "Downtown Merchants Welcome You"
- More trees and flowers downtown lining the streets
- Park benches would be nice but would probably encourage transients to sleep on them, or drug dealers, unless we install security cameras downtown
- Graffiti type signage on side of buildings should not be allowed
- We need more businesses in the downtown that are open more than just one day a week, that's going to generate foot traffic
- I'd like to see more events downtown

Would you be interested in a "way finding" type sign program that could announce the downtown? Generally, way finding signs do not announce the name of any business. Should this be pursued by the City?

- Absolutely. We asked for this back in 2009 and were told those were Cal-Trans signs and that would be nearly impossible to get. If we'd have asked in 2009, you'd think we should have gotten them by now.
- Yes, we need a "Gas-Food-Lodging" sign between Mitchell and 4th Street Exits on 99 going north and then some just before Hatch going south.
- Yes. I would like to see a sign as you come off 4th Street exit with all of the downtown businesses names on it.
- We also need directional signs that point to where City Hall is, the Community Center, School district, Bank, etc. Everyone needs an ATM at some point, and if they know there is a bank down here, they just might get off at our exit.