

**VISTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
Approved by the Vista City Council on October 9, 2012  
(Updates noted in parentheses)

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In an effort to further improve the overall Vista economy for residents and businesses, the Vista City Council updated the Vista Economic Development Plan on October 9, 2012.

There are four areas of the Vista Economic Development Plan:

1. Retain and expand local businesses.
2. Attract new businesses.
3. Explore new revenue generation ideas.
4. Participate in and create regional and state-wide economic development efforts.

**Retain/Expand**

Focus on retaining existing industries and jobs that are successful under current market conditions.

Strategy 1 Continue the Vista CAREs (Communicate and Assist to Retain and Expand Vista Businesses) program.

Task 1. Continue the Vista CAREs monthly visits program. These monthly visits to businesses typically include the Mayor or one Council Member, the City Manager, the Director of Economic Development and the Community Development Director. These meetings with Vista Businesses help discern the needs of the businesses in our community and establish a positive working relationship between the City and businesses (Ongoing).

Task 2. Implement a new business property owner component. The goal is to connect with Vista Business Park property owners in the same way we have with businesses and brokers. When a need arises and/or a business is considering moving we would have a direct connect to the property owner to assist with recruiting or retaining a business. (Implemented and the first meeting was held in 2013; meetings continue as appropriate.)

Task 3. Establish a process recognize established industries/businesses for various achievements. The Vista Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) recently started the Heroes of Vista Awards program and the City could partner with the Chamber to honor deserving businesses. (The City has the Mayor's annual "Person of the Year", who is honored at the State of The Community event).

Strategy 2: Expand the Façade Improvement Program to help improve the exterior of older retail centers and to support the small businesses that occupy these spaces. This will also serve as a business attraction function. To implement this new program it is recommended that we make an initial investment of \$75,000 in Fiscal Year 2013/2014. By implementing this program in FY 2013/2014, we will have the time to select the locations/centers where it will have the most impact and we will be able to develop guidelines for its implementation. If there is Council support for this program we will bring it back to the Council for implementation in the operating budget. (Implemented and ongoing).

- Strategy 3: Continue the Vista Business Ombudsman Program. The Business Ombudsman Program provides business with the single point of contact for business related issues and questions if they find they cannot resolve them elsewhere within the city.
- Strategy 4: Working with a third party lender, implement a PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program to help business/property owners finance the purchase and installation of energy efficient, distributed renewable energy and water conservation improvements on their properties with no up-front cost. (Implemented and bringing on new PACE programs when appropriate.)
- Strategy 5: Support small business development and support. Foster growth in the retail and restaurant sectors by partnering with the North County Small Business Development Center (NCSBDC) and others to provide value-added services to programs the City already provides. Two proposed tasks include:
- Task 1. Partner with NCSBDC to provide implementation tools for the propensity study data provided by City to retailers. This has already started and the Vista Village Business Association (VVBA) and Chamber have taken our lead and enhanced efforts with NCSBDC for the benefit of their members (Implemented).
- Task 2. Partner with NCSBDC to provide value-added consulting assistance to restaurants. This will be completed in cooperation with the Taste of Vista on Main Street. (Implemented and ongoing).
- Strategy 6: Continue to contract with the VVBA for the implementation of the Central Vista Business Improvement District. This serves as an important business retention and support strategy for downtown merchants and activities (Ongoing).
- Strategy 7: Continue to contract with the Chamber for business support and communication services. This serves as an important business retention and communications strategy for Vista businesses and business support related activities (Ongoing).
- Strategy 8: Support legislation that is beneficial to Vista businesses and the City of Vista when appropriate and oppose legislation that would negatively impact Vista businesses and the City of Vista. (Implemented and becoming more active with CALED Legislative Efforts.)

### **Attract**

Seek out industries that support the City's fiscal sustainability, enhance the amenities within our community and provide jobs to our local residents.

Strategy 1: Focus on attracting the following Retail/Hotel uses.

Task 1. Explore the feasibility of locating one additional hotel in Vista.

Task 2. Explore the feasibility of locating one additional car dealership in Vista.

Task 3. Explore the feasibility of locating one additional fine dining restaurant establishment in Vista.

(Implemented and many successes and activity on these goals.)

Strategy 2: Explore Industrial and office attraction opportunities.

Task 1. A list of businesses has been identified as best industrial/office attraction opportunities based on existing clusters and potential for growth. All efforts will be made to bring these businesses to the Vista Business Park and other appropriate areas:

- Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services
- Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
- Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing
- Scientific Research and Development Services
- Computer Systems Design and Related Services
- Pharmaceutical and Medicine Manufacturing
- Communications Equipment Manufacturing
- Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing
- Computer and Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing
- Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing
- Commercial and Service Industry Machinery Manufacturing

(Implemented and modifying to be in sync with Innovate78 strategy and activities).

Strategy 3: Create a Vista Business Incentive Program (VBIP) and communicate the program's benefits to desired industries. Desired industries that would be eligible for benefits under this program include new businesses that:

1. Produce sales tax or transient occupancy tax for the City.
2. Make an effort to employ at least 30% of their employees from Vista.
3. Provide a desired amenity to the community. Examples include a new book store or high-end restaurant.
4. Provide for new development in the Paseo Santa Fe corridor or others areas of focus that the City may define.

(There has been no desire to move forward with a financial based incentive program but staff utilized a customer service based approach to support the recruitment and retention of business in Vista. This has been found to be cost effective and very successful. Financial based incentives will be considered on a case by case basis and must meet stringent state guidelines.)

Strategy 4: Work with Community Development to amend the business park specific plan to allow for higher density office uses, emerging industries, and creative parking solutions. This also serves as a business retention function. (Completed)

Strategy 5: Continue to utilize, formalize and publicize the Development Review Committee (Red Team) to help business locate in Vista. The goal of this committee is to help businesses looking to locate in Vista to understand the processes and timelines for their project. This committee consists of the Directors of Community Development, Economic Development and Redevelopment. The committee meets on an as needed basis when projects or proposals are presented to the City (Ongoing).

## **New Revenue Generation Ideas**

Research and implement new revenue ideas for the City of Vista.

Strategy 1: Explore the feasibility of Digital Message Board/s as a potential new revenue generation idea. The City has let an RFP for Digital Message Boards and we are in negotiations with a developer. This will be brought back to the City Council for consideration in the near future. (Progress halted due to lack of funds for the required full environmental impact report.)

## **Regional and State-Wide Economic Development Efforts**

Collaborate with regional and State officials on economic development efforts that are mutually beneficial and help foster business growth and employment for Vista stakeholders.

Strategy 1: Assist with the Creation of a North County-wide Economic Development Identity and Plan. (Implemented Innovate78 programs and ongoing efforts relating to this strategy).

Strategy 2: Assist with creating a new structure and functional economic development programs at the San Diego North Economic Development Council (SDNEDC). Potential programs include:

1. North County-wide revolving loan fund for businesses.
2. North County-wide retention program to connect with corporate headquarters located outside of Vista and San Diego.
3. Create the North County Identity and market the value of the region. (City sits on SDNEDC Board but most economic development efforts are being undertaken under the Innovate78 program.)

Strategy 3: Transition the current local workforce program to a sub-regional level (78 Corridor cities). Part of this effort will be to reduce duplication and facilitate partnership opportunities. (Completed however working with the Innovate78 effort on talent attraction).

Strategy 4: Assist at the local, regional and state level to develop economic development program/s to help fill the gap created by the loss of redevelopment. (City Economic Development Director sits as Chair of the California Association for Local Economic Development {CALED}. In this role he assists with creating and influencing State-Wide economic development policy and programs.)

Note: A communications strategy will be incorporated in all components of the Vista Economic Development Plan. This will include all print and digital media as appropriate and will be created in cooperation with the City's Communications Officer (Implemented and ongoing).