



NEW MUSEUM LOS GATOS

ART ■ INNOVATION ■ HISTORY ■ BAY AREA

408.354.2646 | 106 E. Main Street, Los Gatos CA 95030 | numulcsgatos.org

Los Gatos Town Council

The Honorable Mayor Marico Sayoc, Vice Mayor Rennie, and Council Members Badame, Hudes, and Ristow

110 E. Main St.

Los Gatos, CA 95030

January 14, 2021

Dear Mayor Sayoc, Vice Mayor Rennie, and Council Members Badame, Hudes, and Ristow,

On behalf of New Museum Los Gatos | NUMU board and staff, I want to express our gratitude for forgiving our rent during the unprecedented events of 2020. 2020 began under dire projections for museums: American Alliance of Museums estimated 12,000, or 1 in 3, museums in the U.S. were at risk of closing forever due to the economic hardships of the pandemic. But with your support, the museum is positioned to weather the pandemic and build on the successes of our 55 years as the Museums of Los Gatos and now as New Museum Los Gatos. We have been able to retain essential staff members and begin an exciting series of virtual exhibitions and programs (free for Los Gatos residents). We kicked off the ambitious 18-month, 3-phase Los Gatos History Project, researching and sharing untold stories from Los Gatos and beyond, and were able to finish transforming our lower level space into a dedicated MakerSpace and Painting & Drawing Studios. **The Town's rent forgiveness has been a true lifeline for all of these efforts—thank you.**

All of us at NUMU dream about the day we can reopen and welcome our community in-person once more. Imagine this: with ongoing free admission for Los Gatos residents, NUMU will be positioned as a place of inspiration, creativity, and cultural understanding with thought-provoking exhibitions, art and history experiences, and gatherings for all that will help heal our community. Art and culture are the "second responders" in times of crisis, and can help our community recover from the trauma of the pandemic. NUMU will be on the frontline of this recovery and healing.

While the time we can reopen will surely be memorable, we need to pave the runway for this. Even after a COVID vaccine is rolled out, we will need time to recoup losses and work towards fiscal sustainability to continue serving Los Gatos and beyond. We'll have been closed to the public for at least a full year with almost no income from programs, resulting in an estimated \$78,000+ loss in revenue through December 2020. Continued rent forgiveness from the Town of Los Gatos will make a significant impact to sustain us and help us reopen as soon as possible. **We are asking for any updates about possible ongoing rent forgiveness, so we may plan our finances and build a sustainable future for NUMU.**

NUMU's relationship with the Town of Los Gatos is vital to us and our ongoing ability to serve our community. Thank you from all of us for your continued support.

In partnership,

Ami Davis | Executive Director

To: Los Gatos Town Council
From: Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Advisors
Date: January 14, 2021
Subject: Recommendations to Council to consider regarding Immediate COVID 19 Recovery Plans

Overview:

This global pandemic has highlighted even more some of the challenges facing our business community.

However, there are simple things we can do to stabilize our economy right now. There are plans we can implement to put ourselves on solid ground and start the process of recovery. By taking such steps we can ensure that we are in the "ready" position as soon as this crisis is over.

Early in the pandemic; those first 90 days, we took immediate action and benefitted because of the work we did together. Ten months later, it is time to reevaluate some of those early decisions and move into the next stage. Our state and particularly our County faced unusually strict rules that set our businesses back even further.

So what can we do right now to prepare for a swift recovery when the time comes? Also, one might ask what are the Town's long term action items on which to focus. We will undoubtedly feel the effects of this pandemic for years to come.

Three cheers again to the past Council and staff for stepping up back in March; for representing the people and listening to what they needed; for being a voice of unity, and for seizing the moment. We are better situated in a better position now than we would have been if you had not acted at that time.

While some people wanted to bail out local small businesses in those first few months, diverting public resources into them directly or indirectly would have been detrimental and costly. Instead, it has been exciting to watch the entrepreneurs among us as they adapt and pivot their business models. Unconsciously perhaps, we have created fertile ground for new businesses to emerge and to innovate. Those will be the businesses that succeed, will thrive but who also might need a little local financial assistance now.

While recovery when it happens might happen quickly, it is unlikely we will ever return to pre-coronavirus America. On top of the pandemic, we uncovered many long-standing tensions within our society. While these were nationwide, we acutely felt them here in Los Gatos. These tensions need consideration when planning for the future. Moving forward, the Town's financial resources will undoubtedly be stretched, so we will need to find ways must find ways to do more with what is likely to be much less.

Thanks Council for taking a look at the attached proposal. The Chamber staff has had multiple conversations with Board members and our advisors in recent weeks and have determined that at the January 19th Council meeting, you should focus on what we think are the top 5 priorities for moving into Recovery mode. We have \$1.4 million left in the Covid-19 Recovery Fund. Let's use that efficiently, effectively and wisely. We need to set plans into motion quickly once again to further enhance our previous economic vitality efforts.

Sincerely,

Catherine Somers
Executive Director

COVID-19 Economic and Community Recovery Initiatives

Proposed by the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce
(with input from community members)

For Consideration @ January 19th Council Meeting

Most important:

1. Open for Business – *political pressure on SC County and State may be necessary*

As soon as we are able, all businesses in Town need to fully reopen. Town has done a great job of communicating with the public, encouraging but not mandating mask wearing, posting reminders, and implementing educational disciplinary action for those not in compliance with health orders.

Economic recovery is going to happen very quickly. We saw this happen when the economy opened back up in Summer of 2020, Town was buzzing. There is no need to create another discretionary deciding body to create more red tape or spend any Town funds on recovery programs.

The Chamber of Commerce and its various sub-committees are engaged with the County supervisors and representatives from the County DEH to push as hard as possible for the safe reopening of the economy.

The Town Council should align their efforts with the Chamber's to bolster the message. This is the single greatest thing the Town can do to help. The shutdown is not a justified response to the problem.

Additionally, Council may need to step up at some point soon and help with advocacy efforts themselves. As soon as California is given the green light, Santa Clara County must do the same. Dr. Sara Cody can no longer set her own rules. Once we begin to reopen, there is no going backwards. Our businesses need your commitment.

Message to the County:

- o Retail – retail needs to be open more as quickly as possible. Due to the nature of the business model, you can control the environment and keep everyone safe.
- o Restaurants – outdoor dining has had little to no correlation to increased cases. Dr. Anthony Fauci has stated publicly there is no connection between outdoor dining and increased cases. The County's argument is that it encourages people to leave their homes. There is no issue with people leaving their homes if they behave in a responsible manner. They need to trust the public and the restaurants to abide by the safety guidelines DEH has put in place the same way the police trust the public to abide by traffic safety rules.
- o Salons –again there is no evidence suggested that increased cases are a result of salon practices. We need to reopen salons as soon as we possibly can.

2. COVID 19 Recovery Projects and Programs

Parklet program – The parklets had a tremendous impact on downtown vitality in Summer of 2020 and while we only were able to observe the sensation for a few regulated months – we saw the potential.

We propose to - Amend the parklet program to do the following:

- Establish a set of design guidelines that mirror the five original permanent parklets. We can create uniformity downtown and significantly reduce the cost of a future streetscape renovation.
- Establish a sunset on the existing temporary parklets. An application must be filed by 6/1/2020 for a conforming permanent parklet or the owner has until 10/1/2021 to remove the temporary parklet.
- Provide a 50% hard cost rebate from a Town 'recovery fund' once the parklet has been constructed according to the guidelines. Consider a loan program as well for 100% of the hard cost of a new permanent parklet, with 50% forgiveness upon completion. Provide a 50% hard cost rebate to the 5 original parklets as well to be fair and consistent.
- Once the permanent parklets are in place after 12-18 months, Town can re-visit the streetscape program and see certain areas where sidewalks could be wider or landscaping and planter boxes, etc. could be reimagined. A very costly and renovation of the entire streetscape is not needed at this time and may never be.
- Town Staff can handle the processing of applications, setting soft costs and ease the burden on the applicant. Staff will act as administrators only – removing that burden from the applicant and not having to take responsibility or have any liability for the construction.
- Chamber is prepared to handle the work with the pre-qualified contractors – those who built the original permanent parklets and a handful of others. Chamber staff can facilitate all logistics and details of the building process – taking the burden off the town and applicant. One design will be used to ensure a consistent look throughout.

Projects and Other downtown enhancements

It goes without saying that space is critical. –

- create space for people.
- Beautification and cleanliness go a long way.
- Planters, Garbage cans, tree trimming, sidewalk cleaning, parking lot upgrades need to be addressed and more funding needs to be allotted to these items.
- More lighting should be considered to enhance the ambiance in public spaces. We have been in discussion with a lighting company who helped the Chamber with the installation of the Holiday lights.
- Plan ahead for community building events and public art installations
- Plan ahead for adding to the Holiday lights now - make sure they are in the budget
- Be mindful of including the Boulevard and other commercial districts in plans to improve the overall ambiance of the whole town. ie: Welcome signage, street pole banners, consistent signage, etc.

3. Parking

Utilize Dixon report-

- Expedite this parking study implementation. We should be 100% ready for a surging economy when the time comes.
- Implement the new parking wayfinding signage, the new revised time limit districts, the employee parking areas, and the shuttles to underutilized parking.
- Combine this with messaging via social media and in physical form (ready to launch when appropriate) about "Park Once". Advertise new parking areas.
- No fees or fines or parking tickets issued until September of 2021

4. General Plan

Prioritize the finalization of the General Plan Update. The General Plan Update was scheduled to be complete by end of 2020. The new schedule, delayed due to the Pandemic, has the General Plan Update now being finished towards the end of this year.

- a. General Plan Update Advisory Committee needs to meet more frequently. B.
- b. The environmental document still needs to be prepared, reviewed, refined, and finalized. Perhaps, pay a consultant to expedite this work. This would be a good use of Town funds and an important measure to move towards recovery, as it will unlock new economic opportunities in Los Gatos. We should explore the concept of opportunity zones or tech hubs. Get the EIR done in 3 months instead of 6-8.
- c. Lastly, when it comes time for the deciding bodies to review and approve the documents, expedite the meetings. Call special meetings to vote and move forward as opposed to waiting for upcoming meeting schedules. Understanding there are time constraints for public comment and challenge, any measures to condense the schedule as permitted under CEQA should be taken.

5. Financial Relief Fund and Continue with Streamlining Efforts already in place

- Explore ways in which to offer certain industries (ie salons, restaurants, retail) can apply for a partial or full waiver of their 2021 town business license. This gesture in and of itself will have an impact and show that Town is trying to help small businesses.

Currently town's 20/21 budget is due to receive \$1.3 million from business license fees. To date no study has been as to how much Town would lose if it eliminated collection from the business sectors proposed above.

- The real estate brokerage community needs to be incentivized bring new businesses to Town. We must continue the streamlining efforts and continue the positive messaging. We need to strengthen relationships between the brokerage community, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Town Economic Vitality office to keep this effort on track. Together we can create a good commercial environment. We were just beginning to see the fruits of those long-term efforts right when the pandemic hit. They need a chance to play out further and spark even more opportunities in coming years.

To close, we recognize the Council has to make some tough choices here as to where and how to spend your time and money. You are tasked with setting priorities that will aid in the future health and well-being of the whole community. If we start small, keeping our end goals in sight, we will be able to see and feel the progress which will be rewarding to all residents. Knowing that we are in this together is most important for any plan's success.

Monica Renn

From: Willie Harmatz [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 8:21 PM
To: Monica Renn
Subject: Re: Community & Economic Vitality Discussion: January 19 at 7 p.m.

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I would like to keep my parklet at Athletic Performance.
I would also like to see restaurants be able to eat outside, maybe 2-3 people only.
I would also like to see some type of a special weekend promotion for businesses downtown with an additional discount of some type.

Willie
Athletic Performance

-----Original Message-----

From: Monica Renn <mrenn@losgatosca.gov>
To: Monica Renn <mrenn@losgatosca.gov>
Cc: <chamber@losgatoschamber.com> <chamber@losgatoschamber.com>
Sent: Tue, Jan 12, 2021 2:50 pm
Subject: Community & Economic Vitality Discussion: January 19 at 7 p.m.

Good afternoon Los Gatos Business Community- Happy New Year, I hope this email finds you in good health!

I'm connecting today to let you know that we are returning to the Town Council this coming **Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7 p.m. via Zoom** to continue our discussions on economic recovery, community vitality, and a semi-permanent parklet program. The Town continues to be committed to the health, safety, and recovery of Los Gatos and is seeking ways to support our entire community, including you, our valued businesses.

I'm seeking your input and ideas on tangible items or initiatives that the Council could consider that offer additional business and community support as we weather the pandemic and look towards recovery.

Currently, the staff report includes discussions around continued rent forgiveness for Town-owned properties, consideration for business license modifications for specific business sectors unable to operate due to the public health order, a semi-permanent parklet incentive program including grants to assist with the build-out of parklets, and a timeline for the temporary krail parklets.

If you have thoughts on these, other economic recovery, or community vitality initiatives, please email them to me directly.

- Comments received before 11 a.m. on Thursday, 1/14 will be included with the original staff report for the Council.
- Comments received between 11:01 a.m. on Thursday, 1/14 and 11 a.m. on Tuesday, 1/19 will be provided for the Town Council as a part of a written addendum or desk item.
- As always, we welcome you to join the conversation via Zoom at the Town Council meeting on Tuesday 1/19 at 7 p.m. where comments may be provided verbally. The zoom link will be available with the staff report that comes out this Thursday evening.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and resiliency. We have an incredible business community in Los Gatos and I remain optimistic for our future. I have tried to reach as many business stakeholders as possible with this email, however please feel free to share with other businesses so that we may reach as much of our community as possible.

Monica Renn

From: Alexander Hult [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:33 PM
To: Monica Renn
Cc: chamber@losgatoschamber.com
Subject: Re: Community & Economic Vitality Discussion: January 19 at 7 p.m.

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

1. A town fund where landlord can request rent to give the tenant free rent to weather this storm. Landlord applies shows they are not a wealthy big company and that they have taken a hit (only got 9 out of the last month payments or something like that)
Monthly rent is \$10,000. Landlord applies for 2 months worth of rent at 50% and then in return provides 2 months of free rent to tenant.
2. No business license fees. Plea to ABC and health dep to reduce or relief fees
3. Marketing plan for people to come out to LG when we are allowed to open back up.

Alex Hult
Flights Restaurants - Founder/President/CEO
Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce - Past President

On Jan 12, 2021, at 2:50 PM, Monica Renn <mrenn@losgatosca.gov> wrote:

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Kindly,
Monica Renn
Economic Vitality Manager
Town of Los Gatos