

Business Friendly Hayward

Outreach Summary

AUGUST 2025

**City of Hayward
Development Services Department
Planning Division**

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Executive Summary

Project Overview

The Business-Friendly Hayward Project is a strategic initiative designed to make it easier for businesses to locate and thrive in the City's commercial and mixed-use areas, while also working to revitalize vacant and underused properties. The project aims to create a supportive environment for local businesses, attract new investment, and strengthen the local economy. The project is aligned with multiple projects identified in Hayward's Strategic Roadmap, a vision for the future of Hayward.

Project Phases

Timeframe	Products	Outreach
<i>Spring 2025</i>	Summary of Best Practices	Project Website
<i>Summer 2025</i>	Analysis of Hayward Codes & Practices Commercial Analysis	Online Survey Pop Ups STACK Extra Article Chamber of Commerce Downtown Hayward Improvement Association
<i>Fall 2025</i>	Draft Regulations	Focus Groups
<i>Winter 2025/2026</i>	Final Code Updates	

Key Findings

On July 10, 2025, staff published a survey aimed at both community members and business owners. This survey was promoted via a variety of mediums. At the survey's close (July 31, 2025) there were 290 responses from 239 community members and 51 business owners.

The data was analyzed and compiled into interactive dashboards available below:

[Community Outreach Data](#)

[Business Owner Outreach Data](#)

Outreach was also conducted on June 12, 2025, and July 17, 2025, during Hayward's Summer Street Party events. At these events, planning staff engaged with community members through activities, including a poster board where participants shared what they would like more of in Hayward, as well as their favorite local businesses. Across both events, "Recreation" and "Special Events" received the highest number of votes (21.5% and 16.5%, respectively).

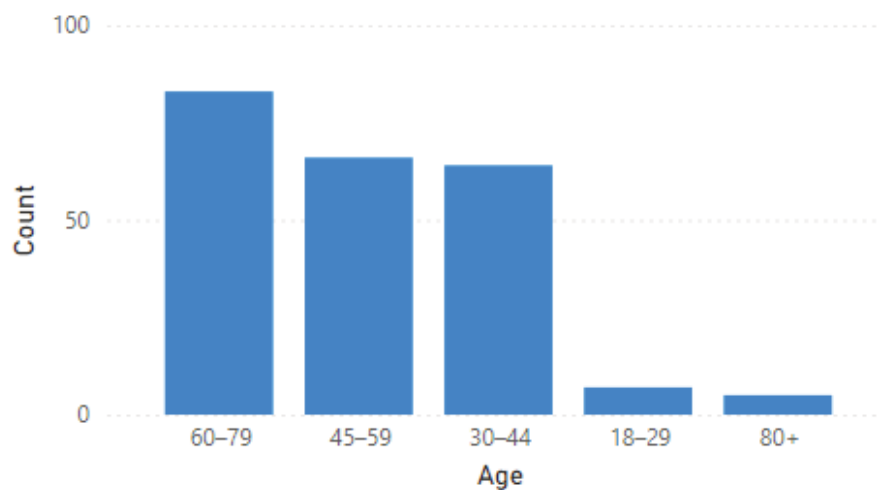
The survey focused on identifying types of businesses that community members would like to see more of in Hayward and the biggest barriers that business owners face while opening and operating in Hayward's commercial areas.

The majority of community members surveyed indicated they were unsatisfied (2.6/10) with the current variety of businesses in Hayward. However, 71% indicated that if Hayward had more local businesses, events, or nightlife, they would be willing to spend more time and money there. Additionally, when surveyed on other cities they enjoy spending time in, Pleasanton, Castro Valley, Livermore, and Dublin were cited most. Respondents highlighted safety, density, and walkability as the main attractors to these areas. Businesses highlighted length of approval times (22%) and lack of communication (18%) as the main challenges they face while interacting with the City. However, businesses reported having an above average experience (3.4/5) with city permitting, licensing, and/or inspection processes. Lastly, businesses emphasized the desire for more dining, retail, and entertainment/arts facilities.

Community Survey and Results

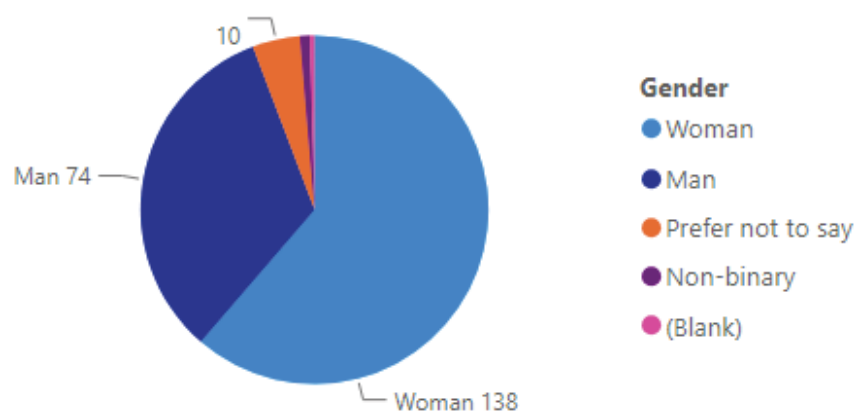
Demographic Data

Average Age of Respondents

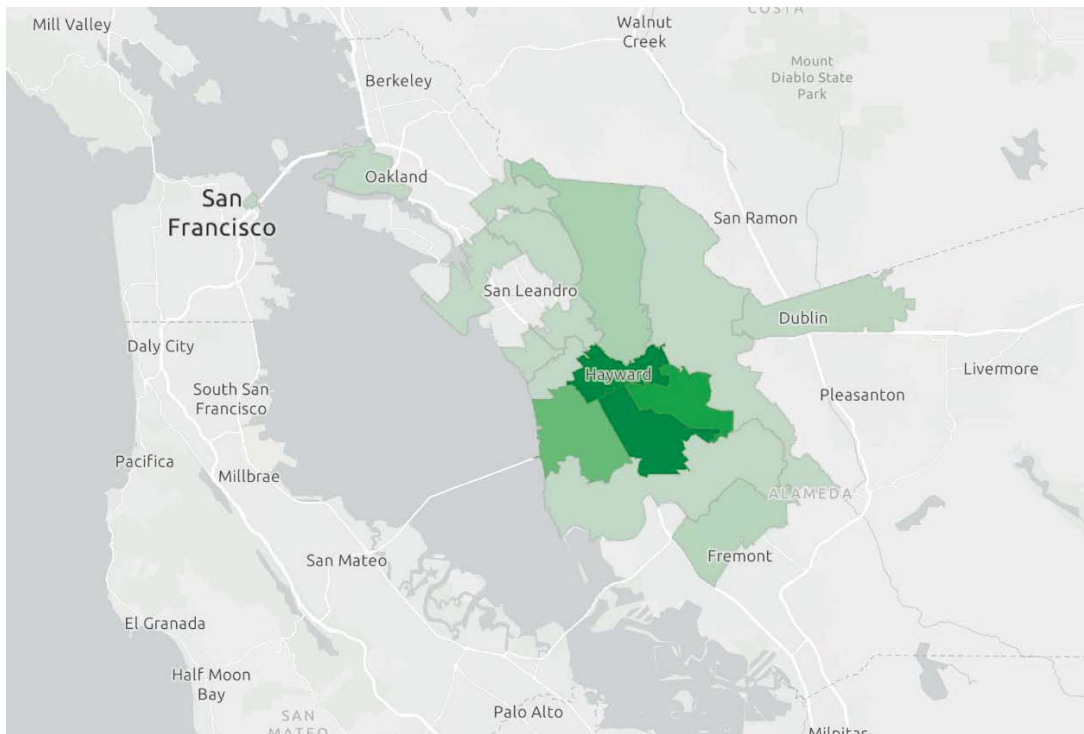


Key respondents are ages 30–79, with the largest group aged 60–79. Very few are under 30 or over 80.

Gender Makeup of Respondents



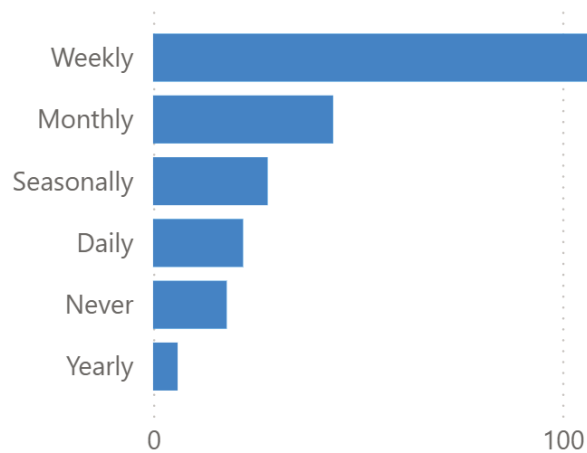
Women make up the majority of respondents (138), with men at 74. Few selected “prefer not to say,” “non-binary,” or left the question blank.



The highest density of respondents clustered in Hayward ZIP codes, especially 94541 and 94544, with secondary pockets in 94542 and 94545. Respondents are located as far north as Sonoma.

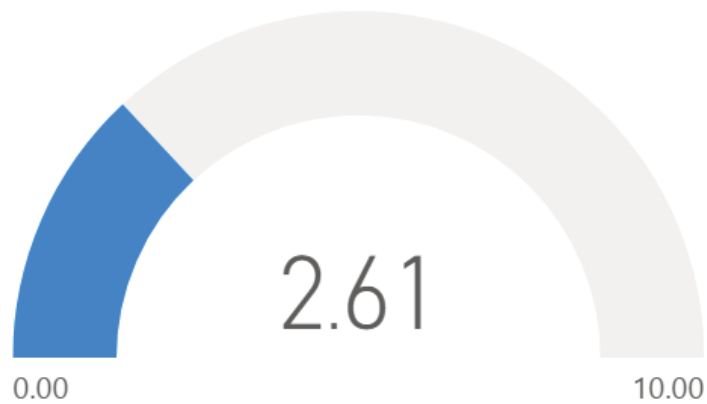
Survey Results

How Often do Respondents Shop in Hayward



Most respondents shop in Hayward weekly, with fewer visiting monthly or less often. Daily and yearly trips are rare.

How satisfied are you with the current variety of businesses in The City of Hayward



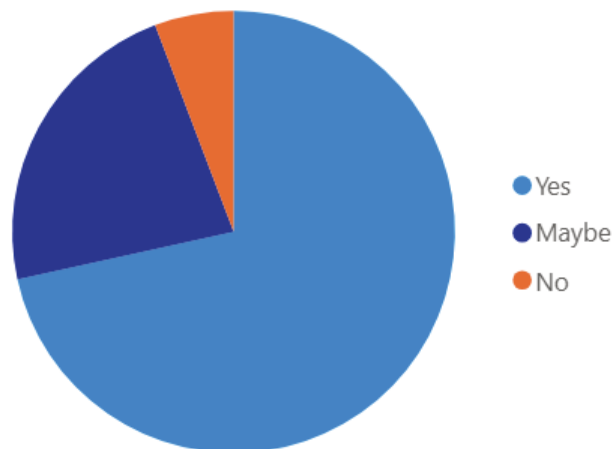
Community satisfaction with Hayward's business variety is low. The average score is 2.61 out of 10.

Where do the Respondents Enjoy Shopping



Top out-of-Hayward shopping hubs: Pleasanton, Castro Valley, Dublin, Walnut Creek, and Livermore. Oakland and San Jose, despite being larger cities have smaller pulls.

If Downtown Hayward had more local businesses, events, or nightlife, would you be more likely to spend time and money there?

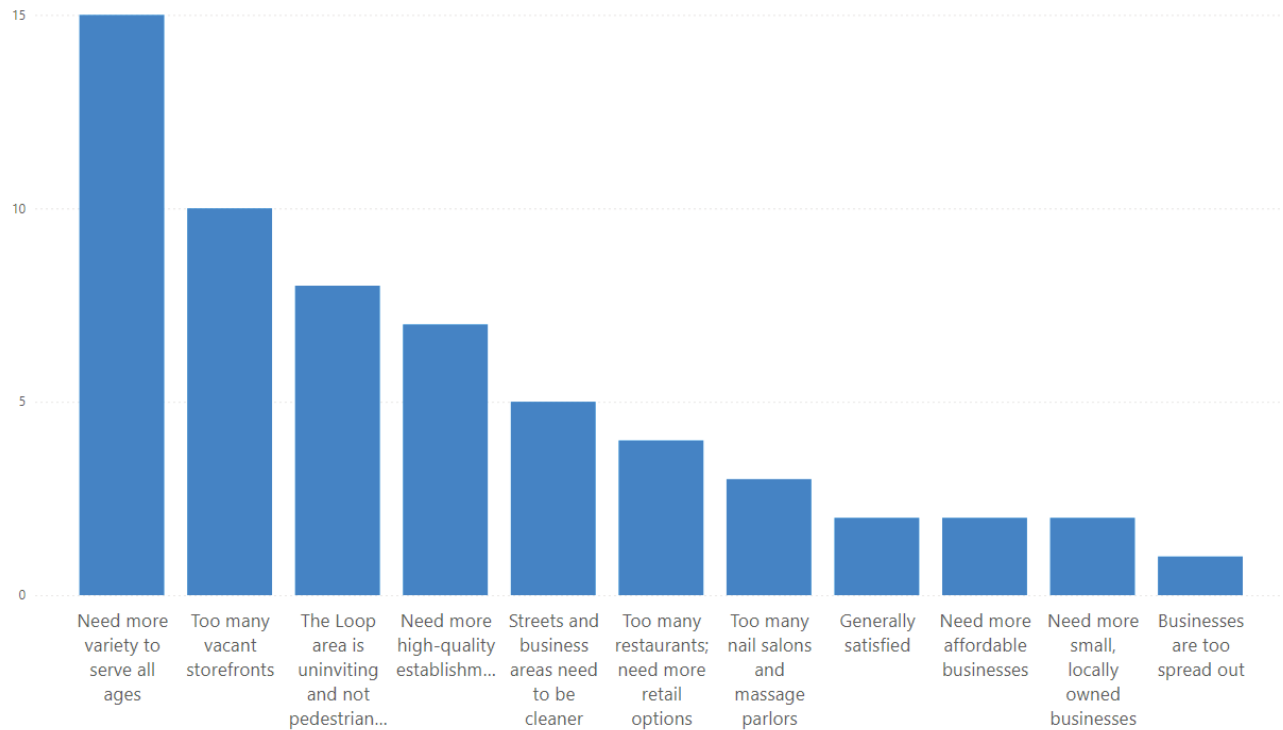


Adding more local businesses, events, and nightlife would significantly increase spending Downtown.

Free Response Analysis

For each question below, the range of free responses provided are summarized into the general categories shown in the bar graphs and a list of key takeaways.

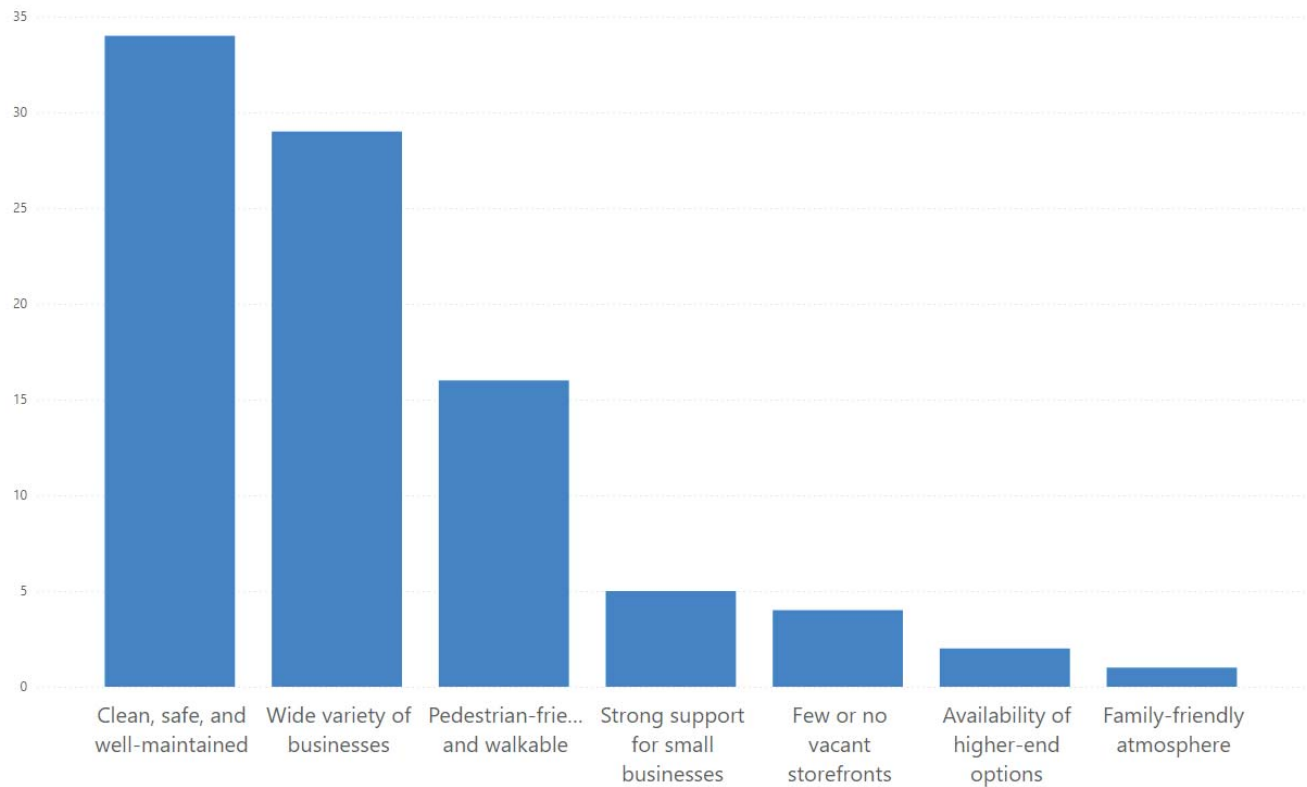
How satisfied are you with the current variety of businesses in Hayward?



Key Takeaways:

- Mixed preferences: some want more national chains, others prefer small local businesses
- Desire for greater variety of businesses overall
- Street conditions are poor
- One respondent suggested aesthetic standards, saying Hayward feels like a “drive-by city”
- Concerns about unpermitted sidewalk vendors
- Some neighborhoods are food deserts
- Too many cannabis dispensaries

Are there other cities or commercial areas you enjoy visiting? What do you like about them?



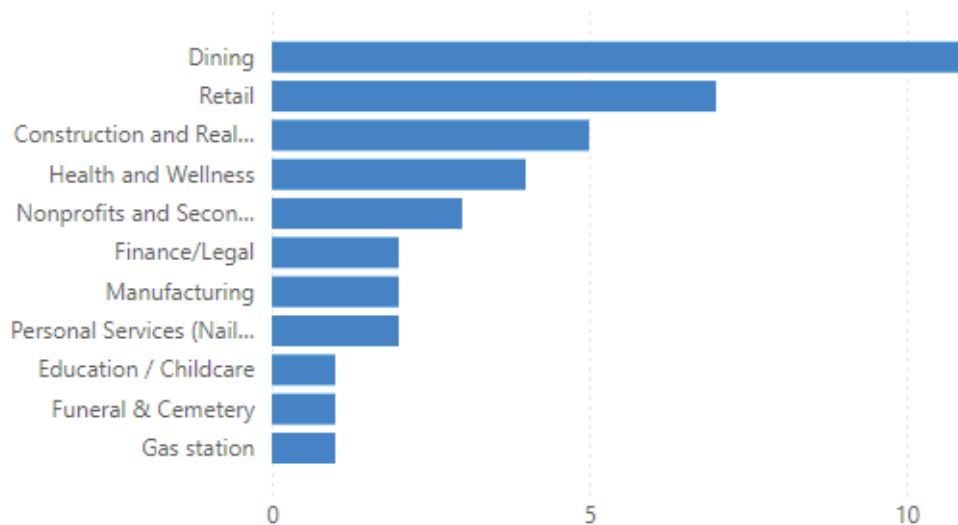
Key Takeaways:

- Desire for live music venues and stronger investment in the local arts scene
- More community engagement and events
- Appreciation for a small-town feel
- Some had a preference for fewer chains and more healthy dining options
- Compact, dense shopping areas that are easy to walk between
- More public gathering spaces, such as outdoor seating or plazas
- Broader mix of businesses representing different ethnicities and cultures

Business Survey and Results

Firmographics

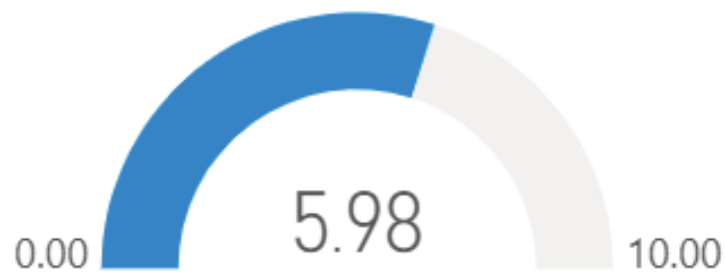
Business Industry



Dining establishments are the largest share of respondents, followed by Retail; other sectors trail far behind.

Survey Results

How clear and accessible is information pertaining to city regulations?



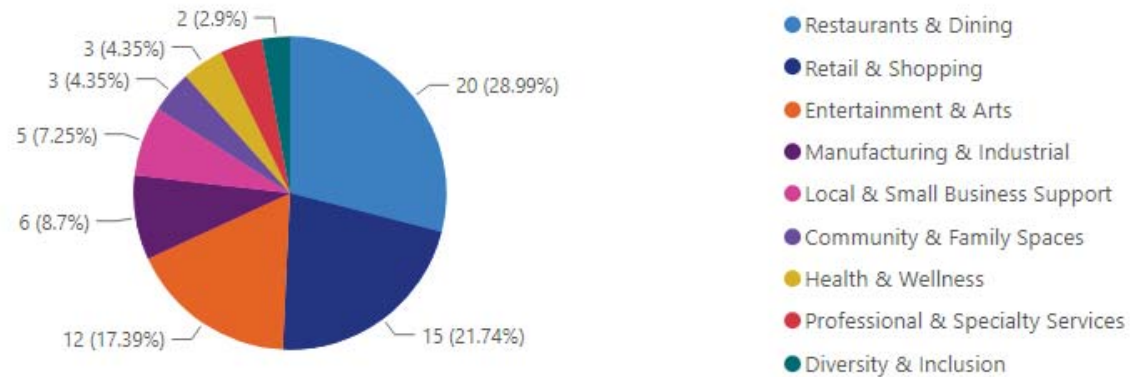
Average clarity/accessibility score is 5.98 out of 10. Moderately clear, but room to improve.

How would you rate your overall experience with city permitting, licensing, or inspection processes?



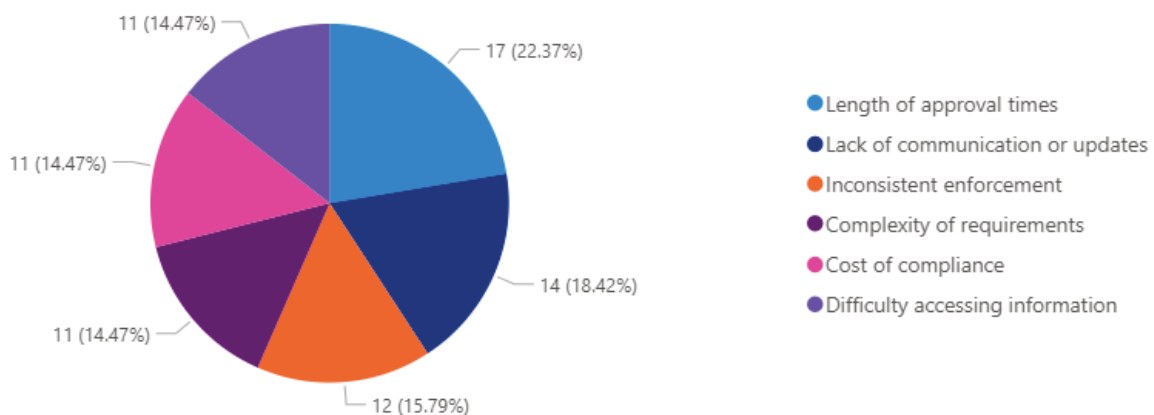
Overall experience with city permitting, licensing, and inspection processes is 3.38 out of 5. Above average, but with room for improvement.

What types of businesses would you like to see in Hayward?



Residents most want restaurants and shopping, with smaller interest in entertainment, manufacturing, small businesses, community spaces, and health and wellness.

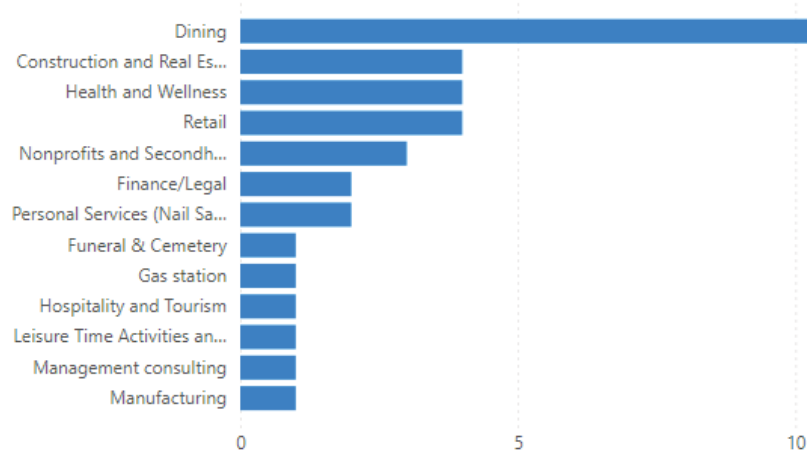
What are the most significant challenges you face (or faced) when interacting with the City?



Top challenges: Lengthy approval times lead, followed by lack of communication by City staff. Complexity of requirements, cost of compliance, and difficulty accessing information are also concerns.

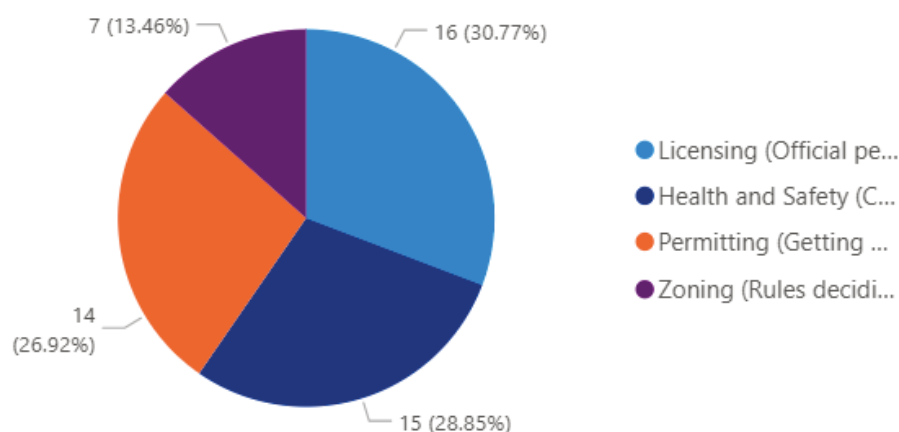
Business Status: Open

Business Industry



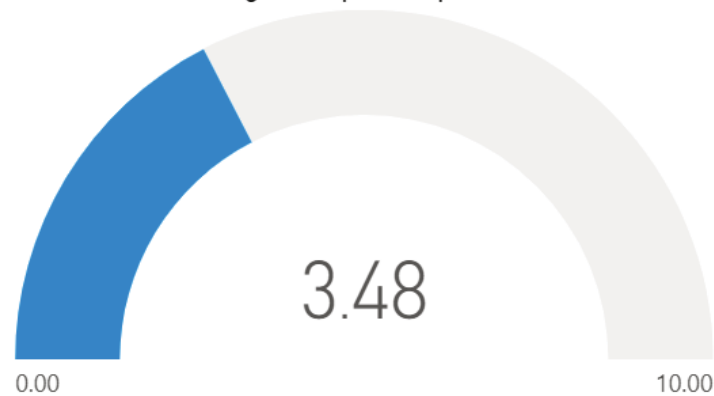
Among open businesses surveyed, dining dominates by a wide margin. Construction/real estate, health and wellness and retail are the next highest represented sectors. All other sectors are minimal.

What top two city regulations have the greatest impact on your business operations?



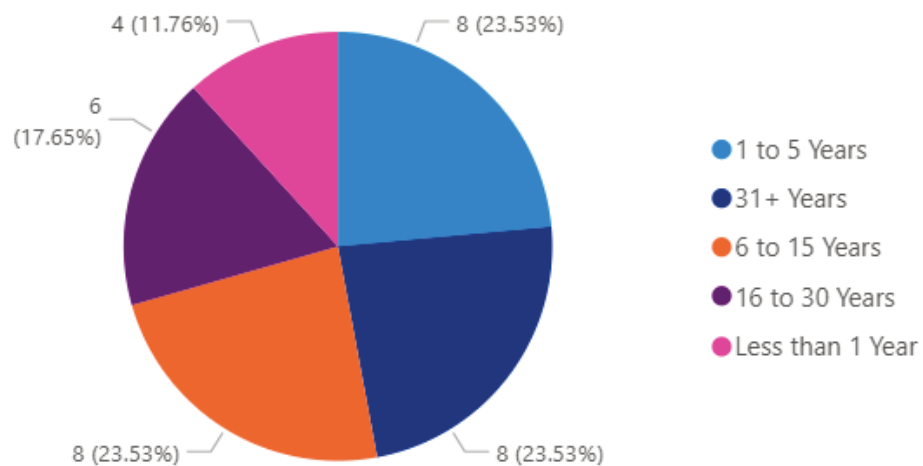
Biggest impacts on business operations: Licensing and health and safety requirements lead, followed by permitting. Zoning is least cited.

How would you rate your overall experience with city permitting, licensing, or inspection processes?



Average experience with city permitting/licensing/inspections is low: 3.48 out of 10.

How long have respondents had a business in Hayward?



Business tenure is evenly split: the largest groups have operated 1–5 years, 6–15 years, and 31+ years (each ~24%), followed by 16–30 years (~18%) and less than 1 year (~12%).

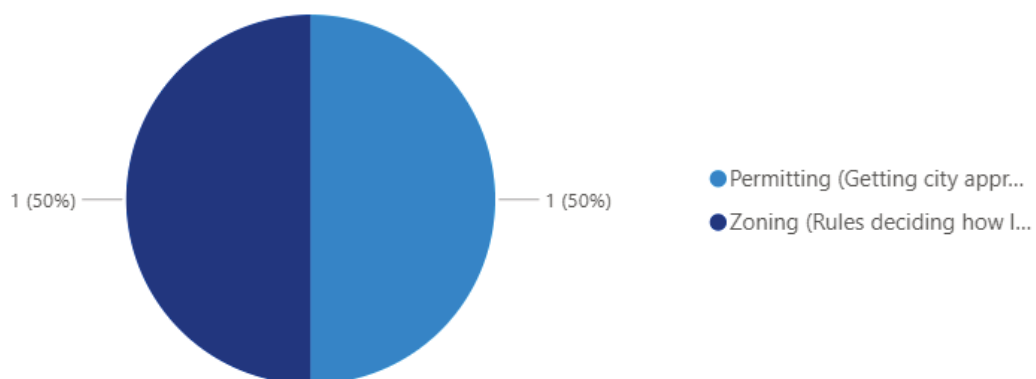
Business Status: Decided Not to Open in Hayward

Business Industry



Among businesses that decided not to open, retail and manufacturing are the only sectors represented.

What top two city regulations or processes would have had the greatest impact on your business operations?



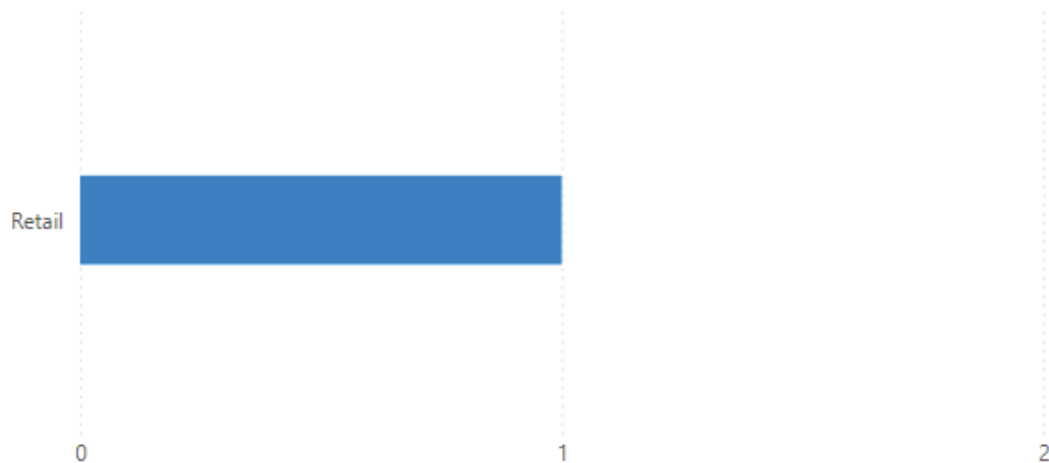
The greatest operational challenges are split evenly between permitting and zoning.



Overall experience with permitting, licensing, and/or the inspection process is 2 out of 10.

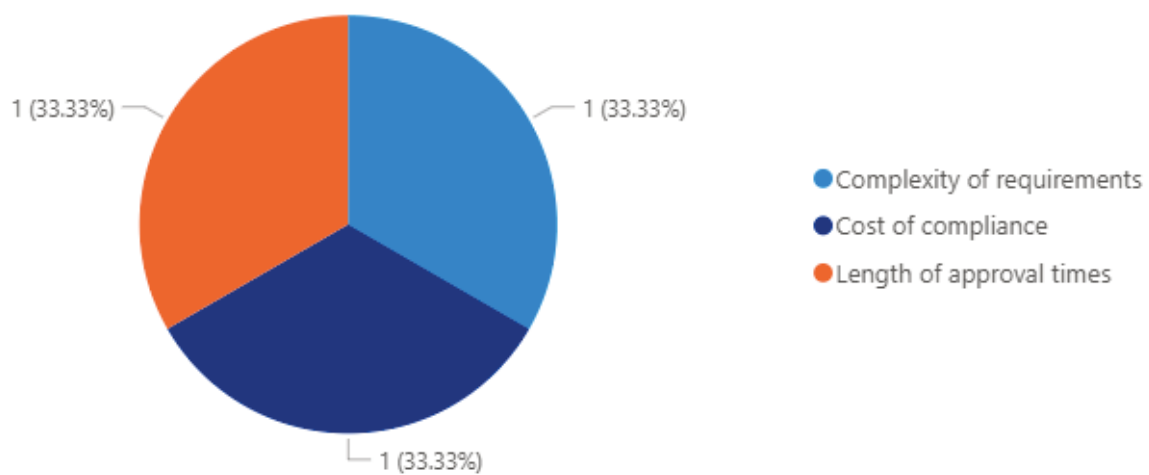
Business Status: Currently in the Permitting Process

Business Industry



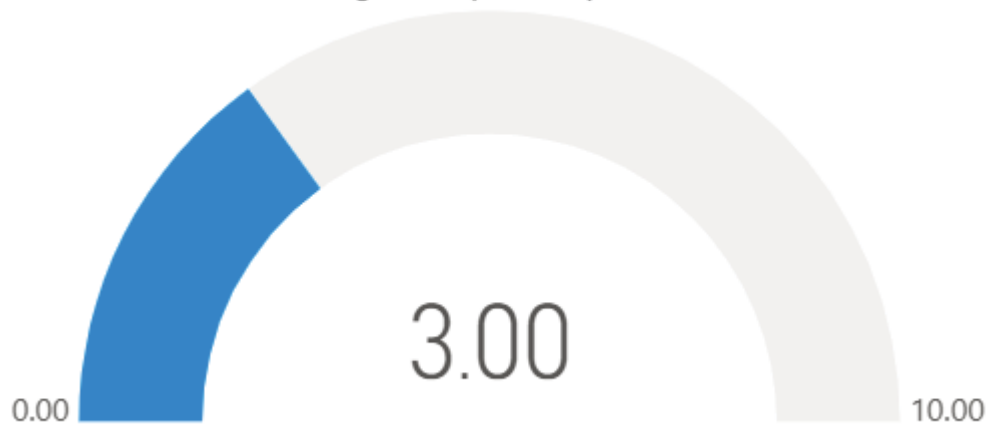
Only one business surveyed is currently in the permit process. It is a retail establishment.

What are the most significant challenges you face (or faced) when interacting with the City?



The challenges faced by this business are identified as the complexity of requirements, the cost of compliance, and the length of approval times.

How would you rate your overall experience with city permitting, licensing, or inspection processes?

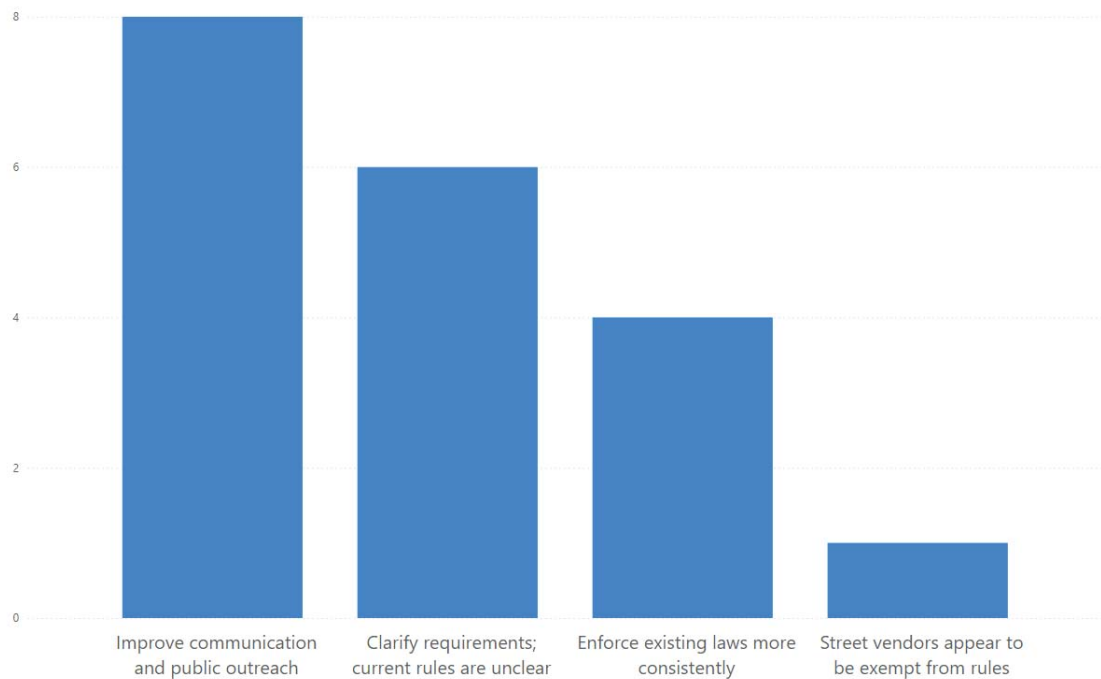


This establishment rated their experience with city permitting, licensing, and/or inspection as 3 out of 10.

Free Response Analysis

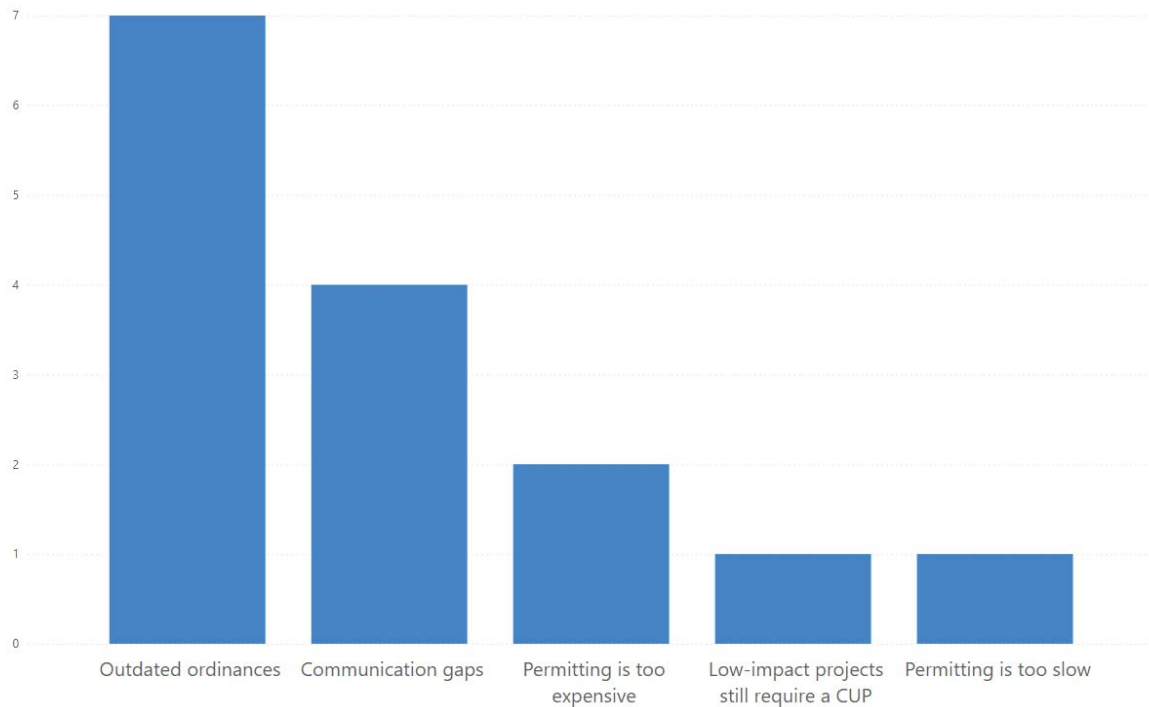
For each question below, the range of free responses provided are summarized into the general categories shown in the bar graphs and a list of key takeaways.

What could be done to strengthen the clarity of zoning laws/other city regulations?



Top priorities include improved communication and public outreach as well as clarifying current zoning laws/regulations.

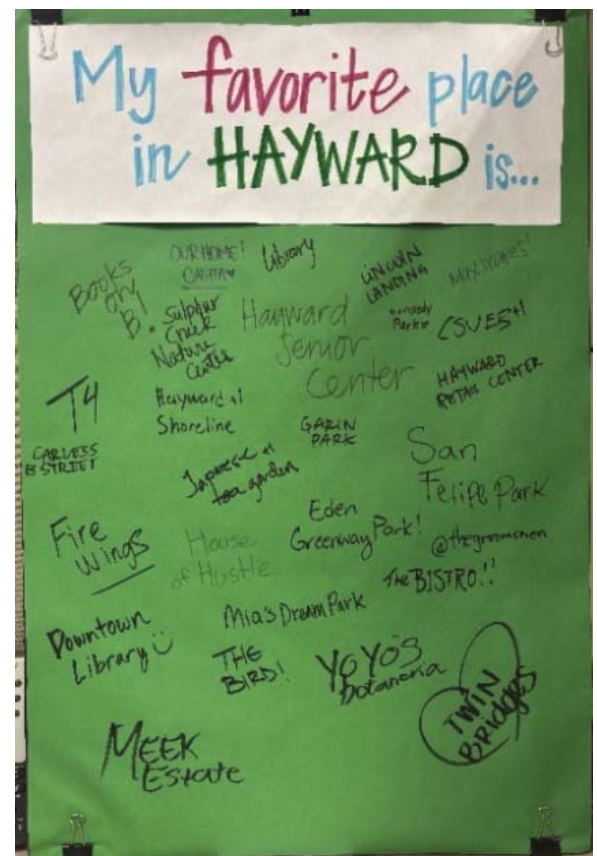
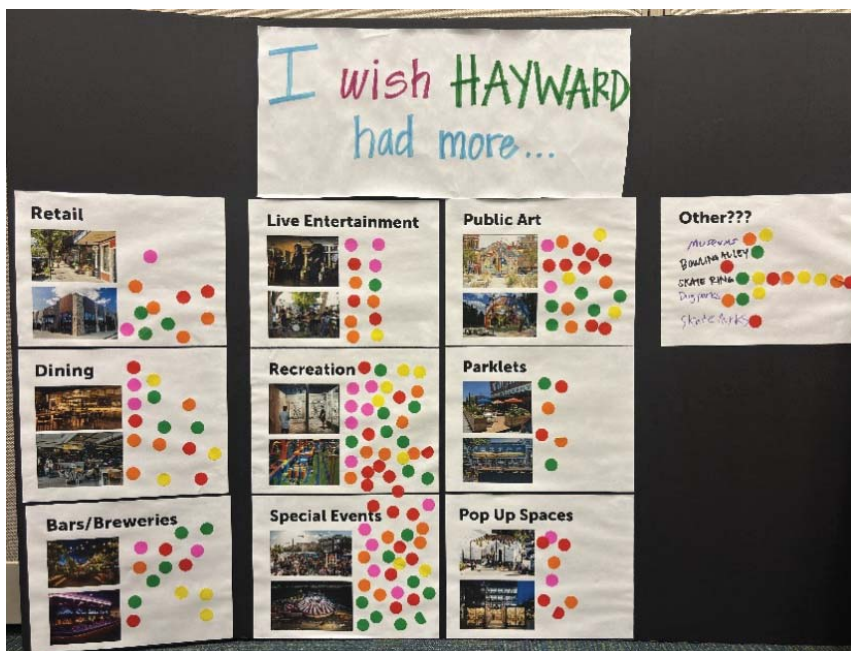
What are the biggest barriers you've experienced or observed when trying to open or improve a business in Downtown Hayward, especially related to permitting, zoning, or other city processes? This can be related to your specific business, or even things such as trying to incorporate live music or other activations.



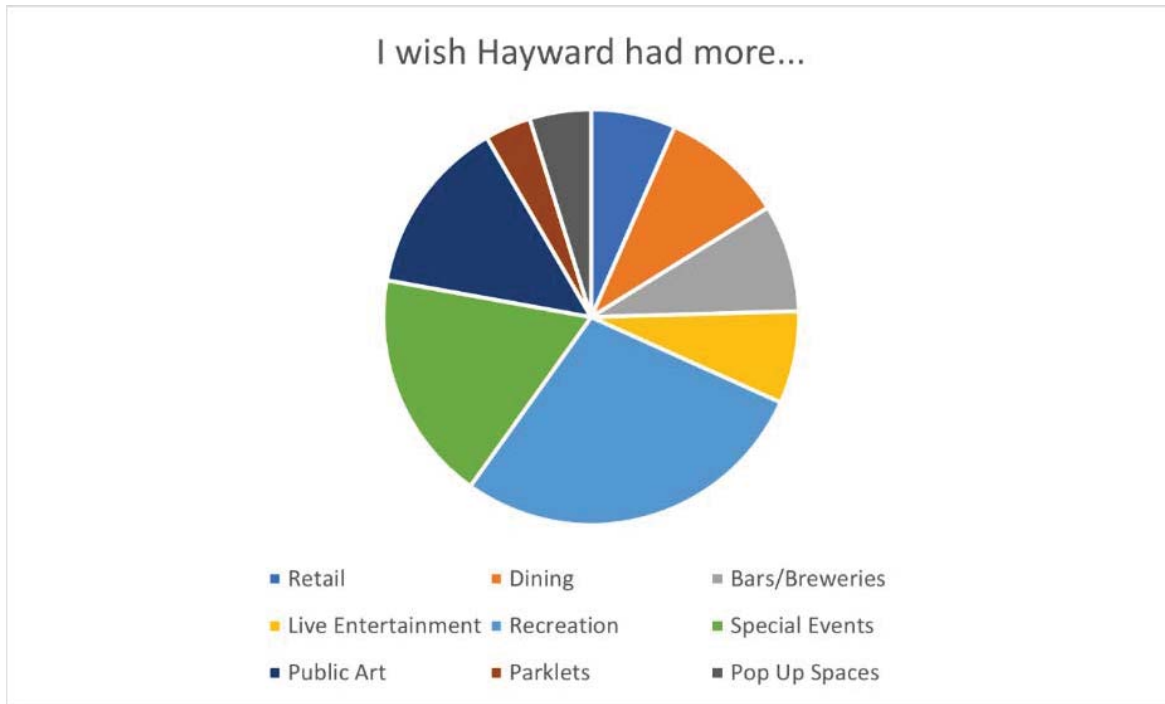
Biggest barriers to opening or improving a business in Downtown Hayward are outdated ordinances and communication gaps.

Summer Street Parties and Results

Staff set up Business Friendly Hayward displays at the Summer Street Parties held in Downtown Hayward on June 12, 2025, and July 17, 2025. At these events staff had interactive posters asking residents and visitors what their favorite place in Hayward is and what types of businesses they wish Hayward had more of. Community members indicated that outdoor spaces such as the Hayward Shoreline and the Japanese Tea Garden were among their favorites. Additionally, the most wished for new businesses in Hayward are recreational uses like skating rinks, axe throwing, and recreation catered towards children.



June 12, 2025



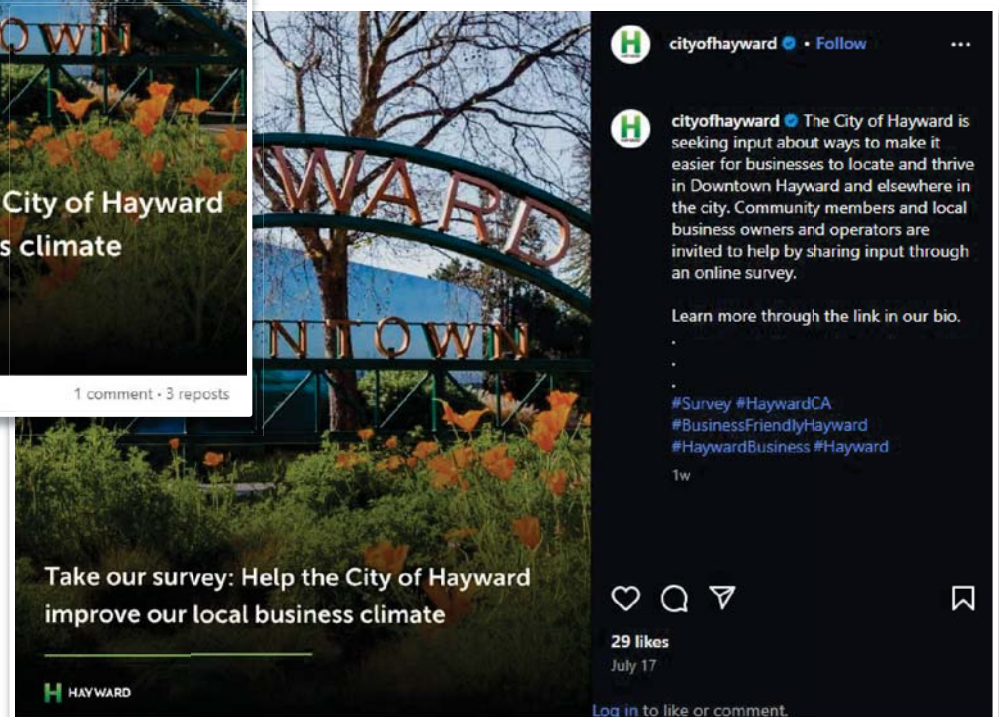
I wish Hayward had more...			My Favorite Place in Hayward Is:
Response	Votes		Retail
Retail	11		Books on B
Dining	16		Hayward Retail Center
Bars/Breweries	14		The Groomsmen
Live Entertainment	12		Dining
Recreation	47		Yoyo's Botaneria
Special Events	30		Max's Cakes
Public Art	23		T4
Parklets	6		Fire Wings
Pop Up Spaces	8		The Bird
			Bars/Breweries
Write In	Votes		The Bistro
Museums	2		Recreation
Bowling Alley	1		Kennedy Park
Skate Ring	8		Sulphur Creek Nature Center
Dog Parks	3		Garin Park
Skate Parks	1		San Felipe Park
			Eden Greenway Park
			Mia's Dream Park
			Japanese Tea Garden
			Hayward Shoreline
			House of Hustle
			Meek's Estate
			Uncategorized
			CSUEB
			Lincoln Landing
			Hayward Senior Center
			Twin Bridges
			Library

I wish Hayward had more...			My Favorite Place in Hayward Is:
Response	Votes		Retail
Retail	36		Eco Thrift
Dining	43		The Stack Record Shop
Bars	21		Dining
Breweries	40		Raising Canes
Live Entertainment	46		El Patio
Recreation	95		El Taquito
Special Events	79		Casa Del Toro
Public Art	61		House of Hushe
Parklets	49		Tacos Gonzales
Pop Up Spaces	25		Khan Hom
			Olef Bistro
Write In	Votes		Max's Cakes
Pottery Studios	1		Chef's Bistro
Bigger Farmers Market	2		Eon Café
Less Vacant Buildings	1		Paris Baguette
Fix up Tennyson	1		A. Romos Café
Dutch Bros Coffee	1		Buon Appetito
Native Plant Nursery	1		Acqua e Farina
"Castro Valley Marketplace"	1		Chai Thai Noodles
Ice cream or yogurt -- More	1		Tram Cream Coffee
Art Spaces	1		Oldtown Roastery
Escape Rooms	1		Suzie Q's
Water Park	1		Max's Cakes
Dog Parks	5		Chai Thai Noodles
Late Night Hang out Places	3		Breweries
Free Community Spaces	1		Buffalo Bills
Cmmunity Spaces for the Ar	1		Dirty Bird
Bike Infrastructure	3		Bars
Splash Pads	1		Curly's Place
Public Pools	1		Funky Monkey
Skate Parks	1		Turf Club
Coffee Shops	1		Recreation
Kid, Baby, and Family Frienc	1		Garin Park
Hiking Trails and Regional P	2		Heritage Plaza
Community Working Spaces:	2		J.A. Lewis Park
More Dog Friendly	1		San Felipe Park
Bagel Shop	1		Don Castro Lake
Café w/ Kid Playspace	1		Japanese Garden
Quality Bilingual Schools	2		

Additional Outreach

Social Media Outreach

Social media outreach was conducted through multiple channels, including Instagram, LinkedIn, and the Stack Extra Newsletter. This outreach promoted both the community survey and the project website, providing residents, community members, and local business owners with opportunities to participate in the survey and learn more about the project's goals, progress, and upcoming activities.



Project Website

A project website was created to highlight the progress made on the project. It includes project background, survey results, as well as opportunities for the public's input.

The screenshot shows the top portion of a website for the "Business Friendly Hayward Project". At the top is a dark navigation bar with icons and links for POLICE, FIRE, AIRPORT, and LIBRARY on the left, and MAKE A PAYMENT, ACCESS HAYWARD, TRANSLATE, and SEARCH on the right. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with the "HAYWARD" logo on the left and links for DISCOVER, RESIDENTS, BUSINESS, SERVICES, YOUR GOVERNMENT, and YOUR ENVIRONMENT on the right. A third navigation bar contains links for Your Government, Departments & Divisions, Planning Division, and Business Friendly Hayward Project. The main content area features a large header image of a man and a woman in aprons holding an "OPEN" sign in front of a shop. Below the image is the section title "BUSINESS FRIENDLY HAYWARD PROJECT" followed by a sub-header "PROJECT SUMMARY/BACKGROUND". The text under this sub-header describes the project as a strategic initiative to make it easier for businesses to locate and thrive in the City's commercial and mixed-use areas, while also working to revitalize vacant and underused properties. It aims to create a supportive environment for local businesses, attract new investment, and strengthen the local economy. The project is part of Hayward's Strategic Roadmap, a vision for the future of Hayward.

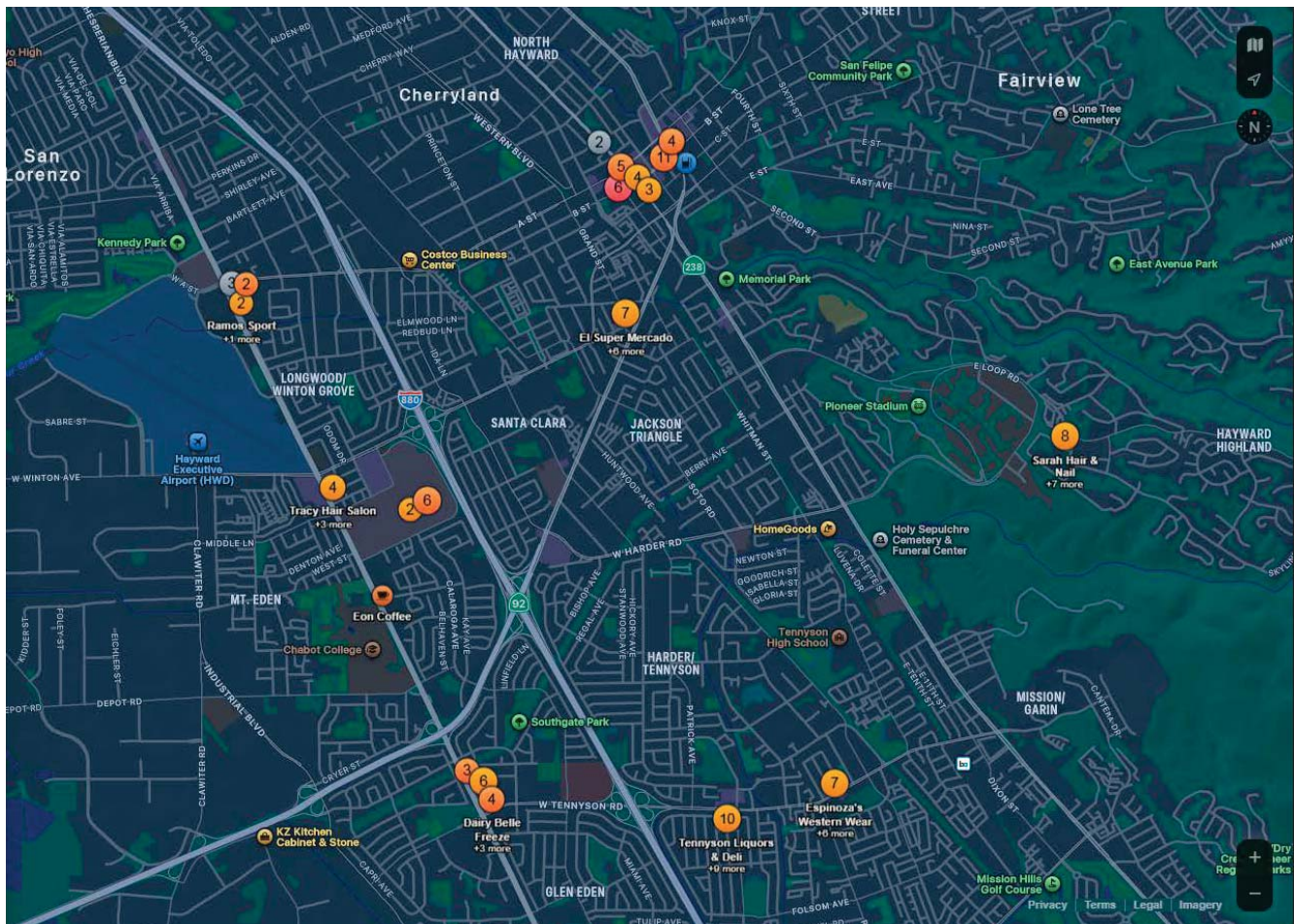
BUSINESS FRIENDLY HAYWARD PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

The Business Friendly Hayward Plan is a strategic initiative designed to make it easier for businesses to locate and thrive in the City's commercial and mixed-use areas, while also working to revitalize vacant and underused properties. The project aims to create a supportive environment for local businesses, attract new investment, and strengthen the local economy. The project is a part of Hayward's Strategic Roadmap, a vision for the future of Hayward.

Door-To-Door Outreach

Over a four-day period, in-person and door-to-door outreach to businesses was carried out across Hayward. More than 100 businesses were visited, helping to promote the project as well as distributing informational flyers. The majority of business owners and managers responded positively, expressing interest in learning more and supporting the project's goals.



Focus Groups Outreach

Additional outreach to the Downtown Hayward Improvement Association and Chamber of Commerce was conducted in July 2025. Focus groups with business owners will be coordinated with these groups for additional focused feedback.

Appendices

Community Survey Questions

1. How satisfied are you with the current variety of businesses in The City of Hayward?
2. Please elaborate, if desired
3. Are there other cities or commercial areas you enjoy visiting? What do you like about them?
4. If something like that existed in Hayward, would you go there? Why or why not?
5. If Downtown Hayward had more local businesses, events, or nightlife, would you be more likely to spend time and money there?
6. Please rank what businesses you would like to see **more** of in Hayward? (Higher = **More** | Lower = **Less**)
 - Retail
 - Dining
 - Bars
 - Live Entertainment
 - Recreation
 - Special Events/Pop Ups
 - Public Art
 - Parklets
 - Brewery/Beer Garden
 - Other
7. How often do you shop in The City of Hayward?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Seasonal
 - Yearly
 - Never
8. Zip Code

9. Age

10. Gender

11. Would you be interested in speaking with a city planner to share more detailed feedback or discuss your ideas for Hayward?

Business Survey Questions

1. How clear and accessible is information pertaining to city regulations?
2. What could be done to strengthen the clarity of zoning laws/other city regulations?
3. How would you rate your overall experience with city permitting, licensing, or inspection processes?
4. Please elaborate, if desired
5. Business Industry
 - Retail
 - Dining
 - Art, Museums, and Other Entertainment Facilities
 - Office
 - Personal Services (Nail Salon, Dry Cleaning, Laundromat, etc.)
 - Automotive Services
 - Health/Wellness
 - Finance/Legal
 - Home Improvement
 - Nonprofits/Secondhand Retail
 - Hospitality/Tourism
 - Construction and Real Estate
6. What types of businesses would you like to see more of in The City of Hayward?
7. What are the most significant challenges you face (or faced) when interacting with the City?
 - Complexity of requirements
 - Length of approval times
 - Cost of compliance
 - Lack of communication or updates
 - Inconsistent enforcement
 - Difficulty accessing information
 - Other
8. What are the biggest barriers you've experienced or observed when trying to open or improve a business in Downtown Hayward, especially related to permitting, zoning, or other city

processes? This can be related to your specific business, or even things such as trying to incorporate live music or other activations.

9. What is the status of your business

Business Status: Open

1. What top two city regulations or processes have the greatest impact on your business operations?

Permitting (Getting city approval for construction, changes, or certain business activities.)

Zoning (Rules deciding how land and buildings can be used in different parts of the city.)

Licensing (Official permission from the city needed to legally run your business.)

Health and Safety (City rules to keep employees, customers, and the public safe from hazards.)

2. How long have you had a business in Hayward

3. Would you be interested in speaking with a city planner to share more detailed feedback or discuss your ideas for downtown Hayward?

Business Status: Opening Soon

1. What top two city regulations or processes did you find to be the most time consuming?

Permitting (Getting city approval for construction, changes, or certain business activities.)

Zoning (Rules deciding how land and buildings can be used in different parts of the city.)

Licensing (Official permission from the city needed to legally run your business.)

Health and Safety (City rules to keep employees, customers, and the public safe from hazards.)

2. Would you be interested in speaking with a city planner to share more detailed feedback or discuss your ideas for downtown Hayward?

Business Status: Waiting on Permits

1. Would you be interested in speaking with a city planner to share more detailed feedback or discuss your ideas for downtown Hayward?

Business Status: Closed

1. What top two city regulations or processes had the greatest impact on your business operations?
Permitting (Getting city approval for construction, changes, or certain business activities.)
Zoning (Rules deciding how land and buildings can be used in different parts of the city.)
Licensing (Official permission from the city needed to legally run your business.)
Health and Safety (City rules to keep employees, customers, and the public safe from hazards.)
2. How long did you have a business in Hayward?
3. Would you be interested in speaking with a city planner to share more detailed feedback or discuss your ideas for downtown Hayward?

Business Status: Decided Not To

1. What top two city regulations or processes would have had the greatest impact on your business operations?
Permitting (Getting city approval for construction, changes, or certain business activities.)
Zoning (Rules deciding how land and buildings can be used in different parts of the city.)
Licensing (Official permission from the city needed to legally run your business.)
Health and Safety (City rules to keep employees, customers, and the public safe from hazards.)
2. If you decided to open elsewhere, where did you decide to do so and why?

3. Would you be interested in speaking with a city planner to share more detailed feedback or discuss your ideas for downtown Hayward?