



## COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES – March 3, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Salinas called the regular meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

### ATTENDANCE: (September 2024-July 2025)

Meeting Attendees	Present 03/3/25	All Meetings Year to Date		Meetings Mandated By Resolution	
		Present	Absent	Present	Absent
Mayor Salinas	✓	5	0	5	0
Council Member Andrews	✓	5	0	5	0
Council Member Bonilla	✓	3	2	3	2

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ana Alvarez, City Manager; Paul Nguyen, Chief Economic Development Officer; Daniel Mao, Economic Development Specialist; Amber Green, Economic Development Specialist; Javier Castro, Community Programs Specialist; Cornelio Montez, Information Systems Support Technician

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING February 3, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes from February 3, 2025, Regular Meeting was made by Council Member Bonilla and seconded by Council Member Andrews. The minutes were approved.

### 2. Hayward Upward Economic Recovery Program Update: Hire Hayward (Oral Report Only)

Chief Economic Development Officer Paul Nguyen introduced the item and Economic Development Specialist Daniel Mao, who provided the presentation.

Council Member Andrews inquired about plans to continue the job fair component of the program beyond spring 2026. Economic Development Specialist Mao explained that Economic Development partnered with Cal State University East Bay (CSUEB) and Chabot College to conduct the job fairs because these institutions regularly organized job fairs prior to the launch of the Tuition Assistance and Hire Hayward programs. He added the programs aimed to help the institutions elevate their job fairs to a new level. It is the goal to continue the job fairs independently moving forward. He added

that current job fairs are held at Chabot College due to feedback from employers and grant recipients indicating it is a more accessible location.

Council Member Andrews mentioned that Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) had recently hosted a job fair at Hayward City Hall. She asked if there was potential for a partnership between BOSS and the educational institutions. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen confirmed that they are all part of the same workforce ecosystem. He added that while the Alameda County Workforce Development Board is located in Hayward. He noted that the program's model could be expanded to include other partners.

Council Member Andrews further inquired about the possibility of collaborating with Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (HARD) to offer job opportunities for teens. She also suggested hosting job fairs at Southland Mall for retail positions. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen clarified that the current program primarily targets post-pandemic young adults and adult students seeking employment in advanced industries. He added that creating a teen-focused program would require a different approach.

Council Member Bonilla asked how the grant funds awarded to businesses were utilized. Economic Development Specialist Mao explained that the funds were used to offset onboarding costs associated with hiring, as well as for employee training. He added that the program focused on placing individuals in highly technical jobs that required specific training, with the condition that hires remain employed for at least six months.

Council Member Bonilla also asked about the program's promotional efforts. Economic Development Specialist Mao stated that the "Learn to Earn" portion relied on the educational partners' existing grant disbursement platforms. For CSUEB, the Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN) program was the primary channel, while Chabot College utilized the Friends of Chabot platform. For the "Hire Hayward" portion, staff issued a press release and conducted direct outreach to the business community. Economic Development Specialist Mao added that staff carefully reviewed applications to ensure they met the program's criteria.

Council Member Bonilla asked if onsite hiring occurred at the job fairs, Economic Development Specialist Mao indicated that, to his knowledge, there were no direct hires on the spot due to the large turnout. However, he noted that many applications were submitted, and the fairs ultimately led to job placements. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen added that more data on employment outcomes would be collected and shared as it became available.

Council Member Bonilla suggested exploring partnerships with businesses to promote economic sustainability by encouraging them to invest in the "Learn to Earn" program. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen agreed that such partnerships would be ideal. However, he emphasized the importance of first demonstrating the program's effectiveness and value before soliciting funding from businesses. He noted that was a challenge to attract businesses to participate in the initial job fairs, but new data and success stories could strengthen future funding requests.

Council Member Bonilla proposed using potential business contributions to fund a workforce development specialist position under the Economic Development Division. He added this role could help expand the program and collaborate with educational institutions' career centers. Chief

Economic Development Officer Nguyen responded that most workforce development positions are funded through federal programs, which are typically managed by counties, not cities.

Council Member Bonilla suggested that the City of Hayward should participate in future job fairs to hire.

Mayor Salinas recommended inviting the program's partner organizations to attend the next presentation. He emphasized the importance of holding educational institutions accountable for their role given the City's financial support for their job fairs.

Economic Development Specialist Mao mentioned that Chabot College recently hired a new Business Engagement Specialist, who will serve as the primary liaison for future job fairs in partnership with Economic Development.

Mayor Salinas concluded by noting that in the previous year, HARD had hired youth recreation leaders, many of whom were students from Hayward Unified School District (HUSD).

### **3. Hayward Restaurant Month**

Chief Economic Development Officer Paul Nguyen introduced the item and Community Programs Specialist Javier Castro, who provided the presentation.

Council Member Andrews expressed interest in the Yelp Elite club and inquired about how Hayward could participate. Economic Development Specialist Mao stated that Economic Development had considered using a passport program and suggested they could explore it further for the next iteration.

Council Member Andrews asked whether the participating restaurants represented a single cuisine style or a mix of different types. Community Programs Specialist Castro responded that the participants offered a wide range of cuisines. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen added that staff cast a wide net, accepting any restaurant that was interested in participating. Businesses that met with staff and created a special offer were included in the program.

Council Member Andrews asked how Hayward could pursue a title such as "Most Cultural Food City." Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen explained that such titles are often arbitrary and may not reflect reality. However, he noted that if a media outlet or newspaper bestowed such a moniker on Hayward, Economic Development would use it in their marketing efforts.

Council Member Bonilla asked if Restaurant Month is always held in January. Community Programs Specialist Castro confirmed that California Restaurant Month is hosted in January.

Council Member Bonilla suggested exploring the possibility of hosting a summer restaurant month to introduce more creative events. He complimented staff for their creative use of Yelp, Instagram Reels, and alignment with marketing trends.

Council Member Bonilla asked how the businesses receiving marketing support were selected. Community Programs Specialist Castro explained that any restaurant could participate, provided they were willing to offer a special during the month. He added that staff visited the restaurants, took photos, and helped refine their promotional offers. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen added

that staff spent hours canvassing major corridors to recruit businesses, building relationships with restaurant owners to gain their trust and encourage participation.

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen noted that while other cities host "Restaurant Week," Hayward chose to extend the effort to a full month to maximize the impact of staff's labor.

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen also expressed interest in creating other cuisine-based promotions in the future, though he pointed out that such programs are typically run by visitors bureaus rather than cities.

Council Member Bonilla asked if most of this year's participants were returning from the previous year. Community Programs Specialist Castro reported that of the 18 restaurants that participated last year, only five returned for this year's 21 participants.

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen emphasized that although the program is labor-intensive, it is not cost-intensive.

Mayor Salinas asked how the City tracks increases in customer traffic during Restaurant Month. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen explained that businesses can track customer counts through their point-of-sale (POS) systems. Economic Development conducts an after-action survey to gather that data.

Council Member Andrews asked if it was typical for cities to run Restaurant Month programs. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen replied that it is usually organized by visitors' bureaus, chambers of commerce, or downtown associations.

Council Member Andrews requested information on the potential benefits of outsourcing such programs versus keeping them in-house.

Council Member Andrews also inquired about the Downtown Hayward Improvement Association's (DHIA) involvement. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen stated that the City includes DHIA and the Chamber of Commerce in all promotional efforts to help market the program. Council Member Andrews asked whether DHIA or the Chamber of Commerce could take on a larger role in running the program. Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen stated that staff could explore handing over the program to other organizations.

Council Member Bonilla asked if the City paid for the digital billboards on used to promote Restaurant Month. Community Programs Specialist Castro clarified that the City is allotted advertising space on the billboards, which it can use without additional cost.

#### **4. Future Meeting Topics**

Council Member Andrews requested updates on the movie theater, the Downtown Action Plan, and surplus properties.

Mayor Salinas expressed interest in receiving a corridor report as part of the economic update and suggested inviting the relevant stakeholders to City Hall. He also proposed the possibility of hosting a meeting at one of the corridors.

City Manager Ana Alvarez shared that she recently toured the Tennyson corridor and found the experience highly informative.

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen suggested conducting a walking tour similar to the previous Downtown tour.

Council Member Andrews noted that the Economic Development Committee previously held a meeting at Southland Mall and expressed interest in doing so again in the future.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER/ STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REFERRALS**

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen announced that HomeGoods is the final box tenant to open at the Hayward Retail Center, creating 130 new jobs. He added that the company donated \$10,000 to the Alameda County Community Food Bank.

Economic Development Specialist Mao announced that Atlas Café in Downtown Hayward has been sold to Tram Cream Coffee, a San Jose based franchisee specializing in Vietnamese egg coffee and bánh mì sandwiches.

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen shared that Eikon Therapeutics, headquartered in Hayward, recently raised \$350 million in funding. He added that since 2019, Eikon has raised over \$1 billion, earning them unicorn status.

Chief Economic Development Officer Nguyen also announced that Urban Air Adventure Park will be opening in Hayward at the former Food Source location on Mission Boulevard. He stated that the park will feature rock climbing walls, trampolines, warrior courses and a zip line.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.