



**Beverly Hills City Council Liaison /  
Small Business Assistance Task Force Committee  
will conduct a Special Meeting, at the following time and place, and will  
address the agenda listed below:**

**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS  
455 North Rexford Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
Teleconference/Video Conference Meeting**

**Beverly Hills Liaison Meeting  
<https://www.gotomeet.me/BHLiaison>**

**You can also dial in by phone:  
United States (Toll Free): 1-866-899-4679 or United States: 1-646-749-3117  
Access Code: 660-810-077**

**Thursday, October 1, 2020  
8:30 AM**

**Pursuant to Executive Order N-25-20 members of the Beverly Hills City Council and staff may participate in this meeting via a teleconference. In the interest of maintaining appropriate social distancing, members of the public can participate in the teleconference/video conference by using this link: <https://www.gotomeet.me/BHLiaison> or by phone at 1-866-899-4679 or 1-646-749-3117, Access Code: 660-810-077. Written comments may be emailed to [mayorandcitycouncil@beverlyhills.org](mailto:mayorandcitycouncil@beverlyhills.org) and will be read at the meeting.**

**AGENDA**

1. Public Comment
2. Members of the public will be given the opportunity to directly address the Committee on any item listed on the agenda.
3. Welcome, Introductions and Purpose of the Task Force
4. Discussion Regarding Process and Fees for Commercial Signage Requests
  - a. Recommendation of Task Force
  - b. Research on Process in Other Cities
  - c. Potential Options for Streamlining Small Business Signage Requests
5. Discussion Regarding Creation of Vacant Storefront Beautification Program
  - a. Recommendation of Task Force
  - b. Research on Programs in Other Cities
  - c. Potential Options for a Program
6. Discussion of Future Potential Focus Areas and Current Small Business Support Initiatives
7. Adjournment

**George Chavez, City Manager**

**Posted: September 25, 2020**



Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Beverly Hills will make reasonable efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities. If you require special assistance, please call (310) 285-1014 (voice) or (310) 285-6881 (TTY). Providing at least twenty-four (24) hours advance notice will help to ensure availability of services.



C H A M B E R  
*of*  
C O M M E R C E

### **Small Business Task Force**

From: Blair Schlecter, Vice President of Economic Development and Government Affairs, Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce

To: City of Beverly Hills Small Business Assistance Task Force

CC: Laura Biery, Marketing and Economic Sustainability Manager, City of Beverly Hills; Todd Johnson, CEO, Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce

Date: September 29, 2020

Re: Beverly Hills Commercial Sign Requests and Vacant Storefront Beautification Program

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#### **Introduction**

At its last meeting, the Task Force discussed two topics that had been the focus of prior discussions and recommendations: providing easier options for small businesses to update signage and potential programs for vacant storefront beautification.

#### **Commercial Sign Requests**

One of the approved recommendations of the Small Business Task Force is “Streamline and provide more cost effective ways for business owners to update their storefront signage.” Further research was conducted to evaluate how other cities handle signage requests.

### **Comparing Signage Requests Across Cities**

<b>City</b>	<b>Level of Review</b>	<b>Cost – staff level review</b>	<b>Cost – Commission level review</b>
Beverly Hills	Signs over 25 square feet go to Architectural Commission	\$385	\$2,243.50 for 1 meeting; \$4,485 for 2 meetings.
Santa Monica	Signs over 25 square feet goes to Architectural Review Board.	\$425	Between \$1,770.45 and \$2,091.93.
West Hollywood	Creative Signs larger than 50 square feet are subject to Commission review.	\$97 – Sign Permit \$635 – Creative Sign	\$1,171.47
Culver City	All signage handled at staff level.	\$210.08	N/A
Palm Desert	Signs over 25 square feet typically reviewed by Architectural Review Board	\$98	\$393

#### Potential Options

1. Lower the cost of Architectural Commission review.
2. Allow more signage requests by small businesses to be handled at the staff level.
3. Enhanced communication with stakeholders.
  - a. For example, communicating that code-compliant signs are still subject to architectural review and approval.

#### Vacant Storefront Beautification Program

The Task Force previously recommended simplifying and streamlining the process for approving vacant storefront beautification to make it easier for landlords to decorate the property while it is sitting vacant. This recommendation was approved by the City Council.

There are several options for vacant storefront beautification.

### Beverly Hills “Beyond 2020” Art Installation Opportunity

The City of Beverly Hills is working on a funding co-sponsorship with United Talent Agency on a “Beyond 2020” art installation to occur in 4-6 vacant storefronts in Beverly Hills during November/December 2020. The project lead is the City’s Arts and Culture Commission along with the Human Relations Commission as part of a campaign called “Embrace and Celebrate Culture.” There is no cost to the business/property owner for the installation of art in a vacant storefront. The insurance and installation costs will all be covered. Installations can be viewed by walking by or driving by the storefronts on the sidewalk/street and will be COVID compliant. Artists for this project are still under review

The City plans to identify locations for arts installations in mid-October. Interested property owners should contact Kristin Buhagiar with the City of Beverly Hills’ Community Services Department at [kbuhagiar@beverlyhills.org](mailto:kbuhagiar@beverlyhills.org).

### Other Cities and Ideas

For example, although there is no formal program, downtown Burbank has a few locations that have put up temporary vacant storefront signage:





The City could implement a similar program with a template logo and color scheme highlighting Beverly Hills that property owners could use to decorate their building while vacant. Many cities throughout the country have storefront beautification programs utilizing various techniques.

For example, the City of Campbell, California has a voluntary, no-cost program whereby artwork from schools or artists can be temporarily displayed in storefront windows to help revitalize empty tenant spaces.

<https://www.ci.campbell.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/9984/VacantStorefront-Program>.

Brownsville, Texas has a program providing small grants for property owners to refurbish the facades of vacant buildings. - <https://www.cob.us/DocumentCenter/View/5326/Downtown-Beautification-Program?bidId=> Another idea is allowing pop up uses through temporary use permits.

Other options include displays highlighting (1) other local merchants, (2) a shop local program or (3) historical, education, tourism or community displays. See

[https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/innovative\\_ways\\_to\\_fill\\_vacant\\_storefronts-\\_pdf-\\_notes\\_0.pdf](https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/innovative_ways_to_fill_vacant_storefronts-_pdf-_notes_0.pdf) (showing campaigns in various cities).

The City of Cambridge, Massachusetts commissioned a report that provides information about many of these options.

[https://www.cambridgema.gov/~media/Files/CDD/EconDev/retailstrategy/cambridgevacancysto\\_refrontreport\\_6302018.pdf](https://www.cambridgema.gov/~media/Files/CDD/EconDev/retailstrategy/cambridgevacancysto_refrontreport_6302018.pdf). The report also emphasizes the need for strong communication

between property owners and cities to identify strategies to fill vacancies and suggests several potential tactics including utilizing a platform for identifying and sharing vacancies.

#### Potential Options

1. Partner with City, local non-profits, and/or other civic institutions for temporary artistic or other window displays.
2. Create a template window display highlighting Beverly Hills and/or the Beverly Hills community, shop local program, education or tourism.
3. Allow neighboring merchants to display goods in vacant storefronts.
4. Property Owners Task Force (this item is already in progress).

#### Next Steps

The Task Force can discuss these findings and determine any follow up needed.