

HCC Recommendation

DATE: August 31, 2004

TOPIC: Changes to the walking mall

SUMMARY: While the downtown walking mall is in need of refurbishing, there is a general sentiment that we should make an effort to preserve its unique character as a downtown park and place to shop.

RECOMMENDATION: The Helena Citizen's Council endorses the concept of improving the infrastructure of the Walking Mall including providing a 20 foot roadway for emergency and permitted traffic only. We also firmly believe that the esthetics of the mall as a walking, park-like setting must be preserved.

VOTE: Proponents 10 Opponents 0 Abstain 0

PROPOSERS:

There is no reason to believe that putting traffic on the mall will help downtown businesses.

Downtown businesses in other cities are suffering the same fate due to the development of shopping malls and "big box stores" outside of the downtown areas.

Downtown businesses cannot expect to compete on a head-to-head basis with the large chain stores, traffic is not the issue.

Helena has something unique in its downtown mall and can be used as an asset for the businesses that cater to the downtown workforce and tourist trade. There are some businesses that are using the walking mall to their advantage.

The Business Improvement District and the City could take an active role in the development of new businesses on the mall with guidance and incentives.

OPPOSERS:

NA

HCC REQUESTS THE COMMISSION ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS RECOMMENDATION AND TO PROVIDE COMMENT IF APPROPRIATE