City of Moorpark

Formula Retail Ordinance Project

Public Outreach Summary Report



January 2022

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to summarize and evaluate the public outreach measures undertaken by the City as well as the responses that were received from residents and local business owners. To ensure a fair and equitable process in crafting the permanent Formula Retail Ordinance, the City wanted to reach out to local stakeholders, particularly those that live near or own businesses on High Street. The feedback from residents and business owners must be considered and incorporated into the Ordinance when practical. Similar to the Case Study Analysis and Recommendations Report, the goal is to utilize the public's feedback to tailor the Formula Retail Ordinance to the needs of Moorpark's present and future.

This report summarizes the City's outreach efforts and evaluates the responses which will provide further direction for drafting the permanent Formula Retail Ordinance.

Cactus Patch Outreach Event Summary

On December 9, 2021, the City hosted an open house-style workshop at the Cactus Patch Restaurant, located at 197 High Street. After advertising the event on the City's website and social media as well as distributing mailers and handouts translated in English and Spanish (Figure 1) to residents and businesses around High Street, the City hoped to generate interest on the issue of chain stores in the immediate area and have the public weigh in on how the law should be written. After garnering a robust response to the Facebook post advertising the meeting, roughly 20 residents and business owners came to Cactus Patch to have informal, one-on-one discussions with City staff and the City's consultant.



Figure 1: English and Spanish flyer advertising the event

The event also drew the interest of local media, with a reporter from the Moorpark Acorn attending the event and speaking with attendees and City staff. The Acorn published an article on December 17, 2021 documenting the feedback they received (Figure 2).

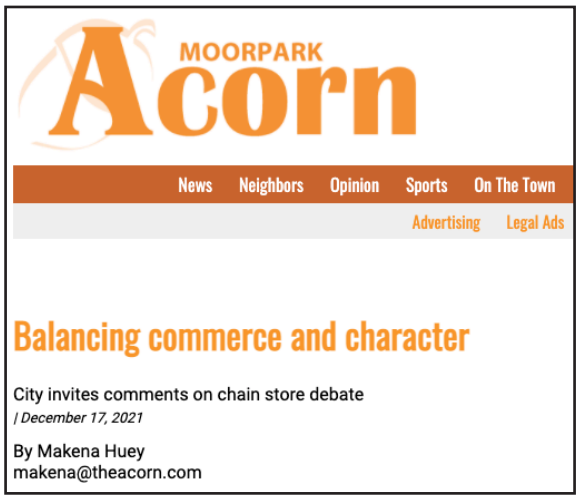


Figure 2: Moorpark Acorn headline

The feedback received at the event covered a wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from allowing chain stores along High Street to an outright ban along with middle-ground options for allowing chain stores under strict conditions. Existing business owners in particular expressed the desire to be able to potentially sell their business or property to a chain corporation.

Online Outreach Survey

The City created a short questionnaire containing four questions to help guide the discussion at the Cactus Patch outreach event, provide feedback on critical aspects of the ordinance, and help provide a record of the feedback received.

The nature of the questions were meant to get respondents to think holistically about High Street and the desired types of commercial establishments which led into more specific questions about how the City should approach regulating chain stores. Additionally, a question was intended to provoke a conversation on the overall architectural and historical character of High Street and if the enhancement of that existing character should be the priority moving forward. Depending on the outcome of the ordinance, it is helpful to know the value that the community places on maintaining the historic character of the street within the context of future development.

While City staff received valuable and helpful feedback from the attendees of the Cactus Patch event, there was a need to reach more residents and business owners to build consensus around the direction of the ordinance. The questionnaire was then turned into an online survey in English and Spanish and posted to the City's website and social media. The survey was available December 13th through the 27th, 2021. In total, 273 people responded to the online survey, including one survey in Spanish, and 12 attendees responded to the survey at the Cactus Patch Outreach Event. In addition, on December 16, 2021, the City received a letter from a business owner sharing concerns about the allowable uses on High Street.

The following table displays the four questions that were included in the survey:

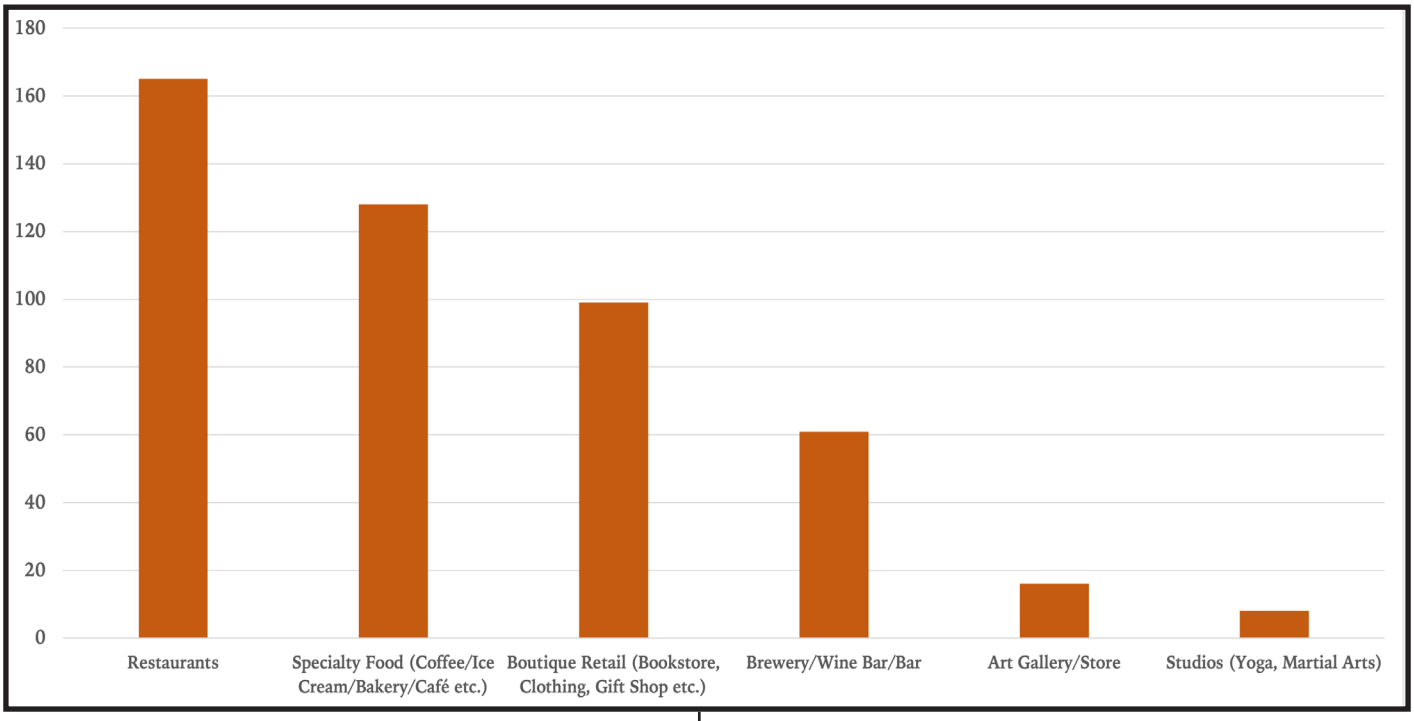
Survey Questions

1. *What types of businesses do you wish to see along High Street? Please specify the general types of businesses such as restaurants or bookstores rather than names of existing businesses.*
2. *Should the City prioritize independent businesses along High Street?*
3. *Should the City consider a "chain store" to be an establishment with 5 or more locations nationwide? 10 or more locations?*
4. *In order to maintain the distinctive character of High Street, does the design of a new building matter more than the use inside of it.*

Pages 3 through 6 of this report provide a breakdown of the responses to each question. The breakdown includes the responses that were received at the Cactus Patch event.

Outreach Survey Results - Question #1

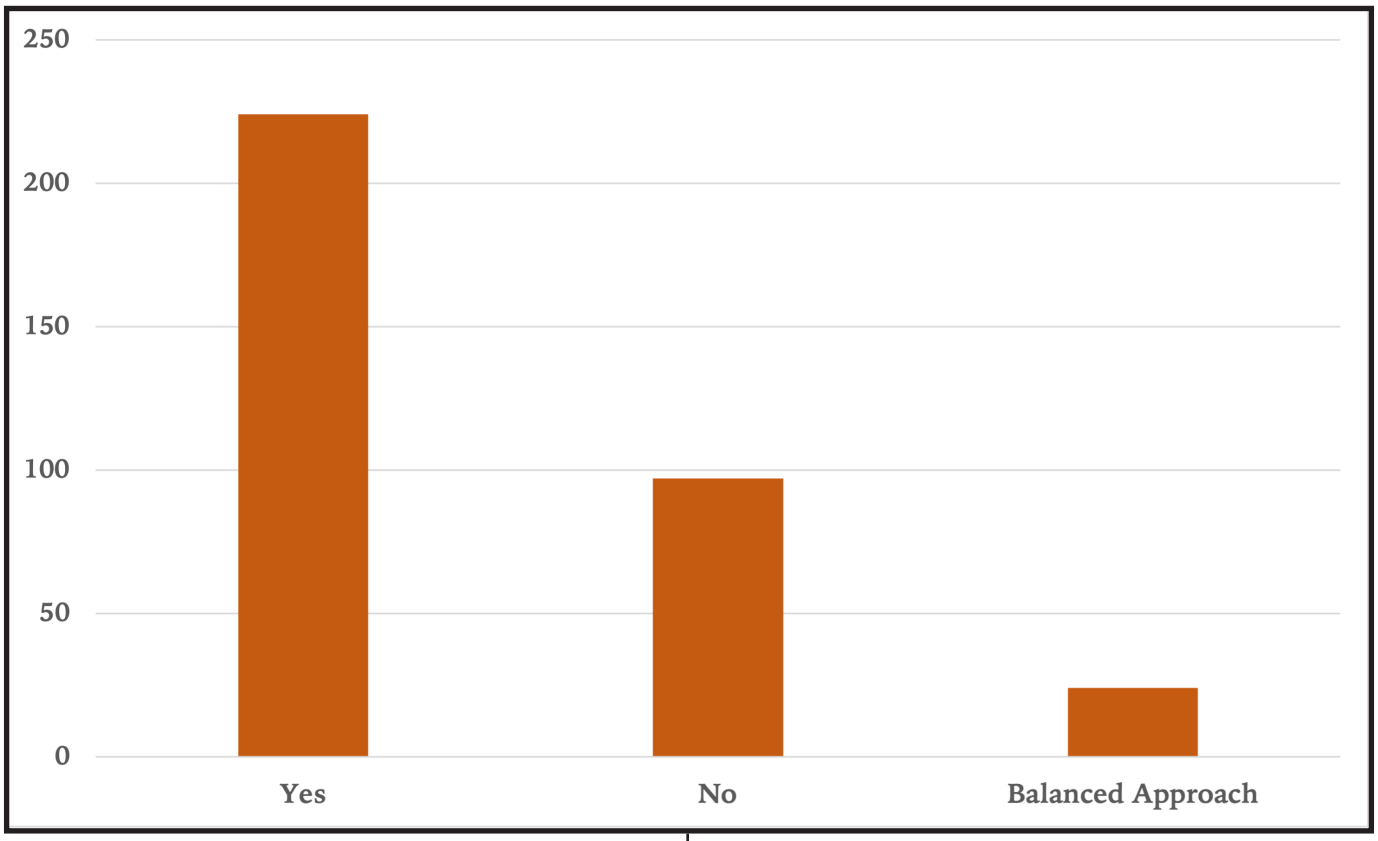
What types of businesses do you wish to see along High Street? Please specify the general types of businesses such as restaurants or bookstores rather than names of existing businesses.



1. Restaurants - 165
2. Specialty Food (Coffee/Ice Cream/Bakery/Cafe) - 128
3. Boutique Retail (Bookstore, Clothing, Gift Shop) - 99
4. Brewery/Wine Bar/Bar - 61
5. Art Gallery/Store - 16
6. Studios (Yoga, Martial Arts) - 8

Outreach Survey Results - Question #2

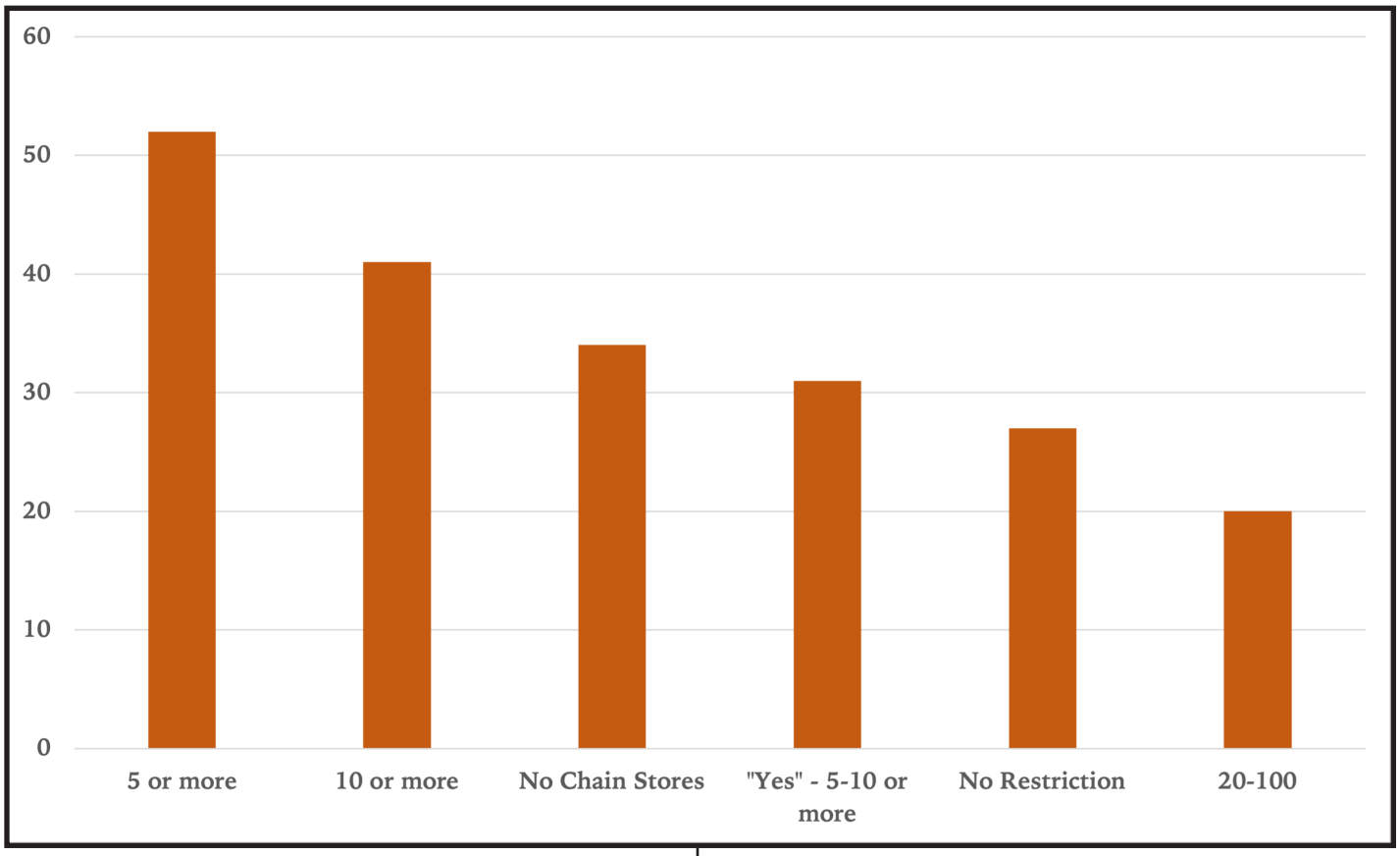
Should the City prioritize independent businesses along High Street?



1. Yes - 224
2. No - 97
3. Mixed/Balanced Approach - 24

Outreach Survey Results - Question #3

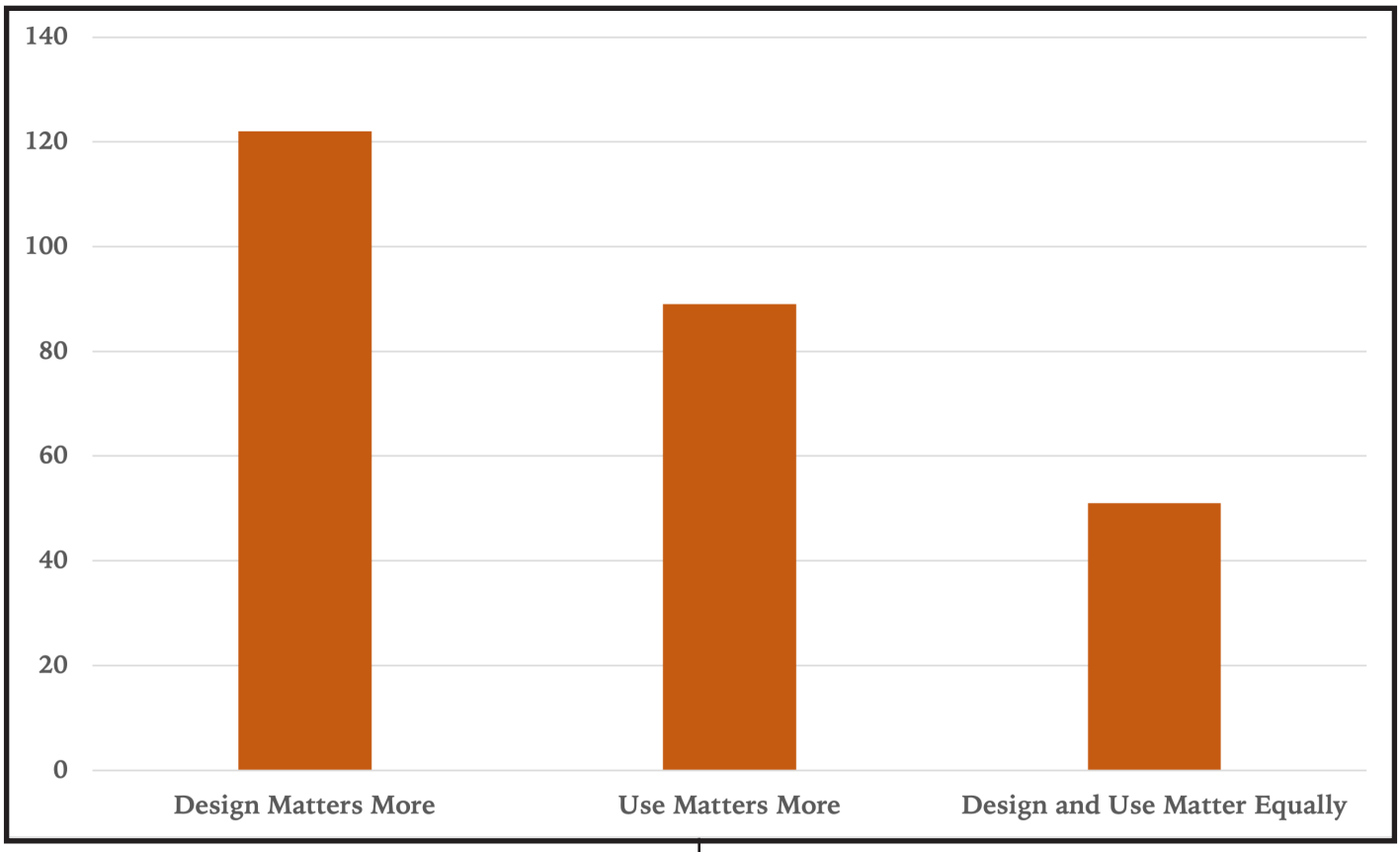
Should the City consider a "chain store" to be an establishment with 5 or more locations nationwide? 10 or more locations?



1. 5 or more - 52
2. 10 or more - 41
3. No Chain Stores - 34
4. "Yes" - 5-10 or more - 31
5. No Restriction - 27
6. 20-100 - 20

Outreach Survey Results - Question #4

In order to maintain the distinctive character of High Street, does the design of a new building along High Street matter more than the use inside of it?



1. Design Matters More - 122
2. Use Matters More - 89
3. Equal - 51

Conclusions

- While restaurants were clearly the seen as the most desired type of establishment, the prevalence of specialty food and boutique retail points to a desire for independently owned establishments. Specialty food and boutique retail establishments tend to be small and independently owned or very small-scale chains, giving an indication that smaller establishments, focused on singular goods or services, would be welcomed by most residents.

- The responses to Question #2 align with the responses to Question #1. The respondents feel the City should prioritize independent businesses along High Street to help enable restaurants, specialty food, and boutique retail establishments to locate there.

- While Question #3 refers to a specific provision of the Urgency Ordinance, it is necessary to evaluate the guardrails of the ordinance in terms how the City will be defining a "chain store" in its Municipal Code going forward. The physical copy of the questionnaire included examples of local and regional chains each with their respective amount of establishments to provide context. While there was no clear choice in responses, the results display a desire for some sort of restriction within the definition of "chain stores".

- The results of Question #4 indicate that any new development along High Street must respect and enhance the existing character. Most respondents were not willing to compromise on character for the sake of new development. The responses lead to an opinion in favor of preserving and enhancing High Street's existing character to ensure that future development does not overrun what respondents hope to be a vibrant Old Town with an array of independent businesses.

- Overall, the results of the outreach event and the online survey show that there is a desire to regulate chain stores along High Street and that residents care about how the area will evolve over the coming years with new development. At the same time, many business owners along High Street expressed the desire to have the freedom to sell their business or property to a larger entity, which would likely be considered a chain store under the existing Urgency Ordinance. Balancing the desires of residents at-large with the needs of High Street's existing business owners has emerged as the key theme from the outreach efforts.

Next Steps

The next phase of the Formula Retail Ordinance Project is to begin drafting the permanent ordinance, based on the information gleaned from the Case Study Analysis and Recommendations Report as well as the feedback received from the public.

The draft ordinance should aim for a balanced approach, given there was not overwhelming consensus to ban chain stores outright nor allow them without restriction. The first draft will seek to create a process that allows for chain stores under certain circumstances with strict conditions. By creating a specific process for proposed chain stores on High Street, the City will in-effect be prioritizing the development of independent establishments but also allowing for existing businesses and property owners to have the freedom to sell to larger commercial entities.