Helene Economy Recovery Board Annual Report

Planning, Economic Development & Environment Committee

Jeffrey Burroughs, Chair

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Key Takeaways

- **Economy Recovery Board** provided:
    - Cross-sector perspectives, community engagement and amplification, feedback and input on key recovery programs that support City Council in decision making.
- **This Annual Report** outlines board engagement, input delivered to City Council, and relevant resulting actions when applicable.

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Helene Economy Recovery Board Scope

- **Advisory Board Role**
  - The Board provides community and business perspectives to help inform the City's economic recovery priorities, with an emphasis on economic resilience, equitable access to resources, workforce development, and long-term revitalization.
- **Supports City Council by**
  - Providing staff with feedback related to programs and economic recovery priorities as they are developed.

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Key Board Agenda Topics:

- CDBG-DR Small Business Support Program
- CDBG-DR Workforce Development Program
- Flooded Commercial Corridors

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CDBG-DR Small Business Support Program:

- **Board Input**: Following program launch, the Board emphasized equitable access to recovery funding, transparent selection criteria, assistance for small and underrepresented businesses, and timely distribution.
    - Members questioned how limited funding would be prioritized given the significant demand, and provided feedback on communication strategies.
- **Feedback Loop with Council:** Board unanimously voted to support staff recommendation of the funding recommendations for the Small Business Program ahead of Council's approval of $15.5 million in awards to four subrecipients on January 27, 2026.
    - Project specific board input informed implementation and operational rollout in partnership with the Subrecipients.

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CDBG-DR Workforce Development Program:

- **Board input**: The Board emphasized paid training, apprenticeships, employment opportunities for young people and underserved populations, targeted industries and trades, and the direct connection of workforce development to disaster recovery projects.
- **Feedback Loop with Council:** Member provided input is informing program development which will be reported to the Planning, Economic Development and Environment (PEDE) Council Committee in winter 2027.
    - Additional Board input will be given on the proposed recommendations, following targeted stakeholder engagement.

Flooded Commercial Corridors:

- **Board Input:** Members provided feedback on needs and opportunities related to revitalization investments such as:
  - Supporting long-term flood resilience and economic recovery
  - Prioritizing catalytic projects
  - Leveraging additional public and private investment
  - Delivering meaningful benefits to heavily impacted commercial districts.
- **Feedback Loop with Council:** Based on Board feedback, staff refined investment strategies, big-picture questions, and content for the City Council's workshop on September 24, 2026.
  - The Board will provide additional input on proposed program recommendations, following targeted community input.
  - The Board's engagement will be included when Council approves strategic direction before allocating funding.

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Questions?

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