CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

Economic Development Advisory Commission

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 6th 2026 PM

City Hall
Novato Council Chambers
922 MACHIN AVENUE
NOVATO, CA 94945

Chair
Alex Tishman

Vice Chair
Christina Mendes

Members
Daniel Christian
Harry Thomas
Susan Wernick
Bradley Wright
Thomas Young
Sylvia Barry, Ex-Officio
Miriam Hope Karell, Ex-Officio

Staff Liaison
Katie Skjerping, Economic Development Manager

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison at (415) 899-8903. Notification at least 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable accommodations to help ensure accessibility to this meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

B. APPROVAL OF THE FINAL AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

All members of the public wishing to address the Economic Development Advisory Commission are welcome. There is a three-minute time limit to speak although the Chair may shorten the time based on the number of speakers or other factors. A speaker may not yield his or her time to another speaker.

For issues raised during Public Comment that are not on the published agenda, except as otherwise provided under the Ralph M. Brown Act, no action can legally be taken.

D. CONSENT ITEMS

All matters listed on the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and will be enacted by a single vote of the Commission. There will be no separate discussion unless specific items are removed from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion and action. Any Commissioner may remove an item from the Consent Calendar and place it under General Business for discussion.

D.1 Approve the meeting minutes of June 4th, 2026

E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

These items include significant and administrative actions of special interest and will usually include a staff presentation and discussion by the Commission. They will be enacted upon by a separate vote.

F.1 Prepare a list of potential speakers to present at the Economic Development Advisory Commission.

F.2 Receive an update from Staff on the City of Novato Tenant Improvement Grant.

G. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

H. STAFF UPDATES

I. ADJOURNMENT

If urgent matters arise after the publication of the regular agenda, there will be an addendum. It will be posted at the referenced locations mentioned in the Affidavit of Posting by Friday at 5:00 p.m., the week before the meeting. Materials, that are submitted to members of the Commission after the distribution of the agenda packet will be made available on the City of Novato website at novato.org when practical and provided that City staff is able to post those documents prior to the meeting. When non-confidential written materials are distributed to members of the Commission during a public meeting by staff or a member of the Commission, it shall be made available online following that meeting.

AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

I, Addison Luong, certify that on the Thursday before the Economic Development Advisory Commission meeting of August 6th, 2026 the agenda was posted on the City Community Service Board at 922 Machin Avenue and on the City's website at www.novato.org.

/Addison Luong/
Senior Office Assistant

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CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

Economic Development Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes Draft

Thursday, June 4th, 2026, 3:00 PM

City Hall
Novato Council Chambers
922 MACHIN AVENUE
NOVATO, CA 94945

Chair
Alex Tishman

Vice Chair
Christina Mendes

Members
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A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Mendes at 3:06 PM

Commissioners Present: Christian, Mendes, Thomas, Wright, Young, Ex-Officio Karell Commissioners

Absent: Tishman, Wernick, Ex-Officio Barry

B. APPROVAL OF THE FINAL AGENDA

Upon motion by Vice Chair Mendes and seconded by Commissioner Thomas the Commission Voted 5-0 0-0-2

DRAFT

Ayes: Christian, Mendes, Thomas, Wright, Young
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Tishman, Wernick

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

D. CONSENT ITEMS

D.1 Approve the meeting minutes of May 7th, 2026

Upon Motion by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Vice Chair Mendes the Commission voted 5-0-0-2 to approve the meeting minutes of May 7th, 2026.

Ayes: Christian, Mendes, Thomas, Wright, Young
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Tishman, Wernick

E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS

None

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

These items include significant and administrative actions of special interest and will usually include a staff presentation and discussion by the Commission. They will be enacted upon by a separate vote.

F.1 Receive a presentation from SMART General Manager Eddy Cummins.

SMART General Manager Eddy Cummins provided the Commission an update on the general state of SMART, upcoming projects and ridership data. Initiatives such as the adoption of the Marin-Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service (MASCOTS), a regional collaboration between local transit agencies increased the amount of rides throughout the week and aligned schedules to improve transfers through different agencies. SMART in the recent quarter has seen an increase in ridership by 19%. As SMART continues to grow and develop, the agency is expanding its services to Healdsburg projected for completion in late 2028.

F.2 Report-Out on Business Visitation Program and discuss any actions proposed for consideration in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Economic Development Manager Katie Skjerping provided an overview of the business visitation program throughout FY 2025-2026 year. Included was a list of benefits and concerns businesses expressed operating in Novato. As Novato approaches the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, Commissioners would like to see plans to improve foot traffic city wide and new avenues to advertise and promote small local businesses.

F.3 Consider Adopting 2026-27 EDAC Work Plan.

Economic Development Manager Katie Skjerping provided a draft of the Economic Development Advisory Commission Work Plan for FY 2026-2027 as approved by the EDAC Work Plan Ad Hoc Committee.

DRAFT

The work plan builds on successful programs from FY 2025-2026, such as the business visitation program, supporting the Tenant Improvement Grant Program, and supporting small business events. The work plan builds on this work by supporting staff in the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The Commission voted to adopt the FY 2026-2027 Work Plan.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Christian the Commission 5-0-0-2 to approve the 2026-2027 EDAC Work Plan.

Ayes: Christian, Mendes, Thomas, Wright, Young
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Tishman, Wernick

G. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Ex-Officio Karell provided an update on national grants available to businesses such as the Restaurant Resiliency Fund.

Vice Chair Mendes mentioned that the Novato Art and Wine Festival will be next weekend June 13th/14th.

H. STAFF UPDATES

First Fridays will be held June 5th, 2026

July 2nd, EDAC Meeting will be cancelled in observance for the 4th of July holiday.

August 6th, will be the next regularly scheduled EDAC meeting.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned at 4:12 PM

DRAFT

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STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2026

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission

FROM: Katie Skjerping, Economic Development Manager
Stacey Hoggan, Management Analyst I

SUBJECT: Update on Citywide Tenant Improvement Grant Program

REQUEST

Receive staff's update on revisions to Tenant Improvement Grant (TIG) Program and provide feedback on proposed process improvements.

DISCUSSION

The Tenant Improvement Grant (TIG) Program has been updated for Fiscal Year 2026–27 to strengthen consistency, transparency, and citywide access. While the grant continues to offer matching reimbursements of up to 50% of eligible project costs, the most significant update is that the program is now available citywide, rather than being limited primarily to the Downtown area.

Many core program elements remain unchanged, including the requirement for applicants to meet with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to review business planning and financial readiness. However, new rules for this year include a formal two-year limit between awards, ensuring equitable distribution of limited funds and preventing repeated applications from the same businesses.

During Fiscal Year 2025–26, the City awarded approximately **$100,000** in Tenant Improvement Grant funding to ten local businesses: Authentics Barber Shop, Bacon, 7400 Redwood, Finnegans, Soda Pop, Beauty Heroes, Wine Down, Wild Fennel, CWS Construction, and Glow House. The program supported a balanced mix of established

businesses making needed façade and property improvements, as well as newer businesses that were grateful for the financial assistance as they established themselves in the community. Staff have received positive feedback from grant recipients regarding both the application process and the meaningful impact the funding will have on their businesses. In addition to financial assistance, businesses benefited from staff support throughout the associated permitting process, helping applicants navigate project requirements and move improvements forward efficiently.

Overall, the updated TIG Program expands economic development support across all commercial corridors and improves fairness and accountability. Staff will incorporate Commission feedback as final materials are prepared for program rollout in early FY 2026–27.