



REDLANDS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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POLICY PLATFORM



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This Policy Platform was compiled by our Governmental Review Committee and has been approved by the Board of Directors of Redlands Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) to provide a basis for the Chamber to act on local, state and federal government issues and to support a vibrant business environment. The Chamber's Board of Directors has authorized the Governmental Review Committee to approve, on behalf of the Chamber, any positions of "support," "oppose," or "no position" that align with this Policy Platform, subject to the Board of Directors' approval or modification.

The Chamber develops its policies and practices based on the underlying principle that creating and promoting a collaborative pro-business environment at the state, regional, and local level will directly enhance private enterprise and quality of life. This foundation is essential to maintaining a vibrant market-based economy. In determining a position on proposed legislation and other public policy issues, the Chamber is guided by its mission to serve our members in the following areas: Workforce, Economic, and Leadership Development; and to create a business climate that will advance the educational, cultural and civic vitality of our community.

Public Safety



Public safety has a significant impact on the quality of life in local communities. The uptick in homelessness, vagrancy, and retail theft in recent years has resulted in a multitude of challenges for businesses. Present and future economic investment and prosperity in the community is often impacted by strains imposed by crime. Public safety represents the well-being and protection of everyone in the community. To ensure Redlands' future prosperity, the Chamber encourages balanced and reasonable policy changes and programs that deter crime to maintain safe communities.

The Chamber Supports:

- Continuing partnership with local law enforcement agencies to provide regular updates to the Chamber in the effort of transparency.
- Advocating for legislation that provides protection for businesses and the residents in the community.
- Advocating for stronger penalties for repeat and organized retail theft offenders to deter criminal activity.
- Support increased law enforcement presence in key commercial areas, including foot patrols and partnerships with local businesses.
- Encouraging business watch programs where retailers collaborate on theft prevention strategies and share security footage or intelligence.
- State and federal legislation that strengthens theft laws, including making it easier to prosecute organized retail crime.
- Grant programs and tax incentives for small businesses to install safety equipment.
- Proposals to modernize criminal penalties for cybercrime and fraud.
- Supporting programs which address mental health and drug use among the homeless population.
- Businesses participating in safe reporting systems to alert authorities and outreach teams about concerns related to homelessness near their establishment.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Policies that decriminalize non-violent offenses without regard for business impact, if those non-violent offenses disrupt commerce, threaten safety, or increase operating costs.
- Limitations on the ability of businesses to remove customers and/or penalize employees engaging in threatening or disruptive behavior.

A.I & Automation



The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (A.I.) and automation technologies presents both significant opportunities and potential challenges for businesses in Redlands. From increasing efficiency and productivity to transforming customer experiences, A.I. and automation are reshaping industries across the board.

The Chamber recognizes that proactive engagement with these technologies is crucial for ensuring the continued competitiveness and growth of our local economy. To that end, we aim to advocate for policies that foster innovation while mitigating potential risks, ensuring that businesses of all sizes can harness the power of A.I. and automation to thrive in the digital age.

The Chamber Supports:

- Business-friendly A.I. policies that reduce liability concerns for companies using A.I. tools in good faith.
- Advocating for policies that help small businesses afford and access automation technologies without being outcompeted by larger corporations.
- Partnering with local workforce development organizations and educational institutions to offer A.I.-focused training that meets industry needs.
- Partnering with ESRI to hold discussions and provide further platform ideas.
- Policies that promote public/private partnerships and pilot programs giving small businesses access to A.I. tools and demonstrating practical applications.
- Pilot programs that could utilize A.I. for city-managed services that would benefit the business community.
- Incentives for adopting A.I. in high-need local industries (healthcare, retail, education, etc), while advocating for job creation initiatives that support upskilling and long-term career pathways for the local workforce.
- Ethics guidelines for A.I. developed in collaboration with industry and government, rather than one size fits all mandates.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Policies that make it easier to file lawsuits against businesses that utilize A.I. to make strategic decisions.
- Legislation which imposes excessive compliance burdens and limitations on small businesses using basic A.I. or automation tools.
- Overly-burdensome limitations or regulations of private sector A.I. usage.
- Additional taxes or fees for the use of automation technology, which would disproportionately affect small businesses.

Parking



Accessible and convenient parking is a critical component of a vibrant and thriving business environment. In Redlands, the challenges of parking availability and management directly impact the customer experience, the vitality of our downtown core, and the overall economic health of our community. The Chamber acknowledges that effective parking solutions require a balanced approach, considering the needs of businesses, residents, and visitors. We strive to work collaboratively with city officials and stakeholders to advocate for realistic and sustainable parking strategies that support economic growth, enhance accessibility, and maintain the unique character of our city.

The Chamber Supports:

- Encouraging City elected officials, appointed commission members, and staff to view the Chamber's position on parking as the most realistic and reasonable set of positions on this topic.
- Working with the City to ensure that new and existing developments include adequate parking requirements while balancing realistic walkability goals.
- Advocating for time-limited parking zones (e.g., 2 or 3-hour parking) in high-demand commercial areas to ensure turnover and availability for customers.
- Pushing for clear and visible wayfinding signage directing visitors to available parking locations. Encouraging the use of smart parking solutions, such as mobile apps that provide real-time parking availability or digital pay stations for convenience (if applicable).
- Promoting employee parking incentives to encourage workers to use less congested areas, such as designated employee parking zones or transit options.
- Increasing local transit services, to promote access for employment opportunities and to foster the characteristics of a "live-work community."

The Chamber Opposes:

- Parking policies that reduce availability in high-traffic commercial areas without providing equivalent alternative options.
- Use of parking fees not allocated for investment in infrastructure, signage, or maintenance.
- Paid-parking mandates that disproportionately affect the business community.
- Unnecessary parking enforcement or excessive ticketing in commercial areas which discourages visitors, customers, and residents.

Housing



The Chamber recognizes the significant need for affordable housing in order to improve the quality of life for the region's residents. To address the ever-widening gap between what Californians earn and what they spend on housing, the Chamber supports land regulation reforms that accurately account for a project's timeline and expectations. Additionally, development fee reductions and the restoration of lost redevelopment funds that went towards housing will assist in addressing the root cause of rising housing costs. The Chamber's efforts to improve access to affordable housing will ultimately serve as a key tool in encouraging businesses to stay and grow in the greater Inland Southern California region, whose population is projected to double by 2050.

The Chamber Supports:

- Support public/private partnerships to provide permanent, supportive, transitional, and emergency housing, as well as housing for individuals and families that cannot afford market-rate housing.
- Policies that ensure public spaces, including sidewalks and storefronts, remain accessible and clean while connecting individuals to necessary services, including support for crisis response efforts.
- Maintaining a workforce development program which partners Chamber members with service providers to offer job training, mentorship, and employment opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Collaboration between businesses, developers, law enforcement agencies, and local government to create housing and transportation strategies that benefit both the economy and the community.
- Streamlined permitting processes to reduce delays and costs associated with housing construction.
- Housing production strategies which prevent workplace displacement, keeping employees within a reasonable commuting distance of their jobs in Redlands.
- Use of targeted housing development in underperforming commercial areas, increasing residential foot traffic and neighborhood stability.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Blanket density increases in downtown and business centers that do not account for infrastructure, traffic, or parking impacts.
- Rent control measures that reduce housing supply and limit the development of middle-income housing and the workforce.
- Excessive regulation or permitting barriers for organizations or developers, which delay housing production and discourage private investment in the local community.

Workforce Development



A skilled and reliable workforce is essential to the strength of Redlands' business community and sustaining economic growth. As the demand for labor continues to increase across industries, the Chamber supports and actively contributes to efforts to strengthen job training pipelines and expand career education through county, state, and federal initiatives. The Chamber encourages collaboration between businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to expand access to career training, encourage upskilling, and connect education systems with industry needs.

The Chamber Supports:

- Continued and increased funding for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and related Title I programs that directly support job training, placement, and employer services in Redlands.
- Workforce programs that offer career counseling, job placement, and upskilling opportunities, while also promoting digital literacy and leadership development, helping to ensure young professionals are prepared to succeed in a tech-integrated economy and build lasting careers.
- Streamlining processes for employers to access on-the-job (OJT) training reimbursements and candidate matching, making workforce programs more business-friendly and responsive.
- Increased investment in career and technical education (CTE) through local school districts, community colleges, and adult education programs, ensuring the workforce pipeline aligns with employer needs.
- Improved access to training programs and credentialing opportunities for qualifying individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, receiving public assistance, or seeking new skills after displacement.
- Funding for mental health and well-being resources for workers, particularly in high-stress or transitional industries, helping maintain productivity, morale, and long-term employment stability.
- Support for CalJOBS enrollment and case management systems, helping job seekers connect to the right resources quickly and effectively.
- Job fairs, career expos, and workforce information events that connect local residents with Redlands employers and raise awareness of available programs and services.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Efforts to politicize or redirect workforce funding away from its core mission of preparing individuals for meaningful, lawful employment, not supporting local or economic development.

CEQA Reform



The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was established to protect environmental resources and encourage responsible development. However, in recent years, CEQA has increasingly been misused to delay or obstruct projects for reasons unrelated to environmental concerns. The Chamber supports meaningful CEQA reform that preserves environmental safeguards while limiting abuses of the process. A modernized framework should streamline the review process, reduce legal uncertainty, and support economic growth for both businesses and communities alike.

The Chamber Supports:

- Legislation that streamlines CEQA review timelines for commercial, infrastructure, and housing developments that supports the local economy.
- Reforms that limit frivolous or non-environmental lawsuits, particularly those filed for competitive, labor-related, or political reasons.
- Clear, consistent CEQA guidelines to improve predictability and reduce interpretation discrepancies that delay projects.
- Policies limiting anonymous or non-local parties from filing CEQA lawsuits unless a direct environmental impact can be demonstrated.
- Reducing excessive data submissions that unnecessarily prolong the review process without contributing to meaningful environmental analysis.
- Legal assistance or grant programs for small developers or businesses facing CEQA litigation, especially when the project aligns with local economic or infrastructure goals.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Raising thresholds for what constitutes environmental “significance”, increasing ambiguity and delaying projects.
- The use of CEQA as a tactic to block or delay completion of public infrastructure projects.

Warehouses



Warehousing and logistics are a major economic driver in the Inland Empire, contributing to job creation, supply chain support, and long-term commercial investment. As Redlands continues to attract industrial development, the Chamber recognizes both the benefits and challenges that warehouse projects may pose to local small businesses and the community. The Chamber supports a balanced, business informed approach to warehouse development, ensuring such projects contribute to economic diversity and do not burden small businesses.

The Chamber Supports:

- Warehouse development that aligns with infrastructure capacity, transportation network, and long-term economic goals.
- Developments that meet local planning, environmental, and infrastructure criteria.
- Local hiring and workforce development partnerships between warehouse operators, local educational institutions, and workforce boards to expand employment access.
- Design standards that ensure warehouses are visually cohesive with surrounding areas, incorporating thoughtful landscaping and architecture that is compatible with Redlands' vision for walkability and aesthetic goals, especially when located near commercial or residential areas.
- Green and low-emissions warehouse designs, helping reduce emissions and ensuring that industrial growth aligns with Redlands' environmental goals.
- Public education campaigns that clarify the economic value of responsible warehousing, reduce misinformation, and highlight the benefits of warehouse investment when balanced with smart planning.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Warehouse development that limits long-term land flexibility, especially in areas with potential for future mixed-use, innovation, or commercial practices that could better serve Redlands' small businesses.
- Workforce displacement caused by automation-heavy logistics projects, especially when not paired with upskilling or retraining opportunities for Redlands' current workforce.

Agritourism



Agritourism is a form of tourism where visitors engage with agricultural settings and activities, either for recreation, education, or direct involvement in farm operations. As agriculture itself remains a meaningful part of Redlands' cultural and economic identity, the Chamber recognizes both the value and operational considerations of "Agritourism." When responsibly planned, agritourism can strengthen small business opportunities, contribute to regional tourism, community education, and help preserve agricultural land. The Chamber supports clear, business-friendly policies that allow agricultural entrepreneurs to diversify their products and services, while also promoting local farms and events, expanding farm-to-table partnerships, and encouraging sustainable practices that advance Redlands' economic and environmental goals.

The Chamber Supports:

- Reducing taxes, permit fees, or compliance costs, especially when those costs are disproportionate to the scale of the operation, which harms small businesses and discourages them from growing.
- Improving infrastructure that supports agritourism, such as expanded parking access, directional signage, and wayfinding tools that make farm-based experiences more accessible to visitors.
- Clear and streamlined permitting pathways for agritourism activities, such as u-pick farms, tasting rooms, and seasonal events.
- Zoning flexibility and streamlined permitting processes that allow small agricultural businesses to expand into agritourism without facing excessive costs or complex land use barriers.
- Educational partnerships between farms, schools, and community organizations, connecting Redlands' agricultural heritage to student learning, workforce development, and civic engagement.
- Technical assistance, grants, and incentive programs that help small agricultural producers expand into agritourism, including support for navigating regulatory compliance, and land-use requirements.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Policies favoring large-scale or corporate agritourism operators at the expense of local, small farms, which limit fair access to opportunity and growth.

Undergrounding Utilities



Reliable power infrastructure is essential to the success of Redlands' business community. As the City and utility providers explore utility undergrounding projects, particularly in historic or high-traffic commercial areas, the Chamber recognizes both the long-term benefits and the short-term challenges such initiatives may present. While undergrounding can improve safety, aesthetics, and service reliability, poorly timed or uncoordinated efforts can disrupt access, harm revenue, and burden small businesses. The Chamber supports thoughtful, business-informed planning that minimizes disruption and maximizes community value.

The Chamber Supports:

- Coordinated long-term planning that integrates undergrounding utilities with broader infrastructure, transportation, and aesthetic revitalization goals in key commercial and pedestrian areas.
- Public-private partnerships to support utility upgrades, ensuring that utility infrastructure keeps pace with Redlands' commercial, residential, and technological growth needs.
- Transparency on what the funds raised by in-lieu fees are going towards.
- Legislation providing financial assistance or mitigation grants to support small businesses impacted by construction-related closures, accessibility issues, or temporary revenue loss.
- Viewing undergrounding as a disaster resilience strategy, particularly in areas vulnerable to wildfires, power outages, or weather related service disruptions that threaten businesses.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Legislation or policies permitting utility rate increases to fund undergrounding development without transparency, economic impact analysis, or protections for small businesses.

Invasive Animal Species



The spread of invasive animal species threatens Redlands' natural ecosystems, local agriculture, and long-term economic stability. In particular, invasive fruit flies, such as the Oriental fruit fly, pose a serious and direct risk to local growers as they cause significant damage to crops, trees, and public landscapes. In 2023,

Redlands faced a state-imposed quarantine due to an outbreak, disrupting operations and increasing costs. The Chamber supports early detection, rapid response, and coordinated management efforts to reduce the spread and impact of invasive species. Proactive investment in prevention, education, and collaboration is essential to protect Redlands' agricultural economy, environmental resources, and quality of life.

The Chamber Supports:

- Funding for early detection and rapid response programs that help local farmers and growers act quickly before invasive species spread and cause economic damage.
- Education campaigns and workshops for agricultural producers to identify different invasive species, understand treatment options, and implement prevention strategies.
- Improved communication between agricultural producers and local city departments, ensuring that pest control strategies align with the local infrastructure and environmental goals.
- Emergency response coordination between agricultural producers and commercial areas, ensuring that outbreaks are managed without unexpected impacts to transportation or business.
- Streamlined access to grants and assistance to help offset costs for pest management, crop protection, and land restoration.

The Chamber Opposes:

- Delayed or underfunded responses to invasive species outbreaks, which increases long-term damage to crops, as well as raises recovery costs to small agricultural producers.
- Regulations that require invasive species removal or treatment but fail to provide clear guidance, resources, or funding for small businesses to do so.