



IMPERIAL VALLEY **REGIONAL** CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

January 21, 2024

Angel Hernandez
Community Development Director
City of El Centro
El Centro, CA 92243

Dear Mr. Hernandez,

On behalf of the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, which represents over 300 members across diverse industries, I would like to express our strong support for the City of El Centro's grant application to Caltrans for the Heart of El Centro Revitalization and Connection Project. This initiative is a pivotal investment in the heart of El Centro that serves as the economic and civic center of our region, with the potential to revitalize and connect El Centro's Downtown and Civic Center, fostering economic growth for businesses and residents alike which aligns with our mission statement.

Downtown and the Civic Center serve as established hubs of commerce and community activity, but both face significant challenges. Vacant and underutilized properties, concerns about accessibility and safety, and the absence of a cohesive community vision hinder the area's ability to support local services, sustain businesses, and attract new investment. These barriers affect the vibrancy and accessibility of the area, directly impacting many of our Chamber members who operate their businesses along or near Main Street.

The proposed project offers an opportunity to transform Main Street, and the areas surrounding it, into a thriving multimodal corridor that drives economic vitality, sustainability, and enhanced quality of life. By introducing targeted programs, zoning and regulatory reforms, and strategic public infrastructure investments, the plan will improve pedestrian and transit connectivity, promote economic development, and enhance beautification efforts. These improvements will create an environment that attracts visitors, encourages local spending, and supports the growth of small businesses.

This project is critical to building a stronger, more resilient local economy and positioning El Centro as a hub for innovation and opportunity in the Imperial Valley. The Regional Chamber is committed to supporting this initiative and collaborating to ensure its success.

We urge Caltrans to approve this grant application and help El Centro achieve its vision for a vibrant, connected, and sustainable community.

Sincerely,

Sher Cowie
President / Chief Executive Officer