



HERMOSA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Community Development Director Alison Becker

From: Chief Landon Phillips

Date: September 11, 2025

Re: Roberts Liquor CUP Review

Information:

On August 8, 2025, the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and the Hermosa Beach Police Department conducted an ABC enforcement/compliance in the city of Hermosa Beach.

During the operation, ABC Agent Connolly observed a young male carrying a 12 pack of an alcoholic beverage and exiting Robert's Liquor at 74 Pier Plaza. The male was contacted, and an investigation revealed the subject was in possession of a fake identification card and was only 17 years old, a violation of 25662(a)BP- minor in possession of alcohol.

An ABC "backtrack investigation" was conducted and the investigation concluded the clerk had not conducted an adequate check of the identification card.

ABC completed a full report (LB-10153996), a redacted copy is attached, due to the confidentiality of the names and minor involved. Agent Connolly has recommended an administrative filing against the licensee, Tran, Dung Quoc for violation of 25658(a)BP- Sales of Alcohol to a Minor.

ABC was able to acquire video of this sale, which shows the underage male subject purchasing the alcohol from Roberts Liquor.

In the report, it is noted one subject (legal drinking age) is observed on video purchasing alcohol inside Roberts Liquor, shortly after the subject was drinking the open alcohol just outside the location. Two more subjects (legal drinking age) are also observed on video purchasing alcohol inside Roberts Liquor, one subject opens the alcohol and begins to consume it in front of the cashier, he is directed to take the alcohol outside. The second subject also purchases alcohol and takes it outside and opens it. Both subjects were issued citations.

According to a summary by an HBPD Officer involved in the enforcement, in addition to these violations, approximately 30 citations were issued for open containers, fake IDs, and minors in possession of alcohol. This was mainly on Pier Plaza and lot A. Most of the open containers came from Roberts Liquor. At one point, Officers had 7 subjects lined up detained outside of Roberts receiving citations.

Background Information:

On Friday, April 5, 2024; ABC conducted a “minor decoy” operation in the city of Hermosa Beach. This operation uses a decoy under the age of 21, supervised by Law Enforcement, who attempts to purchase alcohol using a real CA ID/ CDL, which indicates they are under 21.

During this operation, Roberts Liquor was visited and the cashier sold alcohol to the decoy. A citation was issued and on June 5, 2025; Roberts Licensee agreed to pay a fine of \$6000 for the violation, in lieu of suspension.

Additional Information:

On 8/29/25, HBPD Officers were conducting enforcement throughout downtown, parking lots and Pier Plaza. Officers reported 22 citations during the enforcement related to open alcohol. Three subjects specifically had reported to Officers they were coming from Roberts Liquor. Their “single” use cans were in brown bags. This is relevant due to the fact that Roberts Liquor CUP states “single use” cans are to be in clear bags.

The Police Department is requesting a review of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Roberts Liquor and recommends the proposed changes included. The Police Department believes proposed changes will positively impact the quality-of-life issues in the downtown Pier Plaza area and strengthen the ability of the Police Department to provide citywide public safety.

Roberts Liquor is located at 74 Pier Ave., in an area with a very high concentration of late-night alcohol serving establishments. The area commonly known as “Pier Plaza” is within Reporting District (RD) B105 and B106. RD’s B105 and B106 is the area from 10th Street to 14th Street, and from The Strand to Manhattan Ave. B105 and B106 combined equals 1.58% of the total area of the city. This relatively small area of the city consists of multiple late-night alcohol serving establishments which creates an attraction for nuisance and other criminal behavior.

In 2024, the Police Department received 24,707 calls for service (CFS). Of those CFS, 4,616 (18.7%) were from the Pier Plaza area. That pattern remained consistent in 2023, with 17.9% of all calls in the city being generated in the Pier Plaza area.

The most common days, averaged over the last 3 years for CFS are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In 2024 the most common days were Saturday, Friday and Monday. The most common time for CFS in the Pier Plaza area is between 8:00pm – 4:00am. In 2024, there were 2,374 CFS (51.43%) in the Pier Plaza area during this time frame. This is a direct correlation to the late-night, alcohol serving establishments which operate after midnight and maintain an attraction for nuisance and criminal behavior.

The Police Department recognizes that Roberts Liquor is only one of numerous businesses in the Downton/Pier Plaza and is not solely responsible for issues related to it.

Citywide Public Safety

Pier Plaza area requires a disproportionate amount of police service when compared to the rest of the city. Nearly 19% of CFS are generated in the Pier Plaza area. When officers are required to focus on incidents in the Pier Plaza area, it takes away the ability to conduct patrol and provide police service to the other areas of the city.

In 2024, the Police Department made 77 arrests for Driving Under the Influence. The most common time for DUI arrest is between 11:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. with 66% of DUI arrests occurring during this time period. The most common days for DUI arrests are Friday and Saturday nights (early Saturday and Sunday mornings). During these peak periods, officers commonly respond to DUI collisions and investigations. When officers are responding to large crowds of people who are intoxicated, fighting and violating quality of life crimes in Pier Plaza, they are not able to conduct patrol to address significant crime issues in the city including DUI, which is most prevalent during the late-night hours.

Pier Plaza Area Quality-of-Life Issues

The Pier Plaza area creates an attraction for violent and criminal behavior. In 2024, 51% of citywide batteries (242 PC) occurred in the Pier Plaza area. In 2023, 43% of citywide assaults occurred in the Pier Plaza area.

In 2024, 40.5% of citywide public intoxication arrests occurred in the Pier Plaza area. This pattern remained consistent in 2023 with 38.2% of all public intoxication arrests occurring in the Pier Plaza area.

A common public nuisance problem, which affects residents, businesses and the entire community are the people who come to Pier Plaza during the late-night hours and urinate in public spaces after drinking in excess. In 2024, the Police Department issued 57 citations for urinating in public, and nearly all those citations (89.5%) occurred in the downtown area. This pattern remained consistent in 2023 with 89.5% of all citations for urinating in public occurring in the Pier Plaza area. The Police Department receives complaints about trash, urine and feces impacting the quality of life of residents and businesses who serve the morning and daytime needs of the Hermosa Beach community. The complaints are direct results of the patrons who frequent late night establishments and continue their actions, during late night hours, in public parking lots, beaches, and streets around Pier Plaza.

Recommendations

Most of the restaurants/bars in and around Pier Plaza carry CUP's that generally require operating hours that end before 2am. A liquor store that remains open for alcohol sale and sells "single use" alcohol; offers an opportunity for patrons to continue drinking after business hours. These patrons often choose to drink in public parking lots, on the beach or inside vehicles. This creates additional risks to the community, contributes to public nuisance issues and places additional strain on public safety resources.

It is the recommendation of the Hermosa Beach Police Department that the Planning Commission take Roberts Liquor's conditional use permit (CUP) under review for modification. As part of the recommendation, the Hermosa Beach Police Department believes a reduction in hours from 0200 to 1200 and a removal of "single use" alcohol sales would have a positive impact on the downtown Pier Plaza environment, while still offering the business an opportunity to succeed. "Single use", would refer to individual beer/wine/ spirits cans and bottles. As an example, 12, 16, 20, 32 and 40-ounce beer cans; single use spirits (vodka, whiskey, tequila etc.) bottles 1.7 ounces, often referred to as "nips".

In effort to address underage purchasing and drinking alcohol, the Hermosa Beach Police Department recommends Roberts Liquor install/or utilize technology recommended by the ABC to assist in identifying fake/fraudulent identification cards.

The recommended conditions are necessary to address consistent public safety issues with late-night alcohol serving establishments, which is an accumulation of multiple businesses operating after midnight, creating an attraction for nuisance and other criminal behavior.