

Location: City of Malibu

Issue: Retail Ordinance

Methodology: Workshop/ Keypad Polling

Davenport Institute Role: Consultation/Workshop Facilitation

The City of Malibu, CA takes pride in its pristine beaches and semi-rural feel. Questions regarding development and retail are always touchy – and none more so those relating to a retail ordinance to limit the number of chain stores allowed in the City’s Civic Center.

The Davenport Institute was invited to facilitate a public meeting with two goals:

- 1) The City sought public input into what residents thought constituted a “chain” or “formula” retail business. How many locations or franchises could a business have before residents thought of it as a “chain”? How big did it have to be in terms of square footage? Should any times of business be exempt?
- 2) The City asked residents to develop a list of adjectives that would define a “community serving business”

To accomplish the first task, the Davenport Institute conducted a series of polls using electronic “clickers” from Turning Technologies. The electronic voting allowed for anonymity while also enabling residents more options to prioritize rather than just vote up or down on their top choices.

During the second stage of the meeting residents broke down into small groups and came up with definitions of “community serving business” within their small groups before reporting out to the whole room. Although tensions had remained a little high during the electronic voting, attitudes changed dramatically during this open discussion time. As one participant noted, “To actually hear people talk to one another and hear from the other side is essential.” Several participants admitted that they’d never really had the opportunity to talk to someone who approached this issue from a different perspective, and appreciated the opportunity now.

You can read more from the local Malibu paper [here](#).