

City of Hesperia STAFF REPORT



DATE: April 21, 2026
TO: Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Rachel Molina, City Manager
BY: Orlando Acevedo, Director of Development Services
Eydee Jimenez, Economic Development Supervisor
SUBJECT: Proposed Hesperia Merchandise Store Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the City Council provide direction to staff on opportunities to implement a Hesperia Merchandise Store program.

BACKGROUND

At the September 2, 2025, City Council meeting, Council Member Ochoa requested to explore the creation of a merchandise store that would allow residents and visitors to purchase Hesperia-themed items such as hats, shirts, mugs, and similar products. These items would feature graphics and imagery that celebrate Hesperia's identity, animal care, local heritage, and sense of place in the Mojave River Valley. Accordingly, staff has prepared the following Hesperia Merchandise Program for City Council consideration.

ISSUES/ANALYSIS

Many cities offer local-themed merchandise for sale through online platforms or city hall. Common items include hats, shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, stickers, and other low-cost items that residents and visitors can purchase to express a connection to the community. Merchandise programs typically feature themes that are familiar to locals, such as nostalgic or historic landmarks (e.g. Route 66, Old School House, or Hesperia Hotel), local floral and fauna (e.g. Joshua Trees, coyotes, etc.), iconic structures (e.g. SuperAdobe homes, Swisher Center, Hesperia Lake Park), local or cultural references (e.g. "The Mesa", "Up the Hill", "Est. 1988"), or support of local services (e.g. Hesperia Animal Shelter).

These design themes foster a sense of connection and community identity similar to how sports fans wear team merchandise (or Scorpions or Sultans wear school merchandise) to show loyalty and camaraderie.

Store Front and Logistics: The proposed program will engage local artists to create fun, unique artwork reflecting local themes, history and seasonal events (e.g. America's 250th Birthday). Designs will be printed on various items, including hats, shirts, mugs, stickers, and more. These items will be marketed and sold online and displayed at City Hall with a QR code for online ordering.

Staff recommends using local and third-party vendors for the online storefront and for print-on-demand fulfillment. Under this model, vendors will manage printing, packaging, and shipping, thus minimizing City staff time and involvement in the supply chain and reducing financial risk.

The program would rely on original, non-official artwork and would not use the City seal or official logo unless expressly authorized by the City. Initially, to start the program, staff recommends using local graphic artists to launch the first series of designs. As the program grows, staff will engage the community for future design submittals and fun competitions and rotate designs for fresh new and seasonal looks.

Beneficiaries: Net proceeds from merchandise sales could benefit the Hesperia Animal Shelter through the High Desert Community Foundation, allowing customers to directly support animal care and welfare initiatives. Additional community programs may also be considered as beneficiaries, subject to City Council direction.

CITY GOALS SUPPORTED BY THIS ITEM

Future Development - Facilitate balanced growth to ensure cohesive community development and pursue economic development.

Public Safety - Ensure public safety resources adequately protect our community.

FISCAL IMPACT

The startup program costs, estimated at less than \$5,000, would include graphic design services as well as online storefront setup and subscription fees; the City will not carry inventory costs. Should the City Council approve the program, related expenditures will be funded in the new FY 2026-27 budget.

ALTERNATIVE(S)

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None