



City of Santa Barbara
Transportation & Circulation Committee
Staff Report

DATE: June 25, 2020

TO: Transportation & Circulation Committee (TCC) Members

FROM: Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager

SUBJECT: State Street Reopening and Parklets

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee receive a report and presentation on the State Street Reopening.

DISCUSSION

On May 19, 2020, City Council approved a preliminary recommendation of the COVID-19 Business Advisory Task Force for the City to temporarily close streets and on-street parking as well as temporarily suspend the regulations on private property to allow temporary outdoor dining for foodservice businesses.

Since Council's action, State Street is temporarily closed to vehicles from the 500 to 1300 blocks to accommodate outdoor dining within the existing sidewalks and roadway areas until Labor Day Weekend. Some businesses off State Street have used on-street parking spaces to build parklets for outdoor dining for businesses. A parklet is a sidewalk extension that provides more space for restaurants who have less capacity during the COVID-19 crisis and phased re-opening. Parklets are often installed in parking lanes and are commonly level with the existing sidewalk.

We are bringing this item to TCC related to the transportation aspect of the re-opening process. We will also share the feedback that we are receiving from businesses and the community to date.

ATTACHMENT: Council Agenda Report dated May 19, 2020



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 19, 2020

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: City Administrator's Office

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Business Advisory Task Force Recommendation To Assist Businesses

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve a preliminary recommendation of the COVID-19 Business Advisory Task Force for the City to temporarily close streets and on-street parking as well as temporarily suspend the regulations on private property to allow temporary outdoor dining to enable the reopening of the City's foodservice businesses. Council will have the opportunity to review, modify and approve the specific regulations governing street closure and outdoor operations in a proposed Economic Recovery Ordinance.

DISCUSSION:

On March 19, 2020, the State of California enacted an order directing all Californian's to stay at home except as needed to facilitate authorized, necessary activities or to maintain the continuity of operations of critical infrastructure sectors. Due to the State's stay at home order in response to the pandemic and the impact to Santa Barbara's economy, the Mayor convened a COVID-19 Business Advisory Task Force (Task Force) comprised of 20 business representatives to provide ideas and recommendations to the City to assist businesses reopen and for recovery of the local economy. Foodservice businesses throughout the City provide an important function in activating the commercial districts where they are located. As such, foodservice businesses add to the vibrancy of the community, employ many residents and generate significant economic activity. Foodservice businesses such as restaurants and cafes have been allowed to operate with take-out and delivery service. However, that limited service business model is not a financially viable business model many foodservice businesses.

The City has over four hundred foodservice businesses, many which cannot financially sustain their operations with the service limitations imposed by the stay at home order. Due to the pandemic it has been estimated that the foodservice industry could experience

30 to 40 percent closure of businesses within this industry, which equates to 120 to 160 local restaurants and cafes.

Additionally, in evaluating the proposed stages of the reopening of the economy, it is expected that foodservice businesses will be required to maintain social distancing guidelines within their premises which will reduce the operating occupancy of those operations.

In an effort to address the significant economic impact that the foodservice industry is experiencing and will continue to experience in the coming months, the Task Force is recommending that the City temporarily close portions of some streets and on-street parking spaces to facilitate outdoor dining activity. The City has successfully facilitated similar activities in which State Street has been closed to support the Oldtown Farmers' Market, community gathering events to help activate certain sections of the downtown and support the central business district.

In the instances where it may not be feasible to temporarily close a portion of a street or on-street parking to allow outdoor dining, the Task Force recommends that the City temporarily suspend zoning regulations to allow outdoor dining in a surface parking lot or open space area on private property adjacent to the business on a case by case basis.

In addition to the City's support of this concept, there are other regulatory agencies such as the County's Department of Public Health, California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and in certain locations in the City the California Coastal Commission approval may also be required.

The Task Force is discussing other efforts that the City can pursue to support the reopening of the economy and business recovery such as: 1) coordinating public outreach and communication campaigns; 2) seeking federal and state aid for the local business community which has experienced frequent natural disasters; and 3) streamlining the City's development review and permitting processes. Staff will bring these additional recommendations forward to Council upon finalization by the Task Force.

Finally, Council should be aware that the creation of pedestrian malls via street closures necessarily implicates First Amendment and other constitutional rights. The City Attorney advise that an Economic Recovery Ordinance should be established to create a legal framework for many phases of the City's recovery efforts.

Staff seeks Council direction on the Task Force's recommendation to allow the temporary closure of streets and on-street parking as well as temporarily suspend the regulations on private property to support outdoor dining.

PREPARED BY: Jason Harris, Economic Development Manager
SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, City Administrator
APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office