



Date: May 18, 2020

To: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager *TBM*

From: Craig A. Beck, Director of Public Works *CB*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Open Streets Initiative**

As the City of Long Beach (City) begins to look at loosening restrictions in line with Phase Two of the Governor's plan to reopen California, staff is studying efforts being undertaken in other cities and formulating "best practices" recommendations for what could work in Long Beach. Other large cities (e.g., Portland, Oakland, Pasadena, and Los Angeles) have implemented open streets programs, utilizing public space for increased outdoor activities, safer access to public transit, and stronger economic recovery. These elements are key to achieving appropriate physical distancing as cities work to restore operations and open businesses.

Neighborhoods

The City has significant experience with open streets events and practices. In addition to the annual "Beach Streets" active street festivals, each summer, Bay Shore Avenue is closed from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (June 15 to September 15, per LBMC 10.38.100). Staff is looking at a number of additional options for open streets, focusing on temporary street closures in dense areas of the City that are park deficient, many of which align with existing Bicycle Boulevards.

Closures could include wooden barricades with appropriate signage directing vehicular traffic to alternate roads and allowing for local access only. For vehicles utilizing closed roads for local access, speed limits would be reduced by five miles per hour. These closures could mirror the annual Bay Shore closure, which are familiar to our Public Safety and first responder teams.

Commercial Corridors

Staff is also looking at opportunities to provide open streets uses in commercial areas of the City. Working with local Business Improvement District leaders, the City's Economic Recovery Advisory Group is in the process of developing a plan to support economic recovery for businesses throughout the city and those within commercial corridors. Options to support open streets in commercial areas include temporary parklets, flex space, and full street closures.

Temporary parklets provide businesses with the opportunity to create an outdoor dining and curbside pick-up space. To expedite the support of temporary parklets, staff is developing a standardized guideline toolkit outlining requirements such as barrier types, set-up and take-down processes and timing, and owner responsibility for patrons in the right-of-way (ROW). A local architectural firm (Studio One Eleven) and Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) recently provided a demonstration of different options for achieving physical distancing. Attachment A provides images of this event. Staff may also recommend reducing or waiving application fees for temporary installations.

Flexible space supports curbside walk-up and pick-up activities, while allowing for adherence to social distancing requirements. Flexible spaces could include signage and wayfinding tools, such as sidewalk legends. Partial lane and street closures may occur as necessary, implemented with traffic control plans that utilize signs, cones, delineators, and temporary striping tape.

Full street closures may also be explored using water-filled barriers, concrete k-rails, and other supportive equipment. Full street closures, which would be determined in consultation with the City's Public Safety and Special Event teams, will take into consideration the operational needs of businesses, such as deliveries.

Proper signage supporting the current "Safer at Home Order for Control of COVID-19" (Health Order) requirements and hand-washing stations will be explored to support parklet, flex space, and full street closures.

Next Steps

At the May 19, 2020 City Council meeting, staff intend to provide a presentation on information collected and recommendations.

Staff will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that open streets initiatives align with public safety and City requirements, while supporting enhanced mobility options for residents and economic recovery for businesses.

Any reopening of businesses would need to align with the Governor's executive order and the City's Health Order.

Funding opportunities are currently being evaluated, which may include Metro funding and low-interest small business loans through the Kiva program.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Carl Hickman, City Traffic Engineer, at (562) 570-6665.

CB:CH:AW

ATTACHMENT

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MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (REF. FILE #20-0448)

