



Staff Report

File #: REPORT 20-0442, Version: 1

**Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council
Regular Meeting of July 14, 2020**

**CONSIDERATION OF TEMPORARY OPTIONS TO
FACILITATE FOOT TRAFFIC AND OUTDOOR DINING
OPTIONS WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY ALONG
HERMOSA BEACH BUSINESS CORRIDORS**

(Environmental Programs Manager Douglas Krauss
and Environmental Analyst Leeanne Singleton)

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends that City Council discuss and provide direction on which, if any, options should be further explored to facilitate foot traffic and outdoor dining options within the public right-of-way through downtown Hermosa Beach.

Executive Summary:

The City of Hermosa Beach is discussing options to implement a series of temporary outdoor and open space programs that would safely facilitate foot traffic along Hermosa Beach business corridors and provide space within the public right-of-way to provide outdoor dining and/or shopping space during the COVID-19 pandemic while physical-distancing and safety protocols are in place.

Background:

At the May 12, 2020 City Council meeting, City staff brought before the Council an item describing a proposed Summer Streets program. The program was identified to explore opportunities to repurpose sections of public rights of way to improve multi-modal traffic safety and expand physical-distancing options for the public and businesses per LA County Health orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic and included expanding bike lanes, converting parking spaces to outdoor dining areas, traffic calming associated with enhancing multi-modal transportation, and a number of other potential measures.

At the May 12 meeting, Council provided direction to staff to work with the Economic Development Committee to explore aspects of the program that could directly benefit local businesses. At the following meeting, City Council approved an urgency ordinance to implement a temporary permit program to provide outdoor dining/seating and outdoor retail options on the public right-of-way. Currently, more than 25 businesses have taken advantage of this program, and many more have applied or are interested in applying. We have seen further interest in the outdoor dining program as

the Governor limited indoor dining for a period of at least three weeks in Los Angeles and 18 other counties on July 1, though some establishments have limited adjacent outdoor space available to expand.

Discussion:

The local economic recovery continues to be challenging, as businesses are unable to operate at full capacity under changing state and county reopening requirements. Relaxing local zoning requirements to temporarily allow outdoor dining and retail has assisted in the economic recovery of local businesses, and recently has become the only dine-in opportunity for some restaurants that did not previously have a patio or outdoor space.

Further, many businesses face challenges in finding suitable and affordable options for creating outdoor opportunities for their customers, sometimes requiring substantial investment in infrastructure, such as traffic control barriers and/or the construction of platform structures.

Given that physical-distancing measures will be required even with the easing of public health orders extending into the foreseeable future, and the traffic safety challenges that may occur with expanded use of streets by pedestrians and bicycles, staff is presenting a refined series of options to dedicate additional space to facilitate foot traffic and outdoor dining paired with educational signage on key business corridors in Hermosa Beach.

Potential Corridors

1. *Hermosa Avenue between 8th and 14th or 10th and 14th | 0.3 miles*
2. *Pier Avenue between PCH and Hermosa Avenue | 0.4 miles*

Temporary Program Options

1. *Full Street Closures on an intermittent basis*

Council could direct staff to develop a traffic control plan and rent/purchase materials that would result in a full street closure of one or both corridors for a limited time period (a week or weekend) on a one-time or recurring basis. This option eliminates any vehicular traffic on a corridor and is the easiest to design in terms of traffic control but has potential secondary impacts to neighboring streets and if implemented on a recurring basis, would include repetitive costs to install and break-down equipment. The creation of a one-time event like this could draw crowds that would make it difficult to maintain physical-distancing requirements and does not provided the consistent level of foot traffic desired by local businesses.

2. *Single Lane Closures on a temporary basis*

Council could direct staff to develop a traffic control plan and rent or purchase materials that would result in a closure of one lane in each direction along one or both corridors for a temporary period of two or more months. This could be designed to provide additional walking and biking space, using the lane for parking as a buffer between outdoor dining spaces and

vehicular travel or provide further outdoor dining and retail space. The creation of an ongoing space like this could provide a more consistent level of economic activity and foot traffic desired by local businesses and would have the effect of slowing vehicular travel down to make it safer for these outdoor activities, but could cause some congestion at busier times due to a temporary reduction in vehicular lanes through downtown corridors.

General Plan Consistency:

The proposed program options match the model of “living streets”, also known as “complete streets”, and a key guiding principle of the General Plan Vision is to foster a vibrant local economy. A living street combines safety and livability while supporting ground floor and outdoor economic activities. This centers on designing streets that can be safely shared by both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. A living street should also contribute to an engaging public realm and a vibrant local economy.

Relevant Policies are listed below:

Governance

Goal 6. A broad-based and long-term economic development strategy for Hermosa Beach that supports existing businesses while attracting new business and tourism.

Policies:

- **6.4 Business support.** Support the Chamber of Commerce, retailers, tourist service businesses, artists, and other agencies to develop an aggressive marketing strategy with implementation procedures.
- **6.6 Pop-up shops.** Develop plans and programs for underutilized spaces, such as vacant buildings, utility corridors, parkways, etc., for temporary retail, restaurant, and community promoting uses.

Mobility

Goal 1. Complete Streets (Living Streets) that serve the diverse functions of mobility, commerce, recreation, and community engagement for all users whether they travel by walking, bicycling, transit, or driving.

Policies:

- **1.1 Consider all modes.** Require the planning, design, and construction of all new and existing transportation projects to consider the needs of all modes of travel to create safe, livable and inviting environments for all users of the system.

Mobility

Goal 7. A transportation system that results in zero transportation-related fatalities and which minimizes injuries.

Policies:

- **7.1 Safe public right-of-ways.** Encourage that all public right-of-ways are safe for all users at all times of day where users of all ages and ability feel comfortable participating in both motorized and non-motorized travel.

Fiscal Impact:

Council allocated annual AQMD funding in the amount of \$17,145 to the program and directed staff to investigate other funding opportunities to support these programs. To date, the City has applied for one grant and supported a grant submittal by the Downtown Hermosa Business Association but have not yet secured additional funding for these efforts.

The AQMD funds previously allocated may be used to initiate the development of traffic control plans, however the City has not yet budgeted or identified a funding source to cover the costs of implementation. Costs associated with implementation of a program would include material costs to rent or purchase equipment and labor costs for installation and maintenance of equipment. Estimated costs to design traffic control plans are between \$15,000 and \$20,000 from the City's On-Call Traffic Engineering Consultants depending on the preferred corridors and design options. Costs to purchase or rent, install, and maintain equipment are not included in that figure and would vary widely based on the corridors and design options considered. Traffic control equipment rental costs for a footprint similar to Fiesta Hermosa are estimated at approximately \$20,000/month and the rental of tables, chairs, lights, and other equipment would add another \$20,000/month to the costs.

Respectfully Submitted by: Doug Krauss, Environmental Programs Manager and Leeanne Singleton, Environmental Analyst

Noted for Fiscal Impact: Viki Copeland, Finance Director

Approved: Suja Lowenthal, City Manager