



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS REPORT

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MIKE POSEY, CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

DATE: MAY 4, 2020

SUBJECT: DIRECT STAFF TO RESEARCH EXPANDED OUTDOOR DINING PROGRAM FOR COVID-19 RESTAURANT RELIEF

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered our business landscape, and many restaurants and storefronts face steep obstacles as we look to reopen the economy. Those businesses able to re-open will need to impose strict social distancing and safety measures for their workforce and customers. In particular, restaurants, cafés, and bars will be grappling with significantly-reduced dining capacity, with customers being required to abide by social distancing requirements.

Given the need to socially distance, I am requesting that the City Council consider directing staff to develop a program where restaurants may temporarily use the City's public spaces to place additional tables for outdoor dining. If this protocol is approved, it could help increase capacity and reduce the burden placed on food and beverage establishments, and the added seating capacity could make the difference between a business being able to stay afloat and having to close its doors. Vilnius, Lithuania, has created a similar program for outdoor diners, and it was met with great acclaim.

In addition to helping these specific restaurant businesses, opening up the City's public spaces to additional outdoor dining will bring people back to the City's streets faster, increasing traffic for nearby retail and service-based businesses.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Based on my assessment of the situation, I am requesting that the City Council vote to direct staff to develop a program that would temporarily convert adjacent public spaces into outdoor dining areas to allow restaurants greater dining capacity, given COVID-19 social distancing requirements.