



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

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GRACEY VAN DER MARK, MAYOR PRO TEM

DATE: JANUARY 17, 2023

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO END EXPANDED OUTDOOR DINING AND RETAIL ON MAIN STREET
AND OTHER NEARBY AREAS IN DOWNTOWN**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the interest of accommodating small businesses and the public during the COVID-19 shutdown throughout the City, the City Council allowed restaurants on Main St. and other nearby areas to expand into outdoor areas such as public rights-of-way. This expansion included shutting down and completely cutting off the second block of Main St. to vehicular traffic, in favor of businesses. Additionally, some tenants expanded onto private property beyond approvals or permits.

This expansion served two purposes: to assist small business in continuing revenue generation during the pandemic, but also to allow safe outdoor healthy dining and retail shopping to reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, we are in 2023; the COVID-19 pandemic is over; the downtown small businesses are still occupying the same expanded outdoor dining and retail areas on public property; and the street on the second block of Main St. remains closed. There are efforts to pursue plans to revitalize Main St. in downtown. But the current outdoor dining and retail expansion, including the second block closure, is not warranted any longer, brought with it a lot of avoidable blight, caused an increase in transient occupation, and created an increase in health and safety concerns.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Direct the City Manager to work with staff to give the downtown businesses on Main St., who are occupying public areas with outdoor dining and retail, 30-days' notice to remove all expanded outdoor dining and to return Main St. to its pre-COVID-19 state. This reversal of the outdoor dining and retail expansions by small business will remain until the City Council makes a decision about a long-term revitalization plan. Additionally, direct the City Manager to require tenants who have expanded on public rights-of-way nearby Main Street as well as on private property to scale back to approved patio areas until they are permanently permitted for expansion. Lastly, direct the City Manager to reinstitute parking meters to their pre-Covid state on Main Street as well. We anticipate that this restoring of Main St., downtown to its pre-COVID-19 state will require support from Community Development, Community and Library Services, Police Department, and Public Works.