



# City of Huntington Beach

File #: 21-875

MEETING DATE: 11/16/2021

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**SUBMITTED TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oliver Chi, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Ursula Luna-Reynosa, Director of Community Development

**Subject:**

**Consider 1) Directing Staff to Solicit Proposals to Prepare Construction Documents for a Redesign of Main Street and 2) an Extension of the Temporary Closure of the Second block of Main Street to Vehicular Traffic**

**Statement of Issue:**

As part of the COVID-19 pandemic response, the City Council authorized a temporary closure of the second block of Main Street to vehicular traffic and allowed businesses to expand into the right-of-way. This closure has been in effect for approximately one year and has been extended until December 31, 2021. There has been favorable community response to the closure which caused staff to retain the services of Studio One Eleven to study permanent options related to Main Street as well as to study overall connectivity strategies between Main Street and the greater downtown area. Studio One Eleven has prepared two schemes for Main Street reconfiguration for City Council's consideration.

**Financial Impact:**

If the City Council directs staff to procure a design professional to prepare construction documents to reconfigure Main Street, staff will return to the City Council with a contract for approval. At that time, the cost of the contract will be known and disclosed. There is no fiscal impact associated with directing staff to solicit proposals, and the City Council has previously allocated \$1.75 million in Federal COVID relief ARPA dollars towards advancing this initiative.

**Recommended Action:**

A) Direct staff to solicit proposals to prepare construction documents for Main Street reconfiguration.

And

B) Direct Staff to extend the temporary closure of the second block of Main Street to vehicular traffic during the reconfiguration evaluation.

**Alternative Action(s):**

Do not direct staff to solicit proposals and direct staff accordingly.

**Analysis:**

At the September 7th City Council meeting, the City Council authorized the City Manager to continue the temporary closure of the second block of Main Street to vehicular traffic to accommodate outdoor dining and retail in the public right-of-way through December 31, 2021. At the same meeting staff informed the Council that Studio One Eleven had been retained to further refine some connectivity ideas developed by RSM design which focused on connectivity strategies between Main Street and the resorts to the south-east. Studio One Eleven was also tasked with studying Main Street, as part of the COVID-19 response to the second block closure, and recommending permanent options for consideration.

Studio One Eleven will present to the City Council two reconfigurations of Main Street; option one, a Plaza Scheme, and option two, a One-Way Flex Scheme. The Plaza Scheme envisions a full closure of Block 2 to vehicular traffic on Main Street to create a pedestrian plaza that is an everyday public space for residents and visitors. This scheme will reconfigure and expand on on-street dining that supports the existing restaurants on all three blocks. The One-Way Flex Scheme envisions reconfiguring all three blocks on Main Street to one-way traffic that makes space for a pedestrian promenade on the northern side of the street. This scheme will reconfigure and expand on-street dining on all three blocks as well.

The two schemes were shared with the Ad Hoc Committee (Mayor Carr, Mayor Pro Tem Delgleize, and Councilwoman Moser) as well as with a focus group of stakeholders (property owners, business owners, hoteliers, Downtown BID and VHB). While comments were generally favorable for both options and stakeholders acknowledged that either selection results in much needed community investment in downtown, the overwhelming consensus was a preference for the Plaza Scheme.

The Plaza Scheme was seen as an opportunity to truly create an outdoor living room for the community. It was acknowledged that the longer customers stay in downtown the more likely they are to patronize multiple restaurants and shops. The ability to program and activate the plaza provides an opportunity to attract more customers and to instill civic pride in the community. Both schemes offer the ability for businesses along all three blocks to reconfigure and expand private, outdoor dining opportunities. Based on this feedback, staff is recommending that the City Council direct staff to solicit proposals from design professionals to take the Plaza Scheme concept to full construction documents.

There are three phases to developing the working drawings; schematic design, design development, and finally, construction documents. Community outreach regarding design themes will be conducted to refine the scheme selected by the City Council. Staff will check in with the Ad Hoc Committee during the schematic design phase. Towards the end of this phase staff will prepare a presentation, to the entire City Council, which will include computer renderings. At this point the design won't include final materials. A project narrative will be included which will broadly describe the project and a more refined cost estimate will be included.

During the design development phase a much more detailed set of drawings and a specification book will be prepared. There will be additional opportunities for community input related to street furniture, colors, hardscape, landscape, lighting, etc. This input will be shared with the Ad Hoc Committee and

they will be asked to make some recommendations that will be shared with the entire City Council prior to finalization. The cost estimate will again be refined based on selected finished materials.

The final phase includes a complete set of drawings and specifications, referred to as construction documents. At this phase, staff will ask Council to direct staff to solicit bids to construct the improvements.

On June 1, 2020, the City Council authorized and directed the City Manager to 1) expand the Temporary Emergency Use Permit (TEUP) to allow outdoor dining and retail displays and 2) expand the use of temporary signs and banners as a response to mitigate limited business operations during the early stages of the pandemic. Businesses are now able to open at full capacity. Staff will communicate to TEUP holders that the privileges conferred under the TEUP will cease effective December 31, 2021 at midnight. Restaurants that are interested in continuing outdoor dining operations may pursue a permit that allows outdoor dining. If the outdoor space that they desire to occupy is City right-of-way, they will need to pursue an encroachment permit in addition to an Administrative Permit (type - Outdoor Dining). Encroachment permits to convert public parking spaces into parklets for outdoor dining will not be considered as the loss of on-street public parking is problematic. Code Enforcement will also issue warnings to businesses utilizing temporary signs and banners but will commence regular enforcement effective January 1, 2022.

If the City Council directs staff to solicit design proposals, then staff recommends that the temporary closure of the second block be extended. This temporary extension should continue until either 1) the City Council decides not to proceed with a reconfiguration of Main Street or 2) commencement of Main Street reconfiguration improvement. Construction cannot commence until replacement parking spaces are identified for any lost spaces due to the project.

**Environmental Status:**

Pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, CEQA does not apply to this action because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and it is not a "project" pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines. A future project contemplating the reconfiguration of a portion of Main Street may be considered in the future. Environmental analysis will be conducted prior to awarding a construction contract to construct such improvements.

**Strategic Plan Goal:**

Infrastructure & Parks

**Attachment(s):**

1. Downtown SWOT Analysis
2. Main Street Scenarios Review