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Mayor Robert Garcia
City of Long Beach

May 19, 2020

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Robert Garcia
Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce
Councilwoman Suzie Price
Councilmember Roberto Uranga
Councilmember Al Austin

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct the City Manager to create an open streets initiative and explore ways to open more public space throughout Long Beach to allow for increased outdoor activities, safer access to public transit, and stronger economic recovery, all while maintaining appropriate social and physical distancing.

The plan should include options that would enable additional and creative opportunities for outdoor dining for restaurants and bars when state and local health orders permit.

DISCUSSION:

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have tremendous impacts on our health and economy, it's important to look at creative measures cities around the world are taking to create more open space that encourages physical and social distancing while allowing for outdoor activities, safer mobility, and supporting economic recovery.

Cities across California and beyond are opening up space by limiting cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets and repurposing on-street parking for active transportation and restaurant use, in order to activate neighborhoods. Many essential workers rely upon transit services, and cities are also exploring ways to expand bus stops.

Adding more open public space while the "Safer at Home" health order remains in effect will make it easier for people to move throughout the city and for businesses to survive, while ensuring the social distancing that will be necessary for the foreseeable future.

In addition, as attention turns to safely reopening restaurants in the weeks ahead, providing open street opportunities could support new sidewalk dining and businesses. This concept is supported by numerous business improvement districts.

The City should pursue creative approaches that support their survival.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Financial Management will assess the fiscal impact during the study.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Dated: May 8, 2020