



Agenda Report

City Council

Date: May 26, 2020

To: Brian Saeki, City Manager

From: Kyle Cason, Director of Public Works

Subject: Whittier Recovery Plan - Greenleaf Avenue Temporary Modifications

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to approve a no-fee Special Event Permit to a lead organization that includes the City's subsidy of equipment necessary to temporarily close Greenleaf Avenue between Wardman Street and Hadley Street for a maximum of four months commencing when the appropriate Coronavirus restrictions are lifted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and authorize additional Special Event Permits for the use of public and private spaces in and around Greenleaf in the Uptown Core for up to four months in support of business recovery efforts.

BACKGROUND

In late 2019, a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) emerged and, despite worldwide efforts, began spreading to countries around the globe. On March 4, 2020, the outbreak was declared an emergency in the County of Los Angeles. That same day, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency with regard to the outbreak. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) labeled the outbreak a global pandemic. On March 13, 2020, President Trump similarly declared a State of Emergency. On March 17, 2020, City Manager Saeki signed Resolution No. 2020-13 proclaiming existence of a local emergency related to COVID-19, which the Council ratified with Resolution No. 2020-15 on March 24, 2020.

The Whittier Coronavirus Crisis Team (WCCT) has been meeting regularly since the onset of the public health crisis, serving as the initial phase of a more comprehensive Whittier Recovery Plan (WRP). WCCT has begun to establish additional recovery framework that identifies key action items, City objectives and broader solutions for recovery. The City's recovery measures coincide with the lifting of local measures to ensure that a safe, tiered approach is taken in the following phases:

Phase One (Safer-At-Home Order in place): Emergency Response & Preservation of Community Safety

- Essential businesses only
- Schools closed
- Stay/Safer at home orders in place
- All gatherings prohibited
- Restaurants limited to carry-out and delivery only

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- Non-essential travel suspended
- Reinforce public health and safety guidance for residents, businesses, and essential institutions
- Establishment of the Whittier Coronavirus Crisis Team (WCCT)
- Continue to analyze public health case data and adjust accordingly

Phase Two (Safer-At-Home Order modified): Gradual Re-Opening & Establishment of Continued Safety Protocols

- Workplace and congregate setting interaction restricted; telework encouraged where applicable
- Businesses must continue to practice County social distancing measures
- Childcare facilities and some recreational programs may open pending social distancing measures
- On-site school instruction remains suspended
- Large gatherings of more than 25 persons prohibited
- Retail establishments may open so long as aggressive social distancing measures remain in place; pick-up and drive-up/curbside interaction recommended
- Bars, gyms, entertainment venues, and other indoor establishments remain closed
- Restaurants continue to offer take-out or delivery service; dine-in seating restricted
- Continue to analyze public health case data and adjust accordingly

Phase Three (Safer-At-Home Order lifted): Lift Restrictions & Resume Operations across Sectors

- All individuals and businesses must follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Los Angeles County Public Health orders
- Continue to analyze public health case data and adjust accordingly

As part of Phase 2's reopening and lifting of restrictions, it is expected that Los Angeles County Department of Public Health will release guidelines for restaurant and other retail to re-open to customers at limited capacities.

Parking in Uptown has been reduced since the Safe at Home restrictions were put in place. The City's multi-deck parking structure has remained closed. Many of the Uptown Restaurants have utilized parking spaces in front of their businesses for priority or curbside pickup.

DISCUSSION

In accordance with the Whittier COVID-19 Recovery Plan and the goal of supporting local economic recovery, Public Works has been working through the details of temporary closures of Greenleaf Avenue in the Uptown area to support the reopening of local businesses whose customer base might be otherwise constrained by social distancing requirements. To streamline the process for permission, assignment of space, and managing details such as insurance, staff recommends that Council

authorize the City Manager to grant a “no fee” Special Event Permit to a lead organization (such as the Whittier Uptown Association, Uptown Whittier Improvement Association, or Whittier Area Chamber of Commerce) that would indemnify the City for both the temporary closure of Greenleaf and for the uses in the public right of way during the closure.

These closures would allow for restaurants and retail stores along Greenleaf Avenue to operate in the public right-of-way as limited capacity restrictions are in place. Other public and private spaces could also be conditionally utilized for additional tables with necessary social distancing and sanitization requirements in place and under the purview of the lead organization. Pick-up and drop-off locations would be designated for takeout, retail purchases and services such as dry cleaning.

Temporary closures of Greenleaf Avenue would be in place from Wardman Street to Philadelphia Street, Philadelphia Street to Bailey Street, and Bailey Street to Hadley Street. These closures would allow east/west travel across Greenleaf Avenue. The temporary closures would be in place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the duration of the Special Event Permit, utilizing k-rails at each intersection. K-rails are preferred due to their difficulty in moving without utilization of heavy equipment. Water barriers and wooden barriers are frequently moved by members of the public when not properly monitored. Public Works is working with Los Angeles County Fire Department and Whittier Police Department to allow access in case of emergency, which would include utilization of a lockable gate style access or installation of a lockable bollard.

Public Works would also provide “bike rack” style barricades that hook together for the restaurants and retail stores to utilize to provide necessary division of space. A minimum of six feet between the property line and barricades shall be necessary to allow for public sidewalk and accessibility access. There would also be a minimum of twenty two feet (22) access down the center of Greenleaf Avenue for emergency and pedestrian access. This would allow for a maximum of forty six (46) feet of Greenleaf Avenue’s eighty foot width to be utilized for Uptown businesses (Attachment A). Public Works will provide delineation between the spaces and areas to keep clear with temporary paint or chalk.

Utilization of the extra public space along Greenleaf Avenue would be optional. Temporary access to these areas would be as a part of the Special Event permit issued to the lead organization. Businesses would be limited to their frontage. The lead organization would be required to set up their barricades. The businesses would also be required to take the necessary steps with the State, County, other licensing and approval agencies, and their insurance companies to facilitate usage of these spaces. The Special Event permit will be issued once the lead agency and the City agree to appropriate conditions to ensure public safety. Closing Greenleaf Avenue in the blocks described will impact public parking. All of the stalls on Greenleaf Avenue would be closed, forcing patrons to park elsewhere. The multi-deck parking structure will be open. Signage will be placed throughout Uptown directing patrons to alternative parking locations. Stalls on Wardman Street, Philadelphia Street, and Bailey Street near

Greenleaf Avenue will be signed for 30 minute parking to allow for priority pickup from restaurants and retailers. These signs will coincide with the temporary Greenleaf Avenue closure and will be removed when the closure is lifted.

In addition to a master Special Event Permit issued to a lead agency to facilitate the temporary closure of Greenleaf and expansion of local businesses into the public right of way, Council could consider authorizing staff to work with additional private or nonprofit entities interested in using other public properties and private spaces for socially-distanced seating as the County Health Officer Orders are relaxed. Public properties, such as the greenbelt between the multi-deck and Greenleaf Avenue, could be setup for public seating with necessary materials to sanitize after each use. These spaces would be available for patrons who opt to carry out their food and beverage. The public owned properties would not have servers from a particular establishment. Private spaces, such as private parking lots, could also be utilized conditionally with a Special Event Permit. Staff will work with these businesses to accommodate their temporary requests.



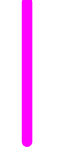


FISCAL IMPACT

Rental of k-rails for four months has a cost of \$5,000. Rental of 500 feet of “bike rack” style barriers for four months has a cost of \$2,000. Costs for sanitization stations are estimated at \$500. There are sufficient funds in the General Fund’s functional supplies account (100-30-321-803 670030) to cover these costs.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Greenleaf Avenue Closure Diagram



-  RETAIL AREA
-  ROAD CLOSURE
-  STREET CURB
-  EMERGENCY ACCESS
-  PRIORITY PICKUP AREA