



Agenda Report

City Council

Date: October 26, 2021
To: Brian Saeki, City Manager
From: Kyle Cason, Director of Public Works
Subject: Greenleaf Promenade - Street Closure

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction on Greenleaf Promenade outdoor operations.

BACKGROUND

On February 26, 2019, City Council selected a concept design from SWA Architects for the Uptown Whittier Streetscape Beautification project inclusive of improvements from “paseo to paseo” along Greenleaf Avenue in Uptown. The project area was approximately midblock north of Wardman Street to midblock north of Philadelphia Street and improvements consisted of new parklets, curbs, gutters, paving, concrete, tree removal, tree preservation, and tree replacement. At the time of Council discussion, the project costs were estimated at \$3.8M.

On May 28, 2019, City Council was presented with a summary of the public input process which took place as part of the Uptown Streetscape Plan referencing desired improvements including outdoor dining and parklets, gathering spaces, safety and cleanliness, and walkability among others (Attachment A).

In June 2020, due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the City Council approved a temporary closure of Greenleaf Avenue to facilitate the Greenleaf Promenade Outdoor Dine & Shop program. The closure, commonly referred to as the Greenleaf Promenade, has allowed for retailers and restaurants to operate their businesses in the City-owned public right-of-way through approval of a temporary encroachment permit while adhering to indoor occupancy restrictions.

On October 13, 2020, due to the evolving pandemic, the City Council approved an extension of the closure through a minimum of 120 days after the point at which restaurants were permitted to serve indoors at 100% capacity again.

On March 23, 2021, the City Council received a presentation featuring a draft permanent single-block closure of Greenleaf also designed by SWA Architects (Attachment B). At that time, City Council directed staff to research traffic control alternatives and perform further outreach to stakeholders in the impacted Uptown area, specifically businesses, property owners, and nearby residents.

On June 15, 2021, consistent with the Governor’s executive orders, the Health Officer Order for Los Angeles County allowed for the full reopening of businesses and restaurants, setting the new deadline for removal of outdoor operations along the Promenade of October 15, 2021.

On August 10, 2021, the City Council received the Greenleaf Promenade Survey results. In the survey, more than 1600 of 1800 community members stated their support of a permanent Promenade. Of those respondents, 60 of 81 Uptown business owners supported the permanent closure, as well as 199 of 241 Uptown property owners. When asked to rank priorities within the Promenade, common responses included outdoor dining, aesthetic uniformity, security, cleanliness, and diversification of businesses. Streetscape improvements including sidewalk repair, lighting, public art, and community gathering space were also noted. City Council action included approving an extension of the encroachment permits through February 1, 2022, and directing staff to bring back a report containing further information about hybrid and build-out options for the Greenleaf Promenade.

DISCUSSION

Greenleaf Promenade began as a street closure to support businesses during health officer-ordered capacity restrictions in nonessential retail, office and food establishments. Expanding out onto Greenleaf Ave., and adjacent areas of Uptown, through the use of K-rail protective measures, provided a lifeline during the capacity restrictions. As part of City Council consideration of the Promenade Survey results, three options for continued Promenade operations were presented (in addition to the option to remove enclosures and K-rails, and reopen the street to through-traffic and parking):

- 1) “Build Outs”: use K-rails to protect former parking stalls to allow for permanent build-out of outdoor dining enclosures along Greenleaf Avenue while permitting through-traffic along the street
- 2) “No Build Outs”: return Greenleaf to its pre-pandemic state while allowing for complete closures of Greenleaf to traffic for special events, potentially including weekend farmers market and similar activities
- 3) Hybrid Option: Carry forward closure of Greenleaf while implementing uniform build-outs into Greenleaf; install bollards to facilitate police and fire response, parades and other special events along Greenleaf.

Each of these three scenarios is described in more detail in later pages of this report. The considerations City Council requested staff explore prior to selection of any option included: safety, emergency response and input from the Los Angeles County Fire Department; pedestrian and vehicle access; and capacity for special events and parades in each of the scenarios. The summary table below briefly outlines these considerations:

Option	Pedestrian	Events	Vehicles	Parking	Emergency
---------------	-------------------	---------------	-----------------	----------------	------------------

Build Outs	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
No Build Outs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hybrid Closure	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Emergency Vehicle Access

Currently, Greenleaf Avenue is closed with k-rails and six different manufactured gates on caster wheels that are lock with Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) approved Knox Locks (to provide LACFD access in case of emergency). This access is similar to a gated community where LACFD retrieves a key for the gate from an LACFD approved Knox Box.



The LACFD approved combination of k-rail and the manufactured gates allow controlled access to the closure areas and ensure the safety of the patrons of the businesses in the closure area. The k-rail and manufactured gate setup can open to safely allow certain special events, such as the Christmas Parade, to still utilize the closure area in a controlled manner. LACFD required 26 feet clearance down the center of the street inside the closure area for their equipment to access.

Removable bollards are posts set and locked in the street that can be easily removed to allow access. Retractable bollards are posts that automatically retract into the ground to allow access. Utilization of removable or retractable bollards will provide the flexibility necessary for LACFD, Police, and maintenance access when the street is closed. Removable bollards would be locked in place with LACFD approved Knox Locks.



Build Outs

Allowing the businesses to utilize the parking areas while still allowing vehicular traffic down Greenleaf Avenue can only be accomplished by protecting all build-out areas with k-rails. This arrangement is in place on Greenleaf north of Bailey Street and near some of the other Uptown businesses not located on Greenleaf Avenue. An example of this arrangement is shown below:



A permanent option would require building permanent traffic rated walls protecting the build outs in the parking areas from the vehicles on the streets. This setup would allow for vehicles to drive up and down Greenleaf Avenue while safely allowing Uptown patrons to utilize the additional spaces in the public right-of-way. The middle of the street could be closed to vehicular traffic if necessary for special events or pedestrians. This permanent setup would allow for pedestrians to utilize the middle of the street while the street was closed, but would limit the accessibility to the businesses on the other side of the traffic rated walls. Also, by allowing the businesses to utilize the parking areas for build outs, the need for cars driving up and down Greenleaf Avenue is minimized because the on-street parking is eliminated.

No Build Outs

Weekend and special event closures of Greenleaf Avenue will not allow permanent build outs without adequate traffic rated protection of the build out areas from the vehicular traffic. Weekend closures without permanent adequate protection would have more of a Farmer's Market feel, as in this example:



Hybrid Closure

Carrying forward the current temporary closure would allow for uniform and aesthetically pleasing build outs along the closed areas of Greenleaf Avenue from Hadley Street to Wardman Street. The build outs would be uniformly built by the City during the Streetscape Project. The street would be closed allowing for pedestrians to utilize the middle of the street, which could be converted to open space, to walk from business to business. The bollards could be removed for emergency access and for certain special events, such as parades.



Conclusion

Should City Council desire to allow for permanent outdoor dining, options for moving forward with a professional service agreement for design with a consultant are:

- Hybrid closure of Greenleaf Avenue from Hadley Street to Wardman Street, allowing for special events and adequate emergency access.
- Build outs with closure of parking areas only, allowing for vehicles to safely remain on Greenleaf Avenue from Hadley Street to Wardman Street with installation of traffic rated walls.

Should City Council desire to have more of a Farmer's Market style closure with no build outs, modifications would be made to the existing Streetscape Concept would be implemented with a professional service agreement for design with a consultant. Design limits would be from Hadley Street to Wardman Street on Greenleaf Avenue.

A preliminary cost estimate along with potential grant opportunities and funding sources will be included in future consideration of a professional service agreement for design of the scope as directed by City Council. With the design of the full scope on Greenleaf Avenue from Hadley Street to Wardman Street, then the Streetscape project could be built in phases or all at once, depending upon funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL

Goal 1: Provide for Public Safety

Goal 3: Maintain & Enhance Quality of Life

Goal 4: Transparent & Open Government

Goal 5: Promote a Strong Local Economic Base

ATTACHMENTS

None.