



**DOWNTOWN  
LONG BEACH  
ALLIANCE**

September 15, 2020

Honorable Mayor Garcia and Members of the Long Beach City Council  
Civic Center Plaza  
411 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**RE: Open Streets Initiative Expansion**

Dear Mayor Garcia and Members of the Long Beach City Council,

Please accept this correspondence on behalf of the Downtown Long Beach (DLBA) Board of Directors and enter into the public record for the City Council meeting scheduled for September 15, 2020, DLBA's support for the extension of the Open Streets Initiative until at least the end of 2020 and continued discussion regarding possible permanent installations in some areas of Downtown.

Although the Open Streets Initiative is still in its initial phases, the program has been a lifeline for business owners, employees, and the greater Downtown community. The program enables businesses to safely expand their operations and workforce while complying with public health regulations and the pedestrian right-of-way requirements. 63% of participating Downtown businesses reported an increase in sales compared to the prior two months, with 84% of the same businesses supporting permanent extension of the Open Streets Initiative.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health orders has had a significant impact on our Downtown business community. Food service, personal grooming, retail, and similar customer-facing industries have been forced to close or severely limit their operations. According to data from the recent Long Beach Quarterly Economic Forum, small businesses in Downtown ZIP codes experienced a 27% average loss in revenue between March and May of 2020. During the same period, Downtown food-service businesses surveyed by DLBA reported an average of 19 full-time employee layoffs per establishment. The Open Streets Initiative has provided much needed relief for this sector.

The DLBA recognizes that any decision regarding street closures should address the concerns of the Downtown business and residential communities. We hope that the evaluation of the Open Streets Initiative will establish best practices regarding signage, streetscape beautification, vehicle ingress and egress, maintenance and sanitation, and quality of life services for those experiencing homelessness. Moreover, we would encourage the City Council to examine the possibility of expanded the Open Streets Initiative to other business sectors that are currently not eligible to utilize the program such as general retail. Going forward, DLBA is eager to assist the City in improving and promoting the Initiative for Downtown and the greater Long Beach community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kraig Kojian  
President & CEO

Cc: DLBA Board of Directors  
Tom Modica, City Manager, City of Long Beach  
Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works, City of Long Beach  
Tasha Day, Manager of Special Events & Filming, City of Long Beach