

May 15, 2020

City of Long Beach
c/o: Tom Modica, City Manager
411 W. Ocean Boulevard, 10th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

SUBJECT: First Amendment to the Restart Long Beach Advisory Group Report

To the City of Long Beach:

On behalf of the Restart Long Beach Economic Recovery Advisory Group, I want to thank you for your efforts in recent weeks to move the City forward into Stage II of the Governor's [Resilience Roadmap](#) to safely reopen curbside retail, child care, manufacturing, and logistics. As presented in our initial report submitted to the City Manager on May 2nd, the first principle is that we must **do all that we can to put people back to work** and we need to focus on those currently unemployed, furloughed, or laid off. Additionally, we need to begin with **sectors least likely to prompt a second wave of COVID-19**, including activities need to have low proximity and duration, protection, and additional hygiene.

The purpose of this letter is to serve as the First Amendment to the initial report from the Restart Long Beach Advisory Group, and to provide recommendations that will both (a) protect public health, and (b) move the businesses, workers, and residents of Long Beach safely into Stage III activities.

The Importance of Preparing for Stage III

Although we must continue to make progress against the public health goals outlined by the Governor before we move into Stage III for "Higher Risk Commercial Activities", there are many actions the City can take to prepare for this transition. These actions include the development of pilot projects, policies and procedures, and legislative changes that will be required for businesses to implement the new business models that will be required. Under Stage III from our initial report, dealing with personal services and restaurants, we would like to add the following:

Outdoor activity represents a safer environment from COVID-19 transmission. If proper social distancing and other protocols are required, the public can enjoy dining and other activities (small concerts, movie presentations, plays, etc.) with lower risks than indoor venues. We urge the City to consider allowing these activities as soon as possible within legal and practical constraints, with the following issues to be resolved:

- Leveraging Public Spaces. Outdoor dining would include curbside tables, parklets, street closures, use of public areas, and relaxed restrictions on private property.
- Streamlining City Permitting. A very efficient permit process, days not months, (or if possible, no permit process for areas such as the Promenade) that would achieve an approval/disapproval in a practical timeframe. Two weeks or less should be the goal.
- Coordinating with State Agencies. The City needs to have discussion with the Alcohol Beverage Control Board (ABC) to allow beverages to be served outside without cumbersome and costly restrictions. This will improve the economics of limited dining.

- Special Innovation Zones. The City should consider locations citywide for outdoor activities, downtown, Belmont Shore, Naples, Bixby Knolls, marinas, Retro Row, the Zaferia District, North Long Beach, and other areas should be considered.
- Reusing Existing Spaces. Consider the partial closure of commercial or public parking lots to restaurant expansion for outdoor dining.
- Preapproving Applications. The City should take applications for outdoor activities in advance of State or County permission to engage in these activities so approvals can be timely.
- Reducing Costs and Fees. All fees should be waived for any required permits for the transition period so that all geographic and demographic groups throughout the city can participate in an equitable way.
- Creating Small Business Loan Funds. Given that these new business models will create additional one-time costs for small businesses, the City should provide low-cost loans to help with the purchase of equipment, materials, supplies, and working capital that will be required to for small businesses to implement these pilot projects needed to move into Stage III.
- Public-Private-Partnerships. Stage III activities that leverage the public right of way and outdoor spaces will require close working relationships between the City, small business owners, and private non-profits like the business improvement districts and chambers of commerce to design and deliver these solutions.
- Adopting Legislative Changes. New design standards, new uses of the public right of way, and new health regulations may be required to implement pilot programs. Participation from City staff, regulatory commissions, and the City Council may ultimately be required to prepare the regulatory environment for Stage III transition.

Next Steps

On behalf of the Restart Long Beach Advisory Group, thank you for your continued efforts to bring people back to work as soon as it is safe to do so. The economic damage caused by COVID-19 continues to grow the longer that businesses are closed and workers are unable to return to work. The Restart Long Beach Advisory Group will continue to work together across sectors to make connections, identify best practices, and form public-private partnerships that will help to move Long Beach forward toward a timely and safe transition into Stage III.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions for the Advisory Group. We are here to serve in any way that is beneficial to the health and well-being of the City of Long Beach.

On behalf of the Restart Long Beach Advisory Group,



Bob Foster
Former Mayor
City of Long Beach