



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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San Diego City Council Adopts Spaces as Places Program to Permanently Allow Outdoor Business Operations

NEW PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE PATH TO MAKE TEMPORARY OUTDOOR DINING AND OTHER PUBLIC SPACE USES PERMANENT

SAN DIEGO – Today the San Diego City Council approved the [Spaces as Places program](#), an innovative solution to allow businesses and institutions to continue occupying outdoor public spaces that were temporarily approved for use in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

City staff devised the Spaces as Places program as a way to transition temporary spaces into permanent facilities with established design and safety standards. The program offers a menu of options to allow for the creation of outdoor areas for dining, walking, biking and other activities.

“While navigating our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, I’ve been committed to finding long-term solutions for San Diego’s beloved outdoor dining spaces,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. **“I’m proud that the City Council has approved the Spaces as Places program, which will provide ways for temporary outdoor structures constructed in response to the pandemic to come into compliance and become permanent installations. Spaces as Places also allows for whole street closures to create promenades and will ensure long-term options that are safe, equitable and accessible for all San Diegans.”**

Earlier this year staff began collecting feedback from community members and business owners regarding the benefits of using outside areas to remain open during the pandemic. With that feedback, staff [drafted regulations](#) that provide locational, design and permit requirements to continue the use of outdoor areas. They also developed a [design manual](#) for streetaries, active sidewalks, promenades and outdoor dining on private property.

The program targets businesses in traditionally underserved communities to ensure outdoor dining investments and bicycle and pedestrian improvements are equitably distributed across the city.

“Since the pandemic began, we’re seeing more people spend time outdoors and want to continue spending time outdoors with their friends and family,” said Mike Hansen, the City’s Planning

Director. “We’re proud to have a program that will strengthen and enhance our neighborhoods by encouraging more opportunities for people to gather with others in safe and comfortable outdoor spaces, all while supporting our City’s economy.”

The Spaces as Places program will be available for business owners 30 days after the City Council’s second reading of the ordinance, which is expected in November. The program would also need Coastal Commission approval before it could be implemented within Coastal areas.

Once the Spaces as Places program is approved, applicants will need to obtain the required permits with the City’s Development Services Department. Any business that would like to make use of a public space, but does not currently do so, will need to apply for a new permit. Any [existing permitted temporary outdoor businesses](#) that would like to continue using that space will have to apply for a new permit and will have until July 2022 to come into compliance with the newly approved regulations.

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