



C H A M B E R  
*of*  
C O M M E R C E

**Via Email Only**

May 14, 2020

Honorable Mayor Lester Friedman & Beverly Hills City Council  
Beverly Hills City Hall  
455 N. Rexford Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Re: Priority Recommendations of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce for COVID-19 Business Recovery Assistance Task Force

Dear Mayor Friedman and Members of the Beverly Hills City Council:

We'd like to thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented time. We have received numerous calls and emails from our business community thanking the City and its staff for their tireless efforts to help our entire community, including our businesses. I have enjoyed and appreciate the opportunity to be on the Beverly Hills COVID-19 Business Recovery Assistance Task Force and think this is a crucial step for us to work together to identify ways we can rebuild the economy.

Our Chamber has been working internally to identify recommendations and action items that can be reviewed by the Task Force and then implemented. Although we have developed additional ideas, we think it's important to start and focus on the most important things first. Here are the Chamber's priority recommendations, broken up into short and medium/long term time frames:

**Priority Recommendations that Can Be Examined and Implemented in the Short Term**

- (1) Reduce parking requirements for all uses– we have heard that the No. 1 challenge for many ground floor businesses in Beverly Hills (and property owners seeking to fill vacant spaces) is high parking requirements and accompanying fees. We thank the City Council for their work in lowering parking requirements for restaurants last year. We recommend that the City immediately move to lower parking requirements for other uses (fitness, medical, office, pop-ups, museum, etc.) to at least match nearby cities. This will create a more flexible environment to adjust uses, adapt to changing times and attract new businesses to our City. This will ensure we have at least an even playing field when we try to keep and attract companies in Beverly Hills.

- (2) Reduce number of requests that require Commission (particularly Planning and Architectural) review & make it easier/less costly to get permits – The City Council has previously approved recommendations of the Small Business Task Force to streamline storefront signage and vacant storefront beautifications processes. We can reduce the cost of these and other actions by reducing fees and limiting the number of items that require Commission review which is often expensive and time consuming.
- (3) Suspend business license fees for a year.
- (4) Put a cap on online delivery services fees.
- (5) Permit outdoor dining in areas not directly in front of each restaurant (for example, in front of an adjacent retailer who agrees to allow it) – this will increase the available dining space needed to accommodate social distancing.
- (6) Automatic renewal of sidewalk seating (no need for a new application).
- (7) Freeze costs associated with outdoor dining for at least the next two years.

**Priority Recommendations that Can Be Examined and Implemented Over the Medium/Long Term**

- (1) Revisit the General Plan to allow more density in certain areas & flexible/alternative uses – the Chamber believes the General Plan should be revisited and made more flexible, including allowing mixed use, allowing new and innovative uses surrounding the future subway stops and removing use restrictions (such as the medical overlay).

Thank you for your consideration of these items and we look forward to working with you on these and other ideas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd Johnson  
President and CEO  
Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce