**May 19, 2020**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**City of Brevard Announces Plan to Create More Temporary Outdoor Space for Retail and Restaurants Downtown**

The City of Brevard announced Monday City Council has unanimously approved staff recommendations to create additional downtown outdoor space for restaurants and retailers in anticipation of a Phase 2 reopening at a reduced capacity for dining and shopping~~.~~

Chair of the Downtown Master Plan Committee Maureen Copelof said, "This initiative reflects a great collaborative effort between city leadership and staff, Heart of Brevard and our local business owners. I'm proud that we are able to respond to this crisis with proactive changes to city policy and look forward to working and refining this initiative as we go.  Working together, moving forward and supporting our local businesses are top priorities of city leadership.”

Council’s resolution outlined the following:

* On-street parking spaces on Main Street on the block immediately west and on the block immediately east of Broad Street, opposite the sidewalk from such stores will be closed to vehicular parking as a “test block.” Through traffic will still be allowed.
* Parking spaces may be used by pedestrians for safe travel while parts of the sidewalk and bricked area WILL be used for tables and chairs or retail display racks, etc.  Other pedestrian use of the sidewalk, with parking spaces used for merchandise, may also be a viable option.
* The City of Brevard will erect fencing to block vehicular parking and createbarriers for safe use of ~~t~~hose parking areas newly designated for outdoor dining and retail.
* Restaurants and retail shops with a license to serve beer and wine may contact the Planning Department for approval to serve alcohol directly adjacent to their establishment andwith proper barricades in place.
* Businesses that do not want on-street parking spaces closed in front of their businessmay petition the City of Brevard to leave spaces open before fencing is put in place.
* The City will identify and clearly mark spaces for all curbside pickup where needed.

Many businesses outside of the “test-block” have expressed a desire to increase outdoor space with use of parking lots, parking spaces and sidewalks. Director of Planning for the City of BrevardPaul Rayencourages businesses to contact the Planning Department to discuss potential solutions: “Not only are we not excluding other businesses throughout the city from thinking creatively, we are actively encouraging businesses to contact the Planning Department to let us know what they have in mind and how we can help them adjust to current conditions.”

This resolution also allows the Heart of Brevard to request special event street closures for weekends and evenings as desired by downtown business owners.  “Brevard City Council and City Staff have taken decisive actions to greatly enhance the downtown business environment, our shared goal is to advocate and support our downtown business community**,”** said Nicole Bentley, Executive Director of the Heart of Brevard, “We look forward to continuing to work closely with our downtown business community and other partners in facilitating the implementation of these strategies.”

In addition to this resolution, City staff have been working to increase the number of outdoor seating areas throughout downtown to accommodate takeout dining. Additional tables have been added to the corner of Caldwell and West Main street with shade umbrellas on order. Visitors to downtown will soon find additional seating in the East Alley near Sully’s Steamers and in the North Alley adjacent to Hunters and Gatherers.

"I am impressed by how much the City of Brevard has stepped up in their support of our business community as businesses deal with the impact of COVID-19," shares Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce and Transylvania County Tourism Executive Director Clark Lovelace. "Their support of the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund and their actions to assist downtown business owners as they operate during North Carolina's three-phased reopening are commendable."

The Heart of Brevard and Brevard/Transylvania Chamber are working on map for downtown businesses to use to direct customers to newly created public seating. The City plans to add additional signage and handwashing stations throughout downtown as well.

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