

08/10/2020

RE: Temporary Waivers of Permit Fees for Café Tables and Chairs and Display Merchandise in the Public Right-of-Way, and Use Fees for Parklets

Dear Small Business Commission President and Commissioners,

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the sidewalk use, fee waiver legislation introduced by Supervisor Aaron Peskin, and co-sponsored by Supervisor Mandelman as file #200786. This legislation would help small businesses impacted by COVID-19 by waiving fees related to activities that can support revenue generation while respecting social distancing guidelines and serve as an important and proactive response to the current circumstances.

There are many businesses that simply cannot possibly come close to their pre-COVID-19 operations without their indoor spaces. This ordinance gives greater flexibility by removing the cost-prohibitive barrier of extending a business outdoors. The waiver would apply for two years to cover August 1st, 2020 through August 1st, 2022 and would be an important tool for a potential economic recovery.

This ordinance does have some cost to the city of San Francisco but will make a significant impact on small businesses and could play a part in defining what San Francisco looks like after COVID-19. The cost to the city is outweighed by the benefit and the encouragement it will give small businesses and should be considered an investment in the future of the city.

The savings from the waived fees will be in the thousands of dollars for many businesses. With the current shared spaces program set to expire at the end of the year, this legislation would remove a financial barrier for more businesses to formalize the practice of effectively and safely utilizing outdoor spaces. Right now, the city must do everything possible to help our small business ecosystem survive these challenging times.

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce actively supports policies that uplift our small business community which contributes so greatly to the City's vibrance and culture. We believe this ordinance will help small businesses to maintain a foothold in San Francisco and persevere through a recovery.

Sincerely,



Rodney Fong, President & CEO
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

CC: All Small Business Commissioners, SBC Executive Director, Regina Dick-Endrizzi