

June 22, 2020

Mayor London Breed  
City Hall Room 200  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mayor Breed,

Outdoor dining and repurposing public space for private use is essential to small business economic recovery as we reemerge from shelter-in-place. As involved and dedicated members of the Vision Zero Coalition's Senior & Disability Workgroup, we believe new programs like Shared Spaces will be most successful if the city's agencies consider the needs of seniors and people with disabilities as the program is developed.

Here are our three recommendations for the Shared Spaces program:

- Provide sufficient time for every part of program development: process of defining final permit application(s), permit review, etc.
  - We understand the need to move quickly during this uniquely challenging time, but two business days might not be enough time for staff to review all the accessibility needs of a given space and street and provide feedback to the businesses before permit is granted. Therefore, we ask the city agencies to allow for ample time to thoroughly review submitted permits. Rushing the process and disadvantaging one group (seniors and people with disabilities) over another group (small business owners) will be detrimental to the program.
  
- Prioritize using street space over sidewalk space.
  - On commercial corridors where restaurants will want to put out tables and chairs, sidewalks tend to be very narrow. We ask that the Shared Spaces program prioritize businesses proposing to use street space -- parking spaces and travel lanes over those requesting to use sidewalk space.
  - Six feet of straight through-zone on the sidewalk is a bare minimum of space required rather than the desired amount of space where everyone feels safe and comfortable using the sidewalk for clear passage as well as social-distancing. Those with mobility disabilities require more space to safely navigate sidewalks.
  - We're disappointed that the initial permit application went live while the process for multiple businesses using car parking spaces was still to come. Conversion of

street space is the best way to provide space for people who may want to sit or rest on a walk without paying to patronize a business.

- Provide ways to give feedback and share examples of places that are in compliance with the distance requirements and report businesses that aren't.
  - Given past issues with outdoor dining space, provide an easy, inclusive way for community members to use 311 or another system to provide feedback on individual Shared Spaces that provide accessibility difficulties and a mechanism for tracking how this feedback will improve implemented Shared Spaces.
  - We encourage staff to find a way to encourage business owners to proactively work with those who know accessibility needs best to improve designs through accessibility consultants or others who can best advise.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback. As pedestrian, senior, and disability advocates, we welcome being included in the development and refinement of the Shared Spaces program, and hope you will reach out to us for feedback.

Sincerely,

LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Senior and Disability Action  
The Arc of San Francisco  
Walk San Francisco

cc:

Nicole Bohn, Mayor's Office on Disability  
Alaric Degrafinried, Public Works  
Rich Hillis, Planning Department  
Joaquin Torres, Office of Economic and Workforce Development  
Jeffrey Tumlin, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency