



805.967.2500

[www.SBSCChamber.com](http://www.SBSCChamber.com)

Mailing Address: 5662 Calle Real #204, Goleta, CA 93117

Visitor Center: 120 State Street, St F, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

---

January 21, 2022

Mayor Rowse and City Council  
City of Santa Barbara  
PO Box 1990  
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

**RE: Economic Recovery Extension and Transition Ordinance**

Dear Mayor Rowse and City Council:

On behalf of the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce, from Goleta to Carpinteria, we ask that you consider postponing the requirement of a 20-foot wide fire and emergency vehicle access lane, and the requirement that all outdoor business facilities on the State Street Promenade be comprised of portable equipment and furnishings, as well as consider a further deadline than March 8<sup>th</sup> to allow more time for businesses on the 00 block of West Victoria, 1300 block of State Street, 116 Santa Barbara Street, and Helena Avenue to make any required adjustments. While many local businesses and the Chamber support the Economic Recovery Extension and Transition Ordinance's (ERETO) 22-month extension of expanded outdoor business areas, the concerns over the timing of the fire lane and portability requirements should be addressed.

**Business Outreach**

After hearing concerns that the City had not conducted adequate outreach to downtown businesses regarding the ERETO, the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce hosted the virtual State Street Business Roundtable Workshop, on Thursday January 20<sup>th</sup>. The Workshop's main goals were to hear the concerns of downtown businesses that would be affected by the proposed requirements of the ERETO, as well as facilitate a discussion between the City and concerned businesses.

**Timing of Implementation**

Feedback from downtown business leaders who attended the Workshop was overwhelming concern regarding the timing of the recommended requirements. While many attendees of the Workshop expressed their gratitude to the City for the work it has done to accommodate businesses throughout the challenges of the pandemic, as well as an understanding that there would eventually be changes to the current arrangement, there was clear confusion as to why the City would choose to introduce requirements that would put further financial strain on downtown businesses during a time where concerns and challenges of the pandemic are at a high. Many attendees admitted that the past month had been one of the most difficult in recent times, and that they were uncertain how they would be able to comply with the proposed requirements by March 8<sup>th</sup>, especially if the current state of COVID continues.

### **Revised Timing**

One proposed solution for the concerns of these businesses would be to extend the proposed March 8<sup>th</sup> deadline. A new deadline should consider 90 days to ensure that public concerns are addressed, as well as an additional 90 days to allow businesses to implement the required changes. An extended deadline of at least **May 31<sup>st</sup>** would allow businesses to address any financial strain the proposed changes might bring, as well as allow them time to work with contractors on implementation.

While we would hope for more time to address concerns over the requirements that would be introduced by the ERETO, the Chamber and local businesses understand the importance of public safety. If that Council feels that it is necessary to implement the 20-foot fire lane by March 8<sup>th</sup>, we ask that the Council consider pulling out the requirements regarding portability. The Chamber and local businesses feel that issues regarding the portability and design of the outdoor business facilities be addressed by a more long-term plan that will offer more consistent guidelines, so businesses are not having to adapt every time a new change is introduced.

### **Master Plan**

The community has been under the impression that the State Street Advisory Committee and the State Street Master Plan were meant to address just these concerns. The justifications for portable outdoor business facilities have been identified as the need to accommodate accessibility, street cleaning, storm flows, parades, and special events. In the interest of consistency, it would be best if these issues wait to be addressed in the State Street Master Plan.

The State Street Advisory Committee was formed to oversee the production of a State Street Master Plan, which has continuously been discussed as a transition from a street to a more pedestrian focused heart of Santa Barbara. Even now, many downtown business owners are describing the current status of downtown State Street as a downtown renaissance in which locals who had not visited downtown in a long while are now returning, a step in the right direction, on point with the goals of the State Street Master Plan.

However, downtown State Street's businesses still find themselves in a tenuous situation, and any changes could stifle the currently described renaissance. Other cities with permanent promenades do not appear to have requirements for portability, with fire lanes along the perimeter, rather than down the middle. The Council should be conscious of how the changes contained in the ERETO are in direct opposition to the City and community's long-term goals for downtown State Street.

### **Victoria Street Circulation**

Following discussion with downtown businesses, we also request that the Victoria Street and 1300 Block reopening to two-way traffic be postponed, as in their current configurations these areas are key to the economic vitality of the promenade. We are aware that there are grant deadlines associated with the Master Bicycle Plan, which was written before the pandemic. Given the extraordinary new circumstances, we ask that the Master Bicycle Plan, which we support in concept, be given time to be updated in line with the State Street Master Plan.



805.967.2500

[www.SBSCChamber.com](http://www.SBSCChamber.com)

Mailing Address: 5662 Calle Real #204, Goleta, CA 93117

Visitor Center: 120 State Street, St F, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

---

Please reconsider the proposed requirements of the ERETO, and the unnecessary and untimely financial strain they will put on local businesses. We ask the Council to carefully consider an extension of the proposed March 8<sup>th</sup> deadline, and/or the possibility of leaving issues of portability of outdoor business facilities to be addressed in the State Street Master Plan.

Thank you for your continued support of downtown businesses during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

KRISTEN MILLER | President/CEO

SANTA BARBARA SOUTH COAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

(805) 967-2500 ext. 108 | [Kristen@SBSCChamber.com](mailto:Kristen@SBSCChamber.com)