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10/17/2023

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

RE: Proposed Citywide Parklet Program

Dear Mayor Rowse and Councilmembers:

The Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce would like to reiterate our support for outdoor dining in the City of Santa Barbara. Outdoor dining is still highly important to businesses and the community. Many businesses have not necessarily seen a marked increase in the amount of customers they are serving at one time, due to the addition of outdoor dining facilities. Rather, the businesses are attracting customers that prefer outdoor dining, and existing customers often prefer outdoor dining over indoor. The Chamber has always been an advocate for process reform regarding permitting throughout the City, and downtown. The proposed citywide parklet program feels like a step in the wrong direction. The success of this program, and its impact to businesses, will be largely decided based on the City's response and relations with businesses throughout this change.

We understand that the proposed citywide parklet program will provide a process for business owners to obtain a license authorizing placement of an outdoor business facilities on public parking spaces in front of their businesses, as well as for private property. The Chamber's hope is that the City will be conscious of any challenges presented by this process and support businesses with any difficulties they may encounter as they look to comply with the new processes. It would be shame if this program, however good intentioned, led to a significant loss of outdoor dining. Outdoor dining continues to attract customers who may not have otherwise considered dining out or visiting these businesses, if not for the outdoor option. Outdoor dining also continues to garner widespread support from the local community and visitors alike.

Thank you all for your time and effort, and for supporting the local business community.

Sincerely,

Dustin Hoiseth
Public Policy Manager
Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce