

Agenda Report

May 4, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Office of the City Manager
SUBJECT: Update on Economic Development Efforts

RECOMMENDATION:

The following report is for information only; no City Council action is required.

BACKGROUND:

The Stay at Home Order represents a critical effort in preventing the spread of COVID-19, but it has resulted in a substantial impact on the economy. The toll on businesses and workers is significant and worrisome, with the full extent of the disruption still unknown.

Current Efforts

In order to assess local impacts and identify resources to this national economic crisis, the City's Economic Development Office has taken a series of actions over the past six weeks. Staff has completed the following:

- Assembled a business resource webpage for COVID-19 impacts. Information on the webpage includes business resilience resources, and information for both employers and employees.
- Partnered with the Pasadena Small Business Development Center to create two webinars for Pasadena businesses, both of which summarized the CARES Act and SBA relief funds. The webinars were recorded and aired on Pasadena Media as well as on YouTube. The SBDC on Foothill Boulevard continues to offer daily webinars with Q&A for small business
- Initiated ongoing weekly conference calls with the Chamber of Commerce, Business District representatives, and Visitor's Bureau to assess challenges faced by the business community while identifying emerging business issues during the crisis.
- Began publishing a COVID-19 newsletter to keep the business community apprised of city, state and local developments with regards to business issues. The newsletter has a wide reach with over 5,000 subscribers.

- Partnered with the Convention & Visitors Bureau to launch 1) the Pasadena Restaurant Takeout Directory which has featured nearly 200 restaurants and has garnered over 20,000 pageviews; and 2) created Connect Pasadena – a virtual content library to keep people active, entertained and enlightened while safe at home. At the same time, the library is a marketing opportunity for Pasadena businesses willing to share free, engaging content. Since launching on April 2nd, the Connect Pasadena virtual content directory has garnered nearly 4,000 pageviews and was featured on NPR, NBC Los Angeles, and Pasadena Now.
- Stepped up efforts to proactively reach out to individual businesses, bankers, hotels and commercial brokers to understand issues, gauge the local slowdown, discuss opportunities and speculate “new normal” business practices.
- Began a weekly blog and social media segment called “The Hustle is Real.” Each blog post highlights 3 things that business owners can do each week to keep the lights on.

Underground Surtax Rebate

On April 6th the City Council authorized a six month suspension in the collection of the Utility Underground Surtax, as well as a rebate of two years’ worth of collection to all PWP electric customers. For many business customers the size of the rebates are substantial. To date, 1,129 customers have been issued rebates ranging between \$1,000 and \$9,999, and 97 customers have received rebates in excess of \$10,000.

Workforce Support

The Economic Development Division includes the Career Services team which staffs a six city Joint Powers Authority. Officially known as the Foothill Workforce Development Board (FWDB), its work is funded by Federal and State programs and is specifically designed to support the unemployed and underemployed in the broader Pasadena area. At the earliest sign of the Covid crisis, staff applied for, and was recently awarded, a \$2 million State grant to be directed to hospitality workers impacted by the virus. These funds are designated for the expansion of regional training opportunities and supportive services to approximately 800 additional individuals dislocated by the COVID-19 virus. These funds are part of the Hire Path Assistance grant program administered through the FWDB to provide services specifically to dislocated workers. Outreach is underway to local hotel workers and those impacted by restaurant closures. This grant funding is aligned with regional workforce objectives and includes a partnership with the Hospitality Training Academy and Unite Here Local 11.

With the surge in unemployment, Career Services staff has been challenged with helping new job seekers and unemployed workers while maintaining recommended physically distancing themselves. Face-to-face meetings have been discontinued with consultations now completed via teleconference.

Layoff assistance to local businesses and impacted employees continues as Career Services staff provides guidance for unemployment insurance, upskilling and training,

financial counseling, healthcare resources and possible transitions into new careers. Business visits, group sessions and individual consultations have been temporarily replaced with webinars and conference calls. Career Services staff has worked with the State, labor unions and local partners to expand services to over 1000+ dislocated workers in response to COVID-19. Staff will continue to pursue opportunities with PCC, other LA county workforce boards, and new partners to support impacted individuals.

Business Support

As outlined above, staff worked quickly to connect businesses to Federal, State and other support programs. As a result of these activities, staff is aware of the challenges that businesses are facing during this time of crisis. Differing approaches to rent reductions or rent delays are causing tensions between many property owners and business tenants. Restaurants with limited take-out business continue to close and are skeptical of the viability of opening with fewer seats. Retailers worry about changes to consumer spending and whether pent up demand will be enough to overcome the significant revenue loss they have incurred. In addition, there is a high level of frustration as many business with limited banking relationships have struggled to secure funds from the Federal government.

Data Sharing:

Once the Stay at Home Order lifts, storefronts will not be able to simply pick up where they left off. Physical distancing will change consumer behavior and retail stores will likely need to take these new behaviors into account. A few weeks before the pandemic, Economic Development staff arranged a group purchase of consumer data. The Buxton data/software is a tool which identifies regional consumer markets and helps to highlight local consumer information for retailers and restaurants. The City, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Old Pasadena, Playhouse Village, and South Lake jointly purchased software access for a year in a collective effort to understand trends and increase new opportunities. With the downturn caused by the virus, this data resource will take on a new supporting role. Buxton has added a pandemic dataset which provides:

- Access to year-over-year comparisons of consumer traffic volumes in local stores to answer evolving business questions
- Help track when consumers settle into a new normal and how similar that new normal is to previous activity volumes
- Inform annual budgeting processes and adjustments with near-real time consumer habits
- Support local businesses with insights across industries including grocery, restaurants, retail and healthcare

Economic Development staff will continue to explore ways to help support the Pasadena business community and the local workforce. With social distancing requirements expected to be in place for months, staff will look to support the business community with resources for omni-channel retail and other best practices to keep our

shops open. Other areas for cross departmental consideration to support businesses include new street parking for consumer pick-up, modifications to business signage restrictions, increased marketing for Pasadena's business areas, collaborative shop Pasadena campaigns and other 'survive and thrive' best practices will be reviewed by City Staff in support of the local economy.

On April 28th the Governor revealed six indicators for modifying the state-wide Stay-At-Home Order along with a four stage plan to re-open California's economy, which are discussed in greater length in another agenda item being presented today. It is hoped that within a few weeks' time the state will allow workplaces deemed "Lower Risk" to begin to re-open with appropriate modifications in place. These "Lower Risk" workplaces include retailers, manufacturing and office environments where telework is not possible.

Recognizing just how important it is to the City's local economy to facilitate the operation of businesses within the Governor's framework, City staff, led by the Economic Development Division of the City Manager's Office, will be organizing new outreach and engagement with various businesses sectors. The purpose of this effort will be to identify how the City can assist with re-opening efforts through the identification and resolution of issues unique to various types of businesses. The groups will likely be organized as follows: 1) storefronts/retailers; 2) restaurants; 3) office R&D tenants and manufacturing; 4) schools/universities; 5) medical/dental offices; and 6) hotels and event venues.

Respectfully submitted,



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Prepared by:



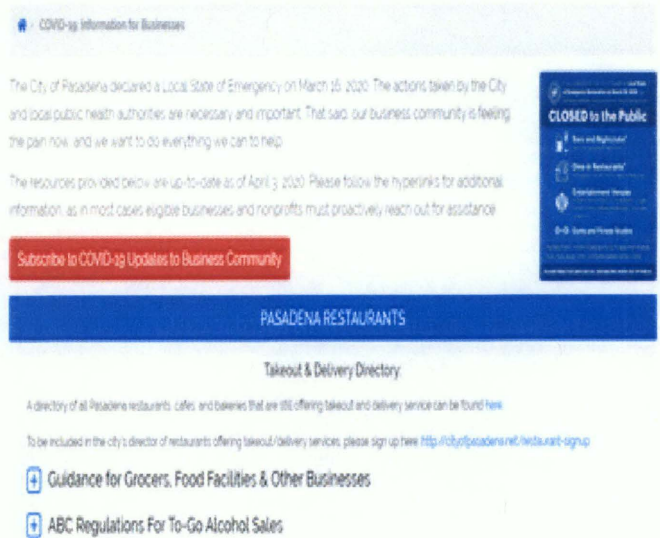
Eric Duyshart
Economic Development Manager

Update on Economic Development Efforts

COVID-19 Information for Business Webpage

The Economic Development Team assembled a COVID-19 business resource webpage that culls the latest information for businesses including business resilience resources, information for employers and employees, as well as health related guidance and orders from the Pasadena Health Department. Included on the page are helpful links to local, county, state and federal resources as well as encore recordings of the Pasadena Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Foothill Workforce Development Board (FWDB) webinars.

COVID-19: Information for Businesses



The City of Pasadena declared a Local State of Emergency on March 15, 2020. The actions taken by the City and local public health authorities are necessary and important. That said, our business community is feeling the pain now, and we want to do everything we can to help.

The resources provided below are up-to-date as of April 3, 2020. Please follow the hyperlinks for additional information, as in most cases, eligible businesses and nonprofits must proactively reach out for assistance.

[Subscribe to COVID-19 Updates to Business Community](#)

PASADENA RESTAURANTS

Takeout & Delivery Directory

A directory of all Pasadena restaurants, cafes, and bakeries that are still offering takeout and delivery service can be found [here](#).

To be included in the city's directory of restaurants offering takeout/delivery services, please sign up [here](http://cityofpasadena.net/restaurant-signup).

- [Guidance for Grocers, Food Facilities & Other Businesses](#)
- [ABC Regulations For To-Go Alcohol Sales](#)

Webinars

The Economic Development Team partnered with the SBDC and the FWDB to create webinars for Pasadena businesses, employers and employees. The SBDC webinars provided an overview of the CARES Act and SBA relief funds, and how businesses can access them. The FWDB provided how-to guidance on filing for unemployment, accessing the variety of programs available, and health insurance continuity during layoffs.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The Pasadena Small Business Development Center will host a webinar on Thursday, April 23rd at 11 am to help Pasadena businesses prepare and plan for the next round of relief funding.

This webinar will provide an overview of the application process and allow time for Q&A, so that businesses are prepared to apply when the funding goes live.

To participate, go to
<https://bit.ly/zoom91284517387>
 Dial-In Option: 1-669-900-6833
 Meeting ID: 912 845 173 87

COVID-19 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS & RESOURCES WEBINAR

The FWDB will host a Webinar on Monday, April 27th at 1 PM to help workers impacted by COVID-19.

If you have been laid off and have questions about unemployment and health insurance or financial and job services, join this webinar for helpful information and get on-the-spot answers to your questions.

To participate, go to
<https://zoom.us/j/6967524809>
 Dial-In Option: 1-669-900-6833 or 1-346-248-7799
 Meeting ID: 696 752 4809

Update on Economic Development Efforts

Business Briefing Newsletter

Prior to the declaration of the local state of emergency, the Economic Development Team began issuing a business briefing newsletter. The newsletter distribution includes over 5,000 business contacts who have either opted-in to the list or whose address was pulled in from the Business License database.

Open Rate: 67% (on average)

Social Media

The Economic Development Social Media accounts did not go dark or miss a beat once the local state of emergency was declared. The @thinkpasadena social accounts immediately pivoted towards a unity campaign to bring the community together- both residents and businesses. Social media content focused on marketing and promotion of the businesses participating in the Restaurant Takeout Directory and the Virtual Content Directory. To give the community a break from COVID news and to instill civic pride, additional content has included Pasadena-themed Jeopardy segments and #PasadenaStrong visuals of places in Pasadena.

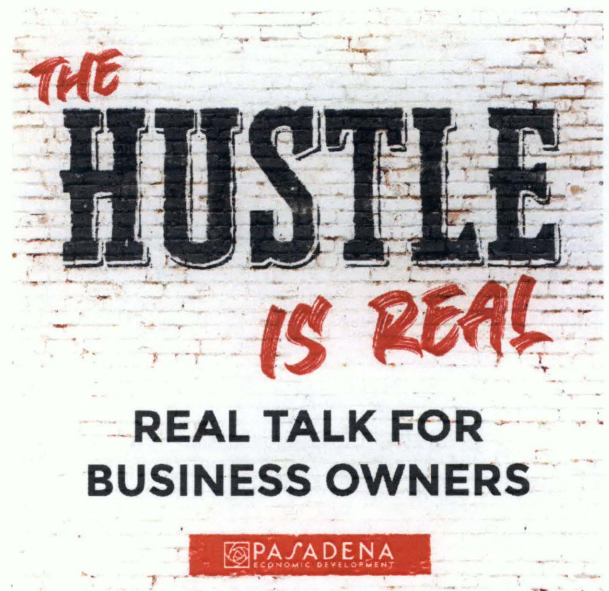
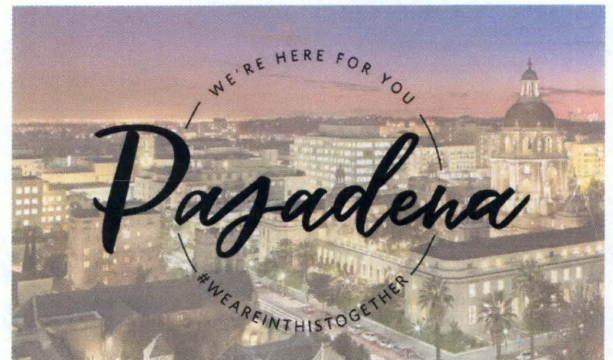
"The Hustle Is Real" Blog Posts

Each week, Economic Development publishes a blog and social media post called "The Hustle Is Real - Real Talk for Business Owners." Each post highlights 3 things that business owners can do each week to keep the lights on. The purpose of the posts are to help eliminate confusion and focus in on the main things that business owners should be paying attention to given the information overload that is happening with COVID developments.

Briefing for the Pasadena Business Community April 29, 2020



In an effort to keep you informed of developments related to COVID-19, the City of Pasadena offers the following information to the Pasadena business community. Our goal is to disseminate accurate public health information, offer recommendations to prepare for and slow the spread of the virus, and provide links to resources for additional information. Please disseminate this information with your businesses, community partners, etc.



Update on Economic Development Efforts

Restaurant Directory – Delivery and Takeout

The City of Pasadena Economic Development Department is working closely with the Convention & Visitors Bureau, with support of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, Old Pasadena, Playhouse Village and South Lake Avenue on supporting local businesses during the coronavirus crisis.

The Pasadena Restaurant Takeout & Delivery Directory launched in mid-March and has featured over 200 Pasadena restaurants that have offered or continued to offer takeout and delivery services.

- 17,000 pageviews
- 3.5 minutes, average time on page

<https://www.visitpasadena.com/pasadenabusineses>

Virtual Content Library - Connect Pasadena

Similarly, the City and Visitors Bureau collaborated on a virtual content library featuring Pasadena businesses and cultural institutions offering free, engaging and educational content.

The goal of Connect Pasadena is to support businesses with marketing exposure, offer community ideas and content to keep people active/entertained/enlightened while they practice social distancing.

- 2,722 pageviews
- 3.46 minutes, average time on page

<https://www.visitpasadena.com/virtual-activities/>



[Home](#) [About](#) [Pasadena Restaurant Directory](#) [Takeout and Delivery](#)

Pasadena Restaurant Directory – Takeout and Delivery



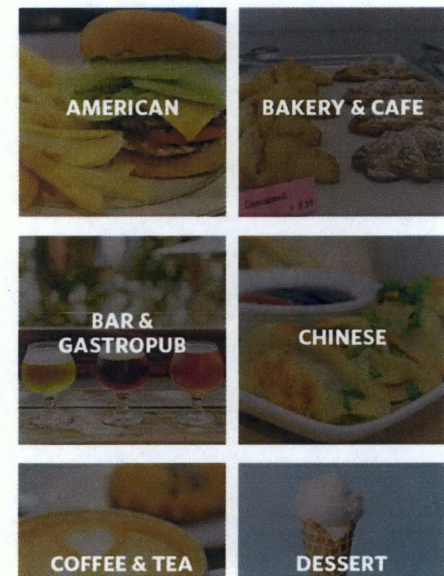
With the evolving coronavirus situation, we realize that times are difficult for the entire community. The City of Pasadena and Pasadena Convention & Visitors Bureau wanted to show our support for our Pasadena restaurants and businesses. Many of our local businesses, are offering new options in place of dine-in services. To make things easier, the City of Pasadena and Pasadena Convention & Visitors Bureau have compiled a list of locations around Pasadena that are offering to-go orders, curbside pickup, delivery, and online ordering.

In an additional effort to support local businesses, parking spaces shall be temporarily converted to 20-minute parking to facilitate delivery and curbside pick-up of food from restaurants. Individuals looking to park long-term should park in parking garages and walk to their destination.

Please join us in supporting our small and local businesses. We are in this together.

To add your business to this listing, [click here](#).

(This listing will be updated every 24 hours to reflect restaurant takeout and delivery options. All of the following information has been submitted by a restaurant representative and may change without notice.)



Connect Pasadena



With the evolving coronavirus situation, we realize that times are difficult for the entire community. The City of Pasadena and Pasadena Convention and Visitors Bureau are helping provide curated local content to keep you safe, keep you home, and keep you entertained. Please join us in supporting our small and local businesses. We are in this together.

To add your virtual content to this listing, [click here](#).



Fitness, Yoga, and Mindfulness

It's normal to feel stress during times of uncertainty. Staying active and mindfulness practices can help keep you balanced.

View our fitness, yoga and mindfulness directory by local Pasadena businesses for free classes, resources and workshops.

[Virtual Library](#)



Art and Culture

Pasadena is a thriving, forward-thinking hub of art, culture, design and technological innovation. Creative spirits have long been drawn to the city.

Stay engaged and inspired with our iconic institutions through virtual tours, in-depth interviews and enriching content.

[Virtual Library](#)



Children's Activities

Keep children curious with fun activities with KidSpace Children's Museum to spark connection, creativity, laughter, and inspiration.

Also download coloring pages featuring Pasadena icons: art pieces from Pasadena Convention & Visitors Bureau

[Virtual Library](#)