

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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

Ordinance waiving, for a two-year period, permit and renewal fees in the Public Works Code for café tables and chairs in public sidewalks and roadway areas and for display of fruits and vegetables or nonfood merchandise on public sidewalks; and waiving fees for use of parklets.

Existing Law

Section 2.1.1 establishes fees for the use of the public right-of-way, sidewalk and roadway areas for café tables and chairs and the display of merchandise.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance will waive for a two-year period the fees described above.

Background Information

The COVID-19 shutdown has had a major adverse impact on the variety of small businesses that contribute to San Francisco's economic vitality, and experts are predicting that a third of the businesses shuttered during this time will never re-open. Whatever the precise number, it will be very large. Even when restaurants, cafes, and retail establishments are allowed to operate in some capacity, the space available to conduct their business activities and the number of customers who may be served are greatly curtailed due to social distancing requirements.

Application and renewal fees present barriers to entry and unnecessary burdens to businesses seeking to avail themselves of permitted uses of public rights-of-way. The revenue to the City generated by those fees is low relative to the barriers to entry that they present to small businesses, in particular.

The urgency of the COVID-19 response demonstrates that businesses are capable of implementing sidewalk and street encroachments pursuant to clear City guidelines designed to allow for safe pedestrian and disability access to public rights-of-way.