

1 [Urging Departments to Create a Permanent Shared Spaces Program]

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3 **Resolution urging the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Planning**
4 **Department, Municipal Transportation Agency, Department of Public Works, Fire**
5 **Department, and Recreation and Parks Department to develop a proposal for a**
6 **permanent Shared Spaces Program; and affirming the Board of Supervisors’ support**
7 **for creating a permanent version of the program.**

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9 WHEREAS, The global pandemic, caused by COVID-19, has led to an economic crisis
10 of an unprecedented magnitude; and

11 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco and the State of California are
12 under a State of Emergency that has required businesses to cease certain operations for
13 various, often predictable, periods of time; and

14 WHEREAS, As of December 6, 2020, given the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in
15 San Francisco, most small business activities have been paused indefinitely, including
16 outdoor dining; and

17 WHEREAS, According to the California Employment Development Department, the
18 City’s restaurant sector, which pre-COVID employed roughly 60,000, has lost more than
19 30.5% of it’s workforce and observed dramatic losses in sales; and

20 WHEREAS, The City’s arts and entertainment and recreation sectors, which pre-
21 COVID, employed 14,000 has lost more than 30% of its workforce and observed dramatic
22 losses in sales; and

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1 WHEREAS, Although San Francisco and California do not currently report which
2 activities contribute to the spread of COVID, New York City recently released data indicating
3 that private household and social gatherings were the largest contributor to COVID spread at
4 74%; and

5 WHEREAS, The local San Francisco Health Officer has presented to the Small
6 Business Commission that while indoor dining increases the risk of COVID spread, there is no
7 clear linkage between outdoor dining and the spread of the virus; and

8 WHEREAS, The distribution of local, State, and Federal relief to small businesses has
9 been limited and uneven; and

10 WHEREAS, Aside from direct cash stimulus, the use of public outdoor space is one of
11 the few options left to save small businesses from permanent closure during the pandemic
12 and its aftermath; and

13 WHEREAS, The Shared Spaces program launched in June 2020 and allows local
14 businesses to apply to temporarily use public spaces to operate outside in a safe, socially
15 distanced way in order to promote public health, help struggling businesses survive, and
16 contribute to a vibrant street life on our commercial corridors; and

17 WHEREAS, The program is a multi-agency collaboration born out of the city's
18 Economic Recovery Task Force; and

19 WHEREAS, The Shared Spaces program has been in effect for approximately six
20 months and has generated 2,281 applications with nearly 2,000 approved or partially
21 approved to create Shared Spaces; and

22 WHEREAS, There are currently seven different types of permits that businesses can
23 apply for under the Shared Spaces Program: Sidewalk Permits, Curbside Lane Permits,
24 Street Closure Permits, Private Property Permits, Port Property Permits, Recreation and
25 Parks Department Property Permits, and Just Add Music (JAM) Permits; and

1 WHEREAS, The Shared Spaces program has provided a lifeline to small businesses,
2 activated neighborhoods, beautified commercial corridors, and created community; and

3 WHEREAS, From the Shared Spaces Impact survey of 1,600 small business owners in
4 San Francisco, 80% wanted to continue operating outdoors and 90% said these shared
5 outdoor spaces have kept them from closing permanently; and

6 WHEREAS, Shared Spaces permits were initially scheduled to expire at the end of
7 2020, but in October, permits were extended through June 30, 2021; and

8 WHEREAS, On October 8, 2020, Mayor London Breed established her support for
9 moving forward on creating a plan to make elements of the Shared Spaces program
10 permanent, and an analysis of how to make parts of the program permanent is currently
11 underway; and

12 WHEREAS, As Shared Spaces transitions from an emergency lifeline for small
13 businesses to a potentially long-term use of public space, stakeholders, City staff and
14 members of the public have grappled with a range of related policy issues, including:
15 addressing accessibility for people with disabilities, navigating who is responsible for
16 maintaining Shared Spaces in a safe and sanitary manner; expanding design standards to
17 enhance public safety, prohibit hostile design, and to ensure effective architectural integration
18 into permanent elements of the City’s streetscape and commercial corridors; ensuring that
19 commercial use of public space does not unfairly exclude any member of the public, and
20 establishing fees and other financial incentives to ensure that free, public access is prioritized;
21 implementing the Shared Spaces program in a way that is equitable and reflects the ethnic
22 and cultural diversity of eligible small businesses across San Francisco; implementing tools
23 for tracking the City’s response to public feedback and for mediating disputes between
24 competing uses of public space; and ensuring that interdepartmental coordination is
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1 conducive to an easily navigable permit system and the fair and even enforcement of
2 conditions of the Shared Spaces program; and

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4 WHEREAS, The Small Business Commission has unanimously established their
5 support for a more permanent Shared Spaces program to last at least three years via SBC
6 Resolution No. 2020-002 in July of 2020; and

7 WHEREAS, The Economic Recovery Task Force established their support for a more
8 permanent Shared Spaces program for long-term economic recovery in their October 2020
9 Report, recommending that the Program be extended three years until December 31, 2023,
10 “so as to give businesses an incentive to make their spaces attractive, and give them certainty
11 that the program will be a worthwhile investment;” and

12 WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors unanimously established their support for the
13 Shared Spaces program via Resolution No. 495-20; and

14 WHEREAS, The Board also unanimously passed an Ordinance (File No. 200786)
15 waiving permit and renewal fees in the Public Works Code for café tables and chairs in public
16 sidewalks and roadway areas, and waiving fees for use of parklets until April 2022; and

17 WHEREAS, Other metro areas with programs similar to Shared Spaces, like New York
18 City, have already established permanent programs to support small businesses; now,
19 therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors supports a permanent Shared Spaces
21 program; and, be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Office of Economic and Workforce
23 Development, Municipal Transportation Agency, Planning Department, Fire Department,
24 Department of Public Works, and Recreation and Parks Department to develop a proposal to
25 make permanent a Shared Spaces program in prior to the current expiration date of the

1 Shared Spaces program on June 30, 2021, or any extension of that term pursuant to the
2 COVID-19 emergency; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board supports streamlined and timely permitting in a
4 permanent program that are currently core tenets of the Shared Spaces program; and, be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED, That Board urges Departments to work together to prioritize
6 equitable City-wide participation in a permanent Shared Spaces program.

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