



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**CC - ACTION ITEM: Discussion and Review of Options for the Future Use of Main Street, Between Culver Boulevard and the City Boundary South of Venice Boulevard, and the Installation of Bollards; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate.**

**Meeting Date:** March 28, 2022

**Contact Person:** Andrew Maximous/Public Works Department  
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**Public Hearing:** [ ] **Action Item:** [X] **Attachments:** [ ]

**Fiscal Impact:** [X] **General Fund:** [X]

**Public Notice:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (03/23/2022)

**Department Approval:** Yanni Demitri, Public Works Director/City Engineer (03/18/2022)

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council (1) discuss and review options for the future use of Main Street, between Culver Boulevard and the city boundary south of Venice Boulevard, and the installation of bollards; and (2) provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

The City of Culver City's Local Emergency due to the outbreak and spread of the coronavirus respiratory disease ("COVID-19") pandemic has been in effect for two years since March 14, 2020. The Local Emergency was proclaimed pursuant to the authority granted by Culver City Municipal Code ("CCMC") Section 3.09.020.B.1.a, to the City Manager, in his role as the Director of Emergency Services. The Local Emergency was ratified by City Council on March 18, 2020.

On March 16, 2020, the City Manager issued the first Public Order enacting new City measures to protect members of the public and City workers from undue risk of COVID-19.

On May 11, 2020, the City Council approved the formation of the Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) to address the unique challenges of COVID-19 and spur economic survival and eventually, recovery with a focus on public health and equity. The ERTF has worked closely with the Public Works Department to address priority items including Downtown and Arts District street closures and

creation of a temporary use permit program.

On June 1, 2020, the City Manager issued the Sixteenth Supplement to the Public Order which provides the Public Works Director/City Engineer with the authority to establish procedures, standards, conditions, rules and regulations, as he may deem appropriate, to implement the processing and approval of expanded outdoor dining and retail areas in the public right-of-way, while ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and any other measures deemed necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The Order also established a specific Temporary Use Permit (TUP) process, including standards and procedures, to allow retailers and restaurateurs to utilize adjacent public rights-of-way to temporarily expand their outdoor dining and retail areas to allow for increased occupancy levels while adhering to physical distancing requirements. Public right-of-way areas that may be utilized include, but are not limited to, the adjacent sidewalk (where space is available) and public street area (where temporarily closed).

On June 9, 2020, Council received a presentation from City staff regarding options to provide expanded outdoor dining and retail in Downtown. Council approved the temporary closure of Main Street to allow adjacent businesses to expand their outdoor dining and retail areas.

In July 2020, Main Street was closed to all vehicular traffic and made available for outdoor dining.

In the spring of 2021, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reached their yellow tier, the least restrictive level in the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy. City staff started discussions regarding the re-opening of streets and businesses, including opening segments of roadways that had been temporarily closed to accommodate outdoor dining and social distancing.

On September 28, 2021, the Mobility, Traffic and Parking Subcommittee received a presentation from staff regarding options for the closure/opening of Main Street. The Subcommittee supported bringing the topic up for discussion to receive direction from the full City Council.

On November 20, 2021, the Move Culver City project was launched. The project removed one lane of traffic in each direction along Culver Boulevard and provided dedicated bus and bike lanes.

On February 17, 2022, the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee received a presentation from staff regarding options for the closure/opening of Main Street. The Committee unanimously passed a motion recommending "Main Street be closed permanently until bollards can be installed and at that time, more study and experimentation be done before the street is opened".

The current TUPs which allow for expanded outdoor dining and retailing in the public right of way expire on April 30, 2022. However, an extension to August 30, 2022 is being presented to Council on April 11, 2022.

This report presents the following options for the future use of Main Street for discussion and to obtain direction.

## **Options**

The options for the City Council's consideration, including the staff's recommendation (Option 1B), include:

**1A) Closure of Main Street to all vehicular traffic at all times**

This option preserves Main Street as a vehicle-free space that is dedicated for use by pedestrians, outdoor dining, and the weekly Farmers' Market. Outdoor dining installations would be removed by each business every Tuesday for the Farmers' Market.

Should the City Council select this option, the street would be required to open on May 1, 2022 after the existing TUPs have expired or before September 1, 2022 if City Council extends the TUPs expiration. Staff recommends opening the Main Street on May 1, 2022. However, a formal process, including environmental considerations, is necessary before any street can remain closed indefinitely; **OR**

**1B) Reopening Main Street to vehicular traffic on weekdays and closing it on weekends and Farmers' Market Tuesdays (Staff Recommendation)**

This option would close Main Street to all vehicular traffic every Friday at 5 pm and reopen it the following Monday by 6 am. In addition, the roadway would be closed during the Farmers' Market on Tuesdays from noon until 9 pm, and, optionally, during special events permitted by the City. Two travel lanes (one in each direction) would be provided at all other times.

This option would preserve curb-side outdoor dining on both sides of the street by removing all 19 on-street parking spaces (10 on the west side and 9 on the east side). All traffic barricades used to protect the outdoor dining spaces from travel lanes would require removal (or lowering) on Tuesdays for the Farmers' Market, and the outdoor dining installations would be removed by each business.

Should the City Council select this option, the street would be required to open on May 1, 2022 after the existing TUPs have expired or before September 1, 2022 if City Council extends the TUPs expiration. Staff recommends opening the Main Street on May 1, 2022.

This option would require staff to bring back an item for the City Council to formally close Main Street during the times discussed above. In preparation for that formal action considering closure of the street, staff would evaluate any environmental considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

As the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic fades and the businesses on and adjacent to Main Street begin to lift work from home policies and reopen to on-site operations, the demand for access to and from Venice Boulevard will greatly increase. In conjunction with the recent re-configuration of Culver Boulevard via the Move Culver City project, staff recommends Option 1B; **OR**

**2A) Removal of on-street parking along Main Street and allowing of outdoor dining at all times**

This option would remove on-street parking spaces and preserve curb-side outdoor dining on both sides of the street and restore two travel lanes (one in each direction) at all times.

As with Option 1B, all traffic barricades used to protect the outdoor dining spaces from traffic lanes would require temporary removal (or lowering) on Tuesdays for the Farmers' Market, and the outdoor dining installations would be temporarily removed by each business. Main Street would be fully closed on Tuesdays from noon until 9 pm for the Farmers' Market.

This option would be categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (c), Class 1 (Existing Facilities), Section 15304 (e), Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land), and Section 15305, Class 5 (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations), because this option would allow minor encroachments into the public right of way and this option involves minor alteration of existing streets that involves no expansion of use; **OR**

### **2B) Removal of on-street parking along Main Street on select days of the week**

This option would allow for outdoor dining to occur on select days of the week as described in Option 2A but allow for on-street parking on other days of the week.

Main Street would be fully closed on Tuesdays from noon until 9 pm for the Farmers' Market.

This option would be categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (c), Class 1 (Existing Facilities), Section 15304 (e), Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land), and Section 15305, Class 5 (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations), because this option involves minor alteration of existing streets that involves no expansion of use, this would be a partial, temporary removal of the on-street parking, and this would allow minor encroachments into the public right-of-way; **OR**

### **3) Reopening and restoring Main Street to all vehicular traffic with on-street parking**

This option would restore Main Street to the configuration that was in place prior to the pandemic. This option does not preserve space for outdoor dining installations within the roadway. If this option is selected, the Farmer's Market would continue to occur on Tuesdays, with full closure of Main Street.

With the anticipated changes associated with the lifting of pandemic restrictions and the recent re-configuration of Culver Boulevard, Staff recommends Option 1B.

## **Roadway Barricades**

A desire for the installation of roadway barricades was discussed by the Mobility, Traffic & Parking Subcommittee. Types of barricades include manually removable bollards, automatic hydraulic/mechanical bollards, or vehicle arresting barriers. (A vehicle arresting barrier is a traffic-rated net with cables running across the top and bottom that is designed to catch and stop vehicles without causing serious injury to the driver.) For both types of bollards, City staff would be required to raise and lower them to ensure the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic.

Under Options 1A and 1B, the roadway barricades would be installed along the City boundary at the north end of Main Street and just north of the marked pedestrian crosswalk at the north side of the Culver Boulevard intersection. It is unlikely that the City of Los Angeles would authorize the closure of Bagley Avenue south of Venice Boulevard with bollards within their jurisdiction. However, if the

City Council directs the installation of bollards at Venice Boulevard, City staff will contact the City of Los Angeles to explore the idea, and the conditions of approval they would impose, if permitted.

Under Options 1B, 2A and 2B, the middle portion of the roadway barricades could be used on full closure days (weekends and Farmers' Market Tuesdays) while the outside barricades in front of the outdoor dining installations would remain in place at all times.

Under Option 3, the roadway barricades would be used only during Farmer's Market Tuesdays.

### **Timeline**

The Option selected by the City Council can be pursued during fiscal year 2022-2023, contingent upon funding being allocated for this project during the upcoming budget process.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Direction provided to staff as part of this report does not have an immediate fiscal impact. However, staff will request funding through the upcoming FY 2022-2023 budget process to implement the City Council's preferred option.

For planning purposes, the cost can vary greatly between the types of roadway barricades. The actual cost will depend on the final design. However, for purposes of discussion, staff estimates costs are between \$160,000 to \$350,000. Additionally, there would be ongoing costs for maintenance, repairs/replacements, and staff time to reopen or keep Main Street closed, all of which have yet to be determined.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

### **MOTIONS**

That the City Council:

1. Direct the City Manager regarding one of the following options:
  - a. Option 1A Close Main Street to all vehicular traffic all times; or
  - b. (Staff Recommendation) Option 1B Reopen Main Street to all vehicular traffic on weekdays and close it on Farmers' Market Tuesdays and weekends; or
  - c. Option 2A Remove on-street parking along Main Street and allow outdoor dining at all times; or
  - d. Option 2B Remove on-street parking along Main Street on select days of the week; or
  - e. Option 3 Restore Main Street to all vehicular traffic with on-street parking and

2. Direct the City Manager regarding the following barricade options:
  - a. Manual bollards; or
  - b. Hydraulic/mechanical bollards; or
  - c. Vehicle arresting barriers; and
  
3. Provide other direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.