



City of Long Beach

Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: May 21, 2020

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager *T.M.*

From: Linda F. Tatum, Director of Development Services *LT*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **COVID-19 Relief Proposals from the Development Services, Financial Services, Fire, and Public Works Departments**

On March 4, 2020, the City of Long Beach (City) declared local health and City emergencies to strengthen the City's preparedness and ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was followed on March 16, 2020 by a "Safer at Home Order for Control of COVID-19" (Health Order) issued by the City's Health Officer to enact protective measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. These actions have saved lives, but have also created significant economic hardships to many families, businesses, and government operations. On March 17, 2020, the City Council requested the City Manager to work with all relevant departments to evaluate the feasibility of implementing an economic relief package for working families and small businesses affected by COVID-19.

On April 14, 2020, staff from the Economic Development Department presented a comprehensive COVID-19 relief package to the City Council, which subsequently approved staff's recommendations to implement many of the proposals in that package. At this meeting, on a separate agenda item, the City Council also directed the City Manager to work with appropriate City departments to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a temporary suspension of the Proactive Rental Housing Inspection Program (PHRIP) and business licensing renewal fees for residential rental property owners and commercial property owners impacted by COVID-19; and, to find additional financial relief or incentives at the local level for residential and commercial owners impacted by revenue loss due to COVID-19.

The Development Services, Financial Management, Fire, and Public Works Departments have each assessed their services, fees and approval processes to identify relevant relief for working families and small businesses. The City Attorney has determined that implementation of these measures will require City Council adoption of a Resolution for most of the benefits, and a Zoning Code amendment for two of the benefits. Accordingly, a Zoning Ordinance Amendment is proposed for Planning Items 1 and 2 below. All other remaining items will be combined in a Resolution that is tentatively scheduled for City Council consideration on June 2, 2020.

Development Services Department

Planning

1. Extend the expiration period of existing entitlement approvals by 24 months, all approvals not expired on January 1, 2020, will now expire 24 months beyond their original expiration date.

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2. Extend the entitlement expiration period for new project approvals issued on or after June 2, 2020, to 36 months.
3. Allow deferral of 50 percent of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP), or other entitlement application fees greater than \$1,000, for projects submitted from June 2, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Fifty percent (50%) of the fee would be required to be paid at the time of application, and the remaining 50 percent of the fee would be required to be paid prior to the scheduled public hearing date, or prior to a final project determination. This deferral is not applicable to environmental fees or noticing fees. This benefit provides an average deferral of approximately 90 days.

Building and Safety

1. For all plans submitted, or plans to be submitted, on or before December 31, 2020, extend the plan review period from 12 months to 18 months.
2. Extend all building permits already issued, or to be issued, through December 31, 2020, from a 24-month expiration to a 36-month expiration period.
3. For all building plan checks submitted on or after June 2, 2020 through December 31, 2020, allow projects with a valuation of less than \$100,000, to defer payment of building plan check fees until building permit issuance.
4. Establish a process at the Permit Center to allow fee payments by phone, via a secure credit card transaction process, until an online payment system can be implemented.

Code Enforcement

1. For administrative citation Warning Notices issued between March 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020, extend the compliance period from 30 days to 60 days, except for violations regarding weeds, trash, debris, and graffiti. Warning Notices for weeds, trash, debris, and graffiti will maintain a 30-day compliance period.
2. Extend the compliance period for all citations issued between March 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020, from 30 days to 60 days. Citations for weeds, trash, debris, and graffiti will maintain a 30-day compliance period.
3. Defer the due date of Proactive Rental Housing Inspection Program (PRHIP) fees for 60 days. Invoices for PRHIP fees are mailed to property owners annually in mid-October with a 45-day payment period, which requires payment by the end of November. This provision would extend the payment period by 60 days and payment of PRHIP fees would be due by January 31, 2021.

Note: Response to life/safety issues will remain a priority for Code Enforcement staff.

Fire Department

1. For all plans submitted for Fire plan check on or after January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, extend the plan review period from 12 months to 18 months.
2. Extend all Fire construction permits issued on or after January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, from a 24-month expiration to a 36-month expiration period.
3. Allow an extension of the annual inspection fee balance due dates by 60 days. Associated compliance dates cannot be changed as they involve life safety. Extension requests will be processed on a case-by-case basis at the request of the property owner.

Financial Management Department

1. Waive penalty fees for all late payments on all business license taxes, including commercial property licensees and residential property licensees from March 16, 2020 through August 31, 2020. Penalties will be assessed on bills that are late as of September 1, 2020.

Public Works Department

Public Walkway Occupancy Permits

1. For all parklet and sidewalk dining permits that expire on or after January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, applicants can defer payment of the renewal fee for 10 months from date of permit expiration.
2. For all new parklet and sidewalk dining permits submitted on or after June 2, 2020 through December 31, 2020, allow applicants to defer payment of the plan check and permitting fees for 10 months from date of application submission.

New Development Permits

1. For all new residential and commercial building plan review applications submitted on or after May 19, 2020 through December 31, 2020, projects with a valuation of less than \$100,000, can defer payments of plan check and application fees until permit issuance.
2. For all new residential and commercial building plan review applications submitted on or after June 2, 2020 through December 31, 2020, projects with a valuation of over \$100,000 are required to pay 50 percent of the plan review fee at the time of application submittal. The remaining 50 percent of the plan review fee will be due at the time of permit issuance.

Equity Lens

The City has incorporated the Equity Toolkit into this recommendation as requested by the City Council on April 21, 2020. This recommendation will provide fee relief and permit extensions to Long Beach families and businesses impacted by revenue loss due to COVID-19. Implementation of these measures will also assist with economic recovery as the “Safer at Home Order” is lifted.

If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (562) 570-6428 or linda.tatum@longbeach.gov.

LFT:VBC

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