Resolution supporting small businesses and the Shared Spaces Program through speedy review and approval timelines, technical assistance, and high-quality customer service; through equitable citywide participation in the program prioritizing disadvantaged communities and support to non-English speaking business owners; and through extension of Shared Spaces permits.

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

WHEREAS, The City of San Francisco and the State of California are under a State of Emergency requiring a shelter in place that has severely impaired small businesses; and

WHEREAS, According to the San Francisco City Controller and the Mayor’s Budget Office, nearly 14,000 businesses that typically generate monthly revenues of $3 billion a month and employ 166,000 workers are fully or partially impacted; and

WHEREAS, The City is focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, while also actively and creatively planning for economic recovery; and

WHEREAS, Social distancing requirements will continue to apply at least until there is a vaccine for COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Given the risk of increasing COVID-19 cases in San Francisco, indoor dining and other small business activities were paused indefinitely and now are going through a phased reopening and partial loosening of restrictions based on local public health indicators, leaving the use of public outdoor space as one of the few options left to save small businesses from permanent closure; and
WHEREAS, The Shared Spaces program launched on June 12, 2020, and allows some local businesses to apply to temporarily use public spaces to operate outside in a safe, socially distanced way; and

WHEREAS, The goal of the Shared Spaces program is to support neighborhoods by providing additional public space to operate local business activities; and

WHEREAS, The Shared Spaces program is intended to have low barriers for participation and no permit fees; and

WHEREAS, The Small Business Commission discussed a number of challenges and barriers to participation in the Shared Spaces program at a specially scheduled meeting on July 2, 2020; and

WHEREAS, That discussion identified more challenging than anticipated applications for street closure; higher than anticipated costs related to street closure requirements, including for additional staffing and physical barriers; administrative and cost challenges related to requesting the use of platforms and wind barriers for outside dining; higher than anticipated costs related to insurance requirements; that the Shared Spaces program did not collaborate closely with neighborhoods more vulnerable to gentrification before launch; that program guidance was not issued in languages other than English at the time of their release; that participation in the Shared Spaces program has not been observed City-wide; that due to unanticipated costs some businesses cannot afford to participate; that the Shared Spaces program did not provide a pathway to operate arts and culture activities within approved outdoor spaces; that designers, architects, artists, and activists have expressed interest in donating their services to help small businesses participate in Shared Spaces but do not know how to connect with them; and that fitness studios wishing to utilize park space must pay a fee per class, unlike all other businesses; and
WHEREAS, The Temporary Waiver of Permit Fees for Café Tables and Chairs and display Merchandise in the Public Right-of-Way, and Uses Fees for Parklets (File No. 200786) would authorize fee waivers of certain uses, conducive to the activation of Shared Spaces, to expire on August 1, 2022 unless revised or extended by ordinance; and

WHEREAS, as of September 28, 2020, 1,695 applications for Shared Spaces sidewalk and curbside permits had been submitted with 78% approved, and 46 applications for Shared Spaces street openings had been submitted with 57% approved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Mayor’s Office, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Municipal Transit Agency, Planning Department, Entertainment Commission, Arts Commission, Fire Department, Public Works, and Recreation and Parks Department to work together to ensure that equitable City-wide participation in the Shared Spaces program is prioritized in the administration of the Shared Spaces program; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges City agencies to adequately staff the Shared Spaces program to meet speedy review and approvals timelines, provide technical assistance and high quality customer service, monitoring and enforcement to ensure public health and safety; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges City agencies to ensure that all Shared Spaces program applicants receive high quality and individualized customer service assistance as they navigate the requirements of the program, with the goal of shepherding every applicant through the program as quickly and efficiently as possible; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the City to fully implement the Shared Spaces Sustainability Strategy and Shared Spaces Equity Strategy
developed by interagency staff and recommended by the Small Business Commission and small business community leaders; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the City to promote the Shared Spaces program to all small businesses across the City neighborhoods, and in languages other than English, to ensure an equitable opportunity to participate in the program; to provide specialized assistance in navigating the program requirements and application to non-English speaking monolingual business owners interested in the Shared Spaces program; and to coordinate with local neighborhood organizations to provide Shared Spaces mini-grants and loans, specifically targeted to disadvantaged communities, for the construction of parklets and/or other needed supplies and resources, and list these organizations on the Shared Spaces website under additional resources; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the City to streamline and remove barriers to Shared Spaces street closure applications through simplifying prerequisites; approving applications, without delay, once these prerequisites are met; tangibly supporting Shared Spaces street closures through providing insurance for street closures, providing tables and chairs for merchants' customers use within those street closures, providing required signage, providing metal barricades already owned by the City, and providing delineator cones and poles; and evaluating existing Shared Spaces staffing requirements for street closure entrances for long term sustainability, ensuring that the lack of availability of site staff and ambassadors not preclude a Shared Spaces street closure from moving forward; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City should connect designers, architects, planners, artists, musicians, activists, and others interested in donating their services to beautify the City, to businesses in need through sponsoring design and art contests, listing their offerings on the Shared Spaces website, displaying their work on the web and in print; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, A hearing regarding the Shared Spaces program should be held to assess the implementation, metrics, benefits and impacts of the Shared Spaces Program, to inform the timeline for the duration of the Shared Spaces Program, requesting that OEWD, SFMTA, the Planning Department, the Entertainment Commission, Small Business Commission, SFFD, Public Works and Recreation and Parks Department to report on their prioritization and administration of equity goals through Shared Spaces.
Resolution

October 06, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 10/6/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board