

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/DIRECTION – REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION
OF A CLOSURE OF PORTIONS OF MAIN STREET IN
DOWNTOWN LOUISVILLE

DATE: JANUARY 16, 2024

PRESENTED BY: SAMMA FOX, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

SUMMARY:

Staff received the attached request from Louisville's Downtown Business Association (DBA) asking City Council to consider closing the 600 through 900 blocks of Main Street to non-emergency vehicular traffic from March to November 2024. The Louisville Revitalization Commission (LRC) also submitted a letter of support for this temporary closure. Staff requests direction from Council on whether or not to pursue exploring this request.

DISCUSSION:

In 2020, the City closed Main Street to vehicular traffic, block-by-block from Walnut Street to Elm Street. The closure began on June 10, 2020, and continued through December 4, 2020. The closure was a significant component of the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions this placed on small businesses, particularly restaurants. In 2021, the City again closed Main Street to vehicular traffic from April 26 to November 1. The 2021 closure included an emergency access lane down each closed block of Main Street in order to accommodate improved emergency access. In both instances, RTD rerouted the DASH bus from Main Street to LaFarge Avenue. Main Street was not closed at all in 2022 or 2023 following the elimination of indoor dining restrictions. In those years the outdoor patios in the parking spaces were brought back giving participating restaurants additional outdoor seating and service area.

If City Council directs staff to consider a potential closure, staff will return with additional information regarding impacts to various stakeholders, such as neighboring residents and businesses, as well as safety and transportation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Any fiscal impact of the temporary closure of Main Street will be determined if City Council directs staff to pursue exploring this request.

PROGRAM/SUB-PROGRAM IMPACT:

The temporary closure of Main Street is related to the City's goal to promote a thriving business climate that produces reliable revenue to support City services.

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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff seeks City Council direction on the exploration of a temporary closure of portions of Main Street in 2024.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Downtown Business Association (DBA) request for March to November 2024 closure of the 600 through 900 blocks of Main Street.
2. The Louisville Revitalization Commission Letter of Support to the DBA's request.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:

☒	 Financial Stewardship & Asset Management	☒	 Reliable Core Services
☒	 Vibrant Economic Climate	☐	 Quality Programs & Amenities
☐	 Engaged Community	☐	 Healthy Workforce
☐	 Supportive Technology	☐	 Collaborative Regional Partner

Meredyth Muth

From: Rick Kron <rickkronco@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2023 5:06 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Eric Reed; Jenni Hlawatsch; Tom Horst; Stephanie Schlageter; Mark Oberholzer; Ashley O'Connell; Greg Reedy; Heather Bingaman; Jeff Durbin; Austin Brown; Alexis Adler; Eric Lund
Subject: DBA Request for March to November 2024 Closure of Main Street

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Downtown Business Association of Louisville ("DBA") requests that the City close the 600 through 900 blocks of Main Street to non-emergency vehicular traffic from March to November, 2024.

With the exception of the addition of the 900 Block, the DBA is requesting that the closure be similar to the closure that was done in 2021 (the second year of the prior closures), with areas on the street to be used for restaurant and business use, emergency vehicles, games and activities-particularly for children, events, and non-motorized transportation.

To help support this request, the DBA has recently conducted three surveys.

First, a survey of the restaurants on and near Main Street showed over 90% supporting the closure (with two non-respondents). Second, a survey of 190 present and former DBA members for which we had email addresses also showed over 90% support. Third, a survey specifically addressing the businesses in the 900 block, showed 100% support among those who responded. The latter survey is ongoing. Experience with the prior two closures showed extremely strong support from residents and visitors alike.

In the past, the City requested that the DBA not engage with RTD concerning bus service, reserving those discussions to itself. The DBA has no objections to the City taking this role again, hopefully with results that will satisfy residents on LaFarge Street. Signage also helped a number of the traffic issues, and we have several months to consider other solutions.

To date, the DBA has discussed the Main Street closure with the LRC, and urges the City to do so as well. Our discussions show LRC support, which may include financial support, to help prevent or alleviate blight because the closure is expected to assist with business retention and attraction, and (of course), help increase business in the urban renewal area. Members of the LRC have also expressed interest in exploring over-the-street lighting improvements in some or all of the closure area, similar to Larimer Street in Denver.

Peter Kageyama, in his book "for THE LOVE of CITIES" emphasizes the need for healthy cities to be "fun." As he put it:

"Cities are not directly responsible for being fun. Certainly they play a huge role in facilitating fun, but ultimately fun comes from people who live in the community. The city may be a squelcher of that fun, or it can figure out how to nurture, support and maybe even amplify the fun being produced by its citizens.

"How can cities help? By recognizing that the city is a venue, a stage, a playground, a canvas, a meeting place, and a market, as well as more traditional definitions."

Louisville's past experience has demonstrated that closing Main Street to vehicular traffic amplifies all of these functions in Downtown—venue, stage, playground, canvas, meeting place, and market—in other words, the closure encourages residents, visitors, kids, and even the businesses, to gather and have fun.

In conclusion, the DBA requests that the City nurture, support, and amplify the fun next year by again temporarily closing Main Street.

Thank you for your continued support of Downtown!

Sincerely,

Board of Directors,
Downtown Business Association of Louisville, Inc.

By: Rick Kron
Its: President

And as a Louisville resident since 1987.

Sent from my iPad

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January 10, 2023

Louisville City Council
749 Main Street
Louisville, CO 80027



Louisville City Council;

The Louisville Revitalization Commission (LRC) encourages City Council to consider a temporary closure of Main Street to non-emergency traffic in 2024. The Louisville Downtown Business Association (DBA) recently shared with the LRC the results of three different surveys that it conducted regarding a temporary closure of Main Street to non-emergency traffic. Each of the three surveys indicated at least a 90% support rate for a temporary closure of Main Street.

As the Urban Renewal Authority within the City of Louisville, the LRC believes that temporarily closing Main Street would help support the goals of the Highway 42 Revitalization Area Urban Renewal Plan, which include reducing, eliminating and preventing the spread of blight within the Urban Renewal Area, and stimulating growth and reinvestment within the Area boundaries, on surrounding blocks and throughout downtown.

We encourage you to consider a temporary closure of Main Street to non-emergency traffic in 2024 as this action is anticipated to have a dramatic impact on the vitality of our downtown and its businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lexi Adler", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lexi Adler
Chair
Louisville Revitalization Commission
Louisville's Urban Renewal Authority