



April 30, 2020

The Honorable Kevin Faulconer
Mayor
City of San Diego
202 C Street, 11th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

The Honorable Greg Cox
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway, 3rd Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: RECOVER Guidelines to Safely Reopen

Dear Mayor Faulconer and Chair Cox,

I am writing to you in my capacity as President and CEO of the Downtown San Diego Partnership (Downtown Partnership), a member of the San Diego BID Alliance and Responsible COVID-19 Economic Reopening (RECOVER) Advisory Group, and a participant on the San Diego Business Resiliency and Re-Opening Alliance, in response to your request for the most effective commitments businesses can incorporate to reopen safely.

We know many organizations have been deeply affected by this pandemic. As we strive to redefine what the new normal will look like, we believe it is crucial to produce sector-specific guidelines that will shape how industries plan and implement safe returns to operation. This industry-specific guidance will be necessary for businesses to get back to work quicker and safer. On Tuesday, April 21, the Downtown San Diego Partnership commissioned a survey to downtown businesses and members of the San Diego BID Alliance. Of the 236 responses, garnered across various industries, 28% said that work areas will be spaced apart to allow for social distancing and 17% said that they would institute staggered work schedules, upon returning to their office or work environment. While each industry varies in terms of scope, size, and environment, we believe the following five commitments could apply to most businesses as part of industry-specific guidelines as we work to reopen our economy:

- **Protocols:** All measures of the San Diego County's Social Distancing and Sanitation Protocol must be in place. Visible signage or announcements can remind employees of personal hygiene and workspace disinfecting procedures. Signage should be consistent and provided by the government. Employees should be monitored for any potential signs of COVID-19. Where possible, employers should screen employees and customers upon

entry. However, mandating employer-purchased thermal scanners or similar devices can cause undue burdens on businesses already in need of financial assistance and may not be applicable across all industries. Additionally, these supplies are in high demand and increasingly difficult to obtain as prices trend higher. Each industry should have health protocols in place to properly train and educate employees on sanitation and etiquette.

- **Sanitation:** Each industry should prioritize hand sanitizing, washing, or disinfecting upon entry if products are readily available. Special considerations should be given to providing hand sanitizing stations around elevators and stairwells. In addition to hand sanitizer and soap for personal hygiene, wipes and other disinfectants should be made available for employees as needed. Employees should also be trained to properly clean workstations, doors, and other common areas. In addition, enhanced janitorial services and cleaning should be considered, where feasible. Financial and procurement assistance should be made available for businesses struggling to fund and find sanitizing products and services.
- **Workstations:** Social distancing should be used to the extent possible between workstations. Otherwise, plastic, plexiglass, or similar material should be used to physically divide workspaces. Demarcations in common areas could be installed to help separate people and allow for safer traffic flow. Additionally, a flexible work from home policy can be used to allow employees to work in shifts with proper disinfecting measures in between.
- **Personal Protective Equipment:** PPE like gloves, masks, and eye protection is strongly recommended. We do have concerns around the availability of PPE and the cost associated with requiring it. Potential grant funding and procurement options should be explored to provide easier access to equipment, as PPE is in short supply.
- Due to high costs and feasibility concerns, the following should NOT be government-mandated but instead considered optional and at the discretion of employers and property managers: touchless door and elevator systems, elevator attendants, and thermal scanning.

In addition to these commitments, we also urge voluntary compliance with public health officials on contact tracing and testing. While widespread testing, contact tracing, and the eventual development of a vaccine are the ultimate solution, we believe developing industry-specific guidelines will ensure business can operate securely until those processes can be realized. As you and your staff work to define which industry groups might need a more-refined checklist to safely reopen, we encourage you to incorporate the following:

- **Commercial Real Estate:** Commercial buildings each have their own unique ecosystem of tenants, personnel, visitors, vendors, contractors, and other entities, which may not fit into a one-size-fits-all guideline for reentry. The Downtown Partnership is proud to serve on the San Diego Business Resiliency and Re-Opening Alliance, which is working with the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties and the Building Owners and Managers Association, to draft guidelines for this sector. We respectfully request that you incorporate these guidelines as they become available.

- **Construction:** As they continue to perform essential work, many in this industry already have safety protocols in place. As our housing crisis worsens, it is imperative that this industry be allowed to operate and that any safety guidelines be developed quickly so that work can continue in a safe manner.
- **Restaurants and Bars:** Social distancing will impact occupancy as these industries are allowed to phase in. While we defer to our partners at the San Diego Restaurant Association to set specific guidelines, we urge policy makers to explore creative means to offset the impacts of reduced occupancy, such as expanding sidewalk dining options and easing alcohol restrictions.
- **Retail:** Like restaurants and bars, retailers will likely need to adapt to maximum occupancy mandates. In addition to the five commitments outlined above, creative measures like curbside pickup and cashless transactions should ease public health concerns and allow this industry to reopen safely. While contactless payment is preferred, policy makers should explore the impact that premium interchange fees, which cost a percentage per credit card transaction, have on businesses.
- **Nonprofits:** Some nonprofits, like the Downtown Partnership and other special management districts, are conducting essential activities and already have protocols in place to allow for the safe continuation of work. Others, like places of worship, arts organizations, and museums, have been unable to operate and should be consulted as plans to phase in are conceptualized.
- **Events:** While the Governor does not anticipate events being held in the near future, event planners, those in the convention space, theme park operators, and professional sports teams should be kept apprised of any timelines so they can plan out operations. Additionally, anticipated allowable gathering sizes should be communicated to members of these industries who financially depend on assembling groups of people. This industry may also be able to limit the amount of human contact is had by the introduction of RFID wristbands or cell phone apps for check-in, entry, payment processing, and the exchange of items.
- **Fitness Centers and Holistic Medicine:** These impacted industries depend on shared equipment and personal contact. While considered nonessential, many of these businesses are struggling to pay rent. Members of these industries, like the Boxing Club Sport & Fitness in Downtown, have identified ways to operate safely and may be consulted when composing these guidelines.
- **Individuals:** While not an industry, clear guidelines should be set for those who frequent any of the aforementioned industries. According to our survey results, there still exists confusion as to what is required, in terms of wearing PPE and frequenting certain areas. Communications from public officials should continue to properly inform individuals of the rules when in public or visiting certain businesses.

As you work to produce guidelines that will reopen San Diego's economy, we also strongly urge you to confer with experts in the Bio-tech/Life Sciences, Tech/Innovation, Healthcare, Industrial, Real Estate, Lodging, Utilities, Consulting Services, Finance, and Education fields to better shape how these industries plan on implementing a safe means of operation.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of our city and region during this challenging time. If you have any questions, please contact me or Marshall Anderson, Vice President, Government Affairs: manderson@downtownsandiego.org, (619) 781-7117.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Brennan".

Betsy Brennan
President & CEO
Downtown San Diego Partnership

cc: Aimee Faucett, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Danny Melgoza, Chief of Staff, Office of Supervisor Greg Cox
Xiomalys Crespo, Policy and Council Affairs, Office of the Mayor
Khea Pollard, Policy Advisor, Office of Supervisor Greg Cox