



Moving Forward in the Age of COVID-19

In light of the difficulties we are having with trying to restart the City of Sandy Economic Development Committee in the age of COVID-19, our committee chair asked me to update you on the items we have completed so far in helping our community adapt to the “new normal”. Below is a list of tasks we have either completed or are currently working on to keep this process flowing:

- **Emergency Small Business Assistance grant program:** The City of Sandy’s signature action in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was a small business assistance grant made available to the businesses that were projected to be hit hardest by subsequent statewide closures in April. This program made twenty-five \$3,000 grant awards available to the following business categories:
 - **Eating and drinking establishments** (restaurants, coffee shops, bars, taverns, breweries, wineries)
 - **General retail** (hobby shops, apparel stores, archery and firearms stores, hardware stores, lawn maintenance equipment retailers, cellular phone providers, etc.)
 - **Indoor entertainment and childcare businesses** (cinemas, theaters indoor kids’ play gyms, preschools, day care centers)
 - **Personal services** (hair salons and barber shops, medical and dental offices, non-medical wellness spas, masseuses, tattoo parlors, nail salons, gyms and health clubs)

The ESBA grant program received a total of 109 applicants for the program by the grant deadline. 73 of the 109 applications received met program guidelines and were considered eligible for the program according to stated grant program guidelines. Grant recipients were chosen by a five-member review panel that included four members of our committee: three city councilors (Council President Pietzold, Councilors Exner and Lee), the CEO of a local, non-eligible business (Mr. Kurt McKnight, CEO Everfresh Fruit Co.) and the executive director of the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce (Ms. Khrys Jones). Sandy was the first small city in the Portland metropolitan area that we know of to provide local grant funding for local COVID-impacted businesses.

- **Removal of off-street parking requirements for commercial businesses and buildings in the C-1 (Downtown Commercial) zone:** The Development Services Director proposed eliminating off street parking requirements for commercial businesses in the C-1 zone earlier in the year – this was approved by Council at their April 6 meeting. This has had a huge impact on development in Sandy – virtually every development interest we have spoken to since this change has mentioned this as a factor in their decision making. I have personally spoken to the principals of two different potential future downtown developments within the last month, and both said this was a game changer and made their planned developments much more likely.

- **Relaxing restaurant requirements during COVID-19:**
 - **Allowing customer seating in off street parking spaces without City review:** With restaurants currently allowed to be partially open, we realize there will be an increased desire for outdoor seating. We are currently allowing temporary outdoor seating without any formal review process (except for seating in the right-of-way):
 - ADA clearances and maneuvering areas shall be kept clear.
 - Liquor sales outside the approved OLCC service area shall be approved by OLCC.
 - Seating in the right-of-way (i.e. sidewalk) requires formal review and approval by the City of Sandy prior to installation.
 - If seating is located in off-street parking areas, we strongly advise businesses to check with their insurance provider and to install adequate barriers to prevent accidents.
 - **Halting the regulation of temporary signage (within reason):** Since March 25, the Development Services Department has elected to not enforce temporary sign regulations to help support retail businesses and restaurants. We are not requiring temporary sign permits until the pandemic is over – these are the only items we are currently enforcing:
 - Secure temporary signs to prevent windblown objects.
 - Do not install attention attraction devices (defined as anything that physically moves or has blinking lights) that cause distractions for motorists.
 - Do not install signage in the right-of-way (i.e. sidewalk area) -- please keep all signage on private property.

- **The following resources have been added to the City of Sandy website:**
 - **Business COVID page:** <https://www.ci.sandy.or.us/BusinessRelief-COVID-19>
 - This page is a daily update for Sandy businesses with regard to all things COVID.
 - **Essential Services page:** <https://www.ci.sandy.or.us/EssentialServicesInformation>
 - A “one stop shopping” page that gives critical information for all “essential” Sandy businesses (i.e. grocers, pharmacies, banks, etc.)
 - **Clackamas County’s “Who’s Open?” database:** <https://ccgismapservice.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3bcd62a700b945d1b907a28dff29f354>
 - A map-based tool that shows critical information (i.e. address, days & hours, services provided, etc.) for every County business that is currently open (businesses must provide information to County to appear on the database)

- **Development of a childcare incentive grant:** With the recent emergence of the lack of childcare businesses as a major hindrance to business growth in Oregon generally and Clackamas County specifically, Economic Development brought a proposal for a financial incentive program for childcare businesses before City Council in March for their input. A revised proposal incorporating Council input to add this type of business to the existing Tenant Improvement Program will be on the agenda for the July 6th Council meeting. If approved, day care centers and pre schools will be eligible for 50% reimbursement (max reimbursement \$25,000) of costs associated with modifying the interior of an existing commercial space to meet requirements for

this type of business.

- **Moving forward with the GI project:** There are currently 16 food service establishments in Sandy that do not have grease interceptors as required by law. Fats, oils and greases (FOGs) are very damaging to sewer systems and need to be removed from effluent prior to entering the system. The Economic Development Department has been working with Matt Degner of Public Works on a project to incentivize local Sandy restaurants and food service providers to add grease interceptors to their businesses by offering Tenant Improvement grant money (the City can usually pay for 80% of these installations depending on cost). We have reached out to two local businesses and the Community Center to kick the program off – all three of these establishments are currently in process.

- **Jonsrud Viewpoint update:** We are still working on part two of a two-part project to refresh Sandy's primary tourism draw in the hopes of attracting more visitors to the site.
 - **Part I – curb shaving:** This was completed in 2018 through a generous grant from Clackamas County Tourism. Tour buses were no longer coming to Jonsrud because the pathway was too narrow – they would end up getting stuck trying to get out of the park. This part of the project surveyed the park, shrank some of the landscaping islands and added rolling curbs to make the internal pathway wider. It also improved an ADA ramp and incorporated Mt. Hood Territory's Heritage Trail, an app-based tour of the site.
 - **Part II – site refresh:** With another generous grant from Clackamas County Tourism, we are cleaning up the site by repairing the entry sign, repairing the wooden fencing, repairing the rock wall around the site, replacing the telescope and adding a second ADA-compatible telescope that allows color blind people to see color, replacing existing and adding new interpretive signage, and trimming back some of the trees for a wider panoramic view. This should be completed by the end of July.

- **Contracting with AntFarm Youth Services for downtown maintenance items:** this includes the following services:
 - Trimming and removing shoots from street trees downtown – this is a maintenance item that has been long overdue and is currently about 75% complete.
 - Removing weeds from pedestrian rights-of-way downtown.
 - Clearing out overgrown planter strips and replacing with weed matting and bark dust.

The following projects are “coming attractions” -- staff would like to get these items completed (and are currently on track to do so) before the end of the year:

- **Sign code update:** Chapter 15.32 (Signs) of the Sandy Municipal Code needs a major update and a bit of simplification -- our Development Services Director plans to bring a revision to this Chapter to the City Council in August.

- **Tree trimming – rest of city:** Our AntFarm Youth Services tree trimming crew will begin trimming street trees in the residential areas of the C-1 zone after they complete Proctor and

Pioneer (August), and will eventually start on street trees in the residential neighborhoods after that (October?).

- **Clearing and replanting divider islands on Hwy 26 at east Arco station & Les Schwab:** These islands have been overgrown for a long time. Public Works has plans in the works to clear both islands out completely and replant new shrubs and ground cover. (late summer)
- **Sandy Style update:** Our Development Services Director also plans to bring a proposed set of changes to the Sandy Style to Planning Commission and City Council later in the fall. This set of changes will clean up the code, but it will also relax and simplify some of the Sandy Style elements that have been sticking points for contractors and staff alike.
- **Restarting the Pleasant Street Master Plan:** Now that the Planning Division is fully staffed, staff is revisiting the Pleasant Street Master Plan and hope to get that process going again before the end of the year. The goal of the PSMP is to promote Pleasant Street as a potential place for commercial development by giving the street a unique look and feel that is slightly different than the rest of the city with new colors and design elements.

The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over – the Sandy business community can expect several additions and subtractions in the coming months in the retail and restaurant sectors. Below is a summary of the changes we have seen thus far:

Business additions:

Dutch Bros (39625 Proctor Blvd.): After years of searching Sandy for the right place to build, Dutch Bros finally chose a site and built a beauty. This gorgeous new drive-thru coffee bar on Proctor Blvd is the Grants Pass-based company's 400th location and features many Sandy Style elements in its design, including sloped roofs, heavy timbers, metal bracketing and a stone wrapped building base. The Sandy store is franchisee Abe Menschenfreund's fifth location in Clackamas County.



The Hair Lodge (38530 Pleasant St., Suite A): This suite over at Anna Zell's building on the corner of Pleasant Street and Beers Avenue was occupied by hair stylist Calene Hartley back in March.



Al Forno Ferruzza @ Paola's Pizza (38015 Hwy 26): The pizza kitchen at Paola's is now under new management. Stephen Ferruzza, owner of *Al Forno Ferruzza Pizza* in Rhododendron, cut his teeth in the ultra-competitive Italian restaurant market of New York City, bringing that old-world knowledge to the kitchen at Paola's Pizza Barn. Previous restaurant manager and owner Denise Overton still manages the bar and will remain at Paola's for the foreseeable future.

Business closures: These businesses have unfortunately closed their doors permanently since the pandemic started in March.

- **Jackson Hewitt** – This business left the Giusto Building (next door to Ria's Bar) back in May. No reason was given for the move.
- **Kidd Island Teriyaki** – This business looks to have closed its doors back in April. We have not heard from the business owner but are assuming this is likely a COVID casualty.
- **Rider Tattoo Company** – This business closed its doors over in Anna Zell's building in March – reason unknown.

Finally, to highlight one of Sandy's most resilient businesses (and a great restaurant to boot), I wanted to include a plug for **Thai Home** on Pioneer Boulevard. Amazingly, this restaurant has not skipped a beat since indoor dining was prohibited back in March.



When I visited restaurants as the pandemic was starting to see how owners were handling the shock, this business was already ramping up their capacity to serve take out and within a week had incorporated:

- Additional signage out front announcing they are open and serving take out
- Plexiglas barriers in the lobby of their restaurant to separate staff and customers
- All employees in full protective gear including face shields
- A check out system that ensures that pens, receipts, and other items are not touched more than once without being cleaned

Not only did this business make these changes on the fly, but they did so without any loss of quality or efficiency. I have now ordered a meal from Thai Home about a half dozen times since March, and my order has been accurate, extremely quick and served with a smile every time. And while they are not operating at the same level that they did when indoor dining was unregulated, take a look at the number of people waiting for their orders if you happen to pass by their restaurant at dinner time....it truly gives me hope for the future.

Thai Home is the perfect embodiment of the Pioneer spirit here in Sandy – and their hard work has clearly not gone unnoticed by the community. Thank you for continuing to support this fine establishment, and please continue to order take out from any of our Sandy restaurants as often as you are able. Your patronage is critical to the survival of these local businesses right now. Keep up the good work, everybody!

