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RECOVERY AGENDA: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES OPEN STOREFRONTS PROGRAM

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the [Open Storefronts](#) program, permitting storefront businesses to use a portion of their sidewalk to display merchandise, sell goods, complete transactions, and provide queuing areas. The program will begin October 30th and run until December 31st.

Building on the success of the [Open Restaurants](#) and [Open Streets](#) programs, Open Storefronts will provide safe spaces for small businesses to rebound in challenging economic times. This program is a part of an effort to make New York City the world’s capital for healthy outdoor living and to advance the Mayor’s recovery agenda, which is centered on public health and social justice.

“Rebuilding a fairer, better New York City means maximizing use of our outdoor space, helping businesses keep their employees, and giving New Yorkers more reasons than ever to shop local and enjoy their communities. Open Storefronts does all three,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This program builds on the successful legacy of our Open Streets and Open Restaurants programs, and I look forward to finding more ways than ever to reimagine our urban landscape.”

“As we move into the holiday season we want to make sure our small businesses – who have been hit so hard throughout this pandemic – have a new and common sense way to sell their goods and merchandise,” said **Deputy Mayor Laura Anglin**. “Building off the highly successful and popular Open Restaurants program, we’re cutting the red tape and making it easier for small businesses to utilize public space, all while keeping New Yorkers safe.”

"To recover from the economic consequences of the pandemic, we must be creative about how to use our outdoor public spaces," said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. "Open Storefronts offers small businesses and their employees economic relief, while also making our neighborhoods safer, livelier, and more convenient for consumers."

An eight-foot clear path of sidewalk from the curb must be maintained for Open Storefronts to operate. Retailers cannot use the space of adjacent businesses, and they must bring all furniture and goods indoors when closed. For existing [Open Streets: Restaurants](#) locations, the Open Storefronts program will also permit businesses to use the curb lane directly fronting their storefront to conduct business activities during operating hours. Businesses can visit www.nyc.gov/openstorefronts to review eligibility requirements and to complete a brief online application.

“Our 240,000 small businesses are the backbone of our economy and we will continue to fight for their survival,” said **Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “The Open Restaurants and Open Streets: Restaurants programs have brought great success to our restaurant industry, and we are excited to now include our small retail shops. This innovative approach will help bring back customers, revive the character of our neighborhoods, and build a stronger NYC.”

“As New York City continues to recover from COVID, Open Storefronts is the next step in helping save thousands of small businesses,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “Thanks to the Mayor’s leadership, stores will be able to use a portion of the sidewalk for sales space, which should be a real economic boost as we near the holiday season. We ask that business owners carefully follow the application and guidance on our website, so that we can guarantee that our sidewalks remain fully accessible to the public.”

"Our recovery presents an opportunity to re-imagine our city by leveraging its streetscapes and outdoor spaces to create a healthier, more vibrant place for all New Yorkers," said **James Patchett, president and CEO of New York City Economic Development Corporation**. "The new Open Storefronts program is advancing this vision while providing a boost to our small businesses, retailers, and economy."

The program is anticipated to impact 40,000 businesses and support over 450,000 employees, while providing customers with an additional option to shop in-person and locally ahead of the holiday season.

"Outdoor space has been a lifeline for bars and restaurants, and there's no reason why our city shouldn't give retailers space outdoors as well. Open Storefronts and the reopening of our hugely popular winter markets will continue our city's reimagining of how we use our street space to help businesses and New Yorkers get the most out of our streetscape," said **NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

"As we prepare for the potential of a second wave in New York City, it is critical that we create innovative options for small businesses to safely continue operating and keep our local economies moving. The Open Storefronts program will be an important outlet for New Yorkers as we move into the holiday season, and I encourage Bronx businesses to apply," said **State Senator Alessandra Biaggi**.

"When crisis comes knocking, New York City has a talent for reinvention. Over the last seven months our streets have been transformed into pedestrian havens lined by outdoor cafes. It's incredible news that the City is expanding open streets to all storefronts, as NYC storefronts face an existential crisis in this pandemic. This change is a revelation, and the question every elected official in New York City needs to be asking is: How else can we take back New York City's streets for its residents? I applaud the mayor for thinking creatively to help our small businesses stay afloat during this pandemic," said **State Senator Brad Hoylman**.

“My thanks to City Hall for this great initiative. I think this use of sidewalk space will be an important lifeline to businesses struggling to stay afloat during this pandemic. That being said, we will need to walk and chew gum at the same time as we figure out what this and other "open" programs mean for our public space going forward. We have an opportunity to transform our city

for the betterment of small businesses and our public realm if we do it with deliberation and thoughtfulness. I look forward to being a partner in those conversations,” said **State Senator Robert Jackson**.

"The Open Storefronts program gives mom-and-pop shops a chance to survive these turbulent times," said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte**. "Many MWBE businesses faced significant obstacles to receiving federal aid and a greater majority of those businesses have closed when compared to their white-owned peers. The Open Storefronts program offers a non-traditional path for survival, especially for them. The Open Restaurants program is a model of the success we can anticipate with this program. I look forward to seeing businesses in my district begin their recovery."

"I want to applaud this positive step from the Mayor, who like me and my many neighbors who run small businesses in Manhattan's East Side, recognize this is probably the most difficult moment for small retailers in their history. In combination with state and federal aid, I believe this Open Storefronts program will help revitalize the small business community and set us on a course for recovery," said **Assembly Member Harvey Epstein**.

"Small business are the lifeblood of our neighborhoods, and I applaud the mayor for the Open Storefronts initiative. We need to be creative, flexible and patient as we find new ways to help our businesses through this crisis. Rebuilding New York means protecting the jobs and businesses that sustain our communities," said **Assembly Member Mathyde Frontus**.

"Small business are the lifeblood of our communities. It is important to make sure they have the tools and resources necessary to thrive and recover from economic hardship due to the pandemic. The Open Storefronts program will provide small businesses with an innovative way of boosting sales during these difficult times in way that maintains social distancing safety protocols," said **Assembly Member Joseph R. Lentol**.

"The Bronx is a borough of small businesses. These retailers are a major part of our economy, serving the shopping needs of our communities and providing jobs for lots of people, many of whom are immigrants. The Open Storefronts program is a move in the right direction- allowing store owners to stay in business and maintain jobs, while protecting health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Open Storefronts will help our communities to recover from the economic effects of COVID-19," said **Council Member Fernando Cabrera**.

"Being creative and trying new approaches to help small businesses is the only way we are going to get through this tough period in our City finances," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "Like I have said many times before our small businesses need all the help they can get right now. By maximizing every inch of the space we can encourage shoppers to buy locally and help keep our economy moving forward. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio the Department of Small business services and the Economic Development Corporation for getting this planned and rolling it out." "Open Storefronts are good news for small retail businesses, who are struggling to make their rent and survive this pandemic. I'm glad that we are building on the momentum of our open streets and restaurants, to transform our streets for people and give a lifeline to local businesses," said **Council Member Brad Lander**.

“Partnership with the community, local stakeholders, and City agencies to connect our small businesses to resources and increase economic opportunity is vital every step of the way as we figure out how to assure stability through this pandemic,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “Our communities are worthy of open streets and storefronts, especially the neighborhoods in the outer boroughs who need it most.”

"I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and the relevant agencies for working to launch this critical program to provide our small businesses with the flexibility and options they need to survive and operate safely for the remainder of the COVID-19 pandemic. We've already seen that Open Streets programs can be successful in supporting our City's restaurants, and I look forward to this program launching and seeing City Hall work with local communities and businesses to provide outdoor spaces," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**.

“The pandemic has hit our small businesses especially hard, and we must do everything in our power to help them recover. This program will give our small-business owners extra space to interact with customers and passersby in a safe, healthy manner. New Yorkers have moved many activities outdoors in the last year to prevent the spread of this virus, and there's no reason we cannot shop outdoors as well. I look forward to seeing this program implemented and hearing feedback from entrepreneurs and residents,” said **Council Member Deborah Rose**.

“The 125th Street BID does not have many restaurants so we applaud the Mayor for recognizing the retail diversity in our commercial districts. Certainly a program to expand the use of Open Streets to support businesses would be beneficial. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Mayor in making this a successful program on 125th Street,” said **Barbara Askins, President & CEO, 125th Street Business Improvement District**.

“Thanks to the Open Storefronts Program, retailers will be able to engage customers with experiential programming outside, and make the queueing process more enjoyable and safe,” said **Matthew Bauer, President of the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District**. “We would like to thank Mayor de Blasio, SBS Commissioner Doris and the NYC BID Association for bringing this vital program for the health of the City’s shops and retail corridors to fruition.”

“The NYC BID Association applauds the administration for announcing this exciting and bold Open Storefronts plan to help save our small businesses who continue to suffer from the economic impacts of COVID-19. It is our hope that this program combined with Open Streets and Open Restaurants will create a vibrant atmosphere for street life and commercial activity during the upcoming holiday season. We look forward to working with the administration and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of this program,” said **Robert J Benfatto and Jennifer Tausig, Co-Chairs, NYC BID Association**.

"It's wonderful to see the City building on the tremendous success of its Open Restaurants program and pushing forward other creative ideas to use outdoor spaces to help New York's struggling small businesses,” said **Jonathan Bowles, Executive Director, Center for an Urban Future**. “Outdoor dining was a lifeline for restaurants, but retail stores need the same sort of jolt at a time when many of their customers are understandably wary of going indoors. This Open Storefronts plan is exactly what's needed.”

“This is great news,” said **Mark Caserta, Executive Director of the Park Slope Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District**. “Having extra space to use during the holiday season is critical for small businesses. It gives them a chance to survive during these difficult times while maintaining a safe, socially distanced shopping experience that protects their customers and staff, alike.”

"We are excited that the City created a plan to allow our small businesses to expand onto our sidewalks," said **Lauren Collins, Executive Director, Flatbush Ave. BID and Church Ave. BID**. “We were two of several organizations which suggested this idea months ago and we've been fighting for it ever since. Finally, an open market to go along with the City's open restaurants. NYC is coming back!"

“The future of our neighborhoods depends on how nimble, creative, and strategic we are in our decision-making today,” says **Jaime-Faye Bean, Executive Director of Sunnyside Shines BID**, which has hosted Plaza markets for the past three years. “New Yorkers need a safe outlet to shop and experience the upcoming holidays in a festive fashion, and our retailers and local artisans desperately need the lifeline this program provides.”

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