

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 25, 2020
MEDIA CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

RECOVERY AGENDA: MAYOR DE BLASIO EXTENDS OUTDOOR DINING SEASON YEAR-ROUND

Popular “Open Restaurants” program to be made permanent

Restaurants permitted to use heating and enclosures, and expand seating to adjacent properties with neighbors’ consent

NEW YORK—As part of New York City’s Recovery Agenda, Mayor de Blasio today announced the City’s popular [Open Restaurants](#) program, which has enrolled more than 10,300 establishments since its inception in June, will be extended year-round and made permanent. The extension also applies to [Open Streets: Restaurants](#), which currently offers restaurants expanded space on 85 car-free streets citywide on certain days.

The announcement comes one day after the mayor put forward an [agenda](#) for New York City’s long-term recovery, which focuses on keeping New Yorkers safe and healthy, while making NYC the public health capital of the nation to help bring back the city’s economy. The Open Restaurants program has already saved an estimated 90,000 jobs citywide.

“Open Restaurants was a big, bold experiment in supporting a vital industry and reimagining our public space. And it worked,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “As we begin a long-term recovery, we’re proud to extend and expand this effort to keep New York City the most vibrant city in the world. It’s time for a new tradition.”

“The Open Restaurants program has changed New York City’s streetscape over these last several months, and now this Administration will work to make that permanent,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin**. “The program has helped save tens of thousands of jobs and has been an essential lifeline to an industry that has faced enormous hardships during this pandemic. And as we extend outdoor dining into the winter months we will work closely with restaurants to ensure the correct heating systems are put in place to keep customers and themselves safe.”

“Restaurants are the lifeblood of our neighborhoods, and seeing them opening back up on our sidewalks and streets has cheered all of us,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. “Continuing Open Restaurants and Open Streets will allow our streets to pulse with energy into the cooler season, keep people working, boost everyone’s spirits, and help drive our economic recovery.”

“Because this popular program has developed into one of the few bright spots in the pandemic, we are excited that Open Restaurants, a creative new vision of public space, will be made permanent and year-round,” said **Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “As we move into the colder months, we will join our sister agencies and the City Council to come up with clear guidance – working closely with the restaurant industry, continuing to make sure that we are of course driven by safety first.”

“Outdoor dining has been a huge success, enlivening our commercial corridors and providing businesses with a much-needed opportunity to generate further revenue while social distancing,” said **Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “This program becoming a mainstay allows patrons to continue supporting their favorite neighborhood establishments and allows restaurants to safely expand their dining options.”

“New York’s recovery offers us an opportunity to try out and then expand on what works and what makes our city better, fairer and stronger. Open Restaurants and Open Streets are ongoing and successful experiments. They are bringing the kind of buzz, economic activity — and even joy — we so desperately need,” said **Department of City Planning Executive Director Anita Laremont**.

“New Yorkers look out for each other in a crisis, and it is our job to serve the public by helping implement creative solutions that keep businesses running during these unprecedented times,” said **Department of Buildings Commissioner Melanie La Rocca**. “The success of the Open Restaurants program demonstrates resiliency of our communities, and there’s no reason that should end because of the changing seasons. We look forward to being part of the solution and partnering with restaurant owners to ensure their outdoor spaces are heated safely so the city can continue to enjoy its vibrant dining culture.”

“Extending Open Restaurants year-round and making the program a permanent New York City fixture will help revitalize neighborhoods and the economy while putting the health and safety of New Yorkers first,” said **James Patchett, President and CEO of New York City Economic Development Corporation**. “The program allows people and small businesses rather than cars to use our curbside lanes. This all means more public space for New Yorkers and a healthier, more walkable city.”

“Very happy for every business, every patron and every New Yorker who has helped make outdoor dining a permanent success,” said **Ariel Palitz, Senior Executive Director of the Office of Nightlife at the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment**. “While there is much more work to do for the nightlife industry at large, the thousands of restaurants and bars moving into the street has created a new café culture that is working to preserve livelihoods and neighborhoods in the face of a pandemic in invincible New York City.”

Adjacent Properties

The City will allow restaurants to expand seating to the frontage of adjacent properties, as long as the adjacent property owners formally agree to the use of the space for a specified period of time and commit not to charge a fee for its use. The City will work with the State Liquor Authority on any requirements associated with extending alcohol service to the expanded seating in front of adjacent properties. In early October, the New

York City Department of Transportation (DOT) will issue a template agreement and provide instructions on how to file the agreements. Adjacent properties may not be used prior to the release of official instructions and formal agreements.

Heating

As cooler weather arrives, the City will allow restaurants to incorporate heating elements into their outdoor dining setups. Electrical heaters will be allowed on both sidewalk and roadway. Propane and natural gas heaters will be allowed on sidewalks only; they will remain prohibited in roadway seating. Propane will require a permit from FDNY and compliance with FDNY regulations for outdoor use, handling and secure outdoor tank storage overnight. Official guidance on what will be considered approved installation and use of heating elements will be released before the end of September, and restaurants are prohibited from installing heating elements until guidelines are released and followed.

Tents

Restaurants will also be permitted to use tent enclosures to keep diners warm. In partial tent enclosures, at least 50% of the tent's side wall surface area must remain open and electrical heaters are allowed. In full tent enclosures, the tent's side walls may be closed but occupancy limitations will be capped at 25% of capacity, and indoor dining guidelines must be followed; electrical heaters will also be allowed. Enclosed structures, such as plastic domes, will be allowed for individual parties and must have adequate ventilation to allow for air circulation.

Roadway Safety

As the program's duration will now continue through the winter months, and winter weather creates potential for inclement weather to impact road conditions, the City will engage the restaurant industry and other stakeholders to develop additional safety features to further strengthen roadway barriers. To ensure timely implementation, the City will require restaurant owners to comply with new safety features by November 15, 2020. In addition, significant snow events may necessitate the temporary removal of some barriers from the roadway.

The City will work with the City Council to make the regulatory changes necessary to make the program permanent.

"Outdoor dining has been one of the major successes of the past few months, and the Council is proud to have led the charge to make this common-sense measure permanent. We are grateful Mayor de Blasio heard our calls and is taking action on this important issue. Lots of cities throughout the world have permanent outdoor dining, and it is time to bring it to New York City. Our restaurants need a lot of help and the Council will continue doing all we can to support them," said **Speaker Corey Johnson**.

"The outdoor dining program has been an unequivocal success for both businesses and the public," said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso**. "While our City continues to take precautions to prevent further spread of the coronavirus, it is critical that we give businesses the flexibility they need to hold on through these difficult times. Outdoor dining has not only provided a lifeline for restaurants, it has demonstrated how our public streets can be transformed to create the dynamic spaces that make New York City special. I am pleased the Mayor has chosen to make the program permanent and I look forward to working with the administration on legislation to codify it into law."

"Outdoor dining has been a runaway success for the city. New Yorkers have made it clear that they want it to stay. New York City is the culinary capital of the world, and now we get to enjoy that a little bit more while helping businesses stay afloat," said **Council Member Keith Powers**.

"As someone who has been fighting on behalf of small businesses since the start of the pandemic, I am happy to hear that Mayor de Blasio will be extending the outdoor dining initiative year-round. The Open Restaurants program has revitalized local communities and created a space where people can enjoy the outdoors. This essential program has allowed small businesses to survive and recover financially," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**. "We must continue exploring innovative ways to reclaim our streets and move a step closer into a more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly City. I will continue to work alongside Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, and my colleagues at the Council to ensure we continue supporting our local small businesses."

"At a time where so many restaurants have had to close for good, I am happy to see and support different ways to ensure businesses keep their doors open," said **Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel**. "Restaurants often source local food, talent and provide a service to the surrounding community. They are important to the hyper local economy. I look forward to continuing to identify new and creative ways to strengthen our communities."

"Outdoor Restaurants and Open Streets serve as examples of thoughtful, streamlined policymaking and implementation to meet urgent needs our shared communities face. I welcome the plans to extend these measures through this year and I welcome the neighborhood and stakeholder engagement to safely and responsibly pursue making these programs permanent," said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.**

"Outdoor dining has revitalized our restaurant industry during a time in which our restaurant owners and small businesses are struggling to stay afloat amid the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**. "It has saved jobs for workers in the hospitality industry and has provided New Yorkers with an opportunity to enjoy a meal at their favorite restaurant. I commend the administration for their decision to extend outdoor dining into the winter months and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the City Council, Mayor de Blasio, and stakeholders to bring this plan into fruition."

"New Yorkers know a great idea when they see one," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "Outdoor dining has helped save tens of thousands of jobs all while keeping the City open for business, and we cannot let colder temperatures bring that to an end. It is no secret that New York City businesses still need all the help they can get in order to make ends meet and extending this program is one good way to do that. Thank you to Mayor Bill de Blasio for focusing on the recovery of our small businesses."

"Small businesses have been hit incredibly hard by this pandemic. Many businesses have lost months of revenue and are grappling with if and how they'll reopen. But a positive program during this time has been the success of New York City's Outdoor Restaurants plan. Businesses have been able to bring in critically needed revenue and follow safety measures that protect both staff and customers. I applaud today's announcement to extend the Open streets program year-round. Our small businesses have been resilient and adaptable and as government leaders,

we have a responsibility to do what we can to help our communities, including the cultural spaces and neighborhood institutions that make them cherished and unique. Businesses are facing significant burdens on multiple fronts right now -- they need support, not prohibitions. I look forward to working with the agencies on effectively implementing this critical policy," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**.

"It is critical that we take steps to ensure that every opportunity is given to small business owners during this unprecedented time. Extending outdoor eating is one way of assisting in the fight to keep restaurants open, their staff employed while meeting the needs of consumers," said **Council Member Alan Maisel**.

"The extension of the Open Restaurants program, which has seen great success on Bell Boulevard and Douglaston Plaza here in Northeast Queens, is a victory for our small businesses and our communities," said **Council Member Paul Vallone, Chair of the Committee on Economic Development**. "Cutting obstructive red tape and setting clear health and safety guidelines for our city's thousands of restaurant owners and the thousands more they employ will help ensure both the long-term health of New Yorkers and of our economy."

"I am extremely excited that the Mayor's office, DOT and SBS has extended outdoor dining year-round, will permit heating components and allow restaurants to enter into agreements with neighboring business for usage of their sidewalk space. The 25% indoor allowance did give us hope for returning to some semblance of normalcy. The outdoor dining extension will allow restaurants to keep our employees and possibly hire additional staff which will contribute to the economic empowerment within our communities.

We are working with Rockwell Group and DineOut NYC on the outdoor and indoor dining experience to ensure our staff and guests have a safe space to work and frequent. In the few months when the outdoor dining has been available, guests have expressed their gratitude in having a safe oasis to break the strain of stress that quarantine life has presented. The ability to have human socially distant and safe interactions is extremely beneficial," said **Melba Wilson, President of the NYC Hospitality Alliance, and owner of Melba's Restaurant**.

"Outdoor dining has transformed New York City's streetscape for the better and has been a critical lifeline for thousands of small businesses and jobs throughout the five boroughs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today's announcement to make outdoor dining permanent, to allow the use of heat lamps to keep customers warm outside during the cooler months, and to allow restaurants to utilize adjacent space where feasible so they can accommodate more guests and generate much needed revenue is a major step to rebuilding a stronger, more resilient and livable city. We thank and look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio's administration and the City Council on rolling out this incredibly important expansion of the popular Open Restaurants program," said **Andrew Rigie, Executive Director, and Robert Bookman, Counsel, New York City Hospitality Alliance**.

"I applaud and support the Mayor for this decision. We need to do all that we can to save our small businesses. This recovery initiative is vital for the survival of our Restaurants. The Restaurant industry is one the most important industries in NYC. Not only are restaurants one of the arteries of our economy, they are the heart and soul of our city! We can't let them die. This is going to inject life and hope to this industry while keeping New Yorkers safe," said **Quenia Abreu, President of the New York Women's Chamber of Commerce**.

"New York City streets have been more vibrant and safer thanks to the mayor's Open Restaurants program," said **Liam Blank, Policy & Communications Manager for Tri-State Transportation Campaign**. "Permanent space for outdoor dining, as well as the city's plan for more busways and bus lanes, are key elements of a comprehensive street redesign that is long overdue."

"Brooklyn Greenway Initiative enthusiastically supports the Open Streets program and has been honored to partner with local community members to manage an Open Street along the Greenway in Greenpoint, Brooklyn," said **Terri Carta, executive director of Brooklyn Greenway Initiative**. "The Open Restaurants component of the Open Streets program has been a resounding success and an important part of New York City's recovery from the pandemic."

"The New Dorp Lane District is happy to continue our partnership with the Mayor's Office and continue to bring patrons to our great restaurants. Curbside, sidewalk and street dining are a key component to business recovery while keeping restaurant goers safe. We are pleased that this program has been supported by the administration and Council Member Steven Matteo," said **Niles French, Vice President of Projects, BID Director**.

"Today's announcement has turned a moment of despair into a moment of hope. The action items outlined are an incredible step forward and our members will benefit greatly. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for his leadership and vision on this issue. I also want to thank SBS Commissioner Doris for his steadfast support and tireless efforts. Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Doris have shown strong leadership on behalf of small and minority owned businesses," said **Jeffrey Garcia, President of the NYS Latino Restaurant, Bar & Lounge Association**. "It is an incredible relief for our members that they are now able to look ahead, plan and feel energy and excitement about what the future will hold."

"A critical element of keeping our city working and vibrant, the City's Open Restaurants program is giving small businesses a fighting chance," said **Elizabeth Goldstein, President of the Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS)**. "We are pleased to see the Mayor's program extend into winter and help restaurants adapt to cold weather conditions. Leadership in the public realm is more important than ever during this difficult time."

"By closing our streets to cars and repurposing them in support of the needs of New Yorkers, we can lead our city to recovery," said **Transportation Alternatives Executive Director Danny Harris**. "We're pleased to see that the Open Restaurants program has been made permanent. Our streets are a lifeline for small businesses. We commend the Department of Transportation for making this program a success, and we are eager to see it expand."

"These important steps will extend a crucial lifeline to restaurateurs throughout the five boroughs as they continue to navigate an increasingly challenging operational environment," said Tim Laughlin, President of the Lower East Side Partnership. "I thank the administration for their

forward looking approach that provides crucial support to these small businesses which employ thousands of New Yorker and are the leading the City's economic recovery," said **Tim Laughlin, President of the Lower East Side Partnership (LESP)**.

"We are excited to see that the City is moving in the right direction and these small steps will help many businesses. This now shines a brighter light on businesses where music and live performances are not incidental and cannot benefit from outdoor seating— as they all need support now more than ever. Let's continue to move the conversation forward and work together on the revitalization of NYC. NYC nightlife and culture depend on it! Thank you for all that you've done thus far," said **Diana Mora, NYC Nightlife United and owner, Friends and Lovers**.

"We are thrilled that the City is extending and expanding this program that has helped get our bars and restaurants on the road to recovery, preserved thousands of jobs, and given us all a glimpse of the spirit and vibrancy for which NYC is famous," said **Regina Myer, president of Downtown Brooklyn Partnership**. "In the midst of this crisis, we need decisive action to keep NYC going, and I look forward to seeing additional programs implemented to similarly assist our struggling retail sector."

"Outdoor dining has been a monumental success for restaurants all around the New York City," said Randy Peers, President & CEO of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. "Mayor de Blasio's decision to safely extend outdoor dining year-round, will not only provide a vital lifeline to our struggling restaurants, but will also enhance the vibrancy of our neighborhoods well into the future," said **Randy Peers, President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce**.

"This is an important step for restaurants as we struggle to recover from an unprecedented crisis. Expanding outdoor dining and allowing us to use propane heaters will provide a lifeline as restaurants reopen and adjust to the new reality in which we find ourselves. There are no silver bullets as restaurants recover but this step will benefit an industry that is such a critical part of life in the City. Relief Opportunities for All Restaurants (ROAR) would like to thank Mayor de Blasio and all the members of his team for their work on this issue which will support the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who work in the industry," said **Relief Opportunities for All Restaurants (ROAR)**.

"BABAR is extremely grateful for the Mayor's expedited approval of permanent outdoor seating and use of street side heaters, which will put our struggling businesses in a better position to survive as the colder months approach. While our industry is still in desperate need of additional federal assistance, we appreciate the Mayor's decisive move to provide a stop gap with these measures," said **David Rosen, Co-Founder of Brooklyn Allied Bars and Restaurants (BABAR)**.

"We thank the Mayor for understanding the importance of extending outdoor dining year round. Not only will this help restaurants survive, but it also gives restaurants that have not been able to provide outdoor dining an opportunity to do so, even during the cold months. The Bronx Chamber stands ready to work with the City to assist all restaurants needing support, as eateries are a major entity in the economy of our borough," said **Lisa Sorin, President, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce**.

"Making the Open Restaurants program permanent is a common sense way to allow New Yorkers to enjoy the outdoors while staying safe. It also proves we can easily prioritize our streetscape for diners, pedestrians, and cyclists, which helps improve air quality and public health. Thank you to Commissioner Trottenberg for championing this program," said **Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters**.

"Today's announcement of the year-round extension of outdoor dining and the acceptance of permissible heating sources are a great step in the right direction for the survival of our industry. We hope to see actions like these from our leaders in the continued efforts to help keep hospitality in NYC alive," said **Raffaello Van Couten, New York Coalition of Bars Restaurants & Entertainment**.

"As a restaurant owner it's a huge relief to see the City approve this extension to outdoor dining and these new regulations regarding enclosures and heating. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, and we cannot let our numbers start heading in the wrong direction, but for now this is a lifeline. I'm also enormously relieved that I no longer have to choose between the safety of my customers and keeping my doors open and my staff employed," said **Amanda Cohen, Chef and Owner, Dirt Candy & Lekka**.

"This effort will allow restaurants to survive and keep New Yorkers employed, while also allowing our residents to have some sense of normalcy during these difficult times. New York City without its restaurants is not New York City, and we appreciate the Mayor's efforts," said **Philippe G. Massoud, CEO/Executive Chef, illi**.

###