ALL-ACCESS
BOULDER’S BUSINESS
RECOVERY AND OUTDOOR EXPANSION PROGRAMS
COVID-19 Business Impact Survey

More than 5,500 Boulder businesses with active business licenses were contacted by email on April 1, 2020 and invited to participate in a confidential 5-minute online survey (available in English and Spanish). The COVID-19 Business Impact Survey was completed between April 1 and April 10 by 1,248 businesses, including nonprofit organizations and women- and minority-owned businesses, for an overall response rate of 23%. The responses generally mirror Boulder’s distribution of businesses by size and industry, and included a wide range of businesses varying by location and other characteristics.

Nearly all businesses surveyed reported COVID-19 had an impact on their business, including more than 70% who indicated the impact was “significant.” Businesses most likely to be significantly impacted included small businesses (2 to 49 employees), sole proprietors, nonprofits and minority-owned businesses, and those in the fitness, hospitality, personal services, restaurant, and retail industries.
The City of Boulder recognizes the significant impact COVID-19 has had on the local business community. To support local business citywide while protecting customers and employees, the city has established the Boulder Business Recovery Program to allow businesses to expand their space outdoors. Eligible businesses include restaurants, retail, theaters, museums, offices, trade schools and a wide array of personal services like acupuncture or massage.

The program is available citywide. To support the program, the city has currently closed several streets, including Pearl Street between 9th and 11th streets, 10th Street from Pearl Street north to the alley south of Spruce Street and Pennsylvania Avenue between 13th Street and the alley.
## Citywide Collaboration

The Boulder Business Recovery and Outdoor Expansion Programs required complex coordination across departments. Staff from every corner of city came together to quickly support local businesses and establish a robust program that would allow businesses to expand their outdoor space to continue to serve customers and generate revenue. When issues arose, staff were able to rapidly adjust. By using the Microsoft Teams tool, staff members could communicate to both on the ground staff and those working from home, to rapidly resolve challenges.

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<tr>
<th>City Attorney’s Office</th>
<th>Community Vitality</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Planning + Development Services</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Staff from the CAO were able to create quick allowances for expanding restaurant dining into the right-of-way; the serving of alcohol in outdoor spaces and the take-out and delivery of alcohol, a key revenue generator for local businesses.</td>
<td>CV staff served as the lifeline to Boulder businesses, helping to define the program, engage stakeholders, get businesses the information they need, and coordinate the implementation of the recovery and outdoor expansion programs.</td>
<td>Transportation staff implemented city street closures, coordinating the installation of barricades, and the re-routing of local buses. Transportation also applied for and won a Can-Do Colorado Grant, which will help enhance streets, survey customers and conduct pedestrian counts this fall.</td>
<td>Staff in Planning and Development Services (P+DS) were able to rapidly develop permit requirements and forms for business owners. Staff worked quickly to review and approve applications and safely conduct on-site inspections that would allow businesses to operate.</td>
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<th>Communications + Engagement</th>
<th>Police and Parking Enforcement</th>
<th>Fire Department</th>
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<td>Communications staff quickly connected with business owners through a wide variety of channels and platforms to share information about the program, describe steps necessary to obtain a permit and provide contact information.</td>
<td>To accommodate food delivery vehicles and curb-side pickup, city staff worked with the Police Department and Parking Enforcement staff to make sure that program participants would not be ticketed for parking, dropping-off or picking-up in designated zones.</td>
<td>Staff coordinated with the fire department to develop access measures for street expansions and insure the safety of community members. As the project moves into a winter phase, staff continue to coordinate with the fire department to explore options for safely heating outdoors spaces.</td>
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The 3-Day Turnaround
Following Governor Polis’s Executive Order on May 25th, allowing restaurants to re-open to in-person dining, Boulder city staff finalized an application packet for restauranteurs with a menu of options to help them use right-of-way space to accommodate business needs.

5/25/20
Governor’s Direction
State Executive Order
Consideration of Additional Direction by City

5/26/20
Application Packet Finalized

5/27/20
Press Release & Webpage Update
Industry Webinar & FAQ

5/29/20
Application Window Open
As part of its efforts to support local businesses recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Boulder is offering a Curbside Pick-Up Zone program, which will operate through Oct. 31. The program converts some existing loading zones and other parking spaces in downtown Boulder and on University Hill for general curbside pick-up use. An online application for new curbside pick-up zones for businesses that are not in the vicinity of an existing zone is below. These curbside pick-up zones will be free of charge for 10 minutes to provide patrons and services enough time to pick-up orders, and will be clearly signed in English and Spanish.

Several blocks along Pearl Street and on University Hill are closed to provide pedestrian-friendly zones where restaurants and retailers can expand operations into the street. The infrastructure of these streets was built for this kind of flexible retrofitting. The city is purchasing barricades to create the pedestrian zones so the closures could be implemented in the future if the need arises.
CITYWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

98 OUTDOOR EXPANSIONS

23 CURBSIDE PICKUP ZONES

4 STREET CLOSURES

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
CASE STUDY: WEST PEARL STREET
WEST PEARL STREET: AFTER
SAFETY FIRST: MESSAGING

- **Face Masks Required**
  - We're wearing them for you...
  - Please do the same for us.

- **Welcome Back!**
  - We're going to extraordinary measures to protect you. Please do your part to protect us:
    - Wear a face mask
    - Keep 6 feet apart
    - Don't enter if sick

Thank you for doing your part to keep our community safe.
The city worked to revisit and revise current policies and practices in order to remove red tape that could prevent businesses from participating.

- Application fees for outdoor expansions are waived allowing all businesses of all size to participate
- Minimum parking requirements are waived everywhere
- Licensed mobile food vehicles (food trucks) are now allowed to operate in residentially zoned areas without additional approvals
- Lowered parking pricing for late-night shift workers and gave up on-street parking
- Staff went door-to-door to meet with business operators on “The Hill” to learn about their needs for outdoor expansion
Universal Access

The city’s Community Vitality and Transportation departments worked together to make sure that all outdoor expansions and street closures are accessible by all people and abilities.

- ADA ramps were installed along street closures at half-block intervals
- Restaurants were required to provide direct ADA access for any sidewalk seating
- Businesses with outdoor expansion into the street were required to provide ADA access and seating to accommodate customers of all abilities
WHAT’S NEXT: WINTER 2020-2021

Revitalizing Main Street

Boulder has been awarded a Can Do Colorado, Revitalizing Main Street grant from the Colorado Department of Transportation to continue to develop Shared Streets in the city.

The Boulder Meadows Shared Street will install improvements to 19th Street and Violet Avenue to create outdoor space for community members in the Meadows neighborhood. Boulder Meadows is a manufactured home community in North Boulder.

The funding will also help extend outdoor expansion programs on Pearl Street, Morrison Alley and Pennsylvania Avenue. The program will also include collecting qualitative data about pedestrian experiences on shared streets to help the city learn from the recent temporary changes for long-term planning and design efforts on shared streets.

Winterizing Shared Streets

Boulder is again working across city departments to coordinate options for the business recovery program to continue into the winter of 2020 and 2021 as COVID restrictions and serious health concerns continue to limit business operations into next year.

Staff are considering creative options for outdoor dining, such as the installation of temporary yurts, tents and heating elements to accommodate outdoor seating. But the reality of winter in Boulder is that the days and nights can be cold and snowy, so the city is also considering how to support businesses through other means including:

- Supporting the costs of third party delivery fees
- Citywide gift card programs
- Shop local campaigns

Into the Future

Our community and staff have learned a lot about shared spaces during this time. We're understanding more and more about how people want to gather, what they value in outdoor urban spaces and how collaboration can quickly resolve a myriad of challenges. During a difficult time, Boulder is striving to demonstrate resilience and equity in our spaces and places throughout the city.