



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN ANNOUNCES FIRST APPROVALS OF
OPEN AIR SEATING FOR RESTAURANTS UNDER THE CITY'S
SMALL BUSINESS SOCIAL DISTANCING INITIATIVE**

The approvals will help restaurants and other small businesses as they begin offering more regular forms of service under Phase 3 of New York's reopening plan

Buffalo, NY - Mayor Byron W. Brown announced the first approvals the City is granting under its Small Business Social Distancing Initiative (SBSDI). The SBSDI was launched two weeks ago to address the concerns of the small business community that is facing the challenge of being able to stay in business while crowd size limiting public health safety measures are in place. The Mayor convened a task force, chaired by Delaware District Councilmember Joel Feroletto and comprised of restauranteurs, transportation advocates, marketing experts and City Hall staff, to examine ways of allowing small businesses and restaurants to use open spaces, like privately owned parking lots, sidewalks or other city owned property, to create open air seating or retail so they can maintain proper social distancing as they reopen over the summer.

Mayor Brown said, "Our small business and restaurant community appreciated the speed with which the City set up this program and responded accordingly. My Administration will continue to work with them as they find ways to reopen their businesses and provide their regular set of services in a manner that is financially viable while also promoting the health and safety of their patrons and staff."

Since June 1st, when the online application process was opened, approximately 27 applications have been received by the City for use of open-air spaces for seating. Today's announcement marks the first three restaurants that have received their approvals and over a dozen more applications are currently being reviewed.

This past week, the Buffalo Common Council passed the required enabling legislation allowing the City to grant these approvals. The legislation was sponsored by Councilmember Feroletto, who said, "This legislation will help small businesses and their employees in the City of Buffalo. The food service industry was one of the hardest hit by the pandemic and we want to help as they reopen."

Brendan Mehaffy, Executive Director of the City's Office of Strategic Planning, said, "Today's approvals will hopefully be the first of many as the City continues to work with the small business community to mitigate the negative economic fallout we will experience as a result of the public health measures we took to protect our communities and help prevent an even greater negative economic impact which would have resulted without those steps."

Restaurants and other small businesses interested in submitting open space utilization plans to help them meet social distancing guidelines can do so by visiting the City's Reopen Buffalo website at www.buffalony.gov/reopenbuffalo where links to the application and other important resources can be found.

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