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COUNCILMEMBER CATE PROPOSES EXPANDING CITY'S STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
Amendments Include: Outdoor Dining, Digital Marketing, & Incorporating Non-Street Facing Businesses

San Diego, CA: With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, countless local businesses have had to adapt to numerous changes and regulations due to operating restrictions placed under health mandates. Many of these businesses have had to create new signage, build additional outdoor dining and retail facilities, and make changes to their front facades. The [Small Business Enhancement Program](#) (SBEP) invests in our local businesses, recognizing economic, employment, and cultural roles, and improving older neighborhoods and residential areas. One of the programs funded through the SBEP, is the [Storefront Improvement Program](#) (SIP) which provides opportunities for businesses to make permanent changes to adapt with the ongoing pandemic.

Councilmember Cate's proposed amendments include allowing for:

- Businesses to use SIP funding to fund outdoor dining or shopping facilities at their premises. Recommendation that SIP funding be permitted for facilities, such as outdoor dining decks and patios, outdoor retail facilities, and additional signage. Although current COVID-regulations allow for indoor operations now, there is still an increased demand for outdoor dining and retail facilities, and outdoor facilities have become an essential part of businesses moving forward.
- Non-street facing businesses to apply for the SIP program. Currently, only street facing businesses may apply for SIP funding. Allowing non-street facing businesses to apply for SIP funding would greatly enhance the ability for businesses to attract new customers by redesigning their storefront.
- Businesses to use SIP funding for website improvements (virtual storefront), digital marketing, and outreach. Many businesses have had to switch to take-out only, or reduced hours during the pandemic. Allowing funding to improve websites and online marketing would be beneficial to these businesses for informing prospective customers that they have reopened and to reach a wider audience.
- Recommending streamlining efforts and coordination between the SIP program and the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund. This coordination will assist businesses with upfront capital for facility improvements.

"Small businesses are an integral part of our vibrant and culturally-rich communities. I recommend that the SBEP and SIP program be fully funded this upcoming budget. Expanding the programs will provide businesses, such as [SomiSomi in Mira Mesa](#), the opportunity to grow and thrive," stated Councilmember Chris Cate, Vice Chair of the Economic Development & Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

View Councilmember Cate's memorandum to expand the Small Business Enhancement Program and Storefront Improvement Program, here: <https://bit.ly/3nAo5Ok>

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