



Legislation Text

File #: ID#20-8232, **Version:** 1

SUBJECT/RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss request for permanent closure of the 400 and 500 blocks of Cleveland Street.

SUMMARY:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the city allowed for restaurants throughout Clearwater to temporarily expand their operational footprint into the Public Right-of-Way under protocols generated by the Planning and Development department. Additionally, the City chose to close two blocks of Cleveland Street, the 400 and 500 blocks, to vehicular traffic to allow businesses to more effectively expand seating outdoors. These actions were taken based on the current state of emergency.

The initial closure was seen as a positive by merchants along Cleveland Street and resulted in the Downtown Clearwater Merchants Association DCMA generating a petition for the permanent conversion of Cleveland Street into a Pedestrian Plaza.

A permanent street closure can only be approved by the City Council through the public meeting process after a full understanding of the impacts of closure and appropriate amendments to the code. In response to the DCMA petition, city staff conducted a preliminary review to better understand the impacts of permanent closure. A summary of issues to consider is attached.

Staff has met with the DCMA and both parties agreed that a pilot program would be the best way to collect information needed to determine the impacts a permanent closure to all parties involved.

Staff recommends the development of a pilot program to be implemented outside of the COVID-19 emergency period. The program will require council consideration after it has been developed.