



CITY OF LOMITA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **City Council Approves Small Business Forgivable Loan Program, Waives Fees for Business Expansion Permits and Pushes State and County to Safely Reopen Small Businesses**

**CITY OF LOMITA, CA**, May 26, 2020 – At a special meeting called to discuss the City’s reopening efforts, the Lomita City Council approved a new small business forgivable loan program to provide much-needed financial assistance to the City’s small businesses, waived fees for permits necessary for businesses to expand into parking lots and sidewalk areas, and pushed State and County leaders to allow all local businesses to reopen safely with distancing and other safety precautions in place.

The City Council approved the program to provide forgivable loans of up to \$5,000 for Lomita businesses to help them jump-start their business activities and keep their employees working safely through the COVID-19 pandemic. The forgivable loans, made possible through the City’s Economic Development Department, are available to businesses in Lomita with 25 or fewer employees. They will be directed toward eligible small businesses that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and will provide a vital lifeline to workers and business owners as they begin to reopen.

The City has also developed an expedited permitting process to allow restaurants and retail businesses to use the outdoor spaces surrounding their businesses – parking lots, sidewalks and other public areas – to implement distancing and other measures needed to safely reopen. The City Council has waived the fees associated with the application process for businesses looking to expand outdoors under the program.

Throughout the local emergency, the City of Lomita has remained committed to providing as much flexibility and leniency as possible to residents and businesses as they cope with State and County restrictions. At its meeting, the City Council expressed its desire to make clear to our State and County officials the need for all local businesses to reopen, provided they can meet the necessary distancing and other safety guidelines, regardless of the product they sell or the service they provide. ***“Our local restaurants and small businesses are the lifeblood of our community, and if they are not allowed to reopen with the same protective measures as larger businesses, they may not be able to reopen at all. That is simply not acceptable,”*** said Mayor Jim Gazeley. ***“We appreciate Supervisor Hahn and her recognition of the importance of small businesses to communities like Lomita and we join her in her call to allow us to provide local flexibility to our business community by allowing them to safely reopen.”***

More information on the City’s forgivable loan programs, free outdoor operations permitting process, and the all of the City’s efforts to support the Lomita Community during this outbreak can be found on the City’s dedicated coronavirus webpage at [www.LomitaCoronaVirus.info](http://www.LomitaCoronaVirus.info) or by calling the City’s Economic Development Team at (310) 325-7110 ext. 122.

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### **About the City of Lomita**

Located in the South Bay area of LA County and near the Pacific Ocean, over 20,000 Lomita residents enjoy a quiet lifestyle featuring friendly neighbors, access to services and burgeoning social scene. As a family-friendly community, the City of Lomita strives to creatively and consistently provide excellent public service and employee performance, with the intent to enrich the quality of life for every citizen, worker and business owner. The mission of the City of Lomita is to provide a healthy, safe and friendly small-town community where everyone can successfully live, work and play.