



ERIN MENDENHALL  
Mayor

BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Erin Mendenhall  
Mayor of Salt Lake City

Chris Wharton  
Salt Lake City Council Chair

Ben Kolendar  
Acting Director of Economic Development

Dear Officials,

As the appointees of the Salt Lake City Business Advisory Board and at the request of the Economic Development team, we respectfully submit this letter to offer perspectives and considerations pertaining to the response of Salt Lake City to the COVID-19 virus.

The Board wholeheartedly supports your administration's focus and prioritization of the health and wellbeing of our community. With the primary priority of public health in mind, we support and appreciate the City's early planning efforts to support our business community.

Though it remains unclear the full impact COVID-19 will have on our community, there is evidence that business disruptions are already occurring. Business owners grapple with an uncertain future and we've heard consistent reports of reduced customer traffic, consumer spending, tightened cash flow, and unplanned expenses related to the COVID-19 response. We are aware of the effects COVID-19 has already had on small and local businesses in other parts of the world and the nation. As a board, we find it especially important to make decisions supporting small businesses and, as appropriate, to advocate for spending locally.

As a result, we recommend urgent consideration for both immediate and ongoing financial relief to business owners. In particular, the ability to maintain payroll is already a concern for many business owners and City support in this area is requested. It is also our recommendation that any considerations of support to local businesses, whether financial or otherwise, should prioritize those businesses that provide key community services, such as grocery, waste, security, key trades, and others.

City-authorized community protection efforts may significantly disrupt day-to-day business operations and create staffing disruptions. As decisions are made by City staff, four areas of consideration have been offered by the Board:

- In the event school closures, travel restrictions, or mass transit and traffic flow changes become necessary, we recommend presenting options and alternatives to address issues created by these events as appropriate.
- The ability to recoup costs associated with fees for permits will reduce strain on business owners. For example, event cancellations are a likely area of consideration.

- Insurance coverages under many business policies may be impacted by decisions and language used to implement governmental ordinances. In the event of such actions, accommodation for requirements of potential insurance claims are appreciated.
- Additionally, many communities have seen shortages of critical supplies to address personal needs and site sanitization. To the degree possible, efforts to manage consistent availability of critical supplies (such as hand sanitizer) are recommended.

We want to thank City staff for their partnership with the many organizations influencing the decisions made within our community. We applaud mitigation efforts to create a task force and/or designate senior-level advisors on topics such as labor disruption, economic impacts, and business continuity.

Finally, the decisions made in response to the challenges faced today present an opportunity to formalize necessary business support services and programs. We encourage the City to make permanent any applicable business support or services implemented during this time.

Thank you for your proactive efforts to bolster City capacity and ensure the vibrancy of our business community. We appreciate the extensive efforts made by City staff to manage an unprecedented situation and the spirit of collaboration to find the best solutions for residents.

As containment and mitigation efforts continue, we also offer our ongoing support and commitment to any efforts that your administration may request of us.

Signed on behalf of the Salt Lake City Advisory Board,



Curtis Thornhill – Chair