



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **East Lansing City Council Approves New Measures to Support Economic Recovery Efforts for Restaurants**

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EAST LANSING, Mich. — At last night's East Lansing City Council meeting, two agenda items were approved to further support economic recovery efforts for restaurants during the temporary occupancy limitations currently in place as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Open-Air Dining Areas for Downtown East Lansing Take-Out**

City Council approved Ordinance 1486 last night, which provides authorization to convert three areas in downtown East Lansing into Open-Air Dining Areas, where take-out food and packaged alcohol purchased from downtown restaurants can be consumed in a socially distanced outdoor setting. Three areas have been designated for potential conversion to Open-Air Dining Areas:

- Albert Avenue, from east of the Albert Avenue Garage entrance (188 Albert Avenue) to M.A.C. Avenue
- Bailey Street Parking Lot, 139 Bailey St.
- The parking area along the north side of Valley Court

City of East Lansing staff is currently working to convert the Albert Avenue location, with tentative plans to have the area open by the evening of Thursday, June 11. Based on the success of this pilot location and the needs of downtown businesses, the program may be expanded to the other two identified locations. Once established, the areas will be open to the public from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. through no later than Aug. 15. Patrons must purchase food and uncapped alcohol from restaurants that are licensed to sell beer and wine for off-premises

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## **Restaurant Support - continued**

consumption within three blocks of the Open-Air Dining Areas. Alcohol must be in original packaging and may only be un-capped and consumed within the Open-Air Dining Areas. There will be a two-hour time limit for patrons of the Open-Air Dining Areas and smoking and amplified sound will not be permitted. A special sanitation team will be on site to keep the area clean during the hours of operation thanks in part to \$20,000 in financial support from the East Lansing Downtown Development Authority.

“This is a new endeavor that we are trying out to support our downtown restaurants and we appreciate the community’s patience as we move through our opening phases. We also encourage community members to maintain social distancing and enjoy these areas in a responsible manner so that we are able to keep them open in support of our downtown businesses,” said East Lansing City Manager George Lahanas. “Our hope is that this provides an incentive for community members to come downtown this summer and support our local restaurants.”

Community members are also reminded that free, two-hour parking is being offered in all gated facilities in downtown East Lansing through the end of June. Fees will automatically be reduced by two hours when tickets are inserted at the exits of the facilities.

### **Expansion of Restaurant Service to Outdoor Areas**

City Council approved Policy Resolution 2020-4 to streamline the approval process and eliminate all fees for businesses that wish to expand their existing seating capacity into adjacent outdoor areas, including public and private property. While fees have been eliminated, restaurants must still receive City approval and have proper authorization. If alcohol is to be served in the area, the restaurant must follow all Michigan Liquor Control Commission licensing and regulations. Businesses can contact Community & Economic Development Administrator Adam Cummins at [acummin@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:acummin@cityofeastlansing.com) or (517) 319-6930 to learn more.

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