

Amy Blaisdell
Communications Director
City of Palm Springs
(760) 323-8250

City Council votes to move forward with outdoor “al fresco” dining pilot program along Palm Canyon Drive

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With the fall season just around the corner and the promise of cooler temperatures, on Thursday night the Palm Springs City Council unanimously voted to move forward with a new outdoor “al fresco” dining pilot program, which would fully close part of Palm Canyon Drive.

Current COVID-19 emergency orders prohibit restaurants from offering indoor dining, which has meant residents and visitors must dine outside.

The pilot program, which is expected to kick off within the next two weeks, would allow for a full closure of **Palm Canyon Drive between Baristo Road and Tahquitz Canyon Way.**

Restaurants who are not in the closure area still have an option to expand outdoor dining on sidewalks with temporary land use permits, according to City’s Development Services Director, Flinn Fagg, who noted that additional restaurant dining options are also being considered for parking lots.

“We recognize that our local restaurants have struggled tremendously since the spread of COVID-19 effectively changed how we all operate,” said Councilmember Dennis Woods, who serves as the City’s liaison for expanding outdoor dining. “Staff has been working diligently with stakeholders over the last several months to develop an outdoor dining pilot program that we hope will make outdoor dining safer by allowing for social distancing and help our local economy as we head into the fall season in the Coachella Valley when typically many of our part-time residents and tourists return.”

For more information about outdoor dining and applying for a temporary land use permit, visit www.palmspringsca.gov/alfresco.

