

CHICAGO'S SMALL BUSINESS COMEBACK AGENDA

The small business community has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Swift action is necessary to help small and local businesses recover. This is the time for Chicago policy makers to eliminate institutional and unnecessary bureaucracy.

PUBLIC WAY USE PERMITS

The fight to allow small businesses to display simple signs that may protrude over the public way by less than an inch without full City Council approval has been ongoing for years. It is time to officially end that process, so local businesses trying to display a sign do not face unnecessary delays in the aftermath of this pandemic. In fact, no public way use permits should require City Council approval.

Alderman should retain the ability to object to signs and other items that protrude over the public way in their ward. However, the delays associated with public way use permits being approved by City Council should be eliminated.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO CAPITAL

Businesses in economically challenged communities often struggle with access to capital and resources. Politicians at all levels of government must implement policies that provide small businesses in low-income communities with capital and resources. We look forward to working with Chicago policymakers to explore and implement initiatives which will spark economic development in struggling neighborhoods throughout the city.

PAYING FINES ONLINE OR VIA MAIL

Small business owners who are charged with ordinance violations must often hire an attorney and attend administrative hearings instead of simply paying their fine online. This costs business owners time and resources, both of which are in short supply given the pandemic. These hearings should be eliminated unless the ordinance violation impacts the health, safety and welfare of the public.

LEGALIZE "A-FRAME" SIGNS

Businesses have seen a dramatic decrease in revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City should legalize the small signs placed safely in front of businesses. This will support small businesses attempting to recover from the pandemic and create badly needed revenue for the City. It is time to move this long-standing small business initiative forward.

HOME-BASED BUSINESS

Employees who lost their jobs and struggling business owners may benefit from being able to more easily start or maintain businesses from home. Making it easier to start a business from home will help people make it through the pandemic.

This can also create new businesses in economically challenged communities. The City should eliminate unnecessary restrictions on home-based business activities while ensuring the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Small businesses create jobs and support local communities. We are calling on every policy maker in Chicago to work with the small business community during this difficult time and enact these reforms. It will help facilitate the comeback of Chicago's resilient small businesses.

