



Carl J. Florea
Office of the Mayor
City of Leavenworth

July 16, 2020

Community Members,

Our grand experiment, (driven by COVID-19, unfortunately), to close the downtown to traffic and parking over the weekends, has been largely successful. It has not been as smooth and easy as one would like to see in such a big step. I am the last one to claim that our plan had anticipated each and every ramification of such a move, or had implemented it perfectly! As I stated from the very beginning, we were basically moving and adjusting, using the “trial and error” method, open to suggestions for improvements, and tweaking it as we went. This is not the normal way we would want to roll out something this momentous. But it was the reality of what we were dealing with. Nothing was normal about this whole new endeavor. What we did know was that we had to give our guests more space to practice social distancing. Forcing crowds onto the sidewalks was just not working. So we jumped in! And the Royal Bavarians stepped up as downtown volunteers to help encourage our guests to wear masks. It was a true gift of love for our city!

First we closed Front Street from 8th to 10th. Then it became clear we needed something to draw people out to use the street, so we added tables, with a big shout out to Joe Cannata of the 59er Diner who jumped all over that and got it done within a day, with the support of the Cascade School District and their facilities director Teresa Disher . And a huge shout out to Projekt Bayern who also stepped up to let us use their tables. They had enough to allow us to put them all through that closed area, and they agreed to allow us to use them for the summer! During that first trial weekend we discovered that the amount of garbage created by all the take-out food was even greater than that created by our large festivals! Our public works crew was prepared to pick up the garbage every couple of hours, which is what they do during festivals. If it weren't for Jesse Boyd of The Bavarian Lodge, who spent all day and evening constantly picking up garbage, we would have had a mountain by Monday morning! Another adjustment to get more staff to pick up the garbage.

That worked, but it became evident that the sidewalks between Gustav's and 8th were also too crowded. Again, an adjustment was made, and more tables added to the upper end of the street as we closed all of Front from the highway to 10th. But we needed a better way to encourage mask wearing. And we needed more sanitation and disinfecting of the tables. Gradually, more and more was added or tweaked. When we made the decision to keep the pool closed for the summer, we kept our pool manager and assistant manager, Kelley Lemons and Tessa McCormick, employed by turning them into downtown ambassadors. They worked closely with the Chamber, Public Works, and the staff of the Festhalle to encourage wearing of masks and social distancing, and checking in with our downtown businesses to see what is working and what isn't. Again, this will remain a flexible work-in-progress. But what has been fun to see and experience is the level of commitment of so many to make things work – to be a part of the solution. Organizations, clubs, groups, associations, as well as individuals, all doing their part to help us open up in a caring and safe way.

And now, we are at another crossroads. The summer crowds are growing and are not limited to the weekends any more. So, it is time to dial up our commitment to safety one more notch: ***Front Street will close for vehicles on a permanent basis for the next few weeks or months.*** We have crafted a plan for deliveries in light of this closure- do not to worry if you get deliveries periodically. You will notice that Front Street will not be opening back up on Monday. We will keep that added pedestrian space available for the midweek crowds as well. While we know that this comes with its own challenges, like getting deliveries made to the core businesses, we also know that these challenges can be overcome with all the creative and committed people who will help us find solutions. Have we thought of everything? Not likely. Will tweaks and changes still need to be made? Of course! This remains a work in progress. ***We think that the closure may go through Labor Day, but only time will tell.*** We are truly all in this together. And with businesses and residents all hoping for the same thing, a safe and active gradual reopening, let's make it so together!



Carl J. Florea, Mayor
City of Leavenworth
700 Highway 2
Leavenworth, WA 98826
(509) 548-5275
cflorea@cityofleavenworth.com