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**For Immediate Release**

**Birmingham City Commission Approves Economic Relief Program**  
*Economic assistance and operational initiatives in place to assist the community.*

BIRMINGHAM, MI, May 12, 2020 – On Monday, May 11, the Birmingham City Commission approved economic assistance measures and operational initiatives to assist the community in the anticipated reopening of the State in the coming weeks. These initiatives are an initial step to mitigate the challenges residents and businesses will face in a new COVID environment.

The City worked to identify measures that will make a positive economic impact while helping the community to feel safe as people re-engage in activities such as visiting a park or heading downtown to shop or dine. Economic assistance measures approved by the City Commission include waiving a wide variety of fees, such as online payment e-check fees through June 30, 2021, field/park/shelter rental fees through September 30, 2020, and pet license fees through January 1, 2021. Parking incentives approved through September 1, 2020 include free parking in the City’s parking structures and waiving fees for monthly permit holders for the same time period. The City has allocated funds to aggressively promote and develop marketing to increase awareness and adoption of the ParkMobile parking application. These initiatives will create a completely contact-free parking environment.

In addition to economic assistance measures, several operational incentives have been approved to further aid the community, such as: installing hand sanitizer stations in high pedestrian traffic areas; initiating a daily cleaning regiment in parks and at bus shelters; and expanding online service offerings to enable City applications, permits and licenses to be submitted online with payment functions.

“Whether you work in Birmingham, own a business in Birmingham, or live in Birmingham, we are all in this together,” said Birmingham City Manager Joe Valentine. “These initiatives were designed to support an entire community struggling to recover. We are fortunate to be in a position where we can support such a comprehensive program.”

To assist restaurants struggling with the financial difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City will temporarily waive fees for items such as outdoor dining platforms, liquor license renewal fees, temporary signage permits and more. The City will delay invoices and payments for sidewalk, street, water and sewer lateral special assessments. The City Commission also approved the following measures: dedicated curbside pick-up locations for restaurants and retailers; allowing businesses with indoor group classes to utilize City parks for an outdoor venue; and temporarily modifying outdoor dining areas to allow for greater social distancing.

In conjunction with the City’s efforts to address the economic impacts of COVID-19, the Birmingham Shopping District (BSD) developed additional relief initiatives to assist downtown businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than \$400,000 has been allocated toward construction and COVID relief efforts, such as: providing small business kits (masks, gloves, etc.), Back to Birmingham shopping and restaurant promotions, promotional videos highlighting Birmingham businesses, Quarantine Cash (randomly selected loyal shoppers will receive gift certificates to use at local restaurants and retailers), and more.

Learn more about the City and BSD’s economic relief initiatives at [www.bhamgov.org/covidrelief](http://www.bhamgov.org/covidrelief).

*City of Birmingham – A Walkable Community. Visit the city’s web site at [www.bhamgov.org](http://www.bhamgov.org).*

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