

Communication from Public

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INDEPENDENT

HOSPITALITY COALITION

Via Email

October 4, 2021

Transportation Committee

Councilmember Mike Bonin, Chair

Councilmember Paul Koretz

Councilmember Joe Buscaino

Re: Sidewalk Dining And People St Program L.A. Al Fresco update ([CF:20-1074](#))

Dear Transportation Committee Chair Mike Bonin and Committee Members:

The Independent Hospitality Coalition (IHC) represents over 1,200 members comprised of local food service business operators and employees within the Los Angeles area. We were created to provide a voice and representation for our workforce and essential businesses that are engrained in the local economy of Los Angeles.

We are writing to provide comment on Item 3 ([CF: 20-1074](#)) listed on Tuesday, October 5th's meeting agenda, hearing a response to CF-1074, recommending a permitting process for existing and new L.A. Al Fresco participants to operate in the public right of way.

Using public rights of way for retail and restaurant uses have always brought life to streets all around the world. It creates excitement, it creates small business opportunity, and it creates more eyes on our city's streets. With some of the best weather of almost any major city in America, Los Angeles has been a prime candidate to flourish in what outdoor retail use can offer. Ironically, we have some of the most restrictive policies on outdoor retail uses -- making it near impossible for the independent small businessperson to gain a permit. City of LA policy has held onto the idea that a permit is more valuable than what the outcome is to our communities. We have allowed the status quo to drive these opportunities into a labyrinth of red tape we ourselves would not dare avenue. We need to ask ourselves if this is the city we wish to live in – where we put limits on the growth of Los Angeles, a city in which we believe the possibilities to be limitless? Is this the type of infrastructure we want to build for our community?

Post-pandemic, there is an opportunity to rethink our approach to policy. We can think of a more sustainable approach to create what we wish for our communities. We can build the infrastructure for where the people can walk. If the private sector is forced to become lean and mean, then the public sector can also adapt to this new way.

We urge you to consider some of the broader impacts of what this additional seating brings to our streets. 1-20 seats provide 1-2 employees. 30-40% of those employee wages go to federal

and state taxes that can be reinvested to the city through government programs. These are earnings to employees that can typically be reinvested in our local community ecosystems.

Additionally, sales tax of 10% (approximately) of every check going straight to the County of LA (roughly 1/10 of this to the city). For example, if we take 20 seats (amount of seats that may fit in a parking stall) at \$25 each seat, that's \$100 of sales tax alone for only one of four turns. Tack on a bottle of wine, and you can easily double this example.

The report mentions 1600 sidewalk dining temporary use authorizations since the launch of the program. It is safe to assume those numbers drastically differ from the amount issued in 2019? The EWDD Report Back on **Changes to Streamline City Processes Affecting The Food And Beverage Industry** issued last year **mentions 60% of BOE Revocable Permit applications were abandoned**. Presumably because the process is too difficult. 60% of missed opportunities to enrich our communities because we have held on to the idea that this complex permit process is necessary. The report does not mention the number of operators so intimidated by the process that they opted to not even apply. Furthermore, the report implies "certain policy changes that would simplify the process" will make the current revocable permit system easier. However, the Revocable Permit process has been broken for decades -- only improving on its complexity.

The Al Fresco model has shown us we can have a much easier self-certifying permitting process absent of the sky falling. Our request is to eliminate the current Revocable Permit process required for sidewalk dining and adopt a more Al Fresco type example allowing operators to self-certify compliance. Improvements to sidewalks, such as permanent railings, projections, obstructions in the public right of way can be maintained.

Thank you for hearing our voice. We look forward to building a more sustainable hospitality community together. We truly appreciate your efforts to ensure we can continue to safely serve Los Angeles residents. We hope you will continue to recognize that and support the thousands of restaurants struggling to make it through this pandemic.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at Eddie Navarrette 213 545 2620.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Navarrette', with a vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Eddie Navarrette
IHC Advocacy Committee Chair

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About IHC

The Independent Hospitality Coalition (IHC) is a coalition of California hospitality workers whose purpose is to provide representation for our growing workforce and essential businesses, creating awareness of our role in the economic fabric of society. Our mission is to have a seat at the table to help shape policy and legitimize our crucial impact on communities and cities throughout California. More information can be found here: <https://www.independenthospitality.org/>