

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the status of the City of Los Angeles Al Fresco Grant Program.

Recommendation for Council action:

APPROVE the Los Angeles Department of Transportation's (LADOT) recommended eligibility criteria and process for selecting and prioritizing locations for funding through the contractual services provided for in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget, as detailed in the March 30, 2022 LADOT report, attached to the Council File.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The LADOT reports that the FY 2022 Budget identified and appropriated \$1,614,791 in the General Fund to launch the grant program. The LADOT is not requesting additional funding or staff at this time in order to launch the program.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On April 12, 2022, your Committee considered a March 30, 2022 LADOT report relative to the status of the City of Los Angeles Al Fresco Grant Program. According to the LADOT, it has received \$1,614,791 in the FY 2022 budget to create grant opportunities for restaurants in under-invested neighborhoods to set up permanent curbside dining areas. In September 2021, the LADOT and the Bureau of Engineering presented a joint report on the recommended permitting process for a permanent outdoor dining program in the public right of way. At that time, Council directed LADOT to report back with an update on how to establish the grant program.

The L.A. Al Fresco program served as a critical lifeline to businesses since the Program's launch in May 2020. Over 2,700 restaurants benefitted from the program to date. The LADOT assisted 191 businesses to set up curbside dining areas on the street by providing safety equipment at no cost to the businesses. In a recent survey of curbside dining participants, 81 percent of businesses report they would have closed permanently without the outdoor dining provided by the L.A. Al Fresco program. Though the safety equipment that delineates the dining area is free of cost, businesses are responsible for providing tables and chairs, furnishings, and decorations that fit their operational needs and identity, which may still pose a financial burden to the business as they recover from the pandemic.

The goal of the grant program is to provide more comprehensive relief to the small businesses that have suffered negative economic impacts due to the pandemic. The Economic Workforce Development Department (EWDD) typically administers grant programs that provide funds directly to businesses. The EWDD currently manages the Comeback Checks program that distributes funding to small businesses to recover from the pandemic, and their department has dedicated contractors that assist with in-person application assistance and administration of the program. The LADOT does not have the

same expertise and resources in distributing grant funding but will use EWDD's programs as a model.

The General Fund will provide the funding and appropriation for the grant program. Due to the nature of the program and anticipated outcomes, this program is also eligible for American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds the City received. The grant program is in line with the statutory use options of these federal funds, as it responds to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts by providing assistance to small businesses and impacted industries. If the City reports this program under its ARPA eligible projects, LADOT must ensure the grant program abides by the U.S. Treasury's guidelines. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the recommendation contained in the LADOT report. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Transportation Committee

COUNCILMEMBER	VOTE
BONIN:	YES
KORETZ:	YES
BUSCAINO:	ABSENT

ARL
4/12/22

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-