



18 REVISED

Date: March 19, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Councilwoman Suely Saro, Sixth District
Councilmember Dr. Joni Ricks-Oddie, Ninth District

Subject: Feasibility for Expanding Economic Opportunities for Vending

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to direct the City Manager to work with the Economic Development Department and relevant City Departments to explore the feasibility of expanding economic opportunities, including but not limited to, sidewalk vending. The report should include an action plan the City could consider, as discussed below, and report back to the City Council by December 2024.

DISCUSSION

Long Beach City Council has approved regulations for sidewalk vendors in line with California's SB 946 and SB 972, which decriminalized sidewalk vending while allowing for local regulation to ensure public health, safety, and welfare. These new rules also support economic opportunities for low-income and immigrant communities.

Long Beach prides itself on its diversity, inclusion, and support of all races, ethnicities, cultures, faiths, and experiences, and is committed to ensuring all residents have the opportunity to thrive. In an effort to make the City of Long Beach a more desirable place to attract business and tourism, specifically as we prepare for the 2028 Olympics, the City should evaluate current policies to better facilitate opportunities:(1) for nontraditional micro-businesses including sidewalk vending, while at the same time protecting the flow of business to established brick-

and-mortar restaurants and (2) to encourage micro business concepts in neighborhoods that would benefit from increased economic opportunities and activation. Incentivizing economic activation in this manner can pave the way for business ownership and economic stability for immigrants, women, and people of color in areas outside of the more standard, high traffic tourist locations.

Aligning with the City's Economic Blueprint 2.0 and Mayor Rex Richardson's "Grow Long Beach Initiative," it is essential to ensure that economic success is expanded to and sustained in every neighborhood across the City. To foster and expand new jobs and entrepreneurial innovation, we need to institutionalize a culture of "economic opportunity" throughout the City. As we look to explore growth opportunities among new and emerging business sectors, fostering innovative and symbiotic relationships between existing brick and mortar businesses and micro-businesses like sidewalk vendors could be a potential avenue. Moreover, for commercial corridors where increased foot traffic would benefit brick and mortar businesses, utilizing micro-businesses like street food vendors to potentially diversify the existing business mix and attract new potential customers to the community can provide a mutual benefit. A program that incentivizes temporary or permanent sidewalk vending zones would encourage the use of large open and/or under-utilized lots. Additionally, activating these areas could potentially deter undesirable activities and vandalism.

As we continue to celebrate our City's diverse population and explore ways that uplift and preserve our diverse communities' as well as be mindful of the need to balance the needs of existing brick and mortar businesses and micro-businesses, we request the City Manager to prepare a feasibility study to explore opportunities to expand economic opportunities for vending.

This study should involve listening sessions with stakeholders such as residents, businesses, and vendors city wide. Additionally, it should identify potential vending zones and explore partnerships between sidewalk vendors and brick-and-mortar businesses, and report back to the City Council by December 2024.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Development Officer Jennifer Rodriguez on March 14, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the Economic Development Department and relevant City Departments to explore the feasibility of expanding economic opportunities for vending, including but not limited to, sidewalk vending, identifying opportunity vending areas, and fostering partnerships between sidewalk vendors and brick-and-mortar businesses. The requested action is anticipated to require a moderate level of staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and have a moderate impact on meeting other City Council priorities.

SUGGESTED ACTION

Approve recommendation.

Honorable Mayor and City Council
March 19, 2024
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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suely Saro'.

Suely Saro, Councilwoman, Sixth District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joni Ricks - Oddie'.

Dr. Joni Ricks-Oddie, Councilmember, Ninth District