



December 1, 2016

Councilmember Joe Buscaino  
Chair, Public Works & Gang Reduction Committee  
Councilmember Curren Price  
Chair, Economic Development Committee  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: CF 13-1493 Sidewalk Vending Policy

Dear Chairmen Buscaino & Price,

Established in 1924, the Central City Association (CCA) is Los Angeles' premier business organization, with 450 members employing over 350,000 people in the Los Angeles region. As the voice of business, we recognize the critical role that vibrant commercial corridors play in supporting business growth and retention.

CCA recognizes the time and effort your offices have spent on this incredibly complex issue. We thank you and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulatory framework that would implement a sidewalk vending program for food and merchandise sales on the city's sidewalks. We believe it is a well-crafted framework, as it recognizes the importance of brick and mortar businesses, sports and entertainment venues, and location filming.

In addition, we support your efforts to end the use of misdemeanors for sidewalk vending violations under Los Angeles Municipal Code 42.00. This is an important action for the city to take immediately, while the sidewalk vending program is being fully developed and funded.

CCA is pleased to comment on the framework and offer the following recommendations:

#### Ease of Implementation

The framework takes into account the large geography of Los Angeles and supports implementation by calling for stationary vendors in commercial and industrial areas and liability insurance indemnifying the city, property owners and business improvement districts (BID). It also limits the amount of vendors to two per city block. These are smart provisions that we support.

We believe once a formal policy is adopted, there will be instant demand from vendors to obtain permits. It will be critical to have the necessary city infrastructure ready to support this demand. For example, maps of sidewalks that are available for vending should be easily accessible so vendors and property owners are informed of where vending will and will not be permissible.

The city will also need to establish a clear application process that includes approvals from other permitting agencies like the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the city's Office of Finance. And, most importantly there needs to be a sufficient number of city personnel in place to manage and implement the program. If this program is to be successful, the city must have enough trained staff available to meet the expected demand.

**We ask that, as you contemplate the vending program, you also identify and allocate the resources that are necessary for the program to work. We also request that you consider a permit cap for the first year of program operation. A permit cap could assist in determining resource allocation and be revisited within the annual status reports.**

#### Property Owner/Business Owner Consent

We appreciate that this provision was included in the framework and want to make sure that it is respected by the city permitting agency and vendors. It is important for brick and mortar business owners and property owners to retain control over what happens on their doorsteps. CCA believes this provision must be clear, and a business or property owner must have the final determination with no fear of retribution. **We recommend that the city utilize the business registration tax mailing list and provide written notice about the sidewalk vending program and its provisions.**

#### Special Vending Districts

The language surrounding the establishment of a "special vending district" is ambiguous and gives us great concern. It can be interpreted that, in order to establish a more restrictive special vending district, a community must find that specific public health, safety and welfare concerns exist. This language is extremely subjective and opens this provision up for abuse. We believe this process to establish a special vending district must be more straight-forward and clear. **We believe strongly that the required 20% threshold be retained but that the public health, safety and welfare language be removed.**

#### Requests for Additional Information

We believe it's important, that you ask the following questions to city departments in their various reports regarding the program:

1. Will the city have the ability to confiscate unpermitted food vending materials or must County Health be present to confiscate as well?
2. Are permits issued to individuals only and is there a limit to how many permits one person can receive? Similarly, will corporations/businesses be allowed to apply for permits?
3. Under what circumstances can the city deny vending permit approval? What will the permitting criteria be composed of?
4. How long are vending permits valid for?
5. Will there be a process to withdraw property or business owner consent if the vending proves to be disruptive?
6. Will vending regulations be monitored proactively or complaint-driven?

7. Will city staff be made available before/after city business hours to monitor and implement the vending program?
8. If a Councilmember initiates a special vending district, will it require a committee hearing?

**We believe receiving answers to these questions will provide more clarity about the vending program, which will help with successful implementation.**

Thank you for consideration and leadership on this matter. We look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne Holley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Suzanne Holley  
Interim CEO

CC: Honorable Members of the City Council