

## **Communication from Public**

**Name:** Eddie Navarrette  
**Date Submitted:** 10/26/2020 01:23 PM  
**Council File No:** 20-1074-S1  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please see attached letter.



*Via Email*

October 26, 2020

Seleta Reynolds  
General Manager, Los Angeles Department of Transportation  
100 S. Main St., Room 10  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[Seleta.reynolds@lacity.org](mailto:Seleta.reynolds@lacity.org)

Re: Motion to fund and improve LA's AI Fresco Program  
CF: [20-1263](#), [20-1074](#), and [20-1074-S1](#)

Dear Seleta Reynolds and LADOT Staff:

The Independent Hospitality Coalition (IHC) represents over 450 members made up 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 Los Angeles' local economy.

We are writing in support of the motion introduced to Council on September 30, 2020 ([Council File: 20-1263](#)) by Councilmember Paul Krekorian, Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, seconded by Council President Nury Martinez, that instructs the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to (1) make any necessary changes to the AI Fresco Program to improve its efficiency, increase participants, and ensure CARES Act funds are allocated to the program; and (2) report back on methods to streamline the program for future participants.

As industry and policy leaders, IHC would like to voice our support for the City's AI Fresco program and Council's motions which provide more funding to this program. AI Fresco is currently one of the only lifelines our industry has to survive during these unprecedented times. Allowing restaurants to serve the City's residents outside also provides a stream of sales tax revenue for the City, confirming that this program's success is also a much-needed win for the City.

As independent small businesses, we don't have access to financing and funding for support like other large businesses have the ability to do, and we rely on the funding of AI Fresco, as well as the efficiency of this AI Fresco program. IHC is grateful that the motion directs CARES Act funds to this program and believe this funding is crucial to the success of AI Fresco. In addition to the motion, we would also like to support and

provide feedback to the report published by LADOT on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 ([Council File: 20-1074-S1](#)). IHC recommends the department consider the following as you make changes to the program and improve the program's reach and efficiency:

- As discussed in LADOT's 10/15/2020 report, it is critical the **City extend the Al Fresco program to 2021**. Restaurants need predictability and this is our lifeline for small businesses and city economic vitality. Extending Al Fresco provides the City an opportunity to transform from **prioritizing cars to prioritizing people** while motivating **people to get out of cars** –a goal supported by many Councilmembers, organizations and residents.
- **Update or change planning codes** that would temporarily or permanently **remove parking requirements** to provide restaurants with more space to set up outdoor dining to serve more patrons while complying with COVID-19 social distancing requirements.
- **Establish a template design guideline** with safety measures included to the satisfaction of LADOT for private operators to construct their own parklets. This will alleviate the financial burden the City has taken to fund all current parklets for restaurants and allow operators the parklet opportunity other operators have already been granted. Further, this is a model adjacent municipalities already have in place (i.e. Santa Monica).
- Request LADOT to assess the feasibility of **temporary speed limit reductions in restaurant cluster areas** i.e. Sunset Junction (CD13) and Abbot Kinney (CD 11) to qualify additional areas for parklet construction currently not allowed due to high traffic zones. This would be similar to temporary speed limit reductions in construction zones during development projects.
- Request BOE to report back on ways the City could use the current Al Fresco permitting model to **replace the City's current permanent Sidewalk Seating Application process**. Once Al Fresco expires, restaurants will need a more practical way to permit seating on the sidewalk.
- **Request \$6,000,000 in CARES Act funds**, instead of the initial \$2,000,000, to fund the Al Fresco program. There are thousands of restaurants throughout Los Angeles that rely on outdoor dining to survive and who need more support from the City to provide safe areas for diners. This money can also be used to ensure Al Fresco participants have the necessary PPE to safely serve City residents, improve the efficiency of the program, and provide hundreds of restaurants throughout the City to open and stay open through the Al Fresco program.

In addition to IHC's recommendations above, our members have worked with countless design and construction teams to build-out outdoor infrastructure to accommodate outdoor dining that meets the City's COVID-19 Health and Safety requirements. If LADOT is interested in learning more about the process and costs associated with the

build-out, IHC would be willing to provide standard designs for installation of parklets and provide as much information to assist LADOT through this process.

IHC is a great resource that would love to work with the City and LADOT to improve the Al Fresco program and help establish a sustainable and accessible program for hundreds of restaurants throughout the City. Our members have extensive experience working with neighboring cities, including Santa Monica, to help coordinate and manage their successful Al Fresco programs and would be willing to offer any further suggestions or recommendations that could continue the success of the program.

Thank you for the hard work you and your staff have invested into the City's restaurants and hospitality businesses. We truly appreciate the Department and City's efforts to ensure we have the space and funding to continue to serve the residents of Los Angeles and bring economic vitality to the City. ***Outdoor dining is truly essential to our survival*** and we hope the City 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 213-687-6963, ext. 101.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Navarrette', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddie Navarrette  
IHC Advocacy Committee Chair  
[eddie@fedesignandconsulting.com](mailto:eddie@fedesignandconsulting.com)

### **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/>