


**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

**DATE:** February 11, 2026

**TO:** Trade, Travel and Tourism Committee  
Los Angeles City Council

**FROM:** Doane Liu, Executive Director   
Los Angeles City Tourism Department

**SUBJECT: DINE LA PARTICIPATION FEE, COUNCIL FILE NO. 25-1178**

**BACKGROUND**

Dine LA Restaurant Week is a bi-annual event that highlights restaurants in Los Angeles and provides the opportunity for locals and visitors to enjoy a selection of lunch and dinner menus from some of LA's best restaurants. It is a vital economic lifeline for the city's restaurant community – it increases restaurant sales and visibility, supports local jobs and enhances Los Angeles's reputation as a top dining destination. Dine LA was started in 2008 by the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board (LA Tourism). The program has grown significantly in size and scope since its inception. In Summer 2025, Dine LA featured 480 restaurants across 90 neighborhoods and 36 global cuisines, including 91 brand-new participants.

LA Tourism is a private, non-profit 501(c)(6) business association that the City of LA contracts with to market and promote LA as a premier destination for leisure travel, meetings and conventions. It is the City's official tourism marketing organization and reports directly to the City Tourism Department (CTD) who manages and oversees their contract.

**FUNDING MODEL**

Dine LA is a co-op advertising fund which pools participation fees to support marketing and promotion, giving restaurants – especially smaller restaurants – exposure they could not afford individually. For example, while a single billboard can cost over \$30k, the co-op provides access to high-impact placements throughout LA. Every participating restaurant gets the same amount of promotion for the flat rate participation fee.

Participation fees are key to the program's visibility and success. Without them, Dine LA cannot fund the essential promotional support required to attract diners. These fees directly finance critical elements, including:

- Paid media campaigns (digital, print, social) that provide visibility in local and drive markets
- Public relations outreach that generates extensive media coverage across top influential publications
- Website development and campaign administration

Dine LA does not profit from these fees and actually operates at a net operating loss of more than a quarter million dollars annually. All participation fees are reinvested directly into marketing, media and operations.

Dine LA is open to restaurants in the LA region and is not restricted to the City of LA. Opening up the program beyond the City borders allows the co-op fund to pool more money, strengthening marketing reach and elevating LA's profile as a premier culinary destination. It benefits City of LA restaurants to have a robust program that gets funding from all over the region. Additionally, consumers do not perceive the LA region as broken up into cities so it makes sense for the program to include restaurants from the entire region.

LA Tourism's overall budget consists of multiple funding sources, including dedicated funds from the City's Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). However, the Dine LA program is not funded by the TOT.

### **COMPETITIVE STANDING AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Dine LA's co-op funding model is a best practice for top restaurant weeks across the country including New York and Chicago. In comparison, Dine LA's fees are lower than most major destinations' restaurant weeks. Additionally, the program has not increased participation fees in many years. They have maintained a 20% pandemic-era discount since 2020 while continuing to absorb rising operating costs. This has been crucial in light of the continued challenges that face restaurant owners, operators and workers, and has helped enable smaller restaurants to take part.

The program remains highly accessible, offering value and affordability compared to other major markets, ensuring that participation is feasible across the entire spectrum of restaurants, from small to large.

### **OUTREACH & GROWTH**

Any restaurant in the LA region can participate in the program as long as they register, pay the fee and curate a menu. The restaurant does not have to be a member of LA Tourism to participate. The program has grown tremendously and there were 91 new participants in Summer 2025.

Dine LA has grown its impact by intentionally expanding outreach through partnerships with business improvement districts (BIDs), Chambers of Commerce, and grassroots organizations such as Regarding Her, a national nonprofit supporting women and non-binary food and beverage entrepreneurs. LA Tourism has hosted in-person and online webinars to encourage first time restaurant participation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

CTD and LA Tourism understand the Council's priority to support the diverse dining offerings in the City and desire to increase participation from smaller, family-owned restaurants. LA Tourism is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to supporting the

local restaurant community, which is reflected in their investment in the Dine LA program that operates at a net loss. Eliminating registration fees for the Dine LA program would not accomplish the goal of increasing participation and instead make the program financially unsustainable and jeopardize an important demand driver for restaurants. It would fundamentally undermine the value proposition for participating restaurants. We have identified two ways we could help achieve the goal of promoting smaller, lesser-known neighborhood restaurants and support this Council priority.

1) LA Tourism can leverage Dine LA's year-round newsletter with more than 50k subscribers. They can highlight these smaller restaurants to a highly engaged local audience in the newsletter and then amplify on their social media channels. The newsletter would be published twice a month, each featuring a single district. Up to four restaurants can be included per newsletter on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Council Districts would conduct outreach using an online sign-up form created by Dine LA. This approach ensures a fair and equitable opportunity for participation. This idea leverages Dine LA's strongest asset – its promotional reach through email marketing – but also allows for marketing throughout the year in a less crowded environment than the month Dine LA takes place.

2) If a permanent web-based listing is desired, the City Tourism Department can create a list and map of smaller, lesser-known restaurants on our website as part of our [Neighborhood Gems](#) program. CTD launched this program to support neighborhood and cultural tourism, showcase attractions that are owned by the City of LA and encourage people to seek attractions in lesser known neighborhoods. CTD could create a Food Edition of this program and highlight restaurants that the City would like to be highlighted.