



July 31, 2022

Office of Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell
Council District 13
1722 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026

To Councilmember O'Farrell,

The East Hollywood Neighborhood Council is formally requesting your leadership in removing the remaining barriers to street vending in the City of Los Angeles. Street vendors play a vital role in the community fabric of Los Angeles, providing quality food and goods to members of our community, often at affordable prices that are becoming increasingly difficult to find elsewhere. Further, many street vendors have been serving their communities for years and have formed longstanding relationships and community trust.

The Governing Board of the East Hollywood Neighborhood Council recognizes the continued collective advocacy, organizing, and research efforts of Inclusive Action for the City, Community Power Collective, East LA Community Corporation, LA Street Vendor Campaign, and the broader street vendor community to daylight the barriers that continue to exist in legalizing street vending. In recognition and support of their efforts, the EHNC is seeking to work with your office to remove these barriers.

["Unfinished Business: How Food Regulations Starve Sidewalk Vendors of Opportunity and What Can Be Done to Finish the Legalization of Street Food"](#) (UCLA Community Economic Development Clinic, Public Counsel, 2021) identifies the following necessary changes to City of Los Angeles rules and regulations to support and fully integrate sidewalk food vending into the small business economy:

- **Maintain a moratorium on citations for unpermitted vending until permit barriers are removed.** It is fundamentally unjust to cite a vendor for failing to acquire a permit that is impossible to obtain. Until these barriers are effectively removed and sidewalk food vendors are given a viable path to acquiring code-compliant equipment and DPH permits, the city should prohibit the issuance of a citation for vending without a permit.
- **Reorient StreetsLA enforcement practices away from punitive law enforcement and toward business facilitation.** StreetsLA should shift its role

to prioritize culturally-fluent education to vendors regarding the process for obtaining relevant permits, rather than employing a punitive response. StreetsLA should also prioritize the education of brick-and-mortar business owners, the general public, and its own enforcement officers about the rights of vendors to legally operate their businesses.

- **Replace “no vending zones” with special vending districts.** The city currently encourages restaurant sidewalk dining in some of the exact same locations that sidewalk vending is banned, disproportionately harming low-income and immigrant vendors. The city should end the disparate treatment of sidewalk vending and eliminate “no-vending zones.” The city should instead implement special vending districts in areas with unique safety and accessibility concerns, giving vendors an opportunity to self-organize and work with area residents and businesses to develop specialized regulations that ensure safety and economic inclusion.
- **Enhance small business support.** The City should investigate opportunities to better support sidewalk food vendors with ongoing business operations, training and resources relating to banking, building credit, implementing cashless and other alternate payment methods, and fundamental business skills.

We thank you for your support of recent related City Council direction, and call on you to double down on your commitment to supporting the street vending community by taking the following steps through Council action:

1. Advancing the necessary changes in rules and regulations outlined above
2. Calling on the appropriate City Departments to work directly with the street vendor community to identify and remove any additional barriers, especially as it relates to the sale of merchandise and goods

Sincerely,

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

Andoni Elias-Nava
East Hollywood Neighborhood Council President