

# UNITEHERE! *Local 11*

## MAIN OFFICE

464 S. Lucas Ave., Suite 201  
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November 26, 2014

Honorable City Council  
c/o: Office of the City Clerk  
Attn: Richard Williams and Felipe Chavez  
200 North Spring Street, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012.

## **RE: Support for proposed Sidewalk Vending Program, Los Angeles City Council File #13-1493**

Honorable City Council,

I am writing on behalf of the UNITE HERE Local 11 to express strong support for the City of Los Angeles' consideration of a citywide program that would legalize and establish a sidewalk vending system in Los Angeles. As a member of the LA Street Vendor Campaign – a coalition of 55 community-based, policy, labor, and academic organizations - we stand with the tens of thousands of food and merchandise vendors who make our streets active and vibrant every day.

Studies estimate Los Angeles is home to over 10,000 street vendors, many of whom provide fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy culturally-relevant food in neighborhoods with limited healthy food options. These street vendors operate outside of the formal economy, because the City currently lacks a process to recognize and support these entrepreneurs. By developing a permit process with a humane enforcement strategy, the City could give these small business owners an opportunity to make an honest living, support public health and activate the vibrancy and safety of our streets.

Over the course of 2 years, the LA Street Vendor Campaign interviewed hundreds of street vendors and community advocates to develop out a citywide proposal that has strong support from vendors, small businesses, and community stakeholders. This proposal solves some of the key challenges currently facing the City, and brings forth innovative solutions that pull from the best practices of other large metropolitan cities, while being sensitive to the unique fabric of Los Angeles. The Campaign has included the following key recommendations to the Los Angeles City Council and City Departments in support of a permit system that works for everyone:

- **A Citywide permit process for food and non-food vending.** This process should consider the cost of the program for the City and the financial capacity of low-income vendors. In order for vendors across the City to have a real incentive to participate, any policy that is put forth must apply to all areas of the city. A cap on the number of permits issued or limiting vending to certain districts will impede the effectiveness of this necessary program.

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4634 W Imperial Hwy  
Inglewood CA 90304  
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ORANGE COUNTY OFFICE  
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- **A coordinated process to permit and properly regulate vending in City parks.** The permit process should be coordinated across departments to create a pathway for regulated vending in City parks as well as City sidewalks. The Department of Public Works and the Department of Recreation and Parks should collaborate to ensure efficient permitting procedures and coordinated education, compliance and technical assistance programs.
- **Avoid vending districts and numerical limits on permits.** Recognizing legitimate public safety concerns, we seek to avoid an unsafe concentration of vending operations in any particular area. But limiting the locations where vending is permitted to specific zones and capping the number of permits has been proven to bring about the very ills these policies seek to avoid. The City's last experiment with legal sidewalk vending was at MacArthur Park in the early 2000s. There, a small vending zone with a de facto cap on the number of carts (less than 50) became a magnet for vendors shut out of the program. As vending activity became over-concentrated, it gave the City's legal vending program a bad name. In addition to the public safety problems associated with vending district and caps, that failed approach is also administratively burdensome for the City, and works against a basic premise of the program: to expand vending opportunities. We must avoid repeating this failed experiment. Instead, the ordinance should allow vending city-wide, but also articulate reasonable restrictions on obstructions, proximity and accessibility that apply throughout the City. Enforcing these "unlawful obstruction" restrictions would have the effect of limiting the over-concentration of vending operations, without unnecessarily restricting the flexibility of vendors to respond to changing markets or undermining the inherent mobile characteristics of the trade. With these reasonable restrictions in place, we believe that any additional geographic restriction or circumscribed vending "zones" or "districts" would only serve to limit economic opportunities for vendors, limit the economic growth potential for the City, and could create an improper tool for exclusion.
- **Meaningful Incentives for different types of healthy food vending,** including but not limited to, fresh fruit, produce, water and healthy snacks. Examples of incentives offered to healthy food vendors should include reduced permit fees, special access to events sponsored by the City and exclusive vending areas, such as schools, in front of hospitals, and within City parks. Many Angelenos lack adequate access to nutritious, culturally-relevant and affordable food. Sidewalk food vendors are a critical part of mitigating this inequity.

- **Access to a streamlined permitting process.** The application process for a vendor to participate in a program should be a primary incentive in any system. The process should be affordable, clear, and equitable to the vendor. This should include efforts to identify and overcome any unique barriers to entry, including providing access to technical assistance and education programs. We soundly oppose any public hearing process that gives traditional opponents of vending a stronger weapon to stop a permit from being approved. This program must create tools to encourage and support, not exclude, permitted vending.
- **Responsible and humane enforcement** focused on education and training first, that avoids arrests, confiscation of property and criminalization of vendors.

Should you desire more expanded detailed from the aforementioned recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me. On behalf of the thousands of vendors we work with and support, we urge the City of Los Angeles to pass an ordinance for permitted sidewalk vending with expediency.

Sincerely,



Rachel Torres  
Senior Research Analyst  
UNITE HERE Local 11



THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW OFFICE OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND BEVERLY HILLS BAR ASSOCIATIONS  
The Southern California Affiliate of The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Honorable City Council  
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200 North Spring Street, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012.

November 26, 2014

**RE: Support for proposed Sidewalk Vending Program, Los Angeles City Council File #13-1493**

Honorable City Council,

I am writing to express enthusiastic support for the creation of a citywide program that would legalize and regulate food and merchandise vending on sidewalks and in city parks.

My organization, Public Counsel, is the nation's largest pro bono law firm of its kind, with a 40 year track record of fighting for the rights of low-income families, children and youth, veterans, and nonprofit organizations and small businesses in Los Angeles. Public Counsel's Community Development Project maintains a specific focus on enhancing economic mobility in low-income neighborhoods by empowering nonprofit organizations and expanding opportunities for low-income entrepreneurs. As a member of the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign – a coalition of 55 community-based, policy, labor, and academic organizations - we stand with the tens of thousands of food and merchandise vendors who contribute to our local economy and make our streets active and vibrant every day.

Studies estimate Los Angeles is home to over 10,000 street vendors, many of whom provide fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy culturally-relevant food in neighborhoods with limited healthy food options. These street vendors operate outside of the formal economy, because the City currently lacks a process to recognize and support these entrepreneurs. By developing a permit process with a humane enforcement strategy, the City could give these small business owners an opportunity to make an honest living, support public health, enhance local economic growth, and activate the vibrancy of our streets.

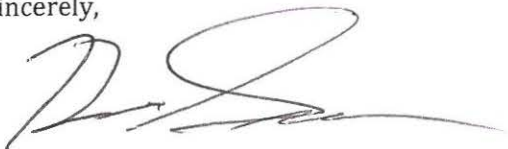
Over the course of 2 years, the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign interviewed hundreds of street vendors and community members to develop out a citywide proposal that has strong support from vendors, small businesses, and community stakeholders. This proposal solves some of the key challenges currently facing the City, and brings forth innovative solutions that pull from the best practices of other major cities, while being sensitive to the unique fabric of Los Angeles. The Campaign has provided the following key recommendations to the Los Angeles City Council and City Departments in support of a permit system that works for everyone:

- **A Citywide permit process for food and non-food vending.** This process should consider the cost of the program for the City and the financial capacity of low-income vendors. In order for vendors across the City to have a real incentive to participate, any policy should apply to all areas of the city. Capping the number of permits issued or limiting vending to certain districts will impede the effectiveness of this necessary program.
- **A coordinated process to permit and properly regulate vending in City parks.** The permit process should be coordinated across departments to create a pathway for regulated vending in City parks as well as City sidewalks. The Department of Public Works and the Department of Recreation and Parks should collaborate to ensure efficient permitting procedures and coordinated education, compliance and technical assistance programs.

- **Avoid vending districts and numerical limits on permits.** Recognizing legitimate public safety concerns, we seek to avoid an unsafe concentration of vending operations in one small area. But limiting the locations where vending is permitted to specific zones and capping the number of permits has been proven to bring about the very ills these policies seek to avoid. The City's last experiment with legal sidewalk vending was at MacArthur Park in the early 2000s. There, a small vending zone with a de facto cap on the number of carts (less than 50) became a magnet for vendors shut out of the program. As vending activity became over-concentrated, it gave the City's legal vending program a bad name. In addition to the public safety problems associated with vending districts and caps, that failed approach is also administratively burdensome for the City, and works against a basic premise of the program: to expand vending opportunities. We must avoid repeating this failed experiment. Instead, the ordinance should allow vending city-wide, but also establish reasonable rules concerning obstructions, proximity and accessibility that apply throughout the City. Enforcing these "unlawful obstruction" rules would have the effect of limiting the over-concentration of vending operations in any one area, without unnecessarily restricting the flexibility of vendors to respond to changing markets or undermining the inherent mobile characteristics of the trade. With these reasonable restrictions in place, we believe that any additional geographic restriction or circumscribed vending "zones" or "districts" would only serve to limit economic opportunities for vendors, limit the economic growth potential for the City, and could create an improper tool for exclusion.
- **Meaningful Incentives for different types of healthy food vending,** including but not limited to, fresh fruit, produce, water and healthy snacks. Examples of incentives offered to healthy food vendors should include reduced permit fees, special access to events sponsored by the City and exclusive vending areas, such as schools, in front of hospitals, and within City parks. Many Angelenos lack adequate access to nutritious, culturally-relevant and affordable food. Sidewalk food vendors are a critical part of mitigating this inequity.
- **Accessible permitting process.** A citywide vending system could open doors to entrepreneurship that are currently closed, expand our economic recovery into neighborhoods that are currently excluded, increase healthy food options, and enhance the vibrancy and safety of our streets. But these benefits can only be realized if the system is accessible to vendors. The permitting process should be easy to navigate, and must be structured to *encourage* participation and foster success. This should include efforts to identify and remove undue barriers to full compliance and promote meaningful coordination with technical assistance and education programs.
- **Responsible and humane enforcement.** Compliance should be achieved by focusing on education and training first, avoiding arrests, confiscation of property and criminalization of vendors.

Should you desire more information regarding these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me. On behalf of the thousands of vendors we work with and support, we urge the City of Los Angeles to pass an ordinance for permitted vending with expediency.

Sincerely,



Doug Smith  
Equal Justice Works Fellow  
Public Counsel – Community Development Project  
213-385-2977 x184



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Honorable City Council  
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Los Angeles, CA 90012.

**RE: Support for proposed Sidewalk Vending Program, Los Angeles City Council File #13-1493**

Honorable City Council,

I am writing on behalf of the **Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge & Services (WORKS)** to express support for the City of Los Angeles' consideration of a citywide program that would legalize and regulate sidewalk vending in Los Angeles. As a member of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council's stakeholder network of over 280 organizations, we have committed to making Los Angeles a "Good Food" region for everyone—where food is healthy, affordable, sustainable and fair.

Legalized sidewalk vending will support increased availability of healthy food in underserved communities, encourage local economic development, and create safer, more vibrant streets. There are an estimated 10,000 street vendors in Los Angeles, many of whom provide fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy culturally-relevant food in neighborhoods with limited healthy food options. These street vendors operate outside of the formal economy, because the City currently lacks a process to recognize and support these entrepreneurs. By developing a permit process with a humane enforcement strategy, the City could give these small business owners an opportunity to make an honest living, and offer incentives to encourage more street vendors to become healthy food entrepreneurs.

We express our strong support for a sidewalk vending ordinance that creates the following:

- **A Citywide permit process for food and non-food sidewalk vending.** This process should consider the cost of the program for the City and the financial capacity of low-income vendors. In order for vendors across the City to have a real incentive to participate, any policy that is put forth must apply to all areas of the city.
- **Incentives for different types of healthy food vending,** including but not limited to, fresh fruit, produce, water and healthy snacks. Examples of incentives offered to healthy food vendors should include reduced permit fees, special access to events sponsored by the City and exclusive vending areas such as around schools and in front of hospitals.
- **Responsible and humane enforcement** focused on education and training first, that avoids arrests or excessive criminalization of vendors.

As community food advocates, we support street food vendors because we know they play an important role in addressing inequitable access to healthy food, and they are a vibrant part of our local food economy. By legalizing sidewalk vending, the City of LA creates jobs, supports local food entrepreneurs and activates the vibrancy and safety of the streets. On behalf of the thousands of vendors we work with and support, we the City of Los Angeles to pass a sidewalk vending ordinance with expediency.

Sincerely,



Francesca de la Rosa  
Director of Policy and Strategic Alliances  
Chair, Urban Agriculture Working Group, Los Angeles Food Policy Council

CC:

- Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo
- Councilmember Paul Krekorian
- Councilmember Bob Blumenfield
- Councilmember Tom LaBonge
- Councilmember Paul Koretz
- Councilmember Nury Martinez
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President  
UNITE HERE! Local 11

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Roxana Tynan

November 26, 2014  
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I am writing on behalf of LAANE to express support for the City of Los Angeles' consideration of a citywide program that would legalize and regulate sidewalk vending in Los Angeles. As a member of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council's stakeholder network of over 280 organizations, we have committed to making Los Angeles a "Good Food" region for everyone—where food is healthy, affordable, sustainable and fair.

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Sincerely,  
Aiha Nguyen  
Director, Shop Well LA Project  
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)





Richard Williams <richard.williams@lacity.org>

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## Support for Sidewalk Vending Ordinance CF #13-1493

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Emily Hannah Freilich <ehf02014@mymail.pomona.edu>

Wed, Nov 26, 2014 at 10:15 PM

To: "richard.williams@lacity.org" <richard.williams@lacity.org>

Cc: "felipe.v.chavez@lacity.org" <felipe.v.chavez@lacity.org>, "cfox@goodfoodla.org" <cfox@goodfoodla.org>

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Sincerely,

Emily Freilich

Pomona College