The City Council first adopted its Sidewalk Vending ordinance in December 2018. Since then, the Council has taken numerous actions to support street vendors in the City, while ensuring the health and safety of vendors and their patrons.

In October 2020, this Council allocated $6 million in COVID-19 relief funds to help vendors finance the purchase of equipment and permits required by City and County vending rules (C.F. 13-1493-S11). This Council has also continued to emphasize outreach and education over enforcement to ensure vendors have time to understand the City’s rules and regulations and attain all of the necessary permits, acting to reduce permit fees and extend permit lifetimes (C.F. 13-1493-S10) and continue those reduced fees through the remainder of the current fiscal year (C.F. 13-1493-S13). More recently, the Council adopted the 47th Program Year Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan, which included $500,000 for a Sidewalk Vending Cart Program to provide vendors with financing for the purchase of a code-compliant food cart needed to obtain a food vending permit from the County (C.F. 20-1433).

Currently, the Bureau of Street Services administers the City’s Sidewalk and Park Vending program and enforces City Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 42.13, which includes the Council-approved rules and regulations for vendors, areas restricted from vending activities, vending permit structure, and a citation schedule for violations of this section. However, the LAMC includes various provisions and sections that apply to any activity occurring within the public right-of-way, inclusive of vending, such as the Fire Code and Health Code sections. These sections of the LAMC are imperative to ensuring the safety of our residents and local businesses by regulating the preparation of food and setting fire safety standards.

While Bureau of Street Services investigators are authorized to broadly enforce the City’s municipal code, there has not been sufficient training to provide investigators with the requisite expertise to enforce different code sections, such as provisions integral to the safe preparation of food at vending carts. As the City continues to develop and implement programs to support our local vending community, it is important that the City also enforce its current laws to ensure the health and safety of consumers and the protection of the vendors who are in full compliance with local regulations.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Street Services, in consultation with the City Attorney, be instructed to report with recommendations to enable and authorize the Bureau of Street Services to more broadly enforce against health and fire code violations occurring within the public right-of-way.