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**Date:** June 15, 2021

**To:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Councilwoman Suely Saro, Sixth District  
Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, Ninth District  
Councilwoman Mary Zendejas, First District  
Councilwoman Cindy Allen, Second District

**Subject:** Safety and Security Program to Protect Street Vendors

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Request the City Manager, or designee, to work with all appropriate departments to report back to the City Council in 60 days on a security and safety program that can be implemented to improve safety conditions for street vendors operating in our city.

**DISCUSSION:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the livelihoods of the food industry. Street vendors contribute to our local economy. Prior to the pandemic, it is estimated that street vending generates \$504 million in Los Angeles.<sup>1</sup> Street vending provides an important entrepreneurship and economic development opportunity for low-income and migrant families. Street vendors benefit our communities that lack major supermarkets and have limited access to healthy food options. Their presence on street corners, the possession of cash and the economic downtown that happened during the COVID-19 pandemic has put these workers lives at greater risk. Vendors contribute economically and culturally to the Long Beach community making it vital that we address their safety and security.

Sidewalk vendors who have already been vulnerable are especially hard hit as they may have not been able to receive any federal relief. Vendors may lack any training or knowledge of state and federal air due to language or logistical barriers or are ineligible due to their immigration status. Street vending is yet to be apart of the mainstream economy, and the first step to this is the city investing in ways to protect vendors physically and financially. It is important for there to be

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<sup>1</sup> <https://economicrt.org/publication/sidewalk-stimulus/>

investments into multilingual education resources and outreach and support for vendors to ensure that they feel safe in the community.

Regionally, we are seeing increasing reported assaults, harassment, robbery, and other crimes committed against street vendors. The Los Angeles Police Department has reported that crimes against street vendors have rose nearly 337% between 2010-2019, going from 38-166.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 45% of these crimes against street vendors were robberies and 28% of them involved some type of assault.<sup>3</sup> In 2020, there were a total of 100 victims in the City of Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> There have been several reported incidents in Long Beach where vendors were robbed and assaulted. In July 2020, a street vendor was robbed, beaten, and pistol-whipped by two armed suspect that fled in a car. And in January 2021, a street vendor selling fruit was beaten and robbed.

Unfortunately, many vendors avoid going to the police when these incidents occur due to the fear of facing repercussions due to the lack of necessary documentation for their cart or themselves. Vendors are often working alone and work in cash payments, making them an easy target for robberies. Therefore, it is important to create measures that vendors may use and turn to when they are feeling unsafe and proactive steps to reduce potential incidents.

There have been recent incidents in Long Beach where vendors were robbed and assaulted. Therefore, a security and safety program is requested to protect street vendors through crime prevention and economic development strategies that includes but not limited to the following:

- An overview of street vending laws in California and Long Beach
- Strategies to decrease robbery by eliminating cash exchange through assistance and support to use online and alternative noncash transaction
- Signage programs that indicate the vendor does not possess cash
- Support for vendors from the Long Beach Recovery Act to protect their business with security cameras and other tools
- Information on how victims can safely report crimes
- Information on the Long Beach Values Act and the protections in place for undocumented residents when interacting with the Long Beach Police Department

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

No Financial Management review was able to be conducted due to the urgency and time sensitivity of this item

### **SUGGESTED ACTION**

Approve Recommendation

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<sup>2</sup> <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Crime-Data-from-2020-to-Present/2nrs-mtv8>

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Crime-Data-from-2020-to-Present/2nrs-mtv8>

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Crime-Data-from-2020-to-Present/2nrs-mtv8>