



## CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL

### AGENDA ITEM

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Report: Al Fresco Dining in Private Parking Lots

1. Motion directing staff to conduct study on the conversion of private parking lots to outdoor dining
2. Motion suspending enforcement on existing Al Fresco locations in private parking lots while City conducts study on conversions

### COUNCIL ACTION

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**Item Type:** Action Item

**Approved for** September 20, 2022 **calendar**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Council has requested that staff consider opportunities to create a by-right path for restaurants that wish to transition existing, private parking lots into outdoor dining locations. After an initial review, staff is proposing that a greater study be conducted to understand any of the potential impacts to removing parking, impacts to surrounding uses, and other potential paths for restaurants to maintain their existing outdoor dining installations. During this time, staff recommends that Council extend the allowance of these installations and suspend any enforcement, provided that the establishment is following all rules and regulations, until staff has the opportunity to conduct a full study and provide a report to Council.

## **COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

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**Economic Vibrancy:** These actions are consistent with Council's priority for Economic Vibrancy as it expands the liveliness of two major shopping and dining destinations within the City.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends that the City Council suspend enforcement on any existing outdoor Al Fresco dining locations within private parking lots, and direct staff to study the potential impacts of allowing the conversion of parking for restaurant establishments into outdoor dining areas.

## **BACKGROUND**

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Since the City declared a state of emergency on March 16, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has undertaken a number of regulatory actions, economic development efforts, and tenant protections to assist businesses during ongoing closures and operational reductions. Part of this strategy included the City's Al Fresco Program that created outdoor dining areas in public parking spaces, and allowing for the conversion of private parking lots into outdoor dining as a means to allow restaurants to continue business operations. The Al Fresco program has had farther reaching benefits in that it has also provided a direct benefit to patrons and the business district as a whole. The program has infused new energy and activity through the use of parklets in Downtown and Montrose, and has provided expanded options for restaurants in private parking lots.

In October of 2021, Council directed staff to expand the parklet program into a permanent program, including designs for new installations. These installations have been completed in Montrose and the contracting of new parklets for Downtown is currently underway. As part of the program, Council also directed the extension of all Al Fresco locations through February of 2022. Since then, inquiries have been made regarding the possibility of private parking lot installations to be allowed by-right. This was largely catalyzed by significant investments made by private businesses to create attractive and vibrant outdoor dining installations as well as limited impacts regarding parking or spillover impacts of parking from these establishments. While these limited impacts are observational, they could be studied at greater length to better understand how patrons choose to park, and if there have been any negative or unintended consequences to surrounding uses such as non-restaurant uses and residential neighborhoods.

## **ANALYSIS**

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Those that have established Al Fresco locations within private parking lots have created new business and revenue opportunities for existing restaurants. While Community Development staff have received limited complaints regarding the impacts of outdoor dining, such as parking and disruption, additional study needs to be conducted to understand whether the conversion or limited provision of parking for restaurants is feasible and what impacts could be a result of that change. This would likely require a larger study regarding parking, specifically with non-residential uses as a whole and how parking standards are discerned between different non-residential uses.

Some of the elements that would need to be studied include:

- Understanding if current minimum parking requirements are greater than demand;
- Impacts to any surrounding uses, such as restaurants that are near residential neighborhoods, due to any spillover parking effects;
- Understanding the relationship of allowing restaurants to have limited or reduced parking in comparison to other non-residential uses;
- Whether there are existing tools such as Parking Reduction or Variance permits that could allow for the continued operation of outdoor dining in private parking lots for specific locations; and
- Developing design and engineering standards that would ensure that any locations that include any form of built structure (ex. Platform, shading, etc.) are safe and accessible.

This study will allow staff to develop a full suite of recommendations that may allow the program to remain, or even potentially expand. Extending the allowance of operations and suspending enforcement, will allow existing businesses to maintain their installations.

### **STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH**

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As part of any further analysis, staff would propose conducting meetings with restaurants and businesses that have created AI Fresco locations, or have considered them, to understand the needs, use and demands. Additionally staff would propose to meet with surrounding businesses and neighborhoods to understand current conditions as it relates to parking, noise disturbances, and any other potential impacts or concerns that could be a consequence of additional AI Fresco locations.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

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There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)**

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Environmental review may need to be considered as part of additional analysis and any changes to the Zoning Code as a result of the study.

### **CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE**

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This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

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Alternative 1: Suspend enforcement on existing AI Fresco dining locations on private parking lots until staff can conduct a larger study on the opportunities to allow the conversion of private parking to outdoor dining. This would allow existing businesses to maintain their operations until the full impacts are better evaluated.

Alternative 2: Do not extend the allowance of existing AI Fresco locations, thus requiring the removal of existing installations until staff can study the full impacts.

Alternative 3: Consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

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**Prepared by:**

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**Approved by:**

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

#### **EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS**

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