



# RESTAURANT BEVERAGE PROGRAM

## SUMMARY

In response to a request by the City Council, the Department of City Planning is proposing an ordinance to shorten processing times and lower costs for certain sit-down restaurants to be able to serve alcoholic beverages. This will help facilitate the creation of new jobs for an industry that plays a vitally important role in the City's economy, employing more than 380,000 people and generating in excess of \$200 million in tax revenues on an annual basis.

## KEY PROVISIONS

For businesses to be eligible for this program, they must meet more than 30 proposed criteria, which include the following:

- Must be a restaurant with an operational kitchen and full menu;
- Daily hours of operation limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.;
- No live entertainment, including dancing, karaoke, or a DJ;
- No outdoor TV monitors or music. Only ambient indoor music allowed;
- Restaurant cannot be take-out or delivery-only. It must offer seated dining;
- Restaurants cannot be drive-through fast food establishments; and
- Adherence to a number of other limitations and requirements.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Why is the City proposing changes to how alcohol approvals are currently processed?

The Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion (Council File #: [17-0981](#)) directing the Department to recommend a path for shortened processing time and lowered costs for restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages. Currently, it takes about six months for restaurants to obtain a Conditional Use Permit for alcoholic beverages (CUB), the City approval required to be able to serve alcoholic beverages, at a cost of about \$12,500. The Department has responded with the proposed ordinance that will be considered by the City Planning Commission (CPC) and the City Council.

### Would bars, nightclubs and/or liquor stores qualify under the proposed ordinance?

No. In order to take advantage of this new program, businesses must be maintained as a bona fide eating place (restaurant). This entails having a commercial kitchen, full menu and food that is offered during the entirety of the restaurant's hours of operation. Moreover, businesses with live entertainment, dancing, or karaoke will not be eligible to apply under this program.

### What policies will be implemented to provide neighborhoods protections?

Eligibility for the program would require adherence to set of standardized limitations and requirements, applicable citywide, to facilitate enforcement. Restaurants unable to meet the standards would be subject to the existing CUB process for approval to serve alcoholic beverages.

### **What community protections will be implemented?**

The ordinance establishes 34 standards that program participants must adhere to, including satisfying the following requirements:

- Provide specialized training for both employers and employees;
- Install a camera surveillance system;
- Maintain a log of all complaints; and
- Respond to any concerns via phone and email within 24 hours, among other requirements.

### **How will the City monitor and enforce the program's limitations and requirements?**

All restaurants participating in the program will be required to enroll in the Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Program (MViP), which entails two City-initiated inspections. The program was created by the Department in in 2015 to provide better monitoring and enforcement of alcohol sales throughout the City.

### **What notifications will neighborhood councils receive?**

The applicable neighborhood council and City Council Office will be notified within 14 days for every business that obtains clearance under this program. The notification will provide a list of the standards the business must comply with and how to contact the Department of Building and Safety to report any violations. From a public safety standpoint, the Los Angeles Police Department will also be notified of any restaurants approved under this program.

### **Will this result in a flood of new alcohol establishments?**

This program is only available to a narrow range of dining establishments that wish to serve alcoholic beverages. These are sit-down restaurants that close by 11:00 p.m. and comply with an array of other limitations and requirements. All other alcohol-serving establishments, such as bars, nightclubs, billiards and liquor stores, will be required to go through the existing discretionary CUB process instead.

### **Can I report an establishment not compliant with the program's limitations and requirements?**

Yes. The community will have the same level of protections as they do with any permitted alcohol serving establishment. Businesses with multiple or repeated violations may be subject to further corrective actions by the City and the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), and may be required to apply for a Conditional Use Permit.

### **What are the next steps?**

An initial staff-level hearing was held on December 5, 2018. Due to strong interest, the Department is offering a second public hearing on January 31, 2019 for those who are interested. Any feedback provided during this process will be considered in the staff recommendation to the CPC for their deliberation. The CPC is expected to hear the proposal in April 2019.

### **Who can I contact for more information?**

For any additional information, please contact City Planning Associate Esther Ahn by email [esther.ahn@lacity.org](mailto:esther.ahn@lacity.org) or by phone at (213) 978-1486. Media inquiries should be directed to Lauren Alba, Public Relations Specialist, by email at [lauren.alba@lacity.org](mailto:lauren.alba@lacity.org) or by phone at (213) 978-1190.