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As CicLAvia Announces Its Return to Open Streets Events in the Coming Months, Mayor Garcetti and LADOT Rely on the Nonprofit's Expertise in Open Streets Planning for the City's – hopefully permanent – *L.A. Al Fresco* Program

***L.A. Al Fresco* Supports Outdoor Dining Opportunities for Restaurants in Communities Most Impacted by the Pandemic**

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (May 19, 2021) — **CicLAvia** announces its expanded outreach to more communities in its partnership with **Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti** and the **Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT)** to help the city grow its ***L.A. Al Fresco*** program, which offers streamlined approval for eligible businesses to provide outdoor dining on sidewalks, parking lots and streets. CicLAvia is known for highly successful and popular open streets events that create public spaces for Angelenos to enjoy through biking, walking, strolling, skating, and jogging.

L.A. Al Fresco was launched by the Mayor in partnership with LADOT in May 2020 as a response to the pandemic. CicLAvia has been working on *L.A. Al Fresco* since late 2020, specifically in communities most impacted by the pandemic, helping them expand outdoor dining options in neighborhoods across LA such as Boyle Heights, Chinatown, Westlake, Pacoima and South LA.

Mayor Garcetti's 2021-22 budget proposal now includes creating permanent areas for outdoor dining as part of the program.

The Mayor and LADOT approached CicLAvia because of its experience and expertise connecting communities to each other across Los Angeles via its open streets events. During these signature Sundays, CicLAvia temporarily arranges for street closures to car traffic while opening them up as public park spaces for all to enjoy.

L.A. Al Fresco's original aim was to help restaurants reopen safely by providing options for more usable areas while allowing customers and employees to maintain the physical distance recommended by public health officials. The program currently authorizes no-cost outdoor dining and street vending on sidewalks, private parking lots, street parking spaces, and on the street. As the initiative continues, the hope is that it will last beyond the pandemic. According to Laura Bliss in a May 11, 2021, Bloomberg CityLab article, "[Where Covid's Car-Free Streets Boosted Business](#)," eateries in car-free areas saw more consumer interest when their streets were strictly limited to pedestrians and cyclists.

"**CicLAvia** has been utilizing its open streets planning expertise in a new way by reaching out to smaller 'mom and pop' restaurants in communities most impacted by the pandemic," says CicLAvia's Executive Director Romel Pascual. "By offering free assistance to these 'hidden gems' via the *L.A. Al Fresco* program, CicLAvia helps these restaurants accommodate more customers so they can serve their neighborhoods safely and with greater capacity, stay open and continue to prosper."

The City and LADOT turned to **CicLAvia** because of its extensive experience reaching out to communities and small businesses around L.A., not only engendering their support and participation in the open streets events, but giving local businesses exposure along the way. “The work **CicLAvia** is doing with the *L.A. Al Fresco* program is an extension of our outdoor work for which we are so well-known,” adds Pascual.

CicLAvia recently announced that it is carefully preparing to return to L.A. streets and neighborhoods. It will soon reveal the upcoming route and date for its first post-pandemic open streets event. “We are looking forward to once again bringing our public space events to Angelenos through biking, walking, strolling, skating, or jogging, together creating more incredible moments and experiences,” says Pascual. “With this *L.A. Al Fresco* work, **CicLAvia** is coming full circle by providing a different type of outreach and ensuring that our return to our highly anticipated open street events will be back even stronger as we continue to expand the horizons of our L.A. community.”

“Though we couldn’t hold our big events during the pandemic, we are still doing our part in the community while setting ourselves up for our return,” adds Pascual. “We hope Angelenos will support the work we are doing with *L.A. Al Fresco* and the local economies in neighborhoods most impacted by Covid.”

Pascual encourages people to venture into neighborhoods they have not explored before while biking and walking as if at a **CicLAvia** open streets event. “Enjoy dining outdoors while continuing the **CicLAvia** spirit of safe exploration and discovering L.A.’s hidden gems. You’ll be doing your part to help these businesses to thrive.”

Businesses that are interested *in L.A. Al Fresco* can visit <https://corona-virus.la/laalfresco> to apply and for more information. Information is also available in Spanish, Korean and Japanese.

Stay informed about CicLAvia at <https://www.ciclavia.org>.

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