



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council **Item No. _____**

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Food and Brewery District Potential Funding Strategies and Incentives

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council provide direction on potential funding strategies and incentives to support the Food and Brewery District, and authorize staff to explore partnerships, grants, and plans to accelerate the development of the designated area.

ANALYSIS:

Over the past several years, cities across Southern California have successfully revitalized underutilized commercial corridors through the development of food and craft brewery districts. These districts support small business growth, stimulate the local economy, and enhance community identity. The City of Commerce has unique industrial and commercial zoning opportunities that could support a similar district, offering a mix of breweries, artisan food vendors, coffee roasters, and complementary retail and entertainment spaces.

To explore feasibility and impact of a Food and Brewery District in Commerce, staff has identified several uses of funding and policy tools that can be implemented in phases. These ideas aim to attract investment, reduce startup barriers, and create a destination-oriented neighborhood:

1. Business Incentives and Microgrants

- a.** Provide seed funding or matching grants to assist with tenant improvements, façade upgrades, and equipment purchases
- b.** Offer fee waivers or rebates for business license and permitting fees specific to the district

2. Infrastructure and Placemaking

- a.** Use funds to enhance streetscapes with decorative lighting, widened sidewalks and signage

- b. Establish shared outdoor spaces for food truck courts, beer gardens, and night markets

3. Branding and Marketing

- a. Launch a district brand campaign with professional logo design and banners
- b. Partner with Visit California, LA Tourism, and regional food media to promote Commerce as a rising culinary destination

4. Streamlined Permitting and Zoning Adjustments

- a. Consider overlay zoning or use-specific adjustments to simplify alcohol licensing, food service, and live entertainment in targeted zones
- b. Expedite plan check and conditional use permit reviews for breweries, tasting rooms, and food halls

5. Public-Private Partnership and Pop-Ups

- a. Partner with developers to create a flagship public market or brewery incubator with shared kitchens, tasting counters, and event space
- b. Pilot short-term leases in City-owned or vacant buildings for food startups or rotating brewery pop-ups

Establishing a Food and Brewery District presents a unique opportunity to diversify Commerce's business base, foster economic development, and position the City as a vibrant destination for dining, culture, and craft beverages. With Council direction, staff can begin laying the groundwork to support this concept through strategic planning, funding, and outreach.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Disapprove staff recommendation
3. Provide further direction to staff

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with this report. Any specific incentives, grants, or infrastructure project will need Council approval and will require detailed cost estimates and funding sources, including property lease revenue and external grants.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:

This item is in alignment with the 2016 Strategic Goal to "develop and invest in infrastructure and beautification projects and support economic growth."

Prepared by: Alvaro Castellon, Director of Finance
Approved as to Form: Noel Tapia, City Attorney
Respectfully submitted: Ernie Hernandez, City Manager