

MOTION

HEALTH, EDUCATION, NEIGHBORHOODS

Los Angeles is a city with a population that cherishes physical fitness. And Los Angeles is a city with a fitness industry and thousands of fitness professionals who are suffering through the impacts of the pandemic. As Los Angeles slowly emerges from Safer at Home orders, and as more businesses open under new public health rules that upend their business practices, the City should consider strategies to help the fitness industry and fitness professionals, many of whom are independent contractors.

In the City and County of Los Angeles, under the Safer at Home order, gyms and other fitness facilities have been closed since March 15. These closures have forced this once booming industry to begin mass layoffs of instructors and trainers as gyms and studios consider permanently shutting their doors. The State of California is currently in Phase 2 of the Governor's recovery plan and these businesses will not be allowed to re-open until Phase 3, which may not arrive for months.

While many gyms and workout studios have quickly adapted to providing online classes, returning to profitability and full employment will depend on restoring in-person training. However, until there is a vaccine, physical distancing requirements are likely to require these businesses to stay closed or operate at greatly reduced capacity. People will not be able to work out in close quarters or use the same gym machinery. Therefore, there is an urgent need for innovative ways to expand the ability of these businesses to operate outdoors to provide proper physical distancing.


In addition, health experts increasingly are in agreement that people are significantly less likely to get the coronavirus while outside. With fresh air and more space between people, the risk goes down. While out-door fitness classes are not yet allowed under the Safer at Home order, they are more likely to open up before in-door classes. The City should consider allowing fitness studios, gyms and independent contractors who offer bootcamps, physical training, yoga classes, etc, to operate more easily in parks and other outdoor spaces.

The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks currently requires trainers who wish to conduct classes in the grassy areas of recreation centers and parks to contact the desired facility directly for rates and permission. There is a separate permitting process for using sports fields. This dispersed system can be confusing and time consuming. Rates vary widely and are not always available online. The City should act urgently to adapt these programs to meet the needs of the fitness industry and its clients. A streamlined and discounted process needs to be in place by the time public health orders are eased, so that fitness professionals can recover financially as quickly as possible.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the Department of Recreation and Parks, in consultation with the Information Technology Agency, to offer a simple, streamlined process for authorizing fitness professionals to conduct classes or activities in public parks and recreation areas, in ways that do not conflict with demand for general public use. Such a streamlined process should offer discounted rates, or allow deferred initial payments.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of General Services provide a list of city-owned properties that might be appropriate for outdoor fitness classes. Such a list should exclude any city property that could otherwise be used for any form of temporary or permanent housing.

PRESENTED BY:


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SECONDED BY:

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