

RIVERSIDE REWARDS PROGRAM

Community & Economic Development

City Council

December 9, 2025

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BACKGROUND

Riverside faces growing competition that impacts local business vitality:

1. Retail leakage to online and regional competitors.
2. Visibility challenges for small, independent businesses.
3. Need to boost resident confidence in choosing local options.



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BACKGROUND: PILOT OVERVIEW

Riverside Rewards provides a digital cash-back incentive to shop local:

1. Built on the BluDot Open Rewards platform.
2. Reward fund of \$50,000 to support up to 500 local businesses.
3. Launch times with Holiday Season Campaigns.

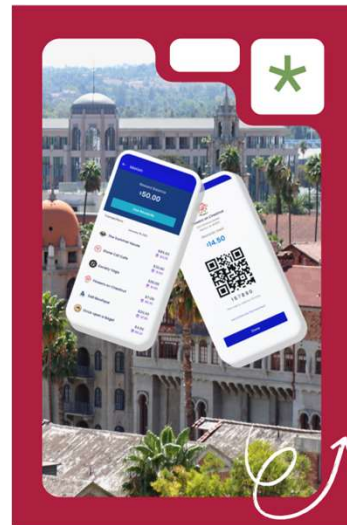


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DISCUSSION: HOW IT WORKS

1. Residents download the Open Rewards app
2. Shop at 500 participating Riverside businesses
3. Earn rewards automatically and redeem them citywide
4. App tracks spending and provides City with dashboards and impact data



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DISCUSSION: REWARD STRUCTURE

1. 10% rewards during launch day
2. 5% ongoing rewards during the pilot
3. Rewards paid from the City's \$50,000 Rewards Fund.
4. User & Business caps ensure equitable distribution of rewards.

Proven Results Across CA

Lancaster

\$30,000 City investment → \$600,000 in local spending

- 📊 20x ROI

Orange

\$40,000 City investment → \$784,000 in local spending

- 📊 19x ROI



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DISCUSSION: PARTICIPATION & EQUITY

1. 500 independent, local small businesses during annual program
2. Prioritized retail, cafes, restaurants, wellness categories
3. Excluded chains, liquor stores, smoke shops
4. Balanced distribution across all seven wards
5. Holiday Season Campaigns include Hot Chocolate Trail and in-app Holiday Gift Guide.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Council:

1. Approve the Riverside Rewards App Pilot Program; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement and rewards budget not to exceed \$50,000.



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