

March 2 , 2021

Honorable Mayor Rober Garcia
Honorable City Council Members

SUBJECT: Feasibility Study for Creation of El Mercado de Long Beach (NB22)

Dear City Council,

My name is Franklin Sims. I am writing on behalf of Move Our City. Org. A nonprofit organization founded in Long Beach to advance critical equity goals related to Environmental Justice.

The fact that Council members recommend creation of a Latino cultural district is a positive step. However, a friendly amendment adding Black, Indigenous, Pacific Island and Combodian groups would better serve inclusion and equity goals.

Here are three topics taken directly from the agenda item that best illustrate how and why the item should be broadened in order to satisfy its own stated rationales:

TOPIC 1 “Integrated into the city’s downtown core and waterfront”

The Council members’ request references the importance of including Latino residents in the downtown and waterfront economies. However, Long Beach’s Downtown and waterfront have historically and presently drawn a line in the sand to exclude most people of color. It would be a more efficient use of resources were City Staff tasked with assessing the feasibility of what the Council members call a “regional economic generator” for black, indigenous and people of color.

TOPIC 2 “Suggest support from... Measure US Funds”

Council members direct City staff to explore funding opportunities such as Measure US funds. However, Measure US was born from whites and all people of color rallying under the unified call for “Black Lives Matter”. In fact, the Measure US campaign was successful at the ballot box because it included voices such as a prominent Black pastor, a Cambodian female community leader, as well as prominent Latino civic leaders. If the City Manager is being directed to look at funds such as Measure US might we find a way to make this “micro-business hub” as inclusive as the voices who fought for the Measure itself?

TOPIC 3 “Food Security Recovery in disproportionately impacted areas”

Today’s agenda item smartly focuses on the black and brown food deserts prevalent throughout Long Beach’s working and poor communities. Notably, the same local Districts disproportionately impacted by food insecurity consist of Latino, Cambodian, Black and Pacific Island brothers and sisters in the 7th, 6th, 1st, 8th and 9th Districts. Thus, a more inclusive “mixed-use small business economic development hub” would better serve the diverse communities sharing an identical food desert landscape.

Therefore, with respect and admiration, the undersigned wholeheartedly recommend to the Mayor and City Council to amend the request to include a broader equity and inclusion framework.

With Kind Regards,

Franklin I. Sims
Government Affairs Representative
Move Our City.org

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