



**City of Long Beach**  
**Working Together to Serve**



## MEMORADUM

# R-19

**Date:** March 2, 2021

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Councilwoman Stacy Mungo Flanigan, Fifth District  
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District  
Councilwoman Mary Zendejas, First District  
Councilwoman Cindy Allen, Second District

**Subject:** **Feasibility Study for Creation of El Mercado de Long Beach**

### RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager to study feasibility and explore support or financing options in for the creation of a Latino cultural district and a mixed-use small business economic development hub significantly similar to the *El Mercado de Long Beach* proposal supported by Centro CHA, and suggest support from upcoming grants and revenue including recovery investment funds, Measure US funds, and other grants that support health and equity for our Latino communities.

### DISCUSSION:

The feasibility study will review the potential scale and scope of a project to find pilot project options as one of many solutions to food insecurity, housing, health care and the economic crisis caused by the pandemic and, in particular, to our disproportionately affected Latino communities. The study will also help explore financing options to include tax-increment financing, bond financing, foundation support, and local, state, and federal funding opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact on Long Beach residents—particularly the City’s low-income and communities of color—leaving residents struggling to pay for necessities such as rent, food, transportation, and health care. One of the most pronounced and direct effects of this crisis is a dramatic decline in food security, defined as the ability to access adequate nutrition to sustain a healthy and active life.

In June 2020, the Council requested that the City create a Citywide Basic Needs Security Initiative, known as “BAND Together Long Beach,” to enhance the coordination and delivery of food and housing security programs. Since then, the City has worked across multi-agency, public, private, and non-profit sector lines to deliver food and housing security resources and programs to residents in need. There has also been an unprecedented community response to meeting the basic needs of the City, including major food distributions, Senior food delivery programs, and food pantry programs.

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Even with these coordinated efforts to respond to food insecurity, the City must continue to respond to the devastating ripple effects of the intensifying COVID-19 pandemic.

To offset the sudden economic and health consequences of food insecurity, this feasibility study should be integrated as part of our equity-informed Food Security Recovery Plan to allow for micro business concepts like *El Mercado de Long Beach* to setup shop in a disproportionately impacted area.

Presently, there is not an established commercial area that represents the City's burgeoning Latino community—which stands at 42.4% of the population. *El Mercado de Long Beach* could serve as part of a burgeoning cultural district that will provide identity and recognition for this population and can be integrated into the city's downtown core and waterfront. This "creation of place" will not only showcase the vitality and spirit of the Long Beach Latino community, but also will become a regional economic generator offering visitor's and tourists an authentic cultural experience.

The City of Long Beach has prioritized equity and inclusion in celebration of its diversity and as a commitment to ensuring all residents have equal opportunity to thrive, regardless of who you are, what your background is, what neighborhood you live in, or your personal and cultural identity.

To this end, we move that the Long Beach City Council direct the City Manager to prepare a feasibility study and explore financing options for the development of Latino cultural district and a mixed-use small business economic development hub called *El Mercado de Long Beach*.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

No fiscal impact analysis was able to be conducted.