



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

333 West Ocean Blvd., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Long Beach, CA 90802

(562) 570-6194

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May 4, 2017

## CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach  
California

### RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Categorical Exemption 17-081, and recommend that the City Council approve a Zoning Code Amendment and Local Coastal Program Amendment to revise the Long Beach Municipal Code Chapter 21.15 and Sections 21.31.110, 21.32.110, 21.33.060 and 21.52.260, related to defining and permitting urban agriculture uses. (Citywide)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach  
333 West Ocean Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(Application No. 1703-41)

### DISCUSSION

Urban agriculture has existed since early civilizations and continues today. From a single avocado tree in a homeowner's backyard to larger scale farming of vacant lots awaiting investment and redevelopment, urban agriculture is an important and growing contributor to local food systems and overall sustainability of the urban environment. However, urban agriculture is not currently defined in the Long Beach Zoning Code, and as a result is not recognized as a permitted use within the City. This action would allow urban agriculture as a matter of right within multi-family, commercial, and light industrial zones and require an Administrative Use Permit within single-family, two-family and heavy industrial zones.

This action is necessary for the City to take advantage of AB 551, the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act, which authorizes cities and counties to provide tax incentives to landowners who allow their vacant properties to be used for small-scale agricultural purposes. City Council authorization of this program is pending and is intended to work in concert with the City's recently completed vacant lot survey, which is scheduled for consideration by the City Council in the coming weeks. Vacant lots, particularly those that are not well kept, are associated with decreased perceptions of neighborhood safety and decreased property values. Therefore, allowing urban agriculture on vacant lots can help mitigate the negative impacts associated with vacant lots while creating opportunities for local food production.

On average, produce purchased in Los Angeles County travels 1,500 miles before consumption, so localizing food sources can help reduce vehicle miles traveled while increasing community resilience to climate impacts. These programs are collectively intended to remove blight, provide economically beneficial and environmentally sustainable uses for vacant lots all while promoting local healthy food availability and consumption.

The following section describes the proposed Zoning Code changes, which are provided in red-line format in Exhibit A (Draft Zoning Code Amendment).

Definition:

The proposed Ordinance is based on the definition found in State law, with an additional clarification that urban agriculture does not include the cultivation of marijuana:

“Urban Agriculture” means farming in all its branches including, but not limited to, the cultivation and tillage of the soil, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural or horticultural products, the raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals, dairy-producing animals, and poultry, agricultural education, the sale of produce through field retail stands or farms stands, and any practices performed by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with farming operations. For purposes of this definition, the term “agricultural use” does not include timber production and does not include cultivation of marijuana.

Locational Requirements

It is anticipated that the common application of urban agriculture and AB 551 incentives will involve the raising of fruits and vegetables for sale on or off site. The current zoning code does not allow agriculture as a use, therefore it is not allowed beyond incidental backyard urban agriculture by homeowners. This is remedied by adding urban agriculture to the zoning code use tables for multi-family, commercial and light industrial zones denoting the use as Y, allowed as a matter of right.

Within single-family and two-family zones (R1 and R2), the sales component of urban agriculture as well as the fencing, agricultural transitions, noise, light and other impacts may require review on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, while urban agriculture can be a great way to remove visual blight, secure vacant lots and provide sustainable food sources, it may not be appropriate in areas subject to contaminated soils or areas adjacent to heavy industrial uses. For this reason, urban agriculture is listed as AP (denoting that an Administrative Use Permit is required), in single-family, two-family, medium industrial, general industrial and heavy industrial zones as proposed in Exhibit A.

Staff recommends the application of development standards outlined in Section 21.52.260 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. These standards include applying the front yard setback of the underlying zone, 4-foot side yard setbacks, and 10-foot rear yard setbacks. The only improvements allowed for an urban agriculture use will be landscaping, irrigation systems, and accessory buildings and structures. Accessory buildings and structures can have a maximum 13-foot building height.

It is important to understand that these proposed standards do not exempt urban farmers from compliance within other sections of the Long Beach Municipal Code including prohibitions on livestock within 100 feet of a residential building (6.16.010), maximum number of chickens (fowl) (6.20.020), distance of chickens (fowl) from hotels and dwelling units (6.20.030), prohibition of roosters (6.20.040), chicken enclosure and cleanliness standards (6.20.060), prohibition of chickens in front yards (6.20.070), requirement for regular food and water for chickens (6.20.080), coop size (6.20.090), animal cruelty (6.20.100 through 6.20.130), and limitations on goats (6.20.150 through 6.20.200). These regulations were all updated in early 2015, when the City Council allowed small livestock and beekeeping within single-family home yards for the first time. No changes to these regulations are proposed. Furthermore, no changes to the community garden regulations are proposed at this time.

#### Review Process

Planning will review all proposed urban agriculture uses through the City's business license application process. All applicants will be required to meet standards A, B and C outlined in Section 21.52.260 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. Those in the R1, R2 and IP zones will also be required to apply for an Administrative Use Permit.

The Municipal Code does not set forth required findings for approval of a Zoning Code Amendment. However, this change is consistent with the General Plan, specifically Land Use Element goals regarding neighborhood services such as neighborhood emphasis, economic development, and citizen opportunity, and ensuring quality development and public safety. This change is consistent with several goals of the draft General Plan Land Use Element update, including prioritizing green and healthy living approaches, and addressing and adapting to climate change. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve Zoning Code Amendment No. 1703-41 to create provisions to allow urban agriculture. Should the Planning Commission recommend City Council approval of these amendments, staff anticipates that this item will be presented for a City Council hearing in June 2017.

As an example, local food sources increase community resilience to major weather events such as an earthquake or storm that could hinder transportation networks currently relied upon for food supply. More generally, activating vacant lots with community-serving destinations such as mini-parks, community gardens or community programming in local neighborhoods increases perceptions of neighborhood safety, helping residents feel comfortable walking or biking, while providing new local destinations accessible by non-motorized transportation.

#### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

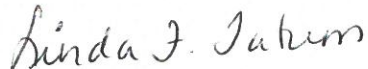
The required public hearing notice was provided in accordance with the Municipal Code. A public hearing notice was published in the Long Beach Press-Telegram, public hearing notices were mailed to the California Coastal Commission and all City libraries, and three

public hearing notices were posted in public places within the City. No comments have been received as of the preparation of this report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This project qualifies for a categorical exemption per Section 15308 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (Exhibit B - Categorical Exemption CE 17-081).

Respectfully submitted,



LINDA F. TATUM, AICP  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



AMY J. BODEK, AICP  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

AJB:LFT:CK:as

Attachments:      Exhibit A – Draft Zoning Code Amendment  
                         Exhibit B – Categorical Exemption 17-081



# NOTICE of EXEMPTION from CEQA

## EXHIBIT B

CITY OF LONG BEACH | DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
333 W. OCEAN BLVD., 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, LONG BEACH, CA 90802  
(562) 570-6194 FAX: (562) 570-6068  
lbds.longbeach.gov

TO: ☐ Office of Planning & Research  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Department of Development Services  
333 W. Ocean Blvd, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802

☒ L.A. County Clerk  
Environmental Fillings  
12400 E. Imperial Hwy., Room 1201  
Norwalk, CA 90650

Project Title: CE-17-081

Project Location/Address: Citywide, City of Long Beach

Project Activity/Description: Define and allow urban agricultural uses within all zones in the City of Long Beach. This zoning text amendment allows agriculture use but does not include or approve any particular project or involve any specific parcel at this time.

Public Agency Approving Project: **City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California**

Applicant Name: Long Beach Development Services

Mailing Address: 333 West Ocean Boulevard

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

BELOW THIS LINE FOR STAFF USE ONLY

Application Number: 1703-41 Planner's Initials: CK

Required Permits: Ordinance (Zoning Text Amendment)

THE ABOVE PROJECT HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE EXEMPT FROM CEQA IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
STATE GUIDELINES SECTION 15308 Protection of the environment

15304 Minor Alterations to Land

Statement of support for this finding: This action will amend the zoning code to allow urban agricultural uses, including farming, which represents a minor alteration similar to landscaping and is enacting to promote local food sources, and improve the appearance and use of vacant lots

Contact Person: Christopher Koontz Contact Phone: 562-570-6288

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: April 24, 2017