



RexRichardson
 Long Beach City Councilmember, 9th District

Date: May 10, 2016

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rex Richardson, Ninth District *RR*
 Councilmember Lena Gonzalez, First District *LG*
 Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal, Second District *SL*
 Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District *(RU)*

Subject: **Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Program Feasibility**

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to request the City Manager explore the feasibility of implementing the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Program, and report back to City Council in 60 days.

Discussion

In 2013, California passed the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act (AB 551). This bill allows cities and counties to give tax breaks to property owners that allow their vacant properties of less than 3 acres to be used as community gardens or urban farms with a 5-year commitment. On April 5, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to implement an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Ordinance and Program. This approval allows for cities within LA County to participate in the program, upon adoption of a resolution.

Urban agriculture provides many benefits to residents including: education about fresh, healthy food and the effort it takes to produce it, vibrant green spaces, community building and a source of economic development. The City has recently been adopting policies and legislation that support urban agriculture. In October 2014, the City adopted the Healthy Communities Policy which establishes a framework for developing each neighborhood into a healthy, prosperous and livable community. One of its objectives under the Healthy Food Access Goal is to "encourage the use of temporary vacant and/or open space for urban agriculture." In addition, in 2015, the City Council voted to approve an ease of the rules governing chickens, goats and bees at residents' homes. Both of these reflect the City's emphasis on sustainability and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

A feasibility report will allow the City to assess the County's Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Program and Ordinance and see where the City fits in.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact for this report.