



R-8



REX RICHARDSON
LONG BEACH VICE MAYOR

Date: June 13, 2017

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

From: Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, Ninth District *R.R.*
Councilmember Jeannine Pearce, Second District *J.P.*
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District *R.U.*

Subject: **Farmers Market Access Policy Feasibility**

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to request the City Manager to explore the feasibility of establishing a Farmers Market Ordinance that requires farmers markets in Long Beach to accept CalFresh Electronic Benefit Transfer cards; and

Recommendation to review a reduction of permit fees, license fees, and any other barriers to establishing farmers markets in Long Beach, and report back to City Council in 60 days.

Discussion

Over the last 30 years, the rate of obesity in the United States has increased at a rapid rate. In the 1970s, the national average for overweight or obese adults represented 15% of the total population. According to the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, 36.7% of Long Beach adults are overweight as compared to 35.9% of all Los Angeles County adults, and 31.2% are obese as compared to 22.2% of all Los Angeles County adults (Community Health Assessment, 2013). Research also shows that low income individuals account for a disproportionate amount of this total (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2012).

Low income communities often face limitations and issues relating to affordable healthy foods. Proximity, limited transportation, and cost frequently create dependency on processed foods and corner store markets. Lack of healthy food options can negatively affect nutrition and overall health. Farmers markets have the potential to eliminate many of the barriers to healthier food options faced by communities.

CalFresh (federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP) is a federally mandated, state-supervised, and county-operated government entitlement program that provides monthly food benefits to assist low-income households in purchasing the food they need to maintain adequate nutritional levels and improve health conditions. Such benefits are only permitted at locations that accept EBT card payments, with a farmers market being an allowable acceptance site.



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Long Beach is known for its emphasis on encouraging healthy lifestyles, sustainability and livability. 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 "Ensure all residents have access to fresh and healthy foods." By ensuring that all farmers markets in Long Beach accept CalFresh, we can improve the accessibility and affordability of fresh food for residents of all income levels.

Fiscal Impact

There is no significant fiscal impact for this report.