

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT relative to proposed no-cost License Agreement with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) to utilize and maintain the City-owned property located at 2254 East 103rd Street as a community garden referred to as the "I Heart Watts Garden".

Recommendations for Council action:

1. FIND, pursuant to Los Angeles City Charter Section 371(e)(10) and Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 10.15(a)(10), that the use of competitive bidding would be undesirable and impractical for this contract and that:
 - a. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) is uniquely positioned to operate and provide programming for the community garden in Watts, leveraging its longstanding relationships with local residents, community organizations, and educational institutions.
 - b. HACLA will collaborate with community groups, residents of Jordan Downs, and students from Jordan High School to develop and maintain the garden, ensuring it serves as a sustainable source of fresh food, environmental education, and community engagement.
 - c. Given HACLA's expertise in community development, access to resources, and established presence in Watts, it is the most qualified and effective entity to oversee this initiative, ensuring successful implementation and long-term benefits.
2. AUTHORIZE the Department of General Services (GSD) to negotiate and execute a new license agreement with the HACLA for a community garden at 2254 East 103rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90002 under the terms and conditions as substantially outlined in the April 1, 2025 Municipal Facilities Committee report, attached to the Council File.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The MFC reports that there is no General Fund impact as this is a no-cost license agreement. HACLA is responsible for tenant improvements, utility, maintenance, fencing, security, custodial, and landscaping costs.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On April 23, 2025, your Committee considered an April 1, 2025 MFC report relative to proposed no-cost License Agreement with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) to utilize and maintain the City-owned property located at 2254 East 103rd Street as a community garden referred to as the "I Heart Watts Garden." According to the MFC, pursuant to Motion (McOskey – Hutt), adopted February 7, 2024, the Council

directed GSD to negotiate and execute a new license agreement with HACLA to utilize a 3,250 square-foot(sf) City-owned vacant lot as a community garden. HACLA will collaborate with community groups to identify the use and operator for the lot. Once an operator is selected, the City will work with them to conduct a Community Benefits Analysis (CBA), assessing the value of proposed services against the market rate of the property. The proposed selection will be reviewed and approved by the MFC.

Upon approval, the licensee may sublicense the lot to the independent operator through a Lot Use Agreement, with the licensee's rights and obligations extended to each operator at their designated location. This community (Watts) has been designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as an urban food desert, with limited access to fresh produce. Residents in food deserts face higher risks of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. To address this, HACLA aims to improve healthy food access in Watts by establishing community harvest hubs. HACLA has secured two grants to support this initiative:

- Community Project Funds from U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán's office
- Urban Agriculture Grant from the California Department of Agriculture Honorable City Council - 2 - March 27, 2025 In partnership with residents of Jordan Downs and the students from Jordan High School, HACLA will develop the community garden to provide fresh food and educational opportunities. The plan includes installing or providing the following:
 - Irrigation system
 - Shade structure
 - Raised planters
 - Fruit trees
 - Semi-annual harvest events
 - Educational programs on composting and gardening This community garden will serve as a valuable resource, promoting food security, sustainability, and community engagement in Watts.

After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the recommendations contained in the MFC report. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Government Operations Committee

COUNCILMEMBER VOTE

PADILLA: YES

LEE: YES

JURADO: ABSENT

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4/23/25

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-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-