

MOTION

Urban farming and community gardens encourage natural spaces where neighbors come together to plant flowers, fruit, vegetables, and herbs and create pockets of edible landscape. In communities with high rates of food insecurity and little green space, these activities can yield high benefits and grow out of necessity where grocery stores may be few and far between, and opportunities to connect with nature are rare.

As the City of Los Angeles is home to varying built environments and the City is urgently deploying ways to address the climate crisis, urban agriculture, specifically through community gardens, has become a way to sustainably and locally provide food and green space for neighborhoods in the region.

As these needs related to public health and the future of the climate are ever-evolving, policies guiding how the City can better engage with local, sustainable practices such as community gardening must also be adapted and looked at in different contexts throughout the times. Non-profit organizations, as prevalent caretakers of community gardens, not only provide a sense of community, but also have increasingly engaged in eco-social enterprises that both create nature-based healing through food, jobs, skills training, and wellness programs for individuals experiencing homelessness or were formerly incarcerated and maintain a stable space of healing through providing a sense of community to many.

Ensuring that the City's policy allows for these spaces to continue to provide, and thrive, for the people that they serve is an important task as we approach reaching our shared climate and local economic development goals. "Truck Gardening" is a hyper-local activity that marries a sustainable use of land and economic development on-site for the produce grown.

In 2017, the City Council adopted ordinances related to the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone (UAIZ) (CPC-2016-3161-CA), amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to define a UAIZ to support the City's green and healthy community goals and to implement the State's Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Act. The action specifically related the UAIZ to the uses of farming and truck gardening because those are existing land uses that are permitted in essentially every zone in the City today. LAMC Section 12.08 permits truck gardening in the R1 (single-family residential) zone. Truck gardening is defined as follows:

TRUCK GARDENING. The cultivation of berries, flowers, fruits, grains, herbs, mushrooms, nuts, ornamental plants, seedlings or vegetables for use on-site or sale or distribution off-site. (Added by Ord. No. 181,188, Eff. 7/18/10.)

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As currently defined, truck gardening restricts on-site sales of produce. For small urban gardens across the City that have adapted their business practice to be able to provide produce on-site to local community members and organizations, the LAMC does not allow for the ability of these sales on-site. Opportunities for activity to occur on-site allow for residents who depend on the produce to access it more readily and would not cause the producer to have to commute offsite and potentially increase carbon emissions and inaccessible business practices for the residents in the neighborhood.

Upon further review of LAMC Section 12.03 with stakeholders that are committed to ensuring that on-site truck gardening sales are harmonious with surrounding residential neighborhoods, a potential change related to limiting on-site sales activity to every other week and not more than an extended duration of time could be a palatable, seamless transition for implementing this revision. This policy change would allow small urban farms to offer on-site sales of fresh, healthy food to the local community. Understanding what the impacts of this would be for the surrounding community is imperative and needs to be addressed through potential mitigation measures.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney to prepare and present a draft ordinance to amend Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.03 with language that would allow for the cultivation of produce listed in Section 12.03 for use on-site and sale or distribution on or off-site to be limited to every other week, conducted only on Saturday or Sunday, and restricted to occur for no more than 4 hours.

PRESENTED BY:


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SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL