AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL November 17, 2026

Supporting Fresh Food Access at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Campus

Access to fresh, affordable food is essential to health, yet many communities continue to face significant barriers to obtaining nutritious produce. Residents of Service Planning Area (SPA) 6 experience the greatest barriers in Los Angeles County (County). According to the Department of Public Health's Community Health Profiles, 40.7 percent of SPA 6 residents live in food-insecure households, and 43.4 percent of adults live in nutrition-insecure households, the highest rates of any SPA.[1] Only 56.6 percent of children in SPA 6 have good or excellent access to fresh fruits and vegetables, also the lowest rate in the County, and nearly one in three residents does not live near a supermarket or grocery store.[2]

These inequities have direct health consequences. SPA 6 has the highest rate of diagnosed diabetes in the County, with 16.7 percent of adults affected.[3] Diet-related illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension drive preventable hospitalizations, amputations, and early deaths, disproportionately affecting communities in South Los Angeles.

[1] Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Community Health Profiles, Service Planning Area 6 (data from the 2023 Los Angeles County Health Survey), https://ph-lacounty.hub.arcgis.com/pages/chp
[2] Ibid. 1
[3] Ibid. 1

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MOTION

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Farmers' markets play a critical role in expanding access to healthy, affordable food. Since 2017, with a brief interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA), doing business as Food Access LA, has operated the Watts Willowbrook Farmers' Market at the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Medical Campus. The market brings fresh produce directly to patients, staff, and surrounding Willowbrook residents and accepts CalFresh and WIC, helping reduce cost barriers for low-income households.

The passage of H.R. 1 in July 2025 heightened the urgency of this work. The law enacted the largest reduction in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funding in history, cutting an estimated $187 billion over ten years.[4] As families lose food benefits, farmers' markets that accept CalFresh experience reduced customer participation, and the small farmers who supply them face income losses. At the same time, Market Match, California's program that doubles CalFresh dollars spent on fresh produce at farmers' markets, received only one-time funding for Fiscal Year 2026-27, below sustainable levels, and federal matching funds have been withheld.[5]

Despite these challenges, the Watts Willowbrook Farmers' Market's role in the community has only grown. Beyond offering fresh, seasonal produce, the market serves as a hub where community-based organizations share resources and hosts free nutrition classes and special programming in partnership with the MLK Outpatient Center. It also serves as a trusted community third space where neighbors gather, connect, and access resources such as health screenings, tree giveaways, and other services that meet residents where they are. The Department of Health Services has affirmed the market's value as a direct link between medical care and healthy eating, and as a tool to help reduce diet-related disease.

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[4] Congressional Research Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Related Nutrition Programs in P.L. 119-21: An Overview, R48552 (citing Congressional Budget Office estimates), July 23, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R48552/R48552.7.pdf

[5] "Market Match program secures $15 million in funding," *Gazetteer SF*, July 2, 2026, https://sf.gazetteer.co/market-match-program-secures-15-million-in-funding; Ecology Center, "Farmers' Markets Remain a Lifeline During the Federal Shutdown,"

In March 2026, the Board of Supervisors approved the motion, “Fiscal Stewardship and Equitable Access in County Fee Waivers,” [6] directing the Chief Executive Officer to develop a Countywide Fee Waiver Policy that prioritizes events with the greatest equity impact, with final recommendations expected by the end of 2026. The Watts Willowbrook Farmers’ Market reflects these priorities: it is free and open to the public, accepts CalFresh and WIC, and serves a community with the County’s highest rates of food insecurity and diabetes. However, the market cannot wait for the policy to be finalized. Without a renewed license agreement, the community risks losing a vital source of fresh, affordable produce at a time when families are already facing reductions in food assistance.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Find that the proposed granting of a non-exclusive, gratis license agreement to Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) for the operation of a farmers market on Los Angeles County (County)-owned property is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15304(e) – Minor Alterations to Land and Class Four (4) of the County's Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines.
2. Find, pursuant to Government Code section 26227, that the portion of the County’s Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Campus proposed for the farmers market is not currently needed for exclusive County purposes during the specified Wednesdays and hours of market operation, which will be defined in the market license agreement.
3. Find that the services to be provided by SEE-LA are necessary to meet the social needs of County residents and serve a public purpose by increasing access to fresh, affordable food in a community with the County’s highest rates of food insecurity and diabetes.
4. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or his designee, in consultation with the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS), to waive the day-use permit

[6] https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/214035.pdf

fee of $200 per market day for the duration of the market's license term, not to exceed 55 market days per year.

5. Delegate authority to the CEO, or his designee, in coordination with the Director of DHS, to negotiate, execute, and issue a gratis license agreement to SEE-LA within 60 days, for a two-year term, for the operation of a farmers' market at the County-owned Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Campus.
6. Authorize the CEO, or his designee, to execute ancillary documentation approved as to form by County Counsel, and to take any other actions necessary and appropriate to implement and effectuate the market license.

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(EA/YV/JY)