AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS **April 5, 2016**

Adoption of the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Ordinance

Relates to Item #45

On September 22, 2015, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion (MRT) instructing various County Departments to collaborate on the development of an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Ordinance (the Ordinance). This Ordinance would implement AB 551, the California Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone (UAIZ) Act, which encourages urban agriculture and increases healthy food resources by offering a reduced property tax assessment for eligible properties in urbanized areas (Program).

Given the Assessor's estimate that almost 57,000 parcels throughout Los Angeles County (County) (including almost 8,000 in unincorporated areas) would be eligible for participation, the Program provides a significant financial incentive to transform blighted and previously defaulted properties into more productive uses. In addition, this program will incentivize new sources of local produce within food deserts, promote community engagement and enhance the quality of life for surrounding residents.

While urban agricultural uses are appropriate in certain zones, as defined by the County or local zoning code, there are specific areas where agricultural purposes are not advisable,

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including within a National Recreation Area, a Significant Ecological Area, or a Sensitive Environmental Resource Area. Therefore, these areas have been exempted from the County's proposed Program.

All former Redevelopment Areas are also classified for a similar exemption given the Auditor-Controller's concerns that 20 of the County's 71 former redevelopment agencies are currently short in generating sufficient revenue to pay their enforceable obligations. However, this policy should be modified for a number of reasons. First, a significant majority of redevelopment agencies are currently up to date in enforceable obligation payments and should not be precluded from participation. Secondly, the Program is expected to be a tool to help improve and revitalize previously vacant, blighted property, of which a significant proportion of properties located within former redevelopment agency areas could potentially be ideal candidates. Thirdly, the County plans to create a $3 million cap on the Program, thereby minimizing the ability for Program participation to meaningfully further reduce a Redevelopment Successor Agency's ability to pay their enforceable obligations.

Instead of exempting former redevelopment areas from the Program outright, the County should instead work with the cities (and their successor agencies) of concern, all of which must adopt their own resolution to authorize participation in the Program, and encourage them to become up to date on their enforceable obligations before authorizing these properties to be eligible for participation.

With this modification, the County's Program has the ability to be a significant tool in addressing the alarming issues of insufficient food access and blight that permeate too many of the diverse communities throughout the County.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Adopt the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Ordinance, and associated recommendations, with the provision that the ordinance be modified to expand eligibility to include properties within former Redevelopment Areas;
2. Direct County Counsel to return to the Board with a revised final version of the ordinance; and
3. Direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a letter, on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, to the Mayors of all cities throughout the County of Los Angeles informing them of the County's adoption of the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Program and encouraging their participation. For the 20 cities whose former Redevelopment Agencies are outstanding in their enforceable obligation payments, the letter may encourage them to become current in their payments prior to allowing properties within former redevelopment areas to be eligible for participation.

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