



City Councilmember Scott Sherman

District 7

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Council Committee Unanimously Approves Sherman's Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone

New Program to Reduce Blighted Properties and Encourage Community Gardens Heads to Full Council

SAN DIEGO – The Smart Growth & Land Use Committee unanimously approved Councilmember Scott Sherman's proposed New Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, a new program that will help expand community access to fresh produce through a property tax incentive for urban agriculture on vacant, blighted land.

This new program will provide communities throughout the entire City an economic tool to incentivize the development of community gardens on eyesore properties. An Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone reduces the property tax of a participating parcel owner in exchange for a minimum five year contract for the usage of the site for urban agriculture.

The new measure is made possible as a result of State Assembly Bill 551 introduced by Assemblymember Phil Ting (D) which was signed into law during the 2013 state legislative session.

"As an active member of the San Carlos Community garden, I am excited to bring forward a program that will help incentivize the development of urban agriculture in all San Diego neighborhoods as well as give residents and property owners an additional tool to transform blighted property in their communities," said Councilmember Sherman.

"The new Agricultural Incentive Zone will help further our mission of developing and maintaining an equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system in San Diego," said Elly Brown, Director of the Food System Alliance.

"This new initiative will help bring fresh fruits and vegetables to residents in Southeast San Diego, many of whom live within what is considered a food insecure area," said Diane Moss, CEO of Project New Village.

"The new program will not only bring much needed produce to communities in need, it will also help introduce the joy of farming to those who may have never had the opportunity to grow their own produce," said Eric Larson, Executive Director of San Diego County Farm Bureau.

"The Human Relations Commission believes that all city residents should have equal access to healthy and fresh food, yet that is not the reality many of our low-income communities face," said Joel Trambley MD, Chair of the San Diego Human Relations Commission.

The measure will be moved to the full council for a vote next month. A similar resolution will be heard before the San Diego County Board of Supervisors next month as well. In order for the measure to be implemented, both will need to pass.

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