

# *a healthy LA*



# ...eats well

## Locally Produced Food

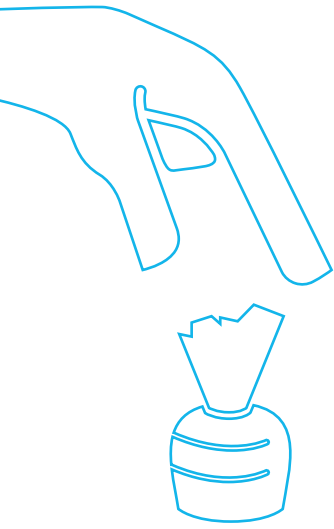
## Access to Nutritious Foods

The types, amount, and availability of healthy food is just as important in promoting healthier lifestyles and combating chronic disease as is increased physical activity. For many families, the consumption of too many cheap calories and too little exercise has caused a diabetes and obesity epidemic.<sup>16</sup> Compounding the impact of cheap calories and reduced amounts of exercise is the fact that there simply are not enough healthy food outlets and places growing and selling nutritious foods to serve the varied neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

"Within a 200 mile landward radius of Los Angeles is a remarkable abundance of incredible food. California leads the country in agricultural exports, particularly of fruits, vegetables and nuts... yet, it appears that only 1% of the food grown so close to us, is actually consumed here."<sup>17</sup> "Southern California is one of the most abundant and productive agricultural regions in the nation, yet Los Angeles has a hunger crisis that dwarfs most US cities. Indeed, Los Angeles is the "epicenter of hunger."<sup>18</sup>

Providing locally produced, nutritious foods positively impacts personal health and well-being. Health benefits are provided by engaging in the physical activity to create gardens and cultivate crops. Urban gardens can provide broader advantages - boosting the local economy and improving communities by bettering air, water, and land quality through reductions in travel and shipping distances and revitalizing vacant or underutilized areas. Another key component of healthy eating includes fresh food options at retail markets. In areas where healthy food is difficult to come by, mobile markets, farmer's markets, and food vendors can provide access to fresh and healthy local produce.

Those economic and environmental benefits directly affect individual health as does the increased nutritional value of fresh food. Cultivating and consuming locally grown food can ensure a high level of food quality, take advantage of L.A.'s climatic advantages, and reinforce healthy eating behaviors.



# Locally-Produced Food

Studies have shown that the places in which we live and work directly influence how and what we eat. Inserting small-scale urban agriculture and community gardens into the urban environment is one way in which L.A. can increase its local food production giving Angelenos more options in deciding what to eat as well as a more reliable level of food security for the City. In almost all L.A. neighborhoods, land is available for small-scale community gardens. These gardens can also serve as learning opportunities and as centers for healthy neighborhood activities. In the most urban of environments, innovative urban farmers are utilizing rooftops and front yards. Schools, public parks, and libraries, for instance, can more than produce food; they are also appropriate locations for demonstration and educational gardens for community residents and visitors. Food producing sites need not all be the same. In fact, the type and intensity of food producing places should be tailored to each individual community, better responding to local conditions, cultures and dietary needs.

## \$12 billion

In 2006, Los Angeles County spent \$12 billion on health care costs and lost productivity associated with obesity and physical inactivity.<sup>19</sup>

## 1 in 7 jobs

The food system accounts for one out of every seven jobs in Los Angeles County. If calculated as an industry, it would be the largest employer in the County.<sup>20</sup>

**Community Agriculture** *Community agriculture can be incorporated by varying mechanisms appropriate to each neighborhood.*

- Provide publicly accessible areas for community gardens.
- Utilize parkways and other available public spaces for gardens.
- Encourage front yard and back yard gardens on residential properties.
- Encourage habitat cultivation and restoration.

**Urban Agriculture** *Urban agriculture and small commercial scale farms are potential food sources throughout the City.*

- Utilizing available land in urban areas for agriculture provides an economic boost through job creation, makes fresh food available locally, and reduces dependence on outside food sources.
- Urban agriculture may be provided by small- to mid-sized farms, hydroponic/technology assisted operations or in the form of building retrofits.
- Locate gardens on nontraditional areas such as rooftops and decks.

**Demonstration and educational gardens** *Gardens can serve as a model of local growing potential and value.*

- Learning Gardens and Farms foster interaction and physical activity as well as exposure to agricultural cultivation methods and fresh food.
- Provide demonstration/educational gardens for schools, libraries and other institutions providing the public opportunities to learn about growing techniques and preparation methods.





Signage in community gardens provide educational and community art opportunities *{Brooklyn, NY}*



Community farming builds relationships *{Chicago, IL}*



Beekeeping is popular in urban garden settings *{Chicago, IL}*



Disused alleyways and courtyards can provide food growing opportunities *{Paris, France}*



Utilize available land in urban areas for community gardens and urban agriculture *{Vancouver, Canada}*



Technology assisted farms can provide high-yield produce where land is scarce *{New York, NY}*



Publicly accessible fruit trees are abundant in Los Angeles and provide a source of nutritious food *{Los Angeles, CA}*

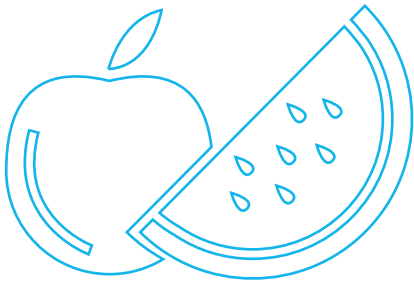


Nontraditional elements, such as street parkways, can be used as food-growing opportunities *{Seattle, Washington}*

## Why This Matters To...

**YOU** Replacing consumption of cheap calories associated with high-sugar, packaged foods with locally produced, nutritious options reduces the odds of obesity and other chronic diseases.

**L.A.** Local agriculture contributes to a stronger economic base and benefits the environment.



# Access to Nutritious Foods

An increase in availability and access to healthy food opportunities is vital to improved eating habits and healthier lifestyles. Just as in food production, food access is accommodated by a range of scales and formats. The proximity, location, and number of healthy food outlets is directly associated with the amount of healthy foods consumed. This relationship is especially magnified in transit-dependent neighborhoods where access is typically limited to walking and biking distances. [Research also clearly indicates that proximity to full service supermarkets is associated with lower obesity, yet access to fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods is limited in many urban neighborhoods, particularly in low-income communities.](#)<sup>23</sup>

Healthy food access opportunities can vary greatly, from traditional retail markets, to mobile markets, to street vendors and farmers' markets. Increasing the amount of healthy food access points can provide the fundamental elements needed for a healthy diet. Environmental benefits are realized by a reduction of vehicle miles traveled to and from points of purchase and economic gains are provided by an increase in local job opportunities. These increase the health advantages of local access to nutritious food.

## 56 miles

Local food purchases reduce vehicle trip miles from an average of 1,500 miles to 56 miles, benefiting the environment and the local economy.<sup>21</sup>

## 1/2 of food dollars

Americans spend about half their food dollars on meals eaten away from home.<sup>22</sup>

**Retail Food** *Varied retail food outlets provide convenient points of access and consumption of healthy foods oriented to a neighborhood scale.*

- Encourage the establishment of small markets and shops selling healthy foods.
- Support the establishment of restaurants serving healthy food options rather than typical fast food outlets.

**Alternative food outlets** *A variety of food outlets provides opportunities for non-conventional food access and supports smaller, local growers.*

- Farmers' markets provide direct farm-to-plate opportunities where local producers can interact with consumers and provide food options tailored to local customs and cultures.
- Mobile markets and vendors are best utilized where underserved or access-inhibited communities exist, providing a much needed fresh food outlet without the needed infrastructure or large amount of capital typical of traditional retail formats.





Mobile markets bring nutritious food to access-inhibited communities (Amsterdam, Netherlands)



Farmers markets provide farm-to-table fresh food opportunities (Olympia, WA)



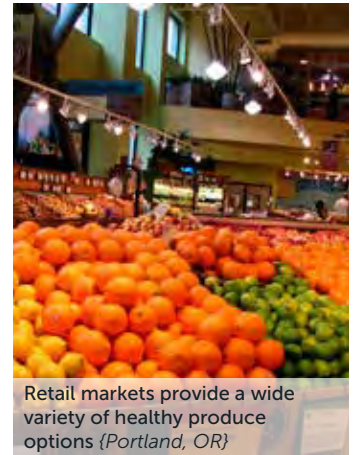
Non-traditional produce delivery increases access to healthy food (Boston, MA)



Community-based delivery methods can be utilized in food-deserts (Boston, MA)



Food warehouses and distribution centers supply fresh food to communities and stabilize the food supply (Atlanta, GA)



Retail markets provide a wide variety of healthy produce options (Portland, OR)



Farmers' markets encourage direct interaction between farmers and consumers enabling access to fresh food (Hollywood, CA)



Community based markets can provide culturally specific food and produce (Istanbul, Turkey)

## Why This Matters To...

**YOU** Increased access to healthy food can reduce hunger and lessen obesity due to poor nutrition.

**L.A.** Cost savings associated with healthier diets and reduced chronic diseases can potentially save the City over \$600 million over 5 years. <sup>24</sup>