



**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

May 3, 2021

Board of Supervisors  
Santa Clara County  
70 West Hedding Street  
East Wing, 10th Floor  
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Supervisors:

SPUR respectfully requests your support for the County of Santa Clara Food System Workplan: An Assessment and Roadmap for the Development of a Comprehensive Food, Restaurants, Agriculture and Health Access Initiative (ID# 105282). The workplan provides high level goals, recommendations and strategies to reduce food insecurity and develop a more resilient and equitable food system.

As the Workplan explains, COVID-19 caused rapid and drastic shifts in the food system including a doubling of food insecurity, the plummeting of demand at restaurants and supply chain disruptions to list just a few. To emerge from this crisis stronger, we must learn from these lessons and build back better. Timely implementation of the priority recommendations in the Workplan is one way to do just that.

### **Reducing Food Insecurity**

California's safety net is failing in two ways: Too many Californians are falling through its gaps and, for those Californians who are supported by the safety net, many find that it doesn't provide enough support to truly help them make ends meet. A number of recommendations and strategies in the Work Plan help address these concerns.

First, as we noted in our report *Healthy Food Within Reach*, maximizing enrollment in federally funded food assistance programs is one of the best strategies we have available for improving food security for Californians.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, improving access to school meals is one of the best strategies we have available for improving food security and nutrition for California kids. We are excited to see these federal programs and strategies for improving participation prominently featured in Goal give of the Workplan.

In addition to maximizing enrollment, SPUR is supportive of improving benefits to better meet the need of individuals and families. Strategy 5.1 of the Work plan specifically calls out continuing to support and expanding healthy food incentive programs such as Double Up Food Bucks and Market Match to leverage SNAP benefits. This strategy is key to improving food benefit adequacy for Santa Clara County residents.

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<sup>1</sup> SPUR, *Healthy Food Within Reach*, February 2015: [www.spur.org/foodaccess](http://www.spur.org/foodaccess)

## **Developing a More Resilient and Equitable Food System**

As we noted in SPUR's report *Locally Nourished*, preserving the region's agricultural land and sustaining a thriving food economy are key to unlocking the benefits of the regional food economy.<sup>2</sup> The future of farming in Santa Clara County is contingent on long-term protection of agricultural land and the Workplan outlines important steps in securing this future within goal three.

Furthermore, as highlighted in strategy 4.1 the Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP) is another way to unlock the benefits of the regional food economy. The GFPP not only encourages purchasing healthy food that supports the local economy but the fair treatment of food system workers, humane treatment of animals, and environmental sustainability. This cross-cutting policy moves the County towards a number of its stated goals.

By both adopting the recommendations in the Workplan and supporting timely implementation, the Board will take much needed strides down the path toward a more healthy, sustainable and just food system.

Sincerely,



Katie Ettman  
Food and Agriculture Policy Associate



Diego Ortiz  
Food and Agriculture Program Manager

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<sup>2</sup> SPUR, *Locally Nourished*, May 2013: [www.spur.org/locallynourished](http://www.spur.org/locallynourished)