



July 17, 2019

MEMO TO: Mayor and City Council Members – City of La Mesa

FROM: Mary England, President & CEO

RE: Support Grossmont Center for the Management
of the La Mesa Farmers' Market

BACKGROUND:

The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce was proud to respond to the City's La Mesa Farmers' Market Request for Proposal. With the 3-2 vote to move the Market and look for a Market Manager, we wanted to be a part of the solution. We were not aware at the time, that Grossmont Center would be an applicant. Upon reviewing Grossmont Center's proposal, it is obvious to our leadership team that they are the perfect partner to manage the Market and continue the La Mesa tradition. Opening in 1961, Grossmont Center for the past 58 years has been a leader within our community and the region. This 125-acre shopping mall has seen tremendous change throughout the years. Today, Grossmont Center prides itself on giving back to local charities and the local community. Their proposal is to manage a not-for-profit market. Each month Grossmont will designate one La Mesa based charity to support with the funds generated from the market. This philanthropic culture began years ago, when the Cushman family gave Sharp Grossmont Hospital the land where the hospital currently sits today.

Grossmont Center hosts an average of 50 unique events per year and certainly has the staffing to manage the weekly La Mesa Farmers' Market. With the addition of the La Mesa Farmers' Market, Grossmont Center will hire a full-time employee to manage the Market. This additional employee will ensure the Market's success, as well as the commitment of the Cushman Family Foundation.

The location of Grossmont Center, the free parking and the area in which to hold the Market are significant to the overall success of the La Mesa Farmers' Market. The property allows the Farmers' Market to operate in all weather conditions. In the event of rain, the Center has the option of temporarily moving the Market inside their parking garage. Unlike other outdoor markets, Grossmont Center has the option to have a completely covered Market year-round.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION:

Grossmont Center has committed a \$200k annual operating budget to manage and produce the La Mesa Farmers' Market. This budget includes the management, equipment expense, media advertising, vendors and funds allocated for market research, as well as a contingency fund. This aggressive budget exemplifies the passion and commitment of the Grossmont Center team and the Cushman Family Foundation and one that cannot be denied.

CHARITABLE COMPONENT:

The La Mesa Farmers' Market at Grossmont Center will be managed as a "not-for-profit" activity. The proceeds of the market each month will be donated to La Mesa based charities. Those charities will be able to participate in the local Market, as well as have funds to support their future endeavors. This generous and philanthropic gesture will be a welcome addition to many La Mesa based charities, allowing them to further their individual mission and potentially enhance the lives of many.

It is for these reasons and many more, that the Board of Directors of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, withdraw our proposal to manage the La Mesa Farmers' Market and support Grossmont Center as the most viable option to manage the La Mesa Farmers Market.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary England". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mary England
President & CEO