

December 15 2017

Joseph Gunter
Mayor
City of Salinas
200 Lincoln Avenue
Salinas, CA 93901

Honorable Mayor Gunter,

As you may already know, the City of Salinas Planning Commission recently held our 6-month review and voted unanimously to allow the continued operation of El Mercado Popular's outdoor market at the Salinas Sports Complex, we are so pleased and thankful for the opportunity to continue to provide Salinas residents with another shopping and entertainment opportunity.

As we shared with city staff and commissioners, the market attracts on the average 70 to 90 food, produce and new/used merchandise vendors and between 200 and 500 participants on any given Wednesday night. The market has also created 7-10 new jobs from ticket booth attendants, security guards and vendor liaisons.

Many of our first-time vendors have been assisted to obtain their state, county and health department permits and for some it provided an opportunity to begin or expand their businesses. We are very proud to be part of this mini-business incubator here in Salinas. All market vendors are required to have all necessary and required permits and licenses.

We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to offer an outdoor market to the Salinas community but just like any other business, we must ensure its success by continuing to be innovative, flexible and adaptive to changes as needed. In order for the market to continue to be viable, there needs to be a few changes to adapt to changes in seasonal weather, local workforce changes, shopping patterns and retail leakage.

CONTINUE MARKET OPERATION

As we have successfully passed our six (6) month review and unanimous vote by the City of Salinas Planning Commission to continue the operation of El Mercado Popular's outdoor market and as per Resolution No. 21144 (NCS), we are respectfully requesting that the Salinas City Council approve the continued operation of the outdoor market

and authorize a multiple year lease agreement with the Salinas Sports Complex management.

MARKET HOURS

The current market schedule (Every Wednesday 4-8 pm) has been pretty stable and can continue to work but a change to the hours should be considered for a couple of reasons. 1. **Local workforce changes:** The local harvest season has come to an end and many agricultural workers and agricultural related workers are off and will be off for the next few months. An hour earlier start would allow for market attendees to be able to come to the market earlier and an hour extra after will allow for non-agricultural workers and their families to come to the market after their work day. 2. **Vendors and traffic:** adding an hour before and two hours after will allow vendors to arrive and depart at staggered times to avoid traffic issues the Salinas Sports Complex entrance and exits.

We are respectfully requesting that the Salinas City Council consider changing the market's hours from the current hours of **4:00 pm to 8:00 PM to 3:00 PM to 10:00 PM**. This schedule has worked really well in San Jose and other cities that hold afternoon/evening markets. **All amplified music and sound will end at 8:00 PM as it currently does.**

VENDORS

The market currently accommodates between 70 and 90 vendors, the market in order to meet all of its financial obligations and continue to be economically viable must increase the number of vendors currently allowed. There are dozens of vendors wanting to sell at the market on a waiting list since the market started operating. There is an opportunity to increase that number to allow for additional vendors to participate in the market. We are requesting that the Salinas City Council allow for **an additional 20 vendors** to be allowed to sell at the market.

DISABLED & ELDERLY VENDORS

Vendors in the Midway are not allowed to keep their vehicles with their booth as per Fire Department requirements, The grass area connected to the cemented area called the "Midway" is currently is currently being used to accommodate a small number of elderly and disabled vendors that are unable to unload heavy merchandise or furniture off their vehicles, in communication and approval by the Salinas Sports Complex Management, we have allowed elderly and disabled vendors to setup in this area and allowed them to keep their vehicles with their booths.

ADDITIONAL MARKET DAY

There is significant interest from market participants and vendors to add one more market day per week. It should be known that many of the current market vendors are new or current Salinas business owners and this would only be an expansion of their businesses on days that are normally slow at their current locations. Having an additional market day would not take away from other local businesses but rather

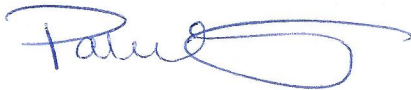
expand their ability to offer their goods in another location. In discussion with representatives of SUBA and other business organizations, we all agree that hundreds of Salinas residents every Sunday attend the flea markets at the Red Barn, Santa Cruz, Watsonville and San Jose. Adding a Sunday market will help capture some of this retail leakage and provide another shopping option for Salinas residents. We would like the Salinas City Council to consider letting us add a few Sunday afternoons from **1:00 PM to 9:00 PM** to as additional market days. Our request is to hold the market **ONLY** on the following Sundays: April 1, 8, 15 & 22, May 13 & 20, June 10 & 17, July 1 & 29, August 5, 12 & 19, September 2, 16 & 30 and October 21 & 28. **All amplified music and sound will end at 6:00 PM.**

Our outdoor market concept has been very successful by providing affordable selling space and by combining organic farmers, food vendors, new and used merchandise vendors as well as government agencies, community organizations and local schools in a single location. We strongly believe that with the additional modifications to the market's operational regulations would allow the market to be financially viable and continue to provide an opportunity for small businesses new and old to start or expand their businesses. For Salinas residents, our market will continue to provide a safe and affordable shopping and entertainment opportunity for them and their families.

We have discussed all of these proposed changes with the Salinas Sports Complex management and they are supportive of the changes. Therefore, we respectfully requested that you and the Salinas City Council consider our suggested modifications to our operational regulations and that this request be scheduled at one of your upcoming city council meetings for discussion and consideration.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. I can be reached at (831) 235-1856 or via email at rodriguezfarms@aol.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patricia', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Patricia Rodríguez
President & Owner
El Mercado Popular, Inc.

cc: Salinas City Council