

From: [Camporeale, Karen](#)
To: [Hughes, Ryan](#); [BOR_OfficeStaff](#); [McKeown, Michael](#)
Subject: Re: Tax Breaks to Incentivize Grocery Stores
Date: Monday, September 28, 2026 6:34:41 PM

Please place this letter of support and the legislative record for LR32.023

Best,
Karen

From: Diana Kolaj <d.ianak.olajd.k@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2026 10:13 AM
To: Hughes, Ryan <RHughes@StamfordCT.gov>
Cc: BOR_OfficeStaff <BOR_OfficeStaff@StamfordCT.gov>; Stamford Land Use <StamfordLandUse@StamfordCT.gov>
Subject: Tax Breaks to Incentivize Grocery Stores

Good Morning Representatives and Land Use Board,

I just read the Stamford Advocate piece regarding tax breaks to incentivize urban grocery stores. I know I am writing to you quite early, but I've got something to say as a long-time employee at Fairgate Farm, where our mission is to address a food-desert too.

We are an urban farm by downtown, growing fresh food all year round in a fresh-food-desert; the West Side and surrounding downtown does not have high-quality produce nearby. We remove financial barriers: our farmstand operates twice weekly evening and morning on a Pay-What-You-Can basis. Everyone can afford farm-fresh organic food. We have upscaled our distribution across the city with our mobile markets through our new van.

I am bringing this up, because I know pretty much every single patron and volunteer. When a face is new, I immediately ask what brought them here.

So these are the casual findings of my own surveying and like observations between constituents and Ryan Hughes'--this is all conversation. A big part of my role is developing relationships with the community.

Here is what I've learned:

- Almost all of the new visitors and customers of our farmstand are young, between their 20s and 30s.
- Almost all of them live in apartments with no growing space, sufficient

balcony, or community garden. *Hence why they come here to volunteer or buy produce they cannot grow!*

- Many have just moved here into newly built apartments.
- Many do not own cars--and so, they are walking all the way to our Farm to carry produce! *(which I commend)*.
- Target. Target is often brought up--I'm told "we sometimes go to Target, but the produce is not fresh or good quality. So, we were searching for 'local farms near me' and you came up!"
- We even have residents of Harbor Point coming to the West Side, because their small organic grocery is expensive and according to customers, their farmer's market is lacking.

Thank you to Ryan Hughes and everyone co-sponsoring this potential ordinance. This is a great and much-needed initiative. I have worked at the farm for many years, but I do feel this trend of new renters making a pilgrimage up the colossal Stillwater Ave hill has increased--and the data throughout the Stamford Advocate piece likely supports what I am noticing; our population has increased and so has our downtown.

I started out European lol...I personally am excited that we are finally learning from best practices and global urban designs. We have been embracing mixed-use and higher density in downtown. We are re-designing streets like Summer and Bedford to be more people-centric and walkable. We established an Urban Forestry Working Group to enhance quality of life for urban residents. This idea fits into the vision I think we are evidently moving towards actualizing.

Providing grocery stores downtown that folks can walk to means we are not forcing folks into owning cars because they need to eat--and can't find or carry groceries otherwise. As we develop more mixed-use neighborhoods, especially in the South End and Downtown, creating a walkable city is even more realistic. And this is good for businesses, it says something extremely positive about Fairgate Farm that folks are willing to walk up a hill for us or struggle to find us--because our location is not pedestrian-friendly. There is limited parking and plenty of speeding cars as we connect Riverside to Stamford. Being in a more pleasantly walkable district would benefit us immensely as we know it does small businesses and attractions.

As a politically active person, and a persistent advocate in my age group (I'm 23), I can tell you too, my generation, favors urban design that is people-centric, walkable, higher-density, green, diverse, and vibrant.

Please keep me updated. Enthusiastically, I will mobilize my fellow youth to support these kinds of strides. I'm here to help.

Thank you all!

To our mutual flourishing,
Djana Kolaj

"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never

sit in."

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