

# The Struggle to Reestablish the South Central Farm:

## A Preliminary Analysis for Urban Agriculture Need in the City of Los Angeles

### BACKGROUND

Urban agriculture has long served as a tool for communities who have suffered from inequitable access to the food they need within their own spatial contexts. Not only has urban agriculture served as an opportunity for communities to reclaim sovereignty over their own food but it has also served as a direct political protest for communities burdened by the label of food desert. However, planning and urban agriculture have not always played well together as planning has looked to understand the regulatory approaches that apply to urban agriculture through reaction instead of proactively planning to allow for urban agriculture's many positive outcomes.

Despite this tension, urban agriculture has grown in popularity as a strategy to improve food security and nutrition, as an education tool, and as a sustainability strategy. As popularity ensues, displacement has quickly followed and a tool which was once used by communities often neglected and overlooked, has become co-opted for green development and growth at the expense of those who needed it the most. The 14-acre South Central Farm was a victim of this displacement in 2006, primarily serving Latinx immigrants and families, the farm was destroyed and the land was sold by the City of Los Angeles to developers for garment manufacturing. Since the farm was destroyed, the farmers and residents have been looking to find new land to buy with a settlement from the City. In looking to support grassroots movements and communities displaced by poor planning decisions, this analysis looks to find possible new locations in the Los Angeles County for a new farm. The analysis will look to prioritize factors important to the organizers such as location and proximity to community resources.

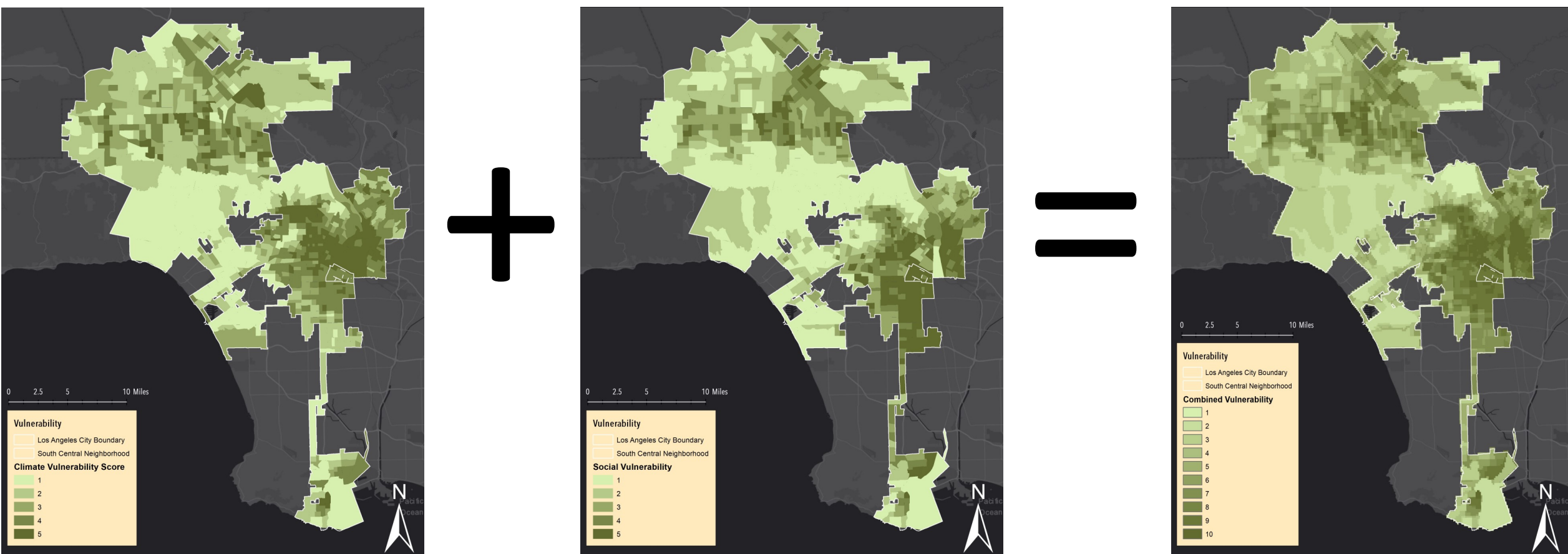
### METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the most suitable locations in the City Boundary of Los Angeles a weighted overlay and fuzzy suitability analysis were used. To create the weighted overlay, the factors taken into consideration were social and climate vulnerability, proximity to libraries, schools, bus stops, and metro stations. Climate and Social Vulnerability data were gathered from the Environmental Justice Screening Method and combined using the Raster Calculator to create an overall vulnerability for the City. These vulnerabilities take into account the density of low-income, non-English speaking, immigrant, and disabled populations throughout the City as well as general climate vulnerabilities like the density of impervious surfaces and density of green space. Together, these created a combined vulnerability which was used in the weighted overlay. Using Euclidean distances for libraries, schools, bus stops, and metro stations, they were combined with the combined vulnerability to determine suitability throughout the City of Los Angeles.

The distribution for the weighted overlay is as follows:

- Vulnerability: 45%
- Bus Stops: 15%
- Metro Stations: 15%
- Schools: 15%
- Libraries: 10%

These distributions take into account that climate vulnerable communities likely would benefit the most from the benefits of an urban farm. In addition, the accessibility of the farm is important as the original farm space was utilized by many through different modes of transit. Proximity to school was also a factor considered as the benefits of nutrition education and access to healthy food is critical at young ages. Libraries and their proximity also provide a resource for those who may be working on the farm and need to utilize the multitude of resources provided by libraries. After this, a Fuzzy suitability was created using fuzzy membership for schools, bus stops, metro stations, vulnerability, and schools. The fuzzy overlay and overall suitability was then created.



### DISCUSSION

It is not surprising to see that the areas most in need, suitable, and climate vulnerable are historically neighborhoods and areas that are predominately communities of color and low-income communities. South Central was and is still one of those neighborhoods who suffers from historical discriminatory decisions like redlining and the building of the 110 freeway through the neighborhood. The destruction of the original 14-acre beautiful space furthers the climate vulnerabilities of a neighborhood which is surrounded by industrial uses around it. The neighborhood of South Central is indicated by the white boundary in the maps and its location is indicated as a highly suitable area both in the original weighted overlay and the fuzzy overlay as well.

As the organizers for the farm and its reestablishment look to find spaces, it will be important to present their case with an analysis as this one as it furthers their purpose. Similarly, this analysis calls out the previous decisions of the City and developers as negligent in their decision to remove the original farm whose size cannot ever be matched again with the large amount of housing and other development that has occurred since 2006. In addition, the map above indicates some vacant parcels within a seven mile distance from the South Central neighborhood that may be beneficial to consider moving forward. These parcels, however, may not be the size needed for the farmers. It will be important to consider, though, moving forward that other options in addition to traditional urban agriculture such as smaller and more dispersed rooftop farms, vertical farming, and hydroponic farming in unused shipping containers.



Cartographer: Miranda Briseño

Data Sources: City and County of Los Angeles GeoHub

Projection: NAD83 / California Albers

References: Pothukuchi and Kaufman, "The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field."  
Alkon and Cadji, "Sowing Seeds of Displacement."

Meenar, Morales, and Bonarek, "Regulatory Practices of Urban Agriculture."  
Irazábal and Punja, "Cultivating Just Planning and Legal Institutions."