

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

June 1, 2015

MEMO TO: Ruffin Hall, City Manager

FROM: Taylor Floyd, Budget and Management Analyst
Cindy Holmes, Assistant Sustainability Manager

SUBJECT: Budget Note 04 – Community Gardens on City-Owned Land

Council Member Gaylord requested a budget note seeking information regarding resources needed to implement a process for the use of surplus city property for community gardening.

Background

A workgroup comprised of city staff and community stakeholders issued a report, "[Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens in the City of Raleigh](#)" in 2011, detailing community interest in urban agriculture and obstacles to community gardening efforts. As part of their work, the group recommended several action items that would facilitate urban agriculture projects throughout the city.

A key recommendation in the report included changes to the zoning ordinance that would allow more properties to be used for agricultural production. Many of these changes were made with the adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance. Community gardens are permitted as either a limited or special use in all residential and mixed use districts, as well as Agricultural Productive, Manufactured Housing, and Campus districts. Urban farms are also permitted as a special use in all mixed use districts. As a result of these changes, several community gardens have been developed on private land throughout the city.

Process Update

The 2011 city report broadly outlined a process that could be used to establish community gardens on surplus city-owned property. The Office of Sustainability is coordinating an inter-departmental effort to develop the policy, procedures and documentation for this process. Goals of this policy would include creating a fair system, protecting the city from liability, ensuring gardens are good neighbors, and establishing a process with limited administrative impact. Resource needs to implement this program (e.g. review and approval of applications, contracts, and permits) will become clearer once policies and procedures have been defined. Staff is working to bring a policy forward for approval by the end of 2015, which would allow for any needed resources to be requested as part of the FY17 budget process.

