



Legislation Text

File #: 1336-2015, **Version:** 1

This ordinance will appropriate funds for a Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan. This plan has two components. The first is a review of internal City rules, regulations, codes, policies and procedures that impact urban agriculture. The plan will produce recommendations on how to update and streamline those processes in the interest of facilitating urban agriculture in the city of Columbus. The project will also extend beyond this to produce a guide to starting an urban farming enterprise in Columbus to assist with navigating the City's requirements.

Farming in the urban core is a new, but much needed industry in our city. Columbus should and is embracing urban agriculture as a means to support the health of its residents and as an engine for revitalization and economic growth in our hardest-hit neighborhoods. However, with all new industries, it is necessary to examine and update internal City processes in order to ensure that our policies are applicable, supportive and transparent. Similar to how the City has adapted old policies and created new ones for food trucks and pedicabs, we must ensure that our policies explicitly address urban agriculture so as to preserve public health and safety, while also supporting those looking to invest in our city.

This project aligns with Objective 2 of the Green Memo III - to "add 10 acres of land for food production over the next five years," an action item of which includes an internal review of policies affecting urban agriculture and making revisions as needed. Streamlining processes and facilitating urban agriculture also stands to underpin the work of ongoing initiatives like the Food Action Plan, Celebrate One and insight2050.

The second, complimentary component of the Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan will be a market study and business plan focused on the potential of developing, attracting and growing green businesses and activities within core urban areas with a high volume of vacant parcels. Examples include urban farms, solar panel farms, other sustainable energy creation and rain gardens. A primary focus on this study would be to assess the availability and suitability of land to support urban agriculture enterprises as well as its ability to meet demand. It will also explore potential areas of synergy with internal and external initiatives such as the Vacant and Abandoned Properties Program, Blueprint Columbus, COTA BRT on Cleveland Avenue, Weinland Park Food District and existing urban farming enterprises.

The goal is to transform the city's blighted neighborhoods by using sustainably-focused activities and businesses as an engine for economic growth. Some examples of success in revitalizing economically-depressed neighborhoods through sustainability and innovation include Cleveland's Urban Agricultural Innovation Zone as well as EcoDistricts in cities like Atlanta, Washington, DC, and Denver. These initiatives have managed to not only spur development, but also have succeeded in leveraging outside sources of public and private money.

Emergency action is requested so that work related to the Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan can be initiated immediately.

FISCAL IMPACT: Sufficient funds are available in the Jobs Growth Fund.

To authorize the appropriation of \$125,000.00 from the Jobs Growth Fund for the Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan; and to declare an emergency. (\$125,000.00)

WHEREAS, this Council finds that there is a need to study internal City rules, regulations, codes, policies and

procedures that impact urban agriculture and green enterprises; and

WHEREAS, there is also a need to conduct a market study and business plan focused on the potential of developing, attracting and growing green businesses and activities within core urban areas with a high volume of vacant parcels; and

WHEREAS, the goals of this Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan include facilitating urban agriculture and green activities in the city of Columbus as well as transforming our blighted neighborhoods by using sustainably-focused activities and businesses as an engine for economic growth;

WHEREAS, this project will serve to underpin the work of ongoing initiatives like the Green Memo III, the Food Action Plan, Celebrate One and insight2050; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Development will issue a request for proposal for the Green Audit and Market Study; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the Department of Development in that it is immediately necessary to appropriate the funds to support the Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan, for the preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; now therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

Section 1. That the City Auditor be and is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate \$125,000 from the Jobs Growth Fund, Fund 15 to the Department of Development, Planning Division, Division No. 44-06, Object Level One 03, Object Level Three 3336, OCA Code 446015 for the Green Business and Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan.

Section 2. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.