



# Help Atlanta Grow!

**Atlanta is on the cusp of becoming a national leader in urban agriculture. But we need your help!**

Urban agriculture increases community access to fresh, healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables by using vacant, neglected, or underutilized land to grow food.

**The Problem:** Urban agriculture isn't addressed in the current Atlanta zoning code, which means urban agriculture operations can't get a city of Atlanta business license. It also means community gardeners and urban farmers have trouble with land purchase and lease agreements. This creates an uncertain environment for growers.

**How this Amendment would help:** The proposed amendment would revise a section of Atlanta's zoning code to define Urban Gardens and Market Gardens as permitted uses, and it details where and how they are allowed. This would support local agriculture, create additional options for green space, provide local economic development opportunities and jobs, and increase property values for our communities.

## **BUT I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS!**

**Where can I read the full text of the urban agriculture zoning amendment?** Visit [gogrowatlanta.org](http://gogrowatlanta.org), then click on the Citizen Feedback tab. You can read the amendment there in full, as well as comment electronically.

**Will the ordinance prevent me from growing vegetables in my yard?** Nope!

**How can I support the amendment?** Let your Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) leaders and Atlanta City Councilmember know you support the amendment. To see a list of NPU meetings, go to [www.gogrowatlanta.org/get-involved/](http://www.gogrowatlanta.org/get-involved/).

**How can I comment on the amendment?** The amendment will go through the NPU process for public comment and discussion. You can attend NPU meetings or contact your NPU leadership.

You can also ask questions and share your input about urban agriculture and the zoning amendment by visiting [gogrowatlanta.org](http://gogrowatlanta.org) and clicking the Citizen Feedback tab – comments on our website are NOT a part of the public record, but a way for the community to share thoughts and questions about the urban agriculture zoning amendment.

**How will existing community gardens and urban gardens be affected?** Most existing community gardens and urban gardens will comply with the zoning amendment. But, if they don't, they will need to come into compliance. They'll have plenty of time to do that!

**Which types of zoning districts will this urban agriculture zoning amendment impact?** The amendment will permit Urban Gardens and Market Gardens in the following zoning districts: Residential, Office, Commercial, Industrial, Special Public Interest, and Planned Development – Mixed Use.

[WWW.GOGROWATLANTA.ORG](http://WWW.GOGROWATLANTA.ORG)

**Will chickens or bees be permitted under the ordinance?**

The urban agriculture amendment will not change any policies regarding the keeping of bees, poultry or other livestock. Atlanta's zoning code is silent with respect to beekeeping. Poultry is addressed in Atlanta's zoning code: **ATLANTA, GA., CODE PART II §§ 18-7 and 18-129; ATLANTA, GA., CODE PART III § 16-06C.002.**

**What's the difference between an Urban Garden and a Market Garden?** There's one big difference as outlined in the ordinance: produce grown in an Urban Garden cannot be sold on-site (but it could be grown for personal use and donation or sold off-site, like at a store or a farmers market). Sales are allowed in a Market Garden, but only produce grown on-site can be sold on-site. (You can find the official ordinance language describing both at [www.gogrowatlanta.com](http://www.gogrowatlanta.com).) Some more specific differences are below.

**Are sales hours restricted under the ordinance?** For Urban Gardens, produce cannot be sold on-site. For Market Gardens, sales are allowed from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. CSA pickups are allowed at any time during the sales hours.

**Why is a Special Administrative Permit (SAP) required for an Urban Garden in residential zoning district?** In residential zoning districts, the city of Atlanta will require a SAP for an Urban Garden that is the *principal* use on an undeveloped lot (including vacant and abandoned lots). This ensures that the Urban Garden maintains the neighborhood's fabric and character. A permit is needed *only* if the garden is the only use on the property. So, if there is a house and the garden is in the backyard, you do *not* need a permit

**What are the requirements for a SAP for Urban Gardens as a principal use in a residential zoning district?** When an SAP is required for an Urban Garden (see above), the applicant will have to submit the following documents: (1) Site Plan and (2) Management Plan/Impact Analysis.

The SAP will expire 12 months from the date of issuance and requires annual renewal. We are working with the city to ensure that no renewal fee is required.

**What are the restrictions on Market Gardens in residential districts?** A Market Garden is allowed as an accessory use on lots with schools, churches, or places of worship without a permit. Market Gardens are not allowed as the principal use.

**Is a permit required for an Urban Garden or Market Garden in non-residential districts?** No, Urban Gardens and Market Gardens are allowed as a principal or accessory use without a permit.

**Will the ordinance address use of pesticides?** Disclosure of pesticide use is required as part of the Management Plan submitted for an SAP for Urban Gardens in residential zoning districts.

**Can machinery be used in Urban Gardens or Market Gardens?** Yes, machinery is allowed under the amendment. When not in use, the machinery must be stored so as not to be visible from any public street, sidewalk, or right-of-way. The urban agriculture amendment will not change any policies regarding acceptable noise levels caused by machinery operation. The Atlanta Noise Ordinance can be found in Atlanta's zoning code: **ATLANTA, GA., CODE PART II § 74-129, ET SEQ.**

**Does the ordinance include parking requirements?** For Urban Gardens, there are no additional parking requirements. For Market Gardens, in zoning districts with no minimum parking requirement, no parking is required. In all other districts, a minimum of 3 spaces must be provided: 2 spaces for customers; and 1 space for garden personnel.

**Who's been working on this?** Georgia Organics and the Atlanta Local Food Initiative worked with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, the Office of Planning, the Turner Environmental Law Clinic at Emory Law School, and local growers for over three years to draft this amendment.