

Mock City Council Reference Sheet: Urban Agriculture & Local Food Systems

Why Urban Agriculture Matters

Urban farming creates **jobs, strengthens local food systems, and promotes sustainability**. Co-ops and CSAs help grocers and farmers **reduce costs, increase fresh food access, and support local economies**.

Key Issues for City Council Discussion

Urban Farmers & Co-Ops

- **Ensuring Supply** – Establish long-term agreements with grocers.
- **Expanding Products** – Offer fresh produce, prepared foods, and specialty items.
- **Attracting Consumers** – Promote sustainable, locally grown food.
- **Managing Demand** – Align crops with seasonal needs.
- **Securing Funding** – Use local, state, and federal grants for training and infrastructure.

Retail Grocers & Local Food Access

- **Lower Costs & Fresher Produce** – Reduce transportation expenses and increase freshness.
 - **Community Engagement** – Host farm-to-store events and educational workshops.
 - **Branding & Sustainability** – Highlight partnerships with urban farms.
 - **Co-Branding** – Create exclusive products featuring local farm branding.
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Shared Citywide Benefits

- **Waste Reduction** – Implement farm-to-grocery donation programs.
- **Education & Awareness** – Promote urban farming through community events.
- **Tech & Infrastructure** – Invest in cold storage and digital ordering systems.
- **Economic Growth** – Create jobs, generate tax revenue, and attract tourism.

City Council Considerations:

- ✓ How can the city support urban farmers through policy and funding?
- ✓ What incentives can encourage grocers to buy from local farms?
- ✓ How can urban agriculture reduce food insecurity in underserved areas?

Counter Talking Points: Urban Agriculture & Local Food Systems

While urban agriculture presents **potential benefits**, there are **challenges and drawbacks** that must be considered when implementing citywide policies.

Key Concerns for City Council Discussion

1. Urban Farmers & Co-Ops

- **Inconsistent Supply** – Small urban farms may **struggle to meet year-round demand**, leading to shortages for grocers.
- **Limited Crop Variety** – Urban farms typically grow **a narrow range of crops**, limiting consumer choices.
- **Higher Costs for Consumers** – Local produce can be **more expensive** due to small-scale production and higher labor costs.
- **Dependency on Government Grants** – Long-term reliance on **grants and subsidies** raises concerns about sustainability.

2. Retail Grocers & Local Food Access

- **Logistical Challenges** – Urban farms may **lack distribution networks** needed for large-scale grocery supply.
- **Food Safety Regulations** – Small farms may **struggle to meet health and safety standards** required by large retailers.
- **Limited Cold Storage & Transport** – Without proper storage, **perishable goods may spoil faster**, increasing waste.
- **Competition with Established Supply Chains** – Large grocery chains may prefer **established suppliers** with predictable pricing and availability.

3. Shared Citywide Challenges

- **Land Use & Zoning Restrictions** – Converting vacant land into farms may **conflict with future urban development plans**.
 - **Infrastructure Costs** – Investing in cold storage, digital tools, and farming infrastructure **requires significant city funding**.
 - **Economic Viability** – Jobs created by urban farms may be **low-wage and seasonal**, offering **limited career growth opportunities**.
 - **Uncertain Impact on Food Deserts** – Urban farms may not **directly address affordability issues**, as **transportation and pricing** remain barriers for low-income residents.
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City Council Considerations:

- ✓ How will the city ensure **long-term financial sustainability** of urban agriculture without excessive reliance on government funding?
- ✓ What **alternative solutions** exist for improving food access in underserved areas **beyond urban farming**?
- ✓ How can urban agriculture compete with **large-scale food suppliers** while maintaining affordability for consumers?
- ✓ What protections are in place to **prevent land-use conflicts** between farming and future city development?

Commercial Urban Agriculture (CUA) Reference Sheet

What is Commercial Urban Agriculture (CUA)?

CUA is a **business model** that turns **vacant lots and unused land into farming spaces**. It helps communities by creating **economic opportunities**, providing **fresh local food**, and supporting **small businesses**. CUA includes **in-ground farming, raised beds, and hydroponics** (growing plants without soil).

In short: It's farming in the heart of the city!

Types of Urban Farming Models

CSA – Community Supported Agriculture

- Farmers sell “**shares**” of their harvest at the start of the season.
- Customers pay upfront, giving farmers the money needed to grow crops.
- Members receive **fresh produce** (fruits, vegetables, eggs, meat, or flowers) throughout the season.
- Creates a **direct connection** between farmers and consumers.

CO-OP – Cooperative Farming

- Farmers **work together** to share resources, reduce costs, and sell products.
- Increases **market access** and **bargaining power** for small farmers.
- Helps farmers **become more efficient** and support one another.

Why is CUA Important?

Boosts the Local Economy

- ✓ Creates **jobs** and strengthens the community.
- ✓ Provides fresh, local produce to **neighborhood stores and markets**.
- ✓ Supports a **cycle of investment** that keeps CUA farms running.

Provides Alternative Careers

- ✓ Offers a **non-traditional career path** that produces real results.
- ✓ Teaches valuable **technical and business skills**.
- ✓ Builds **stronger, connected communities** through agriculture.

Strengthens Communities

- ✓ Encourages **neighbors to work together** and build relationships.
 - ✓ Expands **local food networks** and connects urban farmers.
 - ✓ Reduces crime by **providing jobs and positive opportunities**.
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Challenges of CUA

Start-Up Costs & Budget Struggles

- Setting up a farm requires **a lot of money upfront**.
- Small urban farms have **limited land**, making it harder to grow large amounts of food.
- Natural disasters like **droughts or floods** can cause financial losses.

Soil & Land Issues

- Small farms **can wear out the soil over time**, reducing productivity.
- Unlike traditional large farms, urban farms **have less land to rotate crops**, which can cause nutrient depletion.

City Council Committee Responsibilities

Review the topics your committee should consider and the concerns that may relate to this legislation with these focus items

Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health and Safety Committee

The Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health and Safety Committee shall consider matters relating to parks; recreation; public housing; affordable housing; farms; forestry; fish and game; zoo; Sister Cities program; Jacksonville Public Library; Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department; Special Events; Duval County Extension Office; Jacksonville Housing and Community Development Commission; Jacksonville Housing Authority; ad valorem property tax exemptions; historic preservation; community revitalization; Waterways Commission; vessels for hire; Urban Services Districts; the Neighborhoods Department; education and schools; Duval County School Board; literacy issues; higher education institutions and issues; veterans' issues; Kids Hope Alliance; child services; service quality improvement and public satisfaction with government services; hospitals; Health Department; public health, international travel, wellness; mental health; addiction; human services; homelessness; public assistance; Public Service Grants; public safety; safety hazards and dangerous infrastructure; motor vehicle inspections; collections of code enforcement and other fines and fees; crime and crime prevention; victim services; Sheriff's Office; police-community relations; Fire and Rescue Department; emergency preparedness and civil defenses; military bases; personnel and affairs; base realignment and closure (BRAC) issues; conveyance of City property; reversion of tax deed property; and all related

Rules Committee

The Rules Committee shall consider matters relating to confirmation of nominations by the Council, Mayor and Sheriff; City Council rules; State Laws; executive communications; resolutions; memorials; calendar; agenda; charter revision; governmental reorganization; City Council and School Board redistricting; elections; courts; consumer affairs; "J-Bills" and legislation before the Florida Legislature; advanced communication and technology use and "e-government"; Boards and Commission structures and related subjects; legislation containing waivers or invoking an exception; and all unclassified subjects.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consider financial matters, including appropriations; budgets; budgetary transfers; taxes; fees; franchises; bonds; fiscal and investment policies; economic development investment incentives and related contracts, agreements and appropriations; licensing; personnel; pensions; leases; Finance and Administration Department; Procurement Division; Office of Economic Development; JEA financial issues; auditing; performance measurement and benchmarking; audits of the City and Independent Agencies; selection and retention of the auditor to perform the annual independent audit required by Section 5.11, Jacksonville Charter; TRUE Commission reports; international trade; legislation containing waivers or invoking an exception; conveyance of City property; collections of code enforcement and other fines and fees; and all related subjects.

Jacksonville City Council Reference Sheet

What is the City Council?

The **Jacksonville City Council** is the main **law-making group** for the city. It consists of **19 members** who help make decisions that affect the entire community.

Who is on the City Council?

- **14 District Representatives** – Each represents a specific area (district) of Jacksonville.
- **5 At-Large Members** – Represent the entire city, not just one district.

What Does the City Council Do?

- ✓ **Make Laws** – Pass local laws (**ordinances**) and take official stances on issues (**resolutions**).
- ✓ **Budget City Funds** – Decide how to spend the city's money on parks, roads, schools, and other services.
- ✓ **Provide Oversight** – Ensure city workers and departments are doing their jobs fairly and responsibly.
- ✓ **Serve in Leadership Roles** – One member is chosen as **Council President**, another as **Vice President**, and others serve on different committees (like Finance and Public Safety).
- ✓ **Address Citywide Issues** – At-large members focus on problems that affect the whole city, not just one district.

How are City Council Members Elected?

- ✓ **District Elections** – Voters in each district choose their representative.
- ✓ **Citywide Elections** – All voters in Jacksonville elect the **at-large members**.
- ✓ **Term Length** – Each term lasts **4 years**, and members can serve **two terms in a row**.

How Can You Get Involved?

- ✓ Attend **City Council meetings** and share your ideas.
- ✓ Contact your **City Council representative** to discuss issues in your community.
- ✓ Work with your neighbors to help **solve problems** in your area.

Jacksonville City Council Members (2023-2027)

District Representatives

- **District 1:** Ken Amaro
- **District 2:** Mike Gay
- **District 3:** John Morland
- **District 4:** Kevin Carrico (Vice President)

- **District 5:** Joe Carlucci
- **District 6:** Michael Boylan
- **District 7:** Jimmy Peluso
- **District 8:** Reggie Gaffney Jr.
- **District 9:** Tyrona Clark-Murray
- **District 10:** Ju'Coby Pittman
- **District 11:** Raul Arias
- **District 12:** Randy White (President)
- **District 13:** Rory Diamond
- **District 14:** Rahman Johnson

At-Large Members

- **Group 1:** Terrance Freeman
- **Group 2:** Ronald B. Salem
- **Group 3:** Nick Howland
- **Group 4:** Matt Carlucci
- **Group 5:** Chris Miller

1 Introduced by Council Member:

2 1

3 **ORDINANCE 2025-**

4 AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$500,000.00 FROM
5 THE NORTHWEST JACKSONVILLE ECONOMIC
6 DEVELOPMENT FUND - SUBSIDIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS
7 TO PRIVATE ORG. ACCOUNT AND AUTHORIZING A
8 FULL-SERVICE GROCERY STORE IMPROVEMENT
9 PROGRAM; WAIVING THE CRITERIA FOR USE OF
10 FUNDING FOR "FULL-SERVICE GROCERY STORE
11 PROGRAM" AS ADOPTED BY 2019-245-E; APPROVING
12 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS BY THE
13 MAYOR OR HIS DESIGNEE AND CORPORATION
14 SECRETARY; AUTHORIZING APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL
15 AMENDMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
16 OED; PROVIDING FOR CITY OVERSIGHT BY THE OED;
17 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

18 **BE IT ORDANED** by the City Council of Jacksonville:

19 **Section 1. Appropriation.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year,
20 within the City's budget, there is hereby appropriated the
21 indicated sum from the account (listed in subsection (a) to the
22 account listed in subsection (b):

23 (The account information is attached hereto as Exhibit 1 and
24 incorporated herein by this reference)

25 (a) Appropriated from:

26 See Exhibit 1 \$500,000

27 (b) Appropriated to:

28 See Exhibit 1 \$500,000

29 (c) Explanation of Appropriation:

30 The funding above is an appropriation of \$500,000 from

31 The Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund to

1 provide a grant to "the Company" to assist in funding the
2 acquisition, renovation and expansion of a former store
3 to allow for the lease of the premises by "the Company"
4 as a full-service grocery store.

5 **Section 2. Purpose.** The purpose of this is to fund
6 redevelopment to bring a full-service grocery store within
7 Northwest Jacksonville. Funds may be used for the Construction of a
8 new building; renovation of existing building; leasehold
9 improvements; tangible personal property (TPP); infrastructure
10 costs; and other costs that are incidental to the opening of a Full
11 Service Grocery Store to provide direct and healthy food options
12 for the community. A "Food Desert" is defined "as parts of the
13 country lacking fresh fruits, vegetable, and other whole foods
14 largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmer's markets and
15 healthy food providers. T. Brown Consulting Group (TBCG) found that
16 40 of the 173 census tracts in the City of Jacksonville quality as
17 food deserts, were 23% of the population has low access to a
18 grocery store or supermarket. Of these low access areas, 15 tracts
19 or 38% were in the Northwest Jacksonville area. Access to healthy
20 food is not a luxury, but a necessity for the growth of individuals
21 and of the community.

22 **Section 3. Oversight Department.** The Office of Economic
23 Development shall oversee the projects within.

24 **Section 4. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become
25 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
26 without the Mayor's signature.

27
28 Form Approved:

29 _____
30 Office of General Counsel

31 Legislation Prepared By: