



## Legislation Text

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Resolution Authorizing Interlocal Agreement Between the City of Greensboro, the City of High Point, and Guilford County for the Joint Funding of an Assistant Agent Position to Support Community and School Garden Opportunities and Food Access Efforts Countywide

Department: Parks and Recreation  
Council District: All

Public Hearing:  
Advertising Date/By:

Contact 1 and Phone: Nasha McCray, 336-433-7360  
Contact 2 and Phone: Phil Fleischmann, 336-373-3275

**PURPOSE:** To enter into an interlocal agreement between the City of Greensboro, the City of High Point, and Guilford County to collectively fund an Assistant Agent position housed within the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Guilford County. This position would support the growth of school and community garden opportunities countywide and assist in facilitating food access efforts between the parties. If approved, the agreement would take effect on January 1, 2018 and continue from year to year given available budgetary resources until terminated.

**BACKGROUND:**

Food insecurity, or the lack of physical or economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, is a pervasive issue in Guilford County. In 2014, the Greensboro/High Point area ranked first in the nation on a Gallup Healthways Wellbeing Index as having the most food insecure individuals per capita. Additionally, over 65% of Guilford County Schools students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Over 25% of the population in the county resides in a federally designated food desert area. Given these statistics, local food efforts and gardening and nutrition education have increased in recent years, and additional support is needed to manage these initiatives.

There are currently over 90 community gardens and 75 school gardens in Guilford County, and the majority of those are located in Greensboro including seven on City park properties. Currently, there is not an entity coordinating the management and use of the garden spaces, which results in both duplication of efforts and gaps in this service, wasted produce, a lack of shared accountability for the best use of the spaces, and confusion for the public about how to plan and/or get involved in using a shared garden space.

In order to best coordinate community, school, and shared garden spaces located on public and private land, the creation of a full-time Assistant Agent position serving this purpose is proposed and supported by the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, the City of High Point Community Development and Housing Department, and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Guilford County. If approved, the position would facilitate the growth of shared gardening opportunities, education, and awareness; ensure that governmental agencies are collaborating on the creation and upkeep of garden spaces; and provide streamlined customer

service and resources to those involved in or seeking to get involved in gardening. The position would also be involved with aligned groups such as the Community Food Task Force, Guilford Food Council, and Greater High Point Food Alliance in an effort to develop and promote food access efforts.

Funding of approximately \$52,000 for the salary and benefits associated with this position is proposed to be split evenly between the City of Greensboro, the City of High Point, and Guilford County at a cost of approximately \$17,400 per agency per year. The position will dedicate at least two days per week, or the hourly equivalent of two days per week, to projects within the City of Greensboro and at least two days per week to initiatives within the City of High Point. The position will be managed by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Guilford County in a State position, with Guilford County being responsible for providing administrative support, office space, furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the position in addition to its third of the funding.

The City of Greensboro has a long and rich history of collaborating with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in Guilford County on initiatives related to natural resources, family and consumer science, horticulture, and urban conservation, including work involving the City's community gardens and Community Food Task Force. Cooperative Extension in Guilford County is supported and staffed by both NC State University and NC A&T State University. This expansion of the City's partnership with Cooperative Extension enables the City to better meet the growing needs for community gardens and support food access efforts.

The Parks and Recreation Commission supported the City's entering into this interlocal agreement at its November 8, 2017 Commission meeting. Pursuant N.C. General Statute, 160A-461 et seq., Council approval is required in order for an agreement between local government entities to be executed and Board approval from the City of High Point and Guilford County is being sought this month, as well, in order to allow for the agreement to begin in January, 2018.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** The City will be responsible for funding one-third of the salary and benefits associated with the Assistant Agent position, to be detailed within the interlocal agreement. The City funds necessary for this agreement, of approximately \$17,400 per year, are available within account no. 101-5006-01.5932.

**RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:** It is recommended by the Parks and Recreation Department that the City Council approve the attached resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an interlocal agreement involving the City of Greensboro, City of High Point, and Guilford County to provide for an Assistant Agent position.