



Community Development
200 South Illinois Avenue
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
Telephone 618-457-3248
Fax 618-457-3289
www.explorecarbndale.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: The City of Carbondale City Council Members / Gary Williams, City Manager

FROM: City of Carbondale Sustainability Commission

RE: City Code Review & Revision – Community Gardens

DATE: December 15th, 2022

For the purpose of this memorandum, the Sustainability Commission defines community gardens as “those that are developed in neighborhoods with the primary purpose of providing space for members of the community to grow plants for beautification, education, recreation, community distribution, or personal use.” *Id.* at § 17-17-0103(F)(1).

In the Spring of 2022, the Carbondale City Council, through unanimous vote, passed the City of Carbondale Sustainability Action Plan. Focus Area 3: People, has as its first goal, “Optimize local self-sufficiency and preparedness through local production of food and products to become an export-intensive economy [...]” and “Ensure all Carbondale citizens, with a focus on the food insecure, can access a food system that is community-driven [...]” (p. 21) Under this objective are the following two actions:

“ 1. Prioritize support and expansion of programs already under development, especially in low-income or underserved areas, including programs for recycling, youth programs, community gardens, composting, nutrition and cooking, educational opportunities, waste utilization, reducing single-use plastics, and healthy schools programs, and identify gaps, both on and off city property”

“ 2. Review current statutes, regulations, ordinances and zoning to ensure implementation of local food-friendly practices and appropriate diversion of food waste from restaurants and supermarkets from landfills to shelters or composting.”

In the Fall of 2022, City staff became aware of current gaps within City of Carbondale Revised Code surrounding community gardens. These gaps are found largely on two fronts.

1. Current Carbondale Revised Code limits the location of community gardens by only allowing them in parcels zoned “AG” (Agricultural).
2. Current Carbondale Revised Code limits logistic support of community gardens by not permitting accessory structures (i.e. tool sheds or garden sheds) on parcels without a primary structure.

In the Fall of 2022, the Carbondale Sustainability Commission was alerted to these gaps by City staff. In order to implement the Sustainability Action Plan, ensure the implementation of local food-friendly practices, and support community gardens within the Carbondale community, the City of Carbondale Sustainability Commission deems a comprehensive review and revision of code related to community gardens imperative.

The Sustainability Commission, according to the bylaws of our commission, is issuing this memo as a recommendation to the City Council of Carbondale - that these gaps be addressed through formal code review and revision surrounding community gardens by City staff with input from the Carbondale community.