



City Council

Consider a Referral to the Utility Advisory Commission Related to Water and Urban Agriculture

Agenda Date: 11/23/2021
Agenda Item Number: 8.AA
File Number:21-1141

Type: referral **Version:** 1 **Status:** Referral

Title

Consider a Referral to the Utility Advisory Commission Related to Water and Urban Agriculture

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Consider a referral to the Utility Advisory Committee related to water and urban agriculture.

Report

Issue:

Whether to consider a referral to the Utility Advisory Committee related to water and urban agriculture.

Staff Contact:

Susan Grisham, Assistant to the City Manager, 360-753-8244

Presenter(s):

Councilmember Dani Madrone

Background and Analysis:

Access to water is a significant barrier to urban agriculture. Water rates for irrigation are high during the dry season, rising from \$2.80 to \$8.26 per 100 cubic feet for the months of July through October.

While these rates are designed to help conserve water, they also inhibit our ability to achieve goals in the Comprehensive Plan related to local food production by adding to the cost of operations and impacting affordability. In addition to water rates, there could be other opportunities for the city to address the irrigation needs of urban agriculture with access to hydrants or reclaimed water.

To assist with these considerations, this referral directs the Utility Advisory Committee to:

- Create a separate classification for urban farms and community gardens for irrigation rates to address the affordability of urban food production.
- Research and advise on a program that would allow urban farms and community gardens to get permits to access hydrants.
- Connect with the Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston (LOTT) Clean Water Alliance to explore opportunities to use reclaimed water for food production.

The referral is sponsored by Councilmember Dani Madrone, with support from Mayor Pro Tem Clark Gilman and Councilmember Lisa Parshley.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The support of urban agriculture is well documented in Olympia's Comprehensive Plan through value statements for urban design and economy.

Options:

1. Approve the referral to the Utility Advisory Committee.
2. Approve the referral, with amendments, to the Utility Advisory Committee.
3. Do not approve the referral to the Utility Advisory Committee.

Financial Impact:

There are no financial impacts related to making the referral.

Attachments:

Referral