



## Legislation Text

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### **Request to Approve & Participate in “Local Food System Action Plan” Special Meeting (NB)**

This is a request for the City Commission to approve hosting and participating in a January 2021 special meeting.

In recent years the City Commission has engaged in several discussions related to the topics of food access, food security, and food systems in our community. Between October 2018 and February 2019 the City Commission supported staff in the Office of Strategic Initiatives engaging in a community-based participatory research process to bring a more diverse population of residents and local stakeholders into the discussion of food accessibility issues. Interviews and informal focus groups were conducted to gain insight about the specific challenges that neighbors face in terms of food access and security, as well as learn about the different community resources available that address these issues. On February 12, 2019 the City hosted a public workshop entitled “Gainesville’s Food System: A Community Conversation” where the findings of this community-based participatory research was presented to the public in a forum that invited additional discussion regarding barriers our neighbors face to food access, as well as participation in breakout groups to brainstorm possible solutions to these problems. The brainstormed solutions generated by neighbors during this February 2019 workshop were compiled into a report and presented to the City Commission at a General Policy Committee meeting on March 27, 2019. Following staff’s presentation, a motion was passed unanimously that directed staff to work with community partners to establish and support facilitation of a local food policy council or coalition, with the caveat that it would not initiate as an advisory board to the City Commission. This direction was taken by staff and through engagement with community partners has resulted in the formation of the Food System Coalition of Greater Gainesville. This grassroots group has continued to convene over the past 18 months and aims to serve as a networking space where diverse neighbors and stakeholders can come together to support a shared mission of improving access, justice and sustainability of our local food system.

Additionally, on August 6, 2020 the City Commission adopted the Action Agenda 2020-2021 that includes a High Priority Policy item of developing a “Food Desert Elimination Action Plan.” This item has been retitled as the “Local Food System Action Plan,” as per the memo sent by the City Manager to the City Commission on November 2, 2020. This action plan builds upon staffs’ previous work related to food access and incorporates the feedback and suggestions provided to staff via the February 2019 workshop as well as meetings of the Food System Coalition of Greater Gainesville.

None

The City Commission 1) approve hosting and participating in a special meeting on January 12, 2021, where staff will present an update on the Local Food System Action Plan and engage in a discussion around next steps.