



# Pittsburgh Department of City Planning

# Urban Agriculture Zoning

July 2017

## WHAT IS URBAN AGRICULTURE?

Agriculture and Urban Agriculture are use classifications in the City of Pittsburgh Zoning Code that allow a range of small to large scale agricultural uses, from a chicken coop located in a backyard to a commercial farm.

Agriculture and Urban Agriculture can either be a primary or accessory use. Within these categories, there are specific use types based on the activities occurring.

## PRIMARY USES

A primary use is the main activity occurring on a parcel of land. Primary uses may or may not be permitted depending on the zoning district. The primary use categories in the Zoning Code related to agriculture are:

- **Agriculture (General)** is the category most resembling traditional agriculture and allows full-scale commercial growing of crops and raising of livestock. This use requires a minimum lot size of two acres.
- **Agriculture (Limited) with Beekeeping** allows beekeeping as the primary use on a parcel. This use permits two beehives on lots with a minimum lot size of 2,000 sq ft, and permits two additional beehives for every additional 2,000 sq ft of lot up to 10,000 sq ft. The applicant must provide a flyway barrier at least 6 feet in height.
- **Agriculture (Limited)** allows for the commercial growing of crops as the primary use on a lot of any size. No animals are permitted.

## ACCESSORY USES

An accessory use is an activity that is secondary and subordinate to the primary use.

- **Urban Agriculture (Accessory Use) With No Animals** allows for the commercial growing of crops where there is a separate primary use.
- **Urban Agriculture (Accessory Use) With Animals** allows for the housing of chickens, ducks, goats and/or bees where there is a separate primary use. Up to five chickens or ducks are permitted with a minimum lot size of 2,000 sq ft, and an additional chicken or duck is permitted for each additional 1,000 sq ft. Exactly two miniature goats are permitted on lots 2,000 sq ft to 10,000 sq ft that do not also have chickens or ducks. Two

full-size goats are permitted on lots over 10,000 sq ft. See *Agricultural Use (Limited) With Beekeeping* in previous section for requirements on bees.

## WHAT PERMITS ARE REQUIRED?

A Certificate of Occupancy (aka Occupancy Permit) is required for any of the agricultural uses described above. Any structures related to these uses, including but not limited to chicken coops, beehives, commercial composting facilities, and fences, must also be included on the Certificate of Occupancy.

## I WANT TO GROW VEGETABLES ON MY PROPERTY FOR PERSONAL CONSUMPTION AND WILL NOT BE SELLING IT. DO I NEED A PERMIT?

No, the growing of vegetables for personal consumption is allowed in Pittsburgh and does not require a permit.

## I WANT TO KEEP CHICKENS AND BEES IN MY YARD FOR PERSONAL USE. DO I NEED A PERMIT?

Yes, all uses that involve the housing of any animal, including chickens and bees, need permits.

## AM I ALLOWED TO KEEP PIGS OR OTHER FARM ANIMALS IN MY YARD?

No, only bees, chickens, ducks or goats are allowed as accessory uses. Other farm animals are allowed with Agriculture (General) as a primary use with a minimum lot size of two acres.

## MY LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP WANTS TO GROW AND SELL PRODUCE ON VACANT PROPERTY THAT WE OWN. DO WE NEED A PERMIT?

Yes, if you are growing and selling food on a piece of property in your neighborhood, you will need a permit for the agriculture use (Limited or General) and the retail use.

## MY NEIGHBORS ALL REALLY LIKE THE CHICKENS AND BEES IN MY YARD. DO I STILL NEED A PERMIT?

Yes. Although neighbor support is key to a successful Urban Agriculture venture, you must still go through the process.

## DO I NEED A SOIL TEST IN ORDER TO USE MY PROPERTY FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE?

Although a soil test is always advised, it is not a requirement of the Zoning Code in order to obtain a permit.

# Urban Agriculture Questions

## WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Applications begin at the Division of Zoning and Development Review, 200 Ross St, 3rd floor. The office hours are Monday-Friday 8 AM - 3 PM. Applicants must provide a scaled survey or site plan of the property, valid photo ID and check or money order payable to "Treasurer City of Pittsburgh."

Once Zoning approval is obtained, the applicant must finish the application process with the Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE ON MY SITE PLAN?

The site plan must include:

- Property address and parcel number
- Name and contact information for property owner
- Entire lot, including dimensions
- Scale of drawing
- Existing structures, including fencing and sheds
- Location and height of any proposed accessory structures, including storage sheds/containers, coops, hives and fencing
- Location and height of any proposed landscaping or fencing attributed to a flyway
- Distance between accessory structures and neighboring properties

Please review our [Site Plan Survey handout](#) for more information.

## WHAT ARE THE FEES?

The fee for a Certificate of Occupancy is \$70. While this fee will cover most residential accessory use applications, some structures may require additional review depending on the zone, size of the lot, size of the structures and conformity with the setback requirements. If the application includes structures that require additional review, such as Site Plan Review, additional fees may be assessed.

## I AM INTERESTED IN KEEPING BEES, CHICKENS OR GOATS BUT MY PROPERTY IS LESS THAN 2,000 SQ FT. WHAT CAN I DO?

You may apply for a Variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustments. The Board will consider the specific circumstances of your property and determine whether or not to grant the variance. This process involves a hearing in front of the Board and can take approximately 4-5 months. Please see the [Zoning Board handout](#) for more information on the fees and process.

## I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP MORE THAN THE ALLOTTED AMOUNT OF BEES, CHICKENS OR GOATS. WHAT CAN I DO?

You may apply for a Variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustments. See previous section.

## MY NEIGHBORS HAVE CHICKENS IN THEIR YARD BUT ARE NOT FOLLOWING THE REGULATIONS. WHO CAN I CALL?

Please dial 311 or use the 311 form on the City's website at [www.pittsburghpa.gov](http://www.pittsburghpa.gov).

## I FOUND A ROAMING CHICKEN, DUCK OR GOAT. WHO CAN I CALL?

Call Animal Care and Control 412-255-2036. They will attempt to capture a wandering animal. If you have the animal captured either the Animal Rescue League or the Human Society can accept the farm animal.

## I WOULD LIKE TO GET STARTED WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE. CAN YOU PROVIDE ASSISTANCE?

The City does not maintain this type of resource. You may contact local non-profits working in the field. These organizations include:

Burgh Bees  
[www.burghbees.com](http://www.burghbees.com)

Grow Pittsburgh  
[www.growpittsburgh.org](http://www.growpittsburgh.org)  
412-362-4769

Penn State Extension  
Pittsburgh Food Policy Council  
[www.pittsburghfoodpolicy.org](http://www.pittsburghfoodpolicy.org)  
412-263-1000

## WHO CAN I CALL IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE REGULATIONS?

For additional information, please call the Division of Zoning and Development Review at 412-255-2241. Please note that this handout is intended to generally describe the urban agriculture zoning regulations in the City of Pittsburgh. For the complete requirements, please refer to Chapters 911 and 912 in the Zoning Code.