

Wilmington, Delaware
February 5, 2026

#0178 **WHEREAS**, page 59 of the Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan recognizes that

Sponsor: “social connections are important for the health of neighborhoods,” that “neighborhood hubs

Council Member Willauer of activity are the community assets and institutions where people gather and neighborhood cohesion is forged,” and that neighborhood hubs “should be supported and expanded upon”;

Co-Sponsor(s): and

Council Member Owens **WHEREAS**, in 2010, a coalition of local organizations and over 300 community members sought a location on the West Side to create a community garden, obtained permission from the City to build one on the lower portion of the Rodney Reservoir, and launched a community garden, building a total of 61 beds by 2012; and

WHEREAS, the community garden was successfully managed by Cornerstone West CDC (Community Development Corporation) for 14 years in collaboration with many community volunteers as part of Cornerstone’s West Side Grows Together initiative, including sign-ups, collecting payments, keeping garden beds in good repair, and enforcing guidelines for keeping up plots; and

WHEREAS, community gardens give residents who do not have yards with enough space or sun for gardening the chance to grow their own food and are also places where neighbors can meet to participate in fellowship, resource-sharing, and mutual aid; and

WHEREAS, page 74 of the Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan set the goal of expanding access to fresh, healthy food and lifts community gardens as “an important source of locally grown food”; and

WHEREAS, the community garden at the Rodney Reservoir was highly used with all 61 garden plots assigned to local residents, school groups, and community organizations and over 100 active gardeners up until the Spring of 2024, when demolition and construction activities to create the new Rodney Reservoir Park required it to be temporarily closed; and

WHEREAS, this community garden at the Rodney Reservoir has been a neighborhood hub, serving as the starting point for resident-initiated projects for food sharing like the Free Farm Stand and donations to local food pantries, supporting urban agriculture and outdoor education projects like Bright Spot Farms and the Cool Spring Farmers Market, and hosting the Lewis Dual Language Elementary Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids school gardening program and Wilmington's first urban apiary; and

WHEREAS, following the City of Wilmington's 2022 decision to demolish the Rodney Reservoir, which was no longer being used as part of the City's water system, community gardeners played a key role in resident-led advocacy efforts to maintain the site as a public greenspace and helped develop the vision to transform the Rodney Reservoir into a nature- and community-focused park; and

WHEREAS, in May 2023, the City of Wilmington formed a Community/City Advisory Group that selected landscape architecture firm Hinge Collective to develop a design for a community- and nature-based park with a community garden at the Rodney Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, in the winter of 2024, the City of Wilmington committed to building the Hinge design that was created in collaboration with the community; and

WHEREAS, so far, only 20 of the 62 beds included in the community garden design have been built and there is empty space where the remaining 42 beds will be built; and

WHEREAS, more than 125 people have expressed interest in getting a plot, which is much more than can be accommodated by the 20 beds that have been built so far.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that this Legislative body recognizes the Rodney Reservoir community garden and park as a vital neighborhood hub.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Wilmington City Council urges the City of Wilmington's Administration to build the remaining 42 beds laid out in the approved Hinge design for the Rodney Reservoir Community Garden to meet the strong community interest in time for the garden beds to be put into use for the 2026 gardening season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this legislative body urges the City of Wilmington's Administration and the Department of Parks and Recreation to consider collaborating with the community on garden operations.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution urges the City of Wilmington's Administration to build the remaining 42 beds laid out in the approved Hinge design for the Rodney Reservoir Community Garden to meet the strong community interest in time for the garden beds to be put into use for the 2026 gardening season. It further recommends that the Administration to consider collaborating with the community on garden operations.