



Governance and Priorities Committee Report

For the Meeting of May 21, 2015

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** May 1, 2015
From: Julie MacDougall, Acting Director, Parks and Recreation
Subject: "Growing in the City" – Urban Food Production and Boulevard Gardening in the City of Victoria

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the proposed project charter to finalize the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines and to review, update, and expand City of Victoria policies and guidelines for urban food production.

The City of Victoria recognizes urban gardening and food production as a valuable community activity that contributes to placemaking, community wellness, positive social interaction, neighbourhood building, food security, and the creation of healthy and diverse ecosystems.

This project will further advance several key directives in the City's Official Community Plan and Strategic Plan towards the City's goals for a more sustainable local food system. Under the umbrella of "Growing in the City", this project will produce: (1) an inventory of City-owned lands for food production; (2) a review and update of the Community Gardens Policy; (3) voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed-use developments and other types of housing; (4) guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands; and, (5) a review of City regulations and policies to explore the opportunity for, and implications of, supporting expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture.

This project will also finalize the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines. While not directly related to food systems, the review process for the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines is anticipated to engage similar stakeholders.

The proposed engagement strategy will include targeted stakeholder focus groups, community engagement, targeted meetings with community experts and partners and an education program.

An engagement summary and draft documents will be brought to Council in fall 2015 for review. Final Boulevard Gardening Guidelines will be brought forward early in 2016, such that they are in place for the 2016 growing season. An updated Community Gardens Policy, updated policies and regulations for small-scale commercial urban agriculture, guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands, and voluntary guidelines for food production in new developments will be brought forward in spring 2016.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the 'Growing in the City': Urban Food Production and Boulevard Gardening project charter.

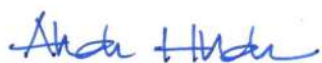
Respectfully submitted



Leigh Sifton
Manager, Parks Planning & Design



Julie MacDougall
Acting Director, Parks & Recreation



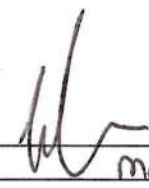
Andrea Hudson
Acting Director, Sustainable Planning &
Community Development



Katie Hamilton
Director, Citizen Engagement & Strategic
Planning

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


May 13, 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the proposed project charter to finalize the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines and to review, update, and expand City of Victoria policies and guidelines for urban food production.

Background

The City of Victoria recognizes urban gardening and food production as a valuable community activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, connection to nature, environmental education, creating healthy and diverse ecosystems, neighbourhood building, and food security.

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan seeks to “Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems”. The actions related to food production are:

2015 Actions

- Create a micro-grant for volunteer coordination of commons and community gardens.
- Develop long-term policies for food security and boulevard gardening including an inventory of City-owned land for food production and improved coordination of food systems resources and initiatives in the City.
- Learn from Vancouver’s success in creating a community garden on Davie Street private property and replicate the model on available private properties in Victoria, including downtown.
- Allocate one existing parks employee as the Food Security Coordinator.

2016 Actions

- Introduce new partnerships with citizens and groups to increase food cultivation on public and private land.

The City’s Official Community Plan (OCP) sets out a mandate including two broad goals for food systems in the City:

- A healthy share of food that supplies Victoria’s daily needs is sustainably grown, processed and packaged in the city, in surrounding agricultural areas, and on Vancouver Island.
- Victorians have access to skills, knowledge and resources to produce and process their own food in urban areas.

The OCP directs the City to review and develop policy to increase the number of allotment gardens, commons gardens, edible landscapes, food-bearing trees and other types of food production activities, including the following:

- Identify the land types and potential City-held sites where different food production activities might be supported (17.4.1);
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of participants (17.4.2);
- Identify mechanisms to encourage and support food production sites on City-held lands, other publicly-held lands, and on private lands (17.4.3);
- Identify mechanisms to acquire land for food production purposes, where appropriate (17.4.4); and,
- Work with community groups to develop pilot projects for the planting, maintenance and harvesting of food-bearing trees on suitable City-held lands (17.8).

The OCP also directs the City to support food production on private lands, including:

- Developing voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed-use developments and other types of housing, to support a range of on-site food production activities such as edible landscaping, rooftop gardens and food-bearing trees (17.12); and,
- Exploring expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture through a review of policy and regulations (17.14).

Two documents currently guide urban gardening and food production by City of Victoria residents:

1. Community Gardens Policy: outlines the process for the creation and retention of community garden sites on City-owned lands. This includes guidelines for site selection, conditions of use, City resources, and use agreements. The guidelines focus primarily on public lands. A small section discusses considerations when developing community gardens on private lands.
2. Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines: outlines considerations for gardening on city-owned boulevard lands fronting residential lots, including site selection, plant selection, garden bed design for setbacks, utility and tree access.

The City of Victoria Urban Forest Master Plan supports the planting of fruit and nut trees on appropriate City-owned lands. The Plan directs the City to explore options for supporting and growing fruit and nut trees on City-owned lands, including site selection and structured use agreements.

In 2014 Council passed two motions regarding urban gardening and food production:

1. Community Gardens Policy (August 28, 2014): "That Council direct staff to continue with the expedited review of the Community Gardens Policy including the development of an inventory of lands and incorporating the policy outlined in the Official Community Plan, Section 17.4, specifically the temporary use of vacant private land"; and,
2. Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines (July 24, 2014): "That Council adopt the Interim Guidelines with the amendments as described in Attachment 1 of the report dated July 24th, 2014, and direct staff to proceed with the development of a project charter and engagement strategy for final boulevard guidelines, to be in place for the 2016 growing season".

This project will respond to these two directives, as well as further advance several key directives in the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) and Strategic Plan towards the City's goals for a stronger local food system. This includes: an inventory of City-owned land for food production; a review and update of the Community Gardens Policy; developing voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed-use developments and other types of housing; developing guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands; exploring expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture through a review of existing City policies and regulations; and, a final set of Boulevard Gardening Guidelines.

Issues & Analysis

As described in the attached Project Charter (Appendix A), this project will include a review of application processes, existing City bylaws, and other outstanding issues to simplify and

streamline the process of approving and supporting urban gardening and food production projects. A complete list of issues to be reviewed are described in the project charter. Several key issues that are anticipated to be addressed in the review process include:

- Land availability for urban gardening and food production;
- Mechanisms to encourage food production on vacant private lands;
- Relationship with existing City programs, regulations and bylaws;
- Liability and risk management; and,
- Maintenance, ownership, and turnover.

The proposed engagement strategy, described in detail in the charter, involves public consultation from June 2015 to October 2015 through:

1. Targeted Stakeholder Engagement (June/September 2015): Stakeholder focus groups will be hosted by the City to provide stakeholders who are actively involved in urban gardening and food production the opportunity to share knowledge, discuss changes and improvements, and provide in-depth feedback;
2. Community Engagement (June/September 2015): The community will be invited to share their thoughts and comments on urban food production through in person events and an online survey.
3. Targeted Meetings with Community Experts and Partners (Summer 2015): The City will host meetings with community experts and community partners to discuss potential partnership opportunities, identify existing barriers, and develop mechanisms to support increased food production in the City, including on private lands.
4. Education Program (February 2016 – Spring 2016): Educate and generate awareness on the new policy and guidelines.

Options & Impacts

This project will be completed using staff time. Costs for public engagement including venue rentals, printing, and information distribution is included in the 2015 Parks Design Admin operating budget.

Any long-term budget impacts and options will be identified through the project and brought forward to Council for consideration.

Recommendations

That Council approve the 'Growing in the City': Urban Food Production and Boulevard Gardening project charter.



PROJECT CHARTER

'Growing in the City'

Urban Food Production and Boulevard Gardening in the City of Victoria

May 1, 2015

Prepared by:

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Project Sponsor:

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1.0 Project Objective

The purpose of this project is to further advance several key directives in the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) and Strategic Plan towards the City's goals for a more sustainable local food system. Under the banner of 'Growing in the City', the project will deliver six related initiatives:

1. An inventory of City-owned land for food production;
2. A review and update of the Community Gardens Policy;
3. Developing voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed use developments and other types of housing;
4. Developing guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands;
5. A review of City regulations and policies to explore the opportunity for, and implications of, supporting expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture; and,
6. Finalizing the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines. While not exclusively related to food production, the review process for the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines is anticipated to involve similar stakeholders, and therefore has been included in this project.

2.0 Project Rationale

In 2014, Council directed the City to review and update the documents that guide urban gardening and food production, with specific focus to:

- Finalize the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines;
- Complete a land inventory of suitable public lands for community gardening;
- Align the Community Gardens Policy with the policy goals of the OCP, specifically an exploration of the use of vacant, private land for urban gardening and food production.

One of the strategies in the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan is to 'develop long-term policies for food security and boulevard gardening including an inventory of City-owned land for food production'.

Extensive public consultation for the 2012 Official Community Plan confirmed a strong interest in supporting urban food production in Victoria. While many residents with access to yard space grow a portion of their own food, Victoria has many residents who live in rental housing or multi-unit housing where access to land for food production is limited.

Other current challenges related to urban food production include limited land availability, a shortage of community garden plots, lack of resources for garden start-up and on-going maintenance, existing City regulations that limit commercial urban agriculture, and various liability issues. There are also differing public perspectives on whether food production is a suitable activity in parks and other public spaces.

Locally, a growing number of residents and families are food insecure and rely on local charitable food services such as food banks for regular access to food. There is an opportunity to link urban food production with programs that increase access to healthy, affordable food for everyone.

The OCP suggests that a coordinated approach to food issues can help address these challenges. The City must work in partnership across departments and with senior levels of government, the health authority, other agencies, organizations and individuals to develop solutions. This project will engage multiple stakeholders to ensure the City and the public have the correct resources to successfully grow and manage urban food production opportunities.

The review process also presents the opportunity to involve and engage the public in an on-going conversation about food security, food production, and urban gardening.

2.0 Background

The City of Victoria recognizes urban gardening and food production as a valuable community activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, connection to nature, environmental education, neighbourhood building, food security, and the creation of healthy and diverse ecosystems.

The City has already undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening the local food system. These include:

- Providing an annual operating grant to the Compost Education Center to provide workshops, events and information on composting, organic gardening, and urban agriculture;
- Provision of a Special Project Grant to Lifecycles in 2009 to develop an Urban Agriculture Hotline and Workshop Series, aimed at increasing gardening skills and the number of gardens in the City;
- Partnering with the Fernwood Community Center to transform 1,800 square feet of decorative garden beds into edible food gardens;
- Partnering with the Victoria West Community Association and the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group to establish two pilot Community Orchard projects in parks;
- Partnering with the local residents to pilot a boulevard nut tree project on Haultain Street;
- An Animal Control Bylaw that permits an unspecified number of chickens, with few restrictions, making it one of the most permissive in North America;
- Revising the Home Occupation Bylaw to permit urban agriculture as a home occupation for up to two occupants; and,
- Approving Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines
- Approving a \$36,000 micro-grant program as part of the 2015-2018 operating budget to support the ongoing maintenance and management of community garden projects.

The City of Victoria partners with local non-profit groups and neighbourhood associations to develop community garden projects. Support offered by the City for community gardens includes the use of public lands where appropriate, a Phase 1 Environmental Analysis as required, community garden contact information provided on the City website, and in-kind support (hookup to municipal water supply and delivery of mulch and compost, when available).

There are currently 11 community garden projects (and one garden under relocation) that fall into three categories:

1. Commons Gardens: This is a garden area, on public or private land, that is maintained by community volunteers and can be harvested by all residents. There are currently four commons gardens operating within City limits:
 - a. Banfield Commons (Banfield Park, Victoria West)
 - b. Fairfield Community Garden (Robert Porter Park, Fairfield)
 - c. Spring Ridge Commons (located on SD 61 lands, Fernwood)
 - d. Wark Street Garden (Wark Street Park, Hillside-Quadra)
2. Allotment Gardens: These consist of individual garden plots, on public or private land, that are maintained and harvested by member gardeners. All allotment gardens currently have a wait list for garden spaces. There are currently five active allotment gardens operating within City limits, and one allotment garden under relocation:
 - a. Burnside Allotment Garden (Cecelia Ravine Park, Burnside-Gorge)
 - b. Earthbound Community Garden (City-owned land, Fernwood)
 - c. Fernwood Allotment Garden (SD 61 lands, Fernwood)
 - d. James Bay Allotment Garden (City-owned land, James Bay)
 - e. Michigan Street Community Garden (*Under relocation*) (James Bay)
 - f. Rayn or Shine Community Garden (Private lands, Victoria West)
3. Community Orchards: This is a grove of fruit or nut trees in a public park where a community group participates in the care, maintenance and harvesting of trees. The food that is produced is then shared with the community. Two community orchard pilot projects were initiated in 2013:
 - a. Banfield Park Orchard (Banfield Park, Victoria West)
 - b. Fernwood Community Orchard (William Stevenson Memorial Park, Fernwood)

2.1 Policy Framework

This project is guided by the following documents and policies:

2015-2018 Strategic Plan

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan outlines an objective to "Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems". The actions identified related to food production are:

2015 Actions

- Create a micro-grant for volunteer coordination of commons and community gardens.
- Develop long-term policies for food security and boulevard gardening including an inventory of City-owned land for food production and improved coordination of food systems resources and initiatives in the City.
- Learn from Vancouver's success in creating a community garden on Davie Street (interim allotment garden on private vacant land) and replicate the model on available private properties in Victoria, including downtown.

- Allocate existing resources in Parks and other departments to implement food security initiatives.
- Strengthen the relationship between the City of Victoria and School District 61 in order to maximize the benefit of School land and facilities.

2016 Actions

- Introduce new partnerships with citizens and groups to increase food cultivation on public and private land.

Strategic Plan outcomes related to food production are:

- Boulevard gardens exist in all neighbourhoods.
- School lands and facilities are enhanced for benefits such as community wellness and recreation, greenspace, and food systems etc.
- Greenspace, parks and food systems that are enhanced, well-maintained and fully utilized.

Official Community Plan

The City's Official Community Plan (OCP) sets out two broad goals for Victoria's food systems:

- A healthy share of the food that supplies Victoria's daily needs is sustainably grown, processed and packaged in the city, in surrounding agricultural areas, and on Vancouver Island.
- Victorians have access to skills, knowledge and resources to produce and process their own food in urban areas.

The OCP supports food production activities on public and private lands, with the goal of increasing food production opportunities in the City, including community gardens, edible landscapes, and food-bearing trees.

A background discussion paper was prepared in 2009 to inform the creation of the Food Systems chapter in the OCP. This background paper included a review of existing food related initiatives in Victoria, an inventory of food related regulations, policies, programs, services and projects supported by the City and a synthesis of issues related to the local food system, including consultation with City of Victoria staff and community food system practitioners. It also included in depth case studies of food system policies from Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and Vancouver, including consultation with these case study municipalities.

Urban Forest Master Plan

The City of Victoria Urban Forest Master Plan supports the planting of fruit and nut trees on appropriate City-owned lands. The Plan also notes challenges to be overcome, including hazards from fruit drop and harvesting, maintenance resources, and ownership of product. The Plan directs the City to explore options for supporting and growing fruit and nut trees on City-owned lands, including site selection and structured use agreements.

Community Garden Policy

The 'Community Gardens Policy' (September 2005, Revised 2009) guides the development of community gardens in the City of Victoria. The policy defines a "community garden" as: "a plot of land where community volunteers from a non-profit society produce food, flowers, native and ornamental plants, edible berries and food perennials on public or private lands."

The Community Gardens Policy outlines the process for the creation and retention of community garden sites on City-owned lands. This includes guidelines for site selection, conditions of use, City resources, and user agreements. The guidelines focus primarily on public lands. A small section discusses considerations when development community gardens on private lands.

Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines

Boulevard gardens have been appearing informally on City boulevards for a number of years. In 2014 a set of Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines was prepared to support and guide the creation of garden beds on City-owned boulevard lands fronting residential lots. The Interim Guidelines were a citizen-led initiative and were submitted to Council for consideration. The guidelines were largely adapted from the City of Vancouver Boulevard Gardening Guidelines in consultation with local food-security organizations and other stakeholders.

The creation of Boulevard Gardening Guidelines is not stipulated in the OCP; however the City of Victoria recognizes the benefits of boulevard gardens in community building, traffic calming, and the creation of ecological diversity.

3.0 Project Deliverables

This project will include six deliverables:

1. An inventory of City-owned land for food production;
2. An updated Community Gardens Policy;
3. Guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-owned lands;
4. Voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed use developments and other types of housing;
5. A review of City regulations and policies to explore the opportunity for, and implications of, supporting expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture; and;
6. A final set of Boulevard Gardening Guidelines.

3.1 Inventory of City-owned land for food production

A land inventory of City-owned land will be completed to determine potential for new community gardens sites and food-bearing trees. The land inventory will assess size of available sites, sun exposure and growing conditions, availability of municipal water hookup, site accessibility, proximity to neighbourhood resource centers (neighbourhood associations or community centers), and proximity to existing community gardens.

3.2 Updated Community Gardens Policy

This project will deliver an updated Policy for Community Gardening. Section 17.4 of the Official Community Plan includes policy goals for Community Gardens, which will guide the review and update of this policy document:

17.4 Review and develop City policy to increase the number of allotment gardens, commons gardens, edible landscapes, food-bearing trees and other types of food production activities that considers other uses and identifies:

17.4.1 The land types and potential City-held sites where different food production activities might be supported;

17.4.2 The roles and responsibilities of participants;

17.4.3 Mechanisms to encourage and support food production sites on City-held land, other publicly held lands, and on private lands; and,

17.4.4 Mechanisms to acquire land for food production purposes, where appropriate

The following issues will be addressed through this policy update:

- Mechanisms to encourage food production on vacant private lands: The role of the City in supporting and encouraging community allotment gardens on vacant private lands will be explored, including the successful model on Davie Street in Vancouver. This will also include a precedent review for tools available to encourage and support gardens on private lands.
- Application process: The application process for new community garden projects will be streamlined and improved.
- Roles and responsibilities of participants: Shared neighbourhood projects require a team of dedicated volunteers, which is often difficult to maintain over long-term land tenures. Length of land tenure agreements, maintenance responsibilities, and volunteer agreements will be reviewed.
- Resourcing: The role of the City in the development of new community garden projects and the proposal process for new projects will be assessed.

3.3 Guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands

New guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands will be developed, to support the objectives of the City of Victoria Urban Forest Management Plan and policy objective 17.8 of the Official Community Plan:

17.8 Work with community groups to develop pilot projects for the planting, maintenance and harvesting of food-bearing trees on suitable City-held lands.

These guidelines will address the following issues:

- **Assessment of pilot projects:** An assessment of the two community orchard pilot projects will be completed to determine the success of the projects to date and identify any recurring issues.
- **Species selection:** A list of appropriate species of food-bearing trees and siting considerations will be developed.
- **Maintenance and harvesting agreements:** Agreements for ongoing pruning, maintenance, harvesting and ownership of product will be developed, as required.
- **Liability:** The Urban Forest Master Plan determines a number of liability issues for food-bearing trees on public lands, especially when located on boulevards. These include slip hazards from falling fruit on sidewalks, private property damage to vehicles from falling fruit or nuts, and safety issues for harvesting on the right-of-way.

3.4 Voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit developments

New voluntary guidelines for food production in private development will be created, as outlined in policy objective 17.12 of the Official Community Plan:

17.12 Develop voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed-use developments and other types of housing, to support a range of on-site food production activities such as edible landscaping, rooftop gardens and food-bearing trees

The Voluntary Design Guidelines will provide guidance for the design of food production installations in private multi-family residential development, including considerations for location, access, size, design, support and stewardship.

3.5 Exploring expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture through a review of City policy and regulations

Some City regulations and policies may present barriers to expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture. Staff will review these to consider the opportunities for, and implications of, amendments to support small-scale commercial urban agriculture, as directed by Policy 17.14 of the Official Community Plan.

The following areas will be reviewed:

- Enabling infrastructure and human resources needed to support urban agriculture as a home occupation;
- Using accessory buildings for commercial agricultural purposes;
- Suitability of commercial urban agriculture, including greenhouses, in different land use zones;
- Other emerging and innovative forms of commercial urban agriculture and how these might be impacted by City regulations or policies.

3.6 Boulevard Gardening Guidelines

In 2014 Council directed the City to prepare finalized Boulevard Gardening Guidelines, to be in place for the 2016 growing season.

Issues that will be addressed through finalizing the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines include:

- **Bylaw Consistency:** The present interim guidelines are not fully consistent with the Street and Traffic bylaw. Approving an activity that is contrary to existing bylaws can be used to support a claim in negligence against both the City and the person engaged in the activity. The implementation of a permit system or an amendment to the existing bylaw will be required to resolve this inconsistency.
- **Maintenance and ownership:** Concerns regarding ongoing maintenance issues, especially in high-turnover situations (eg. rental apartment buildings) should be addressed in the final guidelines. This should include a process and responsibility for ongoing maintenance and/or replacement of neglected boulevard gardens.
- **Existing Boulevard Gardens:** Many residents have been gardening on the boulevards fronting their property for a number of years. A way of including these existing boulevard gardens under the liability and maintenance directives of the final guidelines should be explored.
- **City Resources:** The implementation of the Boulevard Gardening Guidelines may need additional City resources and staff time. The City of Vancouver has a paid staff position to coordinate the Boulevard Gardening program. This position does not currently exist at the City of Victoria. Permitting, bylaw enforcement and monitoring, responding to complaints, and any required upfront review of resident gardening applications may require additional City resources. The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan sets and objective of allocating resources in Parks and other Departments to implement food security initiatives.
- **Liability:** As the owner of the road right-of-way the City of Victoria would continue to be potentially liable for any unsafe conditions created as a result of boulevard gardening.

4.0 Engagement Strategy

The creation of the Food Systems chapter of the Official Community Plan included extensive engagement with community experts, stakeholders, and residents. Engagement strategies included community forums and surveys, 'Community Circles' on food issues, meetings with food system organizations and other stakeholders, school walking tours, and presentations.

The Engagement Strategy for the 'Growing in the City' project will build on previous engagement efforts, to involve stakeholders, experts and the broader community in the development of revised and expanded policies, guidelines, and regulations for food production in the City.

Engagement Approach

The proposed engagement strategy involves a two phased approach, beginning with targeted stakeholder engagement and moving towards broader consultation.

Engagement Objectives

- Engage the community in a conversation around urban food production including the challenges and opportunities.
- Solicit input from the community to inform new recommendations for urban food production from people already growing food and plants to others who might be interested in doing so in the future.
- Tell the story of urban food production in the City and raise awareness around how to grow plants and food through a variety of communication tools.

Phase 1: Preliminary Engagement

Stakeholder Focus Groups

This will provide stakeholders who are actively involved in urban gardening and food production the opportunity to share knowledge and provide in-depth feedback. The focus groups will explore what is working and what could be improved. Future engagement and educational approaches will also be shared for feedback.

What will be discussed:

- Community Gardens
- Boulevard Gardening
- Food-bearing trees on City-owned lands
- Exploring barriers and regulations to support to small-scale commercial agriculture

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Community and Neighbourhood Associations
- Existing community garden volunteer administrators
- Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable
- LifeCycles Project Society
- Compost Education Center
- Urban Food Table (citizen-organized group of urban agriculture projects)
- SPIN Farmers
- Urban Farmers Alliance of Victoria
- Slow Food Vancouver Island

Timeline: June / July 2015

Target Reach: 30 participants, with up to four groups

Outcome: Feedback to further refine policies, guidelines and recommendations for urban food production.

Targeted Meetings with Community Experts and Partners

Meetings will be scheduled to discuss potential partnership opportunities, identify existing barriers to small-scale commercial agriculture and food production on private lands, and develop mechanisms to support increased food production in the City.

What will be discussed:

- Mechanisms to support food production on private lands and other public lands not owned by the City
- Voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed use developments and other types of housing
- Barriers and regulations to support small-scale commercial agriculture.

Community Experts and Partners include, but are not limited to:

- Lifecycles
- Compost Education Center
- Local individuals or groups currently involved in small-scale commercial agriculture
- Local development professionals (real estate agencies, developers, consultants)
- School District 61
- Island Health
- Faith-based groups with land holdings

Timeline: June/July 2015

Engagement Tools: Approximately 10 meetings

Outcome: Feedback to develop mechanisms to develop community partnerships and build opportunities for food production on private lands.

In-person Community Consultation

In person engagement in the form of either an open house, workshop or other engagement event that is open to the general community will be held to solicit feedback from the public through interactive discussions on urban food production and boulevard gardening.

What will be discussed:

- Community Gardens
- Food Trees
- Food Production on Private Land Guidelines
- Review of barriers for commercial urban agriculture
- Boulevard Gardening

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- People who live, work or play in Victoria that are interested in urban food production

Timeline: June / July 2015

Target Reach: 100 participants, two to three events

Outcome: Feedback to provide preliminary input in to policies and guidelines

Survey

A survey will be used to gather preliminary input feedback from the broader community on urban food production and boulevard gardening.

What will be discussed:

- Community Gardens
- Food Trees
- Food Production on Private Land Guidelines
- Review of barriers for commercial urban agriculture
- Boulevard Gardening

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- People who live, work or play in Victoria that are interested in urban food production

Timeline: June /July 2015

Target Reach: 500 participants

Outcome: Feedback to refine policies and guidelines and create new recommendations for urban food production.

All of the feedback collected in Phase 1 will be shared with Council and will inform the draft revisions and draft recommendations which will be first shared with Council in the fall.

Phase 2: Community Engagement

In-person Community Consultation

In person engagement in the form of either an open house, workshop or other engagement event that is open to the general community will be held to solicit feedback from the public through interactive discussions on urban food production and boulevard gardening. The inventory of City held land potentially suitable for urban food production, created in Phase 1, will also help inform these discussions.

What will be discussed:

- Community Gardens
- Food Trees
- Food Production on Private Land Guidelines
- Review of barriers for commercial urban agriculture
- Boulevard Gardening

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- People who live, work or play in Victoria that are interested in urban food production
- All stakeholders that have been involved in the earlier process

Timeline: September/October 2015

Target Reach: 100 participants, two to three events

Outcome: Feedback to further guide the process of refining policies and guidelines and creating new recommendations.

Survey

A survey will be used to gather feedback from the broader community on the updated guidelines, policies and recommendations.

What will be discussed:

- Community Gardens
- Food Trees
- Food Production on Private Land Guidelines
- Review of barriers for commercial urban agriculture
- Boulevard Gardening

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- People who live, work or play in Victoria that are interested in urban food production
- All stakeholders that have been involved in earlier process

Timeline: September/October 2015

Target Reach: 500 participants

Outcome: Feedback to further guide the process of refining policies and guidelines and creating new recommendations.

Second Round of Stakeholder Focus Groups

This will close the loop with the original group of stakeholders who are actively involved in urban gardening and food production. An update will be provided as to how their input helped to shape the draft recommendations taken to Council. The focus group will also provide another opportunity to collect feedback from those actively involved in urban gardening and food production.

What will be discussed:

- Community Gardens
- Food Trees
- Food Production on Private Land Guidelines
- Review of barriers for commercial urban agriculture
- Boulevard Gardening

Stakeholders include the list that was involved in the first round of focus groups.

Timeline: September/October 2015

Target Reach: 30 participants, with up to four groups

Outcome: Feedback to further refine policies and guidelines and create new recommendations for urban food production.

A social media strategy will also be created to raise awareness around the opportunity to provide input, share what has already been done in the City and build greater interest around urban food production and boulevard gardens. Content will be used to help better explain urban food production through tips and tricks people can use at home and visual examples of how it is already working in the City.

Phase 3: Education Program

Once approved, the new policy, guidelines and recommendations will be communicated with property owners and residents in Victoria. The earlier engagement phases will help determine the specific educational tools and approaches to be used. The education program for the

Boulevard Gardening Guidelines will begin in early spring 2016, to educate gardeners in time for the 2016 growing season. Other programs will follow.

Timeline: Spring/Summer 2016

Educational tools could include: Educational events and hands on workshops, tours, boulevard garden demonstration projects, City's website, social media, videos, newsletter articles, media releases.

Target Reach: All property owners and residents of Victoria, particularly those interested in growing plants and food.

Outcome: Well informed residents on the topic of urban food production.

4.1 Level of public participation

The City adheres to the International Association of Public Participation's spectrum of public participation which identifies the level of community involvement in decision-making. This process will focus on the Inform, Consult, and Involve levels.

	Inform	Consult	Involve
Public Participation Goal	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions.	To work with the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.
Promise to the Public	"we will keep you informed"	"We will listen to and acknowledge you concerns"	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made"

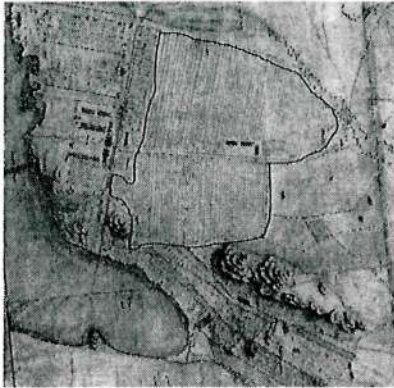
4.2 Key Messages

Growing in the City: A History

Victoria has a long, delicious and nutritious history of growing and harvesting food to sustain its people. The Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations fed their people from the bounty of the sea, the wild berries, wildlife and medicinal plants of the fields and forests and the camas fields that were cultivated and encouraged year after year.



Food production was also a priority for the early settlers to Victoria. This map from 1852 shows Fort Victoria, the collection of red buildings to the north of the Harbour, and the large tract of land used to grow food to feed the city. The earliest form of urban food production.



(Pemberton, 1852, first town plan of Victoria)

As the population increased, people wanted to live close to the heart of the City. This is what Victoria looked like by 1863. Much of the farm land was pushed to the City limits.



Growing in the City: Today

Today in Victoria there is a strong interest in supporting urban food production and in enjoying the results. Many residents that have access to a yard do grow a portion of their food. There is an increasing awareness about the importance of the '100 Mile Diet' and farmers' markets and public markets are making it easier for people in Victoria to enjoy healthy, fresh and nutritious food products that are locally produced.



Growing in the City: The Future

The 'Growing in the City' initiative is all about enhancing our local food systems. It's about finding ways to connect more people with space to grow more food, on public and private land. It's about finding ways to encourage small-scale urban agriculture and to begin thinking differently about how we manage some of our City-owned land, so we can work together to build the skills, knowledge and resources needed to produce more food in our beautiful and already delicious City.



We hope to connect people who are already 'growing in the City' to people who would like to learn how. Through conversation and collaboration we hope to explore what's working and what needs to be done differently to better support urban food production.

Growing the Conversation about 'Growing in the City'

Beginning this summer, conversations, focus groups and a survey will help the City define the ingredients needed to get more people, growing more delicious things in our City. Draft recommendations will be shared with Council and then will be brought to the community for further improvements and feedback in the fall of 2015. A final set of recommendations and an engagement summary will be taken to Council for adoption in the spring of 2016. An education program, informed in part by what was heard during earlier conversations, will begin in the spring and summer of 2016.

The 'Growing in the City' initiative will result in:

- An inventory of City-owned land for food production,
- An updated Community Gardens Policy for public and private land,
- Guidelines for food bearing trees on City-owned lands,
- Voluntary guidelines for food production in multi-unit, mixed use developments and other types of housing,
- Recommendations on how to encourage small scale urban agriculture and
- A final set of Boulevard Gardening Guidelines.

Pull up a chair, gather round the table and let's get talking about 'Growing in the City'.

4.3 Evaluation

- ✓ Impacted stakeholders were invited to participate and were involved in the engagement process.
- ✓ Early stakeholder engagement helped inform the design of later community engagement opportunities.
- ✓ Clear, accessible information was provided to participants, allowing them to participate in a meaningful way.
- ✓ The needs and interests of all participants, including the City of Victoria, were communicated.
- ✓ Feedback collected was considered in the development of the final policy and guidelines and participants understood how their input affected decisions.
- ✓ Engagement participant targets met.
- ✓ Budget not exceeded.

5.0 Project Schedule

An engagement summary, preliminary land inventory, and draft documents will be brought to Council in fall 2015 for review. A review of existing City policies and regulations to support commercial urban agriculture, and associated implications, will also be presented to Council for consideration at this time. Finalized Boulevard Gardening Guidelines will be brought forward early in 2016, such that they are in place for the 2016 growing season. An updated Community Gardens Policy, potential amendments to policies and regulations for small scale commercial urban agriculture and voluntary guidelines for food production in new developments will be brought forward in spring 2016.

6.0 Budget

This project will be completed using existing staff time. A budget of approximately \$10,000 is identified for public engagement (venues, printing, etc.). This amount is included in the 2015 Parks Design Admin operating budget.

6.1 Long Term Budget Impacts

Long-term budget impacts and options will be identified through the project and brought forward to Council for consideration.

7.0 Staff Resources

This project will be led by the Parks and Recreation Division, with the following staff resources:

Project Sponsors – Julie MacDougall, Acting Director, Parks and Recreation, Leigh Sifton, Manager, Parks Planning and Design

An inter-department team approach will be taken and includes:

- Project Manager – Alia Johnson, Senior Parks Planner
- Citizen Engagement – Julie Potter, Manager, Citizen Engagement and Melinda Jolley, Citizen Engagement Coordinator

- Community Planning – Kristina Bouris, Senior Planner

In addition, staff from other departments will be involved to assist with initial input and review of draft documents. Other departments to be involved include:

- Sustainable Planning and Community Development
- Legislative and Regulatory Services
- Engineering and Public Works
- Finance
- Legal Services