

## Growing in the City

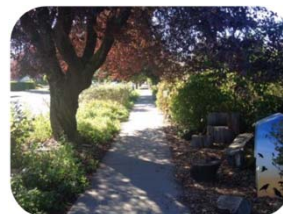
### Urban Food Production and Boulevard Gardening in the City of Victoria



## Purpose

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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.



## Building on Past Initiatives

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- Providing grants to local non-profit organizations to develop and provide education and skills training around urban food production and processing.
- Partnering to build edible food gardens at the Fernwood Community Center.
- Partnering to pilot two community orchard projects in City parks and one boulevard nut tree project.
- A permissive Animal Control Bylaw that permits an unspecified number of chickens.
- Permitting urban agriculture as a home occupation for up to two occupants.
- Approving the Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines.



## Addressing Challenges and Creating Opportunities

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- 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
- Streamlined and simplified applications for new projects
- Expanded opportunities for commercial urban agriculture



## Project Deliverables

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.



## Project Deliverables



### **An inventory of City-owned land for food production**

A land inventory of City-owned land will be completed to determine potential for new community garden sites and food-bearing trees.



- The land inventory will assess size of available City-owned sites, sun exposure and growing conditions, availability of municipal water hookup, site accessibility, proximity to neighbourhood resource centers, and proximity to existing community gardens.



- Targeted meetings with community partners, including School District 61, Island Health, and Faith-based groups with land holdings, will discuss potential partnership opportunities to expand sites for food production opportunities.



## Project Deliverables



### A review and update of the Community Gardens Policy

This project will deliver an updated Policy for Community Gardening, as guided by Section 17.4 of the Official Community Plan. Issues to be addressed include:

- Mechanisms to encourage food production on vacant private lands;
- Streamlining and improving the application process for new gardens;
- Roles and responsibilities of participants; and,
- City resourcing.

*Completion: Spring 2016*



## Project Deliverables



### 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.

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

*Completion: Spring 2016*



## Project Deliverables



### **Guidelines for food-bearing trees on City-held lands**

New guidelines will address the following:

- Assessment of existing pilot projects;
- Appropriate species selection;
- Maintenance and harvesting agreements;
- Various liability issues.

*Completion: Spring 2016*



## Project Deliverables



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

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.



## Project Deliverables



### Boulevard Gardening Guidelines

The following areas will be reviewed to inform the creation of a final set of Boulevard Gardening Guidelines:

- Consistency with Street and Traffic bylaw;
- Maintenance and ownership, including a process and responsibility for ongoing maintenance and/or replacement of neglected boulevard gardens;
- Inclusion of existing boulevard gardens under new liability and maintenance directives;
- Required City resources; and,
- Potential liability for unsafe conditions created as a result of boulevard gardening.



*Completion: Winter 2015*



## Strategic Plan

### 2015 -2016 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 David Street private property 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.
- Introduce new partnerships with citizens and groups to increase food cultivation on public and private land.



## 2014 Council Motions

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### **Community Gardens Policy (August 28, 2014)**

- “That Council direct staff to continue with an expedited review of the Community Gardens Policy including the development of an inventory of lands and incorporating policy outlined in the Official Community Plan, Section 17.4, specifically the temporary use of vacant private land.”

### **Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines (July 24, 2014)**

- “That Council adopt the Interim Guidelines with amendments as described in Attachment 1 of the report dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.”



## Official Community Plan

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### **Urban Food Production**

- 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 lands, other publicly-held lands, and on private lands; and,
  - 17.4.4 Mechanisms to acquire land for food production purposes, where appropriate.



## Official Community Plan

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### **Food Production on Private Land**

- 17.10 Support food production on private land where it is safe, suitable and compatible with the Urban Place Guidelines in this plan.
- 17.11 Encourage the provision of gardens and other food production spaces for the use of residents in new multi-unit housing.
- 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.



## Official Community Plan

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### **Food Production on Private Land**

- 17.14 Explore expanded small-scale commercial urban agriculture through a review of policy and regulations to consider the opportunities for, and implications of:
  - 17.14.1 Enabling infrastructure and human resources needed to support small-scale commercial urban agriculture as a home occupation;
  - 17.14.2 Using residential accessory buildings for commercial agricultural purposes; and,
  - 17.14.3 Allowing commercial urban agriculture uses, including greenhouses, in commercial and industrial zones.

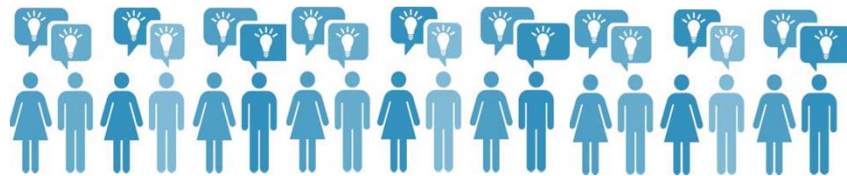




## Engaging Citizens in Growing Food

### 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.



## Engaging Citizens in Growing Food

**1.Targeted Stakeholder Engagement** (June/Sept 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.

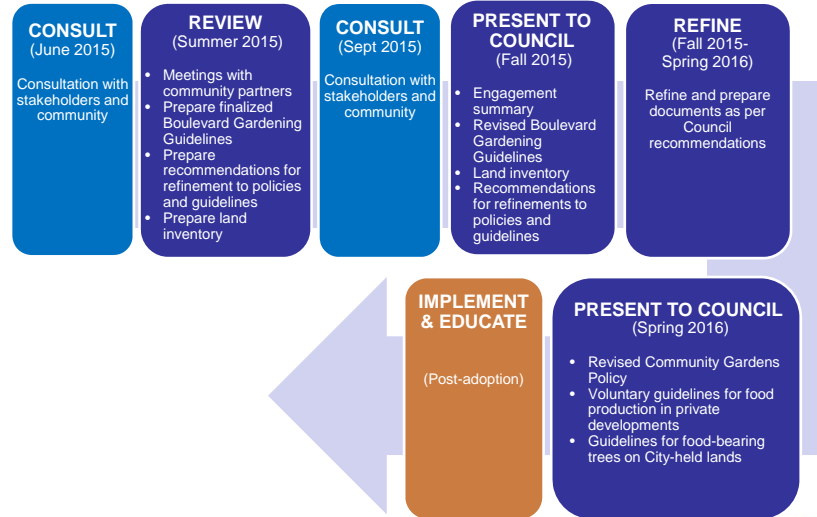
**2.Community Engagement** (June/Sept 2015): The community will be invited to share their thoughts and comments on urban food production through in person events and an online survey.

**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** (Winter – Spring 2016): Educate and generate awareness on the new policy and guidelines.



## Project Schedule



## Project Budget

- This project will be completed using existing staff time. A budget of approximately \$10,000 is identified for public engagement. This amount is included in the 2015 Parks Design Admin operating budget.
- Long-term budget impacts and options will be identified through the project and brought forward to Council for consideration.



## Recommendation

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

