



City of North Vancouver FOOD STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

1. The City of North Vancouver supports and encourages citizens to engage in urban agriculture on public and private land

1.1 Provide core funding for Edible Garden Project. This item has been approved and is included in the 2012-2021 Financial Plan. The Edible Garden Project is now funded through the North Shore Neighbourhood House budget.

1.2 Staff have revised the Street Landscaping Care and Maintenance Guide to provide guidelines for food production on front boulevards. This could be expanded to provide additional information on the construction of raised beds, available resources and appropriate plants for growing on the North Shore.

1.3 Staff will conduct a broad review of current bylaws that inadvertently restrict urban agricultural practices already in effect in other jurisdictions. Council recently received a delegation on City residents being permitted to keep chickens. Staff propose modifying current bee keeping guidelines to permit hives on roof tops in multi-family residential areas. Both of these efforts would be following strong precedents in other urban municipal areas. Actions could include the creation of a bylaw permitting the keeping of Chickens, with modifications to the Zoning, Rodent Control Bylaw and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw.

1.4 Staff will develop site selection criteria for community gardens and community orchards for stewardship by community groups and/or urban farms on public land (defined as parks, medians, utility corridors, statutory ROW's) The selection criteria would look at each site for its agricultural potential, commercial viability, accessibility (vehicular and otherwise), solar aspect, soil condition, current use and community context. A guideline for any necessary public consultation would also be provided. These sites would also be available to City residents to grow food or otherwise maintain.

1.5 The City has funded the construction of several community gardens. The Strategy would identify alternative funding sources for residents and community groups to access for their projects. An example of an alternative funding source is the Parks and Environment Grant. In the past, it has provided resources to

organizations such as the Edible Garden Project, the Community Garden at Lucas Centre and the Sophia House Biodynamic Garden Project.

1.6 The construction of community garden plots at City Hall. Staff anticipate the completion of garden plots, adjacent to the 13th Street frontage, this year. It is anticipated that these plots will be overseen by a community group to ensure that the garden is governed in a manner that will have the plots aesthetically compatible with the rest of City Hall.

1.7 Yard Sharing is a growing movement where people who have gardens offer portions of their yards for others, who may be looking to garden, but don't own land, to come and grow plants. This is an appropriate program for the City of North Vancouver as our current population growth is focused on medium and high density residential properties, yet a large proportion of the City's land is still comprised of single family residential properties. The City would provide links from a City hosted web page on urban agriculture to the Metro Vancouver yard sharing web site sponsored by City Farmer. Information about this program would be disseminated to the community to encourage participation.

1.8 Staff would develop planting strategies and maintenance practices to implement the use of edible, yet ornamentally interesting plants, in annual display beds throughout the City. Currently, display beds are planted with only ornamental annuals, bulbs and shrubs. Staff would explore using edible plants to create attractive displays, demonstrating to the public the possibility of integrating vegetables with current planting schemes. The level of care our current display beds demand would not change with this proposed alternative scheme.

1.9 Native pollinators have been in decline in recent years due to habitat loss and pollution. The City recognizes and encourages the efforts of City residents to establish bee-friendly habitat and plant appropriate plant species to provide a food source to these important insects. Staff will seek to find opportunities to also support native pollinator conservation through appropriate plantings, hosting native bee houses and nesting sites (at appropriate locations) and encourage City residents to learn more about this issue.

2. The City of North Vancouver encourages not-for-profit organizations to propose non-commercial, community engaging Urban Farms on public land

2.1 Staff would create criteria and guidelines for the creation of urban farms. Staff expect other not-for-profit organizations may want to build an Urban Farm, building on the success of Loutet Urban Farm. The guidelines would differ for projects occurring on public vs. private land. Additionally, the guidelines would provide resources and direction from 'lessons learned' during the process to establish the pilot project at Loutet Park's Urban Farm.

3. As the City increases in density, The City of North Vancouver provides opportunities for more food production space within medium and high density developments

3.1 Community gardens are recognized as invaluable community resources, creating social connections and bonds amongst neighbours. The City will facilitate this activity within the smaller communities created in apartment buildings. Staff will explore mechanisms to encourage developers to build these community amenities. Staff will research applicable design and urban agriculture guidelines to inform the creation of our own guidelines. The City's guidelines will encourage more urban agriculture and community garden opportunities within individual development sites.

4. The City of North Vancouver supports local Community Groups which seek to address food security solutions for our City.

4.1 The City encourages citizens to form community groups to foster change and advocate for the needs of those interested in urban agriculture and food security on the North Shore. Citizens would be encouraged to either become involved in existing groups (Table Matters, Ecourbia, Edible Garden Project, North Shore Bee Club, etc) or form their own. Their role would be to promote new initiatives and keep the City informed of new and emerging trends.

4.2 Staff would develop a web page on the City's web site to connect community groups with one another, be a source of City resources and information to our City community and beyond as well as a hub of web links to external web sites. Staff anticipate this site maybe a central repository for the initiatives summarized in this set of proposals.

4.3 Staff would explore the development of programs with outside organizations and agencies (e.g. Silver Harbour, North Vancouver Recreation Commission, etc) to create programs that would engage community seniors in gardening as well as knowledge and experience sharing opportunities with younger members of the community. Our elders are a knowledge base we should access to encourage novice gardeners to take up the hobby. For example, the community of senior gardeners of Italian heritage have a source of seeds that need to be preserved. Connections can be made with other ethnic groups as well. These expert gardeners' knowledge and resources will be lost with their passing. Establishing a seed bank, in cooperation with community gardens, would ensure the transfer of knowledge to a new generation of gardeners.

Adopted by Council: June, 2012