

**Toronto Agricultural Program**

<b>Date:</b>	September 30, 2013
<b>To:</b>	Parks and Environment Committee
<b>From:</b>	Deputy City Manager, Cluster A
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	17746

**SUMMARY**

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GrowTO: An Urban Agriculture Action Plan for Toronto was adopted by City Council on November 27, 2012 and is the result of over three years of collaborative work by community and institutional stakeholders with participation from various City Divisions and Agencies. The GrowTO Action Plan establishes a framework to help the City of Toronto realize the full potential of urban agriculture.

This report updates the current scope of urban agricultural activities undertaken by City Divisions and Agencies and identifies short and long term strategies that would advance urban agriculture in Toronto.

To advance urban agriculture in Toronto, it is recommended that the City adopt the Toronto Agricultural Program and Workplan to be led by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, and supported by a joint City-Sector Steering Committee that includes representatives from City Divisions, Agencies and the urban agricultural community.

The report also summarizes how the Parks Plan 2013-2017 responds to the GrowTO recommendations and how City Planning will continue to work with the City-Sector Steering Committee on Urban Agriculture to explore planning issues, barriers and opportunities associated with urban agriculture.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Deputy City Manager for Cluster A recommends that City Council:

1. direct the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A to establish a joint City-Sector Steering Committee on Urban Agriculture using the Terms of Reference provided in Appendix 1
2. adopt the proposed Toronto Agricultural Program consisting of the City-Sector Steering Committee, Working Group and 2013-2014 Workplan provided in Appendix 2
3. direct the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A to explore funding opportunities to support the City's Urban Agriculture Program, including the Province of Ontario's Local Food Fund
4. direct the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A to report back in the next term of Council on the progress made in addressing planning and policy barriers to linking farmers to land and in implementing the Toronto Agricultural Program and Workplan including longer term activities under development as outlined in Appendix 3 and associated costs
5. direct that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Board of Health for information

### **Equity Impact Statement**

The planned escalation of urban agriculture in Toronto recognizes the potential for activities to achieve social outcomes and community benefits such as increased engagement, employment, health, environmental sustainability, volunteerism, capacity building, safety and learning opportunities. Consequently, the design and implementation of urban agricultural activities will consider barriers faced by members of equity-seeking groups to equitable access, participation and benefit. Urban agriculture is an effective mechanism to engage diverse communities and build strong neighbourhoods.

To achieve these outcomes, the City of Toronto's Equity Lens will be applied where appropriate, to guide equitable allocation and distribution of resources, help set priorities, address the needs of the most disadvantaged and facilitate social development in neighborhood improvement areas through the strategic use of various City planning tools and resources.

### **Financial Impact**

The adoption of this report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in divisional 2013 operating budgets. Financial support for any enhanced activities in 2014 is subject to consideration during the 2014 Operating Budget process.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

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## DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of November 27, 2012, Toronto City Council, in response to a communication from Councillor Mary Margaret McMahon titled *Scaling Up Toronto's Urban Agriculture* (October 26, 2012), adopted GrowTO: An Urban Agriculture Action Plan for Toronto. City Council requested the Deputy City Manager for Cluster A to report on mechanisms for promoting and expanding urban agriculture including identifying where the City is already supporting the community, what opportunities are available to enhance support, what resources would be required and ways to coordinate City operations. The following is a link to the decision.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PE17.5>.

At its meeting of June 1, 2010, the Board of Health requested the City Manager to implement initiatives identified in the report *Cultivating Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto* noting that as a result, the City would reap multiple benefits: healthier residents, more vibrant and livable neighborhoods, stronger and more diverse economic development, better environmental protection and a growing reputation as a leader in food system renewal. The following is the link to the decision:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.HL31.1>

At its meeting of August 5 and 6, 2009 City Council supported the ongoing coordination of inter-divisional strategies by the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Toronto Environment Office (presently the Environment and Energy Division) to achieve the overall goal of expanding opportunities local food production and other urban agricultural activities in the City of Toronto. The following is the link to the decision:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-21648.pdf>

At its meeting of February 5, 2009 the Parks and Environment Committee referred the presentations from the Expert Panel on Urban Food Production to the Director, Toronto Environment Office and General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Forestry and Recreation and requested that they identify main themes, suggestions and challenges to be addressed in the development of the City of Toronto's urban food production policy. The following is the link to the decision:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.PE22.1>

At its meeting of July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2007 City Council adopted the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan: Moving from Framework to Action and directed the Director, Toronto Environment Office to establish in 2007 the Live Green Toronto program to support residents' to green their environments through a range of programs such as allotment/food gardens in parks and homes and green roof project. The following is the link to the Council decision: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/minutes/2007-07-16-cc11-mn.pdf>.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

In recent years, communities across the City of Toronto have expressed growing interest in, and support for, the production, consumption and sale of locally-grown food. This interest has resulted in rising demand for farmers' markets, waiting lists for space at City community and allotment gardens, and innovative activities, social enterprise and new partnerships. As the market for local food expands in Toronto, new opportunities for urban agriculture are emerging, creating a compelling case for advancing City support and coordination.

In 2012 City Council endorsed the Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy, Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021, which highlights the significant importance of the regional food and farming cluster, identifies urban agriculture as a key opportunity and offers an implementation plan to secure the region's role as a leading food and farming cluster. Similarly, the GrowTO Action Plan highlighted the health, economic and social benefits that urban agriculture can generate in communities including the potential to improve health and nutrition, provide employment and job training, generate income and reduce social isolation.

To emphasize the health and nutrition benefits and social implications of local food, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Healthy Kids Panel report *No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy* (March 4, 2013) advocated a comprehensive three-pronged strategy that included "Change the Food Environment" as a strategy for addressing the issue of childhood obesity and promoting the health and well-being of children and youth in Ontario.

In recognizing the growing importance of locally grown food and urban agriculture Toronto City Council adopted GrowTO: An Urban Agriculture Action Plan for Toronto on November 27, 2012, congratulated the Toronto Food Policy Council for coordinating the GrowTO Action Plan, and identified how the City can help promote urban agriculture. To examine how the City of Toronto could "scale-up" urban agricultural activity, the Parks and Environment Committee requested that:

- (1) The Deputy City Manager for Cluster A determine which City Divisions should be responsible for the management and promotion of Urban Agriculture and to examine the logistical and financial implications of creating a co-ordinated office dedicated to the promotion and expansion of Urban Agriculture in Toronto;
- (2) The Deputy City Manager for Cluster A report on where the City is already supporting the community in urban agriculture, what opportunities are available for the City to enhance its support, what are the resource implications of enhanced support and what mechanism and resources the City will establish to ensure coordination and collaboration between City operations in supporting urban agriculture;
- (3) The General Manager of Parks Forestry and Recreation to respond to relevant GrowTO recommendations in the 2013-2017 Parks Plan; and

- (4) The Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning and other appropriate City Divisions to establish appropriate policies and processes to link urban farmers with public and private lands for short or long-term food production.

This report summarizes existing divisional support of urban agriculture and identifies a series of immediate and short-term activities that are aligned with GrowTO priority areas that can be implemented within existing resources. It also presents longer-term opportunities and potential for extending existing partnerships to promote growth of the sector across the City. It is recommended that the City of Toronto establish a Toronto Agricultural Program as an effective mechanism for, and approach to, scaling-up urban agriculture on City and non-City lands.

## COMMENTS

The potential for urban agriculture in Toronto is significant. A 2012 study showed that scaling up urban agricultural activities in the City of Toronto could supply ten percent of the city's commercial demand for fresh vegetables (MacRae et al, 2012)<sup>1</sup>, and in the process create jobs and economic opportunity, engage diverse communities, and enhance the urban environment.

The City of Toronto has a long history of supporting food security, food production and urban agriculture. Led primarily through Toronto Public Health (TPH), the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), Environment & Energy Division (EED), and Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR), the City of Toronto has established itself as a leader in the global urban agriculture and community food-security movement. The scope and scale of activities associated with growing food in and around Toronto - both recreational and entrepreneurial - have been well documented. Appendix 5 provides a map of current City supported urban agricultural activities.

Research on Toronto's urban agricultural sector (Wilford, R., 2011<sup>2</sup>, Nasr, et al, 2010<sup>3</sup>, Wakefield, S.<sup>4</sup> et al, 2007, Wekerle, G., 2002) has identified a number of barriers that limit or restrict advancement of the sector including access to space for production, resources, services, the food supply chain, knowledge, infrastructure, and governance (Nasr et al, 2010). These studies also identify many opportunities for leveraging City resources and partnerships to support scaling up across the city. Similar challenges are experienced in the growth and development of urban agriculture in other Canadian cities<sup>5</sup> while some American cities are recognizing the

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<sup>1</sup> C Rod MacRae<sup>a,\*</sup>, Joe Nasr<sup>b,c</sup>, James Kuhns<sup>b,c</sup>, Lauren Baker<sup>d</sup>, Russ Christianson<sup>e</sup>, Martin Danyluk<sup>f</sup>, Abra Snider<sup>g</sup>, Eric Gallant<sup>a</sup>, Penny Kaill-Vinich<sup>a</sup>, Marc Michalak<sup>a</sup>, Janet Oswald<sup>a</sup>, Sima Patel<sup>a</sup>, and Gerda Wekerle<sup>a</sup>. Could Toronto Provide 10% of its Fresh Vegetable Requirements from Within its Own Boundaries? Part II, Policy Supports and Program Design. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*, Feb. 2012 (pp. 147–169)

<sup>2</sup> Wilford, R., *Urban Agriculture in Toronto: Planning, Policy and Practice Challenges and Solutions*, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Nasr, J., MacRae, R. and Kuhns, J., *Scaling Up Urban Agriculture in Toronto: Building the Infrastructure*. Metcalf Food Solutions, June, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Wakefield, S., Yeudall, F., Taron, C., Reynolds, J and Skinner, A. *Growing Urban Health: Community Gardening in South-East Toronto*, Oxford University Press, 2007)

<sup>5</sup> Vancouver Urban Farming Forum 2011 – Summary Report. City of Vancouver, March, 2012

opportunities urban agriculture presents for urban renewal and potential for job creation and economic recovery<sup>6</sup>.

*GrowTO: an Urban Agricultural Action Plan for Toronto* (GrowTO Action Plan) brought stakeholders together who play a vital role in urban agriculture in Toronto to propose solutions across the City of Toronto in order to increase support for urban agriculture, to highlight economic and social development opportunities associated with urban agriculture and to focus attention on the untapped potential of urban agriculture in Toronto. While the GrowTO Action Plan stressed the collaborative efforts of various groups and individuals, it noted the "significant and ongoing role for City government and City staff" in terms of supporting and encouraging urban agriculture and building partnerships.

The collaborative process was built on the 2010 Metcalf Foundation report "Scaling Up Urban Agriculture in Toronto: Building the Infrastructure" and identified six priorities for scaling up urban agriculture in the City of Toronto:

1. Link Growers to Land and Space
2. Strengthen Education and Training
3. Increase Visibility and Promotion
4. Add Value to Urban Gardens
5. Cultivate Partnerships
6. Develop Supportive Policies

GrowTO also made recommendations for how the City can increase support for urban agriculture while acknowledging that "no one organization or level of government can do it all".

### **City Commitments to Scaling Up Activities**

The City of Toronto's involvement in food security, food production and more recently, urban agriculture, is well documented in both the Metcalf and GrowTO reports and summarizes the investment the City has made in promoting and advancing urban agriculture. Relative to urban agricultural initiatives undertaken by municipal governments across Canada - including Vancouver, Edmonton and Montreal - the City of Toronto's sector is more advanced and has the advantage of the GrowTO Action Plan which offers a blue-print for how the City of Toronto can build an active, vibrant and sustainable sector by coordinating activities, leveraging resources and improving connections to City resources.

To respond to Council requests and understand how the City could best implement the GrowTO actions, an Inter-Divisional Steering Committee was established in March, 2013 consisting of members from City Divisions and Agencies including City Planning, Economic Development and Culture (ED & C), Environment and Energy, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA), Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), Toronto Public Health, Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Transportation Services. The Steering Committee coordinated information, provided advice on opportunities and developed a strategy for responding to the relevant GrowTO priority actions.

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<sup>6</sup> Detroit Works Project, 2010

The Steering Committee surveyed key Divisions and Agencies and created an inventory describing the range of activities the City is engaged in according to the six GrowTO priority areas and the resources being provided to support the work in the community and strengthen the urban agriculture infrastructure (see Appendix 4).

The inventory served as the foundation for the development of an urban agriculture workplan for the City consisting of activities that will be continued or expanded by City Divisions and Agencies in the short-term (Appendix 2) using existing resources, those which could be implemented with additional resources over the long term and potential opportunities to extend activities with existing partners designed to heighten impact, create additional social or economic benefits and overall strengthen and support the work of stakeholders (Appendix 3).

The following short-term activities focussing primarily on continuing or advancing existing activities to support the work of community stakeholders include:

- Supporting the development of three community gardens annually, including in 2013 and planned for 2014 by Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR)
- Developing best practices/guidelines for growing food on rooftops (Planning)
- Delivering the quarterly 'How to Start a Food Business Seminars' for individuals interested in starting up food production operations (ED & C)
- Training and mobilizing appropriate City staff to support existing and new school food gardens (Toronto Public Health)
- Integrating maps (i.e., expanding and adding more information to Live Green Toronto Map community shared agriculture, community gardens, farmers' markets) and create an interactive online map of all community gardens and urban farms in Toronto and eventually, include land most suitable for new urban farms (Toronto Food Policy Council, EED)
- Building upon the existing urban agriculture information on the Live Green Toronto website (e.g., add additional information to the existing sections on local food and growing your own food) (EED, TFPC, TPH, SDFA)
- Scripting language in all RFPs and RFQs to purchase food for City operations that it is a policy objective to increase percentage of locally grown food
- Identifying options for encouraging more enterprise-based farming (Planning)
- Ramping up promotion of urban agriculture as green infrastructure through outreach avenues and financially support urban agriculture activities on green roofs as part of the Eco-Roof Incentive program (EED)
- Working with post-secondary educational institutes to engage graduate students to conduct background research and analysis involving review of case studies (local and international) and existing planning regulation leading to (i) preparation of a best practices/guideline for growing food on rooftops and (ii) identification of options for encouraging more enterprise-based farming (Planning)
- Creating a Guide to Growing and Selling Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in Toronto (Toronto Food Policy Council with Toronto Public Health and other Divisions)

The following longer-term activities focussing more on strengthening the community infrastructure, leveraging resources and exploring emerging opportunities include:

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- Exploring opportunities to implement a strategic plan for large commercial food processing kitchens via Toronto Food Business Incubator (ED & C)
- Working with/support other Divisions to explore opportunities to promote urban agriculture as a vehicle for community building, environmental protection, community safety and promotion of food security (Toronto Public Health/Social Development, Finance and Administration).
- Exploring the expansion of seminars to include urban agriculture-specific sessions through partnership with rural/regional colleagues via the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (ED & C)
- Exploring opportunities for Park Rangers to guide communities interested in urban agriculture through their role in community engagement and involvement in parks (Park, Forestry and Recreation).

City staff consulted with key sector stakeholders, the Toronto Food Policy Council and the Toronto Urban Growers, on proposed City activities. Feedback from both update sessions was very positive and indicated a high level of support for the process, timelines and the range of actions being proposed. Representatives from across Toronto's diverse urban agricultural sector agreed there were many current and newly emerging opportunities for scaling up, building momentum and establishing innovative partnerships.

Consistent with the priority actions identified in the GrowTO Action Plan for the City of Toronto, stakeholders also re-iterated the importance of coordinating city resources, improving access to City information, expertise and resources and building capacity to identify and seize new opportunities to advance urban agriculture. Key suggestions to maintain momentum and advance urban agriculture focused on ensuring that the city took steps to help the urban agricultural community to readily access the City's vital resources, information and support and to provide opportunities for the community to share expertise and experience.

### **Promoting Urban Agriculture through a Toronto Agricultural Program**

There are a range of models currently operating in cities across Canada and the United States for coordinating and advancing urban agricultural activities, each at different stages of development and implementation. According to a recent report, there are six "forms of municipal food policy activity" with 64 local and regional municipalities across Canada involved in using food systems to improve health, environmental performance, food access, and local economic development (MacRae, R. and Donahue, K.).<sup>7</sup> Cities coordinate resources differently and not all models have dedicated staff resources and/or offices as the primary mechanism for coordinating urban agricultural or food-related activities. For example, the City of Montreal coordinates urban agriculture through an internal and external committee (headed by a City councillor) while the City of Edmonton has opted to align urban agriculture with food policy and integrate responsibility into the role of the Coordinator of the Edmonton Food Council. Comparatively, staff from the Social Planning and Policy Department in the City of Vancouver, coordinate urban agricultural activity by supporting a working group consisting of City staff, members from the

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<sup>7</sup> MacRae, R. and Donahue, K. municipal food policy entrepreneurs: A preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change



Vancouver Food Policy Council and community and providing technical advice to city departments.

How cities manage and promote urban agriculture depends on a number of variables such as internal capacity and resources, the scale and scope of activities anticipated and the robustness of the urban agricultural infrastructure and its stage of development. Compared to Vancouver, Edmonton and Montreal, the City of Toronto has a well established Food Charter, a (Toronto) Food Policy Council and a strong community infrastructure with many stakeholders as noted in the GrowTO Action Plan. Currently, City supports of urban agriculture are managed and resourced separately and independently across a number of Divisions without a recognizable mechanism for corporate planning, inter-divisional coordination or stakeholder engagement. While the City is engaged in a substantive number of activities, significant pressure is placed on limited City resources particularly as community interest and expectation grows and new opportunities emerge. Consequently, a model for managing the City's urban agricultural supports must not only help improve connections internally within the City but also strengthen connections externally with stakeholders. The mechanisms must provide the means for the City to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges while at the same time, producing heightened social, economic and health impacts from investments.

Consolidation of divisional activities and existing resources within a focused urban agricultural program area would improve coordination. In addition, expansion of the inter-divisional steering committee model would facilitate strategic planning, strengthen collaborations and improve access. The development of a distinct agricultural program for Toronto would help the City keep pace with the growing urban agricultural infrastructure in Toronto and help maintain Toronto's reputation as a leader in urban agriculture and food policy.

The Toronto Agricultural Program consists of (1) a City-Sector Steering Committee (2) Working Group, and (3) 2013-2014 Workplan. Together, these three components would provide a focal point for planning and coordinating the City of Toronto's urban agricultural activities, improving access, leveraging resources and exploring new opportunities. This is consistent with a key immediate goal identified in GrowTO - to create an urban agricultural program at the City of Toronto - and supported by the feedback from the sector.

The City-Sector Urban Agricultural Steering Committee (Steering Committee) would be composed of senior staff from key City Divisions and Agencies, stakeholders from Toronto's urban agricultural community and led by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A. The primary role of the Steering Committee would be to plan and coordinate strategic City activities, actions and priorities, identify opportunities for new initiatives and partnerships, and to leverage existing or prospective opportunities. The Working Group comprised of staff from participating Divisions and Agencies, will support the Steering Committee and lead the implementation of the Workplan. Staff from Social Development, Finance and Administration will provide lead policy and secretariat support to the Steering Committee and Working Group. The Workplan (Appendix 2) consists of specific activities Divisions will undertake to advance urban agriculture in the next 12 month period that are associated with the six GrowTO action areas.

The Toronto Agricultural Program aligns city-wide urban agriculture activity and outcomes with other key City strategies, including Parks Plan 2013-2017, Toronto Strong Neighborhoods 2020,

Working as One: Workforce Development Strategic Plan for Toronto, Economic Development's Collaborating for Competitiveness, Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan, and the Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan. This alignment may yield benefits such as support of new social enterprises linked to urban agriculture, development or enhancement of skills training for employment in agricultural related occupations or food production and build community capacity through the expansion of learning programs for youth or grant-making for agency-led urban agricultural initiatives. This would facilitate additional social, economic and environmental benefits.

The 2013-2017 Parks Plan has specifically integrated urban agriculture as a strategic goal and is currently in the process of planning implementation. Direction 9 – demonstrate, educate and inspire through horticulture and urban agriculture - recognizes the growing community interest in community and allotment gardens and identifies some of the challenges such as stewardship of allotment gardens and declining states of repair, balancing high demand with the intensive development processes, competition for park space and high cost of soil testing. Over the next five years, Parks, Forestry and Recreation will continue its focus on expanding the number of community gardens across the City (one garden per ward), developing procedures and guidelines for stewardship including maintenance standards, developing an inventory of space for future gardens (with a focus on expanding in areas where there are concentrations of low-income residents with little access to garden space) and adapting the Community Gardens Program model to engage residents in Parks, Forestry and Recreation horticulture. A volunteer horticulture program will be developed to enhance the connection of people to parks, and the number of workshops will be increased. The Steering Committee and Staff Working Group for the Toronto Agricultural Program can support the implementation of the Parks Plan and other strategic plans by coordinating resources.

Similarly, the Tower Renewal Office within Social Development, Finance and Administration, is presently working with City Planning and other Divisions to explore new permissions under Residential-Apartment-Commercial zoning that could allow certain forms of urban agricultural activity in private and public high-rise buildings. Alignment with these initiatives can generate additional and enhanced social and economic benefits of urban agricultural activities.

Urban agriculture can also be promoted through existing City initiatives. The huge potential of rooftops for urban agriculture can be increased through promotion of the City's Eco-Roof Incentive Program (ERIP). Rooftop gardens that meet Toronto's Green Roof Construction Standard are eligible for funding. ERIP provides \$75 per square metre, to a maximum of \$100,000 for eligible green roof projects.

Other potential partnership initiatives that provide opportunities for generating economic benefits include vertical farms (growing with no soil and only needing access to water), low-cost opportunities for support; retrofitting empty industrial buildings with portable LED lighting equipment to grow vegetables and minimize dependence on imports from around the world in the winter; and providing incentives to landlords to utilize their space to grow food profitably.

### **Partnering on Urban Agriculture**

In addition to opportunities arising from inter-divisional partnerships, other public Agencies such as Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) have developed strategic goals in, or that support, urban agriculture and offer significant opportunities to work collaboratively to advance urban agriculture and leverage resources (see Appendix 3). For example, TCHC's concept of an Urban Agriculture Partnership Table provides a vehicle for the City to support social outcomes. Partnerships with institutions, private sector and government creates potential for addressing important priorities such as identification of vacant lands and collaborative mechanisms for connecting growers.

Other orders of government (*e.g.*, Parks Canada), community non-profits (*e.g.*, Everdale Environmental Learning Centre) and private sector organizations (*e.g.*, Cushman Wakefield/Daniels Corp.) with interests and investment in urban agriculture offer interesting opportunities for partnerships in economic development ventures. Enhanced City support of urban agriculture can help attract existing urban agricultural and food-production businesses, create and support new entrepreneurs and stimulate innovation. The Flemington Park redevelopment could widen programming by introducing a commercial shared use kitchen and vertical farming pilot in order to utilize excess produce that can be grown in proximity to the North York Harvest Food Bank. Programs that teach farming, food security and food production methods to youth and children could be run so that they would develop the relevant skills to join future workforce in urban agriculture.

As part of a broader local food strategy, the Province of Ontario recently introduced Bill 36, Local Food Act, 2013, which if passed, is intended to help increase awareness, access to, and demand for local food in Ontario. The Local Food Fund was announced September 16, 2013 as part of the government's overall investment of \$30 million over three years to support local food projects. The Local Food Fund is a 50:50 contributory grant designed to support innovative local food projects that celebrate local food, and help create jobs and economic growth in Ontario.

The Fund will support projects in four categories:

1. Regional and Local Food Networks
2. Enhanced Technologies, Capacity and/or Minor Capital
3. Research and Best Practices
4. Education, Marketing and Outreach

As municipalities are eligible to receive funding, this creates an opportunity for the Steering Committee to explore the Local Food Fund as a potential mechanism to support urban agricultural activities identified in the Workplan as well as other related City plans such as the Parks Plan, Tower Renewal and other initiatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

While the scale and scope of support the City of Toronto is currently providing to the development of urban agriculture in the City is substantive, the growing interest, momentum, knowledge and capacity amongst stakeholders has generated additional expectations of, and pressures on, City of Toronto resources and services.

The City of Toronto can support the implementation of the GrowTO action plan and generate additional social and economic benefits by adopting the Toronto Agriculture Program led by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, and supported by a Joint City-Sector Steering Committee and Staff Working Group, such that urban agricultural activities are coordinated and supported more centrally. The Steering Committee will provide advice and guide the scaling up of urban agriculture and the Working Group will implement the Workplan with emphasis on priorities identified by GrowTO and the community. Priorities include improving community access to the City's urban agricultural supports and services, developing land inventories to help connect farmers to public and private land, and exploring new opportunities including funding opportunities such as the Local Food Fund.

City Divisions will continue to review GrowTO and other relevant strategies that impact the urban agricultural agenda to identify any additional resources that may be required through the 2014 budget process and beyond. Staff will report back in the new term of Council on the progress being made and a possible organizational model to strengthen the work, if required.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Brenda Patterson  
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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for Joint City-Sector Steering Committee on Urban Agriculture  
Appendix 2: 2013-2014 Urban Agricultural Workplan  
Appendix 3: Potential Long term initiatives and Partnership Development Opportunities  
Appendix 4: City of Toronto Divisional Inventory of Urban Agricultural Activities  
Appendix 5: City of Toronto Supported Urban Agriculture Activities, 2013 - Map

# APPENDIX 1

## Terms of Reference

### Joint City-Sector Steering Committee on Urban Agriculture

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Joint City-Sector Steering Committee on Urban Agriculture (the Steering Committee) is to guide the implementation of GrowTO activities that fall within the purview of the City of Toronto and provide leadership for the scaling up of urban agriculture in Toronto.

#### **Composition and Membership**

The Joint City-Sector Steering Committee on Urban Agriculture is composed of representatives from key City Divisions, Agencies and external organizations that are actively engaged in, and provide leadership to, urban agriculture in Toronto.

Membership will include senior representatives from a range of City Divisions and Agencies including:

- City Planning
- Economic Development and Culture
- Environment and Energy
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Real Estate Services
- Social Development, Finance and Administration
- Solid Waste
- Toronto Public Health
- Toronto Water
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority

Membership will include representatives from external umbrella and key organizations from the urban agricultural community/sector such as:

- Toronto Urban Growers
- Toronto Food Policy Council
- Foodshare
- The Stop: Community Food Centre

Additional members may be added by nomination by, and agreement of, the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be chaired by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, City of Toronto.

Membership is for the current term of council.

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### **Goals**

The primary goals of the Steering Committee Group are to:

- guide the promotion and expansion of urban agriculture in Toronto
- plan and coordinate strategic City activities, actions and priorities
- identify opportunities for new initiatives and partnerships
- leverage existing, and seek additional, resources
- build a supportive corporate culture within the City through education and awareness
- support and encourage innovation in urban agriculture

### **Roles and procedures**

The Steering Committee will be convened and led by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A. Three to four Steering Committee meetings will be held during the term of the Committee. Summary Minutes will be drafted identifying key action items.

### **Resources and support**

The Steering Committee will be supported by a staff working group comprised of staff from participating Divisions and Agencies who will lead implementation of the workplan. Lead secretariat support will be provided through Social Development, Finance and Administration.

### **Reporting**

The Steering Committee will guide the development of a progress report and any other report upon the request of the Committee Chair.

### **Committee Review**

The purpose, goals and composition of the Steering Committee will be reviewed annually.

## Appendix 2 2013-2014 Urban Agricultural Workplan

Action area	6-12 months
Linking Growers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2013, PFR is supporting the development of three community gardens (PFR), bringing to total to 57</li> <li>• In 2014, three-to-four new community gardens are planned (PFR)</li> <li>• Promote urban agriculture on rooftops through the Eco-Roof Incentive Program (EED)</li> <li>• Develop best practices/guidelines for growing food on rooftops (Planning)</li> <li>• In 2014, develop and provide information to apartment property owners on best practices in supporting community and allotment gardens on their sites (SDFA)</li> </ul>
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once the Volunteer Horticulture Program (VHP) is in place there is an opportunity to link with the Live Green Toronto Volunteers program (EED)</li> <li>• Deliver the quarterly 'How to Start a Food Business Seminars' for individuals interested in starting up food production operations (ED &amp; C)</li> <li>• Support the World Crops Learning Gardens initiative (TPH)</li> <li>• Public Health Nurses support existing and new school food gardens (TPH)</li> <li>• In 2013, deliver Recipe for Community initiative (SDFA)</li> <li>• Parks, Forestry and Recreation will continue to deliver children's garden programming in High Park and staff program and garden training at additional 14 expansion garden sites, and education and demonstration at its existing community gardens and greenhouses</li> <li>• Develop additional private/public partnerships for building community capacity (TRCA)</li> <li>• Continue to develop formal education and general stewardship as part of TRCA's programming (TRCA)</li> </ul>
Visibility and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote urban agriculture and local food through the Live Green Program (EED)</li> <li>• Integrating maps (i.e., expanding and adding more information to Live Green Toronto Map community shared agriculture, community gardens, farmers' markets) and create an interactive online map of all community gardens and urban farms in Toronto and eventually, include land most suitable for new urban farms (Toronto Food Policy Council, EED)</li> <li>• Building upon the existing urban agriculture information on the Live Green Toronto website (e.g., add additional information to the existing sections on local food and growing your own food) (EED, TFPC, TPH, SDFA)</li> <li>• All RFPs and RFQs to purchase food for City operations to include language on a policy objective to increase percentage of locally grown food</li> <li>• Promote Make It Local recipe book and Local Food procurement policy</li> <li>• currently involved in a working group at the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance that is putting together a Mapping of all food and farming assets in the GH (ED &amp; C)</li> <li>• Create a companion to the Get Growing Toronto Guide to promote all City work on urban agriculture (TFPC)</li> <li>• Work with Black Creek Community Farm on a Health Impact Assessment that identifies quantitative and qualitative indicators suitable for documenting the impacts of urban agriculture (TPH)</li> <li>• Working with stakeholders to raise awareness of changes in zoning for apartment sites, which include new permissions for sale of food (SDFA)</li> </ul>
Add Value to urban Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Live Green Toronto Community Grants have funded over 40 Urban Agriculture related projects (EED)</li> <li>• Green roofs used for food production and built to meet Toronto's Green Roof Construction Standard are eligible for funding through the Eco-Roof Incentive Program. All building types (including residential) are now eligible. (EED)</li> </ul>
Cultivate relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development of the Black Creek Community Farm (TPH)</li> <li>• Public and private spaces for urban agriculture</li> </ul>

Develop supportive policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify options for encouraging more enterprise-based farming (Planning)</li><li>• Ramp up promotion of UA as green infrastructure through our outreach avenues (EED)</li><li>• Promote UA applications on green roofs as part of the Eco Roof Incentive program (EED)</li><li>• Planning project: request for graduate student to conduct background research and analysis involving review of case studies (local and international) and existing planning regulation leading to (i) preparation of a best practices/Guideline for growing food on rooftops and (ii) identification of options for encouraging more enterprise-based farming</li><li>• Develop case studies of urban agriculture activities to be used in the policy development process (TFPC)</li><li>• Create a Guide to Growing and Selling Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in Toronto (TFPC with TPH and other Divisions)</li><li>• Launch and promote Guide to Soil Testing for Urban Gardens (TPH)</li><li>• Review mid-scale composting guidelines under development by the Ontario Ministry of Environment (TPH)</li><li>• Develop new policies to provide more opportunities for lower income communities to access healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food on park lands and in recreation facilities (PFR and TPH)</li></ul>
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## APPENDIX 3



## Potential Long-term Initiatives and Partnership Development Opportunities

Action area	Long- term Opportunities
Linking Growers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rate of community garden expansion can increase depending on budget approval, community capacity to organize a sustained governance structure and maintenance program, and the availability of land (Parks, Forestry and Recreation)</li> <li>With funding requested through the 2013-2017 Parks Plan, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, can expand urban agriculture workshops for community gardeners and horticulturalists, increasing the program's reach</li> <li>Exploring opportunities for Park Rangers to guide communities interested in urban agriculture through their role in community engagement and involvement in parks (Park, Forestry and Recreation).</li> <li>Allotment gardens can be expanded into hydro corridors, surplus City properties, conservation lands (through the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority), Toronto Community Housing lands and in some cases minor extensions to existing gardens. The focus for new allotment gardens should be in low-income areas with high demand for community or allotment gardens. With additional staff and capital funds requested in the 2014 budget and forecast for the 2013-2017 Parks Plan life-cycle, Parks, Forestry and Recreation can establish three new allotment gardens, and enhance existing gardens. This will improve the level of service for existing gardens and create 300 more plots (Parks, Forestry and Recreation).</li> </ul>
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore expansion of seminars to include urban agriculture - Parks, Forestry and Recreation can expand demonstration gardens and education across the city with added resources. Mostly, these are seasonal staff and full-time coordinators. Currently, PFR provides up to 26 training workshops at community gardens and 12 at allotment gardens per year. With the requested funds as part of the budget submission for the 2013-2017 Parks Plan, the number of each training could double depending on demand (Parks, Forestry and Recreation)</li> <li>Explore expansion of seminars to include urban agriculture-specific through partnership with rural/regional colleagues via the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (ED &amp; C)</li> </ul>
Visibility and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with/support other Divisions to explore opportunities to promote urban agriculture as a vehicle for community building, environmental protection, community safety, promotion of food security (TPH/SDFA/TRO).</li> </ul>
Add Value to Urban Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to implement a strategic plan for a large commercial food processing kitchen via Toronto Food Business Incubator</li> </ul>

### Partnerships Development Opportunities

City Division/agency and Partner	Current Partnership Initiative	Opportunity to advance partnerships
<b>Environment and Energy</b>		
Greenbelt fund	Local food procurement policy and Make It Local recipe book (completed)	Funding is available from the Greenbelt Fund for projects that support Ontario food production. <a href="http://ontariofresh.ca/about-greenbelt-fund/broader-public-sector-grant-stream">http://ontariofresh.ca/about-greenbelt-fund/broader-public-sector-grant-stream</a>
Toronto Urban Growers	GrowTO – promotion and consultation	continued engagement opportunities
Green Roofs for Healthy Cities	Urban Agriculture Summit	Promotion of UA on rooftops

<b>Parks, Forestry and Recreation</b>		
Toronto Region and Conservation Authority (TRCA) (Both Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Social Development, Finance & Administration (Tower Renewal Office) have partnerships with TRCA	Plenty of agricultural land outside of the 416, some in the 416	Determine if TRCA could expand or provide lands for the community garden or allotment garden programs including both publicly owned land and work on securing land on privately-owned sites such as apartment buildings.
Toronto Community Foundation – Recipe for Community	Tower Renewal is partnering with local service providers, businesses and public sector to plan, implement and evaluate community gardening projects in Weston/Mount Dennis as part of improving sense of belonging and safety in the neighbourhood	The Toronto Community Foundation – Recipe for Community project is an annual initiative between TCF and the City of Toronto (TRO/Toronto Partnership Office). A core objective of the funding is to be dedicated toward food and beautification activities. Each year, a new neighbourhood is selected as a recipient for the funding.
Settlement Agencies and other neighbourhood-based Agencies	Neighborhood Action Partnerships (NAP)	Provide tools to assess demand for community gardens, and build capacity in (priority) wards that do not have community gardens
<b>Toronto Public Health</b>		
Black Creek Community Farm	Providing support to Black Creek Community Farm	Undertake research on how the City and Province can use health evidence and public policy to better support urban agriculture.  Develop an evaluation framework for urban agriculture.  Work with the Province and community stakeholders to explore mid-scale composting as an option for waste reduction and soil fertility management
<b>Toronto Community Housing Corporation</b>		
City, others	Let's Get Growing – Resident Led Food Security Networking events  Support 128 TCH Gardens  Update Community Gardening Manual/Resource Guide  Provide Compost to	Develop an Urban Agriculture Partnership table to explore how we can use Urban Agriculture to bring opportunities to residents (social enterprises, Health, Food projects)  Develop a New Strategic Plan to support Urban Agriculture and Food Security  Develop a Tool sharing program  Provide Urban Agriculture Training to gardeners  Tenant Gardener training and pathways to employment

	community gardens	<p>Solid waste provide compost to community gardens – will remove barriers to resident engagement and increase the number of gardens</p> <p>Survey TCH sites for large areas of land to farm by connecting farmers to residents and exploring the potential of growing relevant crops to communities</p>
<b>Toronto Region Conservation Authority</b>		
City, others	<p>Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP) Near Urban Agriculture program</p> <p>New Farmer Incubator TRCA has initiated a new partnership to operate an urban farm on 8 acres of TRCA land at Steeles and Jane Street</p>	<p>TRCA will continue to work with the farm partner to develop the urban farm (i.e., infrastructure and programming).</p> <p>TRCA is interested in planning and implementing urban agricultural projects (i.e. Black Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan for Jane –Finch community, University Presbyterian Church).</p>

## Appendix 4

Staff report for action on Toronto Agricultural Program

# City of Toronto Inventory of Urban Agricultural Activities

## Link Growers to Land and Space

Types of Actions and Initiatives Completed/Underway	Details	Divisions Involved
<b>Maps</b>	<p>The Live Green Toronto Map shows existing community gardens, farmers markets, community shared agriculture programs, food box programs, food coops and local food programs.</p> <p>Wellbeing Toronto – A web-based mapping tool that provides the public with information about their communities from population demographics to services such as where community gardens are located. <a href="http://www.toronto.ca/wellbeing">www.toronto.ca/wellbeing</a></p>	<p>Environment and Energy Division (EED), Parks, Forestry and Recreation (Community Garden Program)</p> <p>Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA)</p>
<b>Access to City land</b>	Community Garden Program (manages 57 community gardens and 12 allotment gardens mostly in City parks)	Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Facilitating relationships between growers and land owners</b>	Working with community to approach landlords and explain the benefits and opportunities to generate landlord interest and support	Tower Renewal Office (TRO), etc.
<b>Directly leasing to growers</b>	FarmStart, Everdale	Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)
<b>Removing policy and regulatory barriers to land use</b>	Zoning in new RAC zones	City Planning, Tower Renewal , Toronto Public Health (TPH)

## Strengthen Education and Training

Types of Actions and Initiatives Completed/Underway	Details	Divisions Involved
<b>Online directory</b>	<p>Live Green Toronto map lists groups, activities, markets, community shared agriculture programs, food box programs, food coops and local food programs.</p> <p>The Live Green Toronto website provides information about growing food in the city, dining out, farmers markets, and local food recipes.</p>	EED

<b>Develop and disseminate educational resources</b>	“Get Growing Toronto” brochure	EED, Public Health
	Video: “How to start a community garden”, CGP Toolkit	EED, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
	Soil Assessment Guide	Parks, Forestry and Recreation, TPH
<b>Provide training</b>	Entry Level to Food Processing Program	Economic Development (ED & C), Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS), TPH and ED & C
	Community Food Skills Program	ED & C, TESS, TPH and EDC
	Rockcliffe Demonstration and Teaching Garden	Parks, Forestry and Recreation
	High Park Children’s Garden and Children's Eco Programs	Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Support external educational programs and institutions</b>	Leasing land to Everdale and FarmStart	TRCA
	World Crops Learning Gardens	TPH

## Increase Visibility and Promotion

<b>Types Actions and Initiatives Completed/Underway</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Divisions Involved</b>
<b>Develop promotional material</b>	In support of farmer tenants	TRCA
	Live Green Toronto E-Newsletter	EED
<b>Evaluate and recognize progress</b>	Regular meetings with farmer tenants, regular progress reports to decision makers, conference presentations on approaches and lessons learned	TRCA
	Supported Toronto’s 2012 Urban Agriculture Summit	TPH, EED
<b>Reward and showcase successes</b>	Live Green Toronto Awards	EED

## Add Value to Gardens

<b>Types Actions and Initiatives Completed/Underway</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Divisions Involved</b>
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<b>Compost</b>	Corporate composting program	TRCA
	Supply compost to community gardens	Solid Waste Division, Tower Renewal,
	Compost available through 311	
<b>Support entrepreneurs</b>	Support residents in starting small businesses (incl. food businesses)	Enterprise Toronto with Thorncliffe Park Neighbourhood Office, Tower Renewal
<b>Grants and incentives</b>	Live Green Toronto community grants provide seed funding for community groups engaged in environmental activities (incl. over 40 UA related projects)	EED
	Eco-Roof Incentive Program financially supports the installation of food producing rooftop gardens that comply with Toronto's Green Roof Construction Standard	EED
	Food Security Investment Program (FSIP) helps enable community based urban agriculture in priority neighborhoods through animators program.(ended)	
	Community Service Partnership grants	SDFA

## Cultivate Relationships

<b>Types Actions and Initiatives Completed/Underway</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Divisions Involved</b>
<b>Build institutional support</b>	Local food purchasing directive for all corporate events and events on TRCA property	TRCA
	Staff allotment gardens at office facilities	TRCA
<b>Support community-led action</b>	Black Creek Urban Farm (previously Toronto Urban Farm)	Parks, Forestry and Recreation, TRCA, etc.
	Live Green Toronto Community Animators supported the development of food gardens and farmers' markets in communities across the city	EED
	CSP-funded food-related community projects (e.g., Community Food Animator, Community Kitchens, Foodlink, community gardens, etc.)	SDFA
<b>Connect with diverse neighbourhoods and cultural communities across the city</b>	Collaborative efforts to work with communities in the Jane-Finch area to enhance community and backyard gardening opportunities and expand food opportunities	TRCA, SNAP, Tower Renewal, EED, Live Green
	Applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a grant for vertical gardens on apartment towers in Kingston Galloway/ Orton Park area	Tower Renewal, TRCA

Staff report for action on Toronto Agricultural Program

	Developed new recipes for Children Services that make extensive use of locally-produced food, distributed recipes and info. about growing food to childcare workers and parents in 9 languages	EED, Children Services
	SNAP	TRCA
<b>Collaborating with other jurisdictions</b>	Provided staff support for Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Working Group	Economic Development
	Worked with OMAFRA to develop Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Plan	TRCA

## Develop Supportive Policies

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Divisions Involved</b>
<b>2012</b>	The development of new as-of-right zoning (for growing and selling food and flowers) via the new Residential Apartment Commercial zone	City Planning, Tower Renewal, Toronto Public Health, etc.
	Work with Food Policy Council and Food Strategy team to strengthen policies around food production and access to food through the Official Plan 5 year review.  Creation of new Residential Apartment Commercial zone in City-wide Zoning Bylaw which provides for the growing of food and flowers in apartment tower sites.	City Planning
	TRCA Urban Agriculture Policy	TRCA, etc.
	TRCA Living City Policies	TRCA, etc.
	Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Plan	TRCA, etc.
	Extensive research was completed on regulatory and bylaw changes that would enable the keeping of backyard hens.	EED
<b>2008</b>	Local food procurement policy: City Divisions must state their preference for local food in all procurement documents	EED
<b>2002</b>	Community Gardens	Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>1999</b>	Community Garden Action Plan	Parks, Forestry and Recreation
	Food and Hunger Action Plan	Parks, Forestry and Recreation, TPH, etc.

# Appendix 5 City of Toronto Supported Urban Agriculture Activities, 2013 - Map





