

January 10, 2022



To the Infrastructure and Environment Committee

Re: IE 27.6 Review of City of Toronto Golf Courses

I'd like to say thank you to the staff and consultants who listened to community voices and included food growing as a potential complementary use of golf courses during the consultation process. However, it is deeply disappointing to see that the staff report dismisses the possibility of food growing projects due to floodplain concerns and "conflict between golf operations and food growing."

Other cities have managed the "conflict" between golf and food. Some examples:
<https://www.gcmonline.com/course/environment/news/cordova-bay-golf-garden>
<https://www.wcta-online.com/news/industry-news/358-food-for-golf>

More space can be made available to avoid conflicts by moving to a 9-hole model (which is becoming popular with golfers and is recommended at the Dentonia Park site).

Flood plains were not identified as an issue at Dentonia Park and Tam O'Shanter. They were mentioned as two possible sites for food gardens. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/improvements-expansion-redevelopment/review-of-city-golf-course-operations/>

Dentonia Park is a particularly important site as it has a high proportion of high-rise dwellers, newcomers needing access to culturally appropriate food and long wait lists for community garden plots. Property managers in the neighbourhood prohibit balcony gardens, so some residents can't even grow food in their own spaces. Community agency staff and residents have worked for eight years to identify other potential garden sites in the neighbourhood, only to have every suggestion rejected.

We support FoodShare Toronto's request that food growers who are Black, Indigenous, or racialized as people of colour and who are local to the Dentonia area be named specifically as a group to be consulted in the new master plan for Dentonia Park (Recommendation #4). We would add that their input should be not just be taken, but also prioritized.



Community food gardens can engage all residents, not just gardeners

If not on golf courses, where can we grow food?

The staff report offers an alternative to golf courses:

“Within PFR, the Division is also reviewing PFR-focused food growing offerings such as community and allotment gardens. Further work on the potential of integrating food growing infrastructure with park lands will be undertaken in alignment with these initiatives to support a comprehensive and collaborative response to addressing food security and access to food growing opportunities.”

While it is good to hear that PFR is reviewing community and allotment gardens to grow more food on park lands, this statement is vague and doesn't commit to any specific actions, locations or timelines. It is not a substitute for the specific opportunity brought on by the golf course review.

Food gardens at Dentonia Park would be a tangible benefit to the local community that would uphold the City's commitments to equity and sustainability, including the **Black Food Sovereignty Plan, Cool Food Pledge, C40 Good Food Cities (including the C40 Equity pledge) and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.**

If the City can contract non-core golf operations out to a private for-profit operator, why not contract out a food growing project? This could be a for-profit operator (like Fresh City Farms at Downsview Park) or a non-profit (such as FoodShare). This arrangement is nothing new, it already exists with many community gardens in Toronto and the CEED Garden project in Hydro corridors.

The review contains laudable plans to increase public access to green space and create opportunities for Indigenous land stewardship and cultural activities. Given that food production can help meet the City's goals for equity, access to food and green space and community engagement, we ask that food gardens also continue to be considered as complementary activities.

Sincerely,



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