

October 29, 2025



To the Planning and Housing Committee

Re: PH25.3 Community Within Reach: Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) Neighbourhood Retail and Services Study

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

Congratulations to planning staff for **including market gardens as a permitted use in residential-zoned neighbourhoods** in the revisions to Toronto's bylaws. Toronto residents want to grow and buy healthy, local and culturally appropriate food in their neighbourhoods, and this bylaw change is an excellent start.



As you are aware, in December 2024, City Council declared food insecurity as an emergency. Toronto residents are facing an affordability crisis for food and housing. Growing food in residential neighbourhoods:

- Causes little disruption in terms of noise, traffic or other nuisances.
- Allows more people to walk or bike to access fresh produce.
- Creates local opportunities to earn income.
- Builds connections between neighbours.

Unfortunately, the proposed changes only explicitly allow market gardens on main streets. The additional bylaw changes for small-scale retail are limited, confusing and not relevant to market gardens and farm stands. For instance, most market gardeners are not going to have an indoor retail space, and a 7.5 metre distance from the plot line for a retail space is too large for many small city lots.

These issues can be fixed by adding market gardens as a permitted use in all residential zones with the restrictions that are already in place in the main street regulations. Market gardens and farm stands are not going to create the same concerns as other retail outlets, as they don't generate noise or high volumes of traffic.

While there are people who deeply wish to grow good food for their communities, the challenging realities of urban farming mean that the city is not going to be overrun with urban farm stands. For those who do want to increase access to fresh, local produce for their neighbours, the proposed bylaw changes (with a few tweaks) will be a game changer.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rhonda Teitel-Payne".

Rhonda Teitel-Payne, Co-Coordinator
Toronto Urban Growers