



## **PARK BOARD URBAN AGRICULTURE POLICY**

The Park Board would like to acknowledge that these urban agriculture activities take place on the traditional unceded territory of the Coast Salish people.

### **DEFINITION**

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation recognizes urban agriculture as a valuable food-focused activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness and benefits, positive social interaction, learning, health, exercise, wellness, and access to fresh food. The Park Board will collaborate with interested groups in assisting the development of urban agriculture projects if they meet the intent and objectives of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, urban agriculture is defined as a community development program operated by a non-profit society that supports the objectives of the Board's Local Food Action Plan<sup>1</sup> and the City of Vancouver's Food Strategy<sup>2</sup>.

Urban agriculture includes, but is not limited to, the following types of activities:

- Collaborative and shared gardening
- Community gardening
- Educational, arts, and culturally focused gardening
- Gardens focused on Indigenous people, plants, and knowledge
- Fruit and nut trees
- Hobby beekeeping
- Pollinator gardens and infrastructure
- Permaculture projects
- Edible landscaping
- Urban farming<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Available here: <http://vancouver.ca/your-government/local-food-assets-task-force.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Available here: <http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/vancouvers-food-strategy.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> In the Vancouver Food Strategy, urban farming means urban food production for the primary purpose of revenue generation, and may be operated on a for-profit, non-profit or social enterprise model. An urban farm is a site where fresh food is grown primarily for sale, or where the food is primarily consumed by someone other than the grower(s).

## **APPROPRIATE URBAN AGRICULTURE SITES**

The Park Board prioritizes collaborative and shared gardening to maximize access to valuable green space. The Park Board will support the development of urban agriculture in the Vancouver park system through the following means:

1. Providing access to information on the development and operation of urban agriculture projects, and helping to facilitate a process that will determine project feasibility.
2. Making connections between project proponents and other potential partners.
3. Assisting interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of urban agriculture projects, noting that different types of agriculture projects have different criteria used in identifying suitable land. This review must include City-owned land, land controlled by other government agencies, and privately owned land.
4. Helping to connect project proponents to appropriate landowner, if not the Board.
5. If the most appropriate site is determined to be a Park Board site, then the Board will support the project as described throughout the rest of this policy.

## **GENERAL URBAN AGRICULTURE CRITERIA**

The urban agriculture project will be operated by a non-profit society according to the following criteria:

1. The duration of urban agriculture on the site is time-limited, according to the terms of the license agreement. The standard term for the license agreement will be five (5) years, however this will be evaluated with each project. The Park Board may consider the granting of multiple terms providing the project is operating according to the license agreement and meeting these criteria.
2. Grow primarily edible, art and craft, and/or Indigenous plants.
3. Grow plants for the purposes of:
  - a. project member and community benefit;
  - b. skills and capacity building;
  - c. arts and culture;
  - d. benefitting pollinators;
  - e. donating to charitable causes; and/or
  - f. collaborating with other programs taking place in Park Board parks or facilities.
4. Do not sell products from the project; some exceptions may apply upon discussion and approval with Park Board staff.
5. Actively encourage and support a diversity of community members (e.g. age, ability, cultural background, etc.) to participate in the garden from conceptual stages through to ongoing operations.

6. Ensure accessibility of garden to people with a variety of abilities.
7. Provide open access to the project at all times; locked barriers are not permitted.
8. Provide signage that includes information about the purpose of the garden, the organisation that sponsors it, how to get involved, and emphasises that the garden is open to all members of the community.
9. Follow the *Vancouver Urban Agriculture Guide*, updated regularly and including design, operation, and maintenance guidelines to ensure accessible, productive, safe, healthy, tidy, and community-oriented gardens.
10. Operate at no cost to the Park Board. The exception to this is that prior to the first season, Park Board staff may assist with site preparation, the details of which will depend on the type of project. Park Board staff will also winterize the water supply in the spring and fall of each year.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

If it is determined that park land is the most suitable site for the proposed urban agriculture project, and if the appropriate urban agriculture criteria are met from the above list, the following practices will be followed for public consultation.

### Type 1:

For all community, collaborative, educational, and arts and culture focused gardens larger than 250 m<sup>2</sup>, pollinator projects larger than 500 m<sup>2</sup>, as well as for fruit and nut tree plantings of more than 20 trees, a community consultation process must be completed with details as follows.

1. The consultation will last a minimum of 2 weeks.
2. It will be jointly facilitated by Park Board staff and the project proponent.
3. Information about project design, proponent, project features, site, and any other pertinent information will be developed and used for all consultation materials.
4. At least one informational sign will be posted on site.
5. Flyers will be delivered or mailed to the doors of all businesses and residents within an approximate 2 block radius of the site, with some exceptions potentially applying for very high density neighbourhoods.
6. An on-line forum that enables people to provide feedback.
7. A majority of support must be indicated through the consultation in order for staff to recommend approval of the project to the Park Board.
8. Park Board approval.

### Type 2:

Fruit and nut tree plantings of 20 or fewer trees, garden projects up to and including 250 m<sup>2</sup>, pollinator projects up to and including 500 m<sup>2</sup>, edible landscaping, hobby beekeeping, and mason bee lodges may not require formal consultation, with some exceptions applying at the discretion of the General Manager or their designate. In most cases, informational signage will be posted on site. These projects require Park Board approval.

### Exceptions:

1. Urban farming projects will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with consultation methods determined for each project.
2. In cases where an urban agriculture project is incorporated into a larger park development project, the consultation for the overall park project will incorporate any urban agriculture components.
3. In unique circumstances, staff may opt for a different approach to public consultation than what is described in this policy if there is a strong rationale.

### **PROJECT DESIGN AND OPERATIONS**

Prior to initiating project construction and beginning operations, the non-profit society must provide the following to the Park Board:

1. A final project design including: all necessary details required in the *Urban Agriculture Guide*; all direction received from Park Board staff; the license agreement; and response to feedback received through the consultation, as appropriate. This plan must be approved by the Park Board General Manager or their designate.
2. An operating plan that describes how the garden will comply with this policy as well as with the current *Urban Agriculture Guide* and the license agreement requirements.
3. A construction and operating budget including description of secured funding sources.
4. Proof of two million dollars in liability insurance; liability insurance requirements may be modified at any time at the discretion of the Directors of Risk Management and Legal Services.
5. A license agreement approved and signed by the non-profit society Board as well as the Park Board General Manager or designate.
6. Park Board staff will work with society members to respond to any and all issues and complaints in a timely fashion, and in accordance with the license agreement.
7. Society members must provide the Park Board with the following information and documentation at least once per year:
  - a. License fee (typically \$1 per year);
  - b. Accurate contact information;
  - c. Basic project details as requested in a survey (e.g. wait list numbers, any new infrastructure, etc.); and
  - d. Proof of insurance (limits and requirements as outlined above in item#4).