



April 29, 2021

Urban Foodlands

City of Vancouver Dialogue



Prepared for:



Vancouver Report

Prepared by Angeli dela Rosa, Project Researcher & Writer
Support by Karen Ageson, Project Manager





Acknowledgments

The urban farming work and research of the Vancouver Urban Farming Society takes place on traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh).

While we look to strengthen urban food systems it is important to acknowledge these current food systems historically and continue to displace Indigenous people and their stewardship of these lands. This displacement is ongoing, which means the role of the urban food system needs to constantly be reflecting on its colonial construct and aligning with Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Aiming to grow urban farming as a viable, thriving and vibrant sector in Vancouver and beyond, Vancouver Urban Farming Society (VUFS) is an organization that supports the shared interests of urban farmers. The group strengthens and grows the urban farming sector through education, advocacy, networking and business support. VUFS began as an informal group of urban farmers, entrepreneurs, urban farming supporters, food security advocates, and consumers dedicated to increasing the sustainability of urban farming in Vancouver and throughout BC. We would like to acknowledge our network of members who contributed to our understanding of policies that support urban agriculture and food lands, city staff who have worked hard to create adopted food policy, and the staff members of VUFS involved in the dialogues and report: Angeli dela Rosa and Karen Ageson.

This project is administered by Can You Dig It, a program administered by the Public Health Association of BC and funded by the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia and with support from Colin Dring, PhD Candidate, Centre for Sustainable Food System, University of British Columbia.

Thank you to all who participated in both dialogues and provided valuable insight into this project.





Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Project Background.....	6
Methods.....	9
Outcomes and Urban Foodlands	11
Policy Recommendations.....	15
Dismantle Barriers to Equity in Food Systems and Food Policies	17
Decolonize the Understanding of Food, Agriculture, and Land	20
Increase Permanent and Purpose-Built Foodlands.....	21
Provide Funding and Infrastructure for Community-Driven Food Systems Work.....	24
Reduce Regulatory and Bureaucratic Barriers for People to Grow Food in the City.....	26
Foster Citizenship and Collective Action Around Food Systems Change.....	27
Analysis	29
Conclusion	35
References	36
Appendix A	38
Appendix B	43
Appendix C	45



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2020, VUFS held two online dialogues on the topic of urban foodlands access with local urban agriculture and community food practitioners. The purpose of the dialogues was to:

1. Explore and understand different perspectives about the 'why' of land access for urban foodlands.
2. Come to a deeper understanding of why land access for urban foodlands matters.
3. Generate a broad range of ideas about policies to sustain and grow urban foodlands for future generations.
4. Increase understanding and strengthen relationships among urban agriculture advocates.

For dialogue participants, access to urban foodlands for future generations is important because it creates numerous positive outcomes across the following themes:

- Health Benefits
- Community Connectedness
- Equity and Access
- Decolonization
- Education and Skill-building
- Environmental Stewardship
- Food Self-Reliance

The dialogues inspired and generated many policy ideas from the participants on how these positive outcomes can be achieved. Their ideas were analyzed and developed into 6 themes below. These themes were used to organize specific policy/practice suggestions.

1. Increase permanent and purpose-built foodlands.
2. Reduce regulatory and bureaucratic barriers for people to grow food in the city.
3. Foster citizenship and collective action around food systems change.
4. Dismantle barriers to equity in food systems and food policies.
5. Decolonize our understanding of food, agriculture, and land.
6. Provide funding and infrastructure for community-driven food systems work.

The majority of policy suggestions discussed in this report are changes to existing policies. Not unexpected given two decades of city involvement in municipal food policy. A number of promising policies already exist in the City of Vancouver that could be continued and scaled up and potentially provide policy precedents for other municipalities to consider.



It was also evident from the dialogue that even food system practitioners and advocates vary in their awareness of food system policies that already exist. Suggestions for next steps are:

- For the city to improve information sharing about food policies through regular meetings with interested groups.
- For the city to increase transparency and internal collaboration in the food policy development process.
- For food advocacy organizations to build relationships with municipalities to have better lines of communication regarding food policy, and to become more familiar with the policymaking process.



Project Background

In January of 2020, the Public Health Association of BC received a Real Estate Foundation BC (REFBC) grant to explore urban municipal food policy and practice. The premise of the application was to work with previously or currently REFBC funded food organizations who were undertaking work to strengthen their own municipal urban food policies. Kamloops ([Kamloops Food Policy Council](#)), Vancouver ([Vancouver Urban Farming Society](#)) and Victoria ([Food Eco District](#)) were chosen as case studies because of their current work and geographic location across BC. Specifically, each city was selected because it represents different types of urban settings within the province and there were already existing food networks within each region.

The case studies for each municipality would include an in-person dialogue with urban farmers, community garden leads, food policy councils, and food advocacy non-profit organizations. These dialogues were positioned to provide an in-depth understanding of how people envision the potential role urban agriculture plays in advancing sustainable food systems, the policies that would help them achieve these outcomes and current policies that exist within each municipality.

Starting in February 2020, monthly meetings were held between the three participating organizations to share with each other their previous or current REFBC funded work, discuss the context of urban agriculture in their municipalities, and the structure of the dialogues. In May 2020, a global pandemic was announced and the province implemented an emergency order restricting travel and in-person gatherings. This limited the ability to host in-person dialogues. The proposed format for each dialogue would be held virtually, pivot in the facilitation structure and reduce the number of participants to ensure flow of conversations between dialogue participants. Due to the reduced number, participants were selected to try and cover the broad range of urban agriculture activities that occur in each city. This included community garden coordinators, urban farmers, neighbourhood house representatives, food policy council members, and others.

This project proposes to conduct case studies throughout urban municipalities in Kamloops, Victoria and Vancouver to explore current urban agriculture practices and policies and align them with community visions and outcomes. A provincial report conducted a cross analysis between municipal reports to align efforts across municipalities, and use the information gathered to help inform the development of stronger urban agriculture policies and practices across BC.



City of Vancouver Background

The City of Vancouver is located on the annexed territories of the *thexʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *Selilwitulh* (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia. There are 631,486 residents according to the 2016 Census. The city is regulated under a provincial statute called the Vancouver Charter, which supersedes the Vancouver Incorporation Act and grants the City different powers than other communities have under the Local Government Act.¹

Vancouver has been ranked as one of the most livable cities in the world,² but also grapples with being highly unaffordable, with high housing/land prices disconnected from local incomes.^{3,4} There are numerous groups in the city that are involved in advocating for justice and sustainability across the food system. Strong community organizing efforts in the 1990s pushed the City towards a more concerted approach to municipal urban food policy, notably resulting in the adoption of a Food Action Plan in 2003 and the creation of the Vancouver Food Policy Council in 2004.⁵ The City enacted numerous individual food policies since 2003,⁶ and then shifted to a more coordinated food policy approach with the adoption of the [Greenest City Action Plan](#) (GCAP) in 2011 and the [Vancouver Food Strategy](#) in 2013. GCAP's goals include becoming a world leader in urban food systems by 2020, with a specific target of increasing city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels. The Vancouver Food Strategy sought to integrate individual policies into a more coordinated food systems approach.⁷ Relevant food policies and documents are

CITY OF VANCOUVER FOOD POLICIES
Urban honey beekeeping guidelines
Backyard hens guidelines
Urban agriculture design guidelines for the private realm
Farmers markets guidelines
Community food markets and community kitchens bulletin
Street food vending bulletin
Parks Board's urban agriculture policy for parks
Accessible community garden guidelines
Sustainable food system grants
Funding for soil for new community gardens
Urban farming (growing food to sell) guidelines
Zoning and Development By-law
Rezoning policy for large sustainable developments - requires developments greater than 8000 m ² to include a minimum of 3 food assets. Areas in the Southlands neighbourhood that are in the ALR are subject to ALR policies and the Southlands Plan (City of Vancouver, 2013).

1 City of Vancouver, n.d.-b

2 CBC News, 2018

3 Gurstein, LaRocque, & MacDonald, 2018

4 RBC Economic Research, 2019

5 Mendes, 2003

6 City of Vancouver, n.d.-c

7 KPU Institute for Sustainable Food Systems, n.d.



In addition, the following are important high-level policies and processes that intersect with food policy at the time of writing this report:

- [City of Reconciliation framework](#) was adopted by council in 2014.
- COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan. “Enable increased local food production” is one of the top 41 priorities in the [Report of the Council COVID Recovery Committee](#).
- Development of the [Vancouver Plan](#), a city-wide plan to help guide community recovery and long-term planning.

VUFS Policy Advocacy

In recent years, VUFS has been active in advocating for more supportive and less restrictive guidelines for urban farming (growing food to sell) in Vancouver. In 2017, VUFS commissioned a report that flagged numerous limitations and costs imposed by the City of Vancouver’s Urban Farming Guidelines that diminish the economic viability of commercial and not-for-profit urban farms.⁸ A forthcoming report (scheduled to be released in early 2021) funded by REFBC will put forward policy recommendations to improve the Urban Farm Guidelines in the current review process conducted by the City.

These City of Vancouver dialogues build on VUFS policy advocacy work by seeking to understand what outcomes people hope to see from urban agriculture more broadly (not only growing food for sale), what policies can support those outcomes, and what barriers exist to reaching them. The partnership with PHABC gives VUFS an opportunity to connect with provincial food system advocacy efforts.



Shady Acre Farm, Richmond, BC

Photo Credit: Claire Livia Lassam

⁸ MacKinnon, 2017



Methods

In September 2020, VUFS held two online⁹ dialogues on the topic of urban foodlands access. The purpose of the dialogues was to explore and understand different perspectives about the 'why' of land access for urban foodlands; to come to a deeper understanding of why land access for urban foodlands matters; to generate a broad range of ideas about policies to sustain and grow urban foodlands for future generations; and to increase understanding and strengthen relationships among urban agriculture advocates (dialogue participants). Refer to Appendix for description of dialogue activities.

The first dialogue on September 17th had four participants:

1. **Joey Liu**, urban farmer at Gordon Neighbourhood House and member of Vancouver Food Policy Council.
 - Gordon Neighbourhood House is a community hub in Vancouver's West End with a number of food and urban farming initiatives, including weekly educational gardening sessions, mobile produce market, and community food hub.
2. **Lori Snyder**, Métis herbalist and educator.
3. **Thanushi Eagalle**, entrepreneur and owner of Wild Bee Florals.
4. **Yiman Jiang**, board member at Cedar Cottage Community Garden.
 - Cedar Cottage Community Garden started in 2008 and currently has 100 garden plots. They are seeking a new location as part of their current site is the site of an affordable housing development.

The second dialogue on September 24th had five participants:

1. **Sarah Kim**, coordinator of Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks.
 - The Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks (VNFN) are a network of community organizations committed to promoting food security in neighbourhoods across the City of Vancouver.
2. **Camil Dumont**, Vancouver Park Board Commissioner and urban farmer at Inner City Farms.
 - Inner City Farms is an urban farm that partners with homeowners and local businesses to convert yards urban spaces into productive vegetable gardens. Park Board is an elected body that looks after 230+ public parks and public recreation system in Vancouver.

⁹ In-person dialogues were intended but not feasible due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



3. **Sarah Common**, executive director and co-founder at Hives for Humanity
 - Hives for Humanity is a non-profit organization that supports inclusion and builds belonging through beekeeping related programs and partnerships.
4. **Alexa Pitoulis**, interim executive director at Fresh Roots
 - Fresh Roots is a youth-focused non-profit society that Grows Good Food For All through cultivating engaging gardens and programs that catalyze healthy eating, ecological stewardship and community celebration.
5. **Matthew Johnstone**, administrative director at Sole Food Street Farms
 - Sole Food Street Farms is an urban farming social enterprise that turns vacant and contaminated urban land into street farms and provides jobs, agricultural training, and inclusion programs for people with limited resources who are managing addiction and chronic mental health problems.

The dialogues were analyzed to identify key themes that express the desired outcomes from urban agriculture in Vancouver. Policy ideas brainstormed by participants in the second half of the dialogue were summarized, contextualized and then analyzed according to their level of implementation.



Outcomes and Urban Foodlands

Summary of Dialogues

Dialogue participants were asked why access to urban foodlands matters for future generations. Their responses were analyzed and developed into the seven outcome themes below:

1. Health Benefits
2. Community Connectedness
3. Equity and Access
4. Decolonization
5. Education and Skill-building
6. Environmental Stewardship
7. Food Self-Reliance

Health Benefits

The act of growing food has tremendous benefits for health and well-being. Dialogue participants spoke about physical, mental, social, and spiritual health benefits of growing food, and connecting with neighbours. In particular, they felt a greater personal appreciation of the mental health benefits of going outdoors and moving their bodies through gardening after experiencing isolation created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It really showed when people had to isolate, the value in being outside and being surrounded by [nature].”

- Thanushi Eagalle, Entrepreneur & Owner of Wild Bee Florals

Community Connectedness

Food brings people together. Growing, cooking, and eating food with others helps people feel connected to a community, sparks conversations, and turns strangers into neighbours. One dialogue participant shared the benefits of community garden programs for seniors who might be living in isolation, or who no longer have a garden space. Community gardens allow them to grow food and social connections.

“[A local food program] brought people together, and it turned into so much more. People started talking to each other. Somebody found housing through someone they met over food. Other people found work. [It’s about] interconnections and finding community.”

- Joey Liu, Urban Farmer & member of Vancouver Food Policy Council



Equity and Access

Food programs have the potential to lift people up. Agency can come from having access to land, taking care of it as a steward, and growing the food you want to eat. Dialogue participants brought up examples of intentionally structured and facilitated programs that foster economic empowerment and dignity for participants by using food as a starting point.

“Food has great capacity to change how we think of one another.”

- Sarah Common, Executive Director & Co-Founder at Hives for Humanity

At the same time, exclusion, marginalization, racism, and food insecurity¹⁰ are perpetuated in urban foodlands and food programs. It takes time and resources to participate in urban food growing and food programs, and just because programs exist does not mean they are reaching the most vulnerable members of our community. The dialogue raised questions about how to make foodland spaces and programs less barriered for people who are socially and economically marginalized.

"The idea [for the urban farming project] was to give people access to food growing. But probably if someone's already having a tough time accessing food, and they don't want to go to a food bank, they probably don't have the time to go and farm either."

- Thanushi Eagalle, Entrepreneur & Owner of Wild Bee Florals

Decolonization

Dialogue participants also raised the importance of reconciliation and decolonization in urban food programs. Participants called for the need to take a broader understanding of foodland activities to include food forests, foraging, and Indigenous foodways, instead of being limited to agriculture, farming, and gardening. They pointed to examples of programs that connect to host nations and urban Indigenous peoples and/or that seek to return land to Indigenous stewardship.

Education and Skill-Building

Education was another major theme of the dialogue. Having access to foodlands can change our relationship to food, demonstrate the connection between food and health, and build an understanding of where one's food comes from.

Foodlands are great spaces for learning about science and the natural world. Gardens and green spaces bring scientific concepts of ecology and biodiversity to life and remind us that

¹⁰ Food security aims to improve access to nutritious, safe, personally and culturally acceptable food with a focus on those most vulnerable to food insecurity (BC Food Security Gateway, n.d.).



humans are part of natural systems. Dialogue participants highlighted the educational benefits for children and youth, while recognizing that all age groups can benefit.

Food creates opportunities for learning about culture. Dialogue participants recognized the intergenerational and intercultural learning that can happen in gardens and food programs. Food growing is also an opportunity to better understand one's own food culture.

Skill building happens on urban foodlands. Schoolyard farms and community gardens create opportunities for youth to gain skills in food production and preparation, management, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Urban farms grow new entrants to farming. Having access to urban foodlands can create opportunities for city dwellers to start their own small farm business and test out whether farming is a viable livelihood for them.

"I just love to see how a community garden has transformed people's opinions about our environment and our relationship to it."

- Yiman Jiang, Board Member at Cedar Cottage Community Garden

Environmental Stewardship

Increasing urban foodlands creates direct environmental benefits by promoting biodiversity, creating pollinator habitat, and "re-greening" urban spaces like parking lots. There was a recognition that urban foodlands, when designed and stewarded with purpose, can have a positive impact in providing ecological benefits even in cities. Food growing on urban foodlands is a small but directly personal way for individual urban residents to push back against the unsustainability of the industrialized food system.

By bringing food system issues close to home, another possible benefit of increased awareness is the creation of more engaged food citizens. When people become interested in food system issues at a personal level, they may be more willing to demand action and advocate for a more sustainable and localized food system through policy change. This point was not explicitly stated by participants during the first activity in the dialogue, but it was alluded to in dialogue discussion regarding the importance of fostering an ethic of citizenship and collective action around food system issues.



Food Self-Reliance

Being able to grow one's food close to home can help build a sense of security and self-reliance. Dialogue participants shared how the COVID-19 pandemic increased their concern about how to make our food supply less vulnerable to disruptions. Hearing about empty grocery store shelves and hoarding in the news raised fears about the stability of the food supply. They shared how their families and neighbours were keen to replace lawns with gardens to grow food. Dialogue participants saw potential for urban foodlands to supplement the food grown in our regional agricultural lands.

"That's the first thing I did is, as soon as this [pandemic] happened, I have to start growing food. My neighbour saw what I was doing and he tore up his lawn and started growing food. I was having lots of conversations."

- Lori Snyder, Métis Herbalist & Educator



Policy Recommendations

This section summarizes and provides context for the policy ideas brainstormed by participants in the second half of the dialogue. Their responses to the prompt, “What needs to happen to increase access to urban foodlands?” were analyzed and developed into the 6 themes below and used to organize the specific policy/practice suggestions.

1. Increase permanent and purpose-built foodlands.
2. Reduce regulatory and bureaucratic barriers for people to grow food in the city.
3. Foster citizenship and collective action around food systems change.
4. Dismantle barriers to equity in food systems and food policies.
5. Decolonize our understanding of food, agriculture, and land.
6. Provide funding and infrastructure for community-driven food systems work.

Each policy theme supports one or more outcomes from the first part of this report (see Table 1). The first two themes of decolonization and equity are discussed in their own sections for the purposes of this report, but they need to intersect with all other themes.

Table 1. How each policy theme supports foodlands outcomes.

Policy Theme	Outcomes Supported	How?
Increase permanent and purpose-built foodlands.	Food Self-Reliance	Preserve foodlands in/close to urban areas.
	Health Benefits	Increase amount of outdoor spaces (including foodlands) available to residents
	Community Connectedness	Increase amount of community oriented foodlands
Provide funding and infrastructure for community-driven food systems work.	Community Connectedness	Fund programs that encourage community connectedness
	Education and Skill-building	Fund education programs grounded in food
	Environmental Stewardship	Fund programs promoting environmental stewardship through food
	Food Self-Reliance	Provide processing and distribution infrastructure for local small scale growers and entrepreneurs



Policy Theme	Outcomes Supported	How?
Reduce regulatory and bureaucratic barriers for people to grow food in the city.	Food Self-Reliance	Increase participation in commercial and recreational urban food growing
Foster citizenship and collective action around food systems change	Environmental Stewardship	Foster ethic of citizenship around environmental and food issues
Decolonize our understanding of food, agriculture, and land.	Decolonization	(Directly related)
Dismantle barriers to equity in food systems and food policies.	Equity and Access	(Directly related)

For each of the policy suggestions, comments are provided on the context in Vancouver (if applicable), whether the policy has already been adopted (and if so, any changes suggested), implemented, evaluated and been taken up in the community (or not).



Dismantle Barriers to Equity in Food Systems and Food Policies

Participants in both dialogues spoke about the need to ensure that those who are socially and economically marginalized (e.g. low income, underhoused, racialized, experience of trauma, immigration status, among other factors) can fully participate and benefit from urban foodlands and food programs. Just because programs exist does not mean they reach the most vulnerable members of our community.

“Stability in my life [from having housing] allows me to access nature. When people have shelter, they are not just in survival mode. They have time to be gardening, sitting on the grass, doing things that I might take for granted.”

- Sarah Common, Executive Director and Co-Founder at Hives for Humanity

Ideas generated by dialogue participants on what needs to happen to dismantle barriers to equity are underlined below, followed by policy recommendations.

Centre marginalized voices in policy making and program design

Ensure representation of marginalized communities in all levels of membership and decision-making structures.

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Adopt policies around diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring for paid positions at all levels (including executive/leadership roles) and for advisory/steering committees.

Ensure decent income, livelihood opportunities, and housing for all

Basic needs must be met for people to fully participate in the food system with dignity.

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Adopt a living wage policy at the municipal level.¹¹
- For funders (e.g. municipal/provincial governments, health authorities), ensure that funding levels are sufficient to enable living wage for recipients.
- Pilot a guaranteed basic income policy at the provincial/federal level. Provincial precedent exists in the Ontario Basic Income Pilot¹². Examples of guaranteed income programs at the federal level are disability assistance and seniors' guaranteed income supplement.

¹¹ City of Vancouver, n.d.-a

¹² Province of Ontario, 2019



Move away from policing who is allowed to access urban foodlands

Such as parks and community gardens.

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Adjust municipal budgets to allocate funds away from traditional policing and towards affordable housing, education, community health, and other social supports.
- Mandatory training programs for public servants (e.g. city and parks staff, school boards, police) around non-violent communication, anti-racism, decolonization, allyship, intersectional anti-oppression.

Require that future green spaces are designed to be accessible, inclusive, and meet community needs

Protect existing green spaces and foodlands that already meet these criteria.

What is the policy recommendation?

- Policy recommendations could include:
- For public green space projects like parks (including those that have urban agriculture elements), use community engagement methods that involve, collaborate, or empower residents¹³, especially members of marginalized groups who face barriers to participating in public consultation processes like surveys and open houses. Support participation by paying people for their time and contribution.
- For large scale rezoning developments:
 - Encourage developers to incorporate the design expertise of community food programmers/urban agriculture practitioners throughout the development process.
 - Have all developments, not just those larger than 10 acres, commit resources to ongoing maintenance and animation of food assets.

Create, promote, and/or fund programs that make free, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food available to marginalized communities

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Municipal landscaping provision for edible landscaping to increase free food available for all. This is currently the case in Vancouver through the Vancouver Food Strategy and the Urban Agriculture Design Guidelines for the Private Realm.
- Provide provincial and municipal funding for a universal healthy school food program to ensure that all children in Canada, regardless of their race, class, income, etc, can have access to healthy, culturally appropriate food at school. For policy specifics, refer to the work of the Coalition for Healthy School Food.¹⁴

¹³ IAP2, 2018

¹⁴ Coalition on Healthy School Food, n.d.



Living Wage

Some participants called for fair wages to recognize the broad range of benefits generated by food and farm work. The living wage in Metro Vancouver in 2019 was \$19.50.¹⁵ In comparison, the reported hourly wage of urban farmers in Vancouver between 2017 to 2019 was somewhere between minimum wage (\$13.85 in 2019) for farm labour, and up to \$24 for farm managers. Food and farming entrepreneurs may not even pay themselves an hourly wage, and instead operate at a loss, depending on savings, income from a second job, or income from their partner in order to stay afloat. If society recognizes food and farm jobs as generating value (beyond the low prices that markets are willing to pay for food) and as desirable for the social and environmental benefits they create, these jobs should be paid at wages that allow for a decent livelihood.

“The urban farming realm feels like the non-profit sector. There is an assumption of your good intentions, so you’ll work long hours and do things for free. We need to shift the way we talk about these values.”

- Joey Liu Urban Farmer & member of Vancouver Food Policy Council

Urban farmer jobs could be part of employability programs that provide employment and training to people who are unemployed or face barriers to employment. Models already exist such as Sole Food Street Farms (individuals managing addiction or chronic health issues), Hives for Humanity (mentorship Beekeeping program for traditionally marginalized, hard-to-reach and at-risk individuals), and Fresh Roots (leadership and skills development for youth through food).

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Adopt a living wage policy at the municipal level.¹⁶
- For funders (e.g. municipal/provincial governments, health authorities), ensure that funding levels are sufficient to enable living wage for recipients. As a precedent, the Vancouver Foundation encourages their funded projects to pay living wages.¹⁷
- Fund urban farmer jobs at a living wage to grow food for institutional procurement or school food programs.

¹⁵ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019

¹⁶ City of Vancouver, n.d.-a

¹⁷ Vancouver Foundation, 2018



Decolonize the Understanding of Food, Agriculture, and Land

There was a recognition by participants that urban agriculture activities in Vancouver happen within the context of occupation of unceded Coast Salish territories. Some participants called for a move away from the narrow policy focus on “agriculture” towards broader understandings of foodways and foodlands. It is critical to decolonize food systems advocacy and policy to disrupt the continuing dispossession of Indigenous peoples from the land.

Vancouver’s Greenest City Action Plan has 10 goal areas including Local Food and Access to Nature. Under the Local Food area, success is measured by counting the number of total food assets within the city each year. The current definition of food assets are community garden plots, farmers markets, community orchards, community composting facilities, community kitchens, community food markets, and urban farms. One suggested change from participants is to include food forests, and spaces that allow for foraging and access to traditional medicines.

Another policy step is to support and fund Indigenous led food initiatives. Dialogue participants shared examples of Indigenous food initiatives in or near Vancouver, such as the Sweat Lodge at Hastings Folk Garden, medicinal garden at Astoria Urban Farm, and Tsawwassen First Nation Farm School. Other examples not mentioned during the dialogue are the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and the Tal A'xin Maya garden. Support for indigenous led initiatives includes not only funding but the return of land to Indigenous stewardship. Although the dialogue did not get into the specifics of how to achieve this, policy precedents that come to mind are:

- Strathcona Park fieldhouse made available to the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty
- Development of the Jericho Lands and Heather Lands as a joint venture between Canada Lands Company (federal Crown corporation) and MST Development Corporation (partnership between Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation).
- Walpole Island Land Trust is an Indigenous-led and owned land trust and the first of its kind to be incorporated and registered as a charity in Canada.

These precedents operate within colonial legal and regulatory frameworks. We include them here with the hope that incremental policy change can support deeper change towards Indigenous food sovereignty and the recognition of Indigenous Nations’ inherent right to self-governance.

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Expand policy definitions of food, foodlands, and foodways to recognize and value Indigenous and non-Western worldviews and cultures.
- Support, fund, and amplify the work of Indigenous led food organizations.
- Return land to Indigenous led stewardship and self-governance.



Increase Permanent and Purpose-Built Foodlands

Outcomes supported	How?
Food Self-Reliance	Preserve foodlands in/close to urban areas.
Health Benefits	Increase amount of outdoor spaces (including foodlands) available to residents
Community Connectedness	Increase amount of community oriented foodlands

Participants would like to see an increase in permanent urban foodland spaces, and for those spaces to be intentionally designed and provided with sufficient resources to be useful and beneficial to the public. They suggested golf courses, schoolyards, hospitals lawns, BC Hydro right-of-way, parks, and other public institutional lands as spaces that have potential to be designated and re-allocated for long-term, permanent foodland use for public benefit.

There are current efforts to transform vacant or underused lots into temporary growing spaces. However, the benefits of these spaces are limited by their short term and uncertain land tenure. Temporary land tenure creates uncertainty for organizers of urban agriculture and food initiatives and businesses, and limits their ability to set and act on long-term goals.¹⁸ It is disruptive and costly for an urban farmer or community garden group to renew leases or find a new spot to move every few years when their current growing space gets developed. The ideal situation would be to have long term leases or permanent space allocations for foodlands, for example in the form of a foodlands trust or integrated into the public parks and recreation system.

Participants noted that not all community gardens are created equal. Some gave examples of temporary community gardens or rooftop green spaces that fall short of the intended value to the community because of poor location, design, execution, maintenance, or lack of ongoing support. One specific policy they cited is when an empty lot awaiting development is converted into a temporary community garden, and is re-classified as recreational property, yielding the property owner a significant tax break. As one participant said, “[it’s not enough to] put some garden boxes and get a tax write off.” It takes funding, tools, and organization to turn a lot with empty garden boxes into a space that truly creates public benefit through food. There is an opportunity to create thriving foodlands through policy, but it requires long-term vision and purposeful design and execution, and ongoing support.

¹⁸ For example, the majority of commercial urban farms in Vancouver operate on leases between 1 and 5 year terms. Short term uncertain land tenure is a key issue that limits the sustainability of this sector (VUFS 2020).



Sustainable Large Developments

One existing policy in the City of Vancouver that supports this outcome is the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments.¹⁹ The policy promotes creation of new foodland spaces through private development by requiring a minimum of 3 food assets in large development rezoning applications. Plans must indicate how the food assets can be effectively programmed and maintained. However, only sites greater than 10 acres are required to arrange for active programming and maintenance of the food assets for 5 years.²⁰ This particular requirement for sites over 10 acres was put in place in 2018, and it would be important to evaluate how effective this revision has been in supporting ongoing success of resulting food assets.

Another way to refine the sustainable large developments policy is to require food asset plans to include actions to support user education and outreach, similar to what is indicated in the Zero Waste section of the policy administrative bulletin. Education and outreach would be beneficial for increasing user/resident engagement with food assets such as community gardens, edible landscaping, and on-site composting, and reflects the role of purposeful engagement in animating these spaces. Our local urban farmers, gardeners, permaculturists, and community food programmers have expertise in designing urban foodlands and engaging community members to use these spaces. The City, and developers, would be well-served by engaging with them, with fair compensation for their time and knowledge, and integrating their recommendations into policy and into new developments.

“We have worked in retrofitting gardens in supportive housing where you’ve got cement boxes and dead trees. The developer was able to check the “green” box, but the trees died after a few years. We need better designed and executed green space for communities.”

- Sarah Common, Executive Director and Co-Founder at Hives for Humanity

Urban Foodlands Trust

A policy suggestion from participants was to set aside municipal land for long term foodland use. One way could be through a foodlands trust that could be co-managed with Indigenous led projects and/or non-profit organizations. Food grown could be used for institutional procurement or school food programs. On Vancouver Island, the Capital Regional District commissioned a foodlands feasibility study that recommended the establishment of a foodlands trust in partnership with a not-for-profit organization using existing publicly owned lands historically used for agricultural purposes.²¹ Another precedent is the Sandown Agricultural Lands project in North

¹⁹ Applies to development rezoning applications on parcels 1.98 acres or greater, or development floor area of 484,375 sq. ft (45,000 sq. m) or greater.

²⁰ See B.4.2.(b) - “If site is greater than 40,470 sq.m (10 acres), provide documentation for operationalizing the asset, including any confirmed programmers, coordinators, or operators where relevant and outline of maintenance plans.” (City of Vancouver, 2020)

²¹ Capital Regional District, n.d.



Saanich, which was transferred to the District and leased long-term to a local regenerative agriculture non-profit.²²

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Change the Greenest City Action Plan metric of food assets to include total acreage in foodlands, not just the number of distinct food assets.
- Incentivize permanent or long-term foodland spaces as community benefits through existing development contribution tools (e.g. density bonuses).
- Incentivize permanent or long-term foodland spaces in rezoning of large developments (e.g. Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments).
 - Have all large developments, not just those larger than 10 acres, commit resources to ongoing maintenance and animation of food assets.
 - Incorporate an Occupant/Public Education and Outreach section to the food assets section (specifically for community gardens, edible landscaping, and on-site composting), similar to what is indicated in the Zero Waste section of the policy.
 - Revise the urban farm design guidelines to include infrastructure for indoor/climate-controlled seed starting (e.g. indoor seed room, greenhouse for raising seedlings) and public-facing food distribution (e.g. food stand).
- Hire and engage professional food growers in the design of foodland spaces early on in the design process. This could be a recommendation for private developments and integrated into the design process for public foodlands.
- Prioritize and resource foodland models that represent intentional community engagement and shared garden stewardship (“our garden” vs “my garden”), e.g. Riley Park Community Garden. Support could be in the form of grants. Allocate space in any new city park for community engaged garden models.
- Set aside municipal land for long term foodland use, for example through a municipal or regional foodlands trust that could be co-managed with non-profit organizations. Land can be existing municipally owned land, or additional land acquired for the trust. Food grown could be used for institutional procurement or school food programs.

²² North Saanich, n.d.



Provide Funding and Infrastructure for Community-Driven Food Systems Work

Outcomes supported	How?
Community Connectedness	Fund programs that encourage community connectedness
Education and Skill-building	Fund education programs grounded in food
Environmental Stewardship	Fund programs promoting environmental stewardship through food
Food Self-Reliance	Provide processing and distribution infrastructure for local small-scale growers and entrepreneurs

To achieve potential benefits from access to urban foodlands will take more than simply increasing the amount of urban foodlands available. The majority of the dialogue participants currently work for non-profit or social enterprise organizations that use agriculture and food to create benefits for their community (e.g. food access, skills training, social inclusion). Operational funding was raised as a need during both dialogue sessions. Some grants do exist (e.g. City of Vancouver's Sustainable Food Systems grants, Organizational Capacity Building grants) but the funding amounts are insufficient and groups expend significant staff time competing for the same funding pool. One example of a program model that has been successfully demonstrated in Vancouver is the schoolyard farm programming at Fresh Roots. Institutional and funding support is needed to test it out in other neighbourhoods and jurisdictions.

“There’s no solid template [to scale up schoolyard farms]. I deal with three different school district departments... and city regulations. It would take a lot more institutional support, a strong provincial vision, and district level support to scale up schoolyard farms.”

- Alexa Pitoulis, Interim Executive Director at Fresh Roots

One example of a long-term core operational funding grant for community food initiatives is Vancouver Coastal Health's Community Food Action Initiative. A recent evaluation report highlighted the importance of core funding in retaining staff.²³ However, resources remain limited with funding amounts staying the same over 10 years, ranging between \$15,000 to \$45,000 per community per year, staff positions being funded predominantly on a part time basis. One consequence is the overwork and burnout of staff, which can lead to turnover and loss of knowledge and social capital.

²³ Klein & Goudriaan, 2019



What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Provide/increase operational funding for groups running programs/services that demonstrate tangible community benefits at funding levels that enable full time living wage positions.
- Expand the Vancouver Park Board's Fieldhouse Activation Program where former caretakers' suites in parks are made available for community engagement activities by local groups (including environmental and food related initiatives).
- Provincial level: Invest in infrastructure to support commercial small-scale food growers and entrepreneurs, such as commissaries, cold storage, food hubs, and other food processing and aggregation facilities.



Reduce Regulatory and Bureaucratic Barriers for People to Grow Food in the City

Outcomes supported	How?
Food Self-Reliance	Increase participation in commercial and recreational urban food growing

Participants called for the reduction of barriers to small scale urban agriculture businesses and not-for-profit organizations. This issue is discussed at greater length in another VUFS report (Policy and Possibilities) in the context of commercial and not-for-profit urban food growing.²⁴ The requirements for urban farm permits and licensing create uncertainty and impose high costs that limit the economic viability of these enterprises. The current guidelines set unnecessary limitations on urban farm activities, and there is a lack of supportive policy or programs to help the urban farm sector thrive and grow.

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Change the business license requirement for commercial urban farms to remove the need for a business license for each urban farm site
- Reduce or eliminate permitting costs for commercial urban farms, specifically retrofitting and professional fees associated with development and building permit requirements.
- Incentivize landowners to make land available to urban farmers using taxation or other policy tools**
- Allow urban farming in all zones as a Permitted Use, and eliminate the Development Permit requirement for Class B and large Class A urban farms.**
- Create building bylaws appropriate for urban farm structures.**
- Allow other urban farming products besides fruits and vegetables.**
- Allow non-disruptive urban farming activities outside 8 am - 9 pm.**
- Expand on-site sales and allow farm stands.**

*** Refer to the VUFS Policy and Possibilities report for in-depth discussion of this issue and policy recommendations.*

²⁴ VUFS, 2021



Foster Citizenship and Collective Action Around Food Systems Change

Outcomes supported	How?
Environmental Stewardship	Foster ethic of citizenship around environmental and food issues

Participants shared a number of related comments on the importance of fostering citizenship and collective action around a more just and sustainable food system. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the sense of urgency and the need to mobilize now for a more sustainable future. Some participants pointed to the power of music and art to inspire people and spark culture change.

“As one young woman said to me at the start of the pandemic, she lived in an apartment building and started growing food. Her landlord said, ‘You can’t do that.’ She said, I have every right to be growing food and feeding myself.’ That’s what we need to be doing. We have the right to grow food. It’s time for us to grow up. Bring back our native species, start eating those incredible berries, and ensuring that all species, that have been here much longer than all of us, have the right to be here with us.”

- Lori Snyder, Métis Herbalist & Educator

Education Programs

Youth education programs also have a role to play in promoting food literacy integrated with outdoor experiential education. This is of particular relevance to children growing up in urban environments, disconnected from the natural world and not knowing where food comes from. The Vancouver School Board has a school garden policy and provides guidelines for individual schools to establish their own gardens. However, the VSB does not cover garden costs.²⁵ There are a number of non-profit organizations such as Growing Chefs, Earthbites, SPEC, and Fresh Roots that offer food literacy and schoolyard garden/farm programs linked to the provincial curriculum. Costs may be covered by the non-profit (e.g. fundraising, volunteer hours) or by the school community (e.g. each family pays for their child, PAC fundraising). The provincial government has a major role to play in providing sufficient funding to make sure that every child can have access to food literacy programs without putting more burden on already-strapped teachers and school staff.

²⁵ Vancouver School Board, 2020



Community Grants

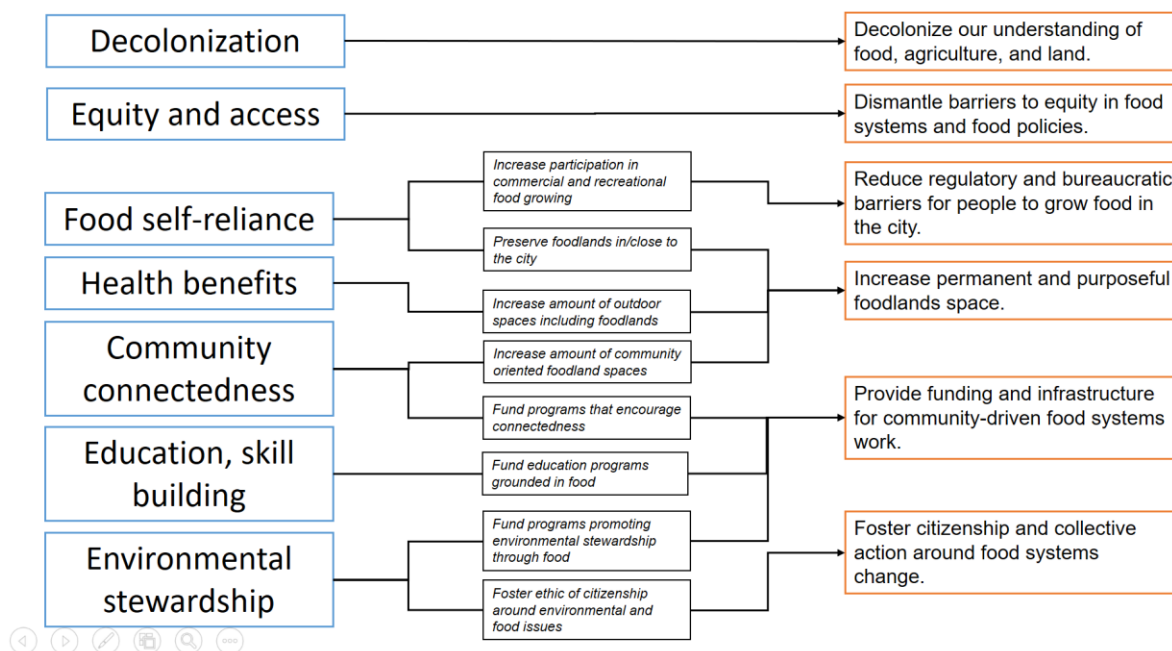
One successful grant program is the Neighbourhood Small Grants. In particular, the Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grant stream supports projects in the City of Vancouver with an environmental focus, up to \$500. The program website shows numerous gardens in parks, rooftops, boulevards, medians, schoolyards, etc have been funded, along with workshops and events to connect neighbours with each other around food, plants, and nature.

What is the policy recommendation?

Policy recommendations could include:

- Expand and continue to support local grassroots initiatives that foster food system change through grants (e.g. Neighbourhood Small Grants). Celebrate and support effective community projects.
- Create or fund leadership programs related to food systems and social change (e.g. Next Up environmental and social justice youth leadership program, Ashoka Changemakers).
- Provincial level: Provide adequate funding to remove fundraising burden from schools and families and ensure that all children can take part in food literacy programs.

Figure 1. Summary of linkages between outcomes and policy themes.

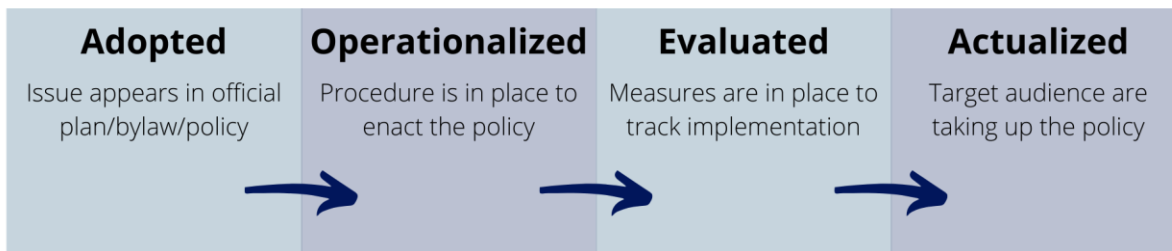




Analysis

The policies and practice suggestions that were brought forward by the participants of the dialogue were analyzed according to the level of implementation. There is a continuum of implementation that the policies fit into, according to the following figure:

Policy Implementation Continuum



The policies are organized below by level of implementation. The majority of policies discussed in this report are proposed changes to existing policies, followed by policies that do not exist or have not been adopted (Table 2).

Actualized Policies

- Expand and continue to support local grassroots initiatives that foster food system change through grants. (Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grants)
- Adopt policies around diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring for paid positions at all levels and for advisory/steering committees.
- Adopt a living wage policy at the municipal level - City of Vancouver since 2019
- Expand the Vancouver Park Board's Fieldhouse Activation Program.

Evaluated Policies (but not actualized):

- Provincial level: Invest in infrastructure to support commercial small scale food growers and entrepreneurs.

Operationalized Policies (but not evaluated or actualized):

- Prioritize and resource foodland models that represent intentional community engagement and shared garden stewardship (“our garden” vs “my garden”), e.g. Riley Park Community Garden - City of Vancouver Parks Board Urban Agriculture Policy.



Adopted Policies (but not implemented, evaluated or actualized)

- Mandatory training programs for public servants (e.g. city and parks staff, school boards, police) around non-violent communication, anti-racism, decolonization, allyship, intersectional anti-oppression - City of Vancouver pilot program in 2019

Existing Policies (but change suggested)

City of Vancouver: Greenest City Action Plan

- Expand policy definitions of food, foodlands, and foodways to recognize and value Indigenous and non-Western worldviews and cultures.
- Change the Greenest City Action Plan metric of food assets to include total acreage in foodlands.

City of Vancouver: Existing grants for Indigenous led initiatives

- Support, fund, and amplify the work of Indigenous led food organizations. Increase level of funding and support.

City of Vancouver: Park Board Urban Agriculture Policy

- For public green space projects like parks, use community engagement methods that involve, collaborate, or empower residents, especially members of marginalized groups who face barriers to participating in public consultation processes like surveys and open houses. Support participation by paying people for their time and contribution.

City of Vancouver: Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments

- Encourage developers to incorporate the design expertise of community food programmers/urban agriculture practitioners throughout the development process.
- Have all developments, not just those larger than 10 acres, commit resources to ongoing maintenance and animation of food assets.
- Incorporate an Occupant/Public Education and Outreach section to the food assets section (specifically for community gardens, edible landscaping, and on-site composting), similar to what is indicated in the Zero Waste section of the policy.
- Revise the urban farm design guidelines to include infrastructure for indoor/climate-controlled seed starting (e.g. indoor seed room, greenhouse for raising seedlings) and public-facing food distribution (e.g. food stand).

City of Vancouver: Density bonuses

- Incentivize permanent or long-term foodlands spaces as community benefits through existing development contribution tools (e.g. density bonuses).

City of Vancouver: Urban Farming Guidelines

- Change the business license requirement for urban farms to remove the need for a business license for each urban farm site.
- Reduce or eliminate permitting costs for urban farms, specifically retrofitting and professional fees associated with development and building permit requirements.



- Allow urban farming in all zones as a Permitted Use and eliminate the Development Permit requirement for Class B and large Class A urban farms.
- Allow other urban farming products besides fruits and vegetables.
- Allow non-disruptive urban farming activities outside 8 am - 9 pm.
- Expand on-site sales and allow farm stands.

Vancouver Coastal Health: Community Food Action Initiative

- Provide/increase operational funding for groups running programs/services that demonstrate tangible community benefits.

Provincial Education Budget

- Provide adequate school funding to remove fundraising burden from schools and families and ensure that all children can take part in food literacy programs.

Policies that have not been Adopted:

- Return land to Indigenous stewardship and self-governance
- Adjust municipal budgets to allocate funds away from traditional policing and towards affordable housing, education, community health, and other social supports.
- Pilot a guaranteed basic income policy at the provincial/federal level (provincial study underway).
- Provide provincial and municipal funding for a universal healthy school food program (2019 federal budget promise).
- Fund urban farmer jobs to grow food for institutional procurement or school food programs.
- For funders (e.g. municipal/provincial governments, health authorities), ensure that funding levels are sufficient to enable living wage for recipients.
- Hire and engage professional food growers in the design of foodland spaces early on in the design process. This could be a recommendation for private developments and integrated into the design process for public foodlands.
- Set aside municipal land for long term foodland use, for example through a municipal or regional foodlands trust that could be co-managed with non-profit organizations. Land can be existing municipally owned land, or additional land acquired for the trust. Food grown could be used for institutional procurement or school food programs.
- Incentivize landowners to make land available to urban farmers using taxation or other policy tools.
- Create building bylaws appropriate for urban farm structures.
- Create or fund leadership programs related to food systems and social change (e.g. Next Up environmental and social justice youth leadership program, Ashoka Changemakers)



Table 2. Number of policies by level of implementation.

Level of Implementation	#
Actualized policies	4
Evaluated policies (but not actualized)	1
Operationalized policies (but not evaluated or actualized)	1
Adopted policies (but not implemented, evaluated, or actualized)	1
Existing policies (but change suggested)	17
Policies that have not been adopted	11
Total	35

Discussion

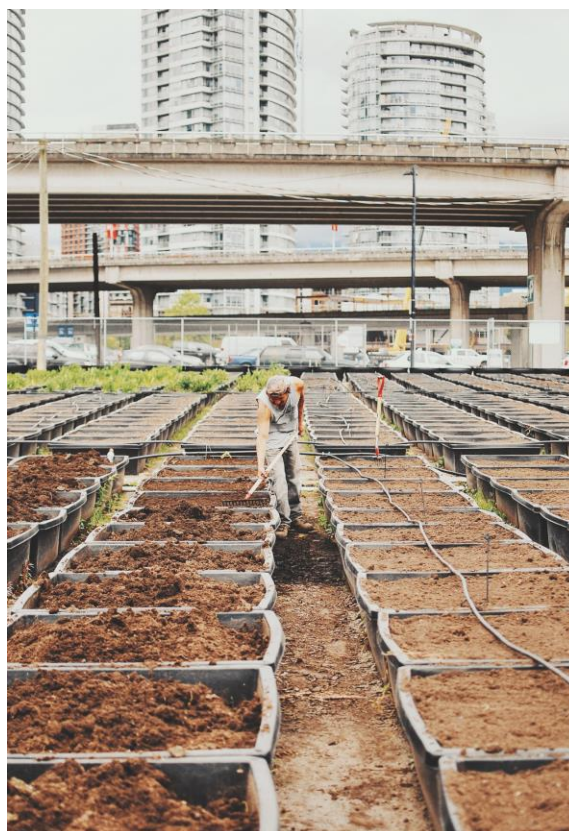
It is important to note that dialogue participants were invited as food system practitioners and were not expected to be policy experts. The majority of time during the policy discussion activity at the online dialogues was focused on brainstorming policy ideas. The brainstorm generated ideas that varied in level of detail and specificity. Some policy ideas were quite broad (e.g. “*City policy to encourage residents to turn underutilized space into food growing space*”) while others pointed to specific policies (e.g. “*City of Vancouver’s rezoning policy for large sustainable developments*”). In instances where policy ideas were quite broad, additional research was conducted to identify more specific policies or precedents if possible. Of the 35 policies presented in this report, just over a third were directly mentioned in the dialogue, and an equal number were alluded to in general terms and developed into more specific policy language after the fact. A smaller number were not mentioned in the dialogue but were developed by the project team after reviewing the dialogue transcript (Table 3).

Table 3. Number of policies by origin.

Origin of policy	#
Directly from dialogue	13
Alluded to in dialogue	13
Not alluded to, but inspired by dialogue	9
Total	35



A number of the ideas brainstormed by dialogue participants actually already exist at the municipal or provincial level (e.g. prioritizing collaborative and shared gardening is already included in the Park Board Urban Agriculture policy). This tells us that ***even food system practitioners and advocates vary in their awareness of food system policies that already exist and are supportive of the outcomes presented in this report.*** Even for the writers of this report, it was challenging to ascertain whether an idea was already in place as a policy, whether there is an evaluation process in place, and whether city residents have taken up the policy. For example, there are numerous changes suggested to the Rezoning for Sustainable Large Developments in this report. That policy was adopted in 2018 and it is unclear from a search on the city website whether an evaluation process is in place to determine the impacts of the policy. One concrete suggestion for city staff to improve information sharing about food policies is to conduct a yearly webinar, meeting, or other web-accessible format with interested groups.



Sole Food Street Farms, Vancouver, BC
Photo credit: Matt Schroeter

One action item for organizations like VUFS would be to continue to build relationships with the City to have better lines of communication regarding food policy, and to become more familiar with the policymaking process. As community food system advocates trying to be engaged in municipal food policy while operating outside of the city bureaucracy, transparency and collaboration are critical. We know that food policy moves through multiple city desks beyond social planning; departments like community services, development, finance, legal, and engineering are also implicated. It is helpful for those departments to become more familiar with urban food issues and to be engaged in food policy development from the start.

As already mentioned, effective policies already exist in the City of Vancouver, such as the Parks Board's Fieldhouse Activation Program, and may be beneficial for other municipalities to consider. The next step for successful policies or programs could be in scaling up. For example, a target could be set for all fieldhouses to have programs hosted by racialized and/or Indigenous groups by 2025. Other identified policy changes can be characterized as relatively "low hanging fruit", such as increasing awareness of neighbourhood small grants to support grassroots initiatives.

There are existing municipal policies that can be improved. For example, the Greenest City Action Plan can expand its definition of food assets to include food forests and medicinal plant foraging, and measure acres of foodlands in addition to the number of food assets. The Rezoning for



Sustainable Large Developments policy is interesting because it seeks to increase food assets through private sector developments. However, the impact of a food asset like a community garden or edible landscaping depends not only on their existence, but also on continuing use by the residents of that development. This raises a question of the role of policy in supporting the ongoing use, maintenance, and resourcing of food assets built into developments.

This report also presents more expensive and/or complex policy recommendations. Community-driven food initiatives already exist but lack capacity and core funding. As municipal budgets are limited, this is an area where higher levels of government could provide more financial and policy support. Establishment of a foodland trust is financially costly and politically complex and would require significant community engagement and investment. To address complex and interconnected issues of equity, access, and decolonization will require policies grounded in long-term thinking, bold vision, strong political will, and the willingness and ability to invite collaboration towards a truly sustainable and just food system.



Sole Food Street Farms, Vancouver, BC

Photo Credit: Matt Schroeter



Conclusion

Two online dialogues were hosted by VUFS in September 2020 to explore the positive outcomes from access to urban foodlands and what policies are needed to realize those outcomes. There were 9 participants engaged in the food system as educators, entrepreneurs, community advocates, gardeners, and policymakers. Participants identified that having access to urban foodlands can support numerous potential positive outcomes for individuals and communities, relating to health, community connectedness, education, environmental stewardship, food self-reliance, and dignity. The experience of the Covid-19 pandemic increased participants' appreciation for the role of foodlands and food-growing in their own lives and the lives of their families and neighbours. They noted that equity, access, and decolonization must be prioritized to make those outcomes accessible for all community members.

The dialogues inspired and generated many policy ideas from the participants. The majority of policies discussed in this report are proposed changes to existing policies, which is not unexpected given two decades of city involvement in municipal food policy, and gives a good starting point for policy change. A number of promising policies already exist in the City of Vancouver, such as the Parks Board's Fieldhouse Activation Program, and we hope will be beneficial for other municipalities to consider.

As this report is written and released, the City of Vancouver and other municipalities are considering their strategy to pandemic recovery. The Park Board is soliciting feedback on the Local Food Action Plan. City staff are conducting a formal review process of the Urban Farming Guidelines. The City is gathering community input for development of the Vancouver Plan, and continuing to enact its commitments as a City of Reconciliation. We hope this report can contribute perspectives from community food practitioners on how we can reorient our communities to be more just, sustainable, and resilient in the face of future shocks.



Farm Mixer, Hastings Urban Farm, Vancouver, BC

Photo Credit: Vancouver Urban Farming Society



References

BC Food Security Gateway. (n.d.). *About*. <https://bcfoodsecuritygateway.ca/about-bc-food-security-gateway/>

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2019). *The 2019 living wage for Metro Vancouver*. <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/updates/2019-living-wage-metro-vancouver>

Capital Regional District. (n.d.) *Regional food and agriculture strategy*. <https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/food-agriculture>

(2018, August 14). *3 Canadian cities make top 10 on global ranking of most livable cities*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/canada-economist-liveability-1.4784524>

City of Vancouver. (n.d.-a). *Living wage*. <https://vancouver.ca/doing-business/living-wage.aspx>

City of Vancouver. (n.d.-b). *The Vancouver Charter*. <https://vancouver.ca/your-government/the-vancouver-charter.aspx>

City of Vancouver. (n.d.-c). *Vancouver food strategy background: how we got here*. <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/food-strategy-background.aspx>

City of Vancouver. (2013). *Regional context statement official development plan*. <https://bylaws.vancouver.ca/odp/odp-regional-context-statement.pdf>

City of Vancouver. (2020). *Bulletin: sustainable large developments*. <https://bylaws.vancouver.ca/bulletin/bulletin-sustainable-large-developments.pdf>

Coalition for Healthy School Food. (n.d.) *About BC chapter*. <https://www.healthyschoolfood.ca/bc-chapter>

Gurstein, P., LaRocque, E., & MacDonald, R.J. (2018.) *No vacancy: high rent, low vacancy, growing homelessness*. <https://www.ugm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NoVacancy-2018.pdf>

IAP2. (2018). *Spectrum of public participation*. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

Klein, K. & Goudriaan, D. (2019). *Community food action initiative evaluation: summary version*. Vancouver Coastal Health. [https://www.britanniacentre.org/database/files/library/high_res_VCH_CFAI_\(Final\).pdf](https://www.britanniacentre.org/database/files/library/high_res_VCH_CFAI_(Final).pdf)

KPU Institute for Sustainable Food Systems. (n.d.). *BC food system policy database: city of Vancouver food strategy*. Retrieved from <https://www.kpu.ca/isfs/foodpolicydatabase/city-vancouver-food-strategy>.

MacKinnon, S. (2017). *'Class B' urban farm guidelines: impacts & recommendations*. Vancouver Urban Farming Society. http://www.urbanfarmers.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ClassB_Urban_Farm_Guidelines_Impacts_Recommendations.pdf



Mendes, W. (2003, November 20). *Policy report: action plan for creating a just and sustainable food system for the city of Vancouver*. <https://council.vancouver.ca/20031209/rr1.htm>

Metro Vancouver. (2016). *Encouraging agricultural production through farm property tax reform in Metro Vancouver*. <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/AgricultureProductionTaxReformMV-2016.pdf>

North Saanich. (n.d.). *Sandown agricultural lands*. <https://northsaanich.ca/local-government/projects-initiatives/sandown/>

Province of Ontario. (2019, April 8). *Archived - Ontario basic income pilot*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-basic-income-pilot>

RBC Economic Research. (March 2019). *Housing trends and affordability: Softer housing market in Canada provides some affordability relief*. <http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/assets-custom/pdf/house-mar2019.pdf>

Vancouver Foundation. (April 2018). *Living wage statement*. <https://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/about-us/publications/policies-financials/living-wage-statement>

Vancouver School Board. (2020). *School garden guide*. https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Sustainability/garden/Documents/sbfile/200513/May2020_Garden%20Guide_FINAL.pdf

VUFS. (2020). *Vancouver urban farming census 2017-2019*. <http://www.urbanfarmers.ca/urban-farms/urban-farming-census/>

VUFS. (2021). *Policy and possibilities: recommendations for the City of Vancouver's urban farm guidelines*. <http://www.urbanfarmers.ca/policy-and-possibilities/>



Appendix A

Policy Analysis Table

Policy Recommendations	Adopted	Direct, alluded to, or 100% new	Operationalized	Evaluated	Actualized	Change suggested to existing policy?
Expand policy definitions of food, foodlands, and foodways to recognize and value Indigenous and non-Western worldviews and cultures. E.g. Greenest City Action Plan definition of food assets.	N	Direct				Revise definitions, indicators in GCAP
Return land to Indigenous stewardship and self-governance.	N	Direct				
Support, fund, and amplify the work of Indigenous led food organizations.	Y (existing grants in CoV, VCH)	Alluded to	Y	Y	Y	Increase the funding and resources dedicated to this
Adjust municipal budgets to allocate funds away from traditional policing and towards affordable housing, education, community health, and other social supports.	N	Direct				
For public green space/foodland projects in parks, use community engagement methods that involve, collaborate, or empower residents, especially members of marginalized groups who face barriers to participating in public consultation processes like surveys and open houses. Support participation by paying people for their time and contribution.	Y	Alluded to	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Revise parks board urban ag policy regarding public engagement
For large scale rezoning developments: - Encourage developers to incorporate the design expertise of community food programmers/urban agriculture practitioners throughout the development process.	Y	100% new	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Revise Rezoning for Sustainable Large Developments policy



For large scale rezoning developments: - Have all developments, not just those larger than 10 acres, commit resources to ongoing maintenance and animation of food assets.	Y	Alluded to	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Revise Rezoning for Sustainable Large Developments policy
Adopt policies around diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring for paid positions at all levels and for advisory/steering committees.	Y (advisory committees and job postings)	Direct	Y	Y	Y	
Mandatory training programs for public servants (e.g. city and parks staff, school boards, police) around non-violent communication, anti-racism, decolonization, allyship, intersectional anti-oppression.	Y (Anti-racism pilot)	Alluded to	Y (pilot)			
Pilot a guaranteed basic income policy at the provincial/federal level.	N (provincial study)	Direct				
Provide provincial and municipal funding for a universal healthy school food program.	N (federal budget promise)	Alluded to				
Adopt a living wage policy at the municipal level.	Y (CoV as of May 2017)	Direct	Y	Y	Y	
For funders (e.g. municipal/provincial governments, health authorities), ensure that funding levels are sufficient to enable living wage for recipients.	N	Alluded to				Refer to precedent: Vancouver Foundation Living Wage Statement
Provide/increase operational funding for groups running programs/services that demonstrate tangible community benefits. E.g. VCH CFAI	Y	Direct	Y	Y	Y	Revisions to CFAI: Increase funding of positions; increase funding pool and make funding more widely available
Fund urban farmer jobs to grow food for institutional procurement or school food programs.	N	100% new				
Expand the Vancouver Park Board's Fieldhouse Activation Program.	Y	Direct	Y	Y	Y	
Provincial level: Invest in infrastructure to support commercial small scale food growers and entrepreneurs.	Y (BC Food Hub Network)	Direct	Y	Y	Unknown	
Change the Greenest City Action Plan metric of food assets to include total acreage in foodlands.	N	100% new				Revise GCAP metrics



Incentivize permanent or long-term foodlands spaces as community benefits through existing development contribution tools (e.g. density bonuses).	Y (density bonuses exist)	Alluded to	Y	Y	Y	include food assets as a community benefit
Incentivize permanent or long-term foodlands spaces in rezoning of large-scale developments: Have all large developments, not just those larger than 10 acres, commit resources to ongoing maintenance and animation of food assets.	Y	Direct	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Revise Rezoning of Sustainable Large Developments policy
Incentivize permanent or long-term foodlands spaces in rezoning of large-scale developments: Incorporate an Occupant/Public Education and Outreach section to the food assets section (specifically for community gardens, edible landscaping, and on-site composting), similar to what is indicated in the Zero Waste section of the policy.	Y	Alluded to	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Revise Rezoning of Sustainable Large Developments policy
Incentivize permanent or long-term foodlands spaces in rezoning of large-scale developments: Revise the urban farm design guidelines to include infrastructure for indoor/climate-controlled seed starting (e.g. indoor seed room, greenhouse for raising seedlings) and public-facing food distribution (e.g. food stand).	Y	100% new	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Revise Rezoning of Sustainable Large Developments policy
Hire and engage professional food growers in the design of foodland spaces early on in the design process. This could be a recommendation for private developments and integrated into the design process for public foodlands.	N	100% new				Could be added to Urban Design Guidelines for Private Realm
Prioritize and resource foodland models that represent intentional community engagement and shared garden stewardship ("our garden" vs "my garden"), e.g. Riley Park Community Garden. Support could be in the form of grants. Allocate space in any new city park for community engaged garden models.	Y	Direct	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Evaluation of parks board urban ag policy on this topic



Set aside municipal land for long term foodland use, for example through a municipal or regional foodlands trust that could be co-managed with non-profit organizations. Land can be existing municipally owned land, or additional land acquired for the trust. Food grown could be used for institutional procurement or school food programs.	N	Direct				
Change the business license requirement for commercial urban farms to remove the need for a business license for each urban farm site.	Y (urban farming guidelines under review) ²⁶	Direct	Y	Y	N (none)	Change suggested
Change development process to reduce costs for commercial urban farms.	Y (urban farming guidelines under review)	Alluded to	Y	Y	N (slow)	Change suggested
Incentivize urban farming through tax reform	N	Alluded to				
Allow urban farming in all zones as a Permitted Use and eliminate the Development Permit requirement for Class B and large Class A urban farms.	Y (urban farming guidelines under review)	Alluded to				Change suggested
Create building bylaws appropriate for urban farm structures.	N	100% new				
Allow other urban farming products besides fruits and vegetables.	Y (urban farming guidelines under review)	100% new				Change suggested
Allow non-disruptive urban farming activities outside 8 am - 9 pm.	Y (urban farming guidelines under review)	100% new				Change suggested
Expand on-site sales and allow farm stands.	Y (urban farming guidelines under review)	100% new				Change suggested

²⁶Marked as adopted policy because an urban farming policy exists, and has been operationalized and evaluated, but uptake is slow. A number of policy changes are suggested.



Expand and continue to support local grassroots initiatives that foster food system change through grants.	Y (Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grants)	Direct	y	y	y	Continue program, expand reach
Provincial level: Provide adequate school funding to remove fundraising burden from schools and families and ensure that all children can take part in food literacy programs.	N	Alluded to				Increase provincial school funding levels
Create or fund leadership programs related to food systems and social change (e.g. Next Up environmental and social justice youth leadership program, Ashoka Changemakers)		Alluded to				



Appendix B

Facilitation Plan of Dialogues

Purpose	Activity
Land Acknowledgment	As we begin our dialogue, I want to start by recognizing that we are on the unceded, ancestral, occupied traditional lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and TsleilWaututh nations. We're talking today about access to foodlands and how we can achieve that for future generations. We have a responsibility to make sure that in projects like this one, we try to find a different way forward, and we work towards a future where future generations not just have access but have the opportunity to become good stewards of the land.
Introduction, Setting the tone	Participants and facilitators introduce themselves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name, organization, and a food (or plant) of significance to you
Introduction, Setting the tone	Introduction of the dialogue and how it fits into the PHABC project.
Introduction, Setting the tone	Invite the following actions for the dialogue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to understand Speak with intention Make room for dissent Use the bike rack if need be (aka parking lot) Take breaks when you need to Ask: What do you need to participate fully?
Introduction, Setting the tone	Go over agenda for rest of dialogue. Introduce next activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why - sharing and discussing different perspectives How - generating ideas for what we need to do this work
WHY - Sharing perspectives	Start with the Why: Conversation Cafe part 1 and 2. Conversation Cafe part 1 - Roundtable Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each participant is invited to share their perspective on this question: "Access to urban foodlands is important for future generations because..." (3-5 mins each?) Leave up slide 5 for instructions but take it down once people start sharing. Everyone else invited to be present. Invite deep listening.
WHY - Deepening understanding	Conversation Cafe part 2 - Reflections and open discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open the floor to reflections and discussion. Possible prompts if needed: What connections do you see in the different perspectives?



HOW - Generating policy ideas	<p>Move into the How: Think-Share activity.</p> <p>Think-Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the 3 questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What needs to happen to increase access to urban foodlands? (blue) ○ When have we been successful in increasing access to foodlands in cities? What was it about that example that made it successful? (red) ○ What suite of policies (local, regional, provincial) will enable this work? (yellow) • Explain the Google Slides process (use the boxes, copy-paste to create new ones) • Go through question by question - 2-3 minutes per question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give a demonstration each slide as needed
HOW - Generating policy ideas	<p>Open discussion on ideas generated. As discussion happens, the whiteboard facilitator will take notes, move things around.</p> <p>Prompts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What common threads do you see emerging? • Imagine that you have more than enough time and funding - what big idea would you recommend? What first step would you take to get started? • Thinking back to our discussion about the “why”, how well do these align? Anything missing?
NEXT STEPS	<p>Participants can expect a chance to review a draft of our write-up and offer feedback, either through Google Docs, email, or phone. Final report will be a public document</p>
CHECK OUT	<p>Check out prompt: e.g. One word or phrase to describe what you’re taking away from this dialogue. Gratitude to participants</p>



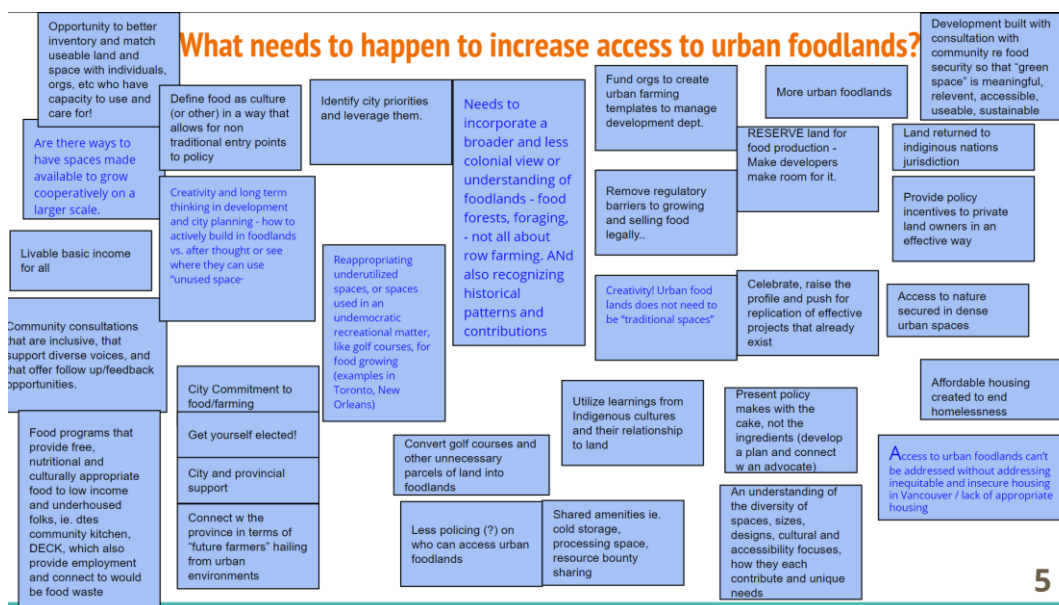
Appendix C

Visual of Think-Share Activity

September 17, 2020

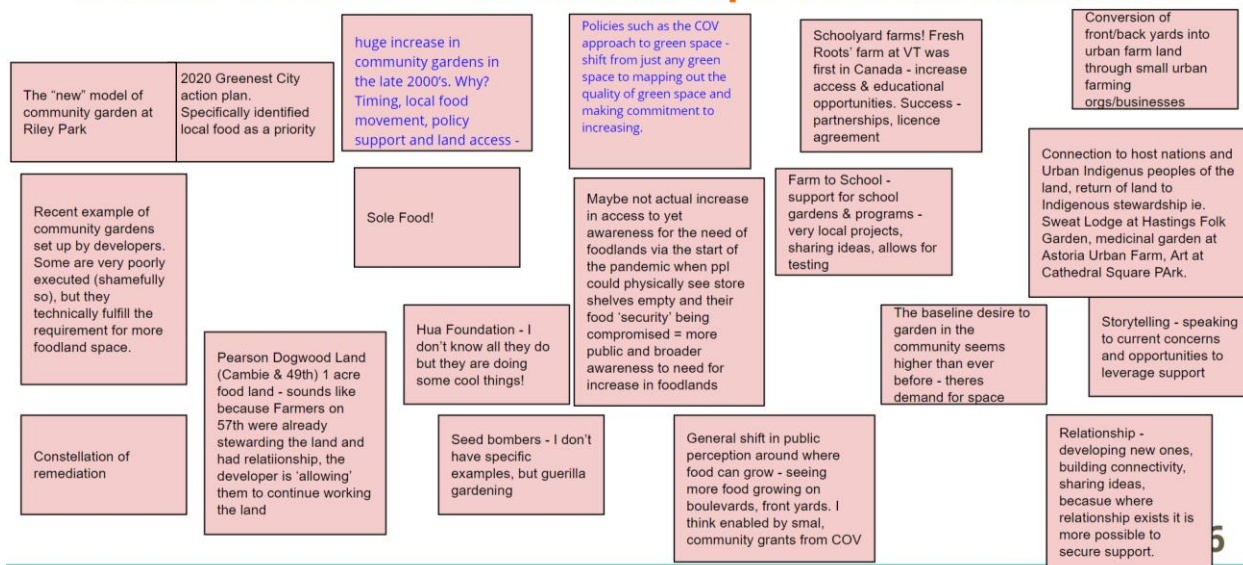


September 24, 2020





When have we been successful in increasing access to foodlands in cities? What was it about that example that made it successful?



What suite of policies (local, regional, provincial) will enable this work?

