GROWING IN THE CITY
Cultivating food and community in the City of Gardens
CONTEXT: CITY OF VICTORIA

Objective 8: Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems

Food Systems

OVERVIEW

Food is a basic human need and one that shapes Victoria’s urban environment in many different ways. The availability of nutritious, affordable food is critical to the health and well-being of all members of Victoria’s community. Food systems and local food networks are recognized as critical to the social, economic, and environmental health of the city. Local food systems play a major role in providing diverse and fresh food to Victoria’s residents while supporting local farmers and business owners. They also help to reduce the carbon footprint of food systems, which is a significant contributor to climate change.

GOALS

- 17 (a): A healthy share of the food that supplies Victoria’s daily needs is sustainably grown, processed, and packaged in the city.
- 17 (b): Communities have access to skills, knowledge, and resources to produce and process their own food in active areas.

DEFINITIONS

- Food: Edible plants, animals, fungi, or microorganisms that can be consumed by humans or animals.
- Local Food Systems: Food systems that are based within a region and directly benefit the people who live there.

DIRECTIONS

- Develop, design, and finance investments to improve urban Green Foods and Food Security on the North Ground.
- Create a movement for volunteer stewardship of community gardens.
- Develop long-term policies, food security, and sustainable agriculture including an inventory of local food systems, coordination with the City of Victoria, and further coordination of food system stakeholders and initiatives in the city.
- Leverage from Victoria’s success in creating a community garden on Oak Bay Street.

Food Systems

Given the small local food base available within Victoria, and the city’s commitment to accommodating a significant amount of regional population growth, Victoria will continue to rely on agricultural lands outside the city and the regional green belt and parkland to supply a large share of its food. The policies in this plan are designed to encourage food production that is safe and sustainable, to increase the resilience of local food networks, and to support local farmers and food businesses.

In Victoria, many households have access to land and grow a portion of their own food. In the same way, the demand for allotment gardens continues to rise due to the high number of people engaging in urban agriculture, either on small plots or in community gardens. The City of Victoria has provided support for the development of community gardens, and these gardens currently make up 30% of the volume growing in Victoria.

Collecting and processing fresh food waste creates future nutrients and provides elements to local soils and food security. Finally, Victoria has made efforts to reduce the impact of food waste, creating additional benefits for the local food system and reducing the climate impact of the food supply.
Growing in the City

Community consultation: June 2015-January 2016

Goal: Create an environment where urban food can flourish

Strong support for increasing urban food production

Outcomes

Community gardening and food Production: public realm policies & programs

Urban farming: 5 bylaws amended to enable growing & selling food throughout City

Food Systems Coordinator position created
COMMUNITY GARDENING AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Revised Community Gardens Policy
(2016)
COMMUNITY GARDENING AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Inventory of City land with community gardening potential

Community Gardens Feature Map: vicmap.victoria.ca/CommunityGardens
Urban Food Tree Stewardship Pilot Program

The City of Victoria recognizes food-bearing trees as valuable assets for promoting food security, food education, and the growth of the City’s urban forest. The Urban Food Tree Stewardship Pilot Program enables residents, in partnership with a community organization, to plant and maintain small groveings, up to a maximum of five fruit and/or nut trees in a park or greenspace in their neighborhood.

**Becoming a “food” Tree Steward**

- **Fruit** and **nut** trees are both considered edible tree species under the term “food” tree. (See the list of eligible tree species in Appendix A.)
- To be considered a “food” tree steward, you must be approved by the City of Victoria and have an approved planting plan. The City of Victoria reserves the right to reject any planting plan.
- You must maintain the tree and any designated plantings that are part of the approved planting plan.
- You must be a resident of the City of Victoria and hold a valid City of Victoria property registration.
- You must be a member of a community organization.
- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must be able to commit to the responsibilities of a food tree stewardship program.
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**For More Information**

- **Fruit, Nut and What’s Next?**
- **City of Victoria**
- **Central Saanich**
- **City of Victoria Parks and Facilities**
- **1000 Government Building**
- **Victoria, BC**

**Tree Maintenance Agreement**

- You must maintain the tree in accordance with the tree location plan approved by the City of Victoria and the “Tree Specifications for Fruit and/or Nut Trees” in Appendix A.
- You must abide by all regulations and tree maintenance plan.
- You must be able to commit to the responsibilities of a food tree stewardship program.
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COMMUNITY GARDENING AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Boulevard Gardening Guidelines
Resources  www.victoria.ca/foodproduction
URBAN FARMING: GROWING FOOD TO SELL

What’s Possible

Throughout City, apply for a business licence to sell raw, unprocessed: Fruits, vegetables & mushrooms, seeds, seedlings, fibres, nuts, flowers, plant cuttings, eggs & honey.

Allowed food stands

Top Soil urban agriculture at Dockside Green
CONCLUSION

Challenges

Example: Large unmet demand for allotment gardens, and little available space

Possible solutions

1) Require new community gardens as a condition of rezoning that add density?

2) Resources or voluntary guidelines to encourage food production in new developments?

3) Vancouver “Davie Street” Model: temporary gardens on vacant lots = lower tax class?
CITY POLICIES: OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE URBAN FOOD PRODUCTION

More info?
www.victoria.ca/growinginthecity

Thank you!