



POLICY REPORT
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: February 9, 2016
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Meeting Date: February 23, 2016

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Acting General Manager of Community Services, in consultation with the
Acting General Manager of Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Amendments to Zoning and Development By-law and Business License By-
law regarding Urban Farming

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Acting General Manager of Planning and Development Services be instructed to make application to amend the Zoning and Development By-law to allow Urban Farming - Class A in residential districts and Urban Farming - Class B in commercial and industrial districts, subject to regulations, generally in accordance with Appendix A, and that this application be referred to a public hearing;
- FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary amending by-law for consideration at public hearing.
- B. THAT, subject to enactment of the amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law, the License By-law be amended to add a definition, regulations and license fee for urban farming, generally in accordance with Appendix B.
- C. THAT, subject to enactment of the amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law, Urban Farming Guidelines generally as set out in Appendix C be adopted for use in consideration of applications for urban farms.
- D. THAT, subject to enactment of the amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law, the Managing Director of Social Policy and Projects be instructed to report back to Council on the effectiveness of these initiatives following the 2017 growing season.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report recommends a) adopting an urban farming definition and regulations in the Zoning and Development By-law b) amending the License By-law to add an urban farming category, and c) adopting the Urban Farming Guidelines to assist staff in considering applications for urban farms.

Urban farming contributes to achieving Greenest City, Healthy City, Vancouver Economic Action Plan and Food Strategy goals including supporting the local green economy, creating green jobs, increasing food access, and shortening food supply chains. Currently, there are approximately 18 urban farm businesses operating in Vancouver, along with an active Urban Farming Society, a non-profit dedicated to increasing the sustainability of urban farming in Vancouver. However, there are no City land use policies or regulations to govern this emerging activity. The result has been an inconsistent and ad hoc response to inquiries, and few tools and levers to monitor outcomes. As well, the absence of urban farming land use policies poses challenges for the urban farmers to secure land lease tenure and limits their ability to pursue long-term business planning, investments and expansion. The recommended policy changes will help legitimize urban farming from a land use perspective, and create a consistent approach to urban farming inquiries, a clear regulatory process, and guidance on best practices. The policy changes will be considered a pilot for two growing seasons and will be monitored and assessed by staff in order to report back in November 2017 on the effectiveness of the initiative and recommend any necessary changes.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

November, 2015: Council adopted the Greenest City Action Plan, Part 2 2015-2020, that identifies Action 7.1 to adopt and implement an urban farming policy to further enable commercial food production in the city and increase the number of urban farming businesses from 18 to 35.

October, 2014: Council adopted the Healthy City for All: Healthy City Strategy 2014-2025, that identifies Feeding Ourselves Well, a key goal to increase access to healthy and nutritious food for all residents.

February, 2013: Council adopted the Vancouver Food Strategy that identifies urban farming and other forms of urban agriculture as a key priority.

July, 2011: Council adopted the Greenest City Action Plan (2020) to increase food assets by 50% by 2020, including the number of urban farms.

February, 2007: Council adopted the Vancouver Food Charter.

December, 2003: Council adopted the Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The Acting General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

The Greenest City Action Plan and the Vancouver Food Strategy identify urban farms as key food assets that contribute to sustainable food systems in Vancouver. Urban farming contributes to Council priorities related to green jobs, health and wellness, food access, environmental sustainability, and compact communities. These include:

- *Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*: Tracks urban farms as a key metric to achieving the City's local food goal of increasing local food assets by 50% by the year 2020.
- *Vancouver Food Strategy*: Sets out five goals, including the identification of urban farming as a priority action area that can enhance Vancouver's green economy.
- *Healthy City Strategy*: Identifies a healthy, just and sustainable food system as one of the 13 building blocks of a healthy city for all.
- *Vancouver Economic Action Strategy*: Urban farms contribute to the local economy and create green food jobs by providing opportunities for food businesses and supplying food to consumers.
- *Transportation 2040 Plan*: Supports local food production and distribution to reduce the need for large scale and long distance transport.
- *Food Waste Targets*: Supports meeting food waste diversion targets by minimizing food wastage due to long food supply chains.

To guide the City's long-term financial strategy and service planning, Council has adopted a set of financial sustainability guiding principles, which include:

- Consider long-term implications in all decisions
- Maintain a stable and predictable revenue stream

Description of Urban Farming

Urban farming is a type of urban agriculture. Other types include community gardens, home gardens and edible landscaping. Despite Vancouver's history as a city that included food growing such as orchards, the idea of farming is now often associated with tractors and fields in rural areas. However, urban farming is experiencing a renaissance across North America, as food growing is being reintroduced to cities after it was mostly excluded through industrialization. Today urban farming typically takes place on a relatively small and compact scale, and urban farms tend to operate on a number of sites. In many cases, urban farms are being reintroduced as small businesses based out of backyards or under-utilized sites.

An urban farm differs from gardening. On an urban farm, fresh food is grown primarily for sale, or the food produced is primarily consumed by someone other than the growers. Urban farms may be operated on a for-profit, non-profit, and/or a social enterprise model.

Urban farming provides many benefits similar to other forms of urban agriculture such as greening the city, improving biodiversity, making use of under-utilized spaces and producing food closer to home. Since food is grown primarily for sale, urban farming also enhances the local food economy by creating green jobs (including food retail, distribution and processing), enhancing skills and shortening food supply chains.

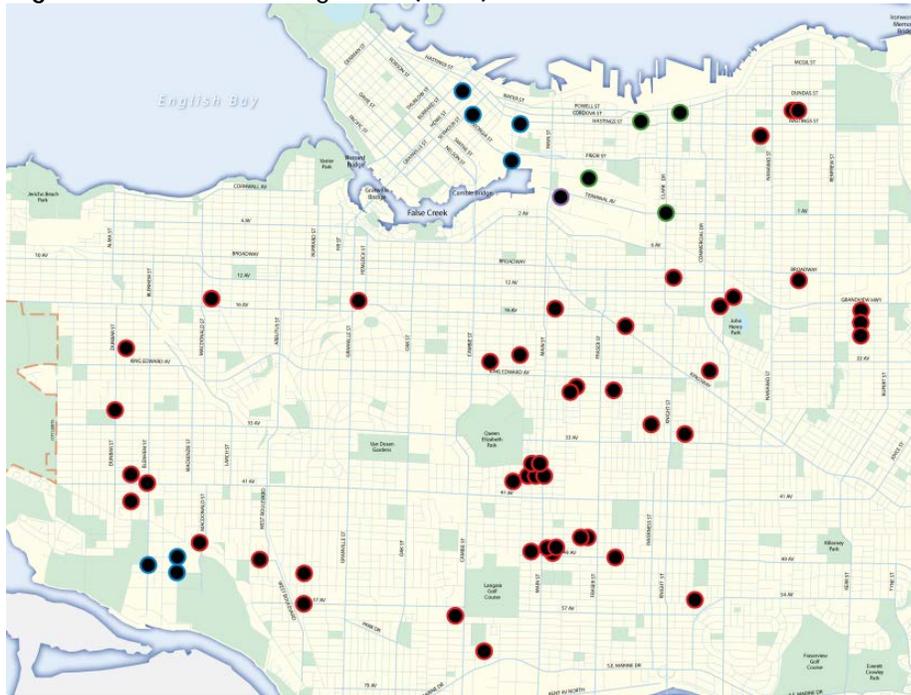
Characteristics of Urban Farming in Vancouver

While Council has not yet adopted a formal policy for urban farming, there is a strong local movement of entrepreneurs who have developed successful urban farming practices. In 2014, there were approximately 18 farming businesses or organizations growing food on roughly 50 sites in the city. Since 2010, the total size of land used for farming has grown from 0.6ha to 2.9 ha. Sizes of farming sites range from a few square meters to over 4000m². Over eighty percent are less than 325m² (see Figure 1).

Generally, urban farms in Vancouver:

- Are revenue generating;
- use organic and sustainable practices;
- use spatially and temporally intensive growing methods;
- involve multiple leased sites; and
- are often community oriented, e.g. youth/community education

Figure 1. Urban Farming Sites (2014)



Urban Farming Sites

- in Residential zoning districts
- in Commercial zoning districts
- in Industrial zoning districts
- in Other zoning districts

Table 1. Location and types of urban farms in Vancouver

Locations/types	Characteristics
Small lot - Residential yard space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale • Front yards and backyards • Each farm business usually grows on multiple sites • Most sales are through Community Supported Agriculture shares (CSA), where members receive a weekly produce box throughout the growing season • Lease arrangement with land or home owner
Large lot - Industrial / commercial land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid to large scale • Multiple vending avenues including restaurants, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture • Using underutilized land • Short term/interim use of land awaiting redevelopment • Growing in moveable planters • Lease arrangement with land owner
Public land - School and city land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using underutilized city land • Social impact focused • Non-profit/social enterprise models • Emphasis on community involvement and youth education • Multiple vending avenues including restaurants, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture • Lease arrangement and Memorandum of Understanding with Vancouver Board of Education • Lease agreement and development permit with City
Indoor growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warehouse or greenhouse in industrial/commercial area • High value crops for specific markets (e.g. micro greens) • Controlled environment: water, light, air, soil

Urban farms have various business and operational models for selling their crops. Most sales from Vancouver’s urban farms are through community supported agriculture (CSA), where customers provide full payment at the beginning of the growing season and receive a box of produce every week during the growing season. This payment model provides funding for farmers up front, and helps pay the costs for supplies and seeds in a timely manner. The model also helps distribute risks and rewards of variable growing seasons over a larger number of members. A significant proportion of produce is also sold at farmers’ markets and community food markets, which are small markets that sell produce in underserved communities, to better serve hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations. Sales are also made directly to restaurants, and other retailers.

Strategic Analysis

Global economic, social and environmental issues such as pollution related to long distance transportation of food, a sharp rise in diet-related preventable diseases, increasing food costs, interruptions in food supply, and dramatic losses of agricultural land have placed tremendous pressure on cities and their food systems.

As a response to these challenges, there is increased interest from the public, consumers and growers to improve access to local, sustainable and healthy food closer to home. In 2013, urban farms in Vancouver collectively sold \$418,000 worth in local food for residents, an

increase of 226% since 2010. Despite considerable growth and advances in urban farming in Vancouver, the City has a limited regulatory framework to assess development applications and respond to urban farming queries and operations. Currently, there are no policies or regulations to govern this emerging activity. The result has been an inconsistent and ad hoc response to inquiries, and few tools and levers to enable the City to monitor outcomes.

To meet the GCAP targets and the Vancouver Food Strategy goal of ensuring food is a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy, supportive policies need to be in place to enable urban farms to prosper while also ensuring appropriate and responsible growing and farming practices in the city. Creating urban farming policy and guidelines will create a consistent approach to urban farming inquiries, a clear regulatory process, and guidance on best practices.

Farmers and farming operations have trouble obtaining business development financing, insurance, or leasing indoor growing spaces, and have a limited desire to invest in infrastructure because of the uncertain status of farming policy in the city. The recommended policy and By-law changes will provide more security for long term investment and planning for urban farming operations. Farmers will be able to apply more easily for business loans, secure insurance, lease property, and invest in their property and infrastructure.

Consultation and Engagement

Support for urban farming, and the need for robust policy and regulations, was evident during the public and stakeholder consultation of the Vancouver Food Strategy in 2012. Urban farming was then identified as a key priority in the subsequent action plan.

The Vancouver Urban Farming Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the sustainability of urban farming in Vancouver and British Columbia, has engaged in a variety of activities over the last four years to advance urban farming in Vancouver. The Society is comprised of urban farmers and urban farming enthusiasts, who advance opportunities for research to help inform appropriate and responsible urban farming operations. Members of the Urban Farming Society have met with City staff to share experiences and discuss urban farming operations as they relate to the policy recommendations; these meetings have also included a tour of select urban farms. The Society also hosts an annual urban farming forum which has been very informative in contributing to the urban farming policy recommendations.

Staff have convened a number of stakeholder engagements and discussions with key urban farming representatives, including the Vancouver Urban Farming Society and Vancouver Food Policy Council.

Proposed Urban Farming Policy

One of the key issues identified through the stakeholder engagement process was the absence of specific land use policy to legitimize urban farming operations, thereby limiting the urban farmers' ability to secure leased sites and tenure. To support the growth of urban farming in both residential and commercial/industrial areas across the city, it is proposed that the following definitions be added to the Zoning and Development By-law:

- **Urban Farm - Class A:** means the use of land, with or without a principle building, for the cultivation of fruits or vegetables for sale.
- **Urban Farm - Class B:** means the use of land or premises for the cultivation of fruits

or vegetables for sale, and of which part or all of the use may take place in a greenhouse or other structure and may include onsite sales.

Urban Farm - Class A would be permitted in all residential zones. Urban Farm - Class B would be permitted in industrial and commercial zones and would allow the use of a greenhouse or other structure. As described in Appendix A, regulations would be added to Section 11 of the Zoning and Development By-law to restrict size, hours of operation, use of pesticides and herbicides, and use of mechanical equipment.

Business License

Staff recommend creating a business licence category for urban farming, which would allow the urban farm to grow and sell produce. The business licence would be kept at a minimal cost, to align with Council priorities. An Urban Farm - Class A licence would be \$10 and an Urban Farm - Class B would be \$136. All farming sites will be required to apply for and obtain a business license, regardless of size or location. If a farming business is operating and using multiple sites, the farming business will need to obtain a licence for each of the sites in operation.

A business licence not only allows the City to track and monitor the number and location of urban farms, but also helps urban farmers to apply for small business loans or other financing, and secure insurance for business operations.

Health and Safety

To address health and safety of farmers and their customers, staff have developed, in partnership with Vancouver Coast Health, a guide for Best Practices for Planting, Growing and Harvesting Fresh Produce to Reduce Health Risks which outlines considerations and steps for farmers and growers. Staff will continue to work with Vancouver Coastal Health to develop education material and communication efforts for the safe growing and handling of food for urban farms and citizens.

Staff recommend that only fruits and vegetables be grown on urban farms at this time. Public health concerns are reduced by ensuring that food grown and sold by urban farms is limited to fruits and vegetables, which are lower risk foods. To minimize health risks, no additional food processing is allowed, unless in combination with additional appropriate permits.

Growing food in an urban environment such as Vancouver does raise some soil safety considerations. Some land, particularly in commercial and industrial zones, may contain contaminants from historical land-use practices. Staff encourage all farming operations to conduct soil testing on the site before any planting. Staff also recommend the use of raised garden plots filled with quality growing medium that do not disturb ground cover.

Greenhouses and Other Structures

Greenhouses, a structure made primarily of glass or translucent material, for which the primary purpose is the cultivation or protection of plants, were identified as a key element in consultation with urban farmers. Greenhouses extend the growing season considerably, which further enables the success of urban farm operations.

There are no proposed changes to the Building By-law for greenhouses at this time. Any proposed greenhouse or other structure that is as part of an urban farming operation would

have to comply with existing building codes. Similarly, rooftop farms would have to comply with existing building code requirements, including such things as life safety considerations and loadbearing capacity.

It is anticipated that as part of the review and assessment of the proposed policy, staff may examine the potential for changes to the Building By-law to better accommodate unique needs of urban farming operations in industrial and commercial zones.

Sales and Distribution

Increasing access to fresh, sustainable and local food in neighbourhoods is an important anticipated outcome. Onsite sales provide an opportunity for interaction directly with the food producer, education and capacity building, while reducing food supply chains. On-site sales will be allowed as part of Urban Farm - Class B in commercial / industrial zones, and that proportion of sales is anticipated to be low compared to other sales revenues (e.g. CSAs). Urban farms in residential zones will be able to deliver and distribute food through restaurant, farmers market, CSA and other market channels.

Property Taxation and Assessment

Property taxes are levied by the City and other taxing authorities ("OTAs") based on the following as determined by BC Assessment in accordance with the *Assessment Act*:

- Property values assessed at their "highest and best use"; and
- Property classes assigned based on their "actual use".

There are nine property classes defined in the *Assessment Act*; eight of which occur within the City. Section 374.2 (1) of *Vancouver Charter* stipulates that City Council impose one tax rate for each property class; not multiple tax rates for individual properties within a property class.

When a property undergoes a change in use, BC Assessment will reclassify it from one property class to another. Class 9 - Farm properties are typically valued at a much lower assessed value than residential, industrial and commercial properties. As well, the overall tax rate (City + OTAs) for Class 9 - Farm is much lower than the tax rates for non-residential property classes. When a property is converted from non-farm use to farm use, and if qualified for reclassification, it would result in property tax loss to the City. As a result, Council would have to increase the tax rates for all other taxpayers to compensate for the shortfall. As property tax accounts for ~60% of the City's operating revenues, it is important to protect the City's key funding source for the services and programs for Vancouver businesses and residents. This policy and the by-laws are intended to support urban farming, while not allowing locations to achieve Class 9- Farm Classification.

In 2015, there were 12 parcels of land in Vancouver that were designated as Class 9 - Farm, of which 11 are located in the Southlands neighbourhood (Agricultural Zone) and one at 811 Carrall (Sole Food Farm). To qualify for Class 9 - Farm, the following criteria must be met:

- **Annual application:** The landowner must complete an application to BC Assessment before October 31 each year.
- **Qualifying agricultural activity:** Only farm activities defined in the *Assessment Act* are eligible.

- **Sites operate as an integrated unit:** Multiple, non-contiguous parcels or part of parcels may operate together as an integrated farm operation.
- **If land is leased, the land must be greater than 0.8 ha (1.98 acres):** Leased land that is outside of the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) and less than 0.8 ha is not eligible for farm classification. (roughly 25 standard single family lots)
- **Minimum farm sales thresholds:**
 - If land is smaller than 0.8 ha, farm operation must produce at least \$10,000 in direct farm sales.
 - If land is greater than 0.8 ha, farm operation must produce at least \$2,500 in direct farm sales.

To support urban farming through legitimizing its land use while mitigating unintended financial implications to the City by properties achieving Class 9- Farm classification, staff recommend that the following parameters be set in the Zoning and Development By-law and License By-law:

Size Limits - The City restricts the size of an urban farm operation (individual parcel or multiple, non-contiguous parcels if operated as an integrated unit) to a maximum of 0.7ha, below the 0.8ha threshold. Relaxation of the size limit may be considered under limited circumstances, where there is a business case for strong social outcomes and benefit for the city.

Leased Land - The City requires that properties be leased if they are not farmed by the occupant. This requirement, in combination with the size limit, should limit applicability of the farm status for land outside of the ALR as leased farms that are smaller than 0.8ha are not eligible for farm status.

Farm Sales Limits - The City restricts sales for farms operated on a single parcel or operated by a single land owner to a maximum of \$9,999, below the \$10,000 threshold. This requirement, in combination with the size limit, will limit ability to claim farm classification because lands that are smaller than 0.8 ha and generate under \$10,000 are not be eligible for farm classification.

Compliance and Active Enforcement - The proposed regulations in the License By-law require all sites to apply and receive business licences, thereby creating a mechanism for regulatory compliance and oversight. As part of the application, a copy of valid lease agreement and farm plan including size dimensions will be required. The City will enforce individual and aggregate farming sites size limits through the application process. If a farm is in violation or non-compliance to By-laws, the City can take legal recourse including, issuance of letter with order to stop, issuance of official legal order (including financial penalties), and prosecution for injunction with penalty as deemed appropriate.

Proactive Monitoring - Staff will monitor and assess the proposed policy parameters to determine their effectiveness and recommend any necessary changes after two growing seasons.

The restrictions in farm size and sales and land lease requirements, coupled with proactive enforcement and monitoring, are intended to create effective mechanisms that minimize the financial risk to the City.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

Staff estimates that the proposed licensing requirements will generate approximately \$1,800 in new revenue for the first year:

License	Annual Fee	Est. # of Licenses	Annual Revenue
Class A	\$10	45	\$450
Class B	\$136	10	\$1,360
Total			\$1,810

Any additional licensing and enforcement work will be handled by existing staffing. Upon completion of the pilot, staff will evaluate the program and make recommendations where necessary to the program and/or staff resources.

CONCLUSION

Urban farms provide numerous health, environmental, economic, and social sustainability benefits by improving access to local food, supporting green jobs, reducing food supply chains, and minimizing environmental impacts. To meet City Council's Greenest City and Food Strategy priorities, the report recommends a) adopting the urban farming definition and conditions within the Zoning and Development By-law b) amending the License By-law to add an urban farming category c) adopting the guidelines to assist staff in considering applications for urban farms.

* * * * *

Note: A draft amending by-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

**A By-law to amend
Zoning and Development By-law 3575
Regarding urban farms**

This By-law amends the indicated provisions for the Zoning and Development By-law.

1. In Section 2, Definitions, under Agricultural Uses, insert at the end:

Urban Farm - Class A: means the use of land, with or without a principal building, for the cultivation of fruits or vegetables for sale.

Urban Farm - Class B: means the use of land or premises for the cultivation of fruits or vegetables for sale, and of which part or all of the use may take place in a greenhouse or other structure, and may include on-site sales.

2. In Section 11, Additional Regulations insert at the end:

11.29 Urban Farm - Class A

Notwithstanding anything else in this By-law, Urban Farm - Class A is subject to the following:

- 11.29.1 The planting area must not exceed 325 m² on any single parcel unless the primary use of the parcel is Park or Institutional in which case the Director of Planning may permit an increase in planting area to a maximum of 7,000 m²;
- 11.29.2 If two or more parcels are operated jointly as an Urban Farm - Class A, the combined planting area for all parcels must not exceed 7000 m²;
- 11.29.3 No on-site processing of fruits and vegetables, or manufacturing of food products is permitted;
- 11.29.4 No mechanical equipment may be used other than that designed for household use including lawnmowers, rototillers, garden hoses and pruners;
- 11.29.5 No herbicides or pesticides are permitted;
- 11.29.6 No on site sales are permitted;
- 11.29.7 No Urban Farm - Class A operated on a single parcel or a by single land owner may generate revenue exceeding \$9,999 in any calendar year, unless the primary use of the parcel is Park or Institutional;

- 11.29.8 If an Urban Farm - Class A is operated, in whole or in part, by a person other than an owner or full-time resident of the parcel, the planting area must be subject to a lease authorizing the operation of the farm.
- 11.29.9 No offensive noise, odour, light, smoke, or vibration or other objectionable effect may be produced.
- 11.29.10 No mechanical equipment may be stored outside.
- 11.29.11 Any development permit or waiver of a development permit for an Urban Farm Class A is time limited to 1 year.

11.30 Urban Farm - Class B, subject to the following:

- 11.30.1 The planting area for a single parcel or the combined planting area for all parcels operated jointly as an Urban Farm - Class B, may not exceed 7000 m², unless relaxed by the Director of Planning due to unnecessary hardship associated with the location, shape or size of the parcel or parcels;
- 11.30.2 If located within 30 m of a residential use, no mechanical equipment may be used other than that designed for household use including lawnmowers, rototillers, garden hoses and pruners);
- 11.30.3 No herbicides or pesticides are permitted;
- 11.30.4 No offensive noise, odour, light, smoke, or vibration or other objectionable effect may be produced.
- 11.30.5 If an Urban Farm - Class B is operated, in whole or in part, by a person other than an owner or full-time resident of the parcel during the farm operation, the planting area must be subject to a lease authorizing the operation of the farm.
- 11.30.6 Any development permit for an Urban Farm Class B is time limited to 1 year.

- 3. Insert into all Residential District Schedules, except for RA-1, the following as a conditional use:

“3.2.AG [Agricultural]

- Urban Farm - Class A, subject to the provisions of Section 11.29 of this By-law.”

- 4. Insert into all C, I, M, H, and CD District Schedules, except for HA-1, HA-1A and CD-1 the following as a conditional use:

“3.2 AG [Agricultural]

- Urban Farm - Class B, subject to the provisions of Section 11.30 of this bylaw."

5. In the MC-1 and MC-2 Districts Schedule, strike "and" from the end of subsection 3.3.3 (h) and the period "." from the end of subsection 3.3.3 (i) and replace the period "." with "; and" and insert at the end:

"(j) Urban Farm - Class B."

6. In the C-1 District Schedule, strike "and" from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (d) and the period "." from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (e) and replace the period "." with "; and" and insert at the end:

"(f) Urban Farm - Class B."

7. In the C-2, C-3A and FC-1 District Schedules, strike "and" from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (i) and the period "." from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (j) and replace the period "." with "; and" and insert at the end:

"(k) Urban Farm - Class B."

8. In the C-2B, C-2C and C-5, C-5A and C-6 Districts Schedules, strike "and" from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (e) and the period "." from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (f) and replace the period "." with "; and" and insert at the end:

"(g) Urban Farm - Class B."

9. In the C-2C1 and C-7 and C-8 Districts Schedules, strike "and" from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (g) and the period "." from the end of subsection 3.3.1 (h) and replace the period "." with "; and" and insert at the end:

"(i) Urban Farm - Class B."

10. In Section 5, **Exemptions From Development Permit Requirement**, insert at the end:

5.21 An Urban Farm - Class A, provided that:

- (a) The planting area of the parcel does not exceed 325 m² (0.0325 hectares); and
- (b) The Urban Farm A otherwise complies with sections 11.29.3 to 11.29.11 of the Zoning and Development By-law.

URBAN FARM GUIDELINES

*Authority – Director of Planning and Development Service and
Managing Director of Social Policy and Projects*

1 Application and Intent

These guidelines have been prepared to assist the development of safe, neighbourly and productive urban farms and create a more sustainable food system for Vancouver. Urban farming will improve the resilience of Vancouver's food systems in accordance with the vision, principles and goals defined in the Vancouver Food Strategy and the Greenest City Action Plan which calls for an increase of urban farms to improve economic, social and environmental objectives. The guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the Zoning and Development By-law and the License By-law.

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist both urban farm applicants to apply as well as City staff to evaluate applications by:

- (a) Providing details on suitability of urban farms in Vancouver; and,
- (b) Ensuring that urban farms meet City policy and regulations.

For more information on sustainable food systems and policy, see the Vancouver Food Strategy www.vancouver.ca/foodpolicy.

2 Guidelines for Urban Farm Applicant and Operator

Applicant to determine the type of urban farm based on the zoning for the proposed site:

- If the site is in a residential zone, the farm would be considered Urban Farm Class A
- If the site is in a commercial, industrial, or heritage zone, the farm would be considered Urban Farm Class B

To determine zoning: <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/map-of-zoning-districts.aspx>

Operational management

Urban farm operators must adhere to the following City policies and regulations:

The following applies to all urban farms (Class A and Class B):

- (i) Urban farm operators must obtain an urban farming business license prior to use of the site. All urban farm sites require a separate and individual business license.
- (ii) Urban farm operators are encouraged to obtain liability insurance prior to occupancy of any site.
- (iii) Urban farm operators must adhere to good management practices and maintain the site to reasonably prevent nuisances including offensive noise, odour, light, smoke, or vibration or other objectionable effect.
- (iv) No herbicides, pesticides shall be used.

- (v) Urban farms are to cultivate only fruits or vegetables.

The following regulations from section 11.29 of the Zoning and Development By-law apply to urban farms in residential districts (Class A):

- (i) The planting area must not exceed 325 m² on any single parcel unless the primary use of the parcel is Park or Institutional in which case the Director of Planning may permit an increase in planting area to a maximum of 7,000 m²;
- (ii) If operated, in whole or in part, by a person other than a full-time resident or owner of the parcel, the planting area must be subject to a lease authorizing the operation of the farm;
- (iii) If two or more parcels are operated jointly, the combined planting area must not exceed 7000 m²;
- (iv) No on-site processing of fruits and vegetables, or manufacturing of food products is permitted;
- (v) No mechanical equipment may be used other than that designed for household use including lawnmowers, rototillers, garden hoses and pruners;
- (vi) Onsite sales are not permitted;
- (vii) If operated on a single parcel or by a single land owner, the farm may not generate revenue exceeding \$9,999 in any calendar year, unless the primary use of the parcel is Park or Institutional;
- (viii) No mechanical equipment may be stored outside;
- (ix) Any development permit or waiver of a development permit for an Urban Farm Class A is time limited to 1 year.

The following regulations from section 11.30 of the Zoning and Development By-law apply to urban farms in commercial and industrial districts (Class B):

- (i) The planting area for a single parcel or the combined planting area for all parcels operated jointly, may not exceed 7000 m², unless relaxed by the Director of Planning due to unnecessary hardship associated with the location, shape or size of the parcel or parcels;
- (ii) If located within 30 m of a residence, no mechanical equipment may be used other than that designed for household use including lawnmowers, rototillers, garden hoses and pruners;
- (iii) Onsite sales are limited to what is cultivated on the site;
- (iv) If operated, in whole or in part, by a person other than an owner or full-time resident of the parcel during the farm operation, the planting area must be subject to a lease authorizing the operation of the farm.

Business License

Every site operated as either an Urban Farm Class A or Class B requires a separate business license as regulated in the License By-law.

- (i) For Class A, no activities may take place outside the hours of 8 am to 9 pm.

- (ii) For Class B, if located within 30 m of a residence, no activities may take place outside the hours of 8am to 9 pm.
- (iii) An Urban Farm Class A or Urban Farm Class B may only operate on more than one parcel if all the licenses are issued to the same person.
- (iv) If a farm is subject to a lease, the lease must be provided to the City License Inspector.
- (v) A license holder may not operate an Urban Farm – Class A that exceeds a combined planting area of 7,000m².
- (vi) A license holder may not operate an Urban Farm Class B that exceeds a combined planting area of 7,000m², unless approved under section 11.30.1 of the Zoning and Development By-law.
- (vii) The urban farm regulations – such a size limits and requirements for leases - are designed such that an urban farm is not able to attain eligibility criteria for farm status under the BC Assessment Act. However, if a license holder applies for farm class tax status under the BC Assessment Act, the applicant must inform the Chief License Inspector at the time the application is made.

Business licence fees are as follows:

Urban Farm Class A	\$10.00 per year
Urban Farm Class B	\$136.00 per year

Waste Management

- (i) Location of compost storage shall not be located near a storm drain and not be open to the elements.
- (ii) Discharge from the site to comply with Sewer and Watercourse Bylaw.

Greenhouses and other structures

- (i) Greenhouses and sheds less than 10m² are permitted and do not require a building permit, as outlined in the Vancouver Building Bylaw.
- (ii) Greenhouses or other structures that are part of an Urban Farm Class B are required to meet standards in Vancouver Building Bylaw.

Food safety

- (i) Only fruits and vegetables are to be grown on urban farms. Public health concerns are reduced by ensuring that food grown and sold by urban farms is limited to fruits and vegetables, which are lower risk foods.
- (ii) To minimize health risks, no additional food processing is allowed unless in combination with additional appropriate permits.
- (iii) It is the urban farm operator's responsibility to ensure that all products meet health and safety standards.
- (iv) City of Vancouver, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, has prepared Best Practices to assist farmers in reducing risk in the planting, growing and harvesting of fresh produce. The Best Practices Guide is available here: www.vancouver.ca/foodpolicy

Soil safety

- (i) All farming operations are encouraged to conduct soil testing on the site before any planting.
- (ii) The use of raised garden plots filled with quality growing medium that do not disturb ground cover is encouraged.
- (iii) It is the urban farming operator's responsibility to ensure that all products, including soil, meet health and safety standards.
- (iv) City of Vancouver, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, has prepared Best Practices to assist in farmers in reducing risk in the planting, growing and harvesting of fresh produce. The Best Practices Guide is available here: www.vancouver.ca/foodpolicy

3 Outline of Process for Application

a) Applicants for an Urban Farm Class A that is less than 325m² apply to Social Policy and Projects. Staff will review the application in partnership with the Business License Department, to issue a business license. More information and details about how to apply can be found here:

www.vancouver.ca/foodpolicy

b) Applicants for an Urban Farm Class A that is more than 325 m² or an Urban Farm Class B apply to the Enquiry Centre. Staff will assist the application and Development Permit process with the necessary departments. More information and details about how to apply can be found here:

www.vancouver.ca/foodpolicy