



## Policy Recommendation Pilot for Urban Farming in Vancouver





# 1. What is urban farming?

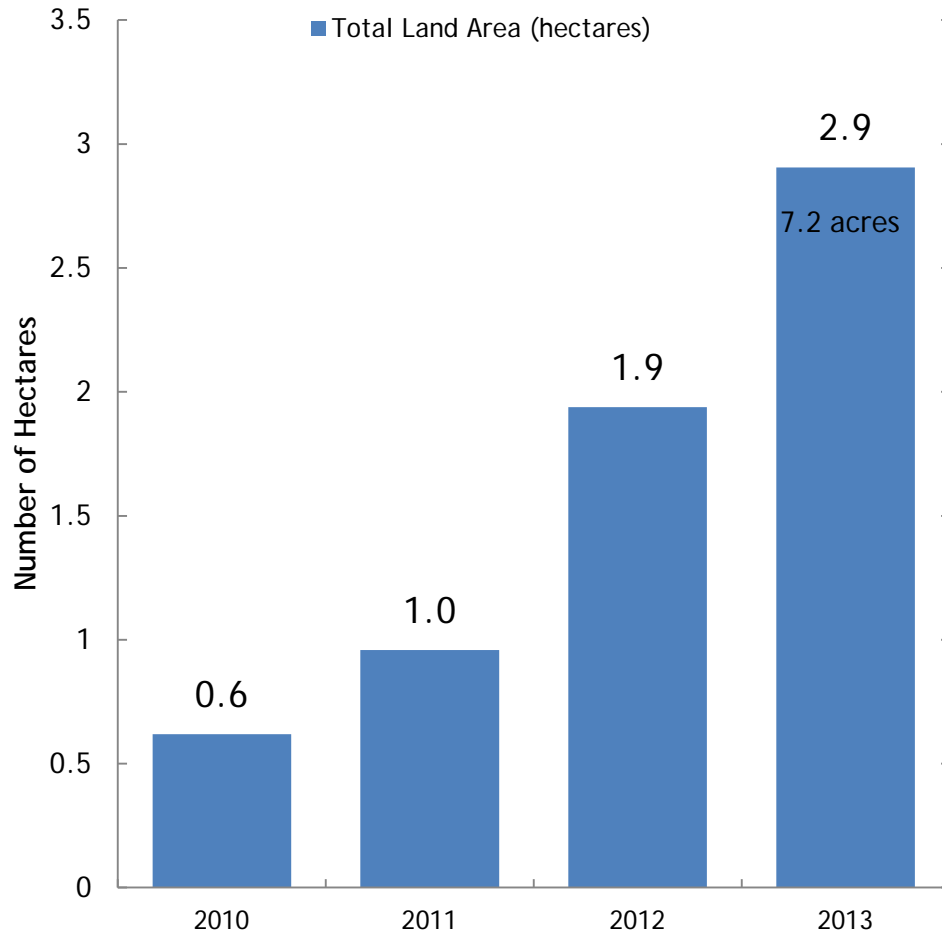


An urban farm is where fresh food is grown primarily for sale.

Urban farming may operate as a for-profit, non-profit or social enterprise model.

# Land in Production for Urban Farming

In the City of Vancouver, 2010-2013



1 hectare = 2.5 acres or 1 acre = 0.4 hectares

No by-law regulations

Increasing interest and  
number of enquiries



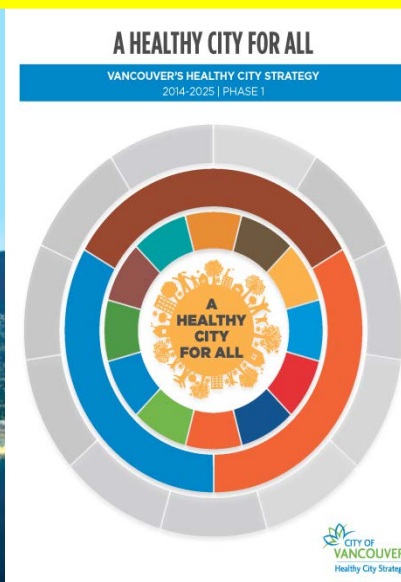
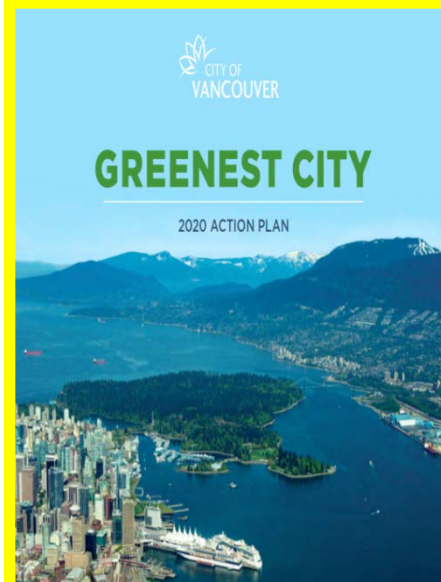
# Policy directive and connection to Council priorities

## Food Strategy

1.10 Create policy to enable commercial food production as a defined use on zoned lands with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies

1.11 Explore possibilities for urban farmers to sell produce directly from an urban farm (farm gate sales) with appropriate limitations and mitigation strategies

1.13 Create urban farming business license category



## 2. Existing situation: Vancouver's urban farming characteristics

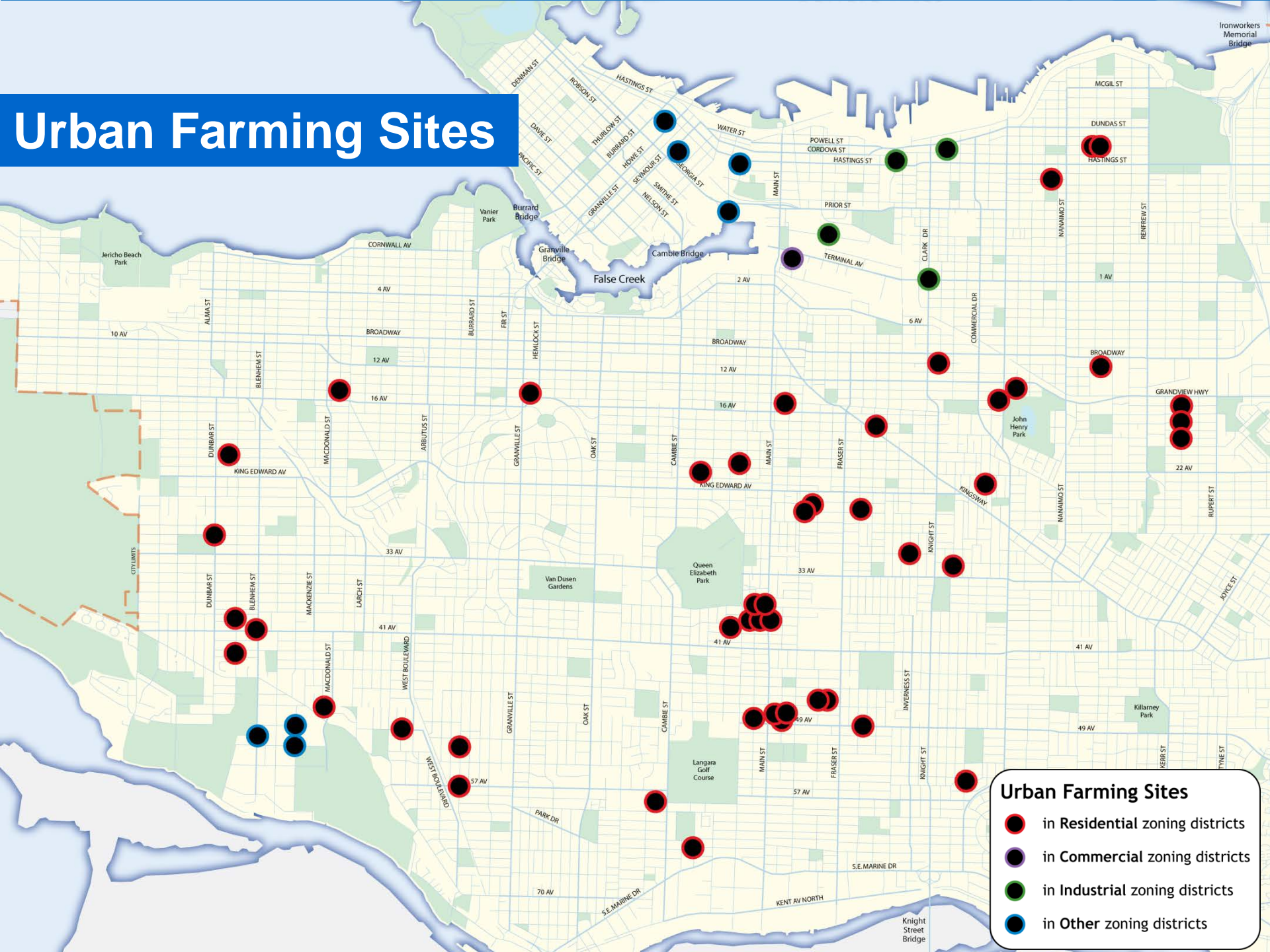


- 18 urban farming businesses
- High functioning Urban Farming Society, establishment of urban farming best practices

- Revenue generating
- Utilize organic/sustainable practices
- Generally small sites with intensive growing
- Often takes place on multiple sites – residential or vacant land
- Often collaborative in nature – between individuals, farms and organizations
- Significant education and community component



# Urban Farming Sites



**Urban Farming Sites**

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

# Urban Farm Sizes

## Size and number of sites

Square Meter Range	Number of Sites
0 - 100 m <sup>2</sup>	28
100 - 250 m <sup>2</sup>	12
250 - 500 m <sup>2</sup>	2
500 - 1400 m <sup>2</sup>	2
1400 - 2300 m <sup>2</sup>	2
2300 - 4600 m <sup>2</sup>	3
4600 - 9300 m <sup>2</sup>	1

100m<sup>2</sup> = 1076 sq ft



# 3. Benefits

➤ Employment and income generation

➤ Training opportunities

➤ Using under-utilized land and beautification

➤ Access to healthy food and nutrition

➤ Creating neighbourhood connections

➤ Educational opportunities (particularly with youth)

➤ Inspiration to grow and prepare food



# Urban farming examples in American cities

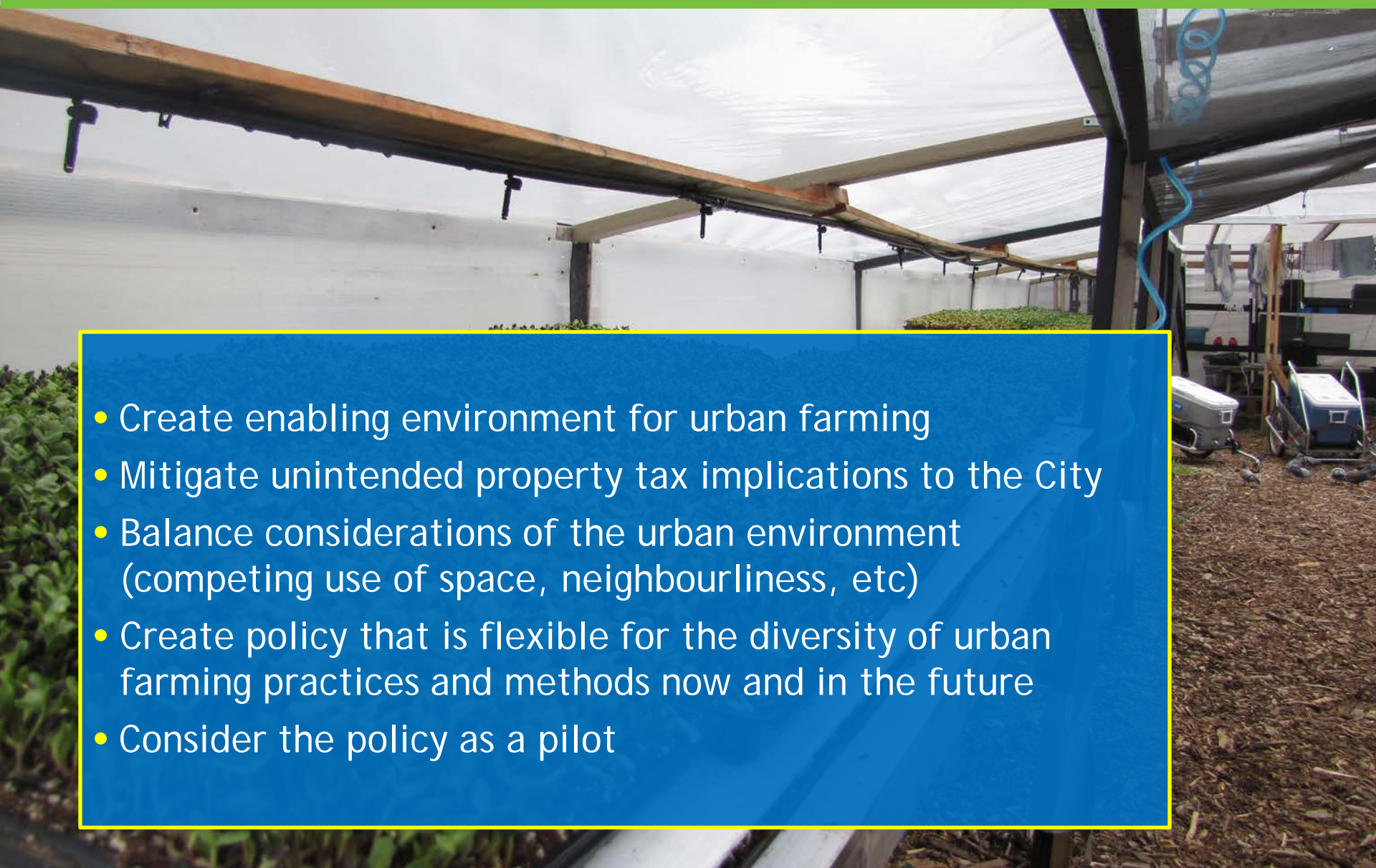
City	Details	Additional
Seattle	Set within broader policy of urban agriculture, including horticulture, community gardens, urban farms	Including chickens, ducks, goats, and aquaculture
San Francisco	Neighbourhood agriculture and large-scale agriculture	
Portland	Small scale and large-scale agriculture gardens or orchards where food is grown for sale	Including chickens and ducks
Philadelphia	Growing food for sale on vacant and underutilized land	
Boston	Distinction between ground level, roof level, roof-level greenhouse	Aquaculture keeping of animals, shipping container
New York	For rooftop industrial zones	Greenhouse

# Urban farming examples in BC cities

British Columbia City	By-law	Details
Victoria	Home occupation regulation	Able to grow in residential zones with home occupation regulations
Port Alberni	Zoning and Development	Able to grow and sell in all zones, not exceeding 600m <sup>2</sup>
Lantzville	Zoning and Development	Able to grow and sell in all zones, no size limit
Nanaimo	Zoning and Development	Able to grow and sell in all zones, not exceeding 600m <sup>2</sup>



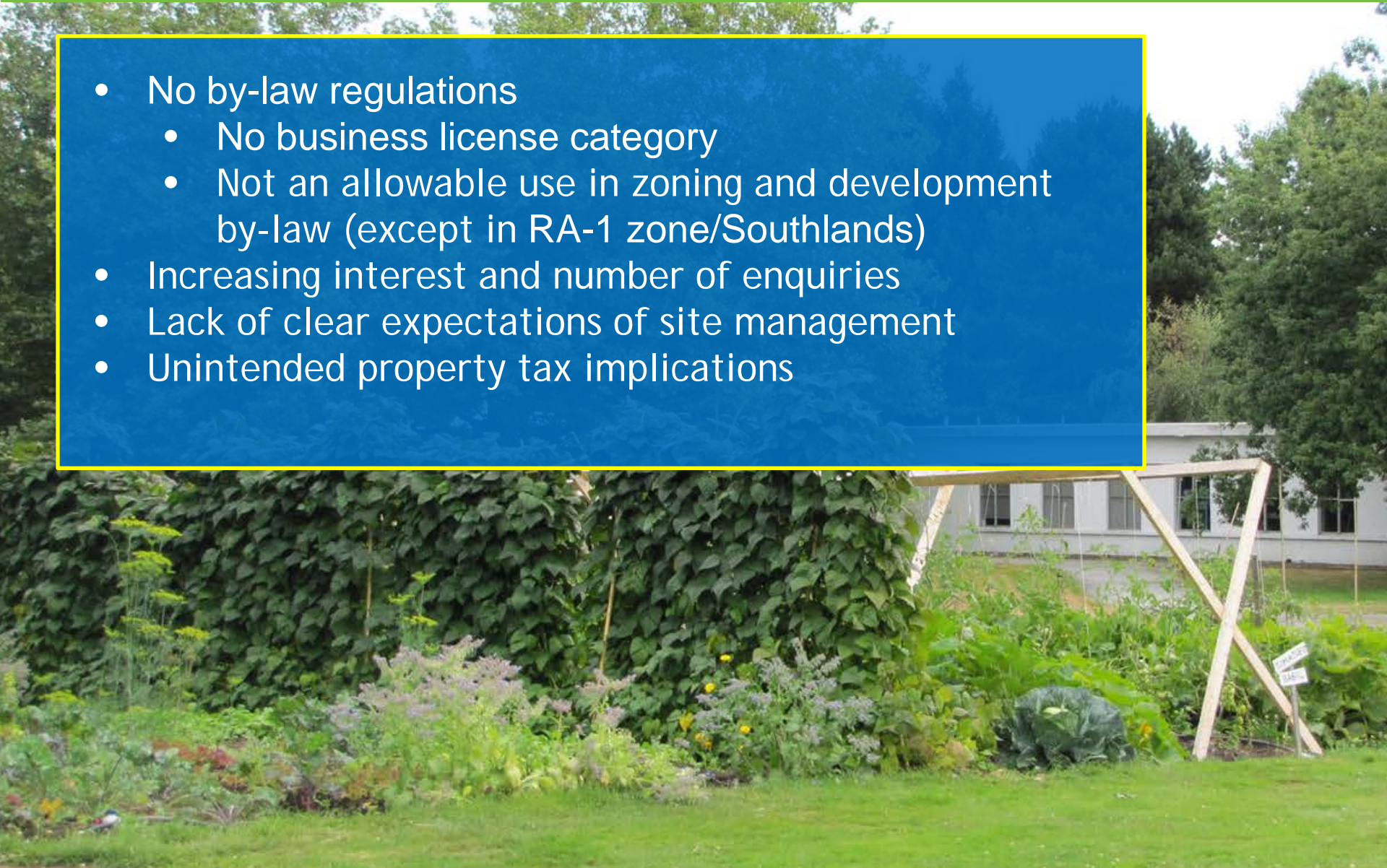
## 4. Principles

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- A photograph of an urban greenhouse. The structure is made of dark metal frames and white plastic covering. Rows of green plants are visible in the foreground and middle ground. Irrigation systems with black pipes and nozzles are installed along the length of the greenhouse. In the background, there are more plants and some equipment, including a blue cooler on a cart. The ground is covered with brown mulch.
- Create enabling environment for urban farming
  - Mitigate unintended property tax implications to the City
  - Balance considerations of the urban environment (competing use of space, neighbourliness, etc)
  - Create policy that is flexible for the diversity of urban farming practices and methods now and in the future
  - Consider the policy as a pilot



# 5. Challenges

- No by-law regulations
  - No business license category
  - Not an allowable use in zoning and development by-law (except in RA-1 zone/Southlands)
- Increasing interest and number of enquiries
- Lack of clear expectations of site management
- Unintended property tax implications





# 5. Property Tax Considerations: Eligibility for Farm Classification

BC Assessment classifies lands "Farm" if they meet the criteria:

- Annual application
- Qualifying agricultural activity
- Sites operate as an integrated unit (can be non-contiguous)
- If land is leased, must be greater than 0.8ha
- Minimum farm sales threshold
  - If smaller than 0.8 ha, have \$10,000 in sales
  - If greater than 0.8 ha, have \$2,500 in sales



# 6. Policy Recommendations

Premise: Legitimize urban farming land use while mitigating unintended financial implications to the City

## Urban Farm Class A:

- Definition: cultivation of fruits and vegetables for sale
- Allow in Residential zones
- Limit planting area to 325m<sup>2</sup>
- Combined planting area not to exceed 7000m<sup>2</sup> (unless additional approval)

## Urban Farm Class B:

- Definition: cultivation of fruits and vegetables for sale with greenhouse or other structure
- Allow only in Commercial and Industrial zones
- Combined planting area cannot exceed 7000m<sup>2</sup> (unless additional approval)



# 6. Policy Recommendations

- **Limit farm size:** must not exceed 0.7ha (below 0.8ha); unless with additional approval
- **Limit farm sales:** must not exceed \$9,999 if operated on a single site or by a single land owner in Class A
- **Require lease:** if not farmed by owner or principal resident
- **Require business license:** all sites
- **Require development permit:** Class A would be exempt
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** In partnership with Food Policy Council and Urban Farming Society, report back and revise after two growing seasons



# Intended Outcomes

- Farms to contribute to environmental, economic and social sustainability objectives
- Farms will be able to obtain business loans, secure insurance, lease property, and invest in their operations

Thank you!