



## **Vancouver Food Policy Council's Position of Support for Proposed Policy Changes for Urban Farming**

Submitted to Vancouver City Council by Dr. Tara Moreau and Caitlin Dorward  
Co-Chairs, Vancouver Food Policy Council | March 7, 2016

This document outlines the position of support by the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) with regard to recommended amendments to the Zoning and Development Bylaw and Business License Bylaw ([outlined in RTS 11150](#)) and summarizes concerns that have been raised by the council as a whole and in discussion with the Urban Farming Stakeholders.

### **Motion of Support for Proposed Two-Year Urban Farming Policy Pilot: Passed by Vancouver Food Policy Council by e-Vote on March 7th, 2016**

*WHEREAS urban farming has the potential to provide a number of health, social, economic, and ecological benefits to Vancouver residents and contributes directly to the actions and goals of the Vancouver Food Strategy, the Healthy City Strategy and the Greenest City Action Plan; and;*

*WHEREAS the lack of policy legitimizing urban farming in Vancouver has hampered the growth of this sector and existing urban farms' ability to sell produce, secure business loans and obtain insurance for business operations;*

*WHEREAS concerns have been raised by urban farming stakeholders that the recommended amendments to the Zoning and Development Bylaw and Business License Bylaw (outlined in Policy Report RTS 11150) do not adequately address some of the issues that urban farmers are facing (see Appendix A);*

*BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council supports a two-year piloting of the recommended amendments to the Zoning and Development Bylaw and Business License Bylaw (outlined in RTS 11150), contingent on:*

- *The success of the piloted changes being evaluated based on the degree to which they enable both for-profit and non-profit urban farms to grow and prosper; and,*
- *A commitment from City staff across departments, and elected officials, to consult in a timely and transparent manner with urban farmers and the VFPC throughout the pilot's evaluation, and make further amendments to the Zoning and Development Bylaw and Business License Bylaw based on the issues raised.*

**Appendix A: Summary of Vancouver Food Policy Council and urban farming stakeholders concerns regarding recommended amendments to the Zoning and Development Bylaw and Business License Bylaw outlined in RTS 11150.**

Areas of Concern	Specific Concern
Farm structures and development permits	<p><b>No structures allowed on Class A</b> may limit the potential for adequate onsite storage and season extension, both of which are basic and essential features of urban farms.</p>
	<p><b>For Class B Farms where structures are permitted, complying with the development permit application</b> may be financially prohibitive for new entrants.</p>
Property tax and size restrictions	<p><b>Inability to achieve farm class status with BC Assessment</b> may reduce the incentive for landowners to make their properties available for urban farming.</p>
	<p><b>Size restrictions for Class A and B farms</b> may limit the ability of urban farm businesses to scale up to levels at which farming becomes financially viable.</p>
Definitions	<p><b>The definition of herbicides and pesticides is needed in addition to language encouraging integrated pest management.</b></p>
	<p><b>A definition of “good management practices” is needed.</b></p>
	<p><b>A definition of social enterprise</b>, for-profit and non-profit business models may clarify for new entrants whether or not they may be eligible for a relaxation of the size restrictions based on their potential for social impact.</p>
	<p><b>Definition of urban farming</b> does not include livestock, aquaculture, flowers, grains, bees, or ancillary products such as seedlings, seeds, or compost. These products are important contributors to urban farm revenue and/or food security in other Cities and on rural farms.</p>
Evaluation of the two-Year Pilot	<p><b>Monitoring and evaluation of the two-year pilot</b> is not adequately outlined in the report. How will the success of the pilot be evaluated and who will be consulted?</p>
Soil Safety	<p><b>The cost of testing soils and interpreting the results is currently cost prohibitive to many urban farmers.</b> Funding to support this is important from both a human and environmental health perspective.</p>