

UFF TABLE 11 (Topic 3)

Government Support - Policy, zoning, bylaws and local government

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GROUP COMPOSITION:

Round 1 Group make-up: inner city farms, fresh roots urban farm, City of Richmond parks, yummy yards, UBC landscape planning, farmers market society, COV – food policy team, city planners, commercial landscape

Round 2 Group make-up: Real estate foundation, urban farmers, student food policy intern, aspiring CSA combined with catering, spec.

Round 3 Group make-up: urban farmer, researcher, marketing, food strategy policy for COV, food collaborative

IDEA GENERATION - Barriers transformed into opportunities.

1. What are the issues and opportunities associated with Urban Farming in Vancouver? How does it relate to our theme? Think big, without restrictions.

Barriers:

- how do you quantify the benefits (carbon footprint) of UF
- are food hubs exclusive? Issue of monopolization.
- Need land, and land that is farmable. Issue of sun, soil, water access/quality.
- lots of small plots are less efficient, need access to large spaces.
- taking away parkland for UF is not ideal, instead to add to it! But how do we acquire this new land? (Incentives)
- Public land for private gains is contentious. Solution: demonstrate value of UF within community.
- Competing interests – naturalists vs. farmers.
- Rules on UF are unclear or don't fit. Need rules that allow farming, but don't restrict it.

Opportunities + Rationales:

- License that potential farmers can apply for so that they have a business that allows them to sell food – right now it's a landscape license. Rationale: provide a legal channel to sell food.
- Incentives for land owners to make their land available for agriculture. Zoning changes – eg. Tax incentives. Rationale: secure access to land. Create partnerships, where landowners seek farmers. Create a database.

- Have stratas measure their footprint so that they can better understand their outputs and have goals to mitigate their footprint. Establish what the baselines are so you can establish a plan to reduce them. Eg. A GHG formula that reduces footprint calculation when UF is used.

- Climate change program/tax credits can act as an incentive. Rationale: make land more available and accessible.

- Climate neutrality funds may be an opportunity for funding – if Urban Farming can be quantified funds can be directed to UF rather than the government offset program.

- Decrease zoning requirement barriers (eg. Businesses in residential zones. Selling in residential zones, like “farmgate” stalls at residences.) Rationale: open up other channels for farmers – more efficient for farmer. Increase access in community, make farm food accessible, healthier communities.

- Allow UF in every zone. Rationale: legitimize UF activities. Allow it. Identify opportunities within the city.

- Requirements for UF on any new developments.

- Incentives for property owners – less landscaping costs.

- Make UF a community amenity. Rationale: raises profile of UF, shows value, make it more visible.

- Identify land that is not used effectively and allocate it to UF.

- Make land available – for businesses **and** enterprises. Community gardens are great for education, but not for UF/profits.

- Recognize UF as a community asset. Rationale: shows value of UF.

- Provide legal spaces to sell. Promote different types of business models, non-traditional models. Eg. Is it legal to sell out of a parking space? Provide places to sell that are not always traditional. Like an ice cream truck for veg.

- UF is positioned to market directly to consumers. Opportunity to create direct marketing channels.

- Identify parks that appropriate for UF, or underused and convert or co-exist UF and parks. Public opinion on this is challenging. UF as a complement to these public spaces. Rationale: bring UF to the foreground, increase understanding

and acceptance.

- Incorporate food into existing gardens. Rationale: bring UF to the foreground, increase understanding and acceptance.

- VCH inspects food safety, but they are not regulating fresh produce. Educate UF on best practices and establish health and safety. Make it safe. Empower farmers to demonstrate food safety.

Best Practices:

- San Fran is a good model for allowing UF.
- some municipalities have licenses in place (home based business) – eg. Victoria
- Saanich has regulations on UF incorporated into new buildings.
- Sandown park (Saanich) – is giving 83 acres for UF.
- Tarra Moreau is doing a thesis on quantifying UF.
- COV is working on plans for fresh fruit and veg food carts.
- Richmond has acreages where farm, interpretation, and natural areas exist.

REFINEMENT AND COLLABORATION

What are the issues and opportunities associated with Urban Farming?

ADDITIONS:

Barriers:

- Food regulations re. preserved food and commercial preparations – meeting rules and licensing is a barrier – cost is prohibitive. Licensing is rigid.

Opportunities + Rationales:

- Farm practices protection act (provincially) needs to be include UF. Rationale: makes UF more accessible, removes some barriers.
- Licenses that allow suppliers to sell/grow/prepare food. Rationale: creates credibility and accountability to land owners, buyers and growers. Allows retailers who want local food to more easily access local food for retailers, access more members on the supply chain.
- Make it easier for value-added, preserved/processed food to be sold. Make the licensing easier and less cost prohibitive. Rationale: support small businesses, legitimizes it.
- Opportunity for organizations to provide licensing/testing services on behalf of government. Rationale: create more opportunities for land.

- Incubator kitchens that are accessible, and allow for multiple recipes/products.
Rationale: creates safe, in-demand food.

- Secure funding for database that informs people about what empty lots are available and other public spaces. Shows people how to access the land. Create a matching program to align like-minded people, and that helps facilitate the process so that each party understands the needs of the other. Rationale: create more opportunities for land.

- Provide low-cost or free soil testing. Currently prohibitively expensive.
Rationale: opens up new land.

- Create teaching collective (eg. Aquaponics, composting, soil remediation) that creates new educators.

- Developments are concerned with parking, but it should be garden plots. Each new building needs to meet certain food requirements based on density. Think about entire food shed, not just the neighbourhood.

- Cooperation between municipalities with respect to food shed. Create trade networks for resources eg. Kale grows in the city, pigs grow in the country.

- Speed up the process of land permits.

- Learn from mistakes of other areas. Zoning should not make residential and farming taxes equal. Rationale: encourage farms, not discourage.

- Make UF allowable in all other zones, apply some exceptions to make farming tools/needs/storage to facilitate UF. Make it an acceptable use. Prioritize food culture over car culture.

- Demonstrate value and build support for UF. Legitimize UF. Educate communities. Rationale: creates more open communication between community members. Reducing strain on transportation system, retail systems.

Best Practices:

- Anne Arbour Michigan has a good matching service.

- Backyard matching service “Westside food collaborative”

- Cityfarmer has a map of land available (but it seems to be dominated by land seekers).

- City can dictate rules on developments – making them include services, UF.

- LEED is starting to incorporate food in building certifications.

EDITING + FINALIZATION

3. Idea clarification

See above.

PRIORITIZATION

4. What are the top-three priorities from each table? What is the top idea?

1. Make UF legitimate. Create a framework for farmers to legally, safely and easily grow, sell and market their food.
 - Create licenses (or license exemptions) for UF.
 - Re-evaluate bylaws that are prohibitive.
 - Have farm practices production act include UF.
 - Clarify retail, food processing and food safety rules to allow UF food to travel all along the food chain.
 - Provide places to sell food – include home-sales, vendors, stalls, vegetable trucks (like ice cream trucks).

2. Make land accessible and available.
 - requirements for developers to allocate land for UF/food security, based on density.
 - incentives for UF land use.
 - include UF as a component in carbon offset or LEED certification.
 - make all zones available for UF.
 - make UF lands a community amenity.
 - create a matching service for land and farmers, that creates good matches based on fit and creates realistic expectations.
 - municipalities should work together - support ALR and UF land in all municipalities.
 - identify new and underused land that could become UF.
 - create clear rules around tenant rights and responsibilities for growing on rental properties.

3. Educate communities re. UF.
 - educate communities on value of UF – demonstrate and provide access to it. Demonstrate how it provides economic and social benefits.

IDEAS PRESENTED:

1. License UF to produce and sell.
2. Provide incentives (tax, regulation, etc.) to make land available to UF.

3. Requirements for food-production related community-amenity contributions on all new developments.