

**The Importance of Local Food**

By almost any measure, our current food system is not sustainable. Human development and urban sprawl are causing the local and global agricultural land base to shrink. We use large amounts of energy, chemicals, synthetic fertilizers and water, and we rely on imports and food produced far from the point of consumption. For these reasons, locally grown food is an important element of a community working to be sustainable.

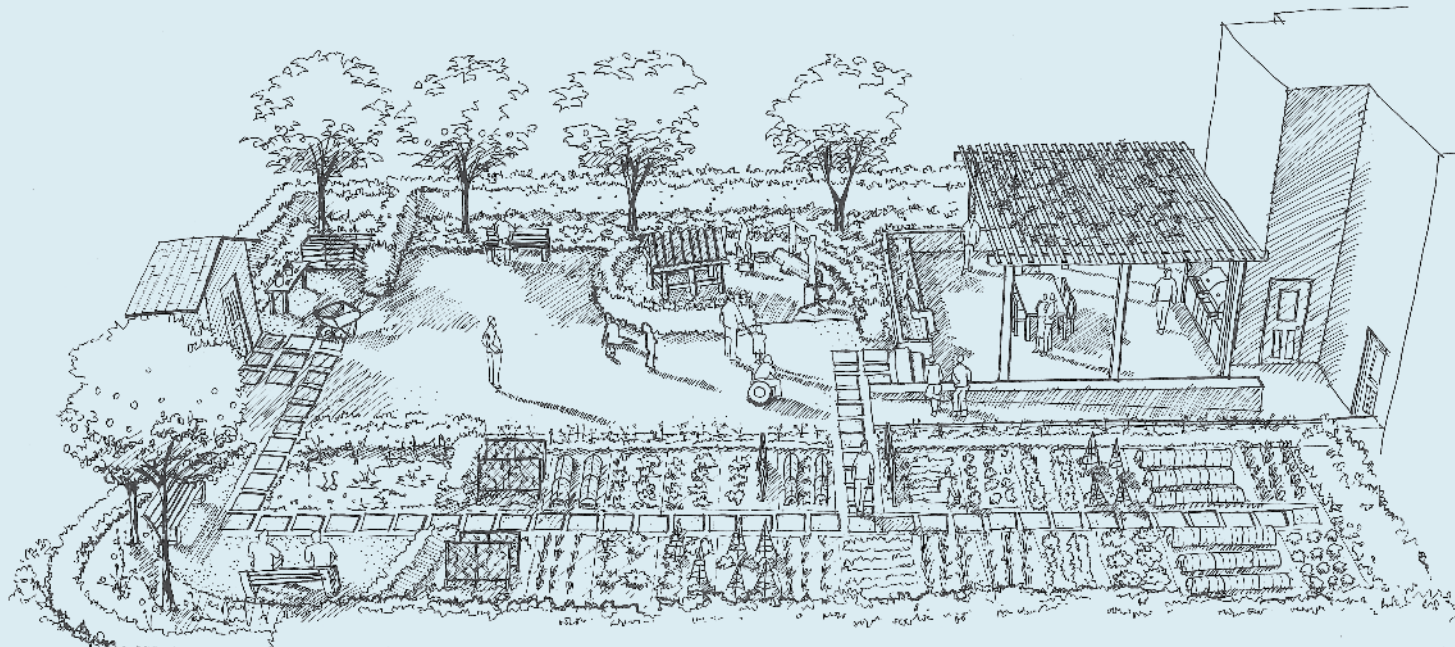
As the SEFC Urban Agriculture Study states, “Most of us take our food for granted – so much so that we often forget the role it plays in our social

relationships, community building and the role that food and agriculture have in shaping our economy and environment.” Similar to energy, water and waste in the context of sustainable development, food can be seen as a “flow” from the environment through the community back to the environment in the form of wastes. How we address this flow affects the relative sustainability of our community. Community gardens and urban agriculture are beneficial for educational, social, economic and environmental reasons.

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**Definition of Urban Agriculture from SEFC Urban Agriculture Study:**

The term urban agriculture, as it is commonly used, refers to any agricultural production that takes place within the urban and peri-urban region. This could include the growing of food (vegetables, grains, mushrooms, even meat and dairy products), medicinal plants, herbs and ornamental plants. It includes a diverse array of techniques and approaches ranging from backyard growing to large-scale urban market gardening, hydroponic greenhouses and aquaculture. It is not just community gardening, although this is an important component in many cities. Food is of paramount importance because of its primary contribution to survival, health, culture and impact on the environment.



An artist's sketch illustrates the possibilities for rooftop urban agriculture and the rich potential for community connection.

Vancouver is experiencing a growing wave of interest in urban agriculture. People are becoming more aware of the environmental, and social benefits of buying local food; going to the local farmers' markets

has become an enjoyable way to meet your neighbours and pass a Saturday afternoon. As well, people recognize they are contributing to their local economy by buying local food.

**Community Demonstration Garden**

Located west of Parcel 4, the community demonstration garden will be designed and constructed after the Olympics. “The idea isn't to have little plots for people to garden, but rather a space that is programmed with the school, community centre and neighbourhood for all to use and to learn about urban agriculture,” says Robin Petri from the City of Vancouver. Specific designs and programming have not yet been determined.

Because of the site's historic industrial use, the City has begun investigating how to handle nearby contaminated soils. The garden will be separated by a membrane from the contaminated industrial soil that underlies Hinge Park.



Urban community gardens are an important element of improving local food supply. Davie Village Community Garden (shown) is an example of what will be possible on rooftops and demonstration gardens at the Olympic Village.