

Dig it! A Practical Toolkit

How local governments can support community gardens



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Chapter 7: Tools and Templates to develop and support Community Gardens

This chapter provides practical tools for local governments and the community groups they work with. There are two checklists:

- The first outlines six steps for getting started on a community garden or community garden program.
- The second outlines 10 critical steps to cover when developing a specific community garden, emphasizing the role that local governments can play in the process.

Other tools in this chapter include sample communication tools to help build understanding and support for gardens, and regulatory tools, which deal with issues of land use tenure, gardeners' insurance, and agreements between local governments and gardening groups. The final part of the chapter offers examples of model policies and by-laws, taken largely from large and small BC communities. These are provided as potential templates for developing local policy support for community gardens.

CHECKLIST #1: GETTING STARTED

1. Determine community interest level and current activities

- How much interest do residents have in community gardens?
- Who is already working on community gardens?
- What is the history and current status of community gardens in your jurisdiction?

2. Assess local government interest

- What is the level of understanding of community gardens among Council and staff?
- Where is their interest and what is their focus -- revitalization, food security, beautification, climate change?
- What type of role does local government want to play? For example, do they want to actively help develop community gardens or simply remove barriers to their creation?
- What current and pressing local needs could be supported by a community garden program?
- What concerns do local governments have with regard to community gardens?

3. Scan/review local government policy and practice

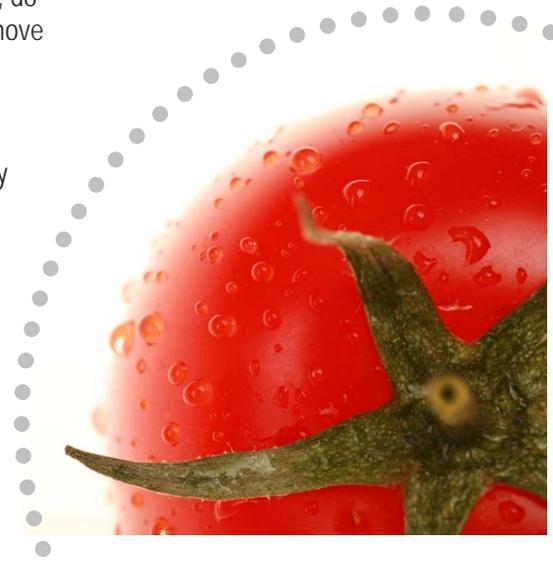
- What in-house expertise and resources are available?

Case Study: City Resolution to support CG in Portland. Portland Parks & Recreation's Community Gardens Program was initiated in 1975 and currently supports several types of community gardening programs. In 2004 the City passed Resolution #36272 which committed the City to continuing to support community gardens, and to creating additional gardens by on City-owned lands.

This Resolution directed the City to conduct an inventory of their properties, to determine suitable sites for gardens or for future agricultural use.

To undertake this work, *the Diggable Cities project* was launched. Graduate students from Portland State University collaborated with the City to inventory public lands.

The findings and inventory were reported back to the City in June 2005. As a follow up, the Portland Food Policy Council formed an Urban Agriculture Subcommittee to work with the City to explore the impediments to community gardens and other urban agricultural uses on city-owned properties and to develop a management plan for use of these lands. For more information on the inventory and project see www.diggablecity.org



- What has the local government already done to support community gardens? (Check, for example, with the Parks Department).
- Note existing strategies and initiatives that are naturally aligned with community gardens (affordable housing, food security, transportation and greenways, economic development).

4. Build understanding and a case

- Find champions/resource people -- councillors, staff, and individuals inside and outside government.
- Based on steps 1 and 2, work with champions to develop a case for local community gardens (see Chapter 4 on *Benefits* and *Communication tools* below).
- Bring ideas forward to Council.

5. Build support, momentum and a vehicle

- Continue to work alongside your champion(s).
- See if staff are interested in establishing a community gardens subcommittee. This committee could be in one department or, preferably, cut across a number of departments.
- Engage residents, participants and other stakeholders in determining priorities for creating community gardens or community garden programs.

6. Next steps

- Conduct a survey to better understand the current situation. How many gardens are there -- waiting lists, areas with active interest in establishing gardens, etc?
- Survey and map potential sites, vacant lands, unique places, schools and community centres.
- Work with the community to provide recommendations to local government for community garden policies and implementation plans.
- Build an array of partnerships and resources to move the process forward.
- See Chapter 7, Checklist #2: "Digging In" -- *10 Steps to Starting a Community Garden*

CHECKLIST #2 - DIGGING IN: 10 STEPS TO STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN

This fact sheet provides information on how to start a community garden. It is adapted from the American Community Garden Association's *Starting a Community Garden Guide* (<http://www.communitygarden.org>), and emphasizes the roles that local governments can play in the process.^{vii} It is not meant to be a complete list and

^{vii} The Community Gardening Network of Ottawa has also produced a 47-page guide for community members getting started on a community garden. http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/en/community_garden_network.asp



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- 60 http://www.regionaldistrict.com/docs/planning/ellison%20ocp/el_ocp_scha.pdf
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- 62 <http://www.cityofportmoody.com/NR/rdonlyres/83B759FF-51FA-47A2-BCD6-E261A1650D3C/77199/Newandrevisedpolicieswebsiteversion1.pdf>
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- 64 http://www.mapleridge.ca/assets/Default/Parks-and-Leisure-Services/pdfs/parks_master.pdf?zoom_highlight=%22community+garden%22#search=%22community%20garden%22
- 65 http://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/viability_strategy6314.pdf
- 66 http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Land%20Use%20and%20Transportation%20Committee/Land_Use_Transportation-October_10_2008-Agenda-Item5-2.pdf
- 67 <http://city.nelson.bc.ca/pdf/OCP/schedaocpbylaw3114.pdf>
- 68 http://www.city.langley.bc.ca/_pdf/downtown_master_plan.pdf
- 69 Available through <http://northcowichan.fileprosite.com/contentengine/launch.asp?ID=4>
- 70 <http://www.sooke.ca/assets/Local-Government/Departments/Planning/PDFs/Final%20Sooke%20Sustainable%20Development%20Strategy.pdf>
- 71 http://cfcdmall.com/cms/fileadmin/files/VisionsToAction/PDFs/VisionstoAction_SSP_Final1.1_050808.pdf
- 72 <http://www.saanich.ca/municipal/clerks/bylaws/pdfs/gardens.pdf>
- 73 <http://kelowna.cioc.ca/details.asp?RSN=556>
- 74 See http://www.toronto.ca/parks/programs/gardening_application.htm and http://www.toronto.ca/parks/programs/gardening_implementation.htm
- 75 For more advice on liability insurance, see the American Community Gardening Association's website at <http://communitygarden.org/docs/learn/articles/InsuranceforCommunityGardens.pdf>
- 76 Report to Health, Recreation and Social Services Committee, September 18, 2003, submitted by Jocelyn St. Jean, General Manager, People Services, City of Ottawa. <http://www.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/hrssc/2003/09-18/ACS2003-PEO-IDP-0020%20Community%20Gardening%20in%20the%20City%20of%20Ottawa.htm>
- 77 http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_newsroom/press_releases/press_releases.php?id=19761
- 78 This list is taken from BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2008. BC Community Gardens Project: Inventory Report.