

Table Matters: A Community Reference Group
on Food Security and Urban Agriculture
North Vancouver, BC

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District of North Vancouver
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Dear Susan,

Input on Draft Official Community Plan, Draft #1 November 19, 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the District of North Vancouver to help create the Official Community Plan. The citizens and stakeholders who have signed this letter are part of a group that has formed as a result of an event held November 5, 2010 called *Table Matters: A Community Discussion about Food Security and Urban Agriculture*. Since then we have begun to work together on strategic planning and building a working group of individuals and organizations on the North Shore interested in food security, urban agriculture and sustainable food systems. At the moment, we call ourselves the Table Matters Community Reference Group. We hope that our participation in the planning process will be valuable.

The Table Matters Community Reference Group supports and encourages planning policy directions that promote and facilitate the health of residents and the environment of the District of North Vancouver, both now and 30 years ahead.

This letter outlines The Table Matters Community Reference Group's input on Draft #1 of the OCP. Our main request is for the inclusion of food security/sustainable food systems in the vision section of the document and for more specificity around related policies in each topic area.

In MetroVancouver, currently 1 out of 8 jobs are related to food. It is a main driver of our economy. Many residents of the District are very interested in increasing our access to local food and growing food. Council saw this on December 6 when they heard about the success of the Lillooet community garden and the overwhelming interest in community gardens found in a survey of 450 residents.

In Attachment 1, we have outlined some detailed comments about various policy areas for your review and consideration and hope that they will be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

The Table Matters Community Reference Group

Members:

Andrea Winterbottom - Congregate Meals Program Coordinator, Parkgate Community Health Centre
Andrew Vander Helm - Environmental Protection Officer, District of West Vancouver & DNV resident
Ann Pentland
Charlene Wood
Cynthia Pagé, Project Coordinator, Can You Dig It initiative - posAbilities
Emily Jubenvill - Edible Garden Project
Erin Williams - North Shore Fruit Tree Project
Gord Trousdell - Teacher, West Vancouver Secondary School

Grahame Dixon
Heather Johnstone - Edible Garden Project
Helen Yeung
Judith Brook
Julie Isaac
Karen Morton - President, Ecouobia Network
Karen Wickerson, Project Manager for the North Shore Youth Safe House
Kevin Connery - Director, EcoUrbia Network
Krista Tulloch - BC Field Trip Fair
Lianne Shyry - Two Bees Apiary
Lilian Trousdel
Margaret Broughton - Community Nutritionist, Vancouver Coastal Health
Maria Morisseau - Coordinator, First Years Count, Community Action Program for Children
Marj Carroll
Paulette Lacroix, PC Lacroix Consulting Inc.
Ross Moster - Convenor, Village Vancouver Transition Town Initiative
Ruth Sherwood
Sharron O'Brien RD - Nutritional Counselling, Vancouver Coastal Health
Susan Brennan - Chair, DNV Community Services Advisory Committee
Trevor Shyry - Two Bees Apiary
Wendy Muir - Steering Committee, Edible Garden Project

**Attachment 1:
Specific Comments about Policies in the Draft OCP (Nov. 2010 draft) from
The Table Matters Community Reference Group**

2.2 Village Centres

The District's objective for Village Centres is to build on their own unique characteristics to create distinct urban village environments.

Establish Development Permit Areas and Design Guidelines regulating the form and character of development to promote design excellence and reflect the unique qualities of each Village Centre

Policy recommendations:

- Promote roof-top gardens as a design option within the guidelines.
- Develop incentives which would encourage developers to provide space for urban agriculture in landscaped areas, on rooftop gardens and on "green walls" where appropriate,
- Ensure that neighbourhoods throughout the District include zones which would permit independent grocers, corner stores, farmers markets, pocket markets (mini farmers market) and other businesses that can provide healthier food options.
- Ensure that new multifamily housing developments provide composting

2.3 Neighbourhoods

The District's objective for Neighbourhoods is to provide safe, beautiful and inclusive environments for residents of all ages.

Integrate a network of parks and open spaces throughout neighbourhoods

Policy recommendations:

- Encourage developers to integrate community gardens as an amenity.
- Redefine a "park" or "open space" to include food growing areas.
- Consider the inclusion of edible landscaping at District facilities and on District lands where appropriate.

CHAPTER 3. EMPLOYMENT LANDS

The District's objective for employment lands is to encourage wealth generating investment resulting in net new employment and increased tax revenue which benefits the whole community.

3.3 Enabling a Diverse Range Economic Uses within Employment Lands

The District's objective is to provide flexibility for businesses to grow and adapt, while avoiding land use conflicts.

Policy recommendations:

- Use land, where feasible, for small scale in vessel composting operations, using the Seattle model. (Suggest that these be operated by a social enterprise)
- Use land, where feasible, for intensive agricultural production, not just industrial uses. Ensure opportunities for food related small businesses.

CHAPTER 4. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The District's objective is to provide a variety of year-round recreational experiences, meet the needs of all users, and protect the ecological integrity of our natural systems.

1. Protect District parkland and manage it according to the type of parkland and measures within the District's Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan

Provide for each neighbourhood to have access to passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities within an appropriate distance.

Policy recommendations:

- Support District residents interested in developing community gardens in their neighbourhoods as an outdoor recreational opportunity.

CHAPTER 6. SOCIAL WELL BEING

The District's objective is to foster a safe, socially inclusive and supportive community that enhances the health and well being of its residents.

EXISTING POLICIES RELATED TO FOOD/URBAN AGRICULTURE

10. Encourage sustainable, local food systems through initiatives such as the promotion of local foods and food production on private property, and the facilitation of community gardens, farmers markets, urban agriculture pilot projects in appropriate locations

11. Collaborate with Vancouver Coastal Health and other community partners in their efforts to provide increased access to safe, nutritious food

Policy recommendations:

- Develop a 'food charter' that outlines the District's vision and commitment to developing a food system which benefits the community and environment.
- Implement policies to allow backyard beekeeping and backyard chickens.
- Encourage food recovery to divert edible and acceptable food from the waste system
- Encourage social enterprise to convert recovered food into value-added food products

CHAPTER 8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The District's objective for economic development is to become an increasingly successful, economically viable and dynamic community where existing and potential employers and employees want to be.

9.6 Community Stewardship

The District's objective is to create a stewardship ethic where citizens and businesses engage in environmental efforts.

Policies

Policy recommendations:

- Through incentives, that the District encourages gardeners to contribute to micro-economies by engaging in community economic development activities related to food production.
- Support economically sustainable food systems: locally and regionally. (eg. Support maintenance of the Agricultural Land Reserve).
- Coordinate and partner with senior government, neighbouring municipalities, local First Nations, the School District and community organizations to ensure residents have access to regional/local food through an improved food distribution system of local warehousing and outlets.
- The District increases the amount of regional/local food procured for organizational/institutional use by set targets.

10. CLIMATE ACTION

10.3 Waste Management

The District's objective is to reduce the waste we generate and use the waste we do generate as a resource.

Policy recommendations

- Support development of a closed loop food recovery model – direct funding and support/expertise in technology/marketing/coordination as well as sourcing out external funding and expertise
- Investigate/establish feasibility of developing local small scale in-vessel composting using the Seattle model. Establish 1 or more social enterprises to operate composting operations. This would build community capacity to reduce waste.