

### Community Insights

Administration reached out to the ten stakeholders, including commercial farms, restaurants, residents, public institutions, not-for-profit organizations and a municipality, to inquire about interest and concerns about urban gardens and farms. Eight interviews were conducted through a virtual meeting and two interviews were conducted on the phone.

The stakeholder engagement revealed important considerations for urban farms and gardens including:

- The type of urban farm was important to residents (crop-based versus animal product)
- Urban farms and gardens were seen as a great opportunity for the City to provide public education, help build a connection between people and food and bolster local agencies (Food Bank)
- There was a preference for longer-tenure agreements and most people wanted to see a five-year lease term at minimum
- There are differences between the classification of an urban farmer versus a rural farmer. There are provincial regulations (lower taxes, fuel prices) that benefit rural farmers that may not apply to urban farmers
- Some stakeholders preferred to see more local food options to source their business and the other half were indifferent about locally sourced food but were concerned about price of food
- The City's role is to set the right parameters to safeguard the public, ensure there is equitable access, make the most efficient use of the land, and reduce barriers to entry
- The City should provide opportunities for people to experiment in a safe environment
- The City should engage with the local farmers to learn and design the program with their perspective

Overall stakeholders were supportive of the City pursuing more urban farms and gardens. Stakeholders also shared the following concerns:

- Caution about using park space for commercial gain (urban farms)
- Permitting requirements and costs that may pose limitations
- Urban farms are an interim use only. People were concerned about their investments being valid only for short periods of time
- Regulation of food sales, contract management of the urban farms, and site-specific related concerns such as nuisance and increased vandalism

## Attachment 4

- Uncertain that urban farms can improve food security and that urban farms will primarily cater to people with disposable income
- Transfer and increase in costs to the City for road maintenance, agricultural runoff and administration versus the existing turf maintenance costs
- Comments were made about wanting more commitment from the City to reserve land for urban agriculture versus urban sprawl

Some critical insights from the agencies and social-enterprise organizations were:

- There is high interest in community gardens, primarily from new Canadians, and this interest is expected to rise
- The community gardens provide an opportunity for people to grow food that is not readily available at grocery stores
- Agencies are seeing a rise in customers using their services since COVID-19
- Agencies are looking into facility expansion since they anticipate more demand
- Food security and resiliency is a concern and organizations believe that serious attention needs to be spent to address these concerns, especially with the impacts of climate change on the rise