



Urban Farms EVERY WHERE

COMMON
ROOTS
urban farm

Implementation Guide

METRO WORKS

runs two farms in NSHA Central Zone:

Common Roots Urban Farm (CRUF) is in central Halifax adjacent to the Halifax Infirmary, and **Back To Our Roots Urban Farm (BTOR)** which is on the grounds of the Nova Scotia Hospital in Dartmouth. They are pieces of health infrastructure with the desired impact of

“People interacting with the health care community in Central Zone NS are nourished, valued, and engaged with nature”.

Photo: Ryan Rideout

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1. VISION

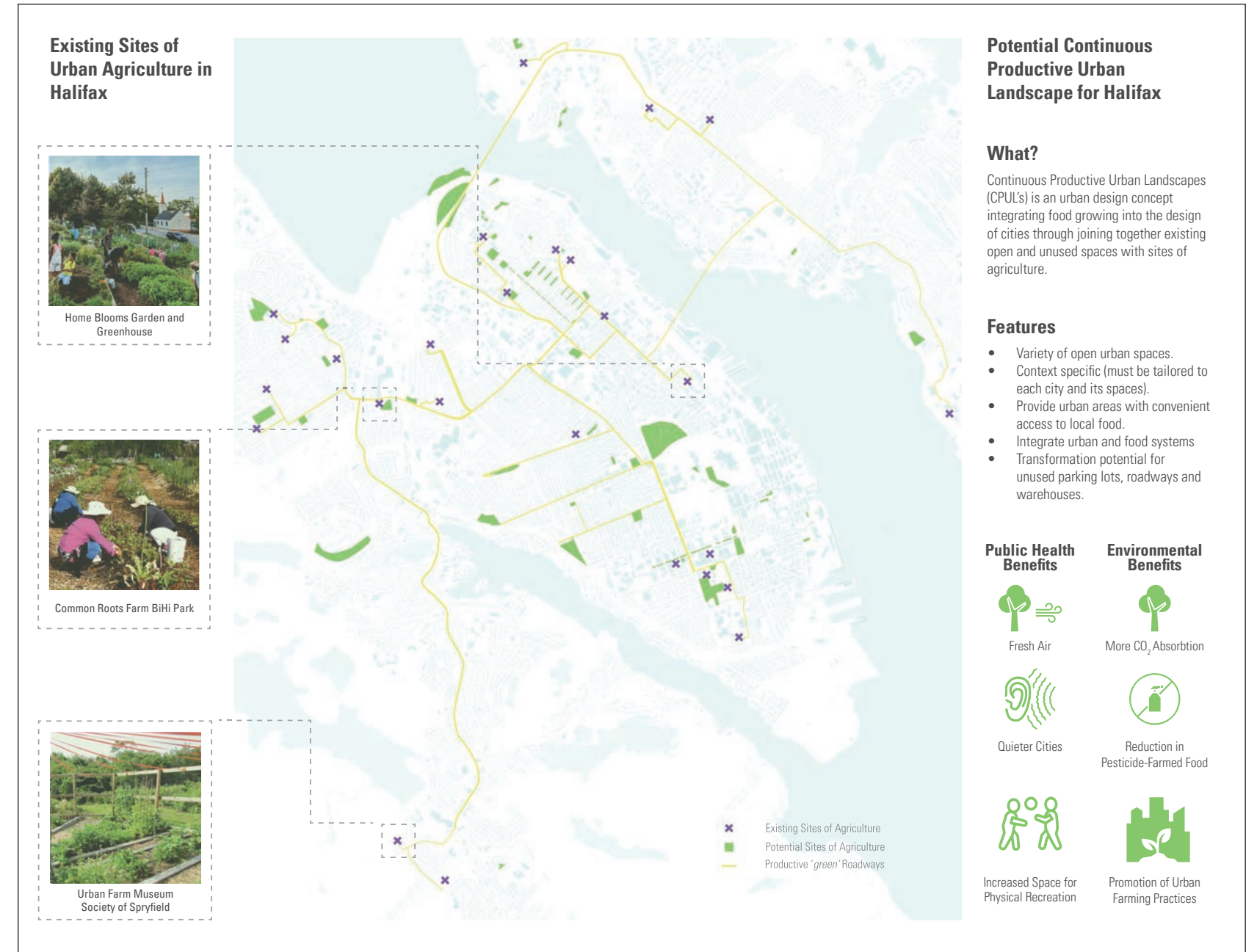
We share a vision of urban farms everywhere, connected by edible greenbelts.



Imagine boulevards and all the little spaces between the sidewalk and street growing food. There are flowers, shrubs, fruit trees in yards and in the little traffic circles. In all the wide open spaces, anywhere there is sun, there is a farm. Some are veggie farms. Some are flower farms. Some grow herbs and teas. Some grow fruit. Some grow art supplies, like pigments and fibres. Some are mixed and even include animals. Many of them have farm stands. You can buy some fresh produce, talk with the growers, bathe your eyes in green, contemplate a bumble bee.

We believe that the elements that will help us joyfully survive an uncertain future occur in community urban farms, especially if there is an abundance of them: one in every neighbourhood.

Sharing this passion to see more urban agriculture in our landscapes, Susan Fitzgerald, a professor at the Dalhousie School of Architecture, teaches a course on urban agriculture, with a studio component in Cuba. With the help of her students and FBM Architecture she offered to create a drawing/map of our area. This serves as an inspirational illustration, an inventory-map of urban agriculture, as well as a tool to locate new sites.



2. CONTEXT



This booklet was born through a funding agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia as part of the Poverty Reduction Government Initiative. The grant was received at a time when Common Roots was making a leap from one organization to another, as well as from one site to another. The funding allowed us to develop new programming with MetroWorks, our new parent organization, and share those learnings through a resource guide that encourages more urban farms to help reduce poverty in Nova Scotia / Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

The urban farm work we do in Nova Scotia is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

In our original funding application, we described the activity of creating this resource guide:

Common Roots received an increasing number of requests from across the province for support in developing inclusive and accessible urban farms and community gardens. The new partnership with MetroWorks will provide the support necessary to create a resource package for emerging community gardens and urban farms across the province on how to use these spaces to foster positive mental health and economic inclusion for newcomers to Canada. Being able to share our best practices and expand our networks will bolster other urban/community farms in Nova Scotia in their capacity to support folks with mental health challenges, and to develop programs that increase access to employment.

In this document, we make some assumptions about who you are. We assume that you want to co-create an urban farm. You have some knowledge of gardening and farming. You have some sense of what it takes to build a community group. You found this PDF, so you are doing research and you're probably fairly knowledgeable, and well-read. There is some basic information in here, also tips from experience, advice from various team members, and gathered resources.



Our Program + Farms

We use the term "Common Roots" to refer to our urban farm program. We call our sites:

Common Roots-Woodside

This is the farm at the Nova Scotia Hospital in Dartmouth, born in 2015. For the first five years it was called Back To Our Roots Urban Farm - BTOR.

Common Roots-BiHi

This is the new farm site, in BiHi Park, Halifax. Born in 2019.

Common Roots-H.I.

The original Common Roots on the grounds of the Halifax Infirmary. Born in 2012, now closed.

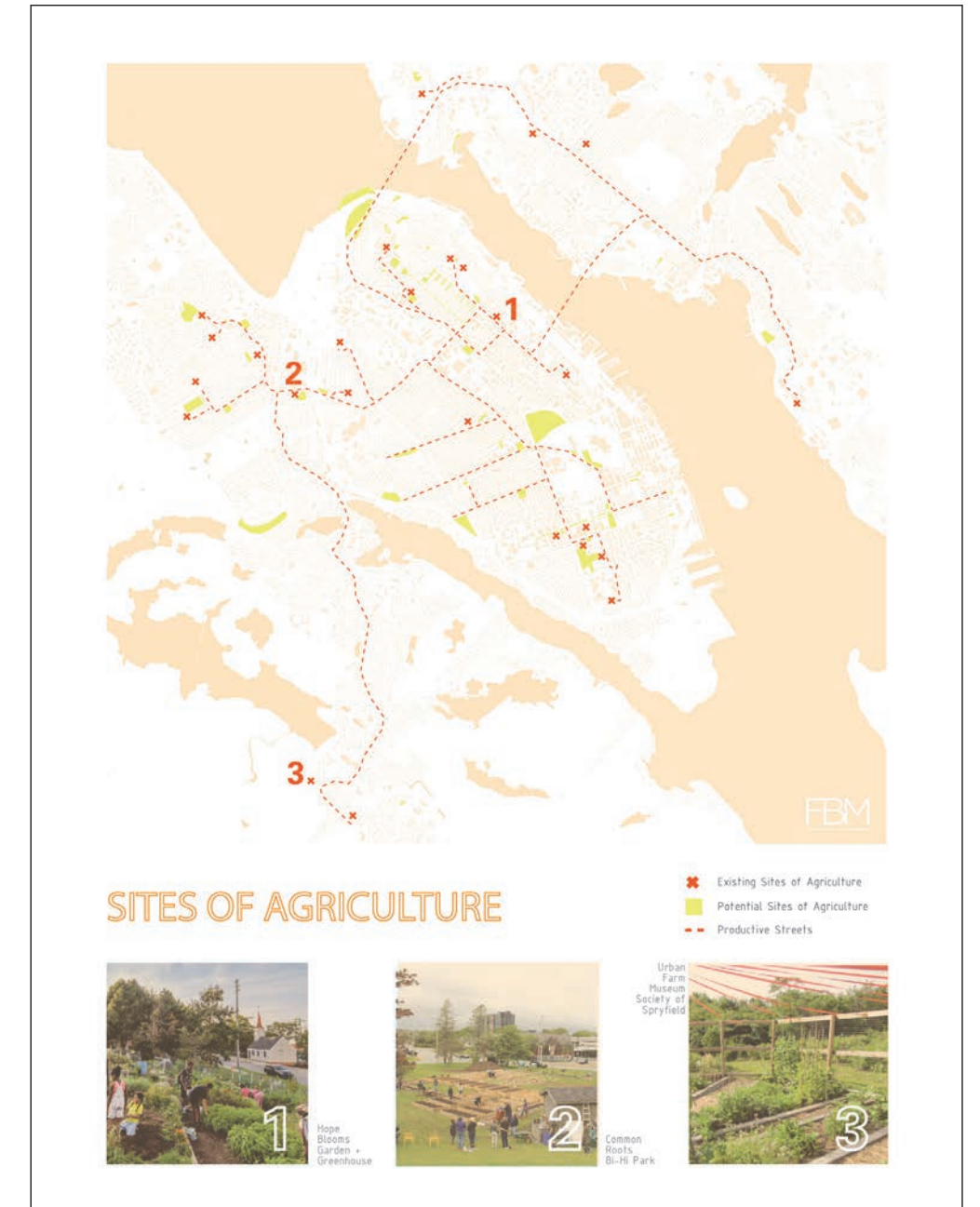
There are multiple voices in this document. The lead coordinator of this deliverable was Jayme Melrose, the first coordinator of Common Roots. So many people contributed, edited and proofread! That was a great team effort. MJ Valiquette wrote much of this document, based on her Masters Without Borders group work at Dalhousie University, with the goal to enhance social enterprise revenues at Common Roots-BiHi. Thanks for her research and academic rigour. The “Advice from Others” chapter, and interviews with staff about inclusion practices, were done by Yewen Li, a Dalhousie College of Sustainability intern. Big thanks to Valiquette and Li for their efforts and skillfulness. Hillary Lindsay, Coordinator of Common Roots-Woodside, Sara Burgess, Coordinator of Common Roots-BiHi, and Nora Macnee, MetroWorks CFO, all edited and contributed. Maggy Burns contributed editing time. Rachel Derrah illustrated the Development Road Map. Heartfelt thanks to these rad people.

The deepest vision of Common Roots is of urban farms everywhere, connected by edible greenbelts. We would love to see our world with gardens and farms everywhere with people marketing and value-adding locally grown products. People working together. Connecting with nature. Helping each other. Making unlikely friends. Producing something to give or trade. What kind of a creative world would result?



We hope you share this vision in some way, and want to co-create an urban farm. We hope there are some great tips in here, and that you rock it. We hope your team has lots of little celebrations. We hope you get to create another urban farm, that sometimes brings tears of love when people talk about it.

If we can be of help, we'd love to be. (Unless it is during the mania of spring: any months but April/May!)
Feel free to send an email through the CommonRootsUrbanFarm.ca website.



3. URBAN FARMS & COMMUNITY GARDENS



The terms urban farm and community gardens

are often interchanged. Both of these operations may contain a mixture of individual allotment gardens, greenhouses, public areas and market garden spaces. They are often in public spaces and collectively managed by member-volunteers and hired coordinators.

The distinction we make at Common Roots, in terms of the difference between a community garden and an urban farm, is that an urban farm is part farm, meaning it sells agricultural products: People are working together to produce a quantity of something(s) for sale (or donation).

Around here, community gardens are generally the allotment model, where people/families grow what they like. People don't sell produce out of their plots (they are too small).

When we built Common Roots, we had heard and observed that community gardens don't always create community - the private property model of allotments meant that people didn't always interact or connect with each other. We were also hearing that a major determinant of health is social connectivity. We wanted to build a place where people could connect and learn from each other about gardening and other things. We're also interested in the

poverty reduction potential of urban farming, through its food production, the educational opportunities of working together, and the social connectivity, including employment opportunities.

What we did was a combo of the two. We had a ¼ acre market garden surrounded by a community garden. Having a market garden adjacent to the community gardens gave all the community gardeners some education, offered some direction, and provided something to compare to. The folks working in the program also got plots, and got to know many people. Hospital patients and families could walk through a vibrant, colourful, productive urban landscape.

Another real benefit of the urban farm model is having knowledgeable staff and volunteers available to the community. Lots of gardeners dropped by the urban farm for help solving a problem. This is a great, accessible resource for people trying to increase their food security by growing food.

Also, having a functioning market garden is a great educational tool, even passively, through observation. We used a lot of row cover, which many home gardeners hadn't considered, and found greater success in using it. Things that happened in the market garden gave

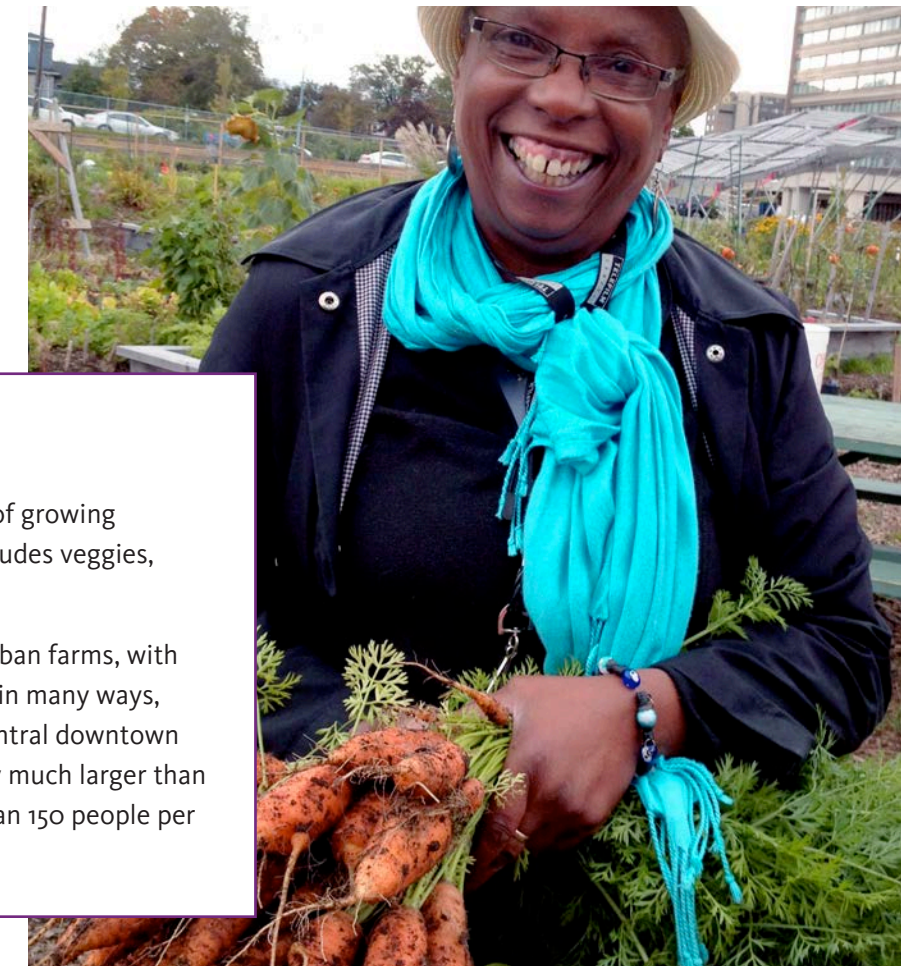
many of the community gardeners and home gardeners ideas to use and conversations to have, such as various vegetable spacing techniques and mulching.

Another nice thing that an urban farm might be able to afford are nibble plots - beds that anyone can harvest from or plant into. We had these bordering the main pathway, which allowed people to nibble and participate.

The Definition!

Urban agriculture is the overarching word that encompasses all forms of growing food in the city, whether public or private, tiny or expansive. It also includes veggies, mushrooms, flowers, and animal agriculture.

A peri-urban farm is a form of agriculture that is more removed than urban farms, with a lower level of social involvement. Scholars describe peri-urban farms in many ways, including stating that peri-urban farms are farms located away from central downtown areas or farms closer to the outskirts of a city. Rural farms are generally much larger than urban farms and occur in regions with a population density of fewer than 150 people per square kilometre.



4. ONLINE RESOURCES



Here are related documents made by others. They are other parts of the puzzle that can help your farm.

Model Urban Farm/Community Garden Guides and Resources

[Urban Farming Guidebook](#)

The Urban Farming Guidebook from the EcoDesign Resource Society is written to help planners from small and large communities in British Columbia gain a better understanding of best practices for growing and selling food within urban boundaries. It provides examples of cost estimates for produce and case studies on exemplary urban farms.

[A Guide for Community Garden Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

This is a model community garden guide replicated in provinces across Canada with straightforward advice and helpful website links to create and maintain community gardens. Many forms of advice for community gardens can also apply to establishing an urban farm site meant to sell produce.

[Community Garden Handbook](#)

These rules and procedures are the Halifax Regional Municipality's process to create a community garden. This is the process through which Common Roots applied for Municipal land for Common Roots-BiHi.

[Scaling Up Urban Agriculture in Toronto](#)

This document provides an extensive overview of urban agriculture considerations in Toronto related to scaling operations. It provides a range of helpful advice, from talking about spreading simple growing practices and involving more people in urban farms, to enhancing productivity and commercial scale agriculture.

[Urban Agriculture Toolkit](#)

From the United States Department of Agriculture, this guide provides advice on key aspects of an urban farm, including costs, accessing capital, production strategies, market development and training and mentoring individuals in urban agriculture.

Inclusive Urban Farms

[Inclusive Community Gardens: Planning for Inclusive and Welcoming Spaces in Vancouver](#)

This document's aim is to understand inclusivity in the Vancouver urban agriculture landscape, investigate current attributes of community gardens and their members, and help leaders in the creation of more welcoming and inclusive urban agriculture.

Municipal Policies Affecting Urban Agriculture

[Opportunities for Growth: An Urban Agriculture Toolkit](#)

This brief toolkit is designed for planners and municipal government representatives interested in making policies to increase urban agriculture, while pointing out examples of policies and partnerships that support urban growing.

[Global Database for City and Regional Food Policies](#)

The database stores PDFs of adopted and/or enacted policies, regulations, and ordinances on a range of food systems topics, from production to waste management.

Soil Management Guides

[Low cost composting training manual](#)

This downloadable manual provides descriptive advice on cost-effective soil amendments.

[Types of Composting and Understanding the Process](#)

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's helpful and easy to understand advice about composting basics.

Volunteer Opportunities

[Alemany Farm volunteer role list](#)

Certification or Incorporation for your urban farm/non-profit

[Nova Scotia Organic Certificate](#)

If your urban farm is interested in being certified organic this link has information about regional certification in NS.

[Resources for Non-Profit Organizations and Volunteers in Nova Scotia](#)

[Society incorporation in Nova Scotia](#)

Accessible (Free) Online Courses

[Canadian Organic Growers](#)

This national organization provides resources, courses, and webinars related to various topics in organic growing – ranging from permaculture to seeds and propagation.

[Growing Insights: Urban Agriculture & Local Food](#)

A massive online course from the Alberta Land-Use Network dedicated to teaching the public about urban agriculture and local food practices in Alberta. This course provides resources and learning opportunities for varying levels of knowledge and interest in urban agriculture.

5. LAND USE AGREEMENT ROAD MAP



How to start an urban farm – the title of an [article](#) we found by Yewen Li. Makes it sound so easy, hey? One major set of hurdles omitted by this handy how-to is how to get a formal agreement to use a piece of land.

Getting agreement to use a piece of land, especially a big one, is complicated. Here's our incomplete and sassy guide and advice on how to secure a land agreement for your community urban farm. The end goal is a Memorandum of Understanding (or an MOU). Here is an encouraging [article](#) about writing an MOU.

HOT TIP #1 Right out of the gates, read Graham Steele's book "The Effective Citizen: How To Make Politicians Work For You" or watch his TED talk. The key point I took from that book is to try to learn the motivation of the individual and institution that you're working with. For federal politicians this can be found in their mandate letters. For provincial and municipal politicians this can be found in their current strategies and policy statements. Your goal is to know what their key priorities are and show how your project aligns with their goals. You're helping them get their work done.

Another critical understanding is to know that within government: there are two rows to hoe, so to speak. To further indulge in

metaphor, there is topsoil and subsoil which are distinct and interrelated: these are the elected politicians, and the (senior) bureaucrats. To get an MOU on public land you need to have support at both levels. Keeping all parties informed is a must.

HOT TIP #2 A Land Use Agreement needs to be signed between two legal organizations: your landowner + your organization. Your urban farm group needs to be registered with the Registry of Joint Stocks, have a business number, and ideally, a financial history. If you can be a project of another, bigger, reputable not-for-profit (NFP), that makes it easier for government and business people to trust you.

HOT TIP #3 You are constantly trying to grow the circle of influence, through all channels possible. You want to create a buzz around your idea, so much so that it feels like it is happening. With enough buzz it kind of reaches a tipping point – or collective consciousness, and it feels like it is going to happen. Grow your network. Be inquisitive and see who knows some of the people you want to connect with. Find out who is a champion, who's on the Board, who might know who, and slowly build your network... Don't let up. You gotta keep at it. You gotta keep figuring out who you need to be talking to. There's something you can do every day. We learned a great deal from the leader of a big project in town. His project required a lot of money

and many agreements, there was lots of red tape, and there was a timeline. He called all the politicians and all the bureaucrats every day. He called to build relationships, to figure out what next steps were coming, to gauge the progress of funding and conversations, and to keep his project top of mind for everyone.

Alright, you have a team and vision, now you need a piece of land. Welcome to the adventure!

Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

When we were looking for our new site we got the wider community involved. To hear more about how the community helped build our list of needs, here is a [summary](#) of the public engagement and here is more [detail](#) on the event. Then we ran the community's set of needs through a [mapping process](#). Lindzay Bedard was a Common Roots volunteer who did a GIS course right when we needed it and did a mapping project for us. You can see her process and results [here](#).

The major elements required by a good urban farm site (for us anyway) are: big and sunny, on public transit routes, and accessible to all. Access to water is critical.

You focus in on some parcels and the team creates the shortlist. Now you need to figure out who owns the land and how it might be available.

To find out who owns the piece of land you have your eye on, contact the Municipality. They can point you in the right direction to determine land ownership. The library can too.

GOOD QUESTION What are the minimum number of seasons you need on a piece of land to make it work? A common reason landowners decline an urban farm proposal is that they have development plans, but that might be 5-10 years down the road. But, Common Roots HI grew on its temporary site for 7 years, and in that time produced loads of food and relationships.

Okay, so you found a piece of land that looks viable. You've figured out who owns it. What's required to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the use of the land?

The process differs if the land is publicly or privately owned. Public land could be Municipal, Provincial or Federal land. Here are four flow charts of things that might be required for a MOU.

Your goal is an agreement between two organizations so as the in between person you need to work on keeping both informed, engaged and empowered. Work with the Executive Director of your NFP organization to know what you can do, what they have to do, and how much communication they need.

Municipal land is probably the most likely land you'll spot: at the community centre, the library, part of a park....

If your municipality has a How to Start a Community Garden process, follow that.

HOT TIP #4 Make a great relationship with your municipal staff person. If this relationship is rocky it will be much harder to get help with any changes or challenges. If you can create a helpful relationship with this person you can do more together.

Create a project presentation that you can pitch to Municipal Committees such as the Regional Committee, or the Planning & Design Committee - whatever they are called where you are. Make a visual presentation that shows how your team is going to help them meet their strategic priorities. Show that your team is trustworthy and reliable. Come to them with a question: do they have any recommendations on how to proceed?

HOT TIP #5 There's lots of fear around how 'messy' and unsightly urban farms can be (I don't get it either) so pay attention to aesthetics. Work with a landscape designer/ architect if you can.

HOT TIP #6 Keep your Councillor and Mayor informed as well as the relevant senior bureaucrats and your provincial Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). They will be part of your circle of influence.



HOT TIP #7 Another potential requirement by the Municipality, and essential thing to do regardless, is to hold a community consultation to meet with neighbours and listen to their thoughts, concerns and desires for an urban farm. Even if there is push back because the neighbourhood values that space in a certain way and has fears about what an urban farm might bring, communication goes a long way. Our strategy of holding space for conversation (including difficult conversation) and working together to address concerns through regular, open and responsive communication has worked so far. We also communicate on a variety of platforms: Facebook page, Facebook Group, Instagram, email list, flyers, a phone tree, on farm meetings, an on-farm communications book and chalkboards on the farm.

The Province owns all the schools and hospitals. They have some big urban properties.

We hope you have an awesome MLA and constituency office and that there is a great policy/agenda alignment that helps them help you.

In our experience the Province is complex to navigate funding and permissions. The subsoil and topsoil (as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter) both really matter. Figuring out who is important to have on-side. Getting them on-side them requires asking a lot of questions and asking around.

HOT TIP #8 The site manager is probably going to be a senior staff in the Department of Transportation and

Infrastructure Renewal. This is where the agreement gets signed. Get a sense of what drives that office.

HOT TIP #9 Make sure the Deputy Minister stays informed.

GOOD QUESTION Are there development plans for the site? How will those plans be impacted by an election?

GOOD QUESTION What other government departments should be involved? Health, agriculture, education, community services, diversity & culture? Having staff allies in these departments is super helpful. Applying for grants is another way of speaking to government priorities and is an opportunity to share your vision.

HOT TIP #10 Don't assume your person in government knows all the things. Just because they have a title, or are senior, doesn't always mean they know all the answers. It pays to ask questions - kindly, inquisitively - and to get details and double-check. Helpful questions include: How has this been done before? Can you give us an example?

HOT TIP #11 Zoning and Building Codes are often Municipal responsibilities and structures on Provincial land are not required to abide by the same rules. Knowing which level of government is responsible can be very helpful for building sheds and greenhouses.

HOT TIP #12 There is funding out there that isn't necessarily in a funding stream, meaning there is no grant for it but your project might just qualify if you can find the right person in government and pitch to access it.

If you are interested in Federal land start with your MP. I hope they have awesome staff people in their office to lead you through the labyrinth. Many of the same hot tips in the Provincial section apply. Accessing federal land is similar, just more complex.

Most of the city land is privately owned by individuals, institutions or corporations. The big sunny lots are often owned by land developers. There might be apartment buildings, townhouses, big backyards, and even churches...

Figuring out who and how to get in touch with the landowner can be tricky. Maybe you have to knock on the door. Maybe it is the office of a developer. Figuring out who to talk to will likely take some social connectivity and networking.

Create two documents: a brief overview and a longer project proposal. Offer the brief (1-2 pages maximum) first. It will be emailed around so make it a PDF document and make it aesthetically appealing. Show alignment, give core details and build trust. This can be followed with a longer project description once interest is shown. Core details include budgets, goal, timeline and activities.

HOT TIP #32 If you can build a good relationship with someone in the development industry they will have contacts across your municipality. A good reputation goes a long way and will open doors.

HOT TIP #14 Your project has something to offer a developer. Your urban farm or garden might help with their tenant retention by making their apartment more appealing, giving them free advertising through good news stories, or getting brownie points with the municipality for being socially engaged.

Here are a few more general tips:

Get creative with finding alignments to create strategic partners. Is there something that they need or that you can provide? Partnerships between the not-for-profit and for-profit are powerful signals of sustainability to the professional class - including politicians and senior bureaucrats.

Working with government you have to check all the boxes. It takes work to figure out what the boxes are. Keep asking about what steps are next and you will find the path to success.

Read and understand the terms and conditions for funding programs. These really matter. Often this information is not obvious. Be curious, ask questions, make phone calls.

Find moments to celebrate as much as possible.

Develop an elevator pitch so that you can describe your project in really simple terms. Develop your "asks" into elevator pitches so that you can ask for what you need in clear ways.

Develop your responses to concerns, and have them ready. Unsightliness is the main concern raised by the public, especially in winter. Rats, vermin and smell are another set of concerns. Soil contamination and air pollution are other concerns cited. Theft and vandalism are also concerns so have a group position and response developed to respond to these issues from the community.



Thank you!

In our local MP's office there is a helpful person named Joanne Macrae. She helped us get Common Roots moved from the Halifax Infirmary site to Bi-Hi Park. She knew who to talk to, and what policy agenda they were tracking. She reminded us to send thank yous and insisted that we keep people informed. We are so grateful to her, and Andy Filmore MP, for their support. She added to the content in this section.

6. BUDGETING



The key to a budget is to map out all your anticipated expenses and potential revenues. You can only spend the money you have, and it is tricky to come by, especially with urban farming. Farming is not profitable to begin with, and then add volunteer management, theft potential, and the time and resources spent on community engagement. But urban farming meets a lot of public priorities: healthy eating, physical activity, community engagement, social connectivity, environmental education, sustainable development, healthy and livable cities, welcoming newcomers, inter-cultural & inter-generational learning, increasing employability. The trick is to figure out where the pockets of money are that you can align with.

A budget is basically a map of revenues and expenses. We found that we would run two or three budgets: the lean machine, the middle path, and in-our-dreams. This was a good exercise to determine what our priorities were and what we'd ask for after the basics were covered.

Our process parallels Outcome Mapping's "expect to see, like to see, love to see." Outcome Mapping is a great tool to use to build a group vision and shared understanding. A well built budget will feed

into and support your Strategic Plan. Keeping the core decisions of the farm coherent builds trust.

When budgeting we find it helpful to map out one year in detail, then multiple years in summary.

We created a version of the budget that showed what we had confirmed, what was projected, and what we still needed funding for.

Forecasting revenue can be difficult. Urban farm business models are diverse and the ways they generate revenue vary. Ways to earn revenue can include revenue from crop sales (e.g. market sales, sales to local grocery stores/restaurants, programs like community supported agriculture), government funds for social programming, revenue from grants and donations, and revenue from hosting workshops or consulting/teaching.

To forecast revenue from crop production, ask some local farmers. What high-value crops would they recommend? What might you expect per bed foot, for revenue? Try some pilot projects. And always, ask around.

HOT TIP #1 [Crop Planning for Organic Vegetable Growers](#) is so useful we use it every year to forecast revenue for programming.

Forecasting expenses might be easier and also terrifying. To determine the costs of farm supplies call a farmer. Maybe call a couple of different farmers. Ask them about what tools they would recommend, what supplies they would buy, where they get compost, and how much would they get at the beginning of the season.

Keep in mind that farmers are incredibly busy and generally aren't well paid for their work. When asking for a farmer's expertise try to do as much groundwork ahead of time so you're asking less of their time. If their time and advice is playing a key role in your project, write an honorarium for them into your budget line, pay them to offer a workshop or offer a work trade or thank you of some kind.

The major cost of an urban farm is always staffing. It can be hard to find money for staffing directly. Often it needs to be built into multiple grants to piece together a position. This is awkward, but hopefully in time you can build stability.

HOT TIP #2 Keep your eyes open for government funding that subsidizes or fully covers hourly wages for a period of time. These often exist for people who are unemployed or underemployed, newly in the workforce or facing barriers to employment.

Other important expenses include marketing and public relations: you need to be part of the community to be successful with grants and funding. Your project is more likely to get money if it's in the public eye and creating positive news coverage for funders and partners. You just have to invest in this to succeed. Think of it as part of your programming around public education. Part of creating buzz.

Administrative costs are also real. We recommend working with/ under a larger and older (more experienced and established) NFP which has an HR Department and accountant: so helpful! There is a cost to this that the project has to contribute to. Often this is ~ 10% -15% of grants.

It is good to budget for staff and volunteer support. Urban farms really grow people and helping out with cell phone costs, bus tickets, food, and other support can make a big difference to your volunteers.

Insurance is another tricky one. If you are with a big organization your project can tap into theirs. If not, ask for a lot of quotes. You'll likely need to include it in your admin budget lines in grant proposals.

Even if you are with a bigger NFP, keeping track of various detailed costs from social enterprise activities with organized and dedicated spreadsheets is a great idea.

SAMPLE BUDGET

This example provides a broad overview of the sources of revenue and expenses similar to those that may impact your urban farm. As you can see below, the majority of revenue from Common Roots involves donations, partner revenue, and service delivery often focused on educational programming, and much of the costs go towards staffing for its programs. You will have to create a budget for your initial building year and that requires researching the cost of infrastructure such as a shed, raised beds, soil, pathway materials, tools, water supply and contracted machinery.

There are different components within an urban farm budget that can also contain more detail. For instance, the net profit from market garden sales can be individualized by item (and projected by calculating how much crop might be sold per yield).

When first developing an urban farm, it is important to review other examples of budgets to help focus your vision and learn about possible revenues and expenses. There are many examples of high-level and detailed budgets online.

REVENUE		EXPENSES	
Sales of products and services		Farm Operation	
Plot fees	\$8,000	Infrastructure	\$14,490
Soil amendments	2,045	Signage	1,970
Compost	1,985	Sheds, tools, market stand	7,300
Produce sales and delivery	16,040	Soil	2,025
Flower sales	8,380	Soil amendments	1,800
Plant sales	520	Compost and manure	2,040
Merchandise sales	1,615	Seeds and starts	2,360
Workshop fees	1,340	Supplies and packaging	2,500
Corporate and class visits	3,750	Total operations	\$34,485
Total sales	\$43,675		
		Program Expense	
Social Program Delivery		Salaries and benefits	\$164,250
Municipal grants	\$11,300	Interpreters	5,700
Provincial grants	88,000	Participant stipends	5,550
Federal grants	8,275	Honouraria	15,900
Foundations and Charities	97,200	Equipment for participants	950
Private sector support	3,750	Volunteer support	1,780
Fundraising Events	1,585	Transportation	680
Total grants and donations	\$210,110	Celebrations and exigencies	13,285
		Total farm personnel	\$208,095
In-Kind donations	\$14,800		
		Admin and fundraising expense	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$268,585	Merchandise inventory	2,035
		Advertising and promotional material	22,340
		Accounting	320
		Admin and bank fees	30
		Communications	1,280
		Total admin and fundraising	\$26,005
		TOTAL EXPENSE	\$268,585

6.1 TOP FUND DEVELOPMENT TIPS

1. Prioritise & match priorities: Your team needs to know what it really wants to do, what programs you want to try. Read about what worked for others. Read about all the funds out there, and what the local funders are prioritising. See if there are ways to make your program work within the funds available. Keeping a spreadsheet of funds and their parameters is helpful, followed by the fund's budget, and the budget of every grant written.

2. Generate some revenue: Do some social enterprise activity. Grow some crops for sale. Ideally high-value ones. Run some programs. Sell some merchandise. Our initial ambitious goal was 20% of expenses covered by revenue. We are closer to 16%, but we will continue to use 20% as our target.

3) Constantly search for grants: Keep that spreadsheet updated, always be on the look out, get on the email lists, constantly dig deeper for other funders. It is crucial to research and keep track of potential sponsors/grant funders/ partners. There are endless resources available - including documents and online software - that can assist in identifying the best options for urban farm grant funds.

4) Be creative: There are MANY funding streams available and fundraising ideas. For example, if your urban farm plans an event the event can include several modes of fundraising from raffles and silent auctions, to snack stalls and photo contests.

And, be creative in your budgeting. Funds raised towards one thing - like supplies - might allow you to shift funds to something else - like staffing - or vice-versa.

5) Network and ask: There's money available that is not advertised; Successful organizations often find pots of money that others didn't know to ask for. Somehow they found a way to ask the right person for the right thing.

6) Partner: Maybe more than one organization/individual wants to see your farm take flight. Partnering with other organizations can help in large and small ways, from running operations to advertising and organizing an event. You can save more time, resources, and help promote your cause.

Sometimes a partner/stakeholder cannot contribute funds but they can help address another need. Contact Local Schools/Businesses/ Organizations for as many donations as possible (like raffling or auctioning items). Their contributions can help serve as great fundraisers and provide more exposure for their business/activities. A partnership can also ensure that your group can apply toward different funding streams. Partnering with a registered charity allows access to more grant funding streams.

7) Every no is an uneducated yes: Or "No you already have: yes, you can get". Or "Go over, go under, go through". Or

“You miss all of the shots you don’t take.” Meaning, be positively persistent. There’s often a yes somewhere, you just have to find it.

8) If you want advice, ask for money: If you want money, ask for advice: Developing the skill of asking questions is a real gift. Especially when going in to ask the elders, the funders, the powerholders. Often these people have seen a lot, and have insight to offer, and are impressed by people willing to ask and listen.

9) Gather Support: Politicians and funders love to get in front of a parade. If your team is a fun parade, it is easier to get behind.

Gathering the support is one thing, maintaining it is another. There needs to be ways for people to contribute, give feedback, and feel that their contributions matter. A robust evaluation plan is part of this. Surveys, community gatherings and communicating back are all required.

10) Create buzz: Raise awareness of what your urban farm offers to the community by having a dedicated communications/marketing employee. This employee can work with local media to ensure there is information about how people can contribute to your organization (either with volunteer work or donations). An employee/volunteer should be skilled in taking good photographs to add to marketing campaigns, and an employee/volunteer should have skill in print communications in order to write press releases.

Remember that media attention does not simply happen in response to good work! It takes work to gain media attention by reaching out to them and distributing press releases. Press releases should

be engaging, informative, and a well written piece that local media outlets will want to use.

With any written communications it is important to use storytelling and write for a general audience. It is also important to use various forms of media to engage individuals. Carry hard copies of fundraising/organizational information with you and contact as many people as you can. The more you talk about your organization, the more people will want to share in that excitement and its mandate. You can create online newsletters that contain updates on your farm, fundraising and reminders on how to support your efforts You can even add donating information in your email signature or voicemail. .

11) Campaign Online: If you’re social media/tech-savvy, spread the word through social media websites. Or, consider creating a webpage to showcase your organization/fundraising campaign. Many websites’ primary function is to run fundraising web pages for non-profits. But, keep in mind that there are many different formats, fees, and processes to use crowdfunding.

12) Play by the Rules: For an organization to generate revenue legally it must be incorporated as a non-profit society. Partnering with an existing non-profit is an option if you don’t want to register. Certain activities also require following policies and regulations, such as selling food. Fundraising activities also require following rules. Following the province’s gaming regulations, if you are hosting an activity like a raffle or casino night. Moreover, ensure that your fundraising event follows municipal bylaws and policies, such as those respecting noise. Lastly, when applying to a funding program, be sure to read and re-read guidelines to fill documentation correctly.

6.2 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY IDEAS

There are lots of great kinds of fundraising activities. Here are some ideas:

Market Stand: We had a market stand on the farm and we sold to restaurants. At the market stand we sold veg, flowers, soil amendment, composted manure, merch, and seedlings. We grew the veg and flowers. The manure we bought from a local farmer. The soil amendment is a mineral fertilizer mix we often call a soil multivitamin which is supposed to increase the nutritional value of the food. We mixed using the recipe from Steve Solomon’s The Intelligent Gardener. The seedlings we sold were propagated from our perennials.

Plant a Tree of Hope: Ask a tree nursery to donate saplings. Sell the saplings to supporters that will plant and watch their Tree of Hope grow!

Guess How Many: Fill a jar with peas (or some version of vegetable/seed) and have people pay to guess how many there are in the jar. If they guess it right, they can win the jar!

Scavenger Hunt: Teams donate an entrance fee to compete in completing tasks around the area (e.g. make them bus from one community garden to another or eat a dish at a local restaurant) for a grand prize. Teams can take photos to evidence completing a task.

Seed/Bulb Drive: In the spring, canvas local gardeners, garden centers, or a wholesaler for donations of seeds, seedlings or bedding plants and host a day of sales.

Art Show: Ask local artists to donate a piece of art to your cause and hold an outdoor show to sell the works.

Photo Contest: Choose your subject (gardens, produce, landscapes, etc.) and get people to submit their photos for a prize. People can pay one dollar to cast a ballot for the winner.

Host a Concert: Hosting a concert can prove lucrative for an organization raising money. Try to keep costs low. If a local artist can perform at a small cost, that’s great!

Holidays are a wonderful time to get together with family and friends. Celebrations can be even more meaningful by raising funds for your society/cause.

Earth Day (April 22): Spring is a wonderful time to sell green-related items such as bulbs, seeds, saplings, or compost.

Mid Summer’s Day/Eve (June 21): Mark the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, with a garden party including various fundraising activities.

6.3 GRANT FUNDING STREAMS

A few tips around grant-writing:

Have a spreadsheet to inventory all the grants out there you can find, with their deadlines and goals. January-February is prime grant-writing season. Have a team and meet regularly. Behind the master grant spreadsheet we had the farm budget(s) and behind that the budget for any grant written.

HOT TIP The focus of the grant is the funders’ priority(ies). Really get to know what that is. Constantly refer back to those priorities in your goal, activities, budget, and how you will measure success. They only fund you if you are getting their work done. Whoever is

awarding grants needs to see that the project is meeting the grant criteria, needs to believe the project is doable within the budget, and wants to be inspired and excited by the project.

If you need partners and letters of support, get on that ASAP. Often these need to be approved by Executive Directors so it takes a while to get emailed around. Generally we advise sending draft content of the letter of support to a contact person at the partners organization so they don’t have to do too much work for us. Make it easy and give some time for them to complete it; this too builds trust.

ORG/GRANT NAME	DEADLINE	DESCRIPTION
Government of Canada (GOC): EcoAction	Jan. 19, 2019	2019-2020 funded new projects that engaged Canadians and demonstrated measurable results related to fresh water.
Culture Innovation Fund Community Food Literacy and Access Program	Nov. 20, 2019; May 21, 2019	Our broad and diverse culture includes the arts, music, heritage, languages, cultural identities, diversity, recreation, museums, libraries, traditions, food, spirituality and much more. Innovation in the scope of this grant is daring, collaborative, and new. The Community Food Literacy and Access Fund supports food literacy initiatives that help older adults share food and nutrition skills and knowledge with younger generations.
TD Friends of the Environment	Jan. 15; July 15	The program supports a range of environmental initiatives, with a focus on education/ green space.
Scotia Bank Community fund	90 days for a response	The fund supports registered charities or non-profits that can display measurable impact and a record of achievement.
J.D. Irving, Limited (JDI)	Not applicable	JDI supports the communities where they live and work through charitable donations and sponsorships
Richardson Foundation LTD.	Apply once per fiscal year	The foundation helps registered Canadian charities achieve by providing funding that will enrich the lives of the people in the communities they serve.



Other useful fund development links

- [Selling your Ideas to Funders](#)
- [Resources from the Grantsmanship Center](#)
- [Canadian Subsidy Directory](#)
- [Canadian Social Enterprise Guide](#)

7. DESIGN PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES



Designing a new site is tricky. Every site we've created (3) we have hired a designer to work with staff and community to create a printable, share-able site design. Common Roots-H.I. was designed by the Cities and Environment Unit (CEU), a community planning and design group based in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University. Common Roots-Woodside was designed by Planner Brynn Nheiley and Landscape Architect Stephen Cushing. Common Roots-BiHi was designed by Samantha Battaglia, MSc Ecological Design.

HOT TIP #1 We wrote grants for this work to be done by skilled professionals. The grants included multiple community meetings to gather input and engagement. Having an accurate, thoughtful, beautiful, legible design is worth it. Ensuring that you hear all the wisdom from the community is worth it too.

We started the design process for Common Roots-BiHi with the information gathered in a community meeting. This was a big community meeting that helped us define what was required in a new site. That summary can be read here. We went through the whole crazy process of securing a site, as per Chapter 4: Land Use Agreement Road Map. Once we settled in on BiHi Park, we held a

community meeting at a neighbouring church. You can read more about that community meeting here.

With that info and the programming plans of the staff, we sat down with the designer. Both staff and the designer spent some time observing the site for how sun, water, wind, people and animals moved through it.

We ended up with three drawings. One analysis. One site design. And a phasing plan....



SUMMARY SITE ANALYSIS

COMMON ROOTS URBAN FARM

Summary Analysis

Observed Patterns and Implications

Clusters of trees and shrubs along the property edge provide shade, shelter and a barrier from vehicular traffic.

- Gaps in between this vegetation could be filled to provide a more secure and continuous barrier to traffic.

Safe pedestrian access to the site is limited to an existing path from the south-facing park along Samuel Walker Dr. This path connects the south and the north side of the park and abruptly ends with a circular asphalt landing on the north side of the park. There is no obvious destination or delineated gathering space on the north side of the park.

- There is opportunity to improve the connection between both sides of the park and create more desirable gathering spaces on the north side.

The southern corner of the park is the main pedestrian entrance and connection to the south side park. This area features a circular asphalt landing, frequent water build-up, saturated soils and summer shade from deciduous trees.

- Species planted in this area must tolerate full shade and ponding.
- Replacing the circular asphalt landing with vegetation and/or applying appropriate stormwater management BMP's could help limit ponding.
- Any alterations to this space must prioritize pedestrian access.

The southern side of the site is a steep north-facing slope along the side of the highway. This slope is difficult to access and the most significant change in elevation on the site.

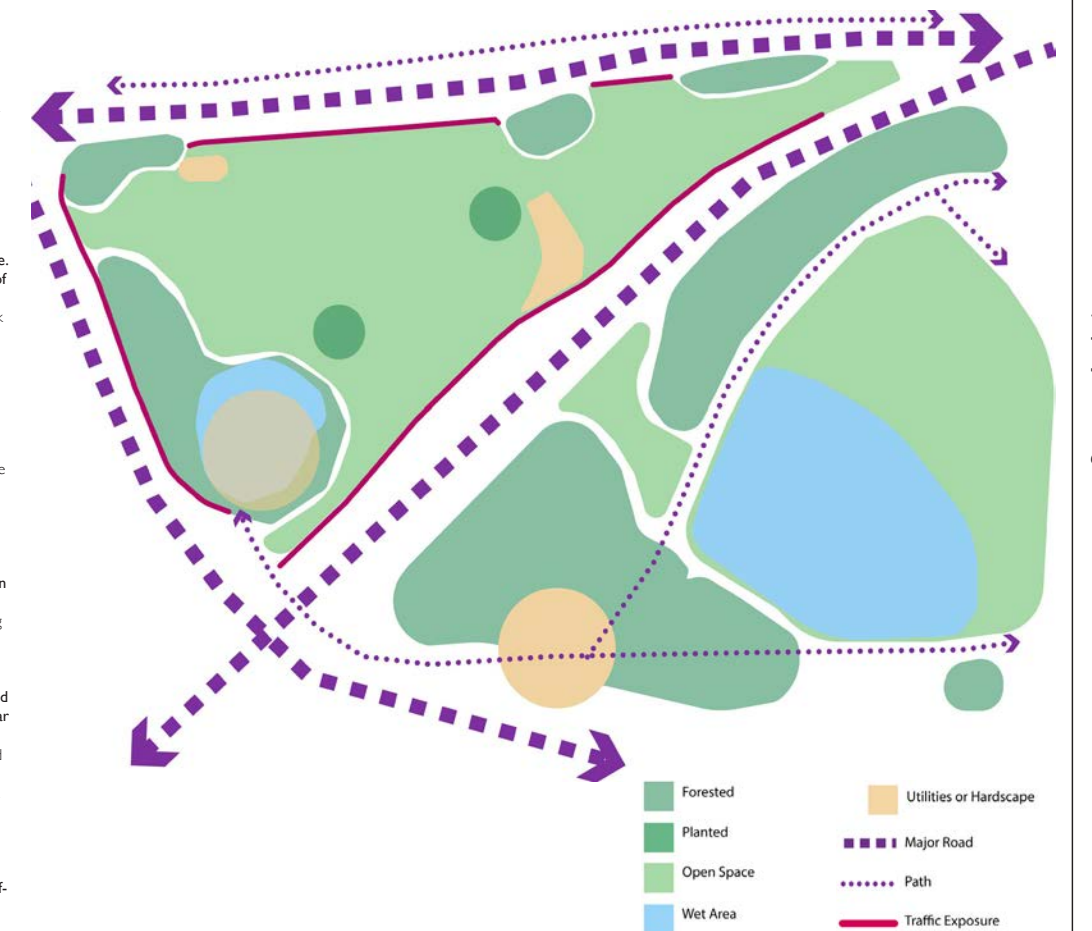
- With limited accessibility the slope holds potential for less time-intensive farming practices (meadows, perennials) and water storage/gravity feeding.

The east half of the site is divided from the west by an old off-ramp paved area and a few trees. This tapered east-end is narrow and sandwiched between fast vehicular traffic with minimal vegetative barrier from the street.

- Defined access and appropriate barriers could create a more safe, sheltered and welcoming space.
- This area is far from the center of the farm and may be more suitable as market garden space, meadow or perennial crops rather than community space.

Overall the site has a small amount of open space in full sun, an awkward tapered shape, and a handful of infrastructural obstacles (storm drains, utility boxes, old off-ramp).

- There is limited space to grow market crops in long continuous beds.
- To limit encroaching on valuable cropland, the farm's gathering space and common plots can be predominantly located in partial-full shade areas where trees are present.



ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN
& COMMUNITY PLANNING

Summary Analysis
Prepared by: Samantha Battaglia
Spring 2019

Common Roots Urban Farm
Bayers Rd. and Desmond Ave.
Halifax, NS



We've included a phasing plan to highlight how helpful a drawing can be in imagining how expansion could happen. (Note: we haven't applied to the Municipality to expand our footprint: that is a whole 'nother kettle of fish.)

In terms of design tips...

Permaculture design is a helpful framework with some great guiding principles. Common Roots-BiHi Coordinator Sara Burgess took a permaculture design course before Common Roots' big move to a new site. The course helped her get better equipped to participate in the design process and respond to realities once on site.

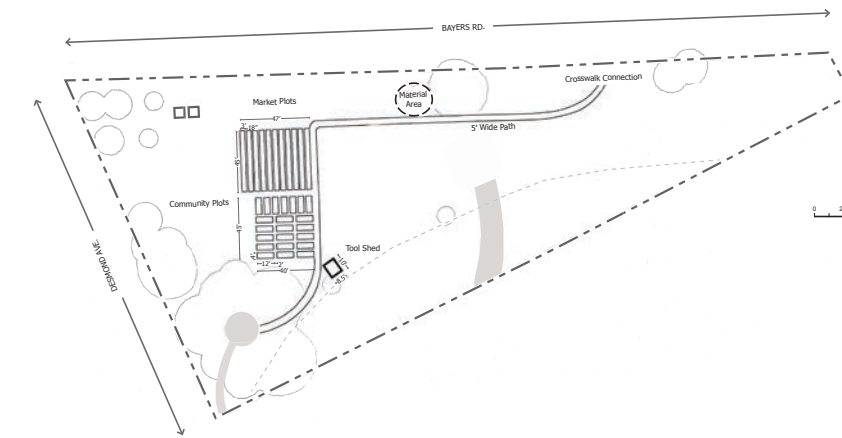
Also, the book *Edible Forest Gardens - Vol 2: Ecological Design And Practice for Temperate-Climate Permaculture*, has some valuable suggestions and design patterns, as does the book *A Pattern Language*, by Christopher Alexander. *Design for Ecological Democracy* by Randolph Hester is full of inspiration and tips too.

HOT TIP #2 When starting on a design, work from the known to the unknowns. The main known is the access point(s) to the site. Starting with the big main pathways might be helpful. The next main things are the footprint and needs - e.g. market garden beds, shed, community garden plots. Through our community consultations we knew what elements the community wanted. The next part of the challenge is careful review of the rules requested by the landowner, the constraints of the MOU. It pays to have a designer help refine these many factors and possibilities into measurable spaces that function well together.

FARM LAYOUT PLAN

COMMON ROOTS URBAN FARM

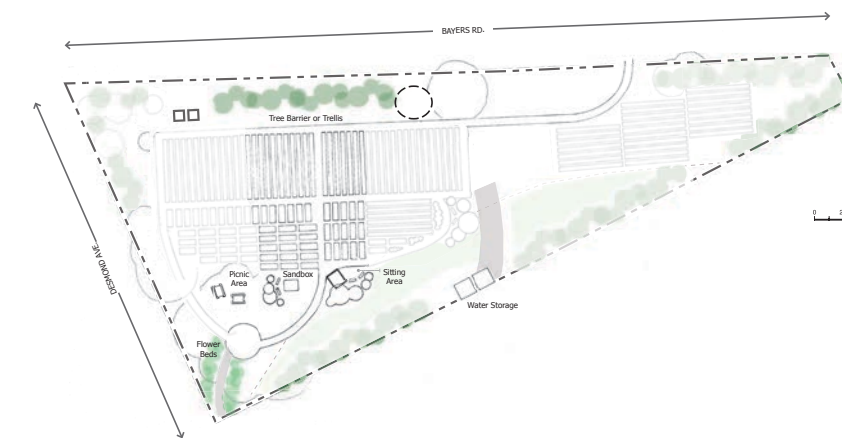
Proposed Farm Layout



PHASING PLAN

COMMON ROOTS URBAN FARM

Phasing Plan



HOT TIP #3 There are multiple pathway widths. The main paths need to be wide enough for a wheelchair to pass a wheelbarrow - a min of 5'. Paths through the market garden are the narrowest: we found 16" to be good. Pathways between community garden plots alternate between 2' and 2.5'. Every second pathway is wide enough to get a wheelbarrow down. We did this to maximize growing space.

HOT TIP #4 We made our community garden boxes 4'x12'. This was the biggest we could affordably make them. We bought boards 12' long. We didn't have to make many cuts. Four feet is about the widest you can go without someone needing to make a path to get into the plot.

We prefer not to encase the market garden beds in wooden boxes. Farmers don't so we didn't want to either. It is a lot of cost, robs nitrogen from the soil, and makes it harder to cultivate the soil. In the early years we had 4' wide beds but later switched to 30" wide beds as per the Market Gardener method, which is more ergonomic and therefore more efficient. This is another argument for not boxing the beds: it was possible to make changes.

We created a colour/shape system to differentiate the three kinds of garden beds: community plots, market garden and commons. The commons beds anyone could garden in and harvest from. In the community garden plots and market garden random harvesting and helping was discouraged. We tried to make this clear with signs and symbols that anyone could understand.

HOT TIP #5 A central gathering place is key. A front stoop, front porch stairs, the kitchen table, if you will.



7.1 KEY ELEMENTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHILE YOU DESIGN

Compost: Compost is tricky. In the city it needs to be tidy and rodent free. Volunteers often throw weeds with seeds into the compost. Because urban farm compost generally lacks manure/ nitrogen it doesn't get hot enough to kill the weed seeds. Finding a volunteer who is compost obsessed and wants to create gorgeous miso-like compost for the urban farm would be ideal. Finding a way to chop the compost finely is very helpful. Soaking seedy weeds in water for 2 weeks helps to kill the seeds but it can smell. Compost needs to stay moist to decompose. In the 'love to have' column of the budget is a compost blanket to help keep the heat in the compost pile and moderate moisture.

Water. So important and so easy to take for granted. Climate change is making this more crucial. Water is not free in most urban places and access is not certain. For a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly solution an urban farm should invest in rainwater harvesting systems - ideally in systems where water comes off adjacent roofs. Rainwater capture is an affordable way to gather water but there are logistical challenges and some health risks to take into consideration. Municipalities have strict policies around rainwater collection to ensure food safety for urban farmers. Many of the policies focus on the location of rain barrels to ensure that no contamination by compost, highway run-off, or other toxic chemicals occurs.

It is also recommended to have another source of water, aside from rainwater. Hooking into the municipal system can be costly, but it sure is nice to have regular running water. What most places tend to do is to pay for water usage through a neighbouring building. This generally means hoses and storage containers that need to be filled.

SIDE NOTE : On two of the three Common Roots sites, water has been a constant topic of conversation. Jayme says, "Oh there is so much to talk about here, I can't even!" Sara replies, "I also can't even. Ugh."

Soil quality: Soil quality is a primary concern. Many municipalities require urban farms to submit soil tests or only allow produce to be grown in raised garden beds with imported soil to reduce the risk of soil contamination. Raised beds on urban farms that use imported soil help protect gardeners from contaminated soil underneath. In addition, if the raised beds are closed at the bottom - and you have the equipment to move them - they can be moved from site to site.

There are two kinds of soil tests: the ones done by the Department of Agriculture that test NPK and soil organic matter. (Around here they are \$25 and very helpful if you have someone who can help you read them and make soil fertility prescriptions. A great book on this is *The Intelligent Gardener: Growing Nutrient Dense Food*.) The other is a

soil contamination test is done by a laboratory. We tested for heavy metals and VOCs (volatile organic compounds = petrochemicals). These tests are expensive (like \$250 each), but it is important to know. Here's some good information on soil contamination and urban agriculture.

Vertical Farming. We haven't done this yet ourselves but plan to. Urban farms use simple vertical farming structures to maximize space and resources and grow as much produce as possible from raised or in-ground garden beds. Vertical farming can optimize an outdoor space with the ingenious use of vine-growing plants and galvanized steel trellises or fencing.

Greenhouses: Greenhouses allow for longer-season food production and expand productivity. They also provide a unique opportunity to host educational programs and employment training throughout the year.

While a greenhouse can add a lot of value to an urban farm or community garden, it is important to be aware of barriers to obtaining them. Along with the high cost and extra labour required to build and operate greenhouses, many municipal bylaws prohibit organizations from building permanent structures. Municipalities that allow permanent structures may have size restrictions or they

may restrict certain greenhouse operations and certain produce grown in the greenhouse.

Prior to purchasing a greenhouse, a community garden/urban farm should undertake certain steps:

1. Undertake a feasibility study similar to the one presented in the NWT Can Grow: Greenhouse Feasibility Guide. It is important to be confident of the local produce demand to ensure that your capital venture is sustainable.
2. Organizations should treat greenhouse structures as a significant capital purchase, especially if the organization intends to pay for a new irrigation system, heating unit, lighting and ventilation. It is important to take all necessary precautions while raising capital funds, such as implementing a funding plan and asking for more funds than you need from a banker, investor, or grant funder – as seen in Chapter 5: Land Use Agreement Road Map.
3. In order to implement greenhouse infrastructure it is important to receive public acceptance – such as permission from the local municipality to build a greenhouse, or public acceptance from individuals living around the farm site.

8. TIPS ON PRACTISING SOCIAL INCLUSION



For many reasons, Common Roots has always asked how we could include a diverse range of individuals and communities in the urban farm. We've thought about this from a physical accessibility perspective, working to make the garden accessible to folks using wheelchairs or with a visual impairment. We've thought about how to make the farm accessible and appealing to folks with privilege as well as folks experiencing poverty. We have participants from many many racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds, as well as socio-economic.

This chapter includes some tips of things we've done that have been helpful for increasing the inclusion of diverse people in the urban farms. We interviewed some of our key participants and partners to glean specific advice to share. Thank you to Milena Khazanavicius for sharing her advice from the perspective of a blind gardener. Thank you to Heather Asbil who works as the community garden coordinator through Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia for the past 6 years. Thanks to Hillary Lindsay who coordinates Common Roots-Woodside at the Nova Scotia Hospital, which serves mental health and addiction patients. Thanks to Sara Burgess, the coordinator of Common Roots- BiHi and Common Roots-H.I., who has been working with new-Canadians, refugee women, folks facing barriers to employment and volunteers. Thanks to all for the insights shared and gathered here.

HOT TIP #1 It takes time. Sometimes it takes way more time than predicted.

This is true in the coordination of volunteers and participants. Explaining things can take time especially when working with folks who speak multiple languages and/or who come from diverse backgrounds. Explaining the tasks takes time. Checking in throughout the activity to make sure that people have understood and are comfortable takes time. If one of the goals is increasing social connectivity, then taking the time to create a culture of inclusion and care is part of the good work.

Get comfortable with taking more time, noticing what needs more time and why. There is the time spent building relationships. There is time that you can't focus on productivity. People come to the farm for so many reasons. For many of them those reasons are social. Many people are socially isolated so come to the farm for community connection. This is part of the impact and outcomes: the good work.

Common Roots works with many newcomers which requires thoughtfulness about language. To communicate, often various methods needed - in person, by phone, signs in multiple languages. Hire interpreters. For an interpreter to pass along a message,

it needs to be written down clearly. It is also helpful to find a community member that will volunteer to communicate with folks in their community. In this case, writing down the clear message you want passed along is good practice.

Sometimes native English speakers may find the pace of interpretation at workshops and events very slow. We work to build a culture of acceptance, patience, curiosity and cross-cultural learning. We've debated doing the same workshop twice - once with interpretation, once without - but we believe in integration not segregation. Native English speakers enjoy many privileges in comparison to newcomers to Canada, so we encourage relaxing and appreciating the intercultural experience.

"Move at the speed of trust" is a guiding principle popularized by Adriene Maree Brown in her fabulous book [Emergent Strategy](#). (Highly recommended reading: all Common Roots staff have read it and continue to draw on the wisdom therein.) This is a useful mantra.

HOT TIP #2 Budget for inclusion. Some of the things we work into our grant budgets include: childcare, bus tickets, taxi chits, grocery gift certificates, food/snacks and interpretation services. (Note: We use the term interpretation instead of translation to acknowledge the improvisational communication that that role requires. It is rarely a verbatim translation.) We hire interpreters for workshops, events, on-farm signage and promotional posters. Common Roots-BiHi makes signs for their farm beds in three popular languages for people that work/volunteer on the farm. Even just seeing the various languages present helps to build a culture of inclusion. To see an example of posters and the beauty of a diverse and inclusive party check out this blog & video of the 2017 Harvest Hootenanny.

A note of the cost of interpretation: assume \$25/hr. Many interpreters charge for a minimum of 2 hrs.

HOT TIP #3 'Haircuts by children'. Inspired by the art project, which you can see [here](#), we embraced this idea of the imperfect, wabisabi nature of a community farm. People did things for the first time, so of course it wasn't perfect. That's fine! We encouraged everyone to take on this attitude of adventuring, to relax into play and participation. It's okay to make mistakes. Sometimes it is even awesome!

Tips around Accessibility:

An urban farm needs to be accessible by public transportation.

Thinking about how blind and wheelchair-using participants can use the site is important. We had a blind friend help us improve the site for access for blind and visually impaired people. When doing our second site design we incorporated her suggestions and feedback in the design process. Same with wheelchair users. Being able to include everyone has really helped to build good feelings at Common Roots. If you need support in creating accessibility, the Rick Hansen Foundation might be a great starting point.

We worked really hard to become accessible. Common Roots-H.I. was on the doorstep of the Emergency Department. There were many wheelchair users around, so we worked hard to find the funds to create wide crusher-dust pathways, appropriate for wheels - wheelchairs, walkers, strollers. We provided benches every 50' or so, for those short-of-breath to take a rest. We also build beds at various heights to make the garden more comfortable for various bodies. Some beds are wheelchair accessible, some good for sitting on the edge of, some knee-high, some lower.

Some tips from Milena about being more accessible to the blind and visually challenged community:

When considering signage and print, use plain language with a high colour contrast. Use large print for signs. The pathways inside the farms should always be clear of debris. Making sure to have some pathways that are made of a distinct surface, that someone with visual challenges can feel, is important for navigation. It is a good idea to encase plots in boxes so that it's easier for people to navigate to their own plots by counting how many plots are on the way to theirs.

Gardening brings people fresh produce and fresh air. It is important to give everyone, including people with disabilities, an opportunity to connect with nature. So many aspects of our society exclude people living with differing abilities. Community gardens can provide the space an opportunity to find a new passion or simply take a break and relax in nature.

Some tips from Hillary, from working at Common Roots-Woodside on the grounds of the Nova Scotia Hospital:

Gardens are a great space for people from all sorts of backgrounds and ability levels to come together. People can work together and be social, or work separately and be contemplative. In terms of working with the hospital, it is extremely important to have a farm champion who works inside the hospital and can make introductions, build relationships, and brainstorm ways of connecting the farm to programs and services. It was important that people in all areas of the hospital knew what we were doing outside and how they could be involved (from housekeeping to administrators). Recreational Therapists (RTs) have become important allies as they can most easily engage patients with the garden. The garden programming



for patients started small, with the RTs that were most keen, and has expanded every year since then, including branching out into indoor programming with plants.

In terms of community engagement, simply walking around the neighbourhood with flyers and talking to businesses and organizations and community groups is a great way to get the lay of the land and understand better how you can engage with and serve the community you are surrounded by.

Some tips from Heather and Nanook:

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) has a community program that supports newcomers to be more included in Canadian community. In this work there are two levels of inclusion: the first level is to reduce the discrimination within the community; the second, higher level of inclusion is to build connections within community.

It is important to try to bring down barriers to participation in community gardens. An essential first step is including everyone in decision making. Building leadership is a key activity required to meet this goal. A main challenge of much social programming aimed at increasing social connectivity is that the leadership team is not diverse. Ideally, a community garden/farm can give a broad range of people from diverse cultural background opportunities for employment, as well as the chance to experience leadership.

Some other tips include:

Have shared leadership resources and provide leadership training for everyone. Create space to show the skills that people have. Work for a culture of supportiveness when new members are joining the

group. Get to know everyone's background and the language they speak.

When it comes to conflict among members and feelings of discrimination, the key is to create space to communicate with respect for all perspectives. Instead of making decisions for the members it's better to ask how the members want to solve the problems.

From a research perspective, a common theme throughout literature describing urban agriculture is its ability to provide cross-cultural learning in the form of building place-attachment and social capital. For many immigrants, community gardens can provide a sense of cultural continuity by providing the regular practice of growing food and a bonding space with people from the same background. It can also be a bridging space to help grow, learn, and connect with neighbours in their new home. Scholars who explore different types of social capital say that long-established and collaborative farms display significant amounts of 'bridging' (connection between groups or inter-group connections) and 'bonding' (within group - or intra-group - connections).

9. PROGRAMMING



Urban farms like Common Roots operate with an important social mandate. Our mission statement is “to promote healthy lifestyles and landscapes through hands-on education about growing and eating healthy food.” We achieve our mission by providing individuals with employability skills and business training, offering at-risk and marginalized individuals increased access to fresh and nutritious food, delivering educational programs and offering community garden spaces.

Individuals who participate in our programs have the opportunity to gain conversational English skills through community interactions and acquire entrepreneurial skills by working as a part of the market garden team. The underlying goal of Common Roots is to fight food insecurity and social isolation by providing space in which individuals can gather together, learn from each other and share.

With help from sponsors and partners we offer numerous programs, workshops and services, including:

Community Garden Plots

Many urban farms (and community gardens) offer community plots, market beds and common beds. Common Roots accepts varied

donations for the use of individual plots, and maintains community plots for public use.

Market Garden and Sales

We grow produce for sale to businesses and the public to help maintain and grow our farms. We sell to a variety of organizations across the city including Stone Hearth Bakery, Birdies Bakery, the hospital cafeteria, the Loaded Ladle and Props Floral. We also run a regular stand to sell our wares at or near each farm. These activities help Common Roots earn revenue, promote urban agriculture and reach new community members.

Skill Development for Newcomers

Common Roots offers employability skill development, including English in the workplace for newcomers, through our Deep Roots program. Through helping in the market garden, participants develop their understanding of Canadian workplace expectations, culture, and vocabulary.

Farm Stewards

Every day from 3-6pm, there are 3-6 volunteers on the farm who have an area of farm commons to garden. These are our Farm Stewards. Volunteers take one shift a week. We train them in April, and from



May through October, this group of volunteers does a tonne to help other gardeners, facilitate social connections, maintain the space, and act as ambassadors for the project.

Farm Tours

Urban farms can offer site tours to businesses, school groups, day camps and other institutions for a suggested donation (we suggest \$50 - \$100). This can be expanded into a professional development opportunity with the help of some skilled facilitation.

Workshops

Common Roots offers a variety of educational workshops to the public, often taking donations for their offerings. Workshops have covered topics such as gardening 101, wreath-making and preparing sauerkraut. Educational workshops are key to the Common Roots' business model as they help promote the farm, engage volunteers and promote growing local produce. Workshops provide participants with the skills needed to start their gardens or explore other creative and therapeutic outlets.

HOT TIP partnering with other organizations can be really helpful for the spring workshop series. The year that we partnered with The Loaded Ladle, and ISANS was our best year ever in terms of attendance and satisfaction.

Community Events

Common Roots hosts free community events for all ages. Annual events such as spring/summer concerts and the Harvest Hootenanny invite community members to come to the farm to share food, enjoy music and dancing, smash pumpkins (for fun and to amend soil) and take part in silent auctions and other activities.

9.1 PROGRAMMING IDEAS

HELPFUL TOOL: This is an example of a logic model for a workshop series targeted to children. Your organization could use this planning tool (among many others) to help design and run a successful educational program.

Inputs (Resources)	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcome	Long-term Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Garden Coordinators (2) Workshop facilitators & instructors (School-teachers (2), community gardens/NFPss (4)) Educational supplies and toolkits Gardening supplies: wood, soil, compost bins, spade, etc. Computers for coordinators with internet access Education program funding (~\$35,000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a series of indoor/outdoor workshops/events that target various modes of interactive engagement with guidance from Ecology Action Centre Curriculum, Nova Scotia School Garden Guide, and educators across the city Collaborate and coordinate with other community gardens/farms, schoolteachers, and experts in downtown Halifax for workshop activities Collaborate and coordinate with local businesses and other community gardens to provide prizes Educational support through ongoing internet resources and hardcopy resources for workshops, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish 15 new raised beds at various school sites Create and distribute informational handouts for each workshop Involve and collaborate with 4 non-profit organizations dedicated to teaching students/youth about horticulture Organize and run 9 workshops to teach beginner gardening practices Engage at least 40 different participants in the respective workshops Use evaluation tools (surveys, questionnaires, photovoice) to track program impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance student and youth's ability to grow healthy and affordable produce Strengthening learning and community ties through informal, indirect, and incidental learning opportunities Enhancing collaboration among organizations, community gardens, and academics involved in the local food system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-aged children gain practical horticultural knowledge and access to fresh produce. More children gain education about nutrition and healthy lifestyles More children develop gardening skills and knowledge

More helpful tools: An annual workshop series could follow a format similar to the one below. Other examples are found in the Ecology Action Centre's twelve part workshop curriculum, Antioch University's [Community Garden Connections year-round manual](#), and Miller and Arnold's proposed [Program](#).

Class Title	Month	Presenter/ Partner	Topics Covered	Hands-on Experiences / Activities
Tasting local produce	January	Urban farm coordinator partnering with local non-profit/student group to help prepare and donate food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why we grow local food What we grow in Canada and what is grown elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and ice breaker. Discussion about farming/gardening experiences with participants Sampling jams, vegetables, fruits, and desserts made from local produce
Planning A Garden	February	Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farm/ community garden representatives, as well as a local greenhouse expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching container gardening and indoor planting for crops that require longer growing periods and more heat Planting periods according to vegetable (growing calendar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of previous workshop activities (each session could start with a quick discussion) Create a growing calendar by using plant images and placing them onto bristle boards Closing circle discussion with members teaching one another what they learnt in the session (each session could end with this activity)
Planting the Garden	March / April	Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farm/ community garden representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companion planting and choosing plant varieties to suit your needs Garden bed design Methods to gather and where to best purchase seed Methods of garden bed preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a plot map design to take home with help from workshop focus groups and resources Starting trays (planting seeds) for the urban farm Urban farm Garden bed preparation Decorating herb kits/ Planting seeds in decorated containers
Composting in the Garden	March / April / May	Urban farm coordinator partnering with municipal waste representative / instructor with knowledge about soil science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What to compost Soil types in Nova Scotia How to enhance soil quality and fertility by various methods (liming, fertilization through compost, and cover crops) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trash or compost? Game Build communal outdoor compost Build take-home vermiculture composts
Plant and Garden Care	May	Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farm/ community garden representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods of general garden maintenance, like weeding, a brief overview of composting, thinning plants, and pruning plants Labelling plants and organizing square sections/rows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will receive a trowel/spade to help with future garden maintenance Weeding activity Photovoice activity (for everyone)
Plant Identification (ID)	June / July	Urban farm Coordinator will partner with master gardener program coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic plant family characteristics and plant ID Methods behind using an identification key How to access online resources and applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing participants with a guide to common native species in Nova Scotia Helping participants download apps and use them / helping participants find and navigate websites

Class Title	Month	Presenter/ Partner	Topics Covered	Hands-on Experiences / Activities
Harvesting Crops: Part I	August	Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farm/ community garden representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing when to harvest, keeping track of your calendar and says to vegetable maturity Methods of transplanting Methods of extending the growing season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class harvest trivia with examples of mature vegetables or photos for discussion Transplant party at the urban farm
Harvesting Crops: Part II		Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farm/ community garden representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed harvesting techniques How to put your garden to bed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed Harvest Party and local growers can take two bags of seed (dependant on variety) Mulching community plots and preparing the soil for the next season
Cooking Party		Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farm/ community garden representatives / diverse local chefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing culturally relevant plants How to cook your favourite produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two chefs will demonstrate their staple dishes with local ingredients. The chefs will instruct participants in food preparation to aid in meal preparation Participants will be asked to bring recipes to this event and write them on recipe cards

Organization	City	Opportunity	Outcomes
Alemany Farm	San Francisco, California, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large outdoor urban farm Educational programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security, social and environmental education Various volunteer programs Corporate group visits Summer camp/school visits
Acta Non Verba	City of Oakland, California, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross cultural learning Educational youth programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases students gardening, and business-related skills Provides hands-on experience on a quarter-acre non-profit land This program is empowered and founded by women of colour
Ripple Farms	Toronto, Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertical Indoor Infrastructure: Hydroponics Educational programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches students gardening, biology, economics, and food literacy Increased hands on experience with indoor infrastructure Provides extra space for growing produce Reduces water waste
Black Creek	Toronto, Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational programming Cross cultural learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces social isolation Encourages cross-cultural learning

Organization	City	Opportunity	Outcomes
Erin Mills Farmers Market	Mississauga, Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches nutrition and how to cook healthy meals
Lufa Farms	Montreal, Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse Vertical Indoor Infrastructure: Hydroponics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces amount of toxins in the soil Reduces water use and waste Provides centrally located produce and an efficient produce delivery service
Sole Foods	Vancouver, British Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertical Outdoor Infrastructure Employability Development Employment support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces amount of toxins in the soil Mobile garden beds for easier transportation. Uses raised beds and has managed large moves Employs hundreds of people that face multiple barriers
Fresh Roots	Vancouver, British Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational school programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches students how to garden Creates active outdoor teaching for various ages
DIVERSEcity	Surrey, British Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational school programming Cross cultural learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances social skills and relationships Encourages cross-cultural learning Teaches cooking and gardening skills
University of Saskatchewan: McEwen Community Garden	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross cultural Indigenous learning Educational youth programming Art programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages cross-cultural learning Reduces social isolation Increases arts and cultural programming
Askiy Community Garden	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational school programming Cross cultural Indigenous learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages cross-cultural learning Teaches gardening, environmental and marketing skills Teaches traditional ways of planting, harvesting, cooking and ceremonies
Reclaim Urban Farm	Edmonton, Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased growing spaces Increases farm access to resources (ex: land, water) Increases ability to interact with consumers and educate
Iqaluit Community Greenhouse	Iqaluit, Nunavut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1000 ft2 fully serviced northern greenhouse Indigenous cross-cultural learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses intergenerational learning by partnering with Elders to teach traditional ways of planting, harvesting, cooking and ceremonies Can grow produce all year round Provides extra space to grow produce
Fort Simpson Community Garden Society	Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational school programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases students gardening, cooking, and food literacy skills Provides hands-on experience with gardens located on school land

10. RESOURCES

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