

URBAN AGRICULTURE POLICY

TOWN OF
MOUNT ROYAL
April 2021

VILLE DE
MONT-ROYAL



TOWN OF
MOUNT ROYAL

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

PHILIPPE ROY



In a garden city like ours, residents have a natural affinity for urban agriculture. While it may be the latest trend for some municipalities, for us, it represents a return to our roots of sorts.

Local history tells us that in addition to the Montreal melon, many other garden species also played a part in Townies' daily lives in the early years of the community. Over the decades, there has been a collective shift toward more ornamental horticulture. However, for some residents, growing their own herbs and picking a handful of beans for dinner are activities that have continued to this day.

Many TMR families are currently discovering or revisiting this idea and are clearly interested in growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables right here in Mount Royal. The Town wishes to support this movement. In the summer of 2020, it collected your feedback through a survey and examined your preferences.

In the following pages, some suggestions have been ruled out from the get-go, such as backyard poultry farming. However, with respect to plants, your answers inspired some of the excellent initiatives included in this document, while a range of discussions are under way on the possibility of front yard and rooftop vegetable gardens, and even the option of greenhouses on private land. One thing is certain—the Town plans to allocate more and more space to vegetable species in its developments.

Happy reading—and happy growing!

WHAT IS URBAN AGRICULTURE?

There are a number of current definitions for urban agriculture. The Guide de bonnes pratiques sur la planification territoriale et le développement durable (Best Practices Guide for Urban Planning and Sustainable Development), published in 2020 by the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation, defines urban agriculture as:

“All food production activities that are often, but not exclusively, carried out on a small scale in urban, suburban and rural built environments and that use local resources, products and services.”

It is important to note that urban agriculture can be commercial, community-based, public or private.

INITIATIVES ALREADY IN PLACE

Private: In Mount Royal, urban agriculture is largely private. In fact, a survey conducted showed 74% of the 225 respondents already have a vegetable garden on their property!

Town community gardens: The Town's community garden on Brittany Avenue has 48 plots available to residents. Each year, many use this space to grow an abundance of fruit and vegetables. Places are limited. Those interested should book early in the season.

Green spaces: The Town already has a number of urban green spaces where fruits, vegetables and herbs are grown. Examples include:

- **Wicksteed Park:** Features a herb and vegetable garden
- **Rockland Road near Jean-Talon:** The lush green foliage you see is actually sweet potatoes!
- **Thomas L. Darling Park:** A large amount of kale is planted there



BENEFITS

Urban agriculture offers numerous benefits, which is why the Town of Mount Royal wants to encourage the practice. Some positive spin-offs include:

- **Promoting food independence**
- **Increasing consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables**
- **Knowing where food is sourced**
- **Increasing children's contact with nature**
- **Serving as an outreach activity for seniors**
- **Beautifying the environment**
- **Encouraging citizens to spend time outside**
- **Reducing stress, and other therapeutic effects of gardening**
- **Strengthening social connections**

MOUNT ROYAL SITUATION

To create a suitable action plan, the Town of Mount Royal had to analyze its strengths and weaknesses in urban agriculture as well as the opportunities and threats it faces. Here are the results of this analysis:

Strengths

- Community-focused Town Council, ready to invest
- Numerous parks and green spaces
- Strong interest in local gardening and urban agriculture among residents
- TMR Horticultural Society
- Fertile land (formerly used for melon farming)

Opportunities

- Space available on residents' properties to put in gardens
- Many roofs in the industrial sector could be developed
- Potential for mediation activities with youth and seniors and for running workshops

Weaknesses

- Community gardens used at full capacity and unable to meet demand
- Current community gardens located too far away from apartment buildings and seniors' residences in the town centre
- Regulations require amending, as needed

Threats

- Presence of small animals (squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, etc.)
- Visual pollution of poorly maintained gardens or greenhouses
- Irresponsible picking from public edible flower beds



A photograph of four purple kohlrabi vegetables with green stems and roots, arranged on a light-colored wooden surface. The vegetables are positioned vertically along the left side of the page.

OBJECTIVES

By adopting an urban agriculture policy, the Town aims to:

- **Improve residents' relationship with nature**
- **Enhance relationships between residents by increasing the area dedicated to community and/or collective gardens**
- **Raise awareness of urban agriculture and promote its education in schools**
- **Integrate urban agriculture into the Town's vision and sustainable development goals**
- **Foster food security and social inclusion**
- **Support residents in learning about urban agriculture**
- **Facilitate the adoption of urban agriculture by different stakeholders in the town**
- **Highlight local and urban agriculture**

ACTION PLAN

Strategic priority 1: Promote urban agriculture

Action 1: Community connections

- Implement a means of communication between the Town and residents

Action 2: Enhance the Town's website to provide tips and advice on urban agriculture

- Create a new section on the Town's website

Action 3: Set up kiosks on urban agriculture

- To be done in summer with the help of the Green Patrol or external specialists

Action 4: Offer training activities on urban agriculture

- In the form of conferences and/or webinars, etc.
- Suitable for all ages—youth, seniors and adults

Action 5: Raise awareness of urban agriculture initiatives and stakeholders in the Montreal area

- Use the Town's website, local and social media and the Green Patrol
- Install informative signage near various initiatives and collective gardens

ACTION PLAN

Strategic priority 2: Facilitate urban agriculture access and development

Action 1: Action 1: Amendments to municipal regulations

- Public consultation on regulatory amendments, including those affecting neighbouring homes
- Analyze the use of front yards, roofs and greenhouses for vegetable gardens

Action 2: Create an urban agriculture starter kit for residents

- This kit will give residents the confidence to start their own urban agriculture project
- The kit could include various plants and possibly small fruit trees so residents can enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables during the harvest season!

Action 3: Analyze the needs for adding new arable spaces

- Create new community or collective gardens
- Increase the arable land available to residents, if possible

Action 4: Implement a community garden management framework that meets the needs and expectations of users and the Town

- Share an “urban agriculture conduct and best practices guide” for community gardens to promote goodwill and harmony in these green spaces

Action 5: Increase the number of edible plantings in the Town’s planters or decorative flower beds

- The harvest will be donated to a food bank

Action 6: Ensure Town involvement in urban agriculture conferences, seminars and networking platforms

- This will allow the Town to keep abreast of the latest developments in urban agriculture.



Strategic priority 3: Improve the quality of life of residents through urban agriculture

Action 1: Share food grown in the Town's green spaces (vegetables, herbs and fruit)

- The harvest will be donated to a food bank

Action 2: Foster new social connections

- Involve TMR Horticultural Society
- Involve seniors and youth

Action 3: Increase fruit and vegetable space at the public market

TIMELINE

	2021	2022	2023
Strategic priority 1: Promote urban agriculture			
Action 1: Community connections	X		
Action 2: Enhance the Town's website to provide tips and advice on urban agriculture	X	X	
Action 3: Set up kiosks on urban agriculture		X	
Action 4: Offer training activities on urban agriculture		X	
Action 5: Raise awareness of urban agriculture initiatives and stakeholders in the Montreal area	X	X	
Strategic priority 2: Facilitate urban agriculture access and development	2021	2022	2023
Action 1: Amendments to municipal regulations		X	
Action 2: Create an urban agriculture starter kit for residents	X		
Action 3: Analyze the needs for adding new arable spaces			X
Action 4: Implement a community garden management framework that meets the needs and expectations of users and the Town	X		
Action 5: Increase the number of edible plantings in the Town's planters or decorative flower beds	X	X	X
Action 6: Ensure Town involvement in urban agriculture conferences, seminars and networking platforms			X
Strategic priority 3: Improve the quality of life of residents through urban agriculture	2021	2022	2023
Action 1: Share food grown in the Town's green spaces (Harvest offered to a food bank)		X	X
Action 2: Foster new social connections	X		
Action 3: Increase fruit and vegetable space at the public market		X	



CONTACT

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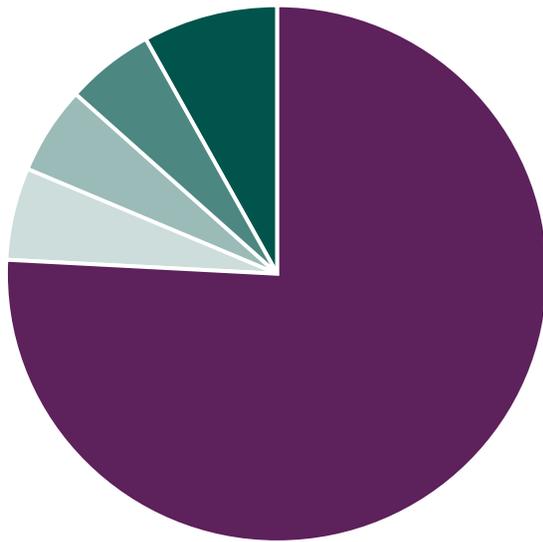
SCHEDULE 1: SURVEY RESULTS

In summer 2020, residents were asked to complete a survey on urban agriculture. 225 respondents answered the following questions:

	Yes	No
Are you in favour of urban agriculture?	99,1%	0,1%
Do you think the Town should implement incentives to promote urban agriculture?	93,6%	6,4%
Do you currently have a vegetable garden (in-ground, container or other type)?	74,2%	25,8%
If not, would you like to start one in the future?	91,4%	8,6%
Should the Town allow vegetable gardens in front yards?	76,9%	23,1%
Should the Town allow residents to grow gardens on their rooftops?	89,8%	10,2%
Should the Town allow year-round greenhouses on private land?	85,7%	14,3%
Should the Town establish a municipal greenhouse?	81,3%	18,7%
Should the Town grow more vegetables, fruits and herbs in some of its green flowerbeds?	84,4%	15,6%
Would you be interested in getting involved in a local urban agriculture association?	38,2%	61,8%

SCHEDULE 1: SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents who currently have vegetable gardens have put them in these locations:



Backyard	76%
Balcony	5,4%
Community gardens	5,4%
Front yard	5,4%
Other	7,8%

Citizens also raised questions or commented on the following points:

- Urban wildlife: squirrels, raccoons, groundhogs, and others
- Possibility of keeping chickens and having beehives
- Possibility of fencing gardens
- Potential visual pollution and standards regarding gardens and greenhouses
- Adding community and collective gardens in easy-to-access areas as well as raised garden beds that are more suitable for seniors
- Involvement of regional organizations
- Youth and school involvement
- Adding fruit trees to the urban forest
- Ban on using chemical products
- Organizing activities and training related to urban agriculture
- Home delivery of compost and mulch

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