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**Urban Agriculture Strategy – Draft Terms of Reference
Planner: L. Maitland**

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FROM:	JOHN M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	URBAN AGRICULTURE STRATEGY – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2016

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning & City Planner with respect to the Draft Terms of Reference for the development of an Urban Agriculture Strategy the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

- a) That the attached draft Terms of Reference for the development of an Urban Agriculture Strategy **BE CIRCULATED** for public review and comment; and,
- b) That the draft Terms of References **BE CONSIDERED** at the October 17, 2016 meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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None

BACKGROUND

Work relating to urban agriculture was initiated as a result of two resolutions of Council. On September 1, 2015 Municipal Council resolved:

the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to consult with key stakeholders and to report back at a future meeting of the appropriate standing committee, with respect to the feasibility of an overarching urban agriculture policy that will outline the following:

- i) an inventory of parcels of City-owned land that are potential location for urban farming;*
- ii) the role the City of London could play with regard to urban farming on public lands;*
- iii) a clear definition of “urban agriculture”; and,*
- iv) a review of the current license policies and by-laws to ensure that the City plays a role that does not hinder the various aspects of urban agriculture such as land preparation, food growth, food production and food sales. (2015-S12) (2/9/CPSC)*

The Planning Service workplan outlines the development of an Urban Agriculture Strategy as a project from Q3 2016 through Q1/Q2 2017. The attached draft Terms of Reference outlines a schedule to achieve that timeline.

On April 19, 2016, Municipal Council resolved:

that the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to report back at a future meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee with respect to how the City can assist in facilitating community groups utilizing privately owned lands for the purposes of urban agriculture; it being noted that the attached communication was received from Councillor M. van Holst with respect to this matter.

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that, for the purposes of urban agriculture, the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to report back at a future meeting(s) of the appropriate committee with respect to how the City can assist community groups utilizing:

- i) *privately-owned property; and/or*
- ii) *the property at 31 Firestone Boulevard; it being noted that the attached communication was received from Councillor van Holst with respect to this matter.*

Staff are currently identifying opportunities related to urban agriculture on the site at 31 Firestone Boulevard.

PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting will be scheduled in mid-September to allow for community confirmation of the draft terms of reference. This will allow for a terms of reference to be presented to PEC for endorsement in advance of the first visioning community meeting to be scheduled for October.

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE STRUCTURE

The draft Terms of Reference provides for an iterative process that allows the City and community to collaboratively develop a future vision for urban agriculture in the City of London. In developing the strategy, the process from growing food through food processing to food distribution can be addressed. Also important will be identifying the roles that the City (as both a regulatory body and community facilitator) and the community can play in implementing an urban agriculture strategy.

The Urban Agriculture Strategy acknowledges the work done within the city on food systems in recent years. A particular focus will be placed on the Community Food Assessment, which outlines the state of food systems in the London-Middlesex Region.

The draft Terms of Reference also notes the completed Community Gardens Strategic Plan which addresses community gardens on public land within the city. The Community Gardens Strategic Plan has established goals for the community gardens on municipally owned lands. The overarching Urban Agriculture Strategy will not modify these, but may include complimentary policies, and identify how this fits within an urban agriculture strategy.

Objectives

The draft Terms of Reference outline goals an Urban Agriculture Strategy which include:

- Establish a vision and goals for the City regarding food growth, food processing and food distribution within the built up area of the city;
- Determine the roles for the community and the City in the implementation of the strategy’s final goals.
- Evaluate the Official Plan, Zoning and other By-laws with regards to their effects on potential urban agriculture in the City.
- Analyze and evaluate options for City and other public lands that could be used for the purpose of urban agriculture; and,
- Prepare and implement any necessary amendments to City policies, by-laws and procedures determined through the Urban Agriculture Strategy.

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These objectives will provide for broad community collaborative discussion to address urban agriculture in the city.

Work Plan and Timeline

The Planning Services workplan identifies work on the Urban Agriculture Strategy beginning in Q3 2016 and finishing mid-2017. The schedule set out in the draft Terms of Reference is set up to meet this timeline. The first step, vision and context, is to be completed by November to prepare for a check-in presentation with the community at the Advisory Committee on the Environment’s Urban Agriculture Summit in November. A minimum of one check-in meeting will be scheduled to review the draft Strategy with the community in advance of bringing the Strategy forward for Council approval in 2017.

Consultation

Collaboration is essential to ensure the goals of the strategy are achieved. This can best be achieved by involving those within the city who are interested and invested in urban agriculture. Public consultation is an integral part of the proposed process. The City needs to ensure those who are likely to carry-out the goals of the strategy participate in its development.

The approach to attracting participants will reflect a ‘snowball’ method to spread notification beyond those directly notified. By asking stakeholders to distribute notice through their networks a greater number of Londoners will be made aware and able to participate in the process.

Publicly advertised meetings at each step is the intended approach. The possibility remains that further meetings could be scheduled should there be a focus on specific elements at any point. Comments submitted to staff will be collected throughout the process.

31 Firestone Boulevard

The property at 31 Firestone Boulevard has been identified as a site for potential urban agriculture demonstration project(s) within the city. It presents a unique possibility for larger-scale initiatives near potential neighbourhood users. The site has the potential to meet community desires for increased local food production.

The City is undertaking background work to ensure the site can operate as a local urban agriculture demonstration site. The site is also zoned and designated for industrial development, so the long-term future is not guaranteed. Availability of water and a possible lease for the lands are being reviewed.

A process to determine what initiatives or pilot projects with community partners will be undertaken parallel to the urban agriculture strategy project will be undertaken. The goal for the site is to have it prepared and ready in time for the 2017 growing season.

It must be recognized that any opportunity on this site is contingent on the desire and willingness of the landowner to lease these lands to the City. The City is currently seeking permission to access the lands.

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CONCLUSION

The proposed draft Terms of Reference sets out a process for developing an Urban Agriculture Strategy for the City of London. Through the proposed collaborative process the definition of urban agriculture, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for increased local food production will be established. The development of the Urban Agriculture Strategy will assist in the broader goal of Building a Sustainable City, in accordance with the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan for the City of London.

PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
LEIF MAITLAND PLANNER I, LONG RANGE PLANNING AND RESEARCH	GREGG BARRETT, AICP MANAGER, LONG RANGE PLANNING AND RESEARCH
RECOMMENDED BY:	
JOHN M. FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER	

August 26, 2016

LM

Appendix "A": Urban Agriculture Strategy Terms of Reference

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