STRATHCONA COUNTY

intelligent futures

COMMUNITY FOOD LAB
DESIGN. ADVOCACY. ENGAGEMENT.

Urban Agriculture Strategy

Our Process

THE BIG PICTURE

EXPLORE + ASSESS

FEB - JUNE 2016

Establish context for urban agriculture within the County. Identify best practices throughout North America. Develop a vision for urban agriculture through extensive community engagement.

THE COUNTY CONTEXT

SYNTHESIZE

JULY - AUG 2016

Engage key implementors of urban agriculture in the County. Script critical moves to realize the vision for urban agriculture.

FOCUSED ACTIONS

APPROVAL

SEPT - NOV 2016

Engage the community and project leadership on a draft strategy. Develop an actionable, strategic urban agriculture strategy for the County.

PROCESS PHASES

Engagement activities and stats.

6 ROADSHOW STOPS
Antler Lake Community Hall / Ardrossan Recreation Complex / North Cooking Lake Community Hall / Josephburg Community Hall / Sherwood Park Ottewell Barn / South Cooking Lake Community Hall

12 EVENTS ATTENDED
Ardrossan Farm Safety Fair / Ardrossan Picnic and Parade / Baseline Farmers' Market / Canada Day / Deville Hall Farmers' Market / Greenland Greenhouse / Salisbury Farmers' Market / Sherwood Park Farmers' Market / South Cooking Lake Bookmobile / South Cooking Lake Seniors Potluck / Strathcona County Trade Fair / Rural Living Days

2,253 PARTICIPANTS

8,896 IDEAS

85 HOURS OF ENGAGEMENT

APR 8 - JUL 1 2016 — EXPLORE & ASSESS

AUG 8 - 10 2016 — SYNTHESIZE

2 ENGAGEMENT PHASES

FEEDBACK CHANNEL		PARTICIPANTS	IDEAS
Attendance at events and businesses		979	949
Roadshow open houses		45	119
Online	Survey 1	161	184
	Survey 2	1051	7456
Workshops		9	188
Interviews		10	--
TOTAL		*2253*	*8896*

The Strathcona County
Urban Agriculture Strategy

Our Defintion

Urban agriculture is the practice of cultivating food in an urban area. It can be growing fruits, herbs and vegetables, or raising animals. It's a growing trend in North America as communities look for ways to increase food security.

It supports local, alternate choices to the traditional food system, and allows communities to grow niche foods.

Vision

Urban agriculture is easily accessed and seen in Strathcona County; it contributes to creating a livable community by helping to grow food, relationships, and economy in our community.

Goals

- Build a sense of community, identity, and place;
- Bring people together;
- Connect urban and rural communities;
- Build food literacy and awareness;
- Support local economic development and entrepreneurship;
- Expand food production;
- Build shared leadership;
- Reflect Strathcona County's natural history.
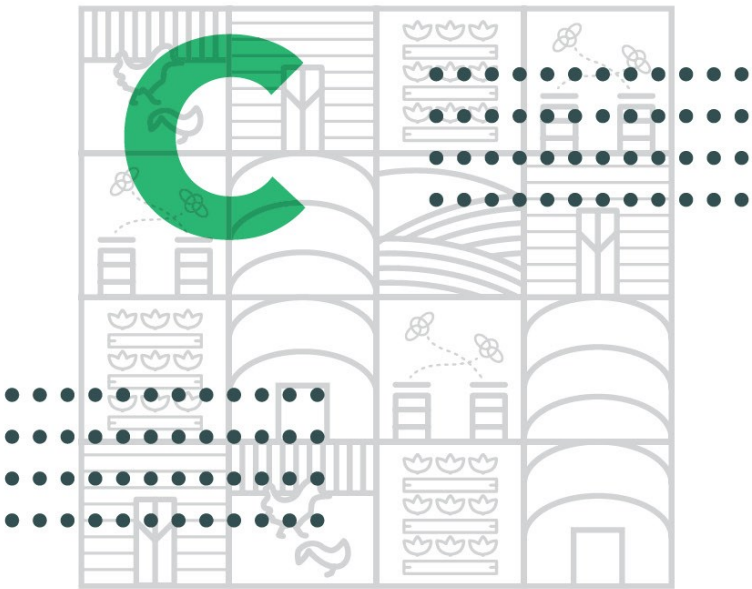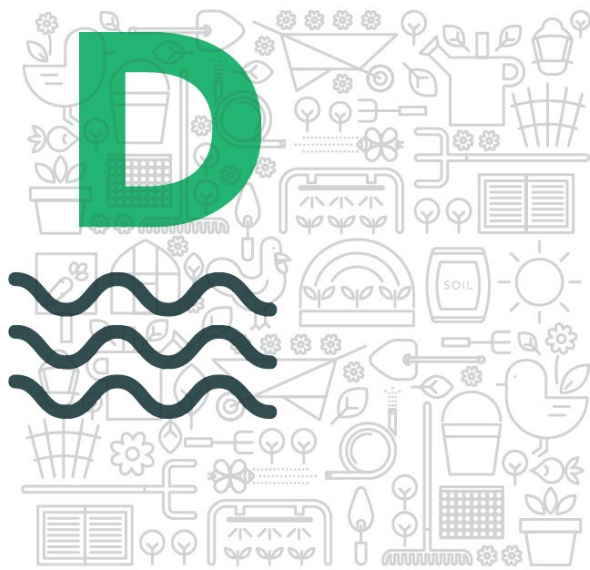
Strategy Areas

Community Gardening

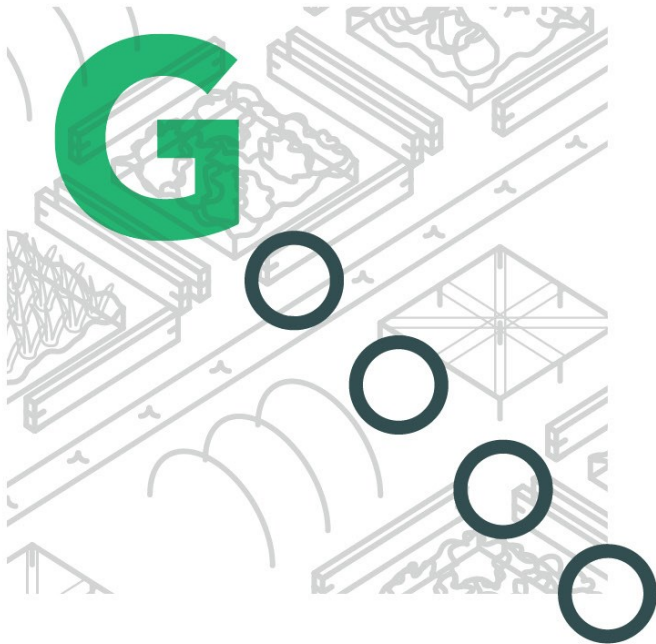Public Agriculture

Urban Farming

School Agriculture Programs

Urban Livestock

Home Gardens

Education and Coordination

Community gardening

is the practice of growing and raising food in a shared garden space for direct consumption.

Actions

1
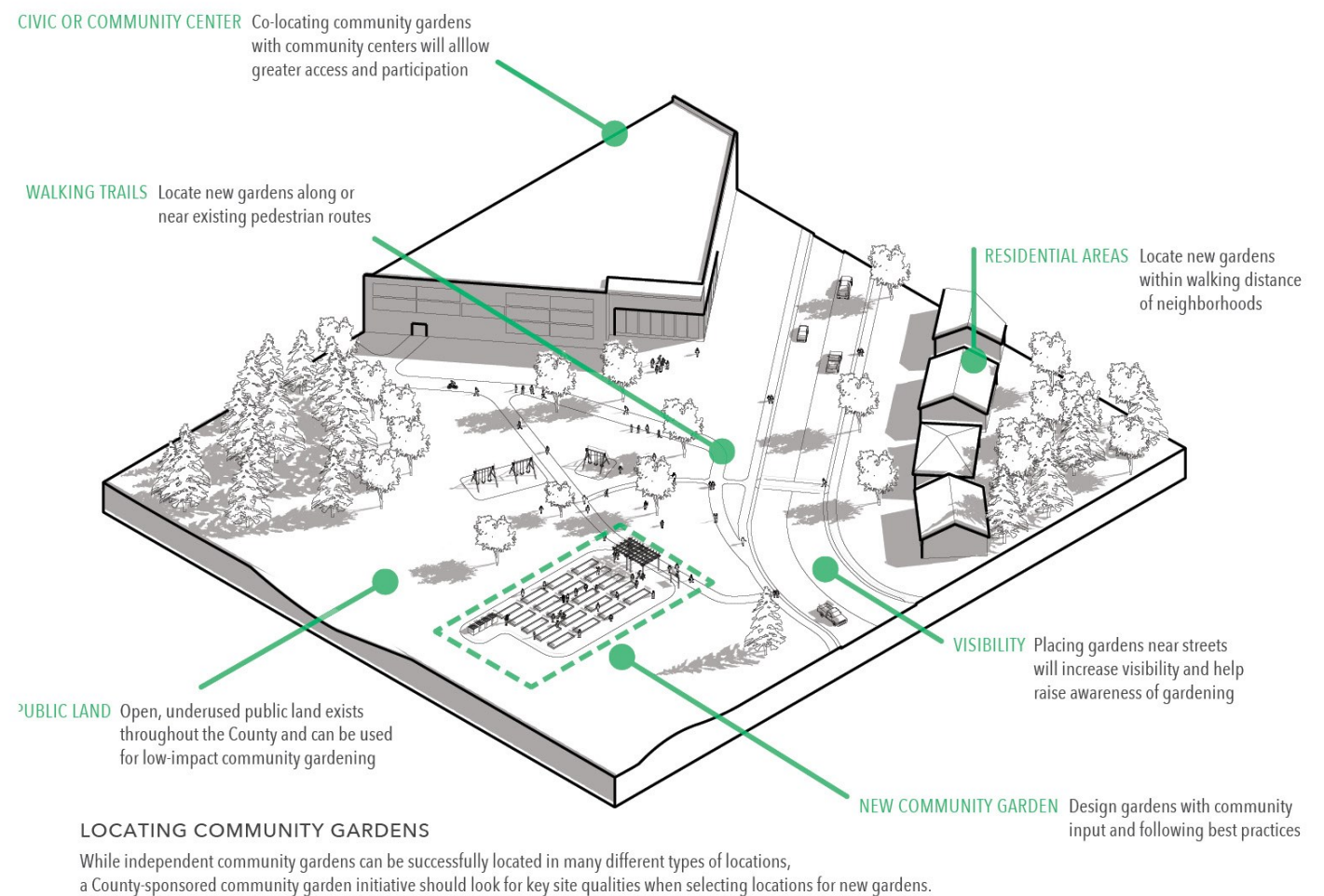Include "community garden" as part of the definition of "park" in the Land Use Bylaw.

2
Develop a community garden policy

3
County promotion and support for independent community gardens.

4
A County-led community garden initiative, with the County providing public land access.

CIVIC OR COMMUNITY CENTER Co-locating community gardens with community centers will alllow greater access and participation

WALKING TRAILS Locate new gardens along or near existing pedestrian routes

RESIDENTIAL AREAS Locate new gardens within walking distance of neighborhoods

VISIBILITY Placing gardens near streets will increase visibility and help raise awareness of gardening

PUBLIC LAND Open, underused public land exists throughout the County and can be used for low-impact community gardening

NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN Design gardens with community input and following best practices

LOCATING COMMUNITY GARDENS

While independent community gardens can be successfully located in many different types of locations, a County-sponsored community garden initiative should look for key site qualities when selecting locations for new gardens.

Public Agriculture & Edible Landscaping

refers to food grown in the public spaces of a town or city, which is generally meant as a public or shared amenity.
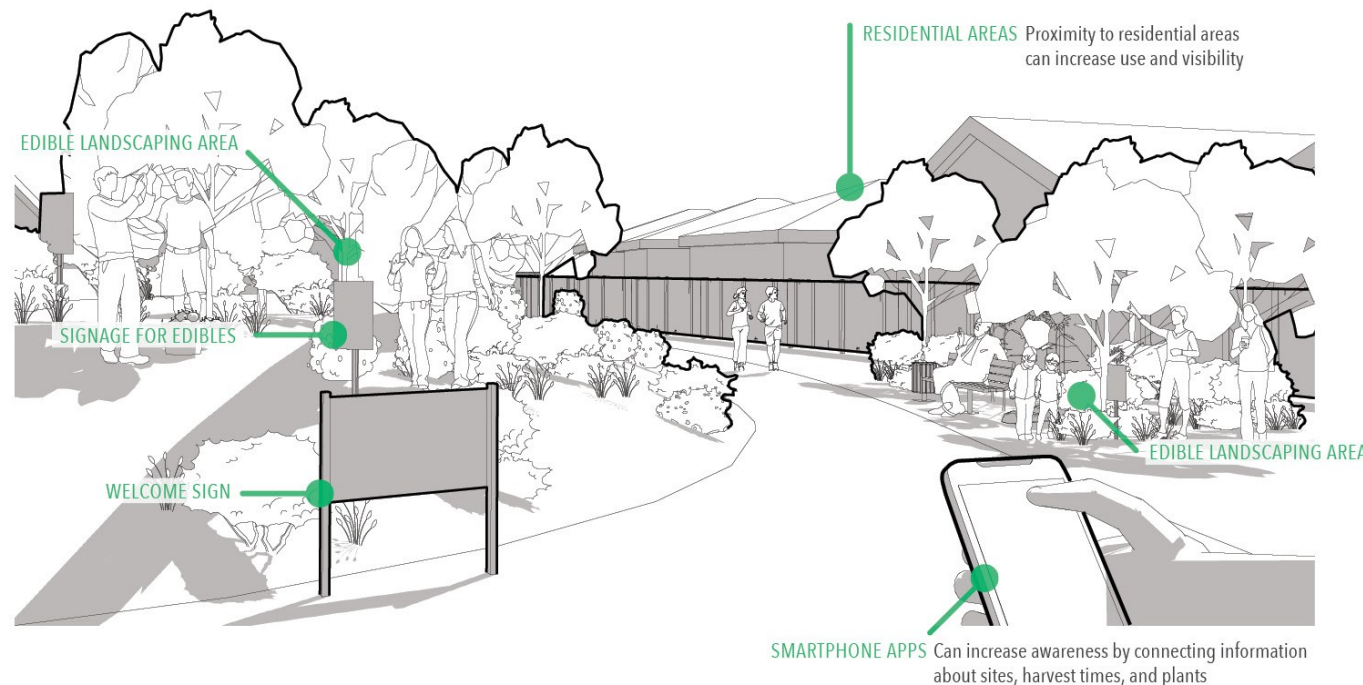
EDIBLE LANDSCAPING AREAS
Locate along trails or other visible spots, enhancing existing outdoor activity

NATURAL AREAS
Adopt-a-plot locations can include native edibles along the County's natural areas

Plan view of Adopt-a-Plot example

RESIDENTIAL AREAS Proximity to residential areas can increase use and visibility

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING AREA

SIGNAGE FOR EDIBLES

WELCOME SIGN

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING AREA

SMARTPHONE APPS Can increase awareness by connecting information about sites, harvest times, and plants

ADOPT-A-PLOT EDIBLE LANDSCAPING

Actions

1
Include edibles in Open Space planning.

2
Mapping of edible trees and shrubs in the public realm.

3
Develop an Adopt-a-Plot initiative for edible and pollinator-supporting public orchards and food forests.

4
Develop signage identifying edible plants.

Urban Farms

is the commercial practice of growing and raising food within the boundaries of a city, town or municipality where large-scale farming is less feasible or desirable than in rural areas.
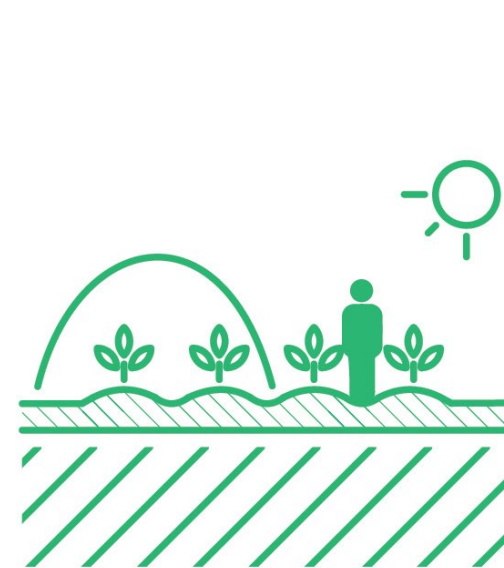
Actions

1
Examine adding urban farming definitions to the Land Use Bylaw.

2
Develop a campaign to promote and support urban farming in Strathcona County.

3
Develop an Adopt-a-Plot initiative for edible and pollinator-supporting public orchards and food forests.

SMALL PLOT INTENSIVE FARM (SPIN)
Typically from 0.1 to 1 acre in size, with built up beds, hand labor and season-extending low tunnels.

ROOFTOP FARM
Lightweight growing systems take advantage of unused flat surfaces and ample sunlight.

CONTAINER FARM
Transportable plastic, metal, or wood containers. Allows temporary sites and parking lots to be farmed.
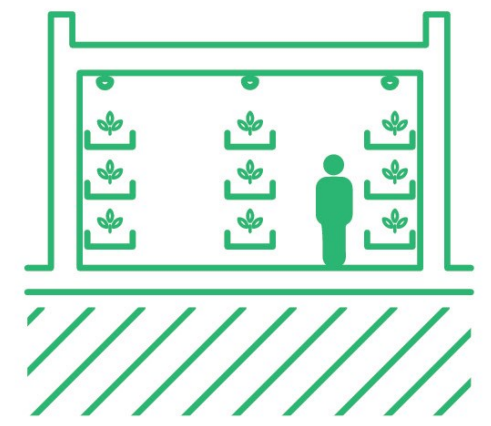
INDOOR FARM
Hydroponics and aquaponics offer highest production per area and most predictable results.

School Agriculture Programs

take many forms: classroom garden, growing demonstrations, community gardens, horticultural training gardens or greenhouses, vertical growing hydroponic and aquaponic systems, among others.

Actions

1
Foster growing opportunities at every school in the County.

2
Increase educational opportunities around urban agriculture, technology and entrepreneurship in schools.

Urban Livestock

includes the raising of chickens, bees, rabbits, and animals such as small-breed pigs and goats.

Actions

1
Replace current Animal Control Bylaw with new separate bylaws: revised Animal Control Bylaw and create an Alternative Pets Bylaw.
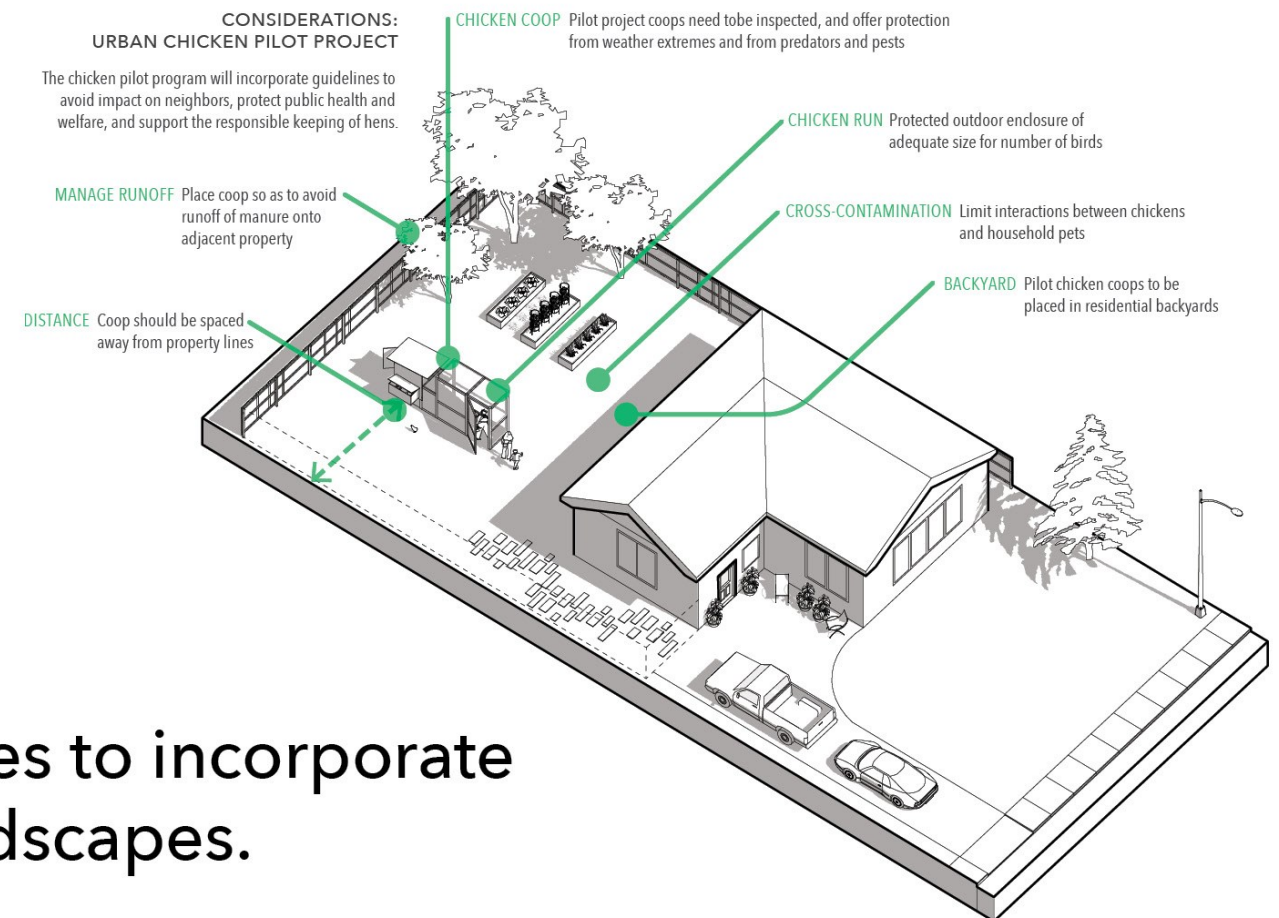
2
Pilot project for urban chickens.

3
Bee Healthy: Revise planting guidelines to incorporate pollinator habitat into ornamental landscapes.

4
Bee Healthy: Amend Apiculture Bylaw to allow demonstration beehives in additional land use districts.

5
Bee Healthy: Beehives installed as demonstration projects in lower-traffic areas.

CONSIDERATIONS:
URBAN CHICKEN PILOT PROJECT

The chicken pilot program will incorporate guidelines to avoid impact on neighbors, protect public health and welfare, and support the responsible keeping of hens.

CHICKEN COOP Pilot project coops need to be inspected, and offer protection from weather extremes and from predators and pests

CHICKEN RUN Protected outdoor enclosure of adequate size for number of birds

CROSS-CONTAMINATION Limit interactions between chickens and household pets

BACKYARD Pilot chicken coops to be placed in residential backyards

MANAGE RUNOFF Place coop so as to avoid runoff of manure onto adjacent property

DISTANCE Coop should be spaced away from property lines

THE SPECTRUM OF FEEDBACK TO BACKYARD CHICKENS

Against backyard chickens

Support backyard chickens

Chickens belong on farms! If you want chickens, move to a farm!

I don't want to live next to a neighbour with hens. I feel the policing and maintenance would incur significant costs that I don't want my taxes to go towards.

I live in Sherwood Park and hate the fact that I can't have chickens in my backyard for my own use

With clear guidelines as set out it sounds like a great idea

Noise, smell, manure ends up in a compost bib so we all smell it. There are already bad pet owners that the County can't deal with 100%...

Inspections done by knowledgeable people and not just bylaw officers who have no animal husbandry background

My husband and children are very interested in raising chicken ... it would be awesome if we could still give our children this experience in town.

THE SPECTRUM OF APPROACHES TO BACKYARD CHICKENS

Don't allow
any chickens

Take a measured,
intentional approach

Allow chickens with
little to no regulation

Current state today.
No changes to the system required.

Develop a pilot project to test
and measure the actual impact
of urban chickens.

Allow residents to proceed without direction
on the expectations and responsibilities
of owning and managing chickens in an
urban setting.

THE SPECTRUM OF FEEDBACK ON ALTERNATIVE PETS

Against alternative pets

Support alternative pets

It is cruel to the animals, overwhelming to rescue, and only wanted by one person

No County discretion is needed for Alternative Pets like pot-bellied pigs, rabbits, reptiles

3 concerns – what animals exactly?; safety is a concern for the public; concerns for the 'pet' welfare if owner is not aware of proper humane care

Education and facts will assist the public in understanding public health / safety issues many urban myths.

Many livestock animals and exotics make wonderful pets with their owners sometimes being more responsible than the average dog and especially cat owner

To prevent the dumping of farm animals into overrun rescues, it would be in the animals best interest not to have them allowed in urban areas

Too much red tape – if there is an issue then deal with it

...I do not support the keeping of most exotics as they are meant to be left in the wild

So long as the animal has enough space, care, and proper shelter I am for this

THE SPECTRUM OF APPROACHES TO ALTERNATIVE PETS

Don't allow any animals outside of dogs and cats

Take a measured, intentional approach

Allow all kinds of animals

Current state today.
No changes to the system required
and community concerns over the issue.

No specific decisions on urban livestock
and alternative pets are recommended.
Rather a process to create a more focused
and measured conversation about the
complexity of the issue and a pilot project
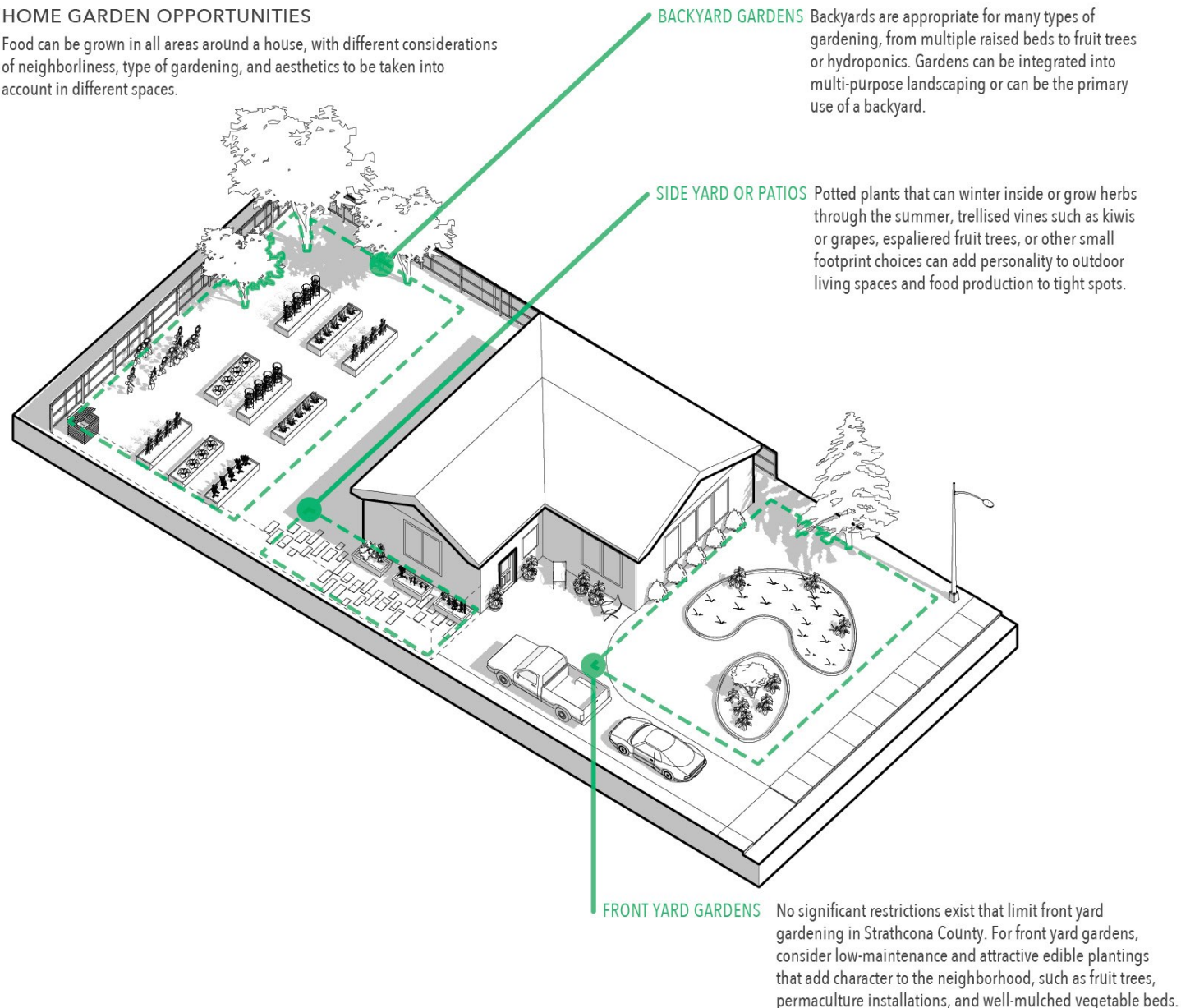to test and measure impact of urban hens.

Proceed full speed ahead without
consideration to the impacts –
to the County, neighbours, and
and animal welfare.

A Home Garden

is a small area of land or raised bed used for growing food on or around a house or apartment complex.

HOME GARDEN OPPORTUNITIES

Food can be grown in all areas around a house, with different considerations of neighborliness, type of gardening, and aesthetics to be taken into account in different spaces.

BACKYARD GARDENS Backyards are appropriate for many types of gardening, from multiple raised beds to fruit trees or hydroponics. Gardens can be integrated into multi-purpose landscaping or can be the primary use of a backyard.

SIDE YARD OR PATIOS Potted plants that can winter inside or grow herbs through the summer, trellised vines such as kiwis or grapes, espaliered fruit trees, or other small footprint choices can add personality to outdoor living spaces and food production to tight spots.

FRONT YARD GARDENS No significant restrictions exist that limit front yard gardening in Strathcona County. For front yard gardens, consider low-maintenance and attractive edible plantings that add character to the neighborhood, such as fruit trees, permaculture installations, and well-mulched vegetable beds.

Actions

1
Promotion and advocacy around residential gardening opportunities.

2
Share programs and courses on home gardening across the community.

Education and Coordination

of action will be critical to build momentum, maintain direction, and realizing a full return on invested public and private resources.

Actions

1
Structured stakeholder conversations on key implementation areas of the Urban Agriculture Strategy.

2
Education in all actions.

Urban Agriculture Strategy

Community Gardens — *a*

Public Agriculture — *b*

Urban Farms — *c*

School Agriculture Programs — *d*

Actions for 3 Years

Urban Livestock — *e*

Home Gardens — *f*

Education & Coordination — *g*

Review & Reflect

Urban agriculture is easily accessed and seen in Strathcona County; it contributes to creating a healthy, livable community by helping to grow food, relationships, and economy in our community.

GOALS

+ Build a sense of community, identity, and place

+ Bring people together

+ Connect urban and rural communities

+ Build food literacy and awareness

+ Support local economic development
  and entrepreneurship

+ Expand food production

+ Build shared leadership

+ Reflect Strathcona County's natural history

STRATEGY AREAS

a. Community Gardens

b. Public Agriculture and Edible Landscaping

c. Urban Farms

d. School Agriculture Program

e. Urban Livestock - Chickens, Pets, Bees

f. Home Gardens

g. Education and Coordination

Thank You!