



City Food, City Land



City Food, City Land is an initiative of Denver's Sustainable Food Policy Council aimed at increasing food production on underutilized public land. As part of the initiative, we are proposing to identify suitable public land and expand the following four types of urban agriculture within the City and County of Denver:

- **Demonstration farms:** sites aimed at educating the general public about gardening, farming, nutrition, landscaping and more.
- **Access farms:** farms that sell or donate fresh produce to underserved communities.
- **Commercial farms:** for-profit enterprises, often housed in greenhouses, designed to operate as viable business and create jobs.
- **Edible landscaping:** installations of fruit, berries and other crops designed to minimize maintenance and water usage.

How would it work?

Under our proposed policy, the City would identify land that is suitable for one or more of the above uses on an ongoing basis. For each parcel chosen, it would issue a request for proposals (RFP) soliciting submissions from nonprofits, businesses and community groups. Once the most qualified proposal is selected, the City would arrange a long-term land use agreement allowing that group to use the land at an affordable rate.

Why City Food, City Land?

- **Local Food.** As part of the Mayor's 2020 Sustainability Goals, the City intends to source 20% of Denver's food locally by 2020. Even with our city's dense character, urban agriculture can play a key role in meeting that goal: according to calculations by UCD professor John Brett, Denver could grow 100% of its demand for seven common vegetables on just a couple hundred acres of public land.
- **Public health.** Engaging more Denverites in food production can have ripple effects far beyond the actual food grown: studies at the Colorado School of Public Health have shown that gardening leads to improvements in overall fruit and vegetable consumption, dietary knowledge, physical activity, and community engagement.
- **Economic development.** Over the last decade, several types of urban agriculture have proven to be viable business models. Expanding the number of commercial farms has the potential to employ dozens

of Denver residents in living-wage jobs.

- **Cost Savings.** City Food, City Land parcels would be leased to qualified nonprofits or other organizations to maintain, eliminating ongoing maintenance costs currently borne by taxpayers.
- **Beautification.** Most of the sites being considered are currently underutilized or vacant. Activating this land through urban agriculture can turn eyesores into pieces of vital civic infrastructure.
- **Demonstration.** Many other progressive cities are already pursuing food production on public land as a means of educating their residents about the benefits of urban agriculture. It's time for The City of Denver to follow suit.

How far along is the process?

We are currently reaching out to stakeholders to gain input on our proposed policy. In the second half of 2015, we will be submitting a policy briefing to the Mayor with our recommendations. Once we have secured his support, we aim to launch 3-5 pilot sites and pass a policy to institutionalize the program in 2016.

How can you help?

- **Tell us your ideas and concerns.** We want to propose a policy that's realistic to implement and that makes sense for all of Denver's citizens. Therefore, we'd love to hear what excites you about our ideas, as well as potential concerns or obstacles and how they might be addressed.
- **Recommend a pilot site.** The City Food, City Land committee is actively seeking recommendations for the program's pilot sites. Potential parcels must be at least 10,000 sq ft, and owned by the City and County of Denver or another public agency (Denver Public Schools, Denver Housing Authority, Colorado Department of Transportation, etc).

Want to know more?

We'd love to hear your thoughts! Contact one of the City Food, City Land committee chairs:

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