

# INFORMATION NOTE

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Community Gardens Operating on City Land COVID-19 Guidelines</b>
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	May 11, 2020
<b>Report To:</b>	Regular Meeting of Council
<b>Councillor and Role:</b>	Councillor Jamie Korab, Community Services
<b>Ward:</b>	N/A

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**Issue:** As per the Provincial decision to allow community gardens to open during Covid-19 Pandemic, the City of St. John's can support *Access to Healthy Food and the production of local foods*, as outlined in [Envision St. John's Municipal Plan](#) by using best-practice safety regulations and guidelines that allow for safe use of community gardens on city-land.

## Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The Covid-19 Pandemic and the resulting closures has made it challenging for some individuals and families to access quality, affordable food. As highlighted in the [Envision St. John's Municipal Plan](#), urban agriculture projects, like community gardens, “*contributes to the local economy, improves access to healthy foods and contributes to population health*”.

Nationally, municipalities and provinces are allowing community gardens to open for the 2020 growing season. Currently, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and most recently Newfoundland and Labrador, have all permitted community gardens to open. While at the same time, local governments are navigating how to provide safe access to community gardens on city-land during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, stakeholders and leaders working in food security nationally have come together to form, [Food Communities Network](#), which has released detailed ‘[Covid-19 Recommendations for Community Gardens](#)’. This document is a detailed resource on how to continue to operate community gardens safely, while abiding by national public health measures to protect the health and safety of gardeners and residents alike. Certain municipalities, such as the City of Victoria, are taking it a step further, by reprioritizing city staff to grow seedlings in municipal nurseries and greenhouses to be distributed during the 2020 growing season, and have released ‘[Best Practices for Community Gardens during Covid-19](#)’. While, the City of Edmonton, published [specific guidelines and regulations for community gardens on city-land](#) to ensure safe gardening during Covid-19. And, Toronto Public Health has released, [Covid-19 Guidance for Community and Allotment Gardens](#) with a [Community and Allotment Garden Declaration](#) that asks all gardeners and garden managers to read and sign to demonstrate their willingness to act in accordance with the guidelines.

# ST. JOHN'S

Locally, the [St. John's Food Policy Council](#) released a two-pager on [Community Garden Guidelines during Covid-19](#). This two-pager was created through consultations with the St. John's Food Policy Council membership, several community garden organizers, and Eastern Health staff. This document shares important information on: Creating a Covid-19 Garden Plan; Gardening Together, but Apart; Being Prepared & Staying Engaged; Additional Supports, Templates, and Best Practices.

The aforementioned resources were used to create the attached ***City of St. John's: Requirement, guidelines, and best-practices for community gardens on city-land during Covid-19.***

The compiled requirements, guidelines, and best-practices will ensure:

- The safe use of community gardens during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Support for local food security efforts
- Increase the local production of foods

This document can be shared through City of St. John's networks and with community gardens operating on city-land. It is an added resource to protect the safe operation of community gardens, while municipal decision-makers navigate the newly released 'easing of restrictions' and the provincial Covid Alert System.

### **Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications: N/A
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Partners or Other Stakeholders: Internal partners include, Public Works & Parks, Community Services, Legal Division, and Planning, Engineering and Regulatory Services.  
External partners include, the St. John's Food Policy Council, Food First NL, Eastern Health, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and other community gardens in the City of St. John's.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: This project is in line with the new *Envision St. John's Municipal Plan* to support community gardens, highlighted under Chapter 4 – Healthy Neighbourhoods (4.5 Access to Healthy Food). This project also supports one of the four key strategic directions as identified in the Strategic Plan, "A Connected City" as this supports safe use of community gardens in community and neighbourhoods during this challenging social/physical time of distance.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: Two of the existing community gardens on city-land (Eric St. Community Garden; Cavell Park Community Garden) are operating on a lease of land from the City of St. John's. Since these gardens operate on city-land, the guidelines will be shared with community garden committees, who will be asked to enforce these guidelines.
5. Privacy Implications: N/A
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Engagement and Communications Considerations: City of St. John's: Requirement, guidelines, and best-practices for community

gardens on city-land during Covid-19 will need to be added to the City web site and shared with community garden committees.

7. Human Resource Implications: No additional Human Resources will be needed for this project.
8. Procurement Implications: N/A
9. Information Technology Implications: N/A
10. Other Implications: N/A

### **Conclusion/Next Steps:**

- Share the guidelines, regulations and best-practices with community garden committees that are operating on city-land and request that they sign a waiver of understanding.
- Work with communications to share the guidelines through City of St. John's websites and social media pages.
- Connect with other communities, and other gardens, and offer the guidelines as an added resource for safe gardening during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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#### **Reviewed by:**

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#### **Date:**

May 04, 2020

#### **Date:**

May 04, 2020

May 04, 2020

May 08, 2020

### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Community Gardens Operating on City Land - COVID-19 Guidelines.docx
Attachments:	- Community Garaden COVID-19 Guidlines and Waiver.docx
Final Approval Date:	May 12, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Tanya Haywood - May 12, 2020 - 3:57 PM**