



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Use the Food Map to find and register land that is available for growing and gardening

Campbell River's Food Map (www.foodmap.campbellriver.ca) is just over a month, old and nearly 3,500 people used it in the month of May to find local food. And, this month's Community Opinion Poll through the City's website found that 70 per cent of respondents plan to use the Food Map to buy more local products.

The Food Map can do more than just find local food retailers. The tool also hosts an inventory of potential land for food growing initiatives. Some City-owned properties (such as parks and vacant lots) have been listed on the Food Map. While these spaces are not guaranteed for urban agriculture projects, the database provides a starting point for groups and associations who are interested in establishing new community gardens, urban orchards, food forests and other food growing projects.

Private land owners can also register their land on the Food Map if they are interested in connecting with an individual or group who are interested in gardening or food growing. Since there is no size limitation, land owners can post entire lots on the Food Map, or just portions of land such as backyards or raised garden beds. Owners can list, update and remove their property from the inventory at any time or simply list their contact details, allowing them to interact with interested community members directly. The City does not pre-approve land that is listed on the Food Map, so land owners must make sure that any proposed use does not conflict with City regulations or bylaws

"Business locations, backyards or farms are potential community gardening spaces. For example, schools that want to expose students to the food system, or aging residents who find it difficult to manage their property can benefit from partnerships with people and organizations interested in growing local food," explains Amber Zirnhelt, the City's sustainability manager. *"The City will also provide information about things to consider and types of agreements between land owners and people interested in growing food."*

"This tool has huge potential to benefit both property owners and community members. Depending on the agreement between a property owner and the individual or group, the owner may gain access to a portion of the vegetables that are grown. At the very least, they'll have someone maintaining a flower or vegetable garden," says Richard Buchan, the City's Food Map / green initiatives coordinator. *"This tool can also help grow the local agriculture sector. Perhaps a new farmer can connect and provide space to others. This can help diversify their farming operation and allows for more land to go into production in a shorter span of time."*

The City has created a guidebook for people interested in using the Food Map to access land. The document contains tips and resources for private land owners who are interested in listing their own land on the database. The guidebook, associated application forms and frequently asked questions and factsheets can be found on www.campbellriver.ca under the Food & Agriculture section of Green City. These materials are also posted on the Food Map's resource section.

For additional information about this project, watch for updates on the Sustainable Campbell River Facebook page, visit www.campbellriver.ca or contact the Sustainability Department at sustainability@campbellriver.ca

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