

TUG Network Meeting
Tuesday, April 26, 2016
5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Location: Riverdale Hub

1. TUG Updates

1a. Website – urban agriculture map

- Covers Toronto and Golden Horseshoe, you can sort results by individual Toronto wards, Toronto as a whole or other municipalities in the Golden Horseshoe
- Different categories of UA projects are included
- School gardens particularly great to have, no extensive list had been compiled. Thanks to volunteer Noemie for scouring the TDSB & TCDSB websites for gardens!
- Right now we only have name & location, there is space for more detailed project profiles (description, links, photos)
- If you have a UA project, you will be able to create an account, add a project and add info to a profile
- Working through some bugs right now, hope to make it public by the end of the week
- Lots of help to put together the data came from other municipalities (DIG in Durham, City of Hamilton, Ecosource), Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

Q: Is this map connected to the TFPC Food by Ward initiative?

A: Yes, TPH provided us with baseline data. We will continue to exchange updates with them.

Q: Does the map give you numbers in each category?

A: No, it's not set up to do that. We can provide a tally as a separate part of the website.

C: We've been talking about needing a map of urban ag for years, glad we finally have one!

1b. Website – Toronto Balconies Bloom

TBB is moving their content to the TUG site, a win for both groups. TBB doesn't have to maintain their site, TUG's site gets some fabulous resources on balcony and container gardening. Thanks to Fern Mosoff for collecting and sharing the info.

1c. Urban Agriculture Tours

Joe and Samantha Chow have put together a menu of tour sites for three upcoming conferences:

- Canadian Association of Food Studies June 21-26
- Rural Sociology Society August 10-14
- Food Secure Canada (pending approval) October 13-16

These tours can form a basis for future events. We will post the tour details on the TUG site, let us know if there are other projects that should be included in the future.

2c. Edible Allan Gardens project

TUG is working with a number of partners to create a temporary urban agriculture demonstration site beside the Children's Conservatory at Allan Gardens

- Five Ryerson Masters students are working on designs for the site that focus on recycled materials
- Gabion baskets (wire mesh boxes that are usually filled with rocks to prevent erosion on shorelines) can be filled with a variety of materials, used as planters or seating and then emptied and flattened for storage when no longer needed.
- Raised beds made of corrugated steel, recycled shipping containers

Q, Zora and Johanne: Can you build the raised beds higher so that you can incorporate sub-irrigation systems? In sites where maintenance may be an issue, this reduces the need for regular watering. Better to incorporate at the beginning of the design process, not afterwards.

A: Yes, there is still time to work this into the design.

Q: Where is the water source?

A: Garden will be right beside existing greenhouses, a hose bib is on site.

2. Tour of Riverdale Hub, Samantha and Andrea – www.riverdalehub.ca

- The Hub houses two organizations: Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre has provided services to immigrant women in the neighbourhood for 30 years. Riverdale Hub is the organization formed 10 years ago to renovate the 100 year old building and turn it into a centre for social enterprise and green initiatives.
- Green features include solar panels, geothermal heating, a green roof, reclaimed wood floors. The Green Community Hub meets regularly to promote green initiatives in the neighbourhood.
- Focus on reaching out to groups that generally don't get involved in the mainstream environmental movement and highlight traditional knowledge.
- There is an art gallery, yoga/dance studios, event space rentals and the Social Gardener Café, a social enterprise incorporating fair trade products and produce from the rooftop garden.
- They've built a community kitchen, but are just figuring out how to manage the programming and integrate it with existing programs. Starting the café took up more time and energy than they anticipated, trying to find a way to support multiple food security initiatives.

Challenges & Opportunities

- Funding. Received some Live Green Toronto funding, doesn't cover everything, easy to get capital funding but not so easy to get ongoing operating funds.
- Hard to find consultants, but found amazing volunteers to help with designs
- May be difficult to grow enough to turn into a product (such as mustard) but using herbs & greens in café menu
- Connect to us on social media, share your ideas!
<https://www.facebook.com/TheRiverdaleHub/>
https://twitter.com/Riverdale_Hub

**3. Fresh City Farms @ Baka – www.freshcityfarms.com
Joel Fridman, Project Manager joel@freshcityfarms.com**

- FCF intro – 2 acre production site at Downsview Park, including greenhouses, 1500 member produce bag program & incubator program for 20 member farmers. Sixth season of growing.
- Looking for a new location matching 2 criteria: in the city, on the ground (want to be visible!)
- John Marion of Baka approached Ran Goel at a green event with proposal to use site beside the 427 in Etobicoke. Offered 5 year lease.
- Esthetic appeal important, so they went with a 3,000 square foot greenhouse made entirely of glass. Also important to be self-contained: rainwater capture for irrigation, solar power

A Few Hurdles

- Challenge getting city to understand growing at this scale, growing for sale
- Started permitting process in Sept/Oct last year
- Site is zoned commercial, UA not a permitted use
- Also setback issues that impact design – proximity to neighbouring lots, greenhouses side by side, province requires 14 metre setback from highway.
- Application fees are extensive and onerous for small business, may be more appropriate for developers with more resources
- In discussions with planning and economic development departments
- Charting a course: zoning review (need engineered drawings, surveys) ➤ committee of adjustment ➤ building application
- Zoning review is to identify every way that you contravene bylaws
- Had to go through a tender process to do engineered drawings, pleased to find a company that works at the right scale
- Just found out on Monday that they also have to do a site plan control before going back to the zoning review
- **Having clarity about the process from the beginning would have been helpful, even the city planning office was surprised**
- **Need to recognize that small businesses need to be treated differently than wealthy developers**

4. 4 Life Natural Food Store Rooftop Greenhouse, Pots Sallapa & Eddie Lee

- Pots has lived and worked in Kensington since 1986
- “Every year I grow food that you can’t buy here” – in backyard and in buckets on his rooftop. Zoning bylaw officer had no problem with the buckets!
- Pots approached Zimmerman to lease his rooftop, Zimmerman wanted him to lease whole building, so now store is on ground floor
- Roof is over one acre (7,000 square feet), designing for a 90x30 foot greenhouse
- Similar experience to Joel’s – met with economic development & chief zoning officer
- Econ dev’t rep asked Pots, when you bring food from other parts of the world, people are making money. How many people will make money from your local produce?

- The proposed use (greenhouse) is not permitted, the committee of adjustment will not issue a variance
- Considering having rooftop zoned commercial so it can be seen as an extension of the business below, but the tax implications may be prohibitive
- Told by the city he can apply for funding to pay for fees

Discussion

- Josephine Grey: talking to Arthur Potts, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture – he agreed there should be an urban agriculture zoning designation
- Try arguing for a legal non-conforming use? Eddie – generally used only for grandfathered projects, not new ones
- What about pollution in city soils? Soil testing was done at Baka, contaminants were below accepted levels, but soil had high salinity
- Lufa Farms in Montreal raised as an example – they re-zoned the roof separately from the rest of the building, had the resources to go through the process
- Edmonton Food Strategy – UA is permitted in all zones

Next Steps

- Due to the interest in greenhouses expressed on the TUG Google group, we have set up a separate TUGgreenhouses Google group. Anyone wanting to join that group can send an email to rhonda@torontourbangrowers.org