



URBAN AGRICULTURE

PHASE 2 WHAT WE HEARD



Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Process and Methods	2
3.0	Engagement Outcomes	3
4.0	Next Steps	7

Executive Summary

Agriculture is a celebrated pillar of Beaumont's heritage, and the City recognizes the role that urban agriculture can play in enhancing the community's future. The City of Beaumont is preparing an Urban Agriculture Plan that seeks to support the vision of a culture of community support for agriculture, while also promoting long-term positive impacts on environmental, social and economic conditions in Beaumont through varied and resilient solutions.

From May 15 to June 9, 2023, residents had the opportunity to share their feedback on the future of urban agriculture in Beaumont. The following report highlights the results of the second round of public engagement, where feedback was gathered on the level of support for the plan's draft strategic actions, goals, and vision. In our conversations with residents of Beaumont, the following key themes emerged:

High level of support for urban agriculture

There was significant agreement with all draft vision, goals, and actions presented in this phase of engagement, all receiving approval ratings greater than 70%. Respondents were enthusiastic of the direction the plan is taking, with the understanding that considerable work is required to transform this high level structure into actionable change.

Timely promotion and implementation

A common concern that emerged from the engagement was that the vision, goals, and actions are very aspirational, and lack the required commitment to promotion and implementation by the City to create meaningful change. Several respondents noted the acute economic, environmental, and social impacts of not taking timely action towards urban agriculture initiatives.

Food security

The topic of food security and affordability in Beaumont continued to emerge across the second phase of engagement. Respondents highlighted the important connection between urban agriculture and food security that this plan should solidify, specifically noting the importance of equitable access to urban agriculture, and empowering all interested residents to have the ability to grow their own food to improve local food access.

Engagement and collaboration

Many Beaumont residents are highly knowledgeable and enthusiastic about urban agriculture initiatives. Building opportunities for engagement and collaboration with local residents and community groups (such as the Beaumont and District Agricultural Society) directly into the plan was highlighted as an important consideration to creating actionable change that will benefit the community.

Interdisciplinary Plan Coordinator

The draft action to create a new role of an Interdisciplinary Plan Coordinator received several comments. The majority of respondents (76%) were supportive of hiring the Coordinator, yet many respondents felt that the plan is over reliant on one individual, and that the work would likely benefit from a greater diversity of perspectives and capacity. Conversely, a few respondents felt that this position wasn't necessary at all, or that the interdisciplinary nature of the role will deprioritize the importance of urban agriculture.

Urban hens and bees

The engagement results suggest urban hens and urban bees continue to be a polarizing topic in Beaumont. While the majority of respondents (80%) expressed support for creating urban hen and urban bee programs in Beaumont, a vocal minority (13%) are opposed to the idea, highlighting concerns around perceived noise, smell, and mess. Several respondents spoke of the opportunity of leveraging existing data, information, and programs from neighbouring municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region who have successfully implemented urban hen and urban bee programs to reduce the time and cost of feasibility studies.

Boulevard gardening

Many respondents supported the investigation of boulevard-based gardening in Beaumont (73%), with the understanding that increased clarity around definitions, maintenance, and permissible growing areas is required. Learnings from similar programs in neighbouring municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region will likely be highly informative to reduce the time and cost of feasibility studies.

Regulation

There were varying opinions on the role the municipality should take in regulating urban agriculture initiatives through bylaws and enforcement. While some respondents noted the need for increased regulation to successfully implement urban hen programs and manage agricultural pests and infections such as Black knot fungal disease, others felt that reductions in bylaws and 'red tape' was critical to community uptake of initiatives such as community gardens.

Next Steps

The final Urban Agriculture Plan will be revised with the feedback gathered through the second phase of engagement, and presented back to Council in the Fall of 2023.

We heard from

456

community participants over the two phase engagement process.

The core elements of the plan were developed over a two-day, highly collaborative workshop, involving:

15

City Staff, and

202

collaborative hours.

12

Actions were drafted to build clarity on the initial direction.



Introduction

Engaging for urban agriculture in a community with rich agricultural history.

Agriculture is a celebrated pillar of Beaumont's heritage, and the City recognizes the role that urban agriculture can play in enhancing the community's future. Urban agriculture contributes to the livability of our city and has environmental, economic and social benefits. The City of Beaumont is preparing an Urban Agriculture Plan to meet legislative requirements outlined in the Regional Agriculture Master Plan (RAMP), support the vision of Beaumont set out in Our Complete Community Municipal Development Plan, and respond to community interest in urban agriculture. The Plan will establish a framework for urban agriculture to ensure that public and private initiatives reflect the unique opportunities and constraints of Beaumont and facilitate the realization of the benefits urban agriculture can have on the community.

The urban agriculture planning process began in July of 2022, following a two phase process. The first phase of the plan established an understanding of best practices of urban agriculture and outlined the current state of urban agriculture in Beaumont. The project team conducted public engagement with 340 community participants in the first phase, where ideas

were gathered on the opportunities and challenges for urban agriculture, and visions for the future of urban agriculture in Beaumont. A summary of the phase one public engagement can be found in the Phase 1 What We Heard report.

The second phase of the plan development is currently ongoing and is expected to be completed and presented back to Council in the Fall of 2023. This phase builds on the learning and engagement of the first phase and is focused on developing new directions for urban agriculture in Beaumont. The project team collaboratively identified key strategic directions for the plan based on research and public engagement outcomes, then built the core of the plan through an intensive 2-day Strategy Sprint process.

The following report highlights the results of the second phase of public engagement, where feedback was gathered on the emerging draft strategic vision, goals, and actions for urban agriculture in Beaumont. Throughout the course of the project, we heard from 456 community participants: 340 in the first phase, and 116 in the second phase.



Process and Methods

From May 15 to June 9, 2023, the second phase of the engagement process was implemented to ensure Beaumont residents could share their level of support for draft strategic actions, goals, and vision for the future of urban agriculture in Beaumont.

To share questions, comments and insights, Beaumont residents were encouraged to provide feedback online via an online survey, at the project website: <https://www.beaumont.ab.ca/849/Urban-Agriculture-Plan>

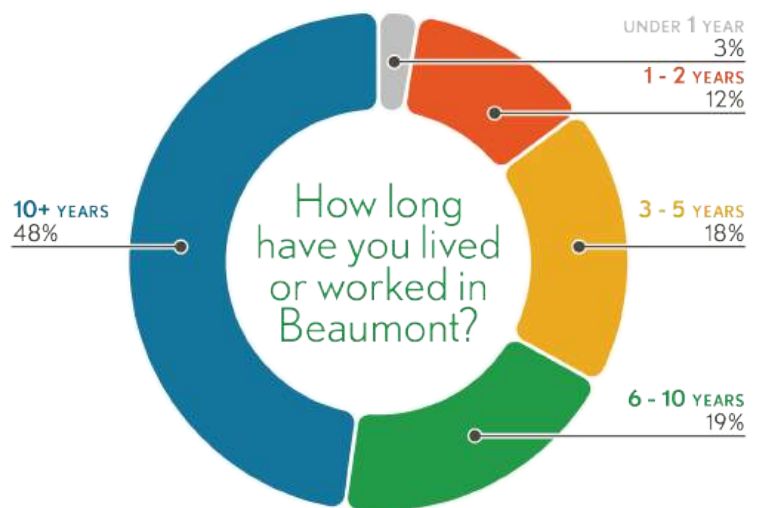
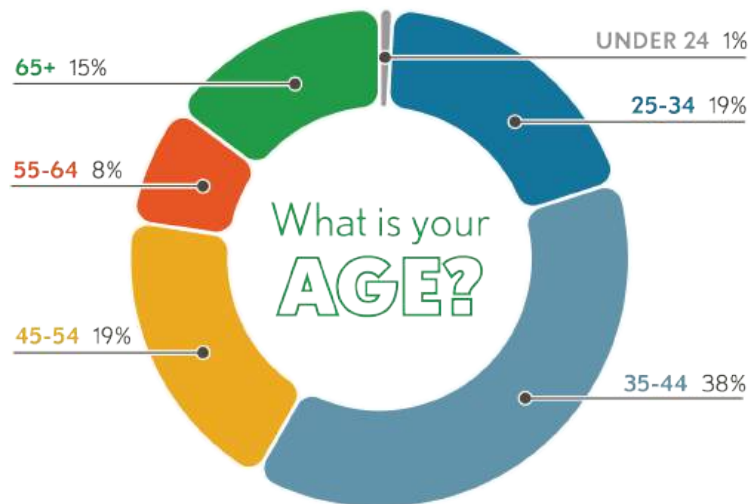
The online approach to engagement gave residents an opportunity to share their insights in an easily accessible way, enabling the project team to gain a broader variety of insights into local experiences and insights. We asked questions about the level of support for the draft vision, goals, and actions, including providing space for any additional feedback on this emerging plan structure. 116 community participants provided their feedback on the draft vision, goals, and actions through the second phase of engagement.



Engagement Outcomes

The following section shares the questions that were asked as part of the community engagement process paired with what was heard from participants in response to these prompts.

Demographics



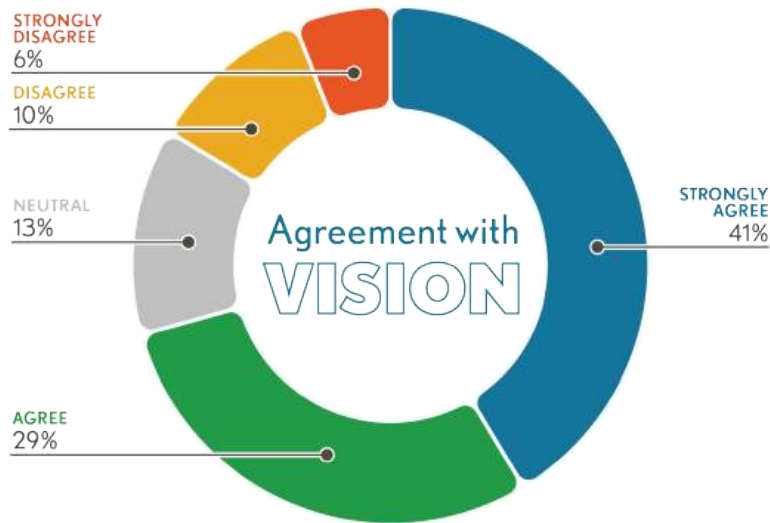
Select all the options that best describe yourself.

- » City of Beaumont resident **(96% responses)**
- » Business owner in the City of Beaumont **(24% responses)**
- » Working in Beaumont but living elsewhere (1% responses)
- » Visitor (1% responses)
- » Other (5% responses)

Vision, Goals, & Actions

What is your level of agreement with the vision?

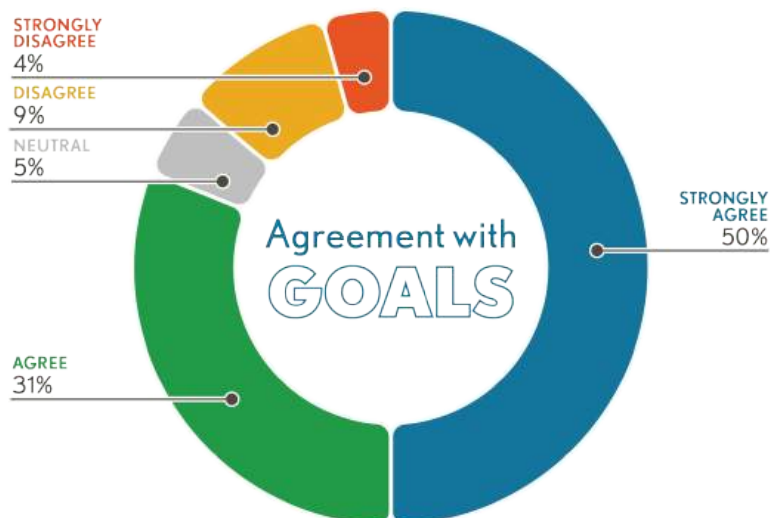
Beaumont is a nimble agricultural innovator and supporter which empowers the community to engage in urban agriculture on public and private lands, and connects new local initiatives to Beaumont's rich agricultural heritage. Urban agriculture and the whole food system are visibly integrated across the city, contributing to the economic, ecological, and social well-being of Beaumont.



What is your level of agreement with the goals?

Beaumont is defined by:

- » *A food economy that supports local businesses and value-added agriculture*
- » *A connected community of producers, distributors, and consumers*
- » *A community knowledgeable about local food*
- » *A biodiverse environment which sets the foundation for food production and habitat restoration*
- » *A food secure community where all residents have access to affordable and nutritious food*
- » *A culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in urban agriculture*
- » *A supportive and equitable regulatory context for urban agriculture*



Do you have any additional feedback on the draft vision and goals for the Urban Agriculture Plan?

The following themes surfaced as a result of the open responses:

Draft Vision and Goals Feedback	
Key Themes (# of occurrences)	Sub Themes (# of occurrences)
Urban chickens (18)	Supportive (15) Unsupportive (3)
Goals and vision structure (14)	Supportive (9) Lacking commitment to promotion and implementation by the City (6) Goals are very ideal, not reflective of the current state, or attainable in the short term (4)
Food Security (12)	Growing ones own food (4)
Urban bees (5)	Supportive (4)
Livestock (5)	Supportive (4)
Education and awareness (4)	
Front and back yard gardens (4)	

"Love the ideas, goals and initiative.

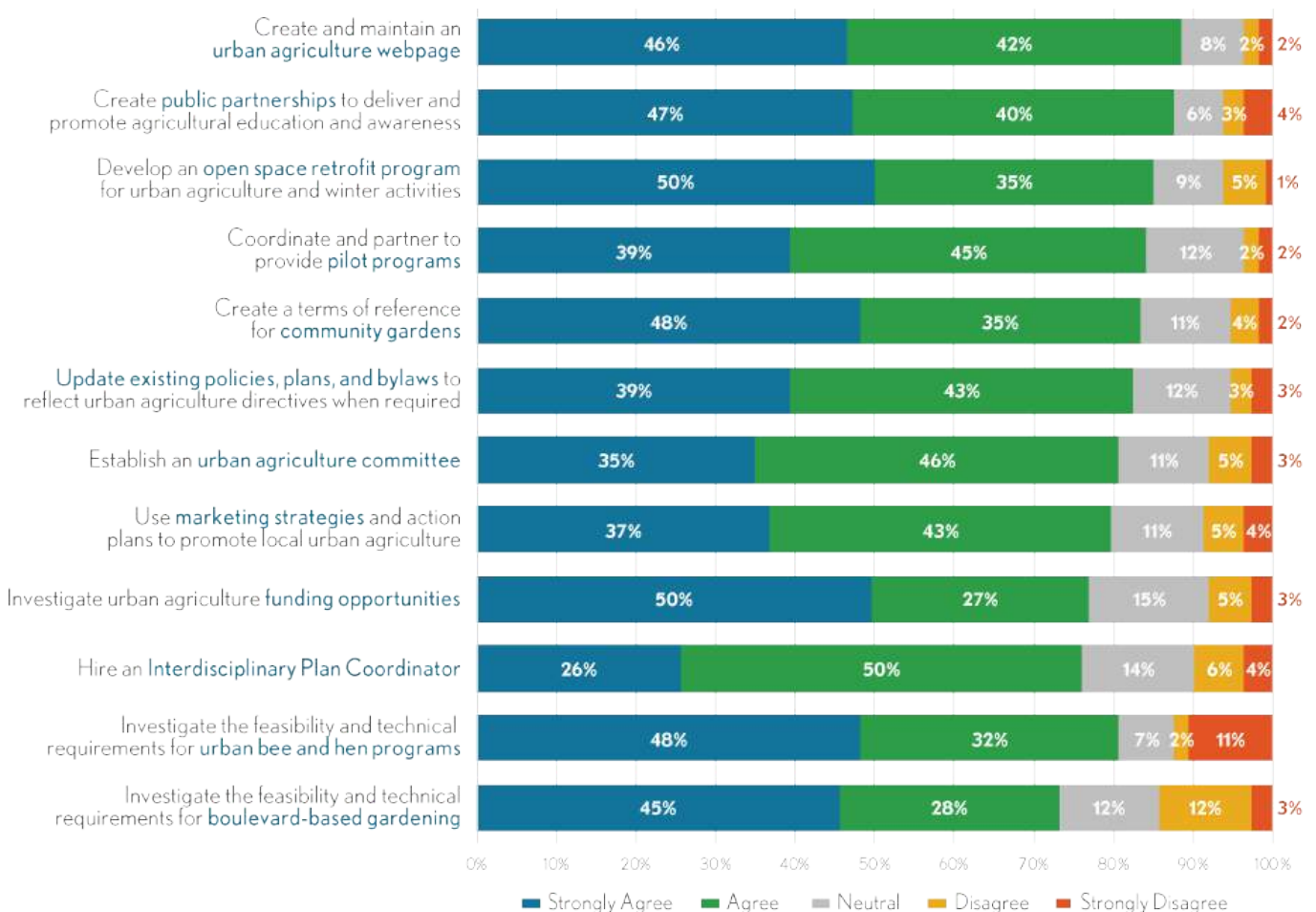
Looking forward to seeing more of them implemented throughout the city. This will hopefully include education and incentives for residents to learn & do the same."

"You have the right words and vision. What steps will be taken to integrate this into ongoing and future community development projects? My concern is the implementation of the vision."

"These goals are quite aspirational and while I agree with them, I do not see them as attainable in the short term - [perhaps] we need to see them broken down a bit more."

"I would like to see this goal focused heavily on feeding families in need that don't have access to quality foods"

What is your level of support for these draft actions?



Do you have any additional feedback on the draft actions for the Urban Agriculture Plan?

The following themes surfaced as a result of the open responses:

Draft Actions Feedback	
Key Themes (# of occurrences)	Sub Themes (# of occurrences)
Action structure and implementation (17)	Supportive (8) Responsible use of tax money (4) Learning and borrowing from neighbour municipalities (3)
Boulevard gardening (12)	Supportive (6) Unsupportive (4) Unclear definitions and responsibilities (4)
Interdisciplinary Plan Coordinator (8)	Over reliant on one position / person (6) Unnecessary position (2)
Education (5)	Supportive (4)
Support community gardens (4)	
Support edible landscaping (4)	
Need a Black knot bylaw (3)	

Do you have any final thoughts about the overall direction, or general comments for the project team?

The following themes surfaced as a result of the open responses:

Draft Actions Feedback	
Key Themes (# of occurrences)	Sub Themes (# of occurrences)
Plan structure and implementation (27)	Supportive (16) Communication and engagement (5) Need fast implementation time (4) Responsible spending tax dollars (4) Lack of leadership and implementation (3) Learning from other municipalities (2)
Urban chickens (18)	Supportive (13) Unsupportive (4)
Bylaw and enforcement (10)	Reduced regulation (4) Increased regulation (3) Black knot bylaw (2)
Urban bees (9)	Supportive (5) Unsupportive (4)
Support boulevard gardening (7)	
Support community gardens (7)	
Food security (4)	Cost of food (2)
Sustainability (3)	Water management (2)
Composting (3)	

"I feel that 'studies' in regards to this are a waste of time and money. There are other towns and cities in the province that have already done such things, so why can't there be some sort of communication with them to review data and information?"

"The residents need to be more involved. This particular project should benefit the residents that are willing to put in the work... Involvement always equals ownership, accountability, and so much more."

"This sounds like entirely too many actions for one Interdisciplinary Plan Coordinator... hiring more than one would likely be required to be realistic in terms of work-load."

"I believe this is a well rounded plan that will provide reasonable opportunity for trial and learning to inform really good policy development for this program."

"I really love that you are thinking about community food security in a way that is achievable."

"Clear and ample communication to the community regarding opportunities they may be able to participate in is key. Many times people don't know of possible programs available to them."

"This is a nice plan, however I feel there is a need for the city to change current bylaws now to address the rising cost of food. Many residents do not have the luxury of waiting another year or two for administration and council to get their ducks in a row."

"You are on the right track, the devil is now in the details... transforming this vision into actionable items to benefit the community."





SECTION 4.0

Next Steps

Findings from this phase of engagement will be used to revise and finalize the Urban Agriculture Plan, to be presented back to Council in the Fall of 2023.

For more information on the project and to stay in touch with the process, please visit

beaumont.ab.ca/urbanagriculture, or email planning@beaumont.ab.ca to be put on the mailing list.

Thank you to all who participated. We are grateful for your time and appreciate the energy you have put into planning for the future of urban agriculture in Beaumont.