

Growing and Sharing Local Food in Boroondara

Community Consultation Report

Prepared by the Environment and Sustainable Living Department

October 2015



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1 Background

From 1 to 30 June 2015, Council consulted with the community on the discussion paper Growing and Sharing Local Food in Boroondara and an accompanying Snapshot of Local Food Growing and Sharing Initiatives.

The consultation aimed to:

1. Increase community awareness about the diversity of existing opportunities for growing (and sharing) of local food.
2. Clarify the level of community interest and support for various community-based food growing opportunities.
3. Outline the issues that need consideration and the associated process for considering any proposals for new community-based food gardens on Council managed land.
4. Seek feedback about how Council might work with the community to foster continued expansion of local food growing (and sharing) opportunities.

Preparing the discussion paper for community consultation was an action in Boroondara's Public Health and Wellbeing Plan - Annual Action Plan 2014¹.

2 Consultation method

Consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy, the opportunity to 'Have Your Say' was promoted via numerous channels including the Boroondara Bulletin, Progress Leader advertisement, 'Have Your Say' web page, the City of Boroondara's Facebook page, Boroondara's intranet (BAZ) and messages on hold. Themed postcards, posters, and hard copies of the consultation documents were available at all libraries, Council customer service centres, and at sports and recreation centres.

The primary method for collecting feedback was through an online survey, which included a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions. Council promoted the consultation material via survey and through tailored emails to key stakeholders including:

- Local food growing and sharing groups that featured in the Snapshot document. Many of these groups added links from their Facebook or web pages to Council's 'Have Your Say' page.
- Schools and kindergartens with kitchen gardens (including recipients of community grants).
- Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres.
- Maternal and Child Health Centres.
- Support services such as Camcare and service groups such as Rotary.
- Living for our Future newsletter list.
- Famers Market vendors.
- Boroondara Community Voice Panel.

Two community engagement activities were held during the consultation period: a stall at the 20 June Boroondara Farmers Market and a workshop on Tuesday 23 June targeting residents and groups involved in local food growing and sharing.

Written submissions were also welcome.

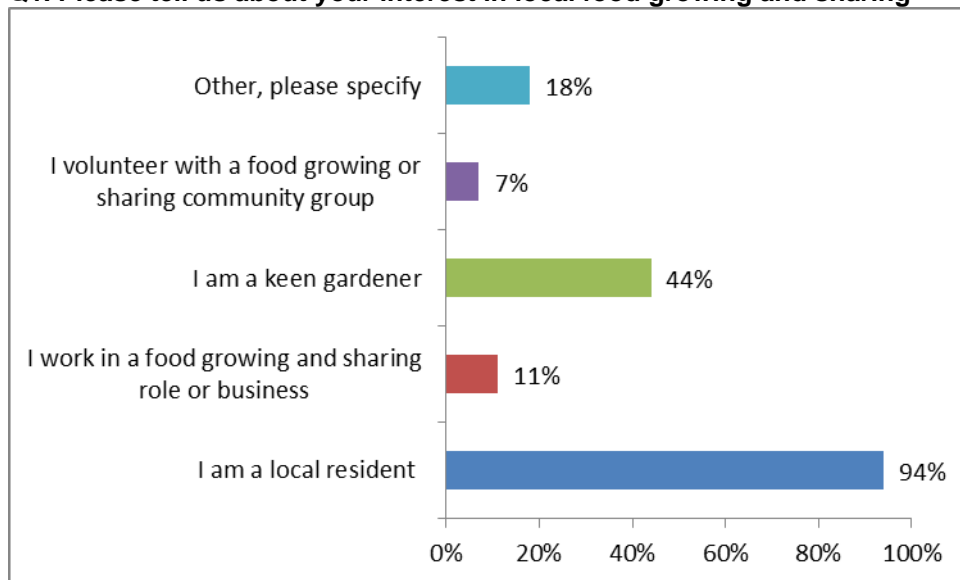
• ¹Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan - Annual Action Plan 2014, City of Boroondara, <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/health-wellbeing-plan>

3 Consultation findings

3.1 Online survey results

Below is a summary of the 213 responses to the online survey. Seventy one percent of respondents answered all questions.

Q1. Please tell us about your interest in local food growing and sharing



The majority of respondents (94%) were local residents, 44% indicated they were keen gardeners, 11% were involved in a food growing or sharing business and 7% said they volunteered with a food growing or sharing business.

Of those that ticked 'Other':

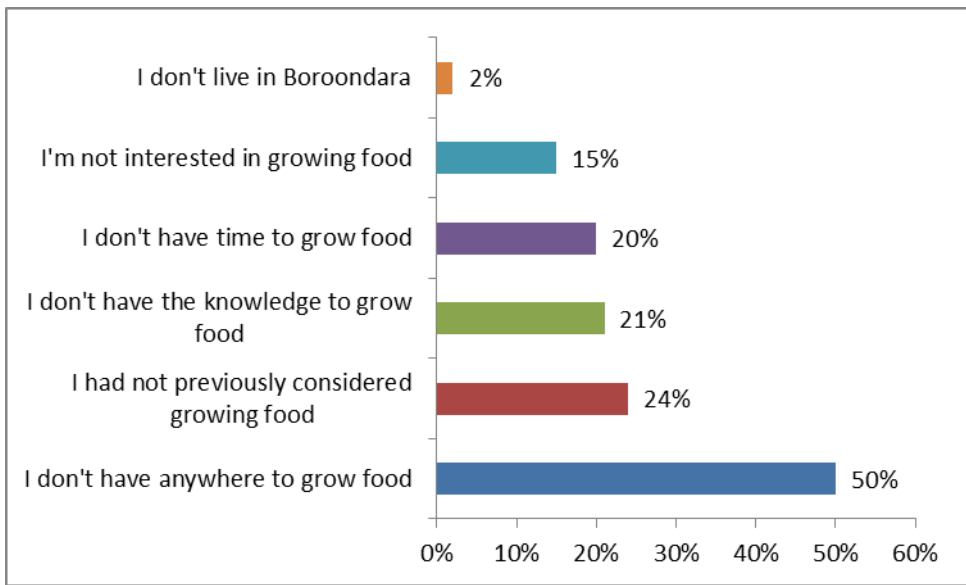
- A few (3) were horticulture students at Melbourne University's Burnley campus and one was involved with the campus food growing group.
- A couple (2) were helping to grow food at their local kindergarten.
- One person said they managed 21 public housing community gardens as well as other community food projects.

Q2a. Are you currently involved in growing food in Boroondara?

Over half (55.8%) of respondents said 'Yes' they were currently growing food.

Q2b. If you answered No to Q2a, please tell us more about your reasons?

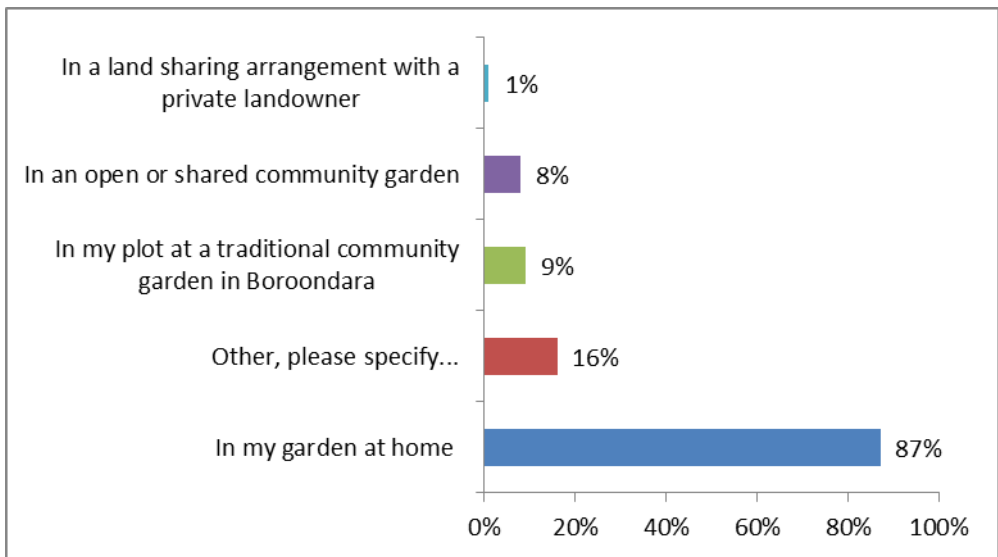
- 50% said they didn't have anywhere to grow food.
- 24% said they had not thought about growing their own food.
- 21% said they didn't have the knowledge to grow their own food.
- 20% said they didn't have the time to grow their own food.



Q2c. If you answered Yes to Q2a, where do you grow food?

- The majority (87%) grow food at home.
- Ten respondents said they had plots at community gardens and nine were involved in growing food at Winton Road Food Forest.
- One respondent was involved in a private land sharing arrangement.

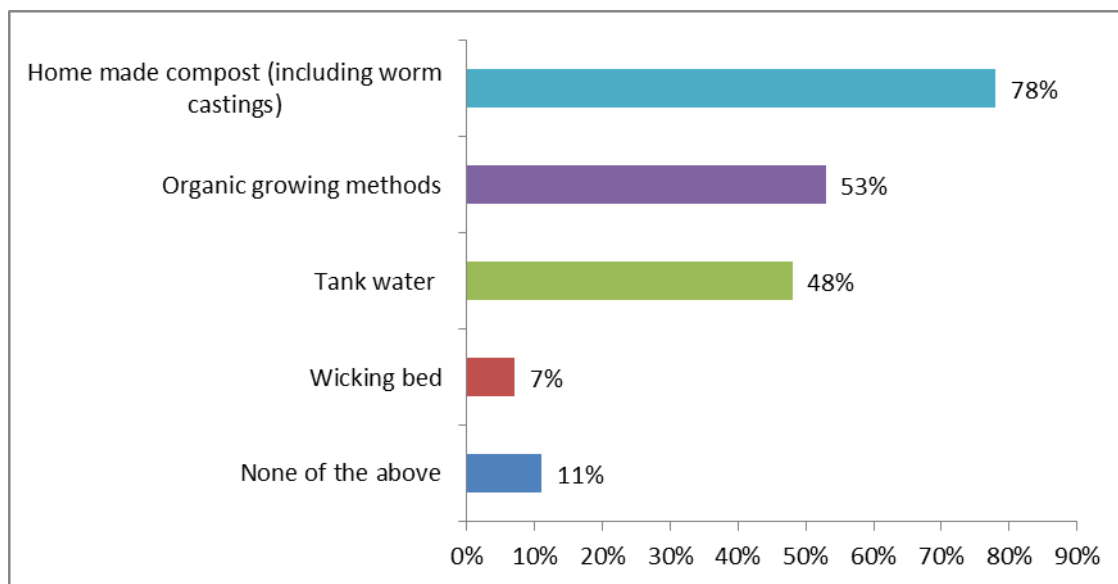
'Other' settings nominated included in gardens at schools, kindergartens and long day child care centres, in pots on balconies and at a local community centre.



Q3. What do you produce, or grow in your garden?

- 94.4% grew herbs.
- 90.7% grew vegetables.
- 62.6% grew fruit.
- 7.5% produced eggs.
- 5.6% produced honey.

Q4. Which of the following do you use in your garden?



Q5. The Discussion Paper identifies a set of benefits to individuals and to the community from growing and sharing local food. How important do you consider each of the following benefits?

This question listed 13 benefits from growing and sharing food. The top five benefits were:

1. Provides a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment.
2. Encourages healthy food choices.
3. Helps children learn about food.
4. Relaxation and wellbeing benefits.
5. Promotes skill and knowledge sharing.

The three benefits considered least important were:

11. Allows households to save money.
12. Supports local farmers.
13. Provides a reliable source of food for my community.

Q6a. Council's Living for our Future program offers sustainable living workshops on food gardening and related topics and provides subsidised worm farms and compost bins. To what extent would you be interested in the following workshop topics and support?

The greatest level of interest and support was for:

1. Access to a subsidised worm farm or compost bin (37.6%).
2. "Introduction to vegetable gardening" workshop (33.7%).
3. "Composting and worm farming" workshop (30%).

Q6b. What other workshop topics or support would you be interested in?

Sustainable food gardening (25 comments):

- Organic growing methods, propagation and seed saving, understanding soils, garden design, growing herbs.
- "Just simple basic - what/when/where/how to plant things and then how to easily look after".
- One respondent suggested City of Boroondara produce a booklet on vegetable gardening similar to those available in other municipalities.

Pest management (14 comments)

- “Dealing with brushtail possums, rats and fruit bats.”

Fruit trees and pruning (12 comments)

- “How to get fruit trees to fruit!”

Growing in small spaces (8 comments):

- “Any that might be suitable for people who only have access to a 1.5msq balcony.”

Water management (6 comments)

- Harvesting water, irrigation, wicking beds.

Other suggestions included:

- “Fresh fruit and nutrition workshops for mind body balance run for: young mothers at home; school children, older residents and church communities.”
- “How to create a viable environment for growing plants when sunshine is limited by surrounding double-storied mansions shadowing the property.”
- “Participating in a community garden - not a workshop as such but just having the chance to participate or learn in a community garden.”

Q7. Do you share, sell or buy local food through any of the following?

Respondents were asked to nominate the local food networks or organisations/venues that they use to share, sell or buy local produce. Options and results are set out below.

	Share	Sell	Buy	I have not used this option
Boroondara Farmers Market	nil	<1%	51.20%	48.80%
Home delivered fruit and veggie box from an organic retailer	1.20%	1.20%	17.60%	81.20%
Organic fruit and veggie box 'direct from the farmer' via a local/regional collective or co-op	0.6%	1.2%	17.1%	82.3%
Food swaps	19.6%	2.5%	2.5%	80.4%
Kew Fruit Squad	2.5%	1.3%	nil	97.5%
Ripe Near Me	3.2%	<1%	1.3%	96.8%
My personal friendship networks	63.9%	1.2%	5.9%	32.0%
School or kindergarten canteens or fairs	7.5%	1.9%	22.0%	71.7%

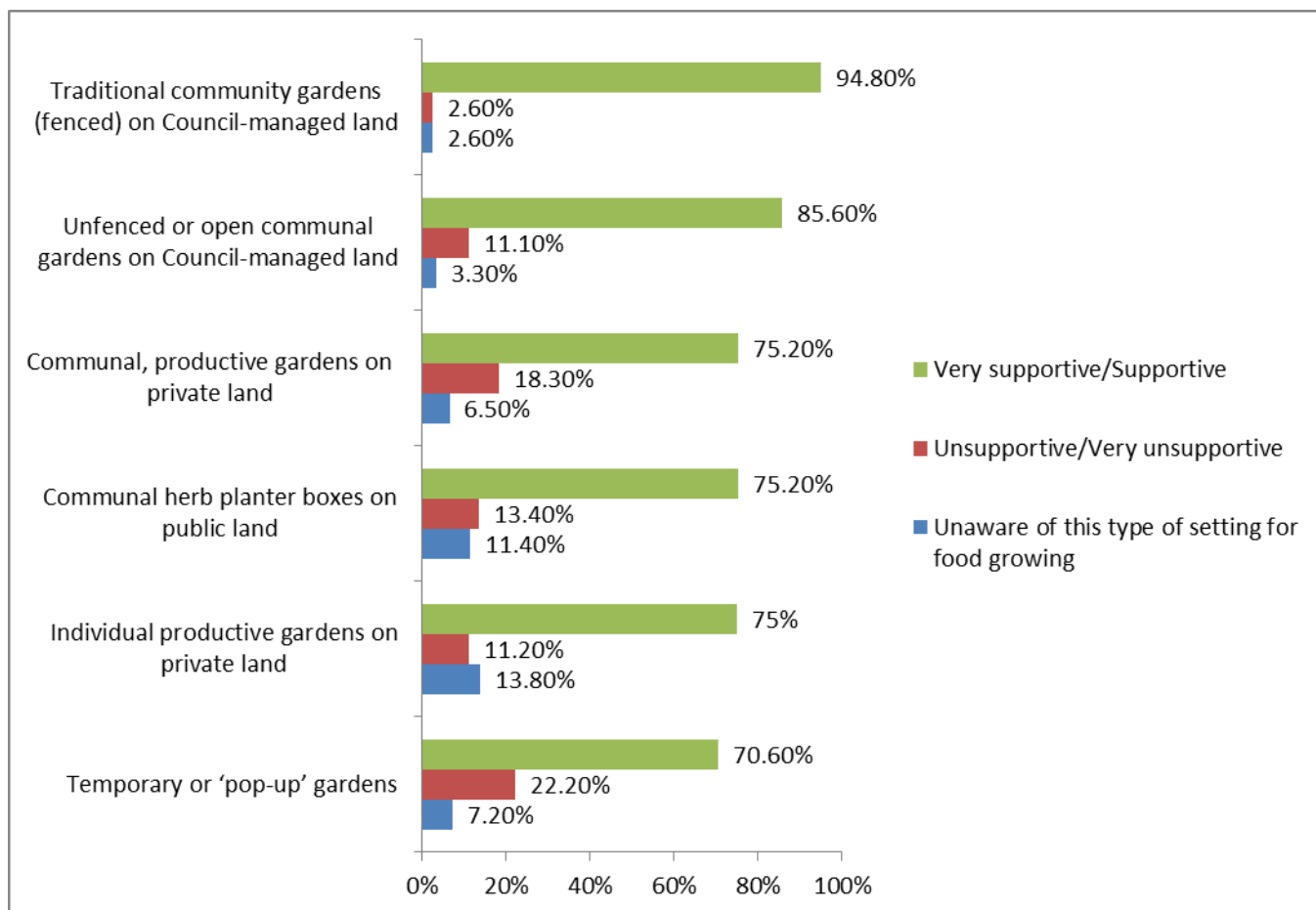
A large number of people (63.9%) share through personal friendship networks and just over half (51.2%) buy from the Boroondara Farmers market. The results from this question highlighted that the majority of people are unaware of many fresh food distribution options.

Q8. To what extent were you surprised by the diversity of food growing and sharing activities profiled in the Snapshot of Local Food Growing and Sharing Initiatives in Boroondara?

- 42.5% were ‘Surprised’ or ‘Very surprised’ at the diversity of local food growing and sharing activities.
- 28.2% were not at all surprised.

Q9. The Discussion Paper describes typical settings for food growing in Boroondara. While home-based productive gardening is very common, there are other settings for community-based and individual food growing. To what extent do you support the following?

While there was strong support for all food growing settings, the greatest level of support was for ‘traditional community gardens (fenced) on Council-managed land’, followed by ‘unfenced/open community gardens on Council-managed land’.



Q10. The Discussion Paper (Section 7, page 15) sets out a proposition for locating future community-based food gardens. This proposition recognises that public open space is limited and that there are many issues that need to be considered before a new community garden proposal can become reality.

The proposition is that:

- 1. Groups that would like to establish a new community garden explore private land options first.**
- 2. If a partnership with a private land owner cannot be established, opportunities to co-locate a community garden with community facilities could be explored.**
- 3. If neither of these two options is successful, the community group can approach Council to propose a new community garden in public open space.**

Most respondents:

- Agreed that the proposition was fair and reasonable.
- Disagreed that public open space should be the last resort for new community gardens.
- Agreed that community groups should take responsibility to explore private land options before seeking public open space for new community gardens.

Statements	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
The proposition outlined above is fair and reasonable	19.20%	57%	19.90%	4%
Public open space should be a last resort for new community gardens	12%	26.70%	38%	23.30%
Community groups should	16%	40.70%	28.70%	14.70%

take responsibility to explore private land options before seeking public open space				
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Q11. As a land owner would you be happy to enter into a partnership to establish a productive or community garden on your land? Why or why not?

Of the 116 respondents:

- 93 people said 'No'.
- 23 people said 'Yes' or 'Maybe'.

Comments from those who said 'Yes' or 'Maybe' noted:

- They would want to have a 'say' over the number of people involved (3).
- Concerns around insurance cover, dealing with conflict or issues that arise and impacts on neighbours (3).
- They would consider this when they were less able to manage their garden (2).

"I already have a productive garden on my land but would be interested in sharing the produce in return for labour when I get older."

Some (5) also commented on the potential for using nature strips for growing produce:

"I'm in a unit so courtyard and small body corporate front yard only. I'm happy for all residents to use the herbs in the front garden. I'd be interested in developing the naturestrip but not with the regulatory hurdles and attitude that council has."

Key reasons given for responding to this question with 'No' were:

- Limited or no land (54 responses).
- Privacy and security concerns for landowners and their family and pets (15 responses).
- Not being a landowner (9 responses).
- No sun (2 responses).
- Community gardens should be on public land.
- Concern that initial enthusiasm might wear off and the land owner left with the land to look after (1 response).

Q12a. Issues for consideration: Section 8.1 of the Discussion Paper presents a checklist of issues that need consideration when reviewing a proposal for a new community garden on Council-managed land.

Fourteen issues were listed in the survey and respondents were asked to rank them as either 'Very important', 'Important', 'Somewhat important' and 'Not at all important'.

Most people ranked all issues as 'Very Important' or 'Important'.

Issues for consideration ranked according to being 'Very' important or 'important'	Very important or Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important
The community group demonstrates vision and commitment	93.30%	4%	2.70%
Site has access for construction of the garden	91.20%	6.80%	2%
Orientation/topography is appropriate	90.00%	9%	1.30%
There is strong community support	88.70%	10%	1.40%
There is a demonstrated demand for a new community garden	88.50%	10%	2.00%
Site history/previous use has been assessed	88.00%	9%	3.30%
There is access to water and power	85.20%	11.40%	3.40%
The proposed garden allows for access and inclusion for the broader community	81.20%	15.40%	3.40%

The site allows for passive surveillance	80.40%	14.90%	4.70%
There is proximity to public facilities and transport	71.60%	23%	5.40%
The community group has public liability insurance	78.60%	12.70%	8.70%
Alternative locations have been explored	76.70%	18%	5.30%
The community group can contribute funding or in-kind support	75.30%	21.30%	5.30%
Impact on existing use of public open space is minimal	69.30%	23%	7.30%

Q12b. Are there other key issues that you think should be included in the list of issues for consideration?

- 30 respondents made comments that were related to existing issues for consideration.
- 13 respondents made unrelated comments. These have been collated as part of Q14.

Comments on appropriate location and site specific issues

- New gardens must be appropriate to the location and avoid the risk of plants escaping and spreading into the natural environment.
- Ensure new community gardens are located away from sources of pollution (traffic, industry, etc.).
- Water is essential, but power is not important.
- The impact on neighbouring properties should be considered (noise, traffic, and aesthetics).

Comments on governance issues

- Ensure each community garden has a board or committee of management.
- Require new community garden committees to report to Council to check progress.
- A code of behaviour/guidelines/rules for participants should be in place.

Comments on community engagement and support

- Community gardens and facilities should be open to the broader community. This could be achieved by lowering fences around the gardens. West Brunswick community gardens was suggested as a good example.
- Engage the broader community in having a say around management of the garden.
- Provide community facilities:

“Community gardens can be public recreational and meeting places that are about more than just the food. Provision for additional activity such as BBQ areas pizza ovens sand pits and passive recreation like should be encouraged.”

Comments on funding and investment

- There were different views about who should fund community gardens. Some felt that Council should invest in funding community gardens, while others stressed that community groups should be responsible or at least contribute.

Q13: What do you think of the proposed process for progressing new community gardens in public open space?

Section 8.2 of the Discussion Paper (page 20) presents a potential process for progressing proposals for new community gardens on public open space. Would you like to make any comments about this?

Twenty were supportive and some made suggestions such as:

- Provide tips for guidance of new groups - so it's clear how they participate in the process.
- Articulate Council's role and support.
- Provide an idea of the likely timeframe to progress a new proposal.
- Require community groups to make a financial commitment.
- Ensure there is a commitment from the group.

“Good sensible process. Would be good to follow up with tips on how community groups can undertake some of those steps.”

“I think that overall the Discussion Paper suggests a good process. It would be useful to gain a more complete understanding of how Council would weight conflicting interests over the land use proposal in assessing the application.”

Seven gave ‘qualified’ support for the process and made comments or raised questions:

- Soil testing - who would be responsible for this?
- The assessment of community group application - would need a ‘like-minded’ Council officer to do this.
- Community groups should be made-up of local residents.
- Need to weigh-up other uses of the proposed open space carefully “How would Council do this?”

Six were opposed to the process and expressed the following sentiments:

- It is overly bureaucratic or onerous.
- Community gardens should not be sited in public open space.
- Council should construct community gardens as public amenities and not wait for a community group to approach them.

Unrelated comments were collated as part of Q14.

Q14: Would you like to add any further comments about the Discussion Paper?

New Community gardens

- Community gardens are public assets and should be located in public open space (3).
- “Community gardens and other types of urban agriculture are fresh, educational, inclusive ways to use public open space, not a loss of public open space. In the same way that councils provide parks for strolling and sport, council should also be actively supporting and implementing food growing spaces on council land.”
- As urban density increases, demand for community gardens will increase and developers should be required to set aside space for food growing (5).
- New community garden proposals should be driven by Council not community groups “Build it and they will come “(1).

Edible plants/trees in streetscapes and formal gardens

- Allow planter boxes for veggies on nature strips in appropriate locations (2).
- More food forests (1).
- Edible plants in formal gardens (1).
- Concern over pollution impacts on food grown near streets (1).

“Boroondara is a little bit precious about its gardens - look at the attention lavished on the garden opposite Swinburne and Canterbury. And yet neither of them include edibles. Why not kale borders and apple trees? They do a good job but it's a bit roses and pansies-dominant for me, when you could do some more modern cool stuff and invite low-key access. If you're in the garden and see the sign (change colour when ready to pick for the 20-somethings) feel free to harvest for personal use sort of thing. And there's a huge north-facing area beside the railway line opposite Swinburne.”

Council's role

- Provide horticultural advice to community gardeners (so community gardens are really productive not just symbolic) (2).
- Have a vision, and ensuring good planning of new community gardens where ‘benefits outweigh costs’ (1).
- Co-ordinating a land sharing register (1).
- Co-ordinating a weekly veggie swap meeting (1).
- Facilitating networking and resource sharing between different community groups (like the Moreland Food Network)(1).
- “Food growing has become separated from our daily lives and not something we expect to ‘see’ in our environment. Council could have a broad vision that changes that over time.”
- “I think this is a great beginning - and should certainly generate some discussion, which I hope to be part of.”

Existing community gardens

- Water is key to the success of community gardens, and they need water tanks or watering systems(2).
- Introduce limited tenure for plot holders to facilitate access for those on waiting lists (1).
- Community gardens could sell fruit and veggie seedlings to the community (1).
- Schools could engage community members to participate in their school kitchen gardens (1).
- Community garden committees should pool waiting lists (1).

Waste of time/money

- Council should focus on core services such as maintaining footpaths (1).
- Community gardens benefit the minority (2).

Other comments

- The Discussion Paper did not address the issue of pest species such as possums and the impact they have on produce gardens (3).
- Improve signage at community gardens so it's clear who to contact and if food can be harvested by the public (such as at Winton Road Community Garden) (1).
- Encouraging environmental approaches at community gardens (2).
- Ensure promotion of options such as Land sharing (2).
- Prioritise native plants and food forests (1).
- Need to ensure we provide bee hives in new community gardens (1).

3.2 Community/stakeholder workshop outcomes

A community workshop and networking event was held on Tuesday 23 June 2015 at the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre. Invitations were sent to community organisations actively engaged in food sharing and growing ventures. Residents on wait lists for community garden plots were also invited via community garden committees. Twenty-eight people registered from organisations including:

- Existing community gardens (Hawthorn and Ashburton)
- Winton Road Food Forest
- Neighbourhood Houses (Surrey Hills)
- Food Swap participants and co-ordinators
- Local food co-ops
- Groups supporting farm direct organic boxes
- Fruit squad
- Landscapers
- Schools
- Aged care centres
- Participants rotated around four 'topic' tables facilitated by a Council officer to provide input to four topics. A summary of feedback from the workshop is provided below.

Topic 1: Existing community gardens - how do they/can they engage with the wider community?

Workshop participants included several community garden plot holders, two people on waiting lists for plots and a former project manager for community gardens in rural Victoria so participants were able to talk from personal experience. Existing community garden plot holders suggested that there is little engagement with the broader community and little interaction between plot holders and therefore a need to 'bring life into the gardens'.

Ideas suggested for doing this included running community events and activities in the gardens, using welcoming signage to communicate what's growing or seasonal activities. There were suggestions to leave gates unlocked and lower fences to open up the gardens to the community and reduce the sense of exclusiveness. Other suggestions included mentoring young people or interested community members to share knowledge and skills, and donating excess produce to community groups that distribute food to those in need.

Additional comments on existing community gardens:

- Community gardens should have a mix of shared and individual plots to increase access. Length of plot leases should also be reviewed.
- Surprisingly, some shared plots are not harvested (even after working bees) and the crops go to waste.

Topic 2: Options, benefits and risks from community gardening in alternative settings (e.g. private land)

Participants discussed three settings: private land sharing, use of nature strips, and use of VicTrack land. Much of the discussion focussed on land sharing.

The land sharing model matches landholders with growers. Benefits discussed included: mutual benefits for homeowners and gardeners such as assistance looking after large gardens or activation of unused land, social interaction, access to growing space, sharing of produce, security for landowner when on holidays. In a community setting activation of a vacant piece of land could reduce antisocial behaviours and rubbish dumping.

Risks identified from a private land sharing arrangement included: potential for the landowner or gardener to change their mind, the level of involvement of the landowner in aspects of the garden project such as design, access considerations such as days or between what hours the garden could be accessed, and dealing with pets.

Key risks around produce gardening on nature strips were limited to the issue of people slipping on dropped fruit, and the risk from contamination from car pollution. During the discussion there were examples of cities where produce was being grown successfully on nature strips including Lisbon and Graz (Austria). VicTrack land was only perceived as risky if plots were positioned very close to railway tracks.

The group suggested that it was important to include risk management as part of any planning process. They also raised the issue of insurance and how this could be purchased.

The representative from 3000Acres said that that group had a toolkit and resources to help with issues such as agreements, insurances and risk management. Their website also enables community members to map vacant private (and public) land for community gardens.

Cost effective public liability insurance for community gardening groups can also be purchased through the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria.

Topic 3: How can we expand awareness of and participation in local food sharing and food distribution activities?

Workshop participants made a range of suggestions around promoting and increasing participation in food growing and sharing. This included promotion via community group newsletters and websites and council's website and publications. More tailored channels are needed to reach Gen Y who are unlikely to use Council communication channels. Participants felt that Council could assist local groups to promote food growing and sharing activities to the broader community because Council is considered a 'trusted' source of information.

New ideas included:

- Developing a resource of community organisations that accept food donations organisations so groups such as Kew Fruit Squad or community gardens can donate produce.
- Establishing a Facebook page for the food growing and sharing network.
- Further networking events to share what is happening locally.
- Schools and other agencies such as aged care centres could partner with local communities to grow food. This idea was raised by a participant from Solway Primary School that has a large veggie garden. Plots are unused from December to April and could be used by interested community members. The representative from Balwyn Evergreen Centre also suggested that there may be opportunities at their produce garden.

Topic 4: Feedback on the Discussion Paper's 'issues for consideration' and proposed 'process' for progressing any proposals for community gardens on council managed land.

Comments were made on both issues and processes:

- In relation to issues for consideration, workshop participants felt it critical that groups proposing new community gardens on council managed land have a solid vision that includes broad community benefits as well as community engagement and community building strategies to look beyond the interests of the group.

- With respect to the process for progressing new proposals, participants felt a guiding document for those starting out would be useful. It could include two sections: the first part focussing on initial pointers and resources to help people getting started to form a group look at private land options and options around co-locating gardens with community facilities. The second section could provide guidance to groups intending to take a proposal to Council for a community garden in public open space. One person considered that perhaps only one round of community consultation (not two) and this could occur when the proposal is more advanced and a draft concept plan prepared. The group agreed that it was important that the link between principles underpinning the use of public open space and the process is made clear.

Other issues raised

The problem of Brushtail possums eating produce from gardens was raised. One participant suggested growing more native trees so the possums have something else to eat, and also making suburbs more friendly for native owls (e.g. protecting habitat trees, installing nest boxes) as Owls predate on possums and can help keep the numbers in check.

3.3 Written submissions

Two written submissions were received: one from a group of community garden plot holders and a shorter email submission from a local resident.

The submission from the community garden members detailed the significant work that goes into the day to day running of the community garden and associated challenges. They said they are mindful of the importance of developing their own 'membership community', strengthening relationships with their patrons (Burke and Beyond) and the wider community of Boroondara. The email submitter suggested that the Discussion Paper could have included more detail on food miles and the connection to global warming.

Additional comments from these submissions that have not been raised elsewhere in this report are shown below.

Benefits from community gardens and produce gardening:

- "It's unique activity accessible to 'young' and 'old' and inherently inclusive."
- "As well as fostering environmental behaviours, growing food leads to an appreciation of the effort needed to produce food."
- "Can help rebuild expertise and life skills that were once passed down from generation to generation and have now largely been lost."

Limited tenure of community garden plots

- 'Limited tenure' for plot holders was not supported. They felt this was contrary to maintaining an engaged community garden culture and that "it made no sense to allow membership of a community group in order to foster social connectedness and then remove this after a set period". They said that plot turnover occurs at a steady rate through natural attrition.

Locating new community gardens

- "Apart from the cost of land, a community garden is inexpensive to maintain, especially in comparison to sportsgrounds and creates an open area of some aesthetic appeal for the general community."
- "Open parklands or 'unstructured' areas should not be used for new community gardens as these are important for maintaining the special character of an area and for community health and wellbeing."
- "Public open space is already under significant pressure (referred to council policy committing POS to non-open space dependent activities and the influence of school 'industry' and organised sporting lobby over council policy and programs access to POS)."
- Some suggested we look at suitable located road reserves for vegetable growing. This has been raised before with Council but was rejected due to soil contamination and road safety issues.
- Others suggested disused bowling greens or tennis courts falling into disrepair could be transformed into community gardens.
- "Schools have veggie gardens and these could be better maintained. Given this potential, this deserves great attention".

Council's role/support

- Council's key role should be to shepherd embryonic groups through the process. 'Providing guidelines around Council expectations would be very useful along with support in grant writing.'
- Council should support community gardens as much as it assists sporting groups because of multiple benefits from community gardening:

"Space for community gardens has been insufficiently prioritised compared with say sporting grounds."

- A program on growing food similar to Council's Living for our Future (LfoF) program could be run within a communal space and used to support new groups. Information/activities targeting new residents landscapers and builders could help build awareness
- A web page for the use of all community gardens could be helpful for key dates, food swap dates etc.

3.4 Boroondara Farmers Market stall

Council's stall at the Farmers Market on the 23 June provided an opportunity for staff to promote the community consultation and chat to visitors about their experiences of growing or sharing local food and purchasing fresh produce and food products at the market. Around 80 veggie seeds were 'potted up' by shoppers and taken home with information on the consultation and website address for the online survey.

While there was an option to provide written comments, most people preferred to chat about their produce gardens or intent to start a produce garden. Common issues raised were lack of success growing produce, issues with possums or fruit bats, and a desire to grow food but having no suitable land.

When asked about suggestions for growing or sharing food in Boroondara, comments included:

- "Love the pick and share tubs in Ashburton."
- "Need more community gardens spread around the area."
- "Riversdale Station car park would be a great spot for fruit trees and veggie boxes."

3.5 Facebook posts

Throughout June, information and questions were posted on Council's Facebook page to raise awareness of the community consultation, the various food growing options in Boroondara and direct people to the 'Have Your Say' page. The posts attracted an average of 120 'Likes', up to 12 comments and numerous 'Shares'.

Comments posted included some that were supportive and others not supportive of community gardening. One person questioned whether Council was really on board with encouraging community gardening after closing down a small produce garden in a pocket park. Comments expressed support for the range of community food growing and sharing activities underway in the community including the Boroondara's Farmers Market, 3000Acres and Kew Fruit Squad. Staff from Kew Recreation Centre posted a comment to let people know that they intend to start growing produce on site for their café in the near future.

4 Conclusion

The response to community consultation demonstrates a high level of interest in the topic of local food growing and sharing and shows that many in our community are either actively involved in or interested in growing and sharing food in Boroondara in the future.

The consultation process revealed that many people were unaware of the numerous local food networks in Boroondara such as food swap events or organisations such as the Kew Fruit Squad and Ripe Near Me. The greatest level of support was for 'traditional community gardens (fenced) on Council-managed land' followed by 'unfenced/open community gardens on Council-managed land'. People were least supportive of communal gardens on private land followed by temporary 'pop-up' gardens. Many people were supportive of the 'draft process for progressing proposals for new community gardens on council-managed land' and some made suggestions for Council's consideration. Of the fourteen issues listed for consideration in the survey, most people ranked all of them as 'Very important or important'. Numerous comments were received suggesting how Council could work with the community to foster continued expansion of local food growing and sharing opportunities.

Council Officers will use the feedback and ideas captured during the consultation to inform current activities and future actions.

5 Further information

To help facilitate sharing of information across the municipality and capacity building, a Food Access Network has recently been established in Boroondara. For further information on joining this network please contact Nicole White, Health and Wellbeing Planning and Policy Officer nicole.white@boroondara.vic.gov.au.

The Snapshot of Local Food Growing and Sharing Activities in Boroondara which highlights various initiatives and community groups has also been updated since the consultation and uploaded to the City of Boroondara website – www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/growing-sharing-local-food.

Further updates to the content of this document should be referred to Andrea Lomdahl, Senior Sustainability Officer andrea.lomdahl@boroondara.vic.gov.

There were a number of potential community gardening sites mentioned in the feedback. We encourage residents to visit the www.3000acres.org to add the location and a description of these sites to their map of possible food growing locations.