

The
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project**

NORTH SHORE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSE



Starting a Schoolyard Market Garden

An Implementation & Resource Guide

*To complement the
Fresh Roots Growing Neighbours Case Study*



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Starting a Schoolyard Market Garden 2017 Edition
– Emily Jubenvill, North Shore Neighbourhood House

***A place of
learning, building
community,
and local food
production.***

a schoolyard market garden

This Implementation and Resource Guide has been developed to assist community organizations and school communities to navigate the development of a schoolyard market garden. We provide an outline of the steps that we took to establish the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden (SMG), examples of materials that we developed and used in the process, and frequently asked questions to help your group clarify the vision and direction of your project.

This Implementation and Resource Guide was made possible by the generous support of the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia

*We're not lawyers,
property managers or
school administrators.
We're just hoping to
illustrate the path we
took, get you thinking
about some of the things
that you will need to
navigate if you're going to
start a schoolyard market
garden, and guide you
through the initial steps.*

how to use this guide

This guide shares the steps we took and our experiences developing the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden from idea to implementation.

It includes lessons learned and frequently asked questions to consider in the development of your project.

It is not intended to be a prescriptive lesson, but a starting place to guide the process of developing a schoolyard market garden in your school district.

We hope that the information provided is useful and encourages the development of more schoolyard market gardens across British Columbia.

program overview



For over 75 years, the North Shore Neighbourhood House has been working to meet the grassroots needs of our neighbours in building a safe, healthy, and strong community. Our Edible Garden Project uses food as a platform to transform community, address health, environmental and social issues, while empowering citizens of all ages through capacity building and community connections.

Our Farms

The Edible Garden Project offers many community based programs and educational opportunities, including two social enterprise urban farms. Our social enterprise grows vegetables to sell in our community on two plots of public land; our goal is to grow and sell enough food to be revenue neutral.



Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden (SMG)

Established in March 2015, our second farm site is the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden. It is located on approximately one-third of an acre of front lawn at Sutherland Secondary School.

Using raised beds we grow a variety of vegetables year round for sale to the cafeteria and the neighbourhood. Student clubs and classes use the garden throughout the school year for various educational pursuits.

our model



schoolyard market garden management

Unlike a typical school garden, our Schoolyard Market Garden (SMG) is managed by our Farmer(s) and community volunteers. The Farmers are paid staff of the North Shore Neighbourhood House. They make operational decisions in the SMG and work with our Education Coordinator to engage teachers and students in a meaningful way. We engage by providing tours, planting areas for students and teachers and collaborating on school events hosted in the SMG.

In our experience the Education Coordinator is the essential link between

SMG and the School. Our Farmers' expertise is in growing food and not necessarily teaching. On the other hand our Education Coordinator's expertise is teaching and facilitating education experiences in an outdoor garden setting. They provide the link that translates what is happening in the garden from the Farmers' perspective to relevant concepts and educational opportunities for the school.

In addition, the Education Coordinator has the important role of coordinating and encouraging school use of the SMG. A garden and outdoor classroom can be challenging for time-strapped teachers to fit into their teaching schedules, so we do our best to remove barriers and increase capacity.



understand your stakeholders

your stakeholders

The School District

The school district is the land-owner and ultimately administrators will decide if your proposed SMG will go ahead or not. In British Columbia all school districts consist of staff and an elected Board of Education.

The Municipality

Although the land discussed in this guide is owned by a school district, your municipality can still play an important role. There may be municipal policies that either support or prohibit garden and farming activities in the area. Your municipality will also need to be engaged if services like water or electricity are required on the site.

Teachers & School Staff

Teachers and staff at your school play an

incredibly important role in the success of your proposed project. With their support the SMG will effectively meet educational goals and garner the support and interest of students.

Students

Students also play a crucial role. Their participation is a driving force behind pursuing a SMG. Student participation and leadership throughout the development process will increase buy-in and use.

Neighbours & Community

Neighbours often have a long-term view. They can tell you things about the site and neighbourhood you wouldn't otherwise know. These could be things significantly impact your plans. Community support and engagement are important.

... and there may be more that are specific to your project!

the steps

from proposal to breaking ground

The most exciting part in developing a school yard market garden is when the spade finally hits the soil. However, it takes a long time to get there. Plan to spend approximately 2-3 years from proposal to ground breaking. Here's an outline of the broad steps involved:

- 1. Develop goals & vision**
- 2. Find a champion**
- 3. Get approval**
- 4. Consult community**
- 5. Fundraise**
- 6. Build it!**

develop your goals & vision

Setting a clear vision and goals for your SMG are vital. These will be used to articulate what you want to do, how you will achieve it and why it is important to all of your stakeholders.

questions to consider:

- Why is a SMG important to your school and community?*
- How will the school be involved? What community partners will you have?*
- Who will staff the project?*
- How will you pay for the capital and ongoing expenses?*
- Is the primary objective food production or education, or both? Who is leading or "owning" this project?*



find a champion

lessons learned:

Find a champion who knows the decision making pathways within your school district.

When Sutherland Secondary teacher, Cynthia Bunbury, started talking to our Farmer about her dream of building another farm with us on the front lawn of the school, we had no idea what role she would play in establishing the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden. The inner workings of the school and school district were a mystery to us. However, her passion for the idea and ability to help us navigate the school district facilitated the development of an idea into a reality.

Find a champion with a strong and broad network of people who may support the idea.

Just like any community based project, the broader your support, the more likely your success. We were lucky that our champion had a strong network of parents, neighbours, teachers and students who shared the project proposal widely. This helped us generate the broad support we needed.

Make sure that you are on the same page regarding the vision and goals of your schoolyard market garden.

Be clear from the beginning with your champion about the vision for the project. As an outside organization developing a proposal for the school district we knew it was very important to be clear from the beginning about how the space would be developed. It needed to be a productive farm space where our social enterprise model could thrive. We were also committed and passionate about creating a welcoming educational space and outdoor classroom. It was great that we were on the same page with Cynthia from the beginning. It meant we didn't have to worry about the vision for the project being misinterpreted.

questions to consider:

- *What power and/or influence does your champion have at the school?*
- *Did they come to you or do you have to seek them out?*
- *How much time do they have to contribute to the project?*
- *How many of the "stakeholder groups" are they in? (ex. teacher, neighbour, parent, student)*
- *What help do you need from them?*

a decision making map

When pursuing a project that has not been attempted before in your school district, it is possible to waste time and effort talking to people who do not have the decision making power required. Understanding who you need to talk to is the most important step you will take in initiating a SMG. As every school district is organized differently there is not one answer that will apply to every district.

Existing policies are the best place to start.

Our school district has an Outdoor Learning Spaces policy. This was important because it provided a framework for the school district to

make a decision. The policy identified the Director of Facilities and Planning as a key decision maker. In the policy we also found the requirements regarding principal and teacher involvement in the project team.

Develop a decision making map.

To develop a decision making map read policies, talk to your champion, principal, school board trustees and other community groups that have worked with your school district. The more you know about the established decision making process before you start, the easier it will be to move forward and build momentum.

our decision making map:

Gain teacher support & find a champion → Gain support of principal
→ Present to the School Board → Meet with principal, champion, superintendent, director of facilities and grounds, and grounds supervisor
→ Acquire acknowledgement to move forward from director of facilities and grounds → Provide detailed information and answer questions → Provide proof of support from municipality → Provide proof of support from neighbourhood → Internal school district administrators' decision making process → School district proceeds to develop a "License to Use Agreement"
→ Provide detailed information and negotiate agreement details → Agreement drafted and revised by legal department → Agreement completed and signed.



make your case

A “case for support” is a pitch that describes your project idea. It describes why the project is important and the impact it will have. It is what you will use to convince and engage decision makers.

When meeting with decision makers have a succinct written proposal (1-2 pages) as well as a visually pleasant powerpoint presentation for your official pitch.

lessons learned:

Connect your SMG proposal to your school district’s priorities.

It is always important to know your audience when developing a community project like a SMG. Every school district will have different priorities which are usually found in annual reports. It is important to know what your school district’s priorities are and find a way to connect your project to these priorities. This will strengthen your case for support.

Answer questions before they are asked.

We talked to stakeholders before our “official pitch” to identify the biggest potential challenges or concerns our proposal could bring up. We used this information to develop solutions that we presented during our official pitch. The more questions you can answer before they are asked, the more polished and well thought-out your presentation proposal will be.

community consultation

Community consultation can mean different things to different people. When you meet with your key decision makers ask them what their expectations are regarding community consultation.

We were required to show proof that the City of North Vancouver was supportive of the project, to hold a public meeting and to attest that neighbours and school community members were generally supportive.

find our pitch presentation, community consultation hand-out, and follow up questions in the appendices.



what we did:

We organized a community meeting at the school. We invited neighbours by distributing paper invitations door to door. A notice was placed in the school newsletter and a message was sent to the congregation of the church across the street.

Our presentation was similar to our “pitch” presentation. We also included a brainstorm session to provide feedback for our site design, and a question and answer period.

In Appendix B we’ve shared the feedback form each participant completed. The results from these forms were shared with our decision makers. We also asked all participants to sign in so we had an accurate count of people who attended.

Teachers at Sutherland Secondary were invited to a professional development day where we presented our “pitch”. They had an engaging conversation about how the SMG could be used as an outdoor classroom and how they could participate with their classes.

site design

There are many fantastic design resources on the internet and in your community. You will likely have someone in your network who would love to help with the site design - perhaps a landscape architect, a permaculturalist, or a horticulturist. Find them and ask for help!

In the meantime check out the Evergreen Foundation's resources on schoolyard greening. Here are a few things to think about to ensure your garden thrives:

Solar exposure:

The average vegetable garden needs 6-8 hours of direct sunlight a day. You'll need to situate the garden carefully if you want to have a productive garden over the long term.

Water:

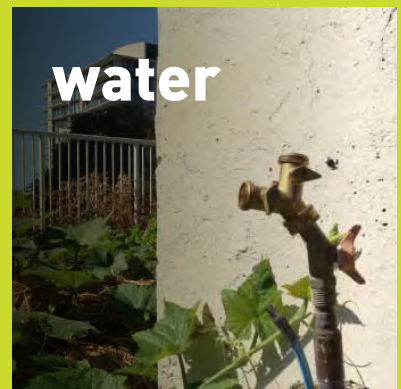
Your garden needs access to water. Think really carefully about where you put the garden if you don't have many outdoor taps. The closer your site is to a water source the better. Setting up a new municipal water connection typically will cost at least \$5,000 CAD.

Soil:

You don't need to start with perfect soil in order to have a productive garden. In fact you can even build a garden bed on top of concrete, so don't let that constrain your garden location.

You can build soil naturally with lasagna gardening or you can purchase soil. The former takes a little more time and effort while the latter can be more costly. Vegetables need an average soil depth of 12-18 inches.

Get your existing soil tested for contaminants and nutrients. This needs to happen as early in your process as possible. A comprehensive soil test costs approximately \$600 CAD.





fundraising

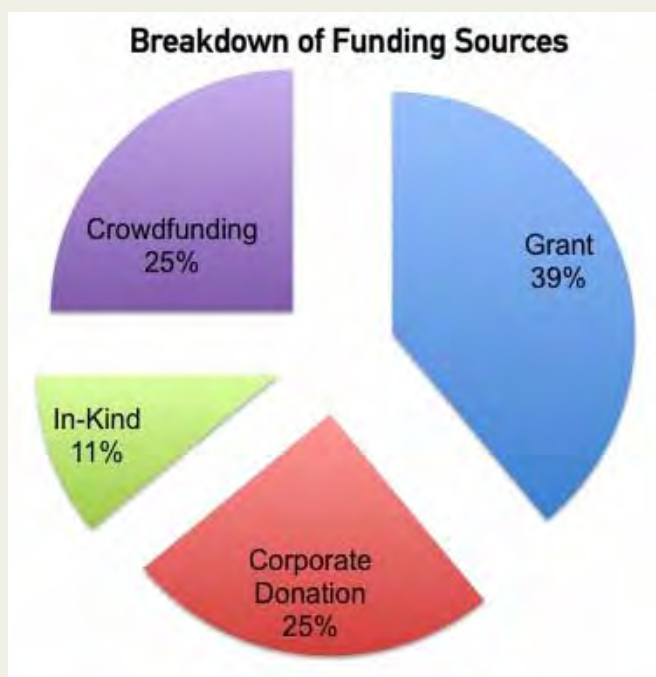
Fundraising for capital projects like starting a SMG can be fun! It's a big project and local businesses will likely want to pitch in with in-kind services or materials if they're unable to provide a cash donation.

We raised funds in a variety of ways for the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden: grants, sponsorships, in-kind donations of materials and services, and a crowdfunding campaign.

You will need to dedicate resources to fundraising.

The *Growing Neighbours: A Case Study of Schoolyard Market Gardens* provides example budgets for your consideration.

how we raised funds:



legal agreement



The legal agreement is a very important component of receiving approval to proceed with your SMG project. It takes time and effort to complete a comprehensive agreement that outlines roles, responsibilities, insurance requirements, site access, etc.

Growing Neighbours: A Case Study of Schoolyard Market Gardens provides an excellent overview and a list of considerations to include in your agreement.

the build

The build needs to be efficient and well organized - very well organized. Think through the whole process from start to finish and make sure that your order of activities makes sense. Have enough staff or lead volunteers to take ownership over specific tasks and groups of volunteers. You can complete it in 4 full days or a month of weekend shifts - chose the schedule that works best for your volunteers and staff.

An ideal order of events:

1. Site preparation (levelling, drainage, irrigation line ditches, wood chip base)
2. Water main installation
3. Shed installation (great to have at the start to store tools and have shelter)
4. Material deliveries (wood, soil, etc)
5. Site layout (string lines to delineate beds, pathways, etc)
6. Main irrigation line installation underground
7. Bed building (building boxes, moving soil, raking)
8. Irrigation installation
9. Pathway mulching and clean up

Be flexible and have fun!

lessons learned:

We learned that even well planned builds don't always work out the way you hope, but in the end it still works. This is roughly the order that the Sutherland SMG build followed:

1. Site preparation (levelling & wood chip base)
2. Material deliveries (wood, soil, etc)
3. Site layout (string lines to delineate beds, pathways, etc)
4. Bed building (building boxes, moving soil, raking)
5. Water main installation
6. Irrigation line installation (below ground...more digging)
7. Irrigation installation (tying into main lines with above ground drip lines)
8. Pathway mulching and clean up
9. Shed installation

share your success!

When all the digging and building is complete it is really important to thank all your volunteers and supporters! Send them updates with photos and share the success of completing the first phase of your schoolyard market garden!

thank you



The North Shore Neighbourhood House's Edible Garden Project gratefully acknowledges all of the volunteers, supporters and funders that contributed to making the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden a success.

A special thank you is required for the North Vancouver School District, which made this project possible by providing access to land at Sutherland Secondary School.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and enthusiasm of our champion, Cynthia Bunbury. Thank you to all of the Sutherland Secondary teachers, students, and administrative staff for getting on board with this project, and continuing to support integrating it into daily life at Sutherland.

This Implementation and Resource Guide was made possible by the generous support of the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia.

THANK YOU!

Appendices:

appendix a: pitch presentation

appendix b: community consultation forms

appendix c: follow up questions & answers

Appendix A

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sutherland
schoolyard
market garden

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NORTH SHORE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE



Learn, share, grow

- Our team
- Strong Roots
- Sharing the Bounty
- Growing Food Gardens
- Loutet Farm
- 3,500 participants
- 4000 volunteer hrs



Experience in design and implementation of urban farm and garden projects from small to large scale






Community programming includes: recruiting and training volunteers of all skill levels, hosting a welcoming an inclusive learning space, coordinating community events, and coordinating student involvement (classes, volunteer hours, work experience, etc)

Community members buy their weekly veggies at our farm gate sales. All market garden revenue from produce sales, training sessions, and educational activities cover program costs.



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**What is a schoolyard market
garden?**



*Schoolyard Market Gardens are
**outdoor, hands-on learning
classrooms** where school communities
come together to learn about food
systems, environmental sustainability,
connection to land and community, and
health.*

**School District
provides the
land**



**EGP grows food
to sell &
maintains land**



**EGP provides
teacher training
& facilitation**



**Community
involvement &
volunteerism**



**Well maintained
& active
education space**



**Thriving social
enterprise & food
production**

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Why create schoolyard market garden?


enrich • empower • inspire

- Provide an opportunity to meet and enrich BC curriculum objectives in innovative, creative, and engaging ways
- Empower all students through skill development and experiential learning



Photo credit: Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society

- Develop new educational infrastructure through a collaborative partnership
- Showcase an aesthetically pleasing, calm, and inspiring space for your students and staff



“Imagine.....a colourful, lively growing space, where students, staff and community come together to learn and grow food for themselves and others, to appreciate the fragility of the earth, to heal and be healed by bonding with living things, to share, to communicate, to create.” – Cynthia Bunbury

Photo credit: Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society

Teachers participate in professional development workshops to learn how to use market gardens to achieve curriculum objectives



Photo credit: Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society

- Provide leadership in environmental education and sustainability practices
- Strengthen and develop relationships with the community

Photo credit: Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society

- Loutet Farm is successful, and we want meet the demands of our community by providing more educational space, and produce for sale.



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Draft Design





- **Compost Plan**
- **Pest Control**
- **Security**
- **Parking Classroom**
- **Community Events**

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Plan & Process

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- Community Consultation
- Design & Agreement
- Fundraising
- Establishment
- Community Programming
 - Community participation
 - Teacher training
 - Student involvement
 - Produce sales
 - Community Events



Corporate sponsorship opportunities, grants & foundations, and crowd funding.

WHOLE FOODS **Neptune**
M A R K E T TERMINALS

onni
group TM

Appendix B

Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden

Open House Feedback Form

Do you live in the:

☐ City of North
Vancouver

☐ District of
North
Vancouver

☐ District of
West
Vancouver

☐ Other

How are you connected to Sutherland Secondary (ex, neighbour, teacher, parent, etc)?

- Edible Garden Project Volunteer
- Neighbour
- Teacher
- Parent
- Residence Association representative
- Other

What is your opinion of the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden?

☐ I am supportive of
this project

☐ I am not supportive of
this project

If the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden is built, how will you be involved? (ex. volunteer, teach in it, etc)

Some people indicated more then more activity:

- Promote to community
- Volunteer
- Teach
- Photograph
- Fundraise
- Purchase food

If the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden is built, would you purchase produce from it?

Do you have any comments or concerns about the Sutherland Schoolyard Market Garden that were not heard or addressed this evening?

Appendix C

Questions from SD44:

These are the questions that the North Vancouver School District had for our group after our initial meeting to discuss the idea. We are sharing these questions to give an idea of the detail and scope required to share with the school district and other stakeholders involved. This is not an exhaustive list, but a starting place for conversations.

Permits

1. What arrangements are required with the City of North Van in regards to permits and licensing to allow farming, and sale of farm produce, on a school site?
2. What process will be followed to ensure public consultation, review and approvals? An Open House promoted to the community, and invitations to houses within 100m of the site.

Insurance

1. What provisions will be made for liability and property damage insurance? (SD44 to review third party coverage requirements with SPP)
2. Will your employees that work on the site have Worksafe?

Selling Produce:

1. Where will you be selling produce?

Site Plan

1. Where do you intend on building your shed? We would want to ensure that it is within code, and that all permits are applied for, as well as ensure it is secure

SD 44 Grounds Department Services

1. What is the anticipated role of Grounds Department during the school year?
2. What actions / assistance would be required over the summer?

Water:

1. Who will be responsible (\$) for initial connections and metering, and ongoing use and operational costs?

Drainage

1. Landscape areas on west side of Sutherland drain into bioswales. Are you able to quantify increased load from watering the schoolyard market garden?
2. Will fertilizers be used and if so, will they be organic?

Electrical Power

1. Requirements for small tools or lighting?

Security

1. Will a perimeter fence be required? If so, please provide a description and confirm responsibility for costs.
2. What is the vandalism response strategy?

Parking and deliveries

1. What are the expected parking requirements? (we need to accommodate other community groups using Sutherland sports facilities)

Termination

1. We must also plan for the possibility that the Sutherland schoolyard market garden does not reach its goal of sustainability in the 5 year time frame identified in the discussions. In this event, we require an outline of the measures to be taken to restore the site to its current condition, and how any assets or improvements will be evaluated and distributed.
2. We must also plan for the possibility that the school district will need the land in the future for other purposes. In this event, we require an outline of the measures to be taken to restore the site to its current condition, and how any assets or improvements will be evaluated and distributed.

Photo credits: Kristi Tatebe,
Heather Johnstone, Emily Jubenvill,
Oliver Harden

Layout: Emily Jubenvill & Sandra
Hanson Design

Contact the Edible Garden
Project to find out how you
can support us, buy our
produce, or get involved.

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