



# Condos, Lettuce, and Tomatoes:

Factors Influencing the Provision of Food Production Spaces in New Multi-Unit Residential Developments in Toronto and Vancouver

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a number of societal benefits associated with urban agriculture, such as increasing the sense of community and promoting improved access to fresh produce. Despite its growing popularity, one of the key barriers, especially for apartment or condominium dwellers, is the lack of access to open space or backyards. While certain municipalities are encouraging urban food production in multi-unit residential projects through policy, there is generally a lack of understanding around the factors that influence the provision of food production spaces from the developers' perspective. Therefore, the study's key objective is to identify ways of enhancing urban agriculture initiatives as well as better understand the enabling and hindering factors for developers. In order to investigate this topic, the study was focused around these three research questions:

- What are the policies that address the integration of food production spaces within new multi-unit residential developments?
- What factors and elements of policies encourage or discourage developers from incorporating urban agriculture amenities into their development projects?
- How can planners and developers further enhance the availability of food production spaces for residents of these multi-unit dwellings?

A qualitative case study approach was used by conducting a literature review, examining urban agriculture policies for multi-unit developments, and interviewing municipal planners and residential developers in Toronto and Vancouver. In terms of findings, it was found that although it varies depending on context and location, there is generally a considerable level of interest and demand from the public for urban food production. With respect to enabling and hindering factors, key influencing factors include municipal policies, the market, capital and operating costs, site conditions, uptake by strata corporations, and partnerships with local gardening groups.

Reflecting the overall findings and results, the study concludes with a series of recommendations that municipalities and developers can consider. The first two recommendations are directed to both municipalities and developers, and the remaining four recommendations are directed mainly to municipalities:

1. Encourage partnerships between community gardening organizations and strata corporations;
2. Explore the programming component of urban agriculture amenities with greater depth;
3. Enhance urban agriculture provisions and guidelines while maintaining flexibility;
4. Conduct assessments to determine the use and maintenance of food production spaces;
5. Consider the provision of municipal incentives; and
6. Seek urban agriculture opportunities in public spaces beyond the private realm.