

Summary of Expert Panel Presentations to February 5, 2009 Parks and Environment Committee

(a) Lauren Baker – Director, Ontario Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming

Ms. Baker spoke about the land use and regulatory barriers related to urban food production, including zoning, taxation and composting.

(b) Solomon Boyé – Community Gardens Program Coordinator, City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Mr. Boyé spoke about community and allotment gardens in the City of Toronto and the Black Creek Urban Farm.

(c) Paula Sobie – Owner/Operator of City Harvest, a SPIN (Small Plot Intensive) Farming business

Ms. Sobie discussed SPIN-Farming and the business City Harvest, which she started and ran for the past two years in Victoria, BC using this farm model. She also shared her insights regarding regulatory barriers and urban food systems along with capitalizing on community support.

(d) Rhonda Teitel-Payne – Urban Agriculture Manager, The Stop Community Food Centre

Ms. Teitel-Payne spoke about the opportunities and barriers for urban growers to market their products and discussed the need for more greenhouses and better access to existing greenhouses in the city.

(e) James Kuhns and Joe Nasr - MetroAg, Alliance for Urban Agriculture

Mr. Kuhns and Mr. Nasr discussed and highlighted the creation of a Toronto Urban Agriculture Centre at Parc Downsview Park to show the partnerships emerging around urban food production.

(f) Debbie Field – Executive Director, FoodShare

Ms. Field proposed a partnership structure between government and community groups to expand community gardening, edible landscapes and fruit trees, thus increasing production of fresh produce for personal consumption in Toronto which will improve health and provide income substitution in these difficult financial times.