Call for Proposals

Three years have quickly passed since the ground-breaking Urban Agriculture Summit in Toronto. Since then, many new developments in design, business practice, policy and research supporting urban and peri-urban agriculture have mushroomed.

It is time to take stock and plan future directions in the critical area of food policy, which is all too often left out of high-level policy discussions about resilience. As more people turn to growing food in cities – as a hobby, for nourishment, or as a new breed of business – there are a greater number of opportunities to learn from one another and to advance the sector.

Living green infrastructure as a whole is rapidly becoming a multi-billion dollar industry in North America.

Understanding the economics of living green infrastructure, and its ability to help communities become more resilient in the face of severe climate change, is critically important to our future.

The Grey to Green Conference will discuss some of the most pressing issues and developments including:

- Designing for food and the bottom line – how designing buildings with the food production cycle in mind can reduce costs, increase property value and improve employee efficiency.

- Resilience – how to prepare our communities for extreme weather impacts by implementing green infrastructure approaches and best practice. How green infrastructure can improve social cohesion and stability.
• Technical advancements in indoor food production.

• Resilience and the role of urban and peri-urban agriculture focused on short and long term food security.

• Community/participant design – how engaging community members and consumers transforms the design process and can result in numerous project cost savings.

• Exploring the edge of technological innovation – design integration for multiple benefits.

• The ecology of local food production – chickens, fish, CO\(^2\), vegetables, waste heat, bees and worms.

• Rethinking parks for resilience – increasingly parks are seen as serving multiple functions in urban areas, beyond traditional recreational spaces. Parks are becoming focal points for community cohesion, managing stormwater, protecting biodiversity, tourism, generating tax revenue, food and more.

• Employment opportunities – exploring a wide range of opportunities associated with green infrastructure investment and development, which generates much needed employment.

• Evolving voluntary standards – understand how green infrastructure is incorporated into LEED, Living Building Challenge and Sustainable Sites.

What we are looking for:

Proposals for sessions that are practical and dynamic – the focus is on interaction and training. The attendees should learn new ways to advance urban agriculture in their own communities.

We encourage sessions that feature best practices in urban food production as well as innovative policies that support urban agriculture from around North America and beyond. The aim is to engage diverse communities and provide opportunities for knowledge exchange across sectors and to draw on local and international expertise and practical experience.

Types of proposals:

We are inviting proposal submissions for three main types of contributions to the Grey to Green Conference.

• Focused Sessions

These sessions will be 90 minutes long, with a lively presentation – by an individual or panel – combined with substantial interaction with participants. Training and hands-on demonstrations of innovative practices are also welcome. While we are seeking primarily proposals for entire 90-minute sessions, proposals for individual presentations (of about 20 minutes) can also be submitted; if accepted, the programming committee would cluster these proposals with other related ones into coherent 90-minute sessions.
Suggested topics are indicated in the submission form found on the Conference’s website. The sessions can feature, among others, the following:

- Exceptional project case studies (existing or proposed) that include urban agriculture
- Innovative urban agriculture policies (existing or proposed)
- Innovative urban agricultural practices
- Particular tools for studying or supporting urban agriculture
- Designing for resiliency
- Public engagement and/or participatory design initiatives

We encourage these sessions to bring together people from different perspectives involved in a single project (e.g., designer, client, landlord), or people involved in 2-3 different cases that share some common issues (such as zoning for urban agriculture).

We will also be organizing a series of specialized training courses around the topic of agriculture, from beekeeping to SPIN gardening. Watch also for the Green Infrastructure Design Charrette, an opportunity to roll up your sleeves and redesign a neighborhood in need of greening.

- Field workshops and tours

This category is limited to Toronto-area projects that offer broader lessons on issues related to urban agriculture. We are looking for proposals for tours that can be approached as sessions similar to the presentations or special training workshops, but are provided “in the field”. Field workshops could integrate hands-on learning. Both longer (full-day) and shorter (half-day) field visits will be considered.

- Special skills/training workshops

We are encouraging the submission of proposals for longer workshops that go into greater depth into certain skills or issues, or provide advanced professional training. These special workshops are expected to run for half a day (double sessions that run all day are possible too).

These sessions could be offered by one or more expert in a particular field, and can be sponsored by appropriate organizations, upon approval by the programming committee. Some of these special workshops may receive accreditation through professional organizations.

For any proposed workshop, associated fees (if any) must be specified on the Proposal Submission Form.

Additional ideas:

We welcome proposals that offer different formats than the types listed above, especially if they feature creative ways to share information, such as a TED talk, design charrette, or consultation.

A “discovery space” is currently being planned, to accommodate other ideas that may not fit into the session categories mentioned above. This would be open to materials in a variety of media: posters, videos, slide shows, art works, design pieces, constructed components, etc. Look for a future announcement about this opportunity on the Conference’s website.

If you have an idea for a relevant topic or case and you are not sure if it fits with programming priorities or if you do not feel it is sufficient for a proposal, don’t hesitate to write to the programming committee at vjavet@greenroofs.org. We will explore with you options for you to contribute to the Conference.
Submission process:

All proposals are due by February 2, 2015. Please send the completed application to: vjavet@greenroofs.org

Proposals will be evaluated by members of the Conference’s programming committee, with support of an advisory committee composed of diverse practitioners or researchers. The evaluation will consider whether the submission features best practices, displays innovation, presents new information, provides practical learning opportunities, or offers a chance for an exchange across sectors.

A response to all proposals will be provided to the lead on each proposal by March 30, 2015.

Additional information:

Please submit any additional suggestions or questions about the Conference’s program to vjavet@greenroofs.org.


Terms and Conditions:

To present at the Grey to Green Conference, the following terms and conditions must be met:
1. Accepted speakers will receive a 50% discount on the delegate registration fee ($295) and priority access to affordable accommodations.
2. Speakers are responsible for their own travel and accommodation expenses.
3. Conference partners reserve the right to publish all presentation materials in electronic and hard copy formats, with credit.

To provide field workshops, special skills or training workshops at the Grey to Green Conference, the following terms and conditions must be met:
1. Proposed training courses must have been run at least once prior to the Conference.
2. Green Roofs for Healthy Cities reserves the right to cancel workshops if less than 6 attendees are enrolled.
3. Workshop provider to supply all written materials, audio-visual requirements and training.
4. Workshop provider to supply biographies of instructor as well as a short course abstract and full course description.
5. Green Roofs for Healthy Cities will administer registration, provide a room, and market the workshops.