



## Staff Report

### Origin

The School Community Connections Program was developed in 2005 to encourage partnerships between schools and local governments to greater utilize school facilities for broader community purposes. Richmond was successful in receiving funding in earlier rounds of this program to enhance facilities in the common area shared by Hamilton Elementary School and the Hamilton Community Association and to improve public access and use of this space.

The 2008 "Strengthening the Connection" program has been designed to provide modest grants to address local issues and provide direct benefit to students, their families and the community. Applications for this funding are due no later than October 30 2008. Eligible projects must support the program goals and objectives:

- To encourage and facilitate the co-location of services for students, their families and the larger community within school facilities;
- To make greater utilization of available or new school facilities; and
- To encourage collaborative, long-term facilities planning that takes into account the needs of the community as a whole.

The maximum grant available is \$8,000 for direct costs incurred in the development or implementation of the approved project. Ongoing operational costs are not eligible.

### Analysis

Community gardens are important element of community building and food security for the City of Richmond. Currently, there are three City-owned community gardens with a total of 157 active plots. There is a waiting list of over 100 individuals who are interested in obtaining a plot.

Since the Spring of 2008, the City and the School District have been working with Evergreen, a national non-profit organization, to identify opportunities for a Community School Food garden.

School grounds are a natural fit for community gardens because they are public greenspaces which are well-located within neighbourhoods and, particularly within the urban core, are surrounded by higher density housing. Growing food on school grounds presents an opportunity to benefit students through learning about food from seed to table. However, one of the biggest challenges facing school gardens is in the summer months when students are out of school. The gardens require maintenance and can be plagued by vandalism. By creating shared food gardens, these challenges can be overcome and the community can benefit by additional available community garden plots available during the summer months.

Richmond Secondary already has a small, active food garden. It is an ideal location to pilot a Community School Food garden as it is well-situated near Richmond Centre, has enthusiastic staff and teachers, is walking distance of several City facilities including the Minoru Seniors Centre and the Cultural Centre and there is available space to expand the existing garden.

Costs associated with this project will be related to construction of the garden as well as communication and educational materials and a Garden Coordinator to assist both the school and the community element of the garden (att. 1). Evergreen is working with the School District and the City to identify a number of potential sources of funding (att.2) including the School Community Connections Program Grant. It is anticipated that some administration costs would be incurred by the City in opening up additional community garden plots but that these costs would be absorbed within the existing Parks operating budget.

**Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact of applying for the School Community Connections funding.

**Conclusion**

The City of Richmond and Richmond School District have a long history of joint use of parks for the benefit of the community as a whole. The School Community Connections "Strengthening the Connections" grant provides an opportunity to extend this relationship to Community Gardens.



Serena Lusk  
Manager of Parks Programs  
(604-233-3344)

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## 18 | Community School Food Gardens

**4.5 Budget**

Funding for this demonstration project will be provided through grants administered through Evergreen. Partners may provide cash, or in-kind support through additional grants. Once the project has been approved, fundraising will begin in earnest. Some seed money has already been secured and other potential funders have been identified below.

The most significant expense is attributed to supporting a part time garden coordinator. The number of days allocated can be broken down into half days, more frequently distributed, depending on the needs of the school and community.

| <b>EXPENSES</b>   | <b>COST</b>  |
|---|--|
| Project Management (13 days over the course of the project at \$300 per day)  | \$3900   |
| Garden Coordinator (at \$250 per day @ 1.5 days per week Jan – June 2009 and 1 day a week July and August) (based on 8 hour day)<br>2 days/week October- December   | \$11750 + \$5500 (fall outreach and program development) =<br>\$17250.00 |
| Communication materials ( flyers, posters, website, interpretive signage, food plant labels)  | \$1250   |
| Educational material  | \$1000   |
| Project materials (Vegetable plants and seeds, soil, mulch, compost, compost bin, water barrel, irrigation system, tools (garden forks/tiller, gloves, spades, wheelbarrow) construction materials for planting beds, tool shed), fencing | \$8,000  |
| Refreshments for volunteers   | \$250  |
| Launch event and Harvest event  | \$2000   |
| Administration (15%)  | \$4208   |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>   | <b>\$37,858</b>  |

| POSSIBLE REVENUE SOURCES                   | POTENTIAL | POSSIBLE IN-KIND | CONFIRMED |
|--|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| Evergreen Learning Grounds                 | \$2,000   |                  | \$2000    |
| Evergreen Common Grounds                   |           | \$2000           |           |
| Evergreen/WalMart Green Grant              | \$10,000  |                  |           |
| School Community Connections Program Grant | \$8,000   |                  |           |
| The Hamber Foundation                      | \$1,500   |                  | \$1,500   |
| VanCity                                    | \$10,000  |                  |           |
| City of Richmond Grant Program             | \$6,500   | \$2,000          |           |
| Richmond School District                   |           | \$5,000          |           |
| Possible TOTAL REVENUE                     | \$38,000  | \$9,000          | \$3,500   |



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Office of the Secretary - Treasurer

October 8, 2008

Ms Serena Lusk,  
Manager, Parks Programs,  
City of Richmond,  
5599 Lynas Lane  
Richmond, B.C., V7C 5B2

Dear Serena:

**SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOOD GARDEN PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL**

I write with regard to the Community-School Food Garden pilot proposal recently received from Evergreen. The proposal is for a community food garden to be based on district owned land at Richmond Secondary School, near the site of the school's existing food garden. The project will be managed by Evergreen, with funding contributions proposed from a number of sources, including the School-Community Connections Program.

Please accept this letter as confirmation of the School District's support for this proposal. The concept of expanding our practice of sharing resources and facilities to include food gardens is a potentially excellent one that could bring many benefits to both the community and the school. This pilot project will bring real new resources to the District's food garden programs, including the services of chef Ian Lai, and expanded services from Evergreen. The district has completed many successful projects with Evergreen, and can vouch for their dedication, enthusiasm, professionalism and knowledge.

Please do not hesitate to call if anything further is required from us.

Sincerely,

Ken Morris,  
Secretary-Treasurer

CC Bruce Beirsto, Superintendent  
Dave Semple, Director of Parks and Public Works Operations  
Eric Thorleifson, Manager of Facilities

*"Our Focus is on the Learner"*