



To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** May 5, 2014
From: Mike Redpath, Senior Manager, Parks **File:** 06-2345-20-GCIT1/Vol 01
Re: **Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan**

Staff Recommendation

That the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan as detailed, and attached to the report “Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan,” dated May 5, 2014, from the Senior Manager, Parks, be endorsed as a guide for future detailed planning and development of the Garden City Lands.

Mike Redpath
 Senior Manager, Parks
 (604-247-4942)

Att. 4

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arts, Culture and Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

On October 29, 2013, three concept plans for the future development of the Garden City Lands were presented to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee and the following was approved by Council on November 12, 2013:

That the Concept Plans as detailed in the report “Garden City Lands – Phase Two Concept Plan Options” from the Senior Manager, Parks dated October 15, 2013, be received for information.

In November 7, 2013, the three concept plans were presented at an all day Open House in Lansdowne Mall. Public feedback was sought through surveys, Lets Talk Richmond and social media. This feedback, together with the adopted Vision and Guiding Principles, was then used to develop a preferred option which was presented to Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee on March 25, 2014, and Committee referred the following:

That the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan be referred back to staff to consider the comments of Committee members including:

- 1. Forwarding the Plan to the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on the Environment, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and other stakeholders for comments;*
- 2. Revising the Plan to reflect a north/south grid orientation; and*
- 3. Investigating the need for the wetland and the expansion of the bog.*

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the feedback in response to the referral and to present the revised Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan for adoption as a guide for the future detailed planning and development of the Garden City Lands. In addition, this report directly relates to the achievement of the following Council 2011-2014 Term Goal No. 7.4 Managing Growth and Development:

- 7.4 Complete the Garden City Lands Planning process by 2014.*

Analysis

The Garden City Lands Vision and Legacy Plan was presented, in a staff report, to the March 25, 2014, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee. The report outlined the results of the communication consultation process; a summary of the Vision adopted by Council, the land use framework, and the key landscape zones of the Legacy Landscape Plan (Attachment 2).

Legacy Landscape Plan Revision

The Legacy Landscape Plan is intended as an illustrative concept plan of how the vision, the land use framework, and the program elements could be implemented at the Garden City Lands. The concept as presented on March 25, 2014, reflected an ‘Off the Grid’ perspective in which the agricultural fields, the community hub and the pathways were laid out on a diagonal axis

(Attachment 1). Concern was expressed over the practicality of this layout for efficient agriculture and farming practices.

The diagonal focus of the Legacy Landscape Plan has been revised to show a north-south orientation of the agricultural fields that still allows for the bog conservation area. In addition, the proposed wetlands have been relocated to the southern edge of Garden City Lands and will be designed to complement the existing bog drainage system. The feasibility and sustainability of creating a wetland in this area will be reviewed as further hydrology studies are conducted and the flow and retention of water in the bog is better understood.

The revised plan responds to the existing knowledge of the site, the community input, the vision and guiding principles and land use framework and is fully described in Attachment 3. The new Garden City Legacy Landscape Plan is designed to meet the following land use framework outcomes:

1. Urban Agriculture – A showcase for innovative and sustainable agriculture practices within a public park setting.
2. Natural Environment – A highly valued, biologically diverse and resilient natural environment that respects the inherent ecology of the Lands and is a vital contribution to the City's overall Ecological Network and community health.
3. Community Wellness and Active Living – An accessible, safe and appealing public open space that promotes healthy lifestyles and community cohesiveness through a unique richness of adaptable social, environmental, agricultural and recreational amenities and programs.
4. Cultural Landscape/Place-Making – A rich and vibrant place with a distinct identity that reflects and highlights the unique characteristics of the site and generates fond memories, community pride, and a deep appreciation of the agricultural and ecological values of the Lands.

Consultation

Staff presented the revised Garden City Legacy Landscape Plan to the Advisory Committee on the Environment, the Agricultural Advisory Committee, staff at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Dr. Art Bomke, University of British Columbia, Faculty of Land and Food Systems. An extensive dialogue was held with each group and the plan was received positively with comments on specific issues such as:

- Ensuring safe pedestrian access across the major roads surrounding the site;
- Providing proper access and circulation within the site for farm vehicles;
- The need for a caretaker on the site especially if there are animals kept on the Lands;
- A strategy for the protection of crops from vandalism and theft;
- The priority of providing adequate irrigation;
- The need to supply adequate parking if this is to be a destination site with farmer markets;
- The importance of partnerships; and

- Understanding the hydrology first and then making decisions about water and natural resource management of the site.

Staff are continuing to communicate with Kwantlen Polytechnic University regarding their proposal for access to a portion of the Garden City Lands to support their degree program in Sustainable Agriculture.

A draft concept of the plan was presented and reviewed by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Attachment 4 is a letter from the ALC titled Garden City Lands Concept Plan Review and Preliminary Comments. This letter summarises preliminary comments regarding the plan and provides an initial positive review of the Garden City Lands vision and concept direction.

Next Steps and Implementation Focus:

Attachment 3 includes a proposed Implementation and Actions Timeline for the Garden City Lands. Priority actions identified for 2014-2016 include:

- Development of a detailed resource management plan for the site which will include site maintenance, water management and farm management;
- Undertaking a detailed hydrology monitoring and testing;
- Construction and design of the perimeter trail;
- Development of a funding strategy and multi-year implementation plan;
- Preparation of phased multi-year capital submissions;
- Development of a partnership strategy; and
- Establishing an interpretation program and phased programming strategy for the Lands.
- Building upon the success of the on-site Ideas Fair, an information event will be hosted on the Lands in 2015.

Financial Impact

There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report. Ongoing resource management, operational, planning and capital submissions for consideration will be prioritized as part of annual budgeting processes.

Conclusion

Garden City Lands is a legacy project for the City as it was expressed by many people through the public planning process conducted by the City in 2013. Uniquely located in the City Centre and surrounded by increasing urban development on three sides, and natural and agriculture lands on the fourth side, it has the potential to be an incredible green oasis for residents and visitors as well as an important ecological and urban agriculture showcase site. The Garden City Legacy Landscape Plan is a long term plan that reflects the intrinsic values of the land and the community, and promotes Richmond as a sustainable and healthy City.

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May 5, 2014

- 5 -

- Att. 1: 'Off the Grid' Concept Plan – Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan, dated March 2014
- 2: Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan Report, dated March 2014
- 3: Revised Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan, May 2014
- 4: ALC Letter of Support, dated April 2014