



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
Date: March 13, 2018

From: Serena Lusk
General Manager, Community Services
File: 11-7200-01/2018-Vol 01

Re: Community Gardens Update

Staff Recommendation

That the community gardens update as outlined in the staff report titled "Community Gardens Update," dated March 13, 2018, from the General Manager, Community Services, be received for information.

Serena Lusk
General Manager, Community Services
(604-233-3344)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: CJ
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

That staff examine potential sites for additional community garden plots in the near future and report back.

The purpose of this report is to respond to the above referral, and to provide an update on the community gardens program as well as opportunities for future program expansion.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2: A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.

2.3. Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #5: Partnerships and Collaboration:

Continue development and utilization of collaborative approaches and partnerships with intergovernmental and other agencies to help meet the needs of the Richmond community.

5.2. Strengthened strategic partnerships that help advance City priorities.

Analysis

The City of Richmond's Community Gardens Program

The City currently has 321 community garden plots in parks and schoolyards throughout the city. A community garden is a shared green space with individual and group garden plots which are cooperatively maintained by community garden members to grow food, flowers, and other plants. The gardens provide opportunities for residents to not only grow food, but also to meet new friends, share knowledge, and build a sense of community. The food grown in each plot belongs to the registered gardeners, and cannot be used or sold for any commercial purposes.

Residents can rent community garden plots on a yearly basis for a fee ranging from \$30-\$80 per year, depending on plot size. Subsidies are available to those for whom the plot fee is a barrier to participating. The community garden plot fees pay for a portion of the costs related to administering the community garden program.

Since 2010, the City has had an agreement with the Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS) for administration of the City's community garden sites. RFSS is a non-profit organization with a mission to inspire a robust Richmond food system through education, advocacy, and community

building initiatives. The City provides a base level of service to establish and support the infrastructure for each community garden site. RFSS administers the program partially through plot fees and also through secured grant funding.

Table 1 provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the City, RFSS, and individual gardeners participating in the community gardens program.

Table 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

City of Richmond	RFSS	Gardeners
Provides land, site infrastructure, irrigation, water, tool sheds, mulch, green bins, and establishes garden rules.	Provides liability insurance, maintains garden waitlist, allocates plots, supplies, shared tools, applies for grants, enforces garden rules, and liaises between the City and gardeners.	Maintain individual plots and common spaces, steward soil, manage compost, supply seeds and plants, grow food or flowers, and follow all garden rules.

Existing Level of Service

RFSS manages the City’s 321 allotment plots at nine community garden locations throughout Richmond. All of the community garden sites are full with a current waitlist of 270 individuals. The City’s nine community garden sites are outlined in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – City Community Garden Sites

Location	No. of Individual Plots	No. of Community Group Plots
Brighthouse Elementary	23	0
Garratt Wellness Centre	15	5 (VCH)
General Currie Elementary	10	0
Gilbert (South Dyke)	41	0
King George Park	34	6 (ERCA)
Paulik Park	24	0
Railway Avenue	64	0
Richmond High	12	0
Terra Nova Rural Park	98	11 (Various Groups)
Total	321	22

At three of the garden sites, community groups such as Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), Richmond Society for Community Living (RSCL), and East Richmond Community Association (ERCA) have communal plots for their clientele. These plots are co-located with those administered by RFSS, but managed independently by each respective organization. The garden

plots are used to support health and wellness programming by these organizations.

Other Community Garden Sites

In addition to the City’s community garden sites managed by RFSS, there are also community gardens built and managed independently by community groups or other government agencies. These garden sites are outlined in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – Other Community Garden Sites

Location	Managed By	No. of Individual Plots
10711 Palmberg Road	Richmond Allotment Garden Association	127
London Heritage Farm	London Heritage Farm Society	71
Rosewood Manor	BC Housing	25
Total		232

The community garden plots at Palmberg Road are available to the public and there are currently no vacancies. The community garden plots at London Heritage Farm are open to members of the London Heritage Farm Society and this site is also full. The plots at Rosewood Manor are available to residents living in neighbouring BC Housing units and not to the general public.

School Garden Sites

There are approximately 300 educational garden plots located on school grounds. These plots are built and managed by each individual school and used by students as part of the school curriculum.

Opportunities for Program Expansion

Opportunities for community gardens are considered in every park planning process. Garden sites are added in locations where there is demand and where park design allows.

To expand the program, the following community garden locations are either in development or being considered:

1. Garden City Lands

A community garden site of approximately 100 garden plots is being planned for the Garden City Lands as part of the Council approved Park Development Plan for the site. While community gardens are an agricultural use and permitted under the Agricultural Land Reserve legislation, proceeding with the planned garden site is dependent on approval by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to bring in the necessary soil to raise the existing grade. This will be subject to an upcoming ALC application by the City and subject to Council approval.

2. The Gardens Agricultural Park

As part of the park concept, Council approved 100 garden plots for the east side of the park. Further development of this park is pending the outcome of the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project process. As this project progresses and the impacts are better understood, staff will review the number of plots and their locations in a revised park concept.

3. Riverport Waterfront

The community adjacent to this park space has expressed interest in formalizing community gardening activities which have been underway in this location. Staff will work with RFSS and the community to explore opportunities to create an official community garden location at this site with approximately 10-15 allotment plots. If the site is feasible, staff will submit a 2020 Capital Request for the creation of the Riverport Community Garden.

4. Cook Neighbourhood Park

This park has the potential to include the addition of a community garden with 25-35 community garden plots to serve the needs of the surrounding community. Staff will work with RFSS and the Richmond School District to explore opportunities to create a garden location at this site. If the site is feasible, staff will submit a 2020 Capital Request for the creation of the Cook Community Garden.

Expansion of Current Sites

A total of 20 plots will be added to the existing Railway Community Garden in 2018, which will also include improvements such as a screening fence to improve the site’s aesthetic fit with the neighbourhood. 5 additional garden plots will be added to both the Garratt and Gilbert community garden sites in 2018/2019, increasing the capacity at those locations. This program expansion will be funded primarily through grants received by RFSS.

Summary of Program Expansion

A summary of program expansion opportunities is identified in Table 4 below:

Table 4 – Summary of Community Garden Program Expansion Opportunities

Location	No. of Plots	Projected Timeline
Railway	20	2018
Garratt	5	2018/2019
Gilbert (South Dyke)	5	2018/2019
Garden City Lands	100	2019
Riverport	10-15	2020
Cook	25-35	2020
The Gardens Agricultural Park	80-100	TBD (pending outcome of tunnel replacement project)
Total	245-280	

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Financial Impact

Capital requests for the community garden sites at the Garden City Lands and the Gardens Agricultural Park will be brought forward as part of the park development plans as those projects progress. Staff will submit a 2020 Capital Request and Operating Budget Impact (OBI) for the creation of the Riverport Community Garden and Cook Community Garden.

Conclusion

Richmond's community gardens are valuable green spaces within the community and provide healthy food for garden members, space for social interactions, and create recreational activities for community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. To meet the demand as the City grows, staff will continue to explore opportunities to add community garden sites in future park planning processes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Brar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "B".

Paul Brar
Manager, Parks Programs
(604-244-1275)