



Date: May 29 , 2002

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**

**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**

**SUBJECT: TEA SWAMP PARK DESIGN AND COMMUNITY GARDEN**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT the Board approve the concept plan for Tea Swamp Park extension, as illustrated in Appendix II**
  
- B. THAT the Board give permission for the use of a portion of Tea Swamp Park as a community garden, with all specifications to the satisfaction of the General Manager.**
  
- C. THAT the Board grant to the Urban Diggers Society a 5 year licence to operate the community gardens, with all terms consistent with the Community Gardens Policy.**

## **POLICY**

See the Community Gardens Policy. (Appendix I)

## **BACKGROUND**

Tea Swamp Park is a small neighbourhood park of 0.09 hectares located at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sophia Street. It is the only park in the area bounded by 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Kingsway and Main Street. Park amenities include shrub and flower beds, a small playground for young children and park benches.

In 1999, the Park Board purchased 4 lots at the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Sophia, with the intent of expanding the park. The acquisition of these properties was funded from the 1997-1999 capital plan. The development of the park extension, which is scheduled to commence early this summer, will be funded from the 2000-2002 capital plan. The concept plan includes an open lawn area, a variety of tree species, a trellis for vines, benches, an “art stream” and a community garden. (See appendix II)

## **DISCUSSION**

Beginning in August 2001, Park Board staff hosted three community meetings to discuss the development of the park extension. Posters were put up at Tea Swamp Park and an ad was

placed in the Courier newspaper to advertize the first meeting. Notices were also mailed out to over 100 individuals and organizations that had been involved with the "Mt. Pleasant Wellness Walkway" project. The meetings were held at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, across the street from Tea Swamp Park, and were attended by 33 different members of the community. Ideas for park development, including a community garden, were put forward and incorporated into a number of concept plans. The concept plans were then brought back, and a final plan adopted by the group. The majority of participants favoured a plan that included a community garden. The proposed community garden is 300 m<sup>2</sup>, and would occupy approximately 18% of the park extension.

Early in 2002, the Vancouver East District office was contacted by the Urban Diggers Society, who offered to administer the garden. This society also administers the Mount Pleasant Community Garden, located at 7<sup>th</sup> and Fraser. A condition of the Community Garden Policy is that a "non-profit society agrees to develop and operate the gardens according to a users agreement which will specify the term of use, management responsibilities, user fees and access procedures."

An information flyer regarding the proposed community garden was prepared by staff and distributed to residences in a two block radius. (see appendix III) It was also made available at Mt. Pleasant Community Centre. Distribution of the flyer was coordinated by the Mount Pleasant Community Association. There were 33 responses: 31 in support; 2 opposed. Those who support the proposal feel the community garden will enhance that aesthetics of the area and create a stronger sense of community. The opportunity to grow food and get exercise are important in promoting a healthy lifestyle. Those opposed to the community garden feel that the garden will attract undesirables and will look messy. The space would be better used for a bigger playground.

In accordance with the Policy, the garden is to be developed "at no cost to the Board, except that prior to the first season, the Board will, at its cost, prepare the site for planting by removing grass, ploughing the soil and adding compost." This can be done as part of the redevelopment process.

## **CONCLUSION**

This proposal meets the criteria of the Community Garden Policy. If approved, Tea Swamp Community Garden will provide recreational activities and stimulate community involvement. Based on the community process and positive feedback received, a community garden at Tea Swamp Park will be a benefit to the neighbourhood.

Prepared by:  
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