

Date: September 24, 2008



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Cottonwood Community Garden Expansion

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approves the expansion of Cottonwood Community Garden in Strathcona Park as shown on Appendix I.

POLICY

The Community Gardens Policy (Appendix I), approved in 1996, provides for community gardens to be operated on park land.

BACKGROUND

Cottonwood Community Garden is located along Malkin Avenue in Strathcona Park, between Chess Street and Raymur Avenue, with a portion of the garden on the Malkin Street right-of-way. The garden was officially recognised in 1994 under an agreement between the Park Board and the Strathcona Community Gardeners Society. Under the revised Community Garden Policy, Cottonwood Community Garden was granted a 10 year license agreement extension, effective October 1, 2005.

DISCUSSION

The subject area is located in the southeast corner of Strathcona Park, adjacent to Raymur Avenue, east of the oval (see Appendix 1). The area was previously overgrown with blackberries and had become a haven for illicit activities. In 2006, Park Board staff cleared the area, with the intent of planting grass. After the area was cleared, staff received a request from the community gardeners to expand the garden.

In February 2007, staff received a written proposal from the gardeners expressing their wish to expand the community garden. This item was discussed at the Park Board Planning Committee on April 10, 2007. The Planning Committee asked staff to undertake a community consultation process, receive a plan for the proposed expansion and prepare a report for Board approval.

The Community Gardeners submitted a plan for the garden showing the layout for the area. The expansion would allow an additional 80 to 100 garden plots. In addition, the area would include plantings of berries and grapes, native plants and fruit trees. The area of the existing garden is approximately 7,800m². The expansion would increase the area of the garden by about 1,900m².

In June 2008, staff undertook a consultation process that involved distributing leaflets to the surrounding area, informing the Strathcona Community Association of the proposal and installing two information signs in the park. No negative feedback was received.

The area will require a cap of clean sandy fill and topsoil to make the area suitable for gardening. This work has begun and is expected to be completed later this year. Staff will work with the Community Gardeners in preparing the area.

SUMMARY

The expansion of Cottonwood Community Garden will be an improvement to Strathcona Park by providing additional opportunities for food production and helping to activate an area that has been affected by undesirable activities and illegal dumping.

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