



Date: May 6, 2013

**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Proposed Cambie Park Community Garden**

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Board approve a new community garden in Cambie Park, with all details to the satisfaction of the General Manager; and*
- B. THAT the Board grant a five-year license to the Marpole-Oakridge Community Association to operate the community garden, with all terms consistent with the Community Garden Policy.*

## POLICY

The Board tasked staff with establishing a Local Food Assets Task Force on May 28, 2012, and the Task Force is currently developing a Local Food Action Plan that is due to the Board in July 2013.

The Board endorsed Phase 1 of its new Strategic Plan on May 18, 2012, including the strategic objective to being “a Leader in Greening”, and more specifically “to support community based food production by contributing to the development of neighbourhood and city-wide food infrastructure programs and assets”.

Vancouver City Council approved “What Feeds Us: Vancouver Food Strategy” on January 29, 2013.

Vancouver City Council approved the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP) on July 12, 2011. GCAP includes a target to increase local food assets by 50%, by 2020.

A revised Community Garden Policy was approved by the Board on September 19, 2005, which outlines the terms and conditions under which the Board will consider community gardens to be operated on park lands (Appendix A).

## BACKGROUND

Staff are recommending approval of a new community garden in Cambie Park proposed by the South Vancouver Green Thumbs and supported by the Marpole-Oakridge Community Association. The proposal was received in response to a joint call for Expressions of Interest for new community gardens and orchards issued by the City’s Park Board, Social Policy and Engineering staff in October 2012.

The South Vancouver Green Thumbs are a group that emerged from a gardening training and mentorship program offered by the Pearson Farmers at 57<sup>th</sup> Ave. and supported by the Marpole/Oakridge Community Centre throughout 2012. The Green Thumbs are now eager to create a new gardening space.

This proposal meets the Park Board Community Garden Policy in the following ways:

- Will create and maintain an organic community garden that will increase the ecological biodiversity of Vancouver and provide increased understanding of local food production.
- Will produce food and flowers for the personal use of society members, as well as for shared benefit of the community.

The Cambie Park community garden proposal was first reported to the Board on March 11, 2013. Some concerns were raised about the extent of public consultation, and more detailed garden design questions were asked so the Board deferred a decision on the proposal. Subsequently, staff worked with garden proponents to develop a more detailed draft design and conducted additional public consultation on the revised proposal.

## **DISCUSSION**

Cambie Park is bordered on one side by single-family housing, and on the other side by multi-family housing. The City has approved the Cambie Corridor Plan that allows for significant increases in density over the coming years. In the long term, Park Board staff intend to enhance the park with more features for a variety of park uses. The proposed garden location has been carefully chosen along the Ash St. edge of the park to not encumber any future park enhancement (Figure 1). While the Cambie Corridor has plenty of park space, South Vancouver is underserved with regard to community garden spaces.



*Figure 1: Location of proposed community garden in Cambie Park*

This proposed garden (Figure 2) includes:

- ~28 community garden plots
- Universally accessible garden plots
- Shared garden beds
- Tool storage shed
- Space for compost production
- Seating
- Food producing trees
- Fence around parts of garden

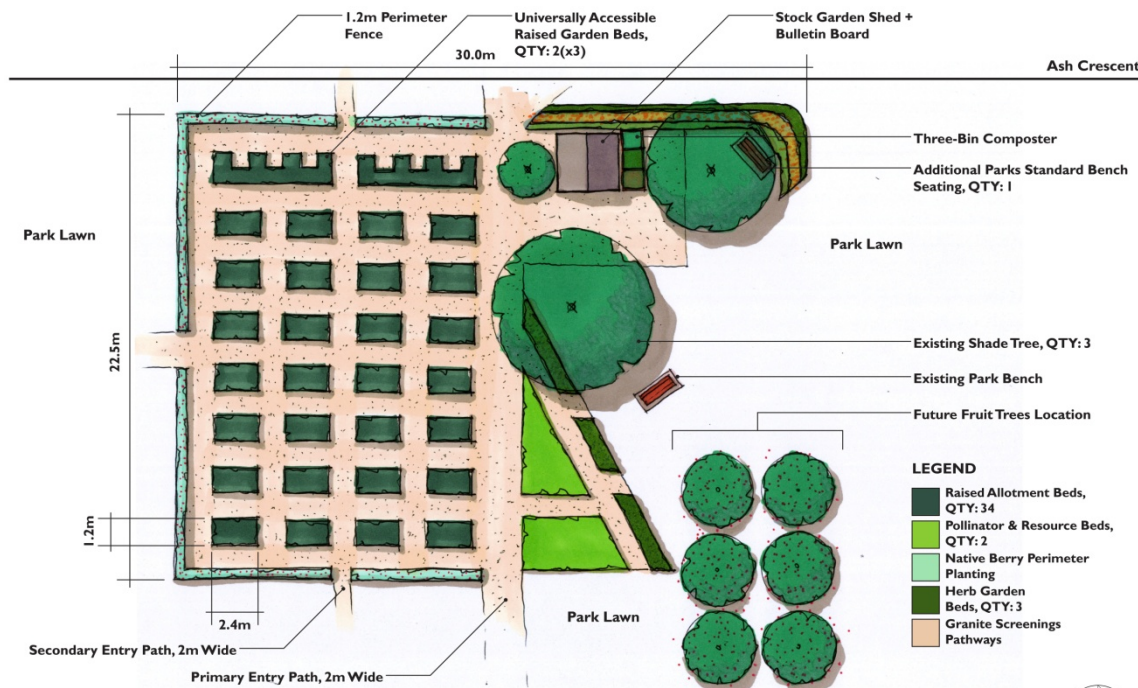


Figure 2: Proposed Cambie Park community garden design for consultation

Cambie Park is a quiet park that has no formal uses and is enjoyed by the local residents on a casual basis. The community garden should not disturb the existing character nor displace any existing uses, but provide for some social animation and community building opportunities. Over time, it is hoped that additional features will make the park more accessible, including walkways and benches that are suitable for the many seniors living nearby.

The Park Board would provide some assistance to get the garden established including installation of drainage, water hook up, the first year of compost, and potentially some food bearing trees and other support depending on available existing capital and operating budgets. The gardeners are responsible for all other costs, and for all governance, maintenance and operations.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### *Phase 1*

From January 26 – February 10, 2013 public consultation on this proposal was held. Staff and garden volunteers delivered approximately 700 flyers to neighbours within a 2 block radius of the garden site, as required by the community garden policy. In addition to this, a sign was posted on site notifying other park users.

The Park Board received a total of 24 responses via email and telephone, and of these, 67% (16 submissions) were in favour of the proposal. Based on this feedback, as well as feedback from the Board meeting on March 11, staff and gardeners were asked to provide more detailed design and conduct a second round of public consultation.

### *Phase 2*

From April 22-May 5, 2013 the second round of public consultation was held. Staff hand delivered approximately 700 flyers to neighbours within a 2 block radius of the garden site, as required by the community garden policy. A sign was posted on the site notifying other park users, an on-line survey was posted on the city's website, and social media notification of the consultation was issued using the Park Board and Greenest City accounts. People who responded to the first consultation were also notified by email of the revised proposal.

The Park Board received a total of 217 responses via email, telephone, on-line survey and petition. Of these 79% (172 submissions) were in favour of the proposal.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Don't Support</b>
<b>On-line survey</b>	Live across from park	6	6
	Live near park	32	2
	Work near park	0	1
	Hope to garden	22	0
	Community garden supporter	28	0
	Park user	0	4
<b>Phone/email</b>		6	1
<b>Petition</b>		78	31
<b>Total</b>		<b>79% (172 responses)</b>	<b>21% (45 responses)</b>

The most common reasons for supporting the garden proposal included:

- Increased neighbour connections and community building
- Growing healthy local food
- Improve park safety, use, interactions

The most common concerns included:

- Displacement of other uses of the park
- Aesthetics and maintenance
- Increased traffic (vehicle and pedestrian) and noise

### **NEXT STEPS**

If the Board approves this garden proposal, the next steps will be to:

1. Produce final design that meets Park Board requirements;
2. Submit final design to General Manager for review and approval;
3. Enter into license agreement;
4. Garden construction.

### **SUMMARY**

The proposed garden furthers the objectives of the Park Board's Strategic Plan and the Greenest City Action Plan and meets the criteria of the Community Garden Policy. The garden will contribute to increasing our local food assets, and will also build community connections. The proposed project is technically feasible and has the support of a majority of consultation respondents. Staff recommends that the Board approve this proposal for the new community garden at Cambie Park and then work with the South Vancouver Green Thumbs and the Marpole-Oakridge Community Association to develop final plans for the project.

Prepared by:

Parks  
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
/LC

## **Appendix A: Community Gardens Policy**

### **Revised September 19, 2005**

#### **Definition**

The Board recognizes community gardening as a valuable recreation activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction and community education. The Board will collaborate with interested groups in assisting the development of community gardens.

For the purposes of this policy, a community garden is defined as a community development program operated by a non-profit society. The program has one or more of the following features:

- A piece of land is utilized by the society to produce food and flowers for the personal use of society members.
- A community development program is in place which encourages the involvement of schools, youth groups and citizens who do not have an assigned plot in gardening activities.
- An organic community garden is maintained, that will increase the ecological biodiversity of Vancouver and provide increased understanding of local food production

#### **Clause One**

The Board will support the development of community gardens in Vancouver through the following means:

- Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens.
- Assisting interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of community gardens. This inventory must include City-owned land, land controlled by other government agencies, and privately owned land.
- Assisting in the development of user agreements with the owners of sites chosen.
- Assisting with the development of a community led environmental education program.

#### **Clause Two**

If it is determined that park land is the most suitable site for community gardens, the following conditions will apply:

- The garden is 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.
- A community consultation process indicates neighbourhood support for the garden.
- A garden site plan must be drawn up and approved by the General Manager. The plan must include the layout of the plots and indicate any proposed structures or fences.
- 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 including the following specific terms:
  - a. "The standard term of the user agreement will be five years. The Board may consider the granting of multiple terms in exceptional circumstances. The issuance of such longer terms is warranted in circumstances where the Society

can demonstrate that the standard five year term would significantly restrict the Society's ability to:

1. comply with Park Board policies and direction
  2. conduct community outreach programming beyond the Societies members
  3. implement a long term plan
  4. execute significant approved site improvements
  5. such other circumstances that the Board deems relevant
  6. For terms longer than five years, a review and formal reporting to the Board will be required at each 5 year period and the agreement will incorporate a strengthened termination clause to allow both the Society and the Park Board the option to terminate the agreement with adequate notice."
- b. Allotments of space must be made from a waiting list on a first come first served basis.
  - c. While community gardens are a neighbourhood initiative, membership in the Society, and the opportunity to be allotted a plot, must be open to any resident of Vancouver.
  - d. Organic gardening methods and integrated pest management principles are to be followed.
  - e. Allotment fees charged by the society must be reported to the General Manager.
  - f. The Society must adhere to maintenance standards set by the Board.
  - g. No barriers to general public access to the site can be erected.
  - h. Garden practices shall comply with all Park Board and City Policies and Bylaws.

Although located on Parks with the prior approval of the Park Board, Community Gardens are operated by volunteers from the community.