



Date: September 2, 2014

TO: Board Members - Vancouver Park Board  
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation  
SUBJECT: Proposed 6<sup>th</sup> and Fir Community Garden

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board approve the new community garden in the park at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Fir Street, with all details to the satisfaction of the General Manager; and*

*THAT staff grant a 5 year license agreement with the Pine Street Community Garden Society to operate the community garden, with all terms consistent with the Community Garden Policy.*

## POLICY

The concept plan for the new park at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Fir Street was approved by the Board on September 23, 2013.

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

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

The Board endorsed Phase 1 of its new Strategic Plan in May 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" in January 2013.

The Board approved the Local Food Action Plan in July 2013, which includes direction to develop new community gardens and other food assets in parks and community centres.

The Pine Street Community Garden was established on Engineering land in 2006; the City has a license agreement in place for the existing section of the garden that is on Engineering land with the Pine Street Community Garden Society until April 21, 2018.

## BACKGROUND

The Pine Street Community Garden Society was established in 2006 on Engineering land, and works to:

- Support urban agriculture by creating a public garden space for members to grow a decorative and/or edible garden.

- Foster a sense of community and develop a public gathering place through gardening and garden related events.
- Provide educational opportunities to learn about urban agriculture in an interactive garden environment.

The existing garden includes 45 garden plots, 27 orchard plots, 2 honeybee hives, and a communal compost space. A portion of the existing garden is on CP rail lands and is being affected by changes to this land due to reactivation of the rail corridor. This proposal is to expand the community garden into park space in order to add more garden plots, fruit trees, and an enclosed education-focused space.

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

- Will include (a) community development program(s) that encourages the involvement of schools, youth groups and citizens who do not have an assigned plot in gardening activities.
- Will create and maintain an organic community garden that will increase the ecological biodiversity of Vancouver.
- Will produce plant material for the personal use of members, as well as for shared benefit of the community.

## **DISCUSSION**

The new park at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Fir Street is currently under construction, with completion anticipated in September 2014. The park design includes an area for children's play, an open lawn, seating, on-site storm water management, and new trees in addition to the community garden, orchard, and education spaces. This park is the first phase of a larger park development that will eventually occupy the entire block framed by Pine and Fir Street, and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

The Park Board has provided some assistance to get the garden established including: paths, provision of soil; provision of shipping container for education and storage space; water access; and fruit trees. The gardeners are responsible for all other start-up and on-going costs, and for on-going educational activities utilising the shipping container and shared garden spaces, all governance, maintenance and operations. Because the garden is integrated into the park design, gardeners and Park Board operations staff will work collaboratively together to address any common concerns.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The design of the park followed a comprehensive public engagement process including three open houses, surveys, and broad notification of the consultation in the neighbourhood from February to June, 2013. Support for community gardening emerged through this process, and 86% of people responded positively to the final design for the park. Staff worked with the Pine Street community gardeners through the consultation process to integrate local food production and community engagement into the park design, alongside the other proposed park uses.

## **SUMMARY**

The proposed garden furthers the objectives of the Park Board's Strategic Plan and the Greenest City Action Plan, and complies with the Community Garden Policy. The

garden will build community connections, engage residents, and provide learning opportunities.

*Staff recommends approval of this expanded community garden in the new park at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Fir Street, in partnership with the Pine Street Community Garden Society. The partnership has been developed alongside the consultation, design and construction of this new park.*

General Manager's Office  
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by: L.Cole & J. McLeod  
Parks, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

## ***Appendix A: Design for 6<sup>th</sup> and Fir Community Garden***



*Figure 1: Location of community garden expansion in new park at 6<sup>th</sup> and Fir*

This garden (Figure 2) includes:

- 12 new garden plots + 3 education focused and/or shared gardening plots
- At least 2 accessible plots
- 16 Fruit trees
- Garden storage shed and educational support space
- Pollinator plantings

Figure 2: Pine Street community garden expansion design and features

