



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 16, 2009  
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RTS No.: 08016  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: June 2, 2009

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic

FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services and the  
Director of Real Estate Services

SUBJECT: Funding for Neighbourhood Greenways and Community Gardens

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. THAT Council approve the expansion of the Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway at an estimated cost of \$120,000;
- B. THAT Council approve funding of \$51,000 to be allocated for the establishment of three new community gardens on East 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Fraser Street and Ross Street;
- C. THAT Council approve longer term community garden development on land managed by Engineering and Real Estate Services at an estimated start-up cost of \$70,000.

Source of funds for recommendations A through C to be the 2009 Streets Basic Capital Budget (Greenways) subject to approval of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

**COUNCIL POLICY**

July 1995, Council approved the Vancouver Greenways Plan. This plan supports the development of neighbourhood greenways to improve local connections and promote community building.

April 2002, the City adopted a formal position, definition and principles on sustainability which in part, states that "sustainability requires integrated decision making that takes into account economic, ecological, and social impacts as a whole" and describes Vancouver as a place where people live, work and prosper in a vibrant community of communities.

July 2003, Council approved a motion supporting the creation of a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver that fosters equitable food production, distribution, consumption, nutrition, community development, and environmental health.

December 2003, Council approved a Food Action Plan. One of five specific actions identified the creation of more Community Gardens as a priority.

May 2005, Council approved a definition of Social Sustainability to be used for developing the social component of the City's sustainability objectives.

May 2006, Council approved the Community Garden Pilot Project and the Draft Community Garden Operational Guidelines for Land other than City Parks.

May 2006, Council approved a motion calling for the creation of 2010 new food-producing garden plots by 2010 as an Olympic legacy.

### ***PURPOSE***

This report requests funding for:

- an expansion of the Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway on East 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Elgin Street as shown in Appendix A;
- three new community gardens on East 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Fraser Street and Ross Street as shown in Appendix B;
- longer term community garden development on land managed by Engineering and Real Estate Services.

### ***BACKGROUND***

This report focuses on opportunities to improve local connections and community building through the implementation of neighbourhood greenways and community gardens on City land.

#### ***City and Neighbourhood Greenways***

The Vancouver Greenways Plan, approved by Council in 1995, includes both City Greenways and Neighbourhood Greenways. While City Greenways, such as the Ridgeway, provide city-wide benefits and connections, Neighbourhood Greenways are smaller in scale and are initiated by the community. They are designed and built by the City in consultation with the community and are maintained primarily by the community. They celebrate the local character of the neighbourhood and are typically a community meeting place that includes places to sit in the gardens, and neighbourhood amenities such as a sand box or a notice board. Neighbourhood Greenways can be effective in providing a unifying focus for a neighbourhood and when work parties and events are held, the entire community is invited.

The Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway, located on the Ridgeway Greenway at the northeast corner of Windsor Street and E 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue, was developed in 1997 by the City and the Friends of Windsor Castle. Windsor Castle is one of the City's most successful neighbourhood greenways with strong leadership, a keen volunteer base and an annual block party that brings together several hundred neighbours of all ages to share food and stories. The greenway was developed on a 10m x 30.5m (33' x 100') site, half of which is managed by Real Estate and the other half is street right-of-way managed by Engineering. There are several similar sites along the Ridgeway on 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Fraser and Ross Streets.

### *Community Gardens*

Community gardens on City-owned land are located in Parks, on Engineering street right-of-way and on properties owned by Real Estate Services. Staff within these work groups oversees the operation of the gardens. While guidelines are in place to assist community gardeners on Park property, no such guidelines existed for community gardeners on other City-owned lands.

In May 2006, Council approved a Community Garden Pilot Project and accompanying Draft Operational Guidelines (Appendix C) that saw the development of three new community gardens on land managed by Engineering and Real Estate Services. The City provided the funding for the start-up costs which included public consultation, land clearing, adding compost and installing a water connection. Once the site is prepared the members of the non-profit societies who operate the community gardens then develop the site according to the approved plan. Community gardens typically have vegetable plots for individual use and communal areas of ornamental or edible plants that are cared for by all members.

Residents who are interested in obtaining a garden plot in an established community garden are often placed on a waiting list. Since the number of requests for community garden plots increases annually and established community gardens are unable to accommodate all these requests, the City has begun a process to address the demand and find potential locations for new gardens. The opportunity to establish new community gardens is based on a combination of available land and interested community groups. The success of the pilot project indicates that City land can provide suitable opportunities for community gardens.

On May 5, 2009, Council received the Greenest City Action Team's interim report entitled *Quick Start Recommendations* and asked staff to develop an implementation strategy. Both Neighbourhood Greenways and Community Gardens support the Greenest City Action Team's recommended actions:

- Recommendation 21 - Increase Public Access to Green Space
- Recommendation 39 - Allocate Additional Land for Community Gardens and Orchards

### *DISCUSSION*

As part of the process to address the demand for new community gardens, Engineering and Real Estate Services have identified potential locations including several opportunities along the Ridgeway Greenway. Enhancements to the Ridgeway include the expansion of Windsor Castle and the development of a network of community gardens on 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Fraser and Ross Streets. This section of the Ridgeway includes three full street closures which provide an ideal environment to integrate and showcase several community programs including Greenways, Bikeways, Green Streets and Community Gardens.

#### *Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway*

The Friends of Windsor Castle have approached the City for assistance in developing a City owned site at 1051 E 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue as shown in Appendix A. The site, which is across the lane from Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway is 10 metres (33') wide and is comprised of a 5 metre (16.5') Engineering street right-of-way and 5 metres of land managed by Real Estate Services. The Friends of Windsor Castle are interested in developing the site to accommodate their seasonal activities, such as their annual block party, and to provide several new community enhancements. Plans include a herb garden and community garden beds in the north section of the lot, improved pedestrian connections, landscaped terraces, a seating

area and drinking fountains for both people and dogs. As well, the Friends of Windsor Castle plan to approach a nearby elementary school with the goal of getting the students involved in the new gardens.

Directly east of 1051 E 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the northeast corner of Elgin Street and E 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is another potential site which is owned by the City. The site, at 5370 Elgin Street, is made up of 10 metres (33') of Real Estate land and a 5 metre (16.5') street right-of-way. (Appendix A.) There is currently no sidewalk on the north side of the street. Streetscape improvements along the street right-of-way could include a new walk, trees and a themed landscape. These improvements would increase pedestrian safety and comfort, and enhance the connection between the neighbourhood and the Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway. Both sites would be cared for by the Friends of Windsor Castle. The cost of the Windsor Castle enhancements is estimated to be \$120,000.

### *Community Gardens*

The Ridgeway Greenway on E 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Fraser Street and Ross Street provides several opportunities to develop a series of community gardens along an established pedestrian and cyclist route with city-wide benefits. These opportunities are provided by an unused portion of street right-of-way and several City owned sites along the north side of the street. Potential locations as shown in Appendix B include:

- northwest corner at Chester Street (lot adjoining 5325 Chester)
- northeast corner at Chester Street (lot adjoining 5328 Chester)
- northeast corner at Elgin Street (5370 Elgin)

As many as 50 new garden plots could be created towards the goal of 2010 new food producing garden plots by 2010, adding to the current total of 1689.

Based on the cost of the Community Garden Pilot Project, it is anticipated that each new community garden will cost approximately \$17,000 for public consultation, clearing, grading, adding compost and bringing a water connection to the site. The majority of the start-up cost is the water connection to the property line which is approximately \$12,000. Beyond this City contribution, gardens would be built and operated by non-profit groups in accordance with the Draft Operational Guidelines for Community Gardens on City Land Other Than City Parks (Appendix C). Therefore, the total cost to develop these three sites as community gardens is estimated to be \$51,000.

In the longer term, there are opportunities to develop new community gardens on several sites managed by Engineering and Real Estate Services over the next several years. Funding in the amount of \$70,000 is requested to assist with the start-up costs of these new community gardens.

### *FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS*

Funding for all three community enhancement projects is to be provided from the 2009 Streets Basic Capital Budget (Greenways), subject to approval of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget. Funding for the projects is summarized as follows:

- \$120,000 for streetscape improvements and the expansion of the Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway;
- \$51,000 to establish three new community gardens on the Ridgeway Greenway east of Fraser Street;
- \$70,000 for the start-up costs of new community gardens over the next several years.

The 2009-11 Capital Plan includes \$1 million in debenture funding and \$3 million in DCL funding for Greenways. A request for an allocation of \$1.4 million from this amount for Greenways development has been submitted as part of the 2009 Capital Budget process.

#### *PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS*

In the short term the Green Streets Program Coordinator will continue to provide support in the implementation of these new community gardens. In the longer term as interest in, and demand for, community gardens increases, additional resources will be required to effectively administer the program and provide the necessary support.

#### *ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS*

Both neighbourhood greenways and community gardens make positive environmental contributions by increasing opportunities for urban greening, providing neighbourhood gathering places that promote sustainability, and encouraging wildlife habitat.

Community Gardens and Neighbourhood Greenways support the Greenest City Action Team's goals of greener communities and local food production by increasing public access to green space and allocating additional land for community gardens and orchards.

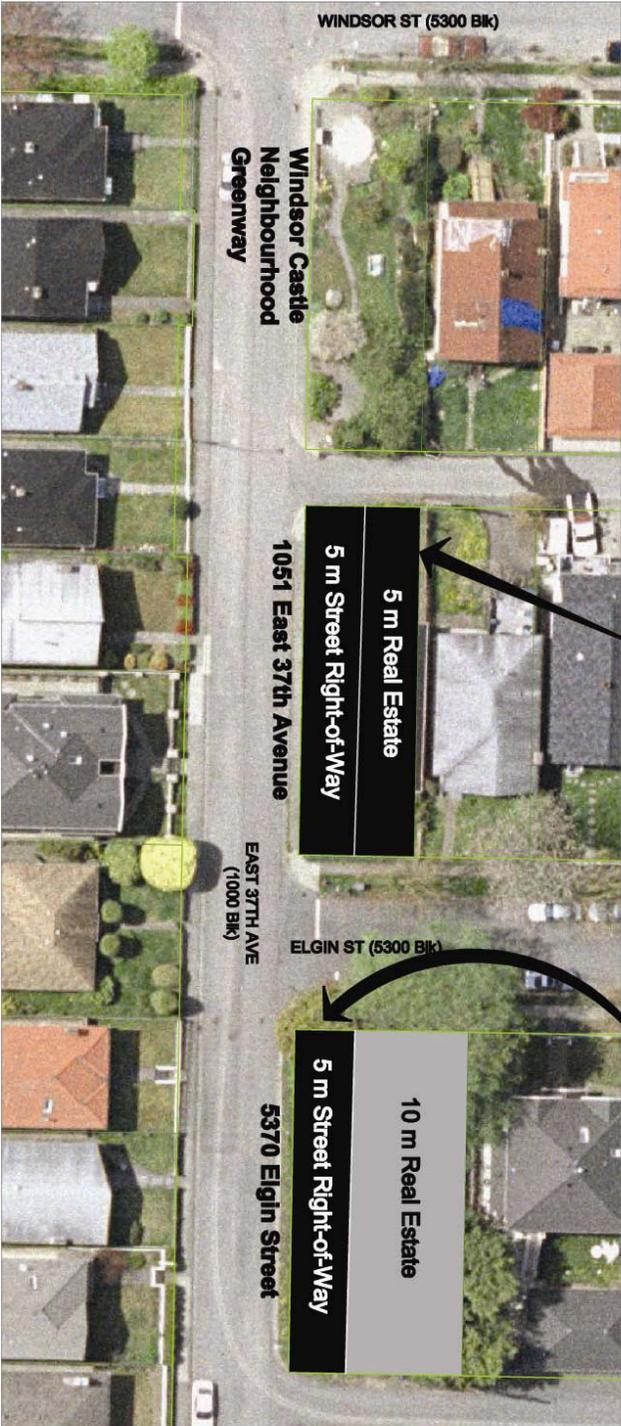
#### *SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS*

Neighbourhood greenways and community gardens make positive social and educational contributions by providing opportunities to learn more about nature in the city, increasing social interaction and community building, providing intergenerational activity, and increasing physical activity.

#### *CONCLUSION*

New community gardens on East 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue and an expansion of the Windsor Castle Neighbourhood Greenway will provide additional recreational opportunities for neighbourhood residents and will complement the overall Ridgeway Greenway experience. Staff recommends that \$171,000 (\$120,000 for Windsor Castle and \$51,000 for East 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue) be allocated for these purposes with an additional \$70,000 allocated to the ongoing creation of community gardens on City land managed by Engineering and Real Estate Services.

\* \* \* \* \*



Windsor Castle Expansion  
East 37th Ave (1000 Blk)  
1:500



Possible Community Garden Sites on East 37th Avenue  
Between Fraser Street and Ross Street



1:2500

## Draft Operational Guidelines for Community Gardens on City Land Other Than City Parks

The City of Vancouver (the “City”) recognizes community gardens as more than places to share one’s passion for gardening. Community gardening is a valuable activity that can contribute to community development and education, increased self-reliance, community health, public open space, wildlife habitat, environmental awareness, and positive social interaction.

The City is addressing food insecurity through the creation of community gardens as a means to relieve hunger, improve nutrition, and increase access to and distribution of food for its residents.

### Definition:

For the purposes of these Operational Guidelines for Community Gardens on City Land Other Than City Parks, (the “Guidelines”), a community garden is defined as a place on City-owned land, other than City parks, operated or overseen by a non-profit society, where people grow and maintain ornamental and edible plants. Residential boulevard gardens, Green Streets Program gardens and beautification projects are not included in this definition of community gardens.

**Community gardens on City land other than City parks may exist in any area of the city and should serve one or more of the following purposes:**

- produce edible and ornamental plants for the personal use of society members;
- grow food for the garden members’ benefit through skill building programs or City approved economic development training opportunities;
- grow food to donate to charitable causes.

**Once a suitable City-owned site has been located for a community garden, the following conditions will apply:**

1. A community consultation process, jointly undertaken by the non-profit society (the “Society”) and the City, indicates neighbourhood support for the garden;
2. The Society agrees to create their own membership agreements, and develop and operate the garden according to the Guidelines and the Community Garden Licence, (the “Licence”) which specify terms of use, management responsibilities, and procedures;
3. The standard term of use will be five (5) years unless the specific terms of use dictate otherwise.
  - a. Should cancellation of the Licence be required, a minimum of ninety (90) days written notice will be provided to the Society and whenever possible, with the cancellation taking effect after the growing season for that year has been completed.
  - b. Notwithstanding, in an emergency such as an unexpected infrastructure repair, the City would require immediate access to the site.
4. The garden is developed and maintained at no cost to the City, except that prior to the first season, the City will, at its cost, prepare the site for planting by removing undesirable vegetation, levelling the land, adding compost and providing a water service to the property;

5. A comprehensive garden site plan must be approved by City staff. The plan shall include the layout of the plots, irrigation, accessible pathways, trees, garden art, paved areas, picnic areas, compost areas and indicate the locations and dimensions of all proposed temporary structures and fences;
6. An ornamental perimeter garden must be provided between the community garden and the adjacent lands and street to create an attractive buffer with the neighbourhood. Fences are permitted around the larger community garden and may not be more than one meter high;
7. All gardens shall include provisions for accessibility for seniors and/or disabled persons, as well as fully accessible paths. In addition, two (2) plots of average size designated for one of the following: a) a local non-profit, b) a neighbouring child-care centre, or c) a common area for food grown for charitable purposes;
8. The City requires \$2 million liability insurance for all gardens prior to issuing or renewing a Licence. Liability insurance requirements may be modified at the discretion of the Directors of Risk Management and Legal Services.

**General rules for community gardens:**

1. Allotments of space must be made from a waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis to any resident of Vancouver with preference to those with no garden plots elsewhere and who reside or work in the local neighbourhood;
2. Community gardens are for chemical-free gardening only. Section 5.17 of the Health By-law No. 6580 (City of Vancouver's Pesticide Use Restriction By-law), restricts the application of synthetic pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides. Synthetic fertilizers are not to be used;
3. Plots must be planted by May 25, with exceptions made for extreme weather. Plots not utilized by this date must be reassigned;
4. Plots must be tidied and prepared for winter by November 1 preferably by mulching, planting cover crop seeds, and/or winter crop gardening;
5. Water is a limited resource, and should be used sparingly. Gardeners are encouraged to collect and use rainwater for irrigation;
6. Tires are not permitted;
7. Garbage service is not provided. Trash removal is the responsibility of the community garden;
8. Best practices must be used in the management of compost bins and windfalls to deter pests;
9. The general public is to have access to the garden at all times. Locked barriers are not permitted;
10. Bees may be kept in community gardens in accordance with the City's hobby beekeeping guidelines.