



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: January 6, 2025
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: February 4, 2025
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Engineering in conjunction with General Manager of Real Estate and Facilities Management

SUBJECT: Licence Arrangements for City-Owned Properties at 453 West 12th Avenue

Recommendations

THAT Council authorize the Director of Real Estate Services to negotiate and execute a new licence agreement with Vancouver City Hall Community Garden for an approximate 650 square meter portion of City-owned property located at 453 West 12th Avenue, legally described as PID 014-570-505 Block A Except Portions in Explanatory Plan 17642 District Lot 526 Plan 1530, for ongoing use as a community garden subject to the terms and conditions outlined in this report, including:

- A term of 5 years commencing January 1, 2025¹;
- A nominal rent of \$10.00 for the term; and
- Subject to an early termination provision in favour of the City upon 90 days notice.

All terms and conditions to be to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Engineering, the General Manager of Real Estate and Facilities Management, and the Director of Legal Services.

- As the rent is at applicable market rate, the Recommendation constitutes a grant valued at approximately \$45,480 per annum, or \$227,400 for the 5-year term of the licence.

FURTHER THAT no legal rights or obligation is created unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

¹ An interim licence agreement is currently in place to cover the time between the expired agreement and this Council Meeting.

Council approval is required to authorize each licence agreement because grant recommendations require at least 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members under Section 206 (1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

Purpose and Executive Summary

The licence arrangement recommended in this report presents an opportunity to retain secured community garden spaces at 453 West 12th Avenue in our current urban agriculture inventory (see Appendix A for map). The Vancouver City Hall Community Garden Society operates this garden and has held a licence with the City since 2019.

Retaining this site as an urban agriculture space helps advance Council objectives around food-friendly neighbourhoods and urban agriculture as part of complete and resilient communities and supports waste diversion. In addition,

- The Vancouver City Hall Community Garden Society has demonstrated an ability to responsibly manage this site;
- The City Hall Community Garden could not continue operating if market rental rates were charged;
- No additional City funds will be required to support the City Hall Community Garden; and
- The removal of the community garden could result in costs to the City.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- [Vancouver Food Strategy](#) – In 2013, Council adopted the Vancouver Food Strategy including goals and actions to support urban agriculture and neighbourhood composting.
- [Vancouver Plan](#) – In July 2022, Council adopted the Vancouver Plan which includes a policy to increase opportunities for local food production.
- [Vibrant Vancouver](#) – In October 2023, Council released their strategic priorities for 2023-26, which included supporting local food production.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

For several decades, the City has supported urban agriculture initiatives including community gardens, urban farming, and Indigenous food and medicine gardens. This support has been formalized through Council decisions, allocation of capital funding and granting of nominal leases, and adoption of urban farming bylaws. The proposed licence arrangement is intended to achieve food system goals and provide continuity to community initiatives. Redevelopment is possible for this site within the recommended license term, but unlikely.

453 West 12th Avenue – Vancouver City Hall Community Garden

The Vancouver City Hall Community Garden, founded in 2009, is situated on an approximately 650 square metre section of, District Lot 526, City-owned lot located within the City Hall Campus

Plan area. The garden is operated by the Vancouver City Hall Community Garden Society and has 75 members and 47 garden plots.

This site is well-managed and there have been no issues or impacts to the surrounding area.

Discussion

Strategic Analysis

Vancouver is home to numerous urban agriculture initiatives including community gardens, urban farms, and Indigenous food and medicine spaces operating under a range of tenure arrangements. Many are located on City or Park land, but over half are on private property.

While the total number of community garden plots has increased since the City began tracking them in 2010, growth has slowed in more recent years and urban agriculture sites on private property have proven to be less secure as they are subject to removal for development. Meanwhile, community demand for urban agriculture space remains at an all-time high. All community gardens report maintaining long waitlists for access to limited plots, and City food policy staff are unable to support the high number of enquiries from not-for-profit organizations and community groups seeking land for urban agriculture initiatives. If the licence arrangement for this community garden is not renewed it will result in a loss of 47 garden plots and community gathering space.

We do not expect that ongoing City Hall campus work will impact the community garden during this five-year licence arrangement term.

Financial Implications

The recommendations contained in this report do not entail any new financial impacts.

Should Council approve recommendations, staff will arrange nominal rate licence agreements with the society. These arrangements will represent an estimated annual rent subsidy totalling \$227,400 for the five-year term. The activities undertaken by the organizations at these sites could not be sustained if market rental rates were charged.

Operating costs and funding sources are covered by the operators largely through member fees, donations, and fundraising.

The urban agriculture uses on the site have no new property tax implications because the properties are City owned and the current uses will be unchanged.

In the event that Council does not approve of the new Licence Agreement, the Society will be required to pay market rent, amounting to \$20,521.80 for the period between September 19, 2024 to February 28, 2025.

Legal Implications

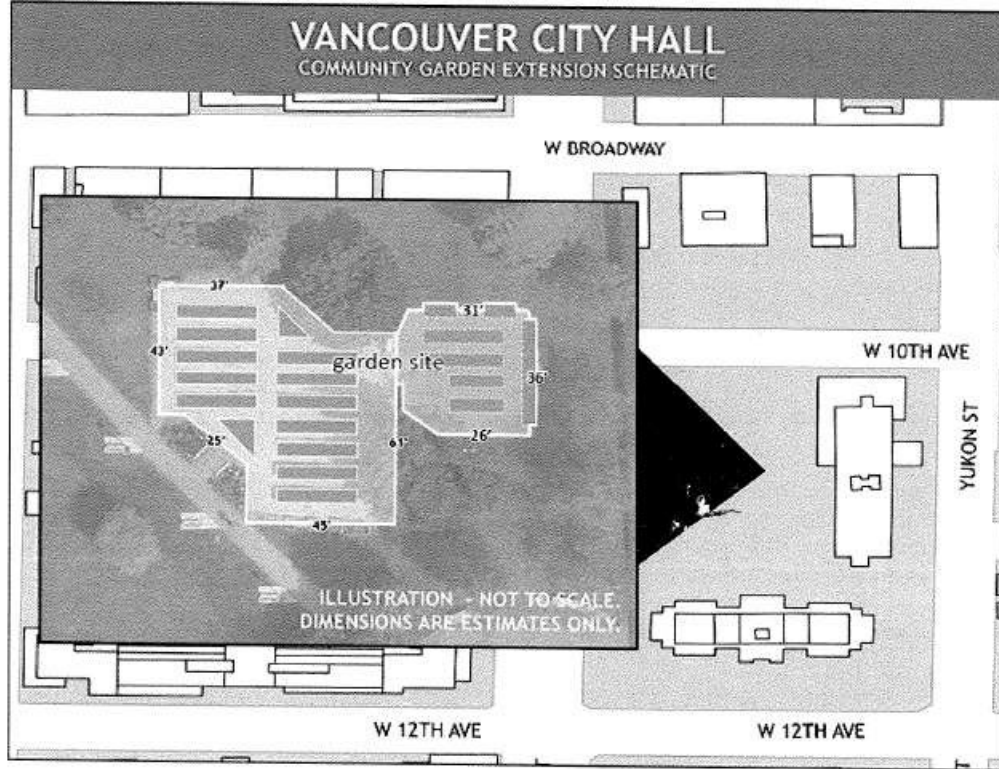
All terms and conditions of the license agreements will be made to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Engineering, the General Manager of Real Estate and Facilities

Management, and the Director of Legal Services. No legal rights or obligations are created unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

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APPENDIX A
LICENCE AREA: 453 West 12th Avenue

Total size of lease area: 650 square meters (6,997square feet)



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