

Community Gardens Proposal 2010

Prepared for: the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Esquimalt
Prepared by: Community Gardens Task Force

Date: 7 April, 2010
Version 1

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Gardens Task Force recommends that:

- A. Council secure the Town Square as Esquimalt's first Community Garden site, and;
- B. Council direct Development Services to provide feedback relating to Community Gardens as a permitted land use within Zoning Bylaw, 1992, No. 2050.

BACKGROUND

At the December 7, 2009 meeting of Council, Council resolved to establish a Community Gardens Task Force. During the January 19, 2010 meeting of Council, Council directed that the formation of the Community Gardens Task Force proceed with the Committee foundation being two representatives each from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee and Environmental Advisory Committee, with public representatives added at a later date.

A call for public representation and involvement was advertised. A total of ten candidates put forth expressions of interest and submitted resumes to demonstrate their gardening interests, experience and skills. A public meeting was then held to introduce the community gardens project and present the projects objectives. In addition each candidate was provided an opportunity to speak and inform the group at large of their gardening experience and the strengths, skills and contributions they would be able to provide to the Community Gardens Project. Candidates were advised of the commitment and requirements of Task Force members and they were informed that all persons interested in taking part in the project would be given that opportunity either as a Task Force member or as an ancillary member.

Two of the attendees were chosen to complete the Community Gardens Task Force. Esquimalt's Community Gardens Task Force is comprised of the following persons;

Mark Salter,	TF Chair and Environmental Advisory Committee member
Sally Challenger,	TF Member - Public Representative
Olga Liberchuk,	TF Member - Public Representative
Willie MacGillivray,	TF Member - Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee member
Natasha MacKinnon,	TF Member - Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee member
Blair Irwin,	TF Member - Environmental Advisory Committee member

PROJECT STRATEGY – 2010

The Community Gardens Task Force (CGTF) was provided with a general mandate - develop a proposal for community gardens in Esquimalt. The CGTF received verbal support from some of the Members of Council with who expressed a committed desire to Esquimalt's first community garden in place in time to make use of the 2010-growing season.

Given this mandate and timeline, the following tasks have been identified as the major components of the preliminary phase of the Community Gardens Project:

1. Establish a list of potential sites
2. Research the requirements of an optimal community garden
3. Identify all potential restrictions, limitations and difficulties that may impede project progress
4. Establish a set of criteria based on items 2 and 3 and use these criteria to;
5. Evaluate each site
6. Present a list of the best potential sites to council

The CGTF established a goal of one garden for the 2010 year and that this garden would be characterized as an allotment style community garden with raised beds, a tool shed, water, and secure fencing. The CGTF then set out to identify the general requirements of this garden, mostly through investigation of established community garden projects from several locations around the CRD as well as other regions and provinces. The CGTF quickly learned that developing this project from the ground up would require a multitude of components. With a short timeline to urge the speed of project development the Task Force identified and categorized the major components required to build a community garden and then prioritized the components in an effort to progress as efficiently as possible.

POTENTIAL SITES

Given that Esquimalt's first community garden will be an allotment style garden requiring full sun, water, and security the following six potential sites have been identified within the Townships region.

1. Anderson Park – 835 Colville Road
2. Colville Property – between 1086 and 1100 Colville Road
3. École Victor-Brodeur – 637 Head Street
4. Esquimalt Teen Centre - 535 Fraser Street
5. Fraser Property - 537 Fraser Street, and;
6. Town Square – 1235 Esquimalt Road

SITE EVALUATION CRITERIA

In an effort to be fair and objective in its evaluation of these sites the CGTF established a set of criteria and awarded each site a score according to those criteria. The scores for each site are reported in Table 1 of this report.

A set of nine criteria components was established as follows;

1. **Accessibility:** available parking; bus routes nearby; accessibility for physically impaired; close to high density housing; easy access into garden area.
2. **Water:** Is water available onsite?
3. **Security:** Is the area prone to vandalism? Does the site have high visibility? Will security structures (i.e. fencing) be required?
4. **Community Support:** Is this form of recreation a good fit for the neighbourhood? Close to high density housing? Is there a potential conflict of land use with neighbouring businesses?
5. **Exposure:** What is the drive-by or walk-by volume and visibility of the site?

6. **Ownership:** Will there be resistance by the Township (3yr agreement)? Or Is it possible to acquire a 3yr agreement with the owner?
7. **Zoning:** Do we require rezoning for land use?
8. **Site Conditions:** Will soil analysis & characterization be required? Is surface run-off and site drainage an issue? Is there sufficient sun exposure?
9. **Site Development:** Is excavation or tree service required? Are there buildings or structures to be removed? Will structures (i.e. tool shed) need to be built?

Each component was written up as a question and several components contain more than one question. Each question holds the potential of a score in the range of 0 to 5. Water for example is worth 5 marks or 0 marks with one question provided; 'is water available on site? Within the component of accessibility there are 5 questions for a total possible score of 25. The first question in that component is 'available parking' where 5 marks are awarded for 5 spaces or more and 0 marks are given if no parking is available. The next question in this component is 'bus routes nearby' where 5 marks are awarded if at least one route is handily located and 0 marks are awarded if the nearest route was considered to be inconvenient. For this second question only a 5 or a 0 is awarded. A full list of the criteria used to evaluate potential sites is presented in Table 1 included at the end of this report.

MOVING FORWARD

The Community Gardens Task Force (CGTF) now seeks the support of Council by providing support for the Town Square as Esquimalt's first community garden site. It should be noted that the Community Gardens Task Force is prepared to continue with its mandate of establishing a community garden in one of the remaining sites should council not agree with the evaluation criteria.

When council has secured a site for the community garden the CGTF will call together its ancillary team and assign the tasks required for the next phase of the project. The next tasks of this project as identified by the CGTF include project costing and establishing Community Gardens as a permitted land use in Esquimalt.

Table 1. Community Garden Site Evaluations

Criteria	Defense	Range	Value	Anderson Park	Collville Property	École Victor-Brodeur	Esquimalt Teen Centre	Fraser Property	Town Square
Accessibility	Available parking	(0 - 5)	5=5 spaces, 0=0 spaces	4	3	2	5	5	5
	Bus routes nearby	(0 or 5)	5=yes, 0=no	4	3	5	5	5	5
	Accessibility for physically impaired	(0 - 5)	5= easy, 0= not possible	2	2	5	5	5	5
	Close to high density housing	(0 - 5)	5=very, 0= not very	5	5	1	5	5	5
	Easy access into garden area	(0 - 5)	5= easy, 0= difficult	5	4	1	5	5	5
	Total Possible Criteria Score	25	Actual Criteria Score	20	17	14	25	25	25
Water	Is water available onsite	(0 or 5)	5= yes, 0= no	5	0	5	5	5	5
	Total Possible Criteria Score	5	Actual Criteria Score	5	0	5	5	5	5
Security	Is the area prone to vandalism?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= yes, very	3	4	4	2	4	5
	Does the site have high visibility?	(0 - 5)	5= very, 0= limited	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Will security structures (ie.fencing) be required?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= complete	0	3	0	2	4	0
	Total Possible Criteria Score	15	Actual Criteria Score	8	12	9	9	13	10
Community Support	Is this form of recreation a good fit for this neighborhood?	(0 - 5)	5= very, 0= no	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Close to high density housing	(0 - 5)	5= support, 0= resistance	3	2	5	4	4	5
	Is there a potential conflict of land use with neighboring businesses?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= significant	5	2	5	5	5	5
	Total Possible Criteria Score	15	Actual Criteria Score	13	9	15	14	14	15
Exposure	What is the drive-by and walk-by volume and visibility of the site	(0 - 5)	5= very high volume, 0= very low volume	3	4	3	5	5	5
	Total Possible Criteria Score	5	Actual Criteria Score	3	4	3	5	5	5
Ownership	Will there be resistance by the Township? (3yr agreement)	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= significant	3	3		3	3	3
	Is it possible to acquire a 3yr agreement with the owner?	(0 - 5)	5= yes easily			5			
	Total Possible Criteria Score	5	Actual Criteria Score	3	3	5	3	3	3
Zoning	Do we require rezoning for this land use?	(0 or 5)	5= no, 0= yes						
	Total Possible Criteria Score		Actual Criteria Score	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Conditions	Will soil analysis & characterization be required?	(0 or 5)	5= no, 0= yes	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Is surface run-off and site drainage an issue?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= requires	5	5	3	4	5	5
	Is there sufficient sun exposure?	(0 - 5)	5= full, 0=very limited	5	4	4	5	5	5
	Total Possible Criteria Score	15	Actual Criteria Score	15	14	12	14	15	15
Site Development	Is excavation or tree service required?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= requires	2	2	4	5	5	5
	Are there buildings or structures to be removed?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= requires considerable work	5	5	5	5	0	5
	Will structures ie. a tool shed need to be built?	(0 - 5)	5= no, 0= requires	0	0	0	1	0	3
	Total Possible Criteria Score	15	Actual Criteria Score	7	7	9	10	5	13
	Total Possible Site Score	100	Actual Site Score	74	66	72	85	85	91