

CITY OF HAMILTON

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Operations and Waste Management Division

TO: Chair and Members Public Works Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: April 19, 2010	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Community Garden Policy (PW10044) - (City Wide) (<i>Outstanding Business List Item</i>)	
SUBMITTED BY: Beth Goodger Acting General Manager Public Works Department	PREPARED BY: Adam Watson 905-546-2424, Extension 5522
SIGNATURE:	Ed DeVries 905-546-2424, Extension 4819

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Community Garden Policy and Procedures attached as Appendix "A" to Report PW10044 respecting a Community Garden Policy be approved;
- (b) That a new annual budget in the amount of \$20,000 to support the Community Garden Policy as part of the Forestry and Horticulture section budget be referred to the 2011 Budget process for deliberation;
- (c) That staff seek out interested community groups to operate via licence agreement(s) the current city-run Community Gardens by January 1, 2011;
- (d) That the Community Garden Policy be identified as completed and removed from the Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in response to Council Motion 7.2 from December 9, 2009. The motion called on the Public Works Department to work with other departments and come forward with a Community Garden Policy that included the following: criteria for establishing new community gardens, garden plot allocation

policies, a budget for establishing new community gardens and the provision of appropriate funding for existing community gardens.

Currently, the Operations and Waste Management Division administers the annual Community Gardens Program, operating May through October at two locations, Churchill Park and Olympic Drive in Dundas. A third location at Victoria Park is scheduled to begin operation in spring 2010.

By developing and adopting a Community Garden Policy the City of Hamilton joins a growing number of municipalities that recognize the importance and need for residents to grow their own food, even in urban settings.

Recognizing that community gardens provide residents with the opportunity to become engaged in a healthy recreational activity while growing nutritious food, meeting neighbours, building community, learning about the growing cycle, and beautifying open spaces. The policy outlines responsibilities of both City of Hamilton staff and members of the public in the development of new community gardens on City lands. It is recommended that Public Works staff assume the lead in development of long-term licence agreements as well as initial site preparation for the use of City lands for the development of new community gardens. This policy, if approved, will take effect January 1, 2011.

It is also recommended that the City seek partnerships with community organizations or a new Garden Collective to take over the operation of the existing three (3) community Gardens by January 1, 2011. For the 2010 growing season the City will maintain its existing operation of these gardens using the current allotment-style arrangement. This policy will allow the City to better respond to community requests for new community gardens and reallocate staff resources from maintaining existing sites and focus on the creation of new gardens.

The cost of the program is expected to be \$20,000 per year based on adding five (5) gardens per year.

Alternatives for Consideration - See Page 7

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The financial impacts of the Community Garden Policy are relative to the number of community gardens to be developed. The total cost of implementing the Policy is estimated at \$20,000 per year.

The policy recommends that staff prepare the site for the initial garden season. The cost to set up one (1) community garden (25 meters X 50 meters) is projected to be about \$4,000. Staff suggests the creation of five (5) new gardens this size each year creating a new budget line item request of \$20,000 to support the Community Garden Policy and Procedures.

The current 2010 projected cost of operating the three (3) City-run community gardens is \$17,250 and is offset by the collection of \$10,000 in user fees from the plot rentals,

for a net operating cost of \$7,500. As the operation of the three (3) existing gardens would be transitioned to the community organizations or Garden Collectives, the City would no longer bear any related yearly operating costs and would no longer collect any user fees from garden users. A budget reduction is not recommended as the associated staff time will be redirected to other horticultural programs.

Staffing:

The proposed policy and setup of five new gardens per year can be accommodated within the existing staff complement in the Operations and Waste Management Division. There would be no increase to FTEs in order to accommodate the recommendations of this policy.

Legal:

Legal Services has been consulted and will be required to draft and review the licence agreements for each of the Community Gardens initially and subsequently upon renewal(s).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This report has been prepared in response to Council Motion 7.2 from December 9, 2009, which called on the Public Works Department to work with other departments and come forward with a Community Garden Policy for the creation and support of community gardens on City-owned lands.

The Operations and Waste Management Division administers the annual Community Gardens Program operating May through October at two locations at Churchill Park and in Dundas on Olympic Drive currently, and a third location at Victoria Park to start in 2010. The Public Works Department also administers licence agreements with the North Hamilton Community Health Centre for the use of four (4) parcels of City-owned land in the north end. A community organized garden has also been proposed for City-owned property on Hill Street. These gardens provide an opportunity for gardening without chemical pesticides and are excellent value to participants in terms of produce and physical exercise.

Operational and administrative expenditures in support of the program for 2010 are approximately \$17,500 with \$10,000 offset through program user fees. The remaining \$7,500 will be absorbed through the general operating budget of the Forestry and Horticulture Section. The average user fee charged in 2009 was \$77 per garden plot. This fee would need to be increased to \$122 for user fees to provide full cost recovery. Staff is concerned that with the current operating shortfall and the growing interest in establishing new community gardens in the City, that this program will no longer be sustainable at a user fee level.

Currently, the City of Hamilton supports three (3) allotment-style Gardens (Dundas Community Garden, Churchill Park and Victoria Park), comprising of 142 individual plots.

The City provides:

- Spring/Fall cultivation,
- Staking out and marking individual plot boundaries,
- Mowing pathways,
- Litter control,
- Administration,
- Water usage and the operation of the irrigation system

It is the intention of the City to seek partnerships with community organizations or a new Garden Collective to take over the operation of these Allotment Gardens.

There is a national trend toward urban agriculture that has increased the demand for community gardening. An aging population combined with the popularity of gardening as an outdoor activity, have also increased interest in establishing community gardens. The ongoing cost to operate community gardens and the increase demand for more community garden plots created some urgency for a formal policy to be developed.

In a review of what other cities and municipalities are doing it was apparent there is a more effective way to operate community gardens. The attached policy is a result of that consultation process.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Strategic Plan

The adoption of a community garden policy is consistent with the Corporate Strategic Plan in the following focus areas:

Focus Area 2 - Financial Sustainability

- Delivery of municipal services and management of capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost-effective manner

Focus Area 5 - Social Development

- Residents in need have access to adequate support services

Focus Area 7 - Healthy Communities

- An engaged citizenry
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

Innovate Now

The adoption of a community garden policy is consistent with the Public Works Business Plan under the following priorities:

- 1.1 The leader in the “greening” and stewardship of the city
- 1.4 Mutually beneficial charters with external customers
- 4.2 Work is undertaken at approved service levels with budgets that match

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Consultation on the development of the Community Garden Policy was undertaken with internal City staff through the Public Works Community Garden Task Group, which includes representatives from the Public Health, Community Services, Planning & Economic Development and City Housing Departments.

External consultations were undertaken through the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee (CFSSC) and the Hamilton Community Garden Network (HGCN).

Input from these groups was incorporated to the development of this policy document.

In December 2009, Public Health Staff conducted an online public survey through surveymonkey.com that aimed to identify the major priorities for community garden support under the following categories: Infrastructure and Materials, Procedural and Education Support. The top priorities were identified by averaging the ranked scores provided by each of the thirty-three (33) respondents and each of the top priorities in these categories has been recognized and addressed in the recommended policy. A summary of the public survey results is attached as Appendix “B” to Report PW10044.

In addition, many of the municipalities surveyed provide direct or indirect support for a Community Garden Coordinator position to assist interested residents in starting and successfully operating a community garden. Through consultations with the CFSSC and HGCN, the need for a garden coordinator was also put forward as integral for new community gardens to be sustainable in the longer term. This could be supported through a grant to an external agency already engaged in this work. It was suggested that this issue be reviewed by other city departments currently engaged in programming related to health promotion and recreation.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the operation of community gardens be transitioned to a community-driven model by phasing-out the operation of the existing three (3) allotment-style community gardens at Dundas, Churchill Park and Victoria Park. Under the current model the City is unable to provide operational support for the creation of new community gardens. As well, the Forestry and Horticulture Section currently is absorbing a \$7,500 annual operating shortfall. This shortfall can only be corrected with a significant increase in user fees, which may make the program unaffordable for residents.

A more efficient use of staff resources would be to partner with existing community organizations or a new Garden Collective to operate the existing three (3) gardens, allowing these staff resources to focus on the development of new community gardens to be run by other Garden Collectives. Staff would initially be approaching existing garden users to gauge interest in them forming their own Garden Collective to take over operation of the garden. In the absence of interested current gardeners staff will approach community organizations who are already engaged in urban agriculture to takeover garden operations. Staff anticipate that these partnerships will be established

prior to January 1, 2011, with the stipulation that all current garden users be allowed to maintain involvement with the community garden following the transition.

In order to respond to the increased demand for community gardens in the City, it is recommended that an annual operating budget be adopted to support the development of a minimum of five (5) Community Gardens annually, or a larger number of gardens of an equivalent area. This would bring the annual budget request to support this policy to \$20,000 for the 2011 budget. This operational support would include the initial site preparation and tillage of new garden sites and the staff resources to administer the licence agreements.

A breakdown was completed to determine the cost associated with the establishment of one community garden 25 meters by 50 meters. Staff costs both direct and indirect amount to \$4,000. These costs assumed the site was an open parcel of land covered with grass. The direct costs for site preparation included staking out the four corners, removing and disposing of sod and bringing in compost or topsoil as well as roto-tilling the site. The indirect costs included administrative efforts from Legal, Operations and Waste Management and Risk Management to coordinate licence agreements.

There are no anticipated ongoing operating costs to the City following the initial garden setup activities outlined above. A minimal amount of administrative costs will be incurred by staff to review and renew licence agreements with each Garden Collective at the end of each three (3) year licence term.

In addition to the operational support proposed for up to five (5) community gardens per year, staff would continue to assess proposals for additional licence agreements for new gardens on City-owned lands if the Garden Collective was able to provide site preparation by their own means.

Due to the location of some City-owned lands in former industrial areas and Public Works yards, there is the potential that some sites may not be suitable for a community garden due to soil conditions. The site selection criteria for community garden sites will require lands with unknown site history and the potential for a contaminating prior use to be removed from consideration. The eligibility of land parcels will be at the discretion of Operations and Waste Management staff, in consultation with other pertinent City departments. In the event that a proposed site is found to be unsuitable for garden development, staff will endeavour to locate alternative sites in reasonable proximity to the proposed lands.

A review of community garden policies adopted by other Canadian municipalities was undertaken to identify different approaches available to the City of Hamilton. In general, municipal involvement in community gardens ranges from activities with little or no direct cost to the municipality (i.e. the provision of lands through licence agreements) to more direct investment in garden development (i.e. the provision of hard services such as garden construction and/or dedicated water lines to each garden site). The level of support for community gardens recommended in this report would place the City of Hamilton on a comparable level to the majority of municipalities surveyed.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Staff is proposing three (3) options for consideration that are described in the following table.

Table 1: Comparison of Alternative Community Garden Operation Policy Options

Option	Description	Projected Cost
<p>Option 1: Continuation of allotment-style model for all current & future gardens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain existing model for existing three (3) City-run gardens ▪ No future licence agreements for community-run gardens on City lands. ▪ Operating costs offset by user fees, administrative costs ▪ Limited availability of plots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partial cost recovery due to collection of user fees ▪ Remaining costs of ~\$2,500 per garden/year continue to be funded by City or user fees increased to provide full cost recovery ▪ Gross operating costs: \$17,500 per year ▪ Revenues from User Fees: \$10,000 per year ▪ Net operating cost: \$7,500 per year ▪ Cost per user: \$52
<p>Option 2: Full management of all gardens on City lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain existing operation of three (3) City-run gardens ▪ Transfer four (4) existing gardens currently licensed to North Hamilton Community Health Centre to a City-run allotment model ▪ All future gardens on City lands to be operated on City-run allotment model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partial cost recovery due to collection of user fees ▪ Remaining costs of ~\$2,500 per garden/year continue to be funded by City or user fees increased to provide full cost recovery ▪ Gross operating costs - \$40,500 per year ▪ Revenues from User Fees \$10,750 per year ▪ Net operating cost: \$29,750 per year ▪ Net cost per user: \$137
<p>Option 3: Phase-out operation of three existing allotment gardens and only administer licence agreements for future gardens Allow use of gardens on City lands, with no City start up assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer of existing gardens to interested community partners ▪ No set up support for future gardens ▪ Involvement limited to administrative support for the development of licence agreements for future gardens on City lands. ▪ Users responsible for all set up and operating costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administrative costs projected to be ~\$250 per garden to administer each licence agreement

Option 1: The City could continue to operate the three (3) community gardens as we currently do and support their operations through the user fee structure. In

addition, the option for community groups to enter into licence agreements for use of City-owned lands for community garden purposes would no longer be entertained. No new community gardens could be established until a user fee structure has been developed for the new garden that supports its operation. In the meantime we would establish a waiting list for residents who wish to join the program but are unable to get a plot due to the demand. Currently there is a waiting list for plots at two (2) of these gardens. This option does not promote development of community driven gardens and the user fee structure will make it unaffordable to some residents who have food security concerns.

Option 2: The City of Hamilton could take over the operation of all community gardens on City property. Currently there are four (4) other gardens operated through Licence Agreements with private groups on City Property, in addition to the three (3) city-run gardens. The direct operating impacts on Forestry and Horticulture staff would be a minimum of 24 person days annually to operate these gardens. From an analysis of the 2009 user fees, the average cost, to operate the three (3) current gardens is \$5,850 each, therefore an extra four (4) gardens would create an additional operating pressure of \$23,400, for a total of \$40,900 for seven (7) City-run gardens. If the City were to operate these sites on a user fee system the financial impact on the current users would make these gardens unaffordable as they cater to those residents in need. In order to maintain the affordability of the four (4) community-run gardens, the current user fee of \$10 per plot would be maintained. Appropriate funding would need to be considered in the 2011 budget deliberations.

Option 3: The City could phase-out its operation of the existing City-run gardens to interested community partners, and provide no funding allocation for future garden construction. Under this arrangement the City would divest itself of all direct operational support for community gardens, but would continue to administer licence agreements for community groups to construct new gardens on City-owned land. Under this option the operational costs at the existing gardens would be eliminated as would the user fees collected from gardens users. However, the costs for staff to administer new licence agreements would continue. Under this option the developments of future gardens would be restricted to residents and community groups who have the means to organize and fund the development of a community garden independently. This will likely result in no or little expansion of community gardens on City-owned land and would likely limit the expansion in more financially challenged neighbourhoods.

The table below provides a comparison of the three options, including the projected costs of each alternative option.

The following table presents service components identified as beneficial for the development of future community garden sites, including projected costs. The components presented were either ranked highly by respondents to the community

questionnaire included as Appendix B to Report PW10044, or are currently being provided by other municipalities in support of their community garden programs. These components could be considered in place of or additional to the initial site preparation and tillage already recommended by staff. Staff is recommending the provision of initial site preparation and tillage of new garden sites as it offers the most cost-effective investment of City resources and provides a service which is vital to the development of a new community garden.

Table 2: Alternative Service Components and Projected Costs

Service Components	Description	Projected Cost
Dedicated Metered Water Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provision of a dedicated water line for a community gardenCost dependent on length of line installed	\$18,000 - \$22,000/garden Yearly operating costs - \$180 plus water consumption charges
Hardscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Perimeter fencing of entire 25m x 50m garden areaSupply and Installation of 1.3m x 2.5m garden shed at each garden site	\$2,500 plus installation \$900
Compost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provision of Compost in first year of garden constructionTo be blended 50/50 with existing top soilUnder existing leaf & yard waste processing contract, contractor may be requested to deliver bulk loads of compost to designated site within the City at their cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compost availability is dependent on amount of leaf & yard waste compost and is to be assessed annually
Raised Beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be constructed for the purpose of siting gardens on lands with unknown site history and/or potential soil contamination (would include items like soil and wood for framing)	\$5,000 per bed per 25 metre by 50 metre site
Enhancement of Outreach/Promotion of Community Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Acquisition of a Community Garden Coordinator for an 8-month period	\$45,000-50,000 (includes staff salary, vehicle and operating supplies)

The option being recommended by staff is to transition the operation of community gardens to a community-driven model and to phase-out the operation of the existing allotment-style gardens. In addition, it is recommended that an annual operating budget be adopted to support new garden development on city lands, which includes the initial site preparation and tillage of new garden sites and the staff resources to administer the licence agreements. The details of this option are contained in the Analysis/Rationale section of this report.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Social Development

- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services

Financial Sustainability

- ◆ Delivery of municipal services and management of capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost-effective manner.

Healthy Community

- ◆ An engaged Citizenry
- ◆ Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix "A" - Community Garden Policy

Appendix "B" - Responses to City of Hamilton Community Garden Services Questionnaire

THE CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS & WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
POLICY and PROCEDURES

POLICY NO:
SUBJECT: Community Gardens
ELIGIBILITY:

POLICY

The City of Hamilton ("City") recognizes the development of community gardens on City lands by community organizations.

Definitions

"Community Garden" means a plot of City land which is used by a Garden Collective to produce food, native and ornamental plants edible berries and food perennials.

"Garden Collective" means a community organization or a group of organized individuals (a minimum 4 – 6) that have come together for the purpose of operating a Community Garden.

"Community Engagement Plan" is a plan developed by the Garden Collective in consultation with the City which will indicate what process will be used to assess whether there is neighbourhood support for the Community Garden, and which plan on its approval, will be implemented by the Garden Collective.

Purpose

Community Gardens provide City residents with an opportunity to engage in a healthy recreational activity while growing nutritious food, benefiting from social interaction by meeting neighbours, and building community ties while learning about the growing cycle and beautifying public open space. A Community Garden may include the following features and/or societal benefits:

- a) Promotes urban agriculture, food security and food production;
- b) Uses a plot of City land in order for the Garden Collective for: the growing of produce such as vegetables and fruit for use and/or consumption by Garden Collective members in a garden, which garden may be ornamental, native or perennial in nature, and shall be for the community's enjoyment;
- c) Provides demonstration gardening and other environmental education programs to encourage the involvement of schools, youth groups and citizens in gardening activities;
- d) Encourages environmental innovation, demonstration and education sessions including: composting, pesticide free and organic gardening practices and drought tolerant plant characteristics/selection in gardening;
- e) Donates surplus produce as determined by the Garden Collective;
- f) Encourages partnerships with other community organizations;
- g) Increases safety and stewardship of public land by providing increased surveillance.

The development of Community Gardens is subject to the accompanying procedures.

**THE CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS & WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
POLICY and PROCEDURES**

POLICY NO:
SUBJECT: Community Gardens
ELIGIBILITY:

PROCEDURE

1) Administration

The Public Works Department of the City of Hamilton supports the development of a Community Garden by working with a Garden Collective. The City will promote and raise awareness of a Community Garden through the City of Hamilton's website and other opportunities when available. The City of Hamilton will support the development of a Community Garden in the following ways:

- a) Providing access to information on the development and operation of a Community Garden;
- b) Creating and maintaining a list of City lands that are suitable for the development of a Community Garden;
- c) Assisting in the development of a licence agreement with a Garden Collective for the use of City land as a Community Garden when a suitable and approved site has been chosen;
- d) For the duration of the Licence Agreement the Public Works Department will make the following commitments:

i) First

The City will assist a Garden Collective with the preparation of the Community Garden by the following means:

- Removing grass
- Turning soil

ii) Subsequent Seasons

The Garden Collective will be responsible for all Community Garden activities and/or enhancement of Community Garden site amenities moving forward, as per the Licence Agreement.

2) Guidelines for Selecting New Community Garden Sites

The City of Hamilton supports the creation of a Community Garden and will assist a Garden Collective in locating a new Community Garden on suitable and approved City land where:

- a) A Garden Collective expresses, in writing, an interest in developing a community garden on City-owned land;
- b) The City has determined that the location of the proposed Community Garden is available and is suitable for this use;
- c) The neighbourhood/community residents have been consulted and are supportive of the use of the City land as a Community Garden;
- d) The Community Garden does not conflict with established amenities/programs; and

- e) The Community Garden fits with the character and function of the area, and is compatible with adjacent land use.

3) CONDITIONS FOR USE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

The use of City land for a Community Garden shall be decided on a case-by-case basis following consultation with the affected community and subject to approval by the Portfolio Management Committee. On the approval by the Portfolio Management Committee, the General Manager of Public Works or designate is authorized to enter into such agreements as may be necessary with the applicant(s) to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.

The following conditions will apply to a Community Garden on City land:

- a) A Community Garden is expected to be developed, managed and maintained at no direct cost to the City, and is expected to have minimal impact on City resources;
- b) The Garden Collective, will in consultation with the City, develop a Community Engagement Plan which will indicate neighbourhood support, and which on its approval, will be implemented by the Garden Collective;
- c) The Garden Collective shall agree to develop, manage and operate the Community Garden in accordance with a Licence Agreement entered into between the Garden Collective and the City. The Licence Agreement will provide for the terms of use, management responsibilities, capital improvements and access to the Community Garden, which will include but is not limited to the following:
 - i) An initial term of three years, with an option to renew;
 - ii) A list of criteria developed for the use of the site which all members of the Garden Collective will be required to sign indicating their agreement to comply with regular maintenance and gardening standards for the Community Garden;
 - iii) Development of a plan by the Garden Collective that includes key principles such as the not for profit nature of the Garden Collective, how plots will be allocated and ensuring that unallocated plots are made available to the general public;
 - iv) Minimum maintenance standards including aesthetics, orderliness, signage, any fencing requirements and acceptable and/or prohibited plantings;
 - v) That no chemical pesticides are to be used on the Community Garden;
 - vi) That produce grown in the Community Garden shall be for personal consumption and not for private profit; excess produce is encouraged to be donated to community food programs such as Food Share, Student Nutrition Programs or local food banks;
 - vii) Providing for public access to the site;
 - viii) The Garden Collective shall be required to take out and maintain Commercial General Liability Insurance in the amount of \$2 million and shall be required to indemnify the City with respect to its activities;
 - ix) The Garden Collective agrees to cover the cost to restore the lands to their original condition on termination of the Licence Agreement;
 - x) All Garden Collective practices shall comply with all Provincial legislation, regulation and all City policies and by-laws; and
 - xi) Raised beds may be required by the City or requested by the Garden Collective and any costs related will be borne by the Garden Collective.

DIRECTOR APPROVAL: _____

APPROVED DATE: _____

REVISED DATE: _____

Responses to City of Hamilton Community Garden Services Questionnaire

Total started survey: 32

Total completed survey: 30

2009

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NS3GFX6>

The City of Hamilton is in the process of developing a Community Garden Policy to facilitate the creation of new gardens and the maintenance of existing community gardens in the city.

City staff have identified the following possible supports for community gardens, based on what other municipalities provide. Now, we want to know what community gardeners themselves see as the most important role(s) for the city in assisting community gardens. Your responses will help us to develop a policy that is appropriate for Hamilton, and to prioritize the various possible activities as we develop a budget request.

Infrastructure/Material Support

Q1. Please number the following infrastructure and material supports the city could provide in order of importance, with 1 being most important and 8 being least important:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| <u>1</u> | where appropriate, offer City-owned land (such as undeveloped parcels, closed road rights-of-way, or parks) for garden sites |
| <u>2</u> | provide municipal water, compost, and/or soil (for no cost, low cost, or on a cost recovery basis) |
| <u>5</u> | provide hardscaping (e.g. tool sheds or tool boxes, tables, fences) |
| <u>7</u> | provide plant material (for gardeners or for general landscaping of site) |
| <u>4</u> | offer one-time grants to help with start-up (on a first-come, first-served and/or matching basis, or based on need) |
| <u>3</u> | provide one-time-only site preparation (e.g., clearing the site, bed preparation, water hook-up) |
| <u>6</u> | provide ongoing maintenance (mowing pathways, litter control, staking out and marking plots, irrigation management) |
| <u>8</u> | provide a forum for public artwork |
| | other (please specify: _____) |

Procedural Support

Q2. Please number the following procedural supports the city could provide in order of importance, with 1 being most important, and 7 being least important:

- 2 inventory unused property and assess for suitability for community gardens
- 1 assist in securing land for community gardens through the use of zoning, interim use agreements, lease agreements and/or partnerships with public or private sector organizations
- 4 facilitate community outreach and public consultation about plans for new community gardens
- 5 assist with site planning and design
- 3 provide environmental assessment (e.g., soil testing, title searches) where necessary
- 6 assist groups in applying for grants to support the garden
- 7 garden administration (e.g., plot allocation, fee collection, coordinating maintenance)
- other (please specify: _____)

Education and Information Sharing

Q3. Please number the following education and information functions the city could provide in order of importance, with 1 being most important and 6 being least important:

- 4 raise awareness of community gardening generally
- 3 compile and provide information to the public on existing community gardens and/or community garden organizations (e.g., by listing in the Recreation Guide or on the City website)
- 2 provide information to the public on how to develop and operate community gardens
- 6 assist in communication within and between community gardens (e.g., through a community garden newsletter, listserv or facebook page)
- 5 provide recreation and/or educational programming (e.g., environmental or nutrition education) for various groups at community garden sites
- 1 provide a "one-stop-shop", key contact person for all community garden questions and support
- other (please specify: _____)

Q5. Overall, which **category** of activities do you think it is most important for the city to provide? Please number the categories in order of importance, with 1 being most important and 3 being least important:

- 1 Material/Infrastructure Support
 2 Procedural Support
 3 Education and Information Sharing

Other (please specify: _____)

Q6. Overall, which of the specific roles/activities listed in questions 1-3 do you think are **most** important for the City to take on? **NOTE:**

1. Assist in securing land for community gardens through the use of zoning, interim use agreements, lease agreements and/or partnerships with public or private sector organizations
2. Provide plant material (for gardeners or for general landscaping of site)
3. Offer one-time grants to help with start-up (on a first-come, first-served and/or matching basis, or based on need)
4. Provide a forum for public artwork
5. where appropriate, offer City-owned land (such as undeveloped parcels, closed road rights-of-way, or parks) for garden sites

Q7. Please provide any additional comments you have to help us to develop a community garden policy for the City of Hamilton:

Responses for "Additional comments you have to help us to develop a community garden policy for the City of Hamilton"

MATERIALS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- City should provide land and services and community groups can take it from there.
- Material and infrastructure support are the major needs.
- Some fencing to keep out deer where required.
- Our experience with the community garden in Westdale was a major disappointment. I would hope that there is someone overseeing the whole thing, making sure the water is available and working properly, and that preparation was such that a successful gardening season could be enjoyed by those who work so hard. We lost everything in our garden due to broken watering systems and poor drainage. Someone was caught taking what little we managed to grow. It would be sad to go to all this trouble and then have no one willing to take advantage of such a good opportunity.

ORGANIZATION SUGGESTIONS

- I think the city should support by hand this over to an NGO and that the city should in part fund this NGO's work.
- I think there should be small gardens in many neighbourhoods, monitoring standards is a concern. I think the larger gardens are difficult to access, some with catchment areas.

- From my understanding, the city was quoting \$200,000 for a community garden in Victoria Park. This is totally outrageous. Community minded folks could do it for \$30,000 and that would be a hugely expensive proposition. Could be done with volunteers and community people for very cheap.
- The city owned gardens must be organic. Hire local organic farmers to teach about soil, and how to grow healthy food.
- There are a lot of community groups interested in starting gardens, so tapping into their efforts, experience, and energy is essential. There needs to be a way that local councillors can encourage these groups without having to take up a lot of their time pushing ideas through city hall, also there needs to be a recognition that there will not be a one size fits all solution or mechanism for encouraging community gardens, so there needs to be a lot of flexibility in making them possible in all different areas of the city (some times there is a sentiment that everything has to be 'equal' somehow, which doesn't recognize each communities assets or requirements.)

GENERAL SUPPORT

- Great idea, keep them growing!
- We need gardens and lots of them. Mainly for their community building benefits with food production as an added bonus.
- It's great that you're considering this! I hope we can produce a lot of the city's food from inside the city!
- This is a fantastically important initiative for short term food security and long term community sustainability and resilience.
- Community gardens are the way of the future, we are lagging behind. Once this level is going, look at other models of urban intensive gardening and food sources. Go boldly in the Future Hamilton!

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Gardens take a long time to build – need time to build a community of seasoned community gardeners who are able to provide opportunity for new gardeners – start-up animators may be necessary for a number of years at each site. I think there is an opportunity for a summer job program for students that would provide assistance to community gardens and introduce students to hard work and where their food comes from. The Y runs an employment program for at risk youth that might be a good partner.
- We have found it difficult to engage residents if we don't work through the children. Working with them also facilitates good nutritional habits. We have also learned that garden have to be where people have access and feel safe.
- Make artist gardens and community collaboration in an artist-led gardening activity mandatory for a percentage of each new initiative.