



## **Committee of the Whole Report**

### **For the Meeting of August 8, 2019**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole                      **Date:** July 16, 2019  
**From:** Thomas Soulliere, Director, Parks, Recreation and Facilities  
**Subject:** Community Garden Licences of Occupation

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute new licences of occupation for the following community gardens, subject to the publication of notices as required by the Community Charter, and with all terms to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor and the Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities:

1. Banfield Commons/ Tea Garden (Banfield Park on Craigflower Rd)
2. Banfield Orchard (Banfield Park on Craigflower Rd)
3. Fairfield Community Garden (Robert Porter Park)
4. Wark Street Commons (Wark Street Park between Bay St and Kings Rd)
5. Fernwood Community Orchard/ Stevenson Community Orchard (William Stevenson Park)
6. Earthbound Garden (2507 Garden Street)
7. Spirit Garden (1769 Newton St & 1782 Kings Rd)
8. James Bay New Horizons Pollinator Garden (Irving Park, James Bay)
9. Yates Street Community Garden (1012/14 Yates St.)

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for new licences of occupation for nine existing community gardens.

The licences of occupation for the Banfield Commons, Banfield Orchard, Fairfield Community Garden, Wark Street Garden, Fernwood Community Orchard and Earthbound Garden expired in May 2019. The licences of occupation for the Spirit Garden, James Bay New Horizons Pollinator Garden and Yates Street Community Garden will expire in November 2019.

The Community Gardens Policy outlines the process for the creation and retention of community garden sites on City-owned lands. These gardens help facilitate positive community experiences, including educational and social opportunities for citizens. Community associations play an active role in organizing events, providing signage and developing other place-making features.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for new licences of occupation for nine existing community gardens.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City's Community Gardens Policy (Appendix A) outlines the process for the creation and retention of community garden sites on City-owned lands. When licence agreements with the City are renewed, community gardens are required to amend their operating agreements in alignment with the current policy.

A standard license agreement for a community garden is for five (5) years. License agreements may be renewed for multiple terms providing the project continues to meet the criteria of this policy.

The location of each garden is shown in Appendix B.

## **ISSUES & ANALYSIS**

### Banfield Commons/ Tea Garden

The Victoria West Community Association's Food Security Collective operates Banfield Commons, a permaculture food forest open to the public for harvest. The garden was created in 2006. The mix of fruit and nut trees, fruit shrubs, perennial and annual vegetables, and herbs covers an area of 400 square metres in Banfield Park.

In 2018 a total of 219 volunteers attended five monthly and 36 weekly work parties, contributing 357 hours.

### Banfield Orchard (Banfield Park on Craigflower Rd)

The Victoria West Community Association's Food Security Collective also operates the Banfield Park Community Orchard. The Orchard was created in 2013 as a pilot project to test the viability of growing fruit trees in a public park.

Eighteen fruit trees and two nut trees are under-planted with various ground cover and pollinator plants in an area covering 435 square metres. The Parks division is responsible for maintenance of the grass in the Orchard. Banfield Commons and orchard are both used weekly by two community daycares as outdoor classrooms and two social programs for work experience.

### Fairfield Community Garden (Robert Porter Park)

The Fairfield Gonzales Community Association, through its Community Garden Committee, oversees the Fairfield Food Forest in Robert J. Porter Park. The garden was installed in 2013 and covers approximately 450 square meters. It is a public permaculture commons garden with many food-producing trees and shrubs.

Approximately 70 volunteers contributed to maintaining the garden last year through six work parties and nine learning sessions with FGCA "early years" programs. Fairfield has installed benches and a toolshed to improve accessibility for volunteers with mobility issues.

#### Wark Street Commons (Wark Street Park between Bay St and Kings Rd)

The Quadra Village Community Centre oversees the Wark Street Commons (built in 2006) in the park between Bay St and Kings Rd covering approximately 180 square metres. The garden consists of native pollinator plants, edible berries and shrubs available for community harvest.

A garden coordinator and approximately 5-10 volunteers are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the gardens.

#### Fernwood Community Orchard/ Stevenson Community Orchard (William Stevenson Park)

Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group Society oversees the Kitchen Garden Project and neighbourhood orchard of 25 fruit trees on the west side of the Centre that includes a variety of apple, pear, plum, and fig trees. The orchard is approximately 180 square meters and was installed in 2013 with volunteer work parties as a part of the City of Victoria community orchards pilot program.

Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group Society staff and the Victoria High School gardening class manage the ongoing maintenance of the orchard. The orchard is open to the public to harvest, which is also used in the Community Centre food programs such as Fernwood NRG's family and student dinners.

#### Earthbound Garden (2507 Garden Street)

The Fernwood Community Association oversees the Earthbound Allotment Garden located on Garden Street and has been ongoing since 1999. This allotment garden is approximately 580 square meters and includes 11 half plots and 8 full plots, with 25 people on the waiting list.

The total of volunteer hours required for the upkeep of the common areas of the garden is approximately 75-100 hours annually. Ten active gardeners contribute approximately 50 hours of volunteer time a year in the common areas of the gardens. Throughout the season, gardeners organize and host multiple work parties and potlucks of harvested foods.

#### Spirit Garden (1769 Newton St & 1782 Kings Rd)

The North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association has been the steward of The North Jubilee Spirit Garden since 1996. Covering two back-to-back City lots between Kings Road and Newton Street of approximately 1340 square meters, the garden is a tranquil respite for walkers and cyclists moving through the neighbourhood. There are no allotment plots or food production found in this unique space.

In recent years, approximately six volunteers have managed most of the watering and weeding needs. In 2016, through funding from My Great Neighbourhood Grant, volunteers restored the garden, rebuilt the walkway in order to increase accessibility (i.e. walkers) and created place-making features such as benches and a Little Library.

#### James Bay New Horizons Pollinator Garden (Irving Park, James Bay)

The James Bay New Horizons Society oversees the JBNH Pollinator Garden. The garden is approximately 165 square meters and was built in two phases: the first phase updated the sidewalk area at 234 Menzies Street in 2014 and the second phase focused on the Irving Park side of the building in August 2016. This phase included two benches from Vic High Woodworking Class and

Victoria's first public building apiary, with an indoor bee-watching area. This organic and neonicotinoid-free garden demonstrates a diverse year-round pollinator habitat.

Presently, eight volunteers maintain the watering, pruning, onsite organic composting, soil regeneration and weeding schedule.

#### Yates Street Community Garden (1012/14 Yates St.)

The Yates Street Community garden, in partnership with the Victoria Downtown Residents Association, was established in 2016 in the vacant lot between 1010 and 1030 Yates St. The garden is approximately 670 square meters and consists of 81 raised beds. Plots are assigned to members of the community and eight are used for community groups such as Victoria Immigrant Resource Centre and Downtown Disability Resource Centre. Plots are currently all occupied and with await list. There are seven raised accessible beds, with plans to add five more for community use this summer.

This garden is governed by a steering committee consisting of six members. There are four work parties throughout the year with approximately 10-20 garden members participating in each party.

#### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

Accessibility accommodations are listed when applicable in each garden description above (under the section Issues and Analysis) that convey how support is being provided for individuals with limited mobility (i.e. raised accessible garden beds, benches, etc.).

The City of Victoria's *Low Pollen Plant list* and *Urban Gardening and Pollen Allergies in the City of Victoria* factsheet, which is currently in development, will be shared with all existing community gardens to help bring awareness and offer gardening tips with allergies in mind.

#### *2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan*

Strategic Objective #5: Health, Well-being, and a Welcoming City.

#### *Impacts to 2019 - 2022 Financial Plan*

There are no additional financial costs to the City in renewing the licence agreements for the existing nine community gardens.

#### *Official Community Plan Consistency Statement*

Community gardens help support goals identified in the Food Systems section of the Official Community Plan, including specifically Objective 17.5: Encourage food production activities in visible and suitable public places to foster a connection between people and the process of growing, harvesting and eating fresh produce.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The community gardens described in this report align with the objectives identified by Council. Staff recommend Council support the renewal of licences of occupation for these nine gardens, for five-year terms.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Harned  
Food Systems Coordinator  
Parks, Recreation and Facilities

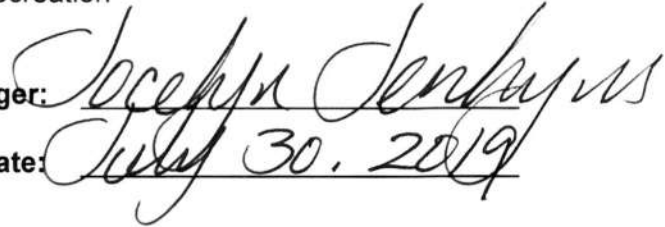


Nav Sidhu  
Assistant Director  
Parks and Recreation



Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:

  
July 30, 2019

**List of Attachments**

Appendix A: Community Gardens Policy  
Appendix B: Location of Nine Community Gardens