

## **Project Description**

### **Pilot Community Garden on Pandora Avenue**

Prepared for Pandora Neighbours by the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network  
Comments please to Jim LaMorte, [jlamorte@telus.net](mailto:jlamorte@telus.net)

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#### **Background**

On June 3, 2015, Mayor Lisa Helps and the Pandora Task Force identified several projects that could help the community in the 900 block of Pandora Avenue. One project called for a small pilot garden to be developed and maintained by the neighbours.

A community garden offers several potential benefits:

- It provides an opportunity for residents and workers on Pandora Avenue to meet and work together on a common effort, adding to the sense of community.
- A community garden and signage identifying the participants would help enhance a sense of place for this block of Pandora.
- A garden would beautify Pandora Avenue, and may result in slower traffic.
- A garden that includes vegetables would help feed those in need.
- Gardening relieves stress for the participants and fosters a reconnection with nature.

The City of Victoria encourages and supports community gardens through policies and guidelines managed by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

Under the Community Gardens Policy (rev. 2009), the City of Victoria will:

*“...offer Victoria-owned land as new community garden sites, such as undeveloped parcels, closed road rights of way, marginal park land and along Greenways as part of a Green Streets program.”*

The City of Victoria recognizes that community gardening contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, community development, environmental education, connection to nature, protection and use of open space and economical, nutritious food production and food security.

This Pilot Community Garden project meets all of these objectives and complies with all requirements of the Community Gardens Policy for the City of Victoria.

## Vision

As a pilot project, we intend to start with a small garden and allow it to develop according to the wishes of the participants. The garden will use raised and moveable beds with imported soil to prevent damage to tree roots and to facilitate gardening.

The initial vision for the garden area anticipates no more than 9 square metres (100 sq ft), equivalent to 3 metres by 3 metres (10 ft by 10 ft). If there is enough interest, the site may be expanded to accommodate a larger area with approval from City Parks. In addition, other community interests, such as an art display or sitting area, may be added to the garden area in the future.

The eventual size and location of the garden will be determined by the participants and the City, within the boulevard area on the south side of the 900 Block of Pandora Avenue. The project will not result in the removal of existing sidewalk or parking spaces. There will be no need for plumbing or electrical services to the site. No trees will be removed or harmed throughout the project.

## Mission Statement

While the pilot Pandora Community Garden project may be small, we have based our mission on a vital concept:

*People who garden together, grow together.*

Our mission is to share a garden as a way of growing community relationships, and to have fun doing so.

## Guiding Principles (Core Values)

In developing the Pilot Community Garden at the Pandora Avenue location, we are guided by the following principles:

1. Build Relationships, Build Community – Through this shared project, we intend to learn more about others on our block and to hear their stories. Our main wish is that we continue to build a strong neighbourhood.
2. Share Responsibility – In joining the group, participants agree to share responsibility for the project. All neighbours are invited to participate in the development and maintenance as part of the group.
3. Focus on Urban Gardening – We intend to promote the benefits of gardening, especially for people who may not be regular gardeners.
4. Make it Useful, Aesthetically Pleasing, and Accessible – The garden should be used to grow practical items, such as healthy food and flowers that can be cut and brought inside. The garden should be accessible and build friendships.

## Sunset Clause

This initiative is a pilot project with a one-year evaluation period. If the pilot is successful, the gardeners will seek an additional licence to operate from the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture. We have also made provisions for closing the project under the following conditions:

- End of Project Period. The garden will be removed at the end of the pilot period if there is no initiative to continue the effort.
- Lack of Interest. If the garden has been abandoned at any time and no one has indicated an interest in maintaining the initiative, the pilot project will have served its purpose.
- Persistent Negative Impacts on Surrounding Neighbours or Land Uses. A neighbourhood initiative that benefits some at the expense of others is not sustainable. We will consider any ongoing impacts of the garden and its consequences on others in the 900 Block, and remove the garden if other attempts to reduce adverse effects are not successful.

The Greater Victoria Placemaking Network will be responsible for dismantling and removing the garden facilities if the project is closed.

## Participants and Support

Figure 1 lists the current and potential individual participants in the pilot garden.

*Figure 1. Potential Participants in Community Garden*

Pandora Address	Name	Workplace or Residence
900	Individual staff and students (tbd).	Victoria Conservatory of Music
916	Kalen Harris	Shatterbox Coffee Bar
	Tony Mathews	Body Logic
919	Laszlo Lyle Pete Gould Ken Greenlees Andrew MacPherson Patricia O'Byrne Karen Wilkinson	Our Place Society
920	Jamie Cummins	Relish Food and Coffee
941	Trudy Chyzowski Kelly Hanna Michelle McEwan Individual clients (tbd)	Island Health

Due to the open nature of community gardening, participants may come and go according to their individual preferences. There will always be a Garden Contact to maintain a current list of members and a waiting list using a first-come, first-served system.

The Pilot Community Garden participants have received substantial support from a number of local and regional organizations to date. Each of the organizations identified in Figure 2 have contributed to the project in specific ways.

*Figure 2. Support for Pandora Community Garden*

Organization	Contact	Support
Parks, Recreation and Culture City of Victoria	Alia Johnson	Interpretation of policy and guidelines
Citizen Engagement and Strategic Planning – Downtown Coordination City of Victoria	Mike Hill	Assistance with city agreements
Risk Management City of Victoria	Graham Fisher	Potential hazards and safety features
Buckerfields	Travis Young	Food, flower plantings
Digger Dale Contracting	Dale Welch	Box construction
Flo n' Live Greens, Organic Farm	Frank O'Brien	Organic fertilizer
Greater Victoria Placemaking Network	Jim LaMorte	Facilitation
Michell Excavating Ltd.	Darrel Michell	Soil
reFUSE	Neil Hodge	Garden waste composting
Volunteer Architect	Ian Welsh	Garden design and layout
Wenstob Timber	Kevin Wenstob	Wood for raised beds

## Design

As a pilot project, the initial design will minimize use of the boulevard area on Pandora Avenue and maximize flexibility. The design incorporates safety elements from both the Community Garden Policy and Boulevard Garden Guidelines adopted by the City of Victoria. Figure 3 below lists the design features for the Pilot Garden:

*Figure 3. Design Features of the Pilot Garden*

### Box Design

- Total area of approximately 9 sq m (100 sq ft)
- A single box must not exceed 8 m (26 ft) in length
- Moveable by forklift
- Non-toxic wood (not pressure treated)

## Garden Area Design

- Close to Our Place to facilitate watering
- Outside the dripline of existing trees
- At least 30 cm (1 ft) from sidewalk
- At least 1 m (3 ft) from curb on Pandora Ave side
- At least 1 m (3 ft) between boxes

### Ground Treatment around Boxes

- Retain grass for the present (may be wood chips in future)
- Consider ease of cutting grass around boxes
- No stakes in the ground or other tripping hazards

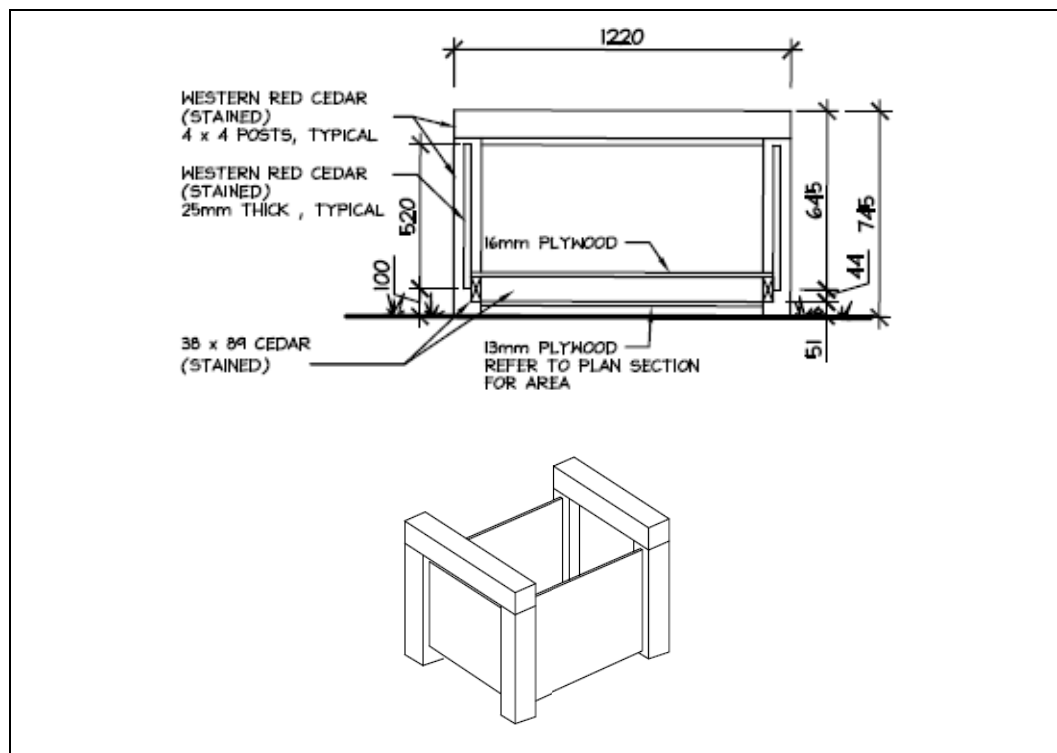
## Plant Design

- Plants not taller than 1 m (3 ft) from ground level
- No trees

The initial design for this Pilot Garden calls for a series of four small boxes, each about 1.2 m square (4 ft x 4 ft) in dimension. Each box will have a raised floor to allow it to be easily moved by forklift.

Plantings will not exceed one meter (3 ft) in height to preserve sight lines for motorists along Pandora Avenue. There will be no ground disturbance, such as stakes or edging that could present tripping hazards. Figure 4 presents a tentative sketch of the proposed design of the garden boxes.

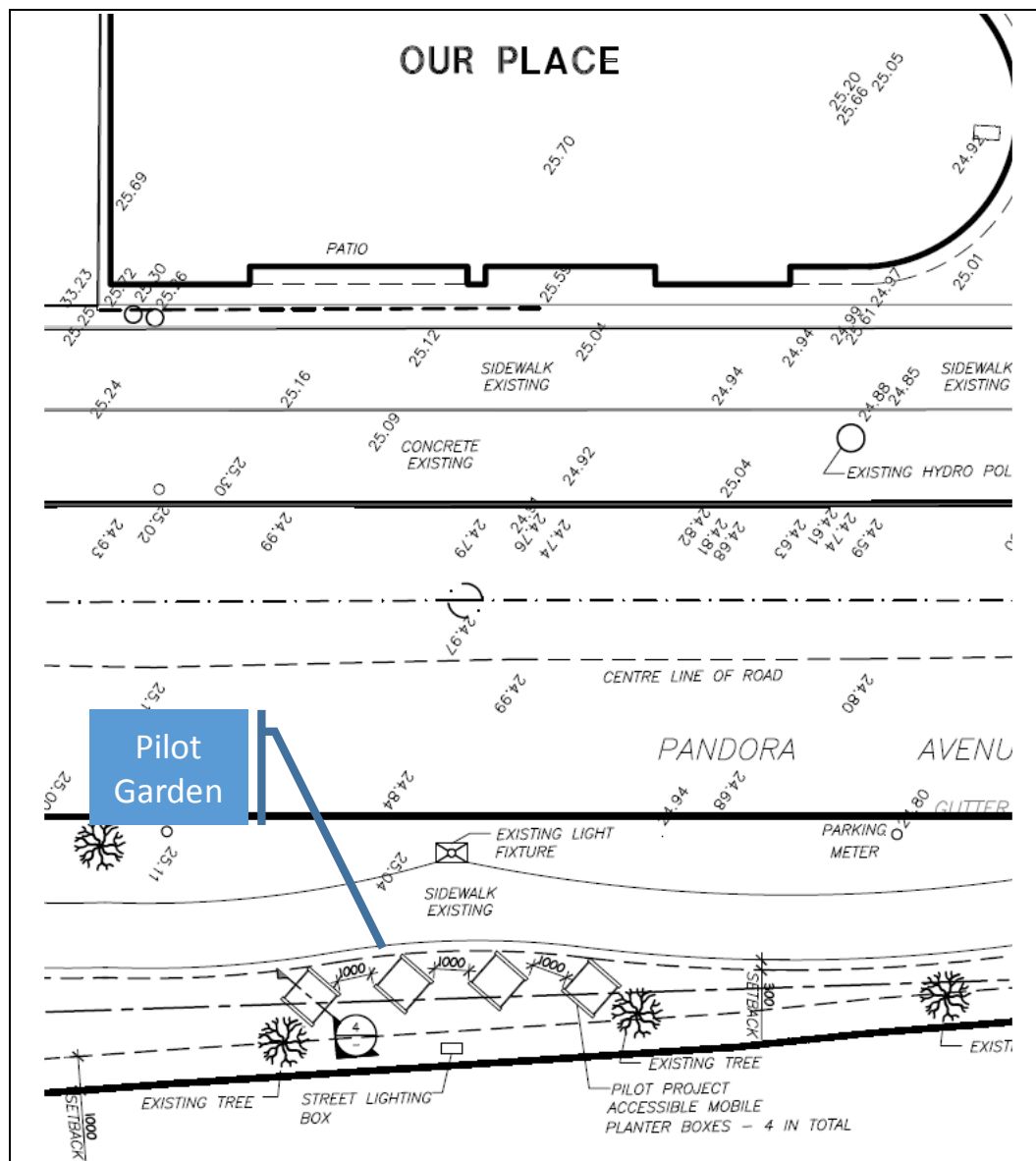
*Figure 4. Sketch of Proposed Community Garden Boxes*



A site for the Pilot Community Garden has been selected to encourage use and maintenance. One of the grass areas adjacent to the sidewalk on the south boulevard in the 900 block of Pandora Avenue has been selected by the gardeners for the initial site. This is close to Our Place Society and the family members who have offered to provide water for the garden plots.

The location is also central to the workplaces and residences of the gardeners who have expressed interest in the project. Figure 5 shows the intended location and layout of the Pilot Community Garden.

*Figure 5. Location and Layout of Pilot Community Garden on Pandora Avenue*



## Operations

The primary purpose of a community garden on Pandora Avenue is to bring individuals from the neighbourhood closer together through a shared activity, one that minimizes stress and enhances relationships.

The daily operations of our garden relies on individual action, with frequent opportunities for interaction. Gardeners will plant, weed, and harvest at their own schedule, supplemented with regular social gatherings. Figure 6 outlines the core responsibilities of the gardeners.

*Figure 6. Member Gardener Responsibilities*

Members of the Pandora Community Garden are required to:

1. Register their interest with the Garden Contact.
2. Maintain their portion of the garden to keep the appearance orderly. Use the garden waste receptacle provided.
3. Do not use pesticides or herbicides.
4. Look for and remove hazards, such as tools left on the ground.
5. Permit access to the garden plot by the general public.
6. Do not sell produce or flowers for private profit. Excess produce may be donated.

A Garden Contact will be appointed to provide a single point of contact for the project, to advise on good gardening practices, and to ensure all gardeners know and follow safety precautions.

Figure 7 lists the primary responsibilities of the Garden Contact.

*Figure 7. Garden Contact Responsibilities*

The Garden Contact will:

1. Maintain an up-to-date list of gardeners, including names and how to contact them.
2. Maintain a waiting list of potential new gardeners by date of registration.
3. Advise gardeners on effective gardening practices, including plant selection and maintenance.
4. Ensure any community garden tools are properly stored, and make them accessible to gardeners.
5. Arrange for regular watering of garden plots.
6. Arrange for the removal of garden waste for composting.
7. Inspect site for safety at least twice a week.

8. Instruct all gardeners on potential hazards and safe practices, such as removing tripping hazards.
9. Monitor activities and serve as a point of contact.

The Garden Contact position may be rotated among the members. Contact information for the Garden Contact will be posted at the site to encourage neighbourhood participation and to support positive relationships.

## Safety

A sustainable community activity must be a safe one. While the initial Pilot Community Garden project is small and short-term, we intend to adopt safe practices that will serve the gardeners and community if and when the garden continues and expands.

Figure 8 identifies the primary safety concerns and the features that have been added to the design and operation of the Pandora Community Garden.

*Figure 8. Potential Safety Concerns and Features*

Potential Safety Concern	Safety Features
Member of the general public or a gardener might trip and fall due to a feature of the garden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruct all gardeners to continuously eliminate all tripping hazards.</li> <li>• Design boxes to stand alone on existing grass with minimal site disturbance.</li> </ul>
Gardeners may injure themselves by lifting heavy objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a Garden Contact to instruct gardeners in safe practices.</li> </ul>
Consumers may ingest produce contaminated with pesticides or herbicides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibit pesticides and herbicides.</li> <li>• Ensure all produce is organically grown.</li> </ul>
The garden may obscure the vision of a motorist on Pandora Avenue as a person steps into the traffic lane.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install garden boxes more than one meter (3 ft) from south curb of Pandora Avenue.</li> <li>• Design boxes to be easily moved by forklift if problems are noted with the location.</li> <li>• Limit height of vegetation to 1 m to preserve motorist sight lines.</li> </ul>



## **Sponsor**

The City's Community Garden Policy requires gardeners to partner with an existing non-profit organization, one that can provide liability insurance coverage. The gardeners have received an offer of sponsorship from the LifeCycles Project Society.

Over the last 18 years, the LifeCycles Project has worked to connect people with the food they eat and the land it comes from. The Lifecycles Urban Agriculture program aims to build the capacity of the Greater Victoria community to grow our own food and develop a network of community resilience through the Urban Agriculture Workshop Series and Garden Creation programs.

LifeCycles is a great match for the Pandora Community Garden and we are grateful for their participation and support.