



## **THE NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN OF ALL SORTS**

**(Formerly Michigan Street Community Garden)**

**Lifecycles Project Society's Proposal to the City of Victoria for the Relocation of the Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts to the north boulevard on Niagara St. adjacent to MacDonald Park**

**July 2015**



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# Background:

The Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts (NGAS) was created 15 years ago with the help and support of LifeCycles Project Society. It was created to meet the pressing need for edible garden space in the James Bay neighbourhood, to help develop local food resilience, and to create a place where residents could gather, learn, and share.

LifeCycles is a registered, not-for-profit society in good standing with a 21 year history in Victoria. LifeCycles' mission is to cultivate community health from the ground up by connecting people, the food they eat and the land it comes from. LifeCycles support people in gaining knowledge skills and resources they need to access or grow their own food in a way that fosters biodiversity and enhances our urban environment.

The NGAS is a LifeCycles project with a Garden Coordinator handling the management of the proposed community garden.

For 15 years NGAS has enhanced the social and ecological well-being of the James Bay community through educational outreach, accessibility and positive interactions with residents and tourists. It's been a refuge for threatened bird and bee populations, and recreational therapy to promote a healthy lifestyle for community members. Photographers and artists frequented the garden as did those seeking a place to meditate and rest. NGAS has a long history of sharing garden produce with local community organizations. James Bay is the most densely populated neighbourhood in the city and many residents have no space for gardens. Community interest in accessing garden plots is in high demand and growing. The Montreal Street Allotment Garden and NGAS have waiting lists of over 100 people in James Bay looking for a space to garden.

Members of the NGAS Committee approached its City Council Liaison, Chris Coleman in June of 2013 for assistance. In June of 2014, Council recommended relocation of the garden to the southwest corner of parkland across from South Park Elementary School pending consultation with and approval from community members and School District 61. After consultation with the local community, it was clear that there was sufficient opposition to this site to indicate the need to look for an alternative. The City Parks Department has assisted in identifying another possible site along the north boulevard on Niagara St. adjacent to MacDonald Park.

# MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE OF THE GARDEN

## How will the Garden be Managed/Governed?

LifeCycles will appoint a Garden Coordinator and Alternate for NGAS on an annual basis. The current Coordinator is MaryLynne Rimer and her alternate is Candis Elliott.

## How will residents of the City learn about the Community Garden?

1. A sign will be posted on the NGAS Tool Shed giving contact information for those interested in gardening.
2. NGAS news and contact information will be posted on LifeCycles website, on social media and from time to time in their newsletter.
3. In order to get in the waitlist, interested parties will contact the coordinator at the garden email address with the subject line "Waitlist for Garden".

## Selection criteria for the new Gardeners

Priority will go to James Bay residents: (2 former gardeners from the Michigan St. garden, who live outside of James Bay, will be "grandparented" into the new site.)

1. Lack access to gardening space equivalent in size and quality to a plot at the NGAS.
2. Have no other household member with access to a garden plot.
3. Agree to sign and abide by a Plot Holders Agreement (PHA) and pay an annual fee.

### Plot Holders Agreement includes:

- Address and contact information
- Confirmation of residency
- Confirmation of commitments including: serving on a garden committee (membership and finance, grounds maintenance and communications)
- Confirmation of commitment to organic growing and grounds policies
- Attendance at 4 out of the 7 work parties during the growing season
- Confirmation of commitment to personally and actively plant and tend the allocated plot including mowing and weeding between plots
- Agreement to and an understanding of the review process that may lead to suspension of the use of an NGAS plot.

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### Review Process

Each fall the Garden Coordinator and Alternate will assess whether gardeners have lived up to their commitments outlined in the PHA. If necessary, a gardener may be issued a letter of suspension giving reasons for suspension.

The gardener may request a reconsideration of this decision. The Director of LifeCycles will reconsider if the gardener can reasonably explain their lack of commitment to the PHA and reconfirm their commitment for the following year.

The Director's decision is final.

A yearly Plot Holders Report will be submitted to the LifeCycles' Board of Directors.

### **How will finances be handled?**

Plot Holders will pay an annual fee for the use of a plot. The fees will be paid to the Garden Coordinator who will be one of two signatories on the NGAS account. The second signatory will be the Director of LifeCycles.

LifeCycles will hold and manage all funds and pay costs associated with the garden through a designated NGAS account.

A yearly financial report will be submitted to LifeCycles' Board of Directors.

### **How will Plots be Re-Allocated?**

An interested gardener list will be maintained and up-dated annually.

# Community Consultation:

Since learning of the sale of the property on Michigan St., in early 2014, NGAS Coordinators have been doing outreach, gaining support for relocation of the garden and consulting with the community. In late March, 2015, City staff identified site on Niagara St. adjacent to MacDonald Park as a potential site. Since that time we have been actively gaining support from the community for the new site.

## Consultation activities included:

- James Bay Neighbourhood Association: Consultation with President Marg Gardiner and Secretary Laura Neil re: site planning and consultation planning; presentation at Land Use Committee (June 14) and General Meeting (July 8)
- Canvass of surrounding residents (May 16)
- White Eagle Hall - Adolf Literowicz
- Meeting with James Bay Community School –Darcy Topinka, Community School Coordinator (June 2)
- Meeting with James Bay Garden Association (April 20) – Tatiana Montgomery, President
- Proposal sent to James Bay Athletic Club – Adam Bate, Executive member responded with questions regarding any expansion of the area, and timing of going before Council.
- James Bay Community Market (May 23)

## Attached are:

Consultation Summary – Appendix A

Letters of support:

James Bay Community Project

James Bay Community School Society

James Bay New Horizons

James Bay Community Market

Signatures from local residents

# Garden Location

• Accessibility - Can the garden be reached by people of diverse ages and abilities? Is there sufficient car parking, bike parking, and transit? Is there room to bring in supplies such as lumber, soil, and plants?

The site is walker and cyclist friendly. Those using walkers and wheelchairs can best access the site on the west end; off Montreal St. Alley. Most of the gardeners walk or cycle to the garden. There is a small parking lot on Montreal St. Alley that would allow for delivery of large items. There is also parking on Oswego and Dock Streets.

• Location & Size - Is the land centrally located in the James Bay neighbourhood? Can the space accommodate a community garden in addition to other activities that residents currently enjoy? The location is not centrally located in James Bay but is very walkable from much of the community. MacDonald Park is used by many sports clubs, residents and James Bay School. The garden is situated across from White Eagle Hall and Dock/Niagara St. intersection. It will not interfere with any other uses of the park or obstruct residences views.

• Collaboration - Are there potential partners nearby with whom we can share the resources and upkeep of the garden, such as a school, community association, market, recreation centre, or youth centre? Do local businesses support the project?

Consultation meetings have been held with James Bay Neighbourhood Association and the James Bay Community School Society. The James Bay Garden Association on Montreal Street is adjacent to the Niagara St. site. The Garden Coordinator and President are talking about sharing ideas and special events. We are actively soliciting business support by asking for in kind donations and we will continue to seek other partnerships with community associations.

• Mixed Use - What are the current uses of the space? Will a garden interfere with the recreational activities taking place?

The space is on the boulevard adjacent to MacDonald Park which is currently used by most heavily used by walkers. The conceptual plan for the garden includes the addition of a chip path that will allow walkers to stroll past the garden.

• Security - Can the garden be a secure and safe place for those who use it, and for the neighbours who live nearby?

The site is secure because of the active use of MacDonald Park and the open site lines from the street.

• Site-specific Considerations - Are there environmental concerns that need to be addressed, such as sensitive ecosystems, rare plants, noise issues, or other existing landscape features?

There is heavy tree branch cover of the site and two trees which will seriously affect the access to plots and amount of light available for gardening. We are asking the city to trim trees and remove 2 Honey Locust trees in the garden area. The cedar trees that begin at Dock St. going east on the site aren't compatible for growing vegetables so there is no option to add additional plots along the boulevard.

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# FAQs

Here are some of the most common questions we have received about the relocation of the Community Garden to the proposed new location on Niagara St.

Q. What are the most common concerns raised about the garden?

Some residents are concerned about spoiling the boulevard by raising the canopy, cutting down trees and making the area look cluttered. Even those who are supportive of the site, expressed concern that the climate isn't suitable for gardening. One neighbour also wanted to see more access to community gardening instead of more condos, thought part of the rugby field would make a better garden area and would like to see gardening allowed in front of apartments/condos.

Q. Will children have access to the garden?

A. Yes, all are welcome to visit the garden. Some gardeners bring their children to tend their plot and enjoy the produce. We hope to work with James Bay School to develop a program that will involve students in gardening activities. One resident was pleased that we are interested in working with children from the school.

Q. Will the trees be protected?

A. We are asking the city to raise the canopy which is very much needed for the health of the trees, for sun exposure and to improve access for walkers and to the plots. There are two honey locust trees in the garden site that we are asking be removed.

Q. How do I get a plot?

A. The plots are available to James Bay residents only who don't have access to another space for gardening. You can contact the garden coordinator and if there are plots available you will be asked to fill out a Plot Holders Agreement and pay an annual fee. If no plot is available, you will be put on a waitlist. We aim to have attrition of one garden plot per year beginning in 2018.

# Garden Design

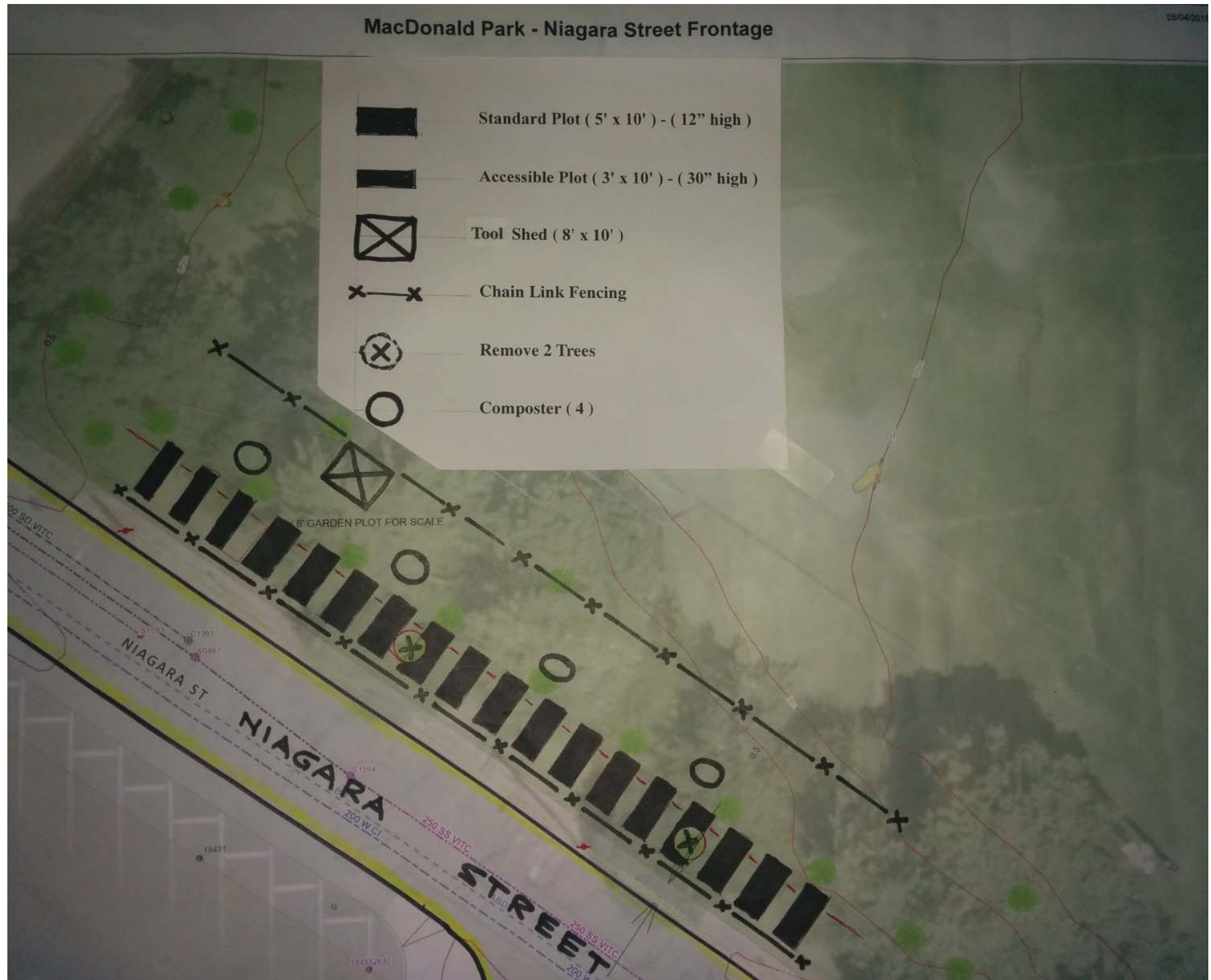
The NGAS is proposing 18 garden plots; 15 at 5' x 10' x 12" and 3 at 3' x 10' x 30" for disabled gardeners with just over 30" in between the standard plots and about 42" between the plots for disabled access. This will allow ample access to plots and for mowing and weeding.

The attached base plan locates the plots at 9' from the curb for required set back and possible fence and are perpendicular to the road for best light exposure. It also shows the two trees to be have removed, the site for the tool shed and indicates the tree trimming/ thinning and removal of lower limbs to 5 m. from curb.

# Budget

The 2015 budget includes one-time capital costs for a garden shed, compost bins, lumber and soil. The operating costs will be significantly higher than at the previous location due to the higher cost of insurance and the requirement to pay for water.

We anticipate covering costs by utilizing cash donations some of which we have already received, applying for City of Victoria grants under its new policy and calling on local businesses and organizations for donations in kind.



# Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts

## BUDGET PROPOSAL

For 10 months: July 1, 2015 – April 1, 2016

REVENUE	2015-2016 (Budget)	Confirmed	Pending
Plot Fees Income (\$50 x 18 plots)	\$900.00	\$500.00	\$400.00
Cash donations	\$500.00	\$500.00	
In-kind donations (Home Lumber, Home Depot and Gravel Mart)	\$2500.00		\$2500.00
Grants – City of Victoria and others	\$6000.00		\$6000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$9900.00</b>		

EXPENDITURES	2015-2016 (Budget)
<i>Operating:</i>	
Office/rental/legal	\$75.00
Maintenance/Repairs	\$100.00
Supplies and Tools	\$100.00
Water	\$500.00
Insurance	\$400.00
<b>Total operating:</b>	<b>\$1750.00</b>
<i>Capital:</i>	
Lumber and brackets for 15-5'x10'x12" and 3-5'x10'x30"	\$4000.00
Soil @ \$40 a yard; 3 yards per box	\$2160.00
3 Composters @ \$100 each	\$300.00
Vinyl Tool shed from Home Depot – 8' x 10' plus 4 concrete footings (see photo and description attached)	\$1500.00
<b>Total capital:</b>	<b>\$7960.00</b>
<b>Total expenditures:</b>	<b>\$9710.00</b>

NET ASSETS	2015-2016 (Budget)
Balance Forward	\$1500.00

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# Vinyl Tool shed



The Vinyl Milford storage shed combines 467 cu. ft. of storage and a height of more than 7 ft. for ample storage space to work in and store large equipment. With an attractive horizontal siding, combined with a vinyl coating, this shed is manufactured to be a strong, durable solution for all your storage needs – all year round. Designed to protect your possessions from the elements, this 10' x 8' shed is perfect for adding storage space to your home and freeing up extra space in your garage or basement.

- 467 cu. ft. of storage space
- Premium vinyl-coated steel design offers year-round protection
- Over 7' tall for plenty of space to work in or hang tools
- Five times thicker than standard wall finishes protects against elements
- 10'x8'

# PLANTING STRATEGY

We plan to plant herbs, vegetables and fruit in the garden. The following list of plants have been grown at the site on Michigan St. and would be appropriate for the Niagara St. location.

## Artichoke

Asparagus	Elderberry	Radish
Alum	Fennel	Raspberry
Asian greens	Fava	Rosemary
Basil	Gladiola	Rhubarb
Bee balm	Iris	Rose
Beet	Jerusalem artichoke	Sage
Bean	Kale	Strawberry
Borage	Lavender	Sunflower
Broccoli	Leek	Snapdragon
Brussels Sprout	Lettuce	Sweet Pea
Cabbage	Mallow	Scarlet Runner
Chard	Mint	Squash
Chives	Nasturtium	Spinach
Chamomile	Nigelia	Sage
Carrots	Parsley	Tomato
Clematis	Parsnip	Tulip
Calendula	Pea	Tarragon
Cilantro	Pansy	Thyme
Cucumber	Potato	Viola
Day lily	Poppy	Violet
Daffodil	Parsnip	
Dahlia	Pepper	
Delphinium	Pumpkin	

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# Project Timeline

“The City of Victoria recognizes community gardening as a valuable recreational activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, community development, environmental education, connection to nature, protection and use of open space, food security, and economical, nutritious food production.” -City of Victoria Community Gardening Policy

## June 2014

- Council decision regarding South Park as a possible site for the relocation of the Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts.

## April 2015

- Agreement with City Parks Staff on the new proposed site for relocation at MacDonald Park on Niagara St.

## April-August 2015

- Development of a new proposal.
- Consultation with community on Niagara St. location.
- Search for grant opportunities and solicit donations.

## July 2015

- Submit grant application to the City.
- Submission of the new proposal to Victoria City Council.

**Assuming the site is approved by Council and grants/donations can be secured**

## Fall 2015

- Recruit gardeners, as needed.
- Prepare site including trees trimmed and removed.
- Purchase shed, lumber, soil, composters.
- Construct plots.

## Spring 2016

- Garden opening celebration
- Active planting

## **Request of the City:**

Partnership between the City of Victoria, LifeCycles, and the Garden Coordinator is essential to the success of this project. The collective work efforts of the City and members of the community in the creation, construction and maintenance of the gardens would optimize resources, and keep lines of communication clear.

We ask that the City install water access at no cost to the gardeners and a fence to provide a break from the street and ball diamond.

The need to have set back from the curb and avoid underground gas lines means that the plots are situated about 9' from the curb. The current heavy tree cover will significantly affect the success of gardening in this area. We ask the City raise the canopy on existing trees and remove two trees along the boulevard in the garden area to optimize sun exposure and access.

Provision of in-kind support such as delivery of leaf mulch would be much appreciated.

## **Next Steps:**

The community has shown support for the relocation of the Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts on Niagara Street on the boulevard adjacent to MacDonald Park. We have addressed, and continue to address, the concerns of those who have questions about the Garden. The review of this LifeCycles proposal by the City is required to advance this project. Input as a result of these reviews will be incorporated into the Garden plan, just as the results of our community consultations have been incorporated in our modifications to the Garden Design and planning process.

## USER AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF VICTORIA

As outlined in the Victoria Community Garden Policy, a User Agreement between LifeCycles and the City of Victoria would be developed to define the terms of use and clarify the role of LifeCycles and the Garden Coordinator. Part the purpose of community gardens is community building and joint stewardship of the land, tasks such as ground breaking, planting and maintenance activities will involve community volunteers and future plot holders, who will be given opportunities to participate in all aspects of the garden creation. As community education is significant for the Garden, transfer of knowledge will occur through workshops and scheduled work parties, which will also provide the garden maintenance service, and fulfill gardening needs.

We believe this proposal, and the steps outlined fulfill the requirements of the Policy and, therefore would conclude the necessary consultation process, moving it forward for final approval from Council. As we wish to solicit further funding and begin soil preparation work on the Garden, a timely response and follow up to the proposal would be appreciated. The Coordinator will continue with ongoing consultation and outreach with the community as the proposal moves forward.

**Thank-you for your consideration,**

MaryLynne Rimer, Garden Coordinator  
Tel: 250-479-9605 [marylynne.rimer@shaw.ca](mailto:marylynne.rimer@shaw.ca)



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## APPENDIX A

### CONSULTATION SUMMARY

#### 1. James Bay Neighbourhood Association

- Meeting with President Marg Gardiner and Secretary Laura Neil regarding site and consultation planning on April 23 where we looked at the site and confirmed the consultation plan with the Association. We agreed to have a draft proposal ready for initial review in May anticipating a Land Use Committee presentation by the end of May and presentation at the general meeting in June. Both Marg and Laura expressed strong support for the Niagara St. location.
- Meeting at City Hall with Marg Gardiner and Laura Neil along with city staff to review the draft proposal on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Issues arising at this meeting included insuring administrative fairness in the review process, attrition of gardeners to allow access to more residents of James Bay, grandfathering of Michigan Street gardeners who aren't residents, the type of shed that would be appropriate and whether fencing was needed.
- Presentation at Land Use Committee on June 14 where Committee members expressed support for the garden being relocated to Niagara Street except for one member who is against any encroachment on city parks. They asked that the wording about eligibility be exclusive to James Bay residents with the exception of 2 gardeners who would be "grand parented" due to their involvement in the Michigan Street garden, that there be an attrition rate established and no subletting allowed.
- General Meeting presentation on July 8 where 46 people attended. Fourteen people spoke all of whom were supportive of the garden being relocated in James Bay. Issues raised were that the Niagara site isn't suitable for gardening due to climate issues, the need to disturb the current trees and encroachment on a city park, concern the JBNA and the City didn't come up with a better spot for gardening, i.e. the grassy area adjacent to the Montreal Street Garden or Irving Park and access to plots for James Bay residents.

#### 2. Canvass of surrounding residents

- On May 16, two gardeners took letters to neighbours who live in close proximity to the proposed site including Montreal, Niagara and Dock Streets explaining the proposed move and providing contact information should they have comments or questions. They were able to speak to a couple of people. One neighbour is concerned about spoiling the boulevard where they walk their dogs, tree trimming, the climate being unsuitable for gardening and the garden making the area look cluttered. This neighbour also wants to see more access to community gardening instead of more condos, thinks the part of the rugby field would be a better spot for gardening and wants to see gardening on the lawns of apartment and condo buildings. Two neighbours are concerned about taking trees out.

#### 3. James Bay Community School

- Meeting with Darcy Topinka, James Bay Community School Coordinator on June 2 where the location and proposed garden were discussed. He is very supportive of the garden and sees potential for the school and gardeners to partner and provide gardening opportunities for students at James Bay School. Also, approached Janice Matthews, the Chair of the Community School Board of Directors for a letter of support.
4. James Bay Garden Association
    - Meeting with Tatiana Montgomery on April 20. She is currently the president of the Montreal Street garden around the corner from the proposed site on Niagara. She is in favour of more gardening spaces in James Bay and wants to see our group and theirs share expertise and events.
  5. White Eagle Hall
    - Spoke with Adolf Literowicz at White Eagle Hall who is supportive of the relocation of the garden to Niagara Street.
  6. James Bay Athletic Club (JBAC)
    - Sent a proposal to Adam Bate, executive member of JBAC. Adam responded with questions regarding any plans to expand of the garden area, and timing of going before Council.
  7. James Bay Community Market
    - Gardeners set up an information table at James Bay Community Market on May 23 and asked people to comment on the relocation to Niagara Street. We received about 50 comments, of which, about 90% were from James Bay residents, and all were supportive.