



**To:** Richmond City Council  
**From:** Councillor Harold Steves  
Chair, Planning Committee  
**Date:** February 9, 2007  
**File:**  
**Re:** **THE RICHMOND FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE (RFSTF)**

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The Planning Committee, at its meeting held on February 6, 2007, considered the attached report and recommends as follows:

**Committee Recommendation (Councillor Howard opposed to part 2)**

- (1) That the urban agriculture proposal be received for information.*
- (2) That the Richmond Poverty Response Committee and the Richmond Food Security Task Force be included on any stakeholders list for the Garden City Lands Study.*
- (3) That both the Richmond Food System Assessment report and the Proposal for a Sustainable Food Systems Centre/Park be received for information, and that staff be directed to review and gather comments, including possible locations and community partners, and that City staff report to a future Planning Committee meeting on the outcome.*

Councillor Harold Steves, Chair  
Planning Committee

Attach.

# PROPOSAL FOR A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS CENTRE/PARK

## Garden City Lands, Richmond B.C.

**Food Security** is when all people in the community, at all times, have access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just.

### The Need

According to the City of Richmond's Official Community Plan (OCP), the population of Richmond is expected to grow to 212,000 by the year 2021. Much of this growth is planned for the City Center where there is a shortage of green space and parks. While the increase in population will result in a greater demand for food, the farming community in Richmond is aging and the rate of replacement is low. Richmond needs more locally-grown food.

A recent Food System Assessment found the city to be at risk for food security and also highlighted the lack of public-transit accessible community gardens, food-related social enterprises, and venues promoting local food consumption. In addition, the present location of the Richmond Food Bank is not readily accessible by public transport, making it difficult for many low-income households to use this service.

### 1. Vision Statement

The Sustainable Food Systems Centre will be a place to promote a local food system with access to affordable and nutritious food for everyone in Richmond. The center will promote sustainable agriculture and will include space for growing native edible plants on land reserved for organic farming, a restaurant featuring locally grown food, a teaching kitchen and CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture). The Center will house a new Food Bank with garden plots accessible to clients and will provide space for cooking clubs and other activities that support food access and security and foster self-reliance as well as a sense of belonging and community.

### 2. Goals

- To develop an accessible, barrier-free food centre that is an example of urban agriculture
- To increase the local production of affordable, culturally-appropriate food.
- To support new and established farmers
- To increase the number of local food enterprises with a focus on youth and First Nations
- To educate the community in environmental stewardship, organic farming, and safe food handling practices
- To develop a community meeting space to counteract the isolation caused by immigration, age and poverty
- To develop a unique green space that would be accessible by trails and would attract tourists from around the GVRD and from afar.

### 3. Concept elements

#### Agricultural

- Leased acreage (s) for Richmond farmers
- Community farms (CSAs) - 1 to 3 acre lots
- Group Allotment gardens for individuals & non-profit agencies

- Apiary and Honey House - 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup>
- Heritage Orchards – 5 acres
- Demonstration Blueberry, Cranberry fields
- Seed Saving Storage (freezers)
- Equipment storage sheds and equipment pool
- Composting systems, water conservation
- Free range chickens & ducks
- Greenhouses and cold frames
- Water reservoir to enhance drainage and be a resource for irrigation needs

### **Economic**

- Organic Local Food Restaurant
- Local Farmers Market
- Economic Social Enterprises - supporting small businesses to market sauces, salsas, dried herbs, honey, & fruit products grown on the GCLs
- Commercial Kitchen accessible to entrepreneurs
- Green Power systems including solar and geothermal

### **Educational**

- Teaching/demonstration farm fields (UBC, Kwantlen)
- Continued Education programs
- Community Teaching Kitchens
- Perinatal nutrition and support program for low-income pregnant women

### **Social Support**

- Future Richmond Food Bank Centre
- Public Trails
- Outdoor gathering spaces
- Cob houses for trainees/apprentices to live in + a caretaker

## **4. Potential partners**

**Educational:** UBC, Kwantlen College, Langara College, Richmond School District

**Community Food Security:** Richmond Food Bank, Richmond Poverty Response Committee, Richmond Fruit Tree Project, Richmond Family Place, Community Kitchens (FSGV), RAISE, Terra Nova Schoolyard Society, FarmFolk/CityFolk, City Farmer, City of Vancouver Food Policy Council, Food Secure Canada, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Environmental Youth Alliance Group, SPEC

**Health/Wellness agencies:** Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, RADAT/Pathways, Garrett Wellness Centre

**Other:** Richmond Nature Park, Richmond Agricultural Advisory Committee

## Successful Urban Farming Projects

Successful urban farms and community gardens have been cited worldwide. Examples include the 27- acre Centre for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems in Santa Cruz, California; The LifeCycles Project, Victoria BC; and the Environmental Youth Alliance's Youth Garden in Vancouver, BC.

The City of Montreal has the largest community garden program in North America. For \$10 a year, over 12,000 urban gardeners have access to 8,195 garden plots, each about 200 square feet, located in 97 different sites. Each garden is administered by a volunteer committee which administers the funds and property of the gardens and acts as a liaison with the city administration. The city in turn provides a horticultural consultant to each garden to provide technical advice and ensure that all the gardeners use organic gardening practices. The city also provides each of its nine districts with a manager to supervise all the gardens. The city also stipulates that a minimum of 5 different varieties of plants must be grown with flowers making up no more than 10% of the area. The waitlist to get into some of the gardens is almost 2 years long.

The City of Seattle provides 4,600 urban gardeners with 1900 garden plots. One of the sites connected with the City of Seattle's P-Patch program is Marra Farm, 4.5 acres of historically preserved farmland and restored creek located in the South Seattle neighborhood of South Park. South Park is surrounded by industrial areas and is home to a high concentration of food insecure and ethnically diverse immigrant communities. Marra Farm is a productive green oasis that generates over ten tons of organic produce each year for low-income families. It also offers youth employment training and market garden activities, nutrition classes for elementary school children, and a place for community members to grow and harvest traditional foods. For the past 3 years the youth crews have been making pesto from the basil that grown in the garden and selling it at the Columbia City Farmers Market.

In the Davenport West neighbourhood of Toronto, The Stop Community Food Centre (The Stop) works to increase people's access to healthy food in a manner that maintains dignity, builds community and challenges inequality. Programming includes community kitchens and dining, urban agriculture, a food bank, drop-ins, civic engagement and pre- and postnatal nutrition and support. The Stop provided access food, information and advocacy as well as social and recreational activities to over 16,500 people in 2006. The Stop's 8,000 sq. ft. community garden and greenhouse produced over 2,400 pounds of fresh food. By the year 2008, the Stop will be expanding its programming to a new site, The Green Barn, a former TTC streetcar maintenance barn. A year-round greenhouse, sheltered garden, community kitchen and outdoor wood-burning bake oven are all planned for the new space.



