



To: Parks Recreation & Cultural Services
Committee
From: Dave Semple
Director Parks Operations
Re: South Dyke Community Garden

Date: April 4, 2003
File: 7200-20-CGAR1

Staff Recommendation

That staff be directed to implement the design and construction of a community garden to be located at the vacant land adjacent to the City Tree Nursery at 13871 No.3 Road.

Dave Semple
Director Parks Operations
Local 3350

Att.1

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

Staff Report

Origin

At the Tuesday January 23, 2001 Community Services Committee meeting Staff received the following referral:

"...That staff develop a strategy and detailed cost estimates for the construction of a future community garden to be located at the vacant land adjacent to the City Tree Nursery at 13871 No.3 Road..."

The purpose of this report is to recommend the development of a community garden adjacent to the existing City Tree Nursery at 13871 No.3 Road (Attachment 1 South Dyke Community Garden Map).

Analysis

Current Community Garden Program

In 1999 the Richmond Environmental Youth Corps from the East Richmond Community Association, the City of Richmond, and the efforts of many volunteers and corporate sponsors developed the first community garden in Richmond. The garden is located at 6080 River Road, adjacent to the No.2 Road Bridge. Below are some facts about the current community garden:

- this site currently has 60 plots, all of which have been spoken for the 2003 season;
- there is a wait list of 32 families;
- over 30 workshops on organic gardening, rose pruning, composting, and waterwise gardening have been held at the site;
- the annual fee is \$35 per plot, with subsidies available to those who cannot afford to pay the full amount;
- the total cost of the garden was \$22,000;
- a total of \$27,000 in labour and materials has been donated to the project;
- the site is home to Richmond's Waterwise and Compost Demonstration Gardens.

Corporate Policy

Community gardens in Richmond promote the agricultural viability of vacant ALR land in the City. The Gardens are gathering places for families from different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, and they are also a productive source of providing food. As an outdoor recreational activity, gardening is one of the fastest growing activities.

Community gardens are supported by the Official Community Plan which encourages "...the promotion of community gardens as an authentic way of reflecting Richmond's farming heritage..." and in 2003 the recently approved Agricultural Survey Report which "...survey respondents (~20%) are hopeful of retaining a diversity of farm types in the ALR, and entertained visions of among other things, community gardens."

Proposed Garden Design - South Dyke Community Garden

A conceptual design plan has been prepared for the South Dyke Community Garden (Attachment 1). There is space for approximately 100 garden plots, each measuring 3m x 7m in size, with an opportunity to grow bigger depending on demand, and depending on the future potential development of the existing River Road community garden site.

A simple, grid-like pathway system has been devised to provide not only access to each plot, but physical separation from each other as well. Room for storage sheds and common areas have also been included.

Additional areas have also been reserved for future development of compost demonstration and "waterwise" gardening displays.

Since the new community garden will in essence be sharing the site with the existing City Tree Nursery, some separation of these two facilities is required. The existing traffic gate to the site will be relocated to allow for daily access to the community garden, while restricting access to the City Tree Nursery during "normal" working hours only. A post and chain fence will also be installed to further control access to the Tree Nursery as part of the Parks 2003 general development program.

Soil Conditions

In January, a soil sample was sent to Soilcon for fertility analysis at the proposed community garden site. The report finds that the micronutrient content of the soil is good for the growth of most plants and shrubs. Gardeners would be advised to consider adding some lime (to improve the pH) and peat (to improve the organic matter) be added to the soil.

Site Access

The south dyke community garden can be accessed via the entrance to the existing tree nursery, or else via a pedestrian walkway from the dyke trail system. There is space for a 10 stall parking area at the site, and ample overflow parking along the dyke trail. Experience from the River Road community garden has shown that the majority of gardeners visit the site by vehicle and do not use public transportation.

The GVRD will be installing a 2100mm diameter outfall pipe at the site during the summer of 2003. Construction will take place in front of the City's tree nursery between June and August. For the Community Garden, the road to the site and the parking area would have limited access at the best of times for the duration of the construction. The GVRD is willing to create a road access to the garden at the completion of the construction, which will result in a cost savings to the proposed project savings of approximately \$10,000.

Potential Partnerships

Staff are currently in the process of establishing potential partnerships with various community groups and businesses. These partnerships form the cornerstone in the creation of a sound and vibrant community garden. The primary partnership for the development of the South Dyke Community Garden consists of a grant of \$10,000 from the East Richmond Community Association which will fund the activities of the Environmental Youth Corps in the summer of 2003 who will be actively involved in securing sponsors and liaising with future gardeners.

Timing

If approved, staff will undertake a survey to mark out plots at the site, install site signage and initiate the process of installing the water taps to the garden in late May of 2003. This would allow the gardeners to access the site prior to the summer growing season.

Financial Impact

The total cost for the development of the community garden is estimated to be \$40,000. It is proposed that \$5,000 be dedicated to the project from the Parks 2002 General Development Capital Account and \$5,000 from the Partners For Beautification Program. The City's contribution of \$10,000 would be used to survey the site and mark out plots, install water taps, and install signage at the site.

At present, the commitment from the East Richmond Community Association for \$10,000 towards the Summer EYC program, and the value of the GVRD construction at \$10,000 represents a combined \$20,000 donation towards the project.

Potential donations totalling up to \$10,000 for the site would be sought for the following:

- trail mulch;
- labour and volunteer work parties for trail construction;
- water taps and irrigation connection;
- construction of a garden shed.

Potential revenues from the community garden assuming 100% participation over a full year of operation could amount to \$3,500 at \$35 per plot.

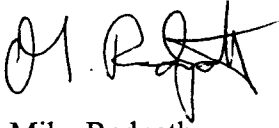
Conclusion

Community gardening is a productive recreational use of fallow or unused vacant land. As interest in the passive recreational activity of gardening continues to grow, an opportunity exists to create safe recreational gardening activities on vacant City owned land. The overwhelming success of the Richmond Community Garden in its first three years of operation has created many hours of recreational gardening activities for Richmond residents.

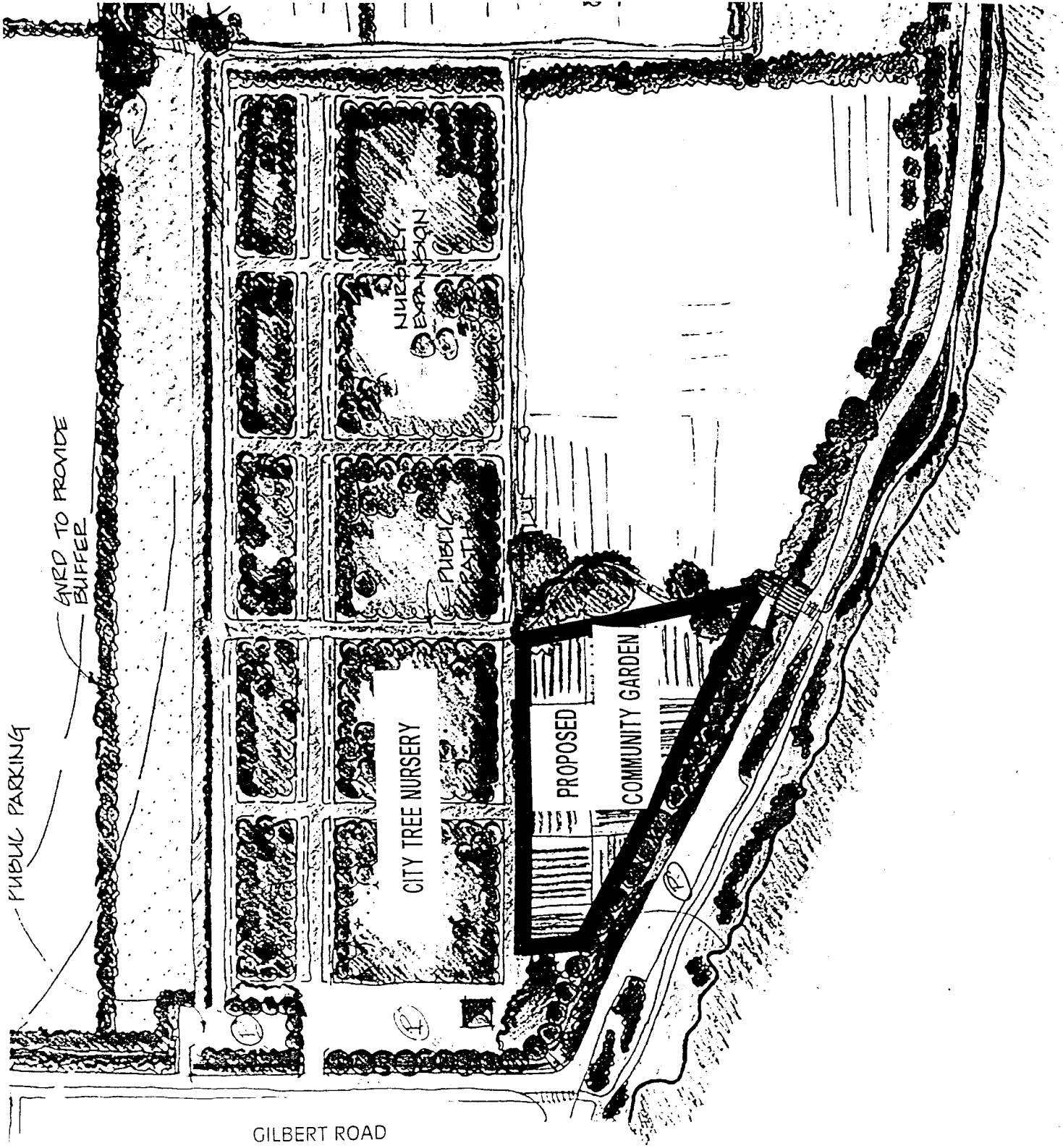
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With the present continuation of the existing community garden located on River Road and the future possible expansion of the program at the proposed South Dyke location, enhanced opportunities for participation in recreational gardening in Richmond can be provided.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Redpath". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Mike Redpath
Manager, Parks – Programs, Planning & Design
Local 1275



GILBERT ROAD