



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** May 13, 2010
From: Dave Semple
 General Manager, Parks and Recreation **File:** 11-7375-00/Vol 01
Re: Community Garden at Railway Avenue and Brunswick Drive in Steveston

Staff Recommendation:

That the proposed community garden at Railway Avenue and Brunswick Drive in Steveston be approved.

Dave Semple
General Manager, Parks and Recreation
(604-233-3350)

Att. 1

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
Transportation	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>			
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the October 13, 2009 regular Council meeting, Council adopted the following recommendation:

That the City develop a minimum of three (3) additional community gardens on City land, with a minimum of 20 plots each, over the next three (3) years."

This report supports the recommendation and responds to the Council term goal to "demonstrate leadership in and significant advancement of the City's agenda for sustainability through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy."

Analysis

The Community Garden Program in Richmond has been extremely popular and currently has over 130 people on the waiting list for garden plots (approximately 20% of those on the wait list reside in Steveston).

There are currently four (4) community garden locations in Richmond:

1. King George Park (28 plots);
2. Terra Nova Rural Park (99 plots);
3. Garratt Wellness Centre (20 plots); and
4. Gilbert Road Garden (39 plots)

A recent analysis of community gardening demand in Richmond by a group of UBC students indicates that there is a high demand for programming in Steveston, however there is currently no garden in that area.

The Parks Division has been approached by the Steveston Community Society who have requested community gardening plots in Steveston. The proposed garden at the corner of Railway Avenue and Brunswick Drive (attachment 1) was designed with input from the executives of the Society and the full support of the Principal and the Parent Advisory Committee at Tomekichi Homma Elementary School across the street.

A public consultation process to determine support level for the site was undertaken which included the following:

1. Signage at the corner of Railway Avenue and Brunswick Drive and at the Steveston Community Centre with information on the proposed garden and contact information for the public to provide feedback.
2. Letters to all residents living within 100 metres regarding information on the proposal.

3. Inclusion of project information in both the Steveston Community Society and Tomekichi Homma Elementary School newsletters which are distributed widely through the Steveston neighbourhood.

The Parks Division received a total of 35 individual responses from the public with 24 area residents in favour of the proposal and 11 against (see table below for breakdown). In addition to these responses, Homma Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee, Tomekichi Homma Elementary School staff, the Richmond Food Security Society and the Steveston Community Society have all expressed support for the initiative.

Comments in support of the project included the positive effect it will have for students at Tomekichi Homma Elementary School, the benefits of community gardening in our community and the opportunities the garden will provide for community engagement.

Negative comments about the project included concerns about the possible untidy look of the gardens and about a possible increase in parking congestion in the area. Steps have been taken to mitigate these concerns including ensuring the plots are contained by wood edges which will provide a uniform look to the garden as well as working with Tomekichi Homma Elementary School to explore parking options in the school parking lot during non-school hours. As well, the recent Agreement with the Richmond Food Security Society to manage the gardens will ensure that there is active management and enforcement of the garden rules and regulations which relate to tidiness of each plot and the overall site.

Steveston Community Garden Community Consultation Summary							
Responses in favour of garden				Responses not in favour of garden			
Email	Letter	Phone	Total	Email	Letter	Phone	Total
18	0	6	24	8	2	1	11

If approved, the garden will consist of approximately 50 garden plots which, on average, measure 3 metres by 6 metres each. The plots would be allocated for the following community uses:

1. Programming by the Steveston Community Society in conjunction with the Richmond Food Security Society;
2. Plots for students in local schools;
3. Smaller plots reserved for the exclusive use of Senior Citizens; and
4. General gardening plots for members of the public.

In order to promote sustainability by reducing the amount of driving or transit taken by community gardeners in the City, Steveston residents currently gardening at other sites will be given first priority for the plots at this garden.

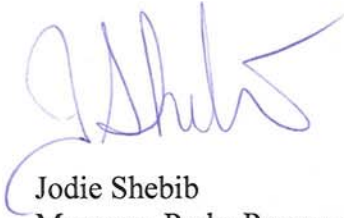
The plots would be included in the inventory managed by the Richmond Food Security Society, who would take responsibility for ensuring gardening guidelines are adhered to.

Financial Impact

Construction of the Garden will cost approximately \$30,000 including providing irrigation to the site. The Parks General Development 2009 project is available to fund this initiative.

Conclusion

Community Gardening is an increasingly popular initiative in Richmond. The benefits of a community garden include physical activity, a contribution to food security and community engagement as gardeners interact with one another and area residents. If approved, the garden at Railway Avenue and Brunswick Drive in Steveston will provide up to 50 residents including seniors and children with access to garden plots.

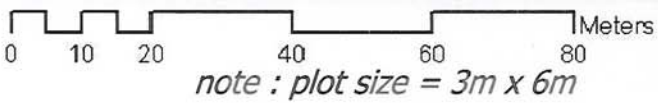
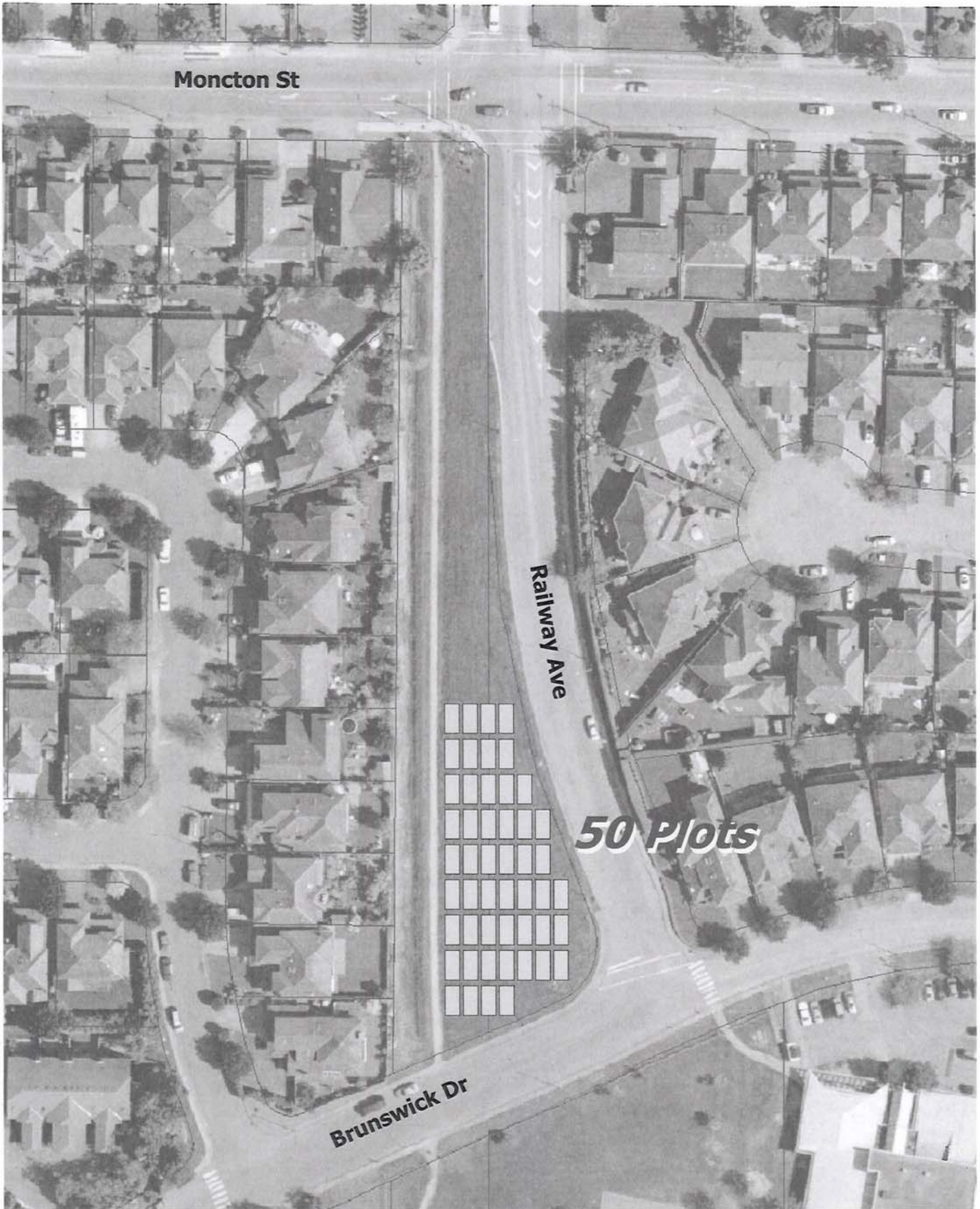


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 **PROPOSED**
Steveston Community Garden