



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: January 3rd 2012

From: Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks

File: 08-4040-08-01/2011-
Vol 01

Re: Incubator Farming

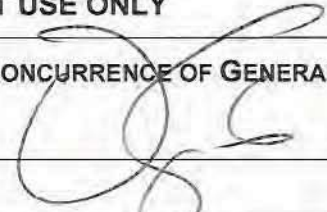
Staff Recommendation

That:

1. The license of approximately 4.5 acres of land at 13871 No. 3 Road and 13891 No. 3 Road to the Richmond Food Security Society for the purposes of incubator farming at a rental rate of \$250 per acre per year for a three-year term be approved as identified in the attached report, Incubator Farming, from the Senior Manager, Parks.
2. Staff be authorized to take all necessary steps to complete all matters detailed herein including authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer and the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to negotiate and execute all documentation required to effect the transaction.
3. Staff continue to work with Kwantlen Polytechnic University to identify and secure the use of both public and private lands for the purposes of Incubator Farming in relation to its Farm School program.
4. That \$12,000 be allocated from the Council Contingency Fund to the Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS) should its application to the Real Estate Foundation of BC for a grant of \$35,000 to support the RFSS's Richmond Foodlands Strategic Plan be successful.


Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks
(604-247-4942)

Att. 4

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
Real Estate Services		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Law		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Risk Management		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Water Services		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

On January 7th 2010, the City received a letter (attachment 1) from a group called the South Dyke Farmer's Collective. This letter included a request for use of land at the south end of Gilbert Road for the purposes of collective, organic, 'incubator farming' - short-term, small plot farming. While the South Dyke Farmer's Collective no longer exists, the Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS) took on its request.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, through its Farm School program, has also requested land for incubator farming for its program graduates (attachment 2).

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the two current requests for city-owned farmland and seek Council's approval for formalizing, through an agreement, the use of approximately 4.5 acres of land at 13871 No. 3 Road (which includes a portion of 13891 No. 3 Road) to partially satisfy these requests without limiting future opportunities for the entire site.

This report responds to Council's term goal of demonstrating leadership in and significant advancement of the City's agenda for sustainability.

Analysis

13871 No. 3 Road and 12891 No. 3 Road

On August 8, 1988, Council approved the acquisition of 56 acres of agricultural land located at 13871 No. 3 Road and 13891 No. 3 Road (map: attachment 3) for \$1.1M. The parcel is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and was acquired utilizing the parkland acquisition development cost charge open space reserve fund and capital reserve. The original rationale for purchasing the property was to preserve the existing features of the site, promote the agricultural heritage of the area and to add to the continuum of recreational uses along the South Arm of the Fraser. The site's uses are limited by the parcel's ALR designation.

Since 1988, local farmers have actively farmed approximately 27 acres of the site and pay the property taxes for the site. Currently, the ditches are being cleared to improve drainage for the overall health of the land. This will also help improve the growing conditions on the site.

Additional uses that have been approved over time include the following:

- Statutory right of way for Metro Vancouver sewage treatment plant (1993 - present)
- City Tree Nursery (1995 - present)
- West Coast Seeds – seed trial (1998 – 2003)
- National Equestrian Events (August 2001, August 2004)
- Tall Ships Event (August 2002)
- South Dyke Community Garden – 39 plots (2003 – present)
- Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project Garden & Orchard (2004 – present)
- Twin Oaks Farm – temporary event site on 7 – 10 acres (2004 – present)
- Trees for Tomorrow Grove (2009 – present)

There are approximately 4.5 acres of land within the parcel that are currently not being used for a specific purpose. Since the spring of 2011, the Richmond Food Security Society has undertaken responsibility for farming 2.5 acres of this unallocated space.

The parcel at 13871 No. 3 Rd and 13891 No. 3 Road is one of the largest contiguous City properties in the ALR. As such, many future, potential uses have been identified for use of the site within its ALR designation and other users have come forward. Some of these include the use of the methane waste energy from the MetroVancouver sewage treatment plant.

Incubator Farming

Both the Richmond Food Security Society and Kwantlen Polytechnic University have provided requests for the City to support Incubator Farming. In the case of RFSS, the purpose is to provide farmers in Richmond an opportunity to learn the business of farming in a supportive and economically viable environment – without having to make a large capital investment. In the case of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the purpose is to offer students in its Farm School program an opportunity to complete their education in an applied manner. While it is challenging to find a textbook definition of the concept, incubator farming programs that exist in North America¹ generally share the following common attributes:

- Land is provided (at no, low or market rent) by municipalities, regional governments or conservation organizations
- Land is leased or licensed to a non-profit umbrella organization
- Small parcels of land are allocated, through a rigorous selection process, by the umbrella organization to new farmers
- Term limits are placed on the individual farmers' tenancy at the site
- Resources such as equipment and tools are shared collectively
- Organic farming is required
- Farm sales, agro-tourism, and food basket-type programs support the farmers financially
- There is a teaching and/or research component on-site

Incubator farming is not meant to significantly impact the sales opportunities for farmers in an existing market. It is meant to promote local farming and provide a learning environment. One key factor identified is selecting participants that show the least potential for negatively impacting existing local agricultural producers.

¹ Haliburton Farm in Saanich, FarmStart in Brampton, ON and the ALBA Farm in Monterey County, CA are examples of existing, successful incubator farm sites.

Richmond Food Security Society

The Richmond Food Security Society is a registered non-profit organization. Its mandate is as follows:

"That 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 RFSS is funded through programming and grants from a number of organizations including Vancouver Coastal Health. Its programs include an annual World Food Day event, production of the local food guide and management of administration and education for the City of Richmond's Community Gardens program.

Currently operating as a pilot, the RFSS proposal is that seven plots be identified on the 4.5 acres of City land at the South Dyke for incubator farming. The purpose of the proposal is to help new farmers overcome some of the challenges of entering the farming profession such as the capital cost of land, cost of equipment and the lack of opportunities to share learning and information with other farmers.

In the spring of 2011, the RFSS was successful in securing a \$50,000 grant from VanCity to fund this pilot project. The funds were used to purchase a walk-behind tractor, hire a coordinator, and develop an urban farming toolkit. The RFSS, in consultation with City staff, allocated five, approximately ½ acre plots to Richmond-based farmers. These farmers, as expected, had varying degrees of success in farming their plots and experienced challenges with flooding, drainage and irrigation. All participants, however, would like to enter into a longer-term endeavour.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University Farm School

The Richmond Farm School is a product of Kwantlen's Institute for Sustainable Horticulture. In December 2008, Council endorsed the following:

"That the City of Richmond endorse Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the Richmond Food Security Task Force's concept of the Richmond Farm School as an important component for the agricultural sector in the region."

In 2009, staff encouraged Kwantlen to work with the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Farm to use the lands already farmed at Terra Nova Rural Park for the purposes of its initial Farm School operations. The Farm School completed its second successful year of operations at Terra Nova in November 2011 and has graduated 16 students over two years. It is now seeking an additional 20 acres of dedicated land to meet the ongoing educational needs of the program in regards to applied learning through incubator farming.

Other Lands

Both current requests for incubator farming land have identified the City-owned property at the South Dyke as a desired location. This location is the most easily identifiable and immediately useful parcel of city-owned land for this purpose. The park master plan for the Fantasy Garden site also includes an urban agriculture component and, when the park is further developed, could be available for incubator farming. In addition, both groups have been encouraged to look for opportunities with private land-owners to meet their needs. As it is particularly clear that Kwantlen's request for 20 acres cannot be met at the South Dyke, staff can continue to work with them to identify both private and/or public lands for additional use.

The RFSS is currently in the process of applying for a grant from the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) to support a study that will assess Richmond's potential food lands and develop a strategic plan to increase food production in Richmond over the next three years. This study will help identify lands available for incubator and other types of urban agriculture. The RFSS has committed \$15,000 of its own funding to the study and is requesting that the City contribute \$12,000 in cash and \$2,000 in-kind (staff time and meeting rentals) to support its grant application for \$35,000 to the REFBC. The funding is available in the Council Contingency fund.

Agreement

There are approximately 4.5 acres of land that could be incubator-farmed at 13871 No. 3 Road and 13891 No. 3 Road without impacting significantly on current uses of the site. In order to ensure future City needs for the lands are not limited, it is important to restrict the terms of any incubator farming license for use of the site to short-term. It is suggested that the Richmond Food Security Society incubator farming program which is already operating a pilot at this site be licensed to use this land with the proviso that at least three plots at any given time are reserved for students graduating from the Kwantlen Farm School program.

The market rental rate for the approximate 4.5 acres is \$250 per acre per annum, which rate includes property taxes. All other costs of operation are at the cost of the licensee. The term of the agreement is three years.

Access to water at the site for irrigation purposes can be provided by either ditch water and/or metered water. It will be the responsibility of the RFSS to determine an irrigation system most suited to its proposed program. The City will make available physical access to the ditch and/or make arrangements for metered water at the licensee's cost. The approximate cost for installation of the meter is \$340.00 (refundable deposit) and the metered water rate is \$1.1175 per cubic meter.

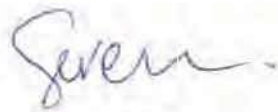
Additional business terms are included in Attachment 4.

Financial Impact

The City will receive approximately \$1,125 annually for the license of the land. These funds will be deposited to the Rental Properties fund. \$12,000 from the Council Contingency fund can support the RFSS's study on Richmond Foodlands, should its grant application to the Real Estate Foundation of BC be successful.

Conclusion

Incubator farming is an important step in providing new farmers with a supportive, cost-effective environment in which to learn the profession. Licensing approximately 4.5 acres at 13871 No. 3 Road and 13891 No. 3 Road will support this initiative without limiting future opportunities for the City.



Serena Lusk
Manager, Parks Programs
(604-233-3344)

SL:sl

South Dyke Farmers Collective
c/o 8480 Dayton Court
Richmond, BC
V6Y 3H6

January 7, 2010

ATTN: Dave Semple

Re: South Dyke 5 acre parcel

Dear Mr. Semple,

The South Dyke Farmers Collective is a cooperative of growers that would like to access City-owned farmland at the south end of Gilbert Rd, east of the Sharing Farm's Orchard. We are a group that is committed to growing food for the residents of Richmond and can offer over 40 years of organic food growing expertise.

Our members have committed to the following:

1. To grow food organically
2. To purchase equipment cooperatively
3. To mentor future farmers and help them develop their own business plans
4. To enable the Fruit Tree Project to extend its orchard
5. To provide a dividend to members, should a profit be made
6. To educate the public in organic food production practices

We would like to take this opportunity to invite the City of Richmond and the Richmond Fruit Tree Project to become members of the Collective so that we can jointly make decisions on land allocation, irrigation, and support each others' endeavours.

One question that was asked of us was to estimate how much water we might need for the site. Doing a simple calculation of 15 weeks of watering at 0.75 inches per watering, we've estimated that the entire 5 acres could potentially require **5,700 cubic meters per year**. We believe this is far beyond what we will require but we believe it's better to err on the side of caution.

We would appreciate if the following could be answered:

1. With the water calculation in mind, could you give us a rough estimate of what irrigation costs might be like so that we can include them into our business plans?

2. When might be the earliest we could sit down with the City and all the partners and figure out how to divide the parcel?
3. Are there any other issues we need to keep in mind before we proceed?

We are very excited to be able to bring 5 new farms into Richmond and look forward to working with the City and the Richmond Fruit Tree Project to the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

Members of the South Dyke Farmers Collective

Susan Lee Hem, Richmond Urban Farmers

Luc Collette, Richmond Urban Farmers

Arzeena Hamir P.Ag., Richmond Urban Farmers

Zachrey Helmberger, White Rock Natural Farm

Giacomo (Jack) Miro, Purplesun Urban Farming and Edible Landscaping.

Ward Teulon, City Farm Boy Ventures

Craig Heighway, Kitsilano Farms Ltd.

MAILING ADDRESS12666-72 Ave, Surrey, BC
Canada V3W 2M8October 29th, 2011

To: City of Richmond
c/o Serena Lusk, Parks and Recreation

Kwantlen Polytechnic University's *Richmond Farm School* has been successfully educating new farmers at the Terra Nova Rural Park with the support of the City of Richmond since January 2010. The program has provided students with the essential science and business skills in order to become involved in small-scale, sustainable agricultural projects. As of November 2011, sixteen full-time students will have successfully completed the program and we are preparing for the 2012 year where we expect we will attract an even greater number of students.

Though the central part of our program is the 10 month term, the second phase of the students' education takes place on their own farms. Land availability is a central issue for new farmers, so through the support of Kwantlen, they are able to continue their learning experience with some security. As initially proposed, all students who complete the program are eligible for up to a half acre parcel of incubator farm land. These plots are available for 3-year terms during which the students practice their skills, develop their businesses and receive continuing support from the Farm School through shared tools and mentorship. Students are free to operate these plots as commercial for-profit businesses and expected to follow all rules and regulations governing their enterprises. At the end of the 3-year term, the students give their plot to the next student in line and move to a new location to continue growing their business. Through this program, new farmers will have support during those first few difficult years.

At the outset of this program, we partnered with the City to help provide land and support the growth of new sustainable agriculture in Richmond. At this time, we are asking the City of Richmond to provide the following:

- **20 acres of agricultural land** – to support this program for all future incubator farmers, the Farm School will need a maximum of 20 acres to rotate students through their 3-year terms. The land does not need to be in one parcel, however, fewer parcels would be more financially practical for the Farm School program.
- **Water access** – sites must have water access, whether through wells or City lines.
- **Road access** – sites must be accessible by vehicle in order to allow for agricultural machinery, delivery of amendments and transportation of produce.

Lands will not need to be provided at one time. Ideally, 5 acres a year provide adequate plots for students. The Farm School will lease/licence the land directly from the City and manage the incubator plots to ensure students are adhering to good practices as well as vacating their plots when promised. Students will pay a lease at the appropriate agricultural rate as part of their regular business expenses to the City of Richmond. The Farm School will provide onsite secure

storage for all equipment, however, incubator farmers will erect only temporary structures such as hoop houses and trellises. The school is also developing guidelines for occupancy, including annual reports from students as well as best practices.

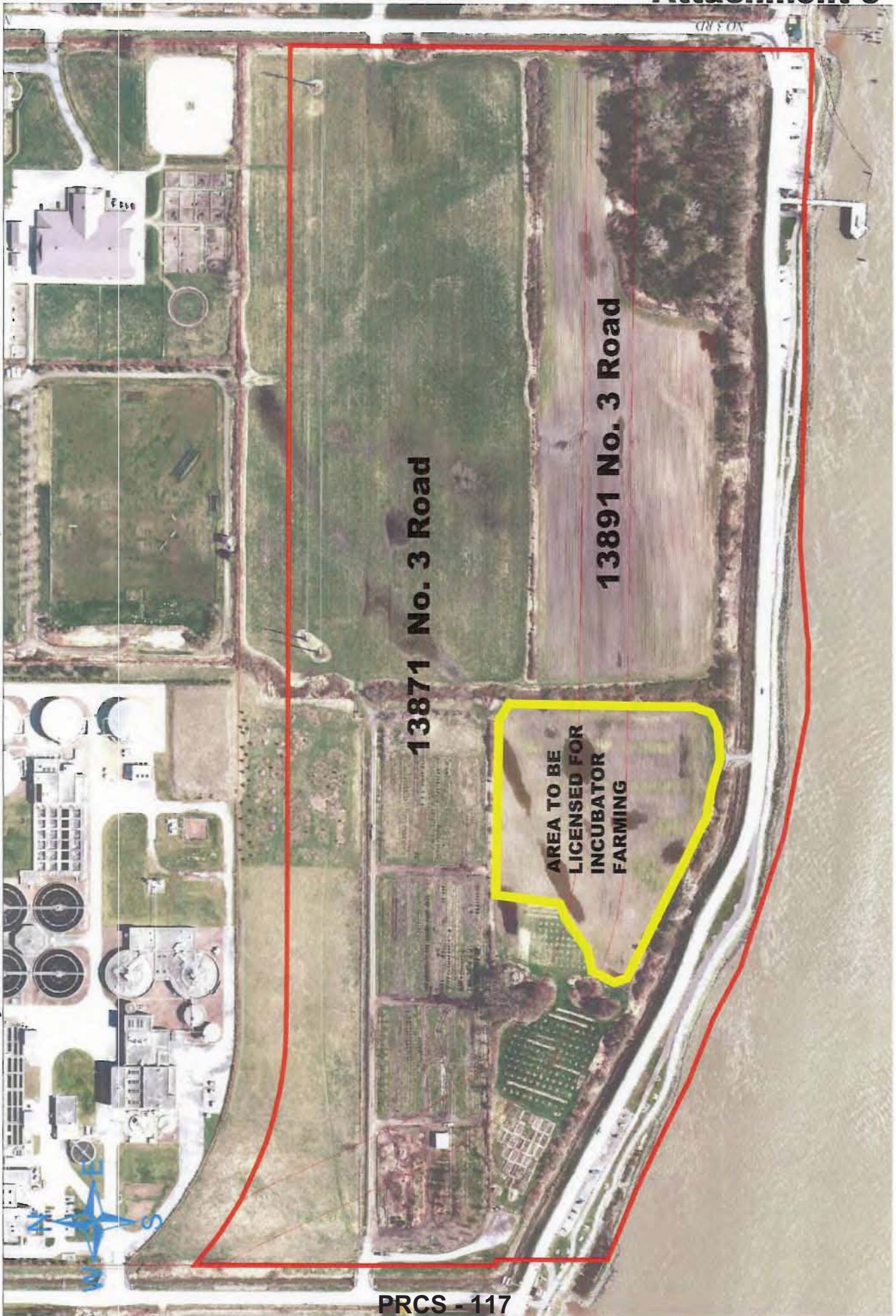
We hope that you will continue your support of this program at this critical stage. We anticipate 10-15 students in the 2012 year and many of them will look to 2013 to begin their incubator farming terms. We hope to see them enrich local municipal lands and the agricultural economy with your help.

Thank you,

Anna Rallings
Farm School Coordinator
Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Kent Mullinix
Director of the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture
Kwantlen Polytechnic University

South Dyke, Gilbert Rd. to No. 3 Rd. Scale NTS (2011 Photo)



ATTACHMENT 4**Business Terms for Agreement with Richmond Food Security Society for Incubator Farming at
13871 No. 3 Road and 13891 No. 3 Road**

Term	3 years
Commencement Date:	To be determined, but before April 1, 2012
Licensee	Richmond Food Security Society
Rental Rate	\$250 per acre per annum
Property Taxes	Payable by the City.
Improvements	Temporary improvements such as storage units, greenhouses, garbage and composting bins may be allowed with prior written permission by the City and provided they are appropriately permitted.
Permitted Use	The licensee is permitted to engage in the organic growing of plants and vegetables excluding trees. Herbicides, insecticides, chemical fertilizers, animal poisons and non-organic materials, including treated wood, are not permitted.
Sales	No sales are permitted onsite.
Insurance	\$5 million commercial general liability listing the City of Richmond and its employees as an additional insured.
Water Services	The licensee is responsible for irrigation of the site. The City will provide access to the adjacent ditch and / or make arrangements for metered water at the cost of the Licensee.
Parking	Parking is not permitted in the license area. Commercial sales and event parking must be approved in writing by the City.
Farming Supplies	Farming supplies such as soil, seeds, and farming equipment are to be provided by the licensee at its own cost.
Waste	Waste, recycling and composting is the cost and responsibility of the licensee.
Termination	Either party may, without cause, terminate this agreement on 30 days' notice
Representation	The licensee must not act as the City's representative in any matter and particularly with the media
Partnership	No partnership is implied.
Recognition	The City must be recognized as a supporter in all marketing materials and communications related to the Richmond Food Security Society.
Special Events	Special Events require prior written approval from the City which may be withheld or denied at the City's sole discretion. Six weeks notice is required.
Selection of Farmers	A criteria for selection will be developed and agreed upon by the licensee and the City and will consider the potential negative impact on existing local farmers; at least three farmers must be graduates of Kwantlen Polytechnic University's (KPU) Richmond Farm School program as determined by KPU.
Annual Reporting	An annual report is required including financial statements and a summary of operations.