

WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO

RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL

REGARDING

**THE GARDEN CITY LANDS**

TRI-PARTITE APPEAL TO

THE AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

DATED March 11, 2008

Submitted by: Deirdre Whalen, 13631 Blundell Road, Richmond, V6W 1B6

My name is Deirdre Whalen and I live at 13631 Blundell Road, Richmond. I am a 33 year resident of Richmond.

I am speaking this evening to encourage the Mayor and Council to re-think the application to remove the Garden City Lands (GCL) from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). I oppose the application and ask Council to consider the following.

**1. What are Richmond's needs?** A city should base its needs on the public good. Mayor Brodie was quoted some time ago as saying "What we're looking for is not a developed area. What we're looking for is an open space, green space, environmental use, for the use and enjoyment of all people in our city and certainly the people of the city centre." I agree with Mayor Brodie, we need more green and open space.

- Keeping the Garden City Lands in the ALR ensures Richmond's "green space" and "open space" needs are met
- Despite recent articles that report Richmond spent \$16 million on parkland, we are still hundred of acres short according to our OCP

**2. How can Richmond use the ALR better?** Permitted uses of the ALR include urban agriculture, community gardens, experimental farms, walking trails, playing fields, water reservoirs and open space for indigenous plants and animals.

- Using ALR land for food production, education and green space is a worthy goal
- Richmond soils are farmable, we are on a delta in one of the largest rivers in North America
- Richmond is food insecure and this will only get worse with peak oil concerns
- The Garden City Lands is an invaluable resource if left undeveloped in the ALR
- ALR is a living, breathing, organic treasure in the City
- ALR eats up pollution, it acts as a carbon sink, it houses and preserves wildlife at risk and native plants

**3. In a compact urban core, what is necessary for livability?** I believe the preservation of **public green space** is essential to livability. Most of the land in our urban core is privately owned, however the Garden City Lands is public land.

- The Garden City Lands is special because it has always been publicly owned
- In amassing green space, we would not have to deny a private owner land value
- If there is a will amongst the parties, there is a way to keep it public

**4. What if the Memorandum is scrapped?** In my view this would be a good outcome. It is better that the land stays green and in the ALR instead of being built on. The Memorandum is outdated. It is stuck in the old way of thinking that developing land is always the best thing to do.

- The Memorandum demands that Richmond develop more land in the urban core than our official community plan (OCP) requires
- Our OCP accommodates future growth without using the Garden City Lands
- At the same time, the City states that we need more parkland in the City core
- The Memorandum is directly in conflict with Richmond's goals and future vision
- Nothing in the Memorandum resolves the shortage of park space in the city core
- The Memorandum would only ensure the Richmond taxpayer is on the hook for Garden City Land development infrastructure including roads, school land and parkland purchased at residential prices - millions of dollars per acre
- How can this possibly be a good deal for Richmond?

**5. What about the Musqueam?** The Memorandum is also held out as a threat in that the Musqueam will take all of the land if we don't proceed. But so far, successful land claims have been on land that is adjacent to reserve land. The GLC is not contiguous with reserve land. So what exactly is the threat?

- The Memorandum gives the Musqueam land outside of the treaty process; land that they would not otherwise claim
- The Musqueam were successful in gaining land at the Musqueam golf course and River Rock casino, which are adjacent to their reserve
- The Musqueam showed no interest in the Garden City Lands until the Canada Lands Company worked the deal to cash in by taking it out of the ALR

**I conclusion, I believe there is another way.**

- Richmond needs to preserve ALR as open space and green space
- The Garden City Lands is public land and always has been
- The Memorandum is not a good thing for Richmond
- There is nothing to fear by canceling the Memorandum

I would ask you. Must we trade off our children's future? Many of our immigrants came to Richmond to get away from just the kind of city this Memorandum wants to create. They came here for a better life for their kids. We need to keep the Garden City Lands in the ALR.

Thank you.

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