Minute No. 620
Report - Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services - June 12, 2006

Item No. 2 Community Garden Policy
File FI-2.2

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services and adopted the following:

1. That the Community Garden Policy which fosters community gardening within Winnipeg and provides guiding principles for the City Administration of community gardens on City-owned land, and as contained in the report from the Acting Director of Community Services and the Director of Planning, Property and Development dated May 29, 2006, be approved.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Further, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services referred the matter to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development for recommendation to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Report - Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services - June 12, 2006

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Steeves,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 21, 2006, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 12, 2006, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services concurred in administrative recommendation No. 1, pertaining to the Community Garden Policy, and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Further, on June 12, 2006, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services concurred in administrative recommendation No. 2 referring the matter to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development for recommendation to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

On March 6, 2006, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted a further extension of time to June 12, 2006 for the Administration to report back on the development of a policy for community gardens, while taking into consideration community consultation and the initiative of balancing residential development with green space.

On January 9, 2006, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted an extension of time to March 6, 2006 for the Administration to report back on the development of a policy for community gardens, while taking into consideration community consultation and the initiative of balancing residential development with green space.

On October 13, 2005, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services referred the recommendation of the City Centre Community Committee to the administration for report back to the Standing Committee in 90 days.

Report - Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services - June 12, 2006

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued)

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 6, 2005, the City Centre Community Committee recommended that the Community Services Department be requested to work collaboratively with the Planning, Property and Development Department to develop a policy for community gardens, while taking into consideration community consultation and the initiative of balancing residential development with green space and forwarded the matter to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services.

RE:	**Community Garden Policy**
FOR SUBMISSION TO:	**Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services**
ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED BY:	**Clive Wightman, Acting Director Community Services**
	Harry Finnigan, Director Planning, Property, and Development
REPORT DATE:	**May 29, 2006**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council approve the Community Garden Policy contained herein, which fosters community gardening within Winnipeg and provides guiding principles for the City of Winnipeg administration of community gardens on city-owned land.

2. That the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services refer this report to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development for their concurrence as well, given its direct relationship to land use policy.

Report Summary

Key Issues:

- For the purposes of this policy a *community garden* is defined as "an open space that a group of citizens voluntarily manage where horticultural activities are practiced."[1]
- A strong community garden movement has emerged over the last five years particularly in neighbourhoods defined through Plan Winnipeg as Major Improvement and Rehabilitation areas.
- Community consultations with community garden stakeholders identified the current roles and responsibilities of the City and garden groups and issues facing community gardeners. Stakeholders included community gardeners, horticultural societies, gardening clubs, greening coordinators, neighbourhood associations, development corporations, community development staff, and gardeners.
- An interdepartmental team, consisting of departments that have a role in community gardens have been engaged throughout the process.

[1] Concise Oxford Dictionary – City Farmer, Community Gardening in Major Canadian Cities: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver Compared. Paper prepared for Urban Agriculture Policy in Southern Africa, International Conference, South Africa, March 1998.

- Implementation of the proposed policy will result in a coordinated, consistent system using an integrated, inter-departmental administrative approach for management of community gardens. This integrated approach will establish a one-stop community garden contact that will facilitate access to information, ensure standardized agreements, uniform fees and charges, communication systems, and booking process.
- Community garden locations must be determined recognizing the need for competing interests including housing and green space.
- To ensure a consistent application the community garden policy will need to be considered in the review and development of other City by-laws and policies.
- Approval of these principles will result in an improved coordinated responsive community garden system.
- The following Community Garden Policy principles were drafted in response to consultation with the public and through research and discussion with the administrative working committee:

.

Healthy Living /Active Living
Community gardens are widely recognized as being very beneficial in supporting healthy communities and improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods.

Community Directed
Resident involvement in the shaping of future strategies is a key to ensuring long term community garden success, allowing for unique strategies tailored for different neighbourhoods.

Affordability through partnership and collaboration
The City of Winnipeg will work collaboratively with community groups to develop long-term affordable plans for community garden development and sustainability.

Effective & efficient service delivery
The City of Winnipeg will utilize an integrated, inter-departmental approach to ensure a coordinated and consistent system for the management of community gardens.

Sustainability
A common understanding between civic government and the community will ensure a predictable environment for community garden development and support in the near and distant future. This predictable environment is vital to resolving competing land use interests, including the need for green space.

Implications of the Recommendation(s):

General Implications

( ) None

(x) For the organization overall and/or for other departments

(x) For the community and/or organizations external to the City

( ) Involves a multi-year contract

Comment(s): The Community Garden Policy provides the decision making parameters to foster a positive climate for community gardening on city-owned land using a coordinated interdepartmental service delivery approach. It provides the community the predictability needed for long and short term strategic planning for community garden development and sustainability.

Policy Implications

( ) No

(x) Yes

Comment(s): The Community Garden Policy is consistent with Plan Winnipeg 20/20 vision, the Integrated Planning Model Directive and the City's Housing Policy, as well as with the Zoning By-law Review and the principles articulated in the City's Red Tape Commission. It identifies key principles and potential strategies that will determine the development and management of community gardens on city-owned land.

Regulatory Implications

( ) None

(x) Eliminates or reduces regulatory impact

( ) Proposes regulatory impact

Comment(s): Implementation of the proposed policy will result in a coordinated, consistent system using an inter-departmental administrative approach for management of community gardens.

Environmental Implications

( ) No

(x) Yes

Comment(s): The Community Garden Policy implementation will consider environmentally friendly and sustainable practices and be consistent with the policy recommendations of Sustainable Winnipeg: A Comprehensive Environment Strategy. Community gardeners convert vacant lots and open green space into usable garden spaces turning liabilities into assets by improving the appearance of streets and neighbourhoods. Research

provides solid evidence that investment in greening yields significant economic returns, specifically, increases in real estate values.

Human Resources Implications

(x) No

( ) Yes

Comment(s):

Financial Implications

(x) Within approved current and/or capital budget

( ) Current and/or capital budget adjustment required

Comment(s): There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Report

REASON FOR THE REPORT:

On September 6, 2005 the City Centre Community Committee requested that Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services request the Community Services Department to work collaboratively with Planning, Property, and Development Department to develop a policy for community gardens, while taking into consideration community consultation and the initiative of balancing residential development with green space.

On October 13, 2005, Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services referred the September 6, 2005 City Centre Community Committee recommendation to administration for report back to the Committee in 90 days.

HISTORY:

On September 6, 2005 City Centre Community Committee referred the following matter to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services for the administration to report back on:

That the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services request that the Community Services Department work collaboratively with Planning, Property, and Development Department to develop a policy for community gardens, while taking into consideration community consultation and the initiative of balancing residential development with green space.

On October 13, 2005, Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services referred the City Centre Community Committee recommendation to administration for report back to the Committee in 90 days.

On January 9, 2006 the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted an extension of time to March 6, 2006 for the Administration to report back on the development of a policy on community gardens.

On March 6, 2006 the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted a further extension of time to June 12, 2006 for the Administration to report back on the development of a policy on community gardens.

DISCUSSION:

There is a strong public belief that community gardens contribute to the quality of life in the City of Winnipeg. Community gardeners convert vacant lots and open green space into usable garden spaces, turning liabilities into assets. Community gardens are grassroots initiatives which improve the appearance of streets and neighbourhoods, reflect the pride of their participants and create community focal points where people gather, network and make life long friendships. They bring together the collective resources of neighbours to address pressing issues such as neighbourhood decline. Gardens are a venue for active citizen participation empowering residents to take on an active role in the further development of their neighbourhoods often expressed as community building. It must be stated that the impact of community gardens goes beyond feel-good benefits. Research provides solid evidence that investment in greening yields significant economic returns, specifically, increases in real estate values.

Community Garden Defined

For the purpose of this and other City policies, by-laws and documents, it is important to adopt one definition of a *community garden* that can be widely accepted and consistently understood. Thus a *community garden* can be defined as “an open space that a group of citizens voluntarily manage where horticultural activities are practiced.”[2]

Community Gardens Background

[2] Concise Oxford Dictionary – City Farmer, Community Gardening in Major Canadian Cities: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver Compared. Paper prepared for Urban Agriculture Policy in Southern Africa, International Conference, South Africa, March 1998.

The City of Winnipeg has a rich history of community gardening. Horticultural societies have existed since the 1970's. Initially agreements were made between the Society's and the local Parks and Recreation Branch to till at the beginning and end of every season, provide top soil and ensure water access. These formal and informal arrangements have continued for many decades with multiple City departments.

More recently, investment by citizens and citizen groups in community gardening has grown exponentially over the last five years, particularly in neighbourhoods defined through Plan Winnipeg as Major Improvement and Rehabilitation areas. Community groups have secured funding from other levels of government, foundations, corporations and the volunteer sector for lot improvements. In some of these neighbourhoods, strategies to green both private and city-owned lots have been a long-standing (5yr) contribution to enhancing the community's image, promoting active living and community development, while addressing neighbourhood safety concerns through collaborative and participatory planning, like the Spence Greening Plan. This plan illustrates how potentially competing uses for the same land such as housing and community gardens can be addressed. Both of these uses are supported by *Plan Winnipeg 20/20 Vision*.

City Council has consistently articulated its support for locally planned and executed community revitalization initiatives through the adoption of *Plan Winnipeg 20/20 Vision, Winnipeg's Housing Policy,* the *Integrated Planning Model Directive* and *the Red Tape Commission.* Community garden development exemplifies how citizen driven activity has contributed to Council's vision and direction.

Current Situation

The City of Winnipeg has very active and significant community garden organizations who currently manage 39 garden sites with more than 401 allotments on city property. An estimated 800 residents participate in gardening on these sites making it a significant recreational activity for Winnipeggers. These numbers do not include organizations who garden on private property or individuals actively gardening on their own property. (Appendix #1) Currently community gardens exist on residential lots, vacant street right of ways, riverbanks, along railway tracks, school grounds, and within some community parks.

The parcels of land used for community gardens fall within a variety of zoning classifications and under the jurisdiction of different departments. This has created a challenge to community gardeners who often do not know which department to contact to access land for community gardening. In addition, each department has developed its own system and guidelines to access parcels of land they have jurisdiction over. Lots are available seasonally and long term, serviced and non serviced, and formalized through permits, leases and management agreements. The fees and charges vary for each type of agreement with no common formula or consistent criteria used to

determine them. This illustrates the importance of developing a long term strategy for managing community gardens.

Community Stakeholder Consultations

In determining a strategy to develop the policy on community gardens, consultations with many community stakeholder groups were held on January 12, 13 and 16, 2006 to facilitate discussion on what should be included in a community garden policy. (Appendix #2) In addition, stakeholders were invited to submit comments directly to the project lead.

Participants provided information on what needs to be considered in a policy as well as the role of the City of Winnipeg and the community. Stakeholders included: community gardeners, horticultural societies, gardening clubs, greening coordinators, neighbourhood associations, development corporations, community development staff, and gardeners. E-mails were received from many individuals providing their opinions and current barriers (if any) to community gardening on City property. Participants also strongly expressed that the City should take the time necessary to produce a meaningful policy considering the complexities noted during the workshops. The ideas generated during the consultations were consistent with the community garden practices of other Canadian municipalities. (Appendix #3)

Internal Consultation

The Community Services Department will continue to coordinate an interdepartmental working group that has representation from the Community Services Department, Planning, Property and Development Department and Public Works Department to collaboratively discuss the issues and develop a consistent approach. All the departments that have had a role in community gardens are represented and have a commitment to build a more effective and efficient system within an overall policy. Approval of these principles will result in an improved coordinated responsive community garden system.

Community Garden Policy

The Community Garden Policy is intended to foster a positive climate for community gardening and identifies the principles used by city administration in its decision-making around the development, management and maintenance of community gardens on City-owned land.

For the purposes of this policy a *community garden* is defined as "*an open space that a group of citizens voluntarily manage where horticultural activities are practiced*."[3]

There are two aspects to this Policy. The first is the statement of the City's Community Garden Policy, addressed under the five general headings. The second are potential implementation strategies following each policy statement. These implementation strategies may be clarified, adjusted or refined from time to time to effectively implement this Community Garden Policy.

Healthy Living /Active Living

The City of Winnipeg considers community gardens to be very beneficial in supporting healthy communities and improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods. They serve as a tool to achieve desirable and quantifiable goals such as food security, neighbourhood stabilization and revitalization, reduction of crime, job training, recreation, therapy, and community building.

Plan Winnipeg supports this by stating "Promoting healthy lifestyles including the provision of safe environments, education, recreation, arts, and culture to assist citizens in developing to their fullest potential." [4]

Potential Strategy

- Continue dialogue with community stakeholders in order that community gardens continue over time to contribute positively to Winnipeg neighbourhoods.

Community Directed

Resident involvement in the shaping of future strategies is a key to ensuring long term community garden success. This involvement requires collaboration, inclusion, communication, and participation. This also allows unique strategies to be tailored for different neighbourhoods which have different characteristics, resources, strengths, traditions, and leadership.

Plan Winnipeg supports this in stating "Encouraging citizens to shape decisions that affect their lives requires sharing of decision-making processes through citizen engagement, promoting local ownership and control, fostering strong local economy, and facilitating ongoing participation." [5]

Potential Strategies

- Ensure ongoing assessment of community need and collaborative planning.

---

[3] Concise Oxford Dictionary – City Farmer, Community Gardening in Major Canadian Cities: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver Compared. Paper prepared for Urban Agriculture Policy in Southern Africa, International Conference, South Africa, March 1998.

[4] City of Winnipeg Plan Winnipeg 20/20 Vision. December 2001, page 10.

[5] Ibid

- Address specific needs of neighbourhoods and communities balancing residential and other development with green space.
- Encourage neighbourhoods in their development of green plans for the use of existing and future green space.

Affordability through Partnership and Collaboration

The City of Winnipeg recognizes community gardens as an asset to both the neighbourhood and the city. The City will work collaboratively with community groups to develop long term affordable plans for development and sustainability of community gardens. The establishment of creative strategic partnerships is key to identifying a wide range of opportunities and resources in support of community gardens.

Potential Strategies

- Determine current and long term management and maintenance/operating costs. The following factors must be considered in determining the costs and benefits in community garden development:
    - social
    - economic
    - financial
    - environmental.
- Explore public/public and public/private partnership opportunities to maximize resources.
    - Determine services, roles and responsibilities of the City and external organizations.

Effective & Efficient Service Delivery

The City of Winnipeg will utilize an integrated, inter-departmental administrative approach to ensure a coordinated, consistent and easily accessible system for the management of community gardens.

Potential Strategies

- Ensure a coordinated, consistent system using an inter-departmental administrative approach for management of community gardens. This includes:
    - Establishment of a one-stop community garden contact for land availability, educational information and related information.
    - Standardized agreements
    - Uniform fees and charges
    - Communication systems
    - Booking processes
- Continue to inventory current community gardens on city-owned land.
- Respond to community enquiries regarding the use of any city-owned land for community garden purposes.
- Ensure communication is clear and concise between the various departments, community networks, community garden organizations, and gardeners to reinforce a positive transparent working relationship.

Sustainable

A common understanding between civic government and the community will ensure a predictable environment for community garden development and support in the near and distant future. This predictable environment is vital to resolving competing land use interests, including the need for green space.

Potential Strategies

- Consult with the community garden network as a link to community garden issues and sustainability.
- Encourage training, networking, and technical assistance of individuals and groups to build self-reliance and interdependence.
- Recognize community gardens as an acceptable land use on appropriate City-owned land.
- Encourage environmentally sound practices.

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** May 29, 2006

Project Name:

Community Gardens Policy Framework

COMMENTS:
There is no financial impact associated with this report.

Cindy Fernandes
Acting Manager of Finance & Administration

IN PREPARING THIS REPORT THERE WAS:

Internal Consultation With and Concurrence By:
Public Works
Assiniboine Park Enterprises
Legal Services

External Consultation With:
Consultations occurred with community garden groups including community gardeners, horticultural societies, gardening clubs, greening coordinators, neighbourhood associations, development corporations, community development staff, and gardeners.

THIS REPORT SUBMITTED BY:

Department	Community Services
Division	Community Resource, Protection and Safety Services
Prepared by:	Kelly Goldstrand, Manager
	Dan Prokopchuk, Community Resource Coordinator
	Gwen Howe, Community Resource Coordinator

Appendix 1

Summary of Community Gardens on City Owned Land

Organization	# of Gardens sites/beds	Addresses	Garden Size	# of Gardeners
Charleswood Horticultural	10/33	North Side of Assiniboine River @Perimeter and Roblin Blvd.	20' x 24"	33
Earth Share Agricultural	1/NA		24 acre at Fort Whyte	12
East Kildonan Gardening Club	1/NA	Fraser Grove Park		150-165
Friends of Montrose Park	1/6	Fleet & Montrose	3000 sq. ft.	8
Furby Street Gardeners	1/NA	547 Furby	20 x 25 ft	6
Herb Society of Manitoba	1/NA	Assiniboine Park		135
Millennium Gardens	1/39		21 boxes 5' x 10' x 16 inches 12 boxes 5' x 10' x 30 inches 6 boxes 4' x 10' 30 inches	65
Riverview Garden Society	1/107	Adjacent to Churchill Drive and the Red River, bewteen Baltimore Rd. and Eccles St.	40' x 50'	107
South Winnipeg Garden Club	1/56	River Road (near St. Amant Centre)	50' x50' or 50' x 25'	56
Spence Neighbourhood Assoc	8/NA	483/85 Young, 435/37 Furby, 350/354 Agnes, 559 Langside, 607/611Langside, 637/39 Maryland, 547 Furby		10
Spirit Park	1/31		4' x 8'	22
St. James Horticultural	1/110	Silver & Albany	1650 sq. ft. 90 @ 26.5' x 62' -20 @ 26.5 x 31	115
St. Matthews / Maryland	1/4	448 McGee		10

West Kildonan Horticultural	3/15	(2) 346 Perth Avenue, (7) Seven Oaks Museum Site at Rupertsland, (6) Patridge Avenue site near Arboredom		
William Whyte Res. Assoc	5/NA	480 Burrows, 362 Aberdeen, 392 Pritchard, 358 Redwood , 278 Powers		10
TOTAL	**37/401**			**754**

Appendix 2
Stakeholder Consultation Summary

The following statements reflect the key points from the stakeholder consultations. For ease of readability, these statements are organized within the principles identified in the Community Garden Policy.

Healthy Living / Active Living

- Recognize the value of community gardens as recreational and social gathering places
- Benefits of community gardens include community capacity building, improved safety, promoting food security, and increased neighbourhood property values.
- Community gardens are an asset to the City – contribute to the ecological, social, economical, health and well-being of the citizens
- City should develop a master plan for community gardening

Community Directed

- Ensure community gardening groups are engaged in determining where the greatest need for community gardens exists within neighbourhoods.
- Recognize the diversity of neighbourhoods and garden types

Affordability through Partnership and Collaboration

- The City should support gardening clubs and the development of a network of gardeners.
- Garden clubs should determine their own guidelines and policies for the gardens they are responsible for
- Determine the operational roles and responsibilities of the City and community garden groups including (but not limited to) soil testing, access to water, availability of equipment and supplies, monitoring of community gardens, lighting, fencing, good land drainage
- Ensure open communication between the City and community garden groups

Effective and Efficient Service Delivery

- Identify city-owned lots available for community gardens
- Ensure equality and consistency of fees for community gardens
- Communicate fee changes one year in advance of implementation
- Implement uniform agreements that include fees, roles and responsibilities, liability insurance, length of term (recommendations vary from 1 – 5 years), operational support

- Establish a one-stop community garden contact for land availability, educational information, and related information such as funding sources
- Ensure that the various departments communicate with each other about community garden activities including access to land, maintenance and operational responsibilities
- Provide community gardeners the required maintenance standards including (but not limited to) weed control, pesticide and herbicide use, composting, path accessibility, debris and litter control,
- The City should monitor the community gardens to ensure compliance with established standards.
- Coordinate the maintenance schedule of the site recognizing community needs

Sustainable

- Encourage promotion and growth of gardening clubs and horticultural societies
- City should allow undeveloped city-owned land to be turned into garden or green space
- Ensure that community gardens are a legitimate land use
- Ensure protection of gardens and green space for the long term
- Respect environmentally friendly gardening techniques
- Encourage organic gardening approaches and nature gardening

In addition to the key principles, the following comments were made regarding the definition of a community garden:

- Community gardens are different than a park or green space
- Essential that definition be consistent in the policy and in other by-laws
- Community garden should be managed by a group of citizens
- Community gardens are places where horticultural activities are practiced.

Appendix 3

Community Garden Practices of other Canadian Municipalities

Many other large urban centres both in Canada and in the USA have an approach to community gardens. In reviewing these policies some recommended best practices to be considered in the overall policy include the following:

- Inventory vacant public lots and make the information readily available to the public.
- Standardize land use agreements for community gardens.
- Enable minimum terms for community garden agreements long enough to elicit commitment by gardeners, such as five years.
- Prepare land for gardening by clearing rubble and contamination where needed.
- Provide compost, tools and hoses, signage and access to water.
- Utilize resources for training about gardening, including organic methods or pesticide use, and problem solving.
- Provide technical assistance to support programs with youth, elderly, disabled, low income, and other populations depending on community interests and needs.
- Provide for liability insurance against personal injury.
- A key element for successful management is a strong partnership among three primary groups: grassroot (c0mmunity) organizations, technical assistance groups, and property owners.

Other major Canadian municipalities that are involved in community gardening are summarized below.

Toronto

Toronto City Council endorsed the Community Garden Action Plan in 1999. This Plan sought to have a community garden in each ward by 2003. The City of Toronto has a policy statement on community gardens that identifies their intent to work to increase both the area of the City devoted to gardening and the number of participants. As such a Community Gardens Coordinator functions as a designated contact for the community who facilitates the development of community gardens and problem solves any related

issues. The City may provide funding for necessities such as water hookup, signage, fencing, and compost delivery. This individual also provides information, advice and technical support to the development of community gardens and works with other civic departments to facilitate gardens being implemented. Permits for community gardens are annual seasonal permits.

The Community Garden Program is a special project of the Parks and Recreation Division, Economic, Development, Culture and Tourism Department. The Parks and Recreation Division oversee 100+ community gardens on public land and parks.

Municipal support includes: assistance to identify and access land, site review and operational support. The Coordinator and Manager of Parks and Recreation approve financial requirements and sources of funding. Funding, which ranges between $5,000 and $8,000, is provided for new community gardens, to assist with fencing, sheds, picnic tables, signage water hook up, site preparation and compost delivery. The community gardens are included under the City's liability policy for volunteers and water is provided at no cost to the gardens. A greenhouse is provided for community garden volunteers to produce plants and as centre for gardening education. A full time Community Garden Facilitator, assisted by two summer staff, provides orientation, ongoing support, advice and technical assistance.

The total cost for Toronto's Community Garden Program is about $150,000 annually which includes a full-time Coordinator, two summer staff, start-up funds for new community gardens and support for established gardens.

Kitchener

The City of Kitchener has had a policy to support the development of community gardens since 1999. Ninety percent of the community gardens are in parkland. When parkland is used for community gardening the following conditions apply: a neighbourhood consultation takes place to determine support for the garden; the garden must operate in harmony with other activities in the park; garden site plans must be approved by the General Manager and public access to the park must not be denied.

Municipal support includes: assistance to identify suitable sites, assistance with advertising and promotion of community gardens and provision of a start up fund of $500 cash and $500 of in kind services. Water access is provided, when available. Site preparation assistance, including the transportation of topsoil and compost is provided subject to the availability of staff and materials. The Community Gardens Facilitator (City staff) is the contact between the Community and various departments and assists with start up as well as providing support to community garden groups.

Montreal
Montreal has the most ambitious community garden program in Canada and has had a policy in place since 1985.

The program is administered by the Sports, Recreation and Social Development Department. The department has 6 staff positions dedicated to the program; one community garden superintendent and five community garden facilitators who provide assistance and advice to gardeners, support garden committee management and enforce program regulations and procedures.

The program has 75+ community gardens; two thirds are located in parkland and have secure status.

Municipal support includes: provision of land, water, tools, fencing, sheds, toilets, equipment, materials and staff for garden maintenance as well as the six Community Garden staff positions.

For 2002, the project had a budget of $770,400. In order to pay for the maintenance and development of the Community Gardens Program, each gardener is requested to contribute $10 per year.

Edmonton
The City of Edmonton has a model to support community gardening. The Community Services Department is responsible for administering the program. There are 53+ community gardens on City land, parkland, school land, road and pipeline right of ways. Community gardens in parks are required to have a Partners-in-Parks agreement to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Each garden has access to a Community Recreation Coordinator or Social Worker. The Principle of Horticulture also plays a key role in supporting the program. A Community Recreation Coordinator from the City Wide Services Branch was recently assigned to provide capacity and organizational development support to the Community Garden Network.

Municipal support includes: assistance to identify and access land, site preparation and water access in situations where the community group is unable to provide it, and horticultural advice. Capacity support is provided by the Community Recreation Coordinators.

Program costs are tied to support provided by City staff, which includes, the Principal of Horticulture, Community Recreation Coordinators and Social Workers who provide support to individual gardens and the City Wide Services Community Recreation

Coordinator to support the Community Garden Network. This support is projected at $33,000 per year.

Vancouver

The City of Vancouver Community Gardens Policy recognizes community gardening ***"as a valuable recreation activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction and community education".***

Community Gardens are the responsibility of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. The Parks and Recreation Board collaborates with interested groups in assisting with the development of community gardens. The policy defines a community garden as a community development program operated by a non-profit society. The gardens are developed at no cost to the Board, except that prior to the first season, the Board will prepare the site for planting by removing grass, ploughing the soil and adding compost. Costs for site preparation for new gardens are approximately $1000 per garden.

There are ten community gardens; nine are on parkland. To be approved on parkland, a garden site plan must be approved by the General Manager.

Municipal support includes: assistance to identify suitable land, information on the development and operation of community gardens, assistance with the development of a community environmental education program, capacity support for the creation of the non-profit society, and site preparation prior to first gardening season.

Ottawa

In 2004, the City of Ottawa approved a model to support community gardening in Ottawa. The Community Gardening Program provides for identification and access to community garden space; support for capacity development through a staff liaison to facilitate access to sponsorships and other funding sources; operational support, and evaluation.

Community gardens are initiated and led by the community, cooperatively planned and managed by local residents. Approximately 3,820 Ottawa residents benefit directly from these gardens. There are 21 community gardens varying in size from 6 to 250 plots.

The City of Ottawa provides $25,000 in sustained funding for the coordination of the Community Garden Network.