Stephen Kirk
Coordinator, Environment & Open Spaces
Spence Neighbourhood Association

To: Executive Policy Committee
Re: Community Garden Strategy

The Spence Neighbourhood Association oversees the maintenance and improvement of 9 community gardens and 2 green spaces in Winnipeg's Inner City. These provide multiple benefits for the community, as acknowledged in the Recommendations to the Standing Committee.

The vast majority of labour is provided by volunteers, or youth on summer job programs. Equipment and supplies are provided by the SNA, supported by grant funding. This represents tremendous savings for the City, when compared to the costs of managing similar public amenities like Parks and Green Spaces.

At present, the City of Winnipeg provides only $2000 of annual support to our organisation for these efforts. It is our hope and request that, in addition to improving coordination of community garden projects throughout Winnipeg, the committee will also increase support to ongoing projects.

More specifically, while we support the Public Service recommendation to develop a Community Garden Strategy, Spence Neighbourhood Association has concerns regarding the budget request of $200,000 for an external consultant. The Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations, which are already managing Winnipeg's community gardens, are much better placed to provide the needed information to a Project Coordinator. If this money is to be spent in the name of community gardens, please direct towards community gardeners. Personally speaking, I would rather it get spent on manure than reports. That, at least, would help the gardens grow.

Thank you,
Stephen Kirk