



# Staff Report to Community Advisory Committee

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**DATE: Tuesday, October 29, 2024**

**DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation and Facilities**

**SUBJECT: Community Gardens Council Policy POL-0174-PARKS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The City of Langford will be piloting its first formal community garden as part of the expansion of Porcher Park, which is currently under construction.

The purpose of the policy is to outline a process in which land is identified, and defines the roles and responsibilities of the City, its partner groups, and the requirements for submitting Expressions of Interest. The policy will replace the ad hoc approach previously taken by the City which required residents to bring forward proposals for the City's review.

## **BACKGROUND:**

As part of Council's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, community gardens were identified as an initiative to address food security. In response, in the City's 2024 capital budget, the Parks, Recreation and Facilities department identified an opportunity for a community garden pilot project as part of the renovation and expansion of Porcher Park.

The creation of community gardens on City-owned land will be governed by POL-0174-PARK titled "Community Gardens Council Policy". As POL-0174-PARK is a Council policy, both the implementation and any future amendments will require Council consideration and approval.

Staff have reviewed policies and practices from other jurisdictions and compiled ideas that will further build-out the process, providing clear direction for applicants looking to partner with the City on future community gardens in Langford.

## **COMMENTARY:**

The Community Advisory Committee provides recommendations and input regarding the City's parks and recreation matters, among other things. This report has been prepared for Committee consideration of the proposed policy, and to forward a recommendation to Council.

### RESEARCH

As the City has never had a formalized community garden policy, staff examined existing policies from other municipalities within the Capital Regional District, as well as the Metro Vancouver region.

Due to Langford's somewhat unique public works and parkland management, the proposed policy puts much of the operational and administrative duties on the partner group as the City does not have the operational capacity to regularly engage, oversee, or help manage the day-to-day activities of a community garden.

The proposed policy, POL-0174-PARK, outlines the steps of how a group who wants to partner with the City on a community garden would express interest in doing so and how the City and partnering group would then proceed with the construction and administration.

### POLICY OUTLINE

Staff drafted POL-0174-PARK for Committee and Council consideration as follows:

- Included definitions of key terms specific to the policy to provide clarity around some of the more complex terms used within the policy;
- A clear explanation of the City's responsibility prior to, during and after the construction of the community garden;
- Operational and administrative requirements of the partner group wishing to operate a community garden, including the requirement to enter into a License for Use Agreement with the City of Langford;
- Steps on how interested groups can express interest in operating a community garden within the City of Langford and how the City will proceed with such inquiries.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

In the past, when asked about creating community gardens on City-owned land, staff asked potential partners to create a proposal to bring to Committee (none of which were formally received). By having a policy with clear guidelines of expectations and roles and responsibilities of both the City and the partner group, applications can be streamlined and make the screening process fully transparent for the applicants and staff.

### FURTHER PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

If the policy is approved by Council, staff intend to publish it to the website (under policies and forms) and advertise its availability through the City's communication channels.

Staff will also provide a copy of the approved policy to those groups who have expressed interest in participating in the pilot community garden at Porcher Park.

### PRIORITIZATION OF APPLICANTS

As part of the City's ongoing commitment to greater accessibility, priority will be given for 10% of the plots to persons with disabilities who are also Langford residents and the operator must ensure that

10% of the plots are accessible including but not limited to, raised beds and fully accessible access and egress.

The City is committed to furthering and strengthening relationships with Indigenous persons therefore, 10% of the plots will be prioritized for self-identifying Indigenous applicants who are also Langford residents.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Should a License for Use Agreement be made with a partner group to operate a community garden on City-owned land, as per the proposed Policy, the partner group will be required to charge each plot holder an annual fee of which a portion will then be repaid to the City. The City's portion of the annual fee will go towards City staff time, servicing fees (i.e. water and power), and the exclusive use of an otherwise public area.

With increased interest in community gardens in Langford, more staff time will also be allocated towards supporting these partner groups (i.e. creating License for Use Agreements, answering inquiries from the public and searching for possible future sites of community gardens).

The City has budgeted \$40,000 for 2024 for the creation of a community garden, which will be used for the new community garden pilot project at Porcher Park. Prior to the completion of the Parks Master Plan, there are no other community gardens planned for construction; however, Council may wish to consider this budget amount as a baseline in future years for the creation of future community gardens.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no legal implications of approving this, Policy; however, staff will use this Policy as the foundation of License for Use Agreements for all community gardens on City-owned land going forward.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This Policy is a direct action with regards to Strategic Priority Two "Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship", more specifically, Objective 2C – Review and action the Food Security Policy as detailed in the OCP. Although the Policy itself may not expressly lead to placemaking and building community, the execution of the Policy and what it means for community gardens in Langford should contribute to placemaking and building community.

#### **OPTIONS:**

##### **Option 1**

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council approve POL-0174-PARK, Community Gardens Council Policy.

**OR Option 2**

THAT the Community Advisory Committee recommend that Council approve POL-0174-PARK, titled “Community Gardens Council Policy”, with the following amendments:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMITTED BY: Wolfgang Schoenefuhs, Parks Planning Coordinator**

**Concurrence:** Melisa Miles, Manager of Legislative Services

**Concurrence:** Donna Petrie, Senior Manager of Communications & Economic Development

**Concurrence:** Yari Nielsen, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities

**Concurrence:** Matthew Baldwin, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services

**Concurrence:** Leah Stohmann, RPP, MCIP, Director of Community Planning and Climate Change

**Concurrence:** Katelyn Balzer, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works

**Concurrence:** Michael Dillabaugh, CPA, CA, Director of Finance

**Concurrence:** Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services

**Concurrence:** Braden Hutchins, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**Concurrence:** Darren Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments: POL-0174-PARK Community Gardens Policy