

**REPORT NO. 54 of the
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
HEALTH & CULTURE STANDING COMMITTEE**
of its meeting held December 14, 2011

Present:
Councillor Al Maghnieh, Chair
Councillor Alan Halberstadt
Councillor Percy Hatfield
Councillor Ron Jones
Councillor Ed Sleiman

That the following recommendation of the Social Development, Health and Culture Standing Committee **BE APPROVED** as follows:

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by Councillor Halberstadt,

THAT City Council **AUTHORIZE** Administration to proceed with a Food Security Initiative in the form of a Community Garden Expansion Strategy, with a maximum of \$100,000 in one-time funding for this strategy to be drawn from the Provincial Unconditional Grant, and;

THAT City Council **AUTHORIZE** Administration to develop a plan to allocate the provincial funds to support various community garden expansion projects in the City of Windsor and County of Essex, and;

THAT City Council **AUTHORIZE** the Community Development and Health Commissioner to enter into agreements with community agencies in the provision of community garden expansion strategies related to poverty reduction and food security for residents of Windsor and Essex County under Provincial Unconditional Grant funding, contingent upon availability of funds and satisfactory in form to the City Solicitor in technical content to the Executive Director of Housing and Children's Service and financial content to the Chief Financial Officer or designate; and;

THAT City Council **SUPPORT** in principal the development of a Food Charter for Windsor-Essex County that will guide decision-making about the food system in our region; with the understanding that the final Food Charter will be presented to Council for endorsement at a future date.

Carried.

Livelink 15171, SS2011

Clerk's Note: The report of the Executive Director of Housing & Children's Services dated November 8, 2011 entitled "Food Security Initiative: Community Garden Expansion Strategy" is attached as background information.

CHAIRPERSON

DEPUTY CITY CLERK

NOTIFICATION:		
Name	Address	Email
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Michele Legere	Food Matters Windsor Essex County	foodmatterswindsorsex@gmail.com
Tom Lucier	9999 Holly Crescent, Windsor N8R 1Y6	
Steve Green	Ford City Community Garden	stevegreen@ymail.com

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR
Social Development, Health and Culture Standing Committee-
Administrative Report

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

"The City of Windsor, with the involvement of its citizens, will deliver effective and responsive municipal services, and will mobilize innovative community partnerships"

LiveLink REPORT #: 15171 SS2011	Report Date: November 8, 2011
Author's Name: Debbie Cercone, Executive Director, Housing & Children's Services, Wendi Eizenga, Executive Initiatives Coordinator	Date to Standing Committee: December 14, 2011
Author's Phone: 519 255-5200 ext. 6239, (519) 255-5200 ext. 5354	Classification #:
Author's E-mail: dcercone@city.windsor.on.ca weizenga@city.windsor.on.ca	

To: Social Development, Health and Culture Standing Committee

Subject: Food Security Initiative: Community Garden Expansion Strategy

1. RECOMMENDATION: City Wide: _____ Ward(s): _____

THAT City Council **AUTHORIZE** Administration to proceed with a Food Security Initiative in the form of a Community Garden Expansion Strategy, with a maximum of \$100,000 in one-time funding for this strategy to be drawn from the Provincial Unconditional Grant, and;

That City Council **AUTHORIZE** Administration to develop a plan to allocate the provincial funds to support various community garden expansion projects in the City of Windsor and County of Essex, and;

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That City Council **SUPPORT** in principal the development of a Food Charter for Windsor-Essex County that will guide decision-making about the food system in our region; with the understanding that the final Food Charter will be presented to Council for endorsement at a future date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

N/A

2. BACKGROUND:

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, 2009).

Access to healthy, fresh and nutritious food is one of our most basic needs, and one that most people take for granted. However, for those living with poverty, the lack of this basic need is a stark reality that has serious implications for many children, adults, seniors and vulnerable populations.

For the past several years, numerous community partners in Windsor and Essex County have been working collaboratively to address food security issues. Initiatives undertaken include the start up of some community gardens and enhanced coordination within the Windsor-Essex Food Bank Association.

On September 6, 2011, the Food Matters Strategy Coordinator, Michele Legere, was hired as a result of a successful submission to the Ontario Trillium Grant Foundation. One of the key outcomes identified in the grant proposal was the development of a local food charter. A food charter is a document to help guide policy makers, communities and residents with regards to food. It comes about through public consultations and discussion groups where various stakeholders express their needs, concerns and visions about the future sustainability of our food system.

Ms. Legere will work with a Steering Committee on the Charter, which is supposed to be completed within the first year of the grant, which started April 2011. Staff from the Community Development and Health Services portfolio will be included, along with a variety of other stakeholders, in consultations that will inform the development of this document. The final document will come before Council, and should Council make the decision to endorse the charter, it will then become a public document to guide decision-making in our community with respect to food issues.

3. DISCUSSION:

Although there are many options for advancing the cause of food security in Windsor-Essex County, this report focuses upon a recommendation for the development and implementation of a *Community Garden Expansion Strategy*, designed toward providing fresh, nutritious produce to people who cannot afford to purchase/access it themselves.

Community Gardens – An Overview

Urban agriculture provides a number of creative ways for people to grow their own food, even with limited space. People can grow healthy and nutritious food, while also having a positive effect on the environment.

Although the idea of gardens is readily associated with food, in reality they can provide much more than the experience of harvesting fresh produce. Community gardens can reap a positive

group identity and valuable tools for creating community. They can become a “gathering place” for people to socialize and build self-esteem. They can add value to people’s lives and contribute toward healthy people and healthy communities.

Some community gardening is already occurring in Windsor-Essex County with good success. Examples follow, but it should be noted that this is not an all-inclusive list.

Community Gardens in the City

- The Unemployed Help Centre Community Gardens: 202 vegetable plots that produce a variety of vegetables, with a portion of the food donated back to the food bank, which improves the quality of food people receive when relying on the food banks (Cantelon Drive)
- Ford City (intersection of Drouillard Road & Whelpton)
- University of Windsor (California Avenue)
- Windsor Essex Community Health Centre (intersections of King Street & Prince Road)
- Harambee Garden Project: 3 “backyard neighbourhood gardens” and 2 “public space” gardens (Glengarry Neighbourhood and Downtown Mission)

Community Gardens in the County

- Lakeshore St. Andrew’s (Amy Croft Drive, Lakeshore)
- Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation (Brien Avenue, Essex)
- Youth & Family Resource Network (Kingsville)
- House of Shalom, Rotary & Amherstburg Community Services (Amherstburg)

Our understanding of existing community garden locations, in combination with several consultations, has led us to identify the central/downtown areas as the primary area of need for community garden expansion. However, having said that, determination as to the number and locations for expansion will be done in consultation with the Planning Department and other Stakeholders in the community who have an interest in the development of community gardens.

Administration has recently been approached by Robert Cameron, Executive Director of the Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative, about using a portion of Bruce Park for a community garden. Mr. Cameron has submitted a letter of proposal to the Parks Department for consideration in this regard, and Parks staff will be taking the lead in bringing a report before Council. With Council’s support, this would be one of the garden expansion projects that would be supported through the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy*, with implementation at this location targeted for spring 2012.

Should Council support the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy*, we may request the use of other properties and/or parkland in the central/downtown area for community gardens, and an initial discussion in this regard has already taken place.

It is important to note that there are a number of options when it comes to community gardening, as traditional garden plots may not be workable in some urban areas where land or water sources are unavailable. As such, the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy* will also give consideration to alternate gardening methods such as container gardening.

Supports to Community Garden Expansion Strategy

The Food Matters Strategy Coordinator position, referenced in the previous section, is housed out of United Way, but it should be noted that this is a community position. Pathway to Potential

and the Food Bank Association were collaborators on the Trillium Grant proposal that ultimately led to the successful creation of this position.

The Food Matters Strategy Coordinator, Ms. Legere, has initiated development of the Windsor Essex County Community Garden Collective, and the first meeting of this group has already taken place. All community gardens listed in this report have been invited to be included in the collective, with the addition of the Place du Partage Garden Co-op. The hope is to create a network for resources, knowledge and information and to support each other with goals and solutions to common challenges and the sharing of best practices. This group functions as its own entity utilizing Ms. Legere as a resource, but certainly could play an important advisory role, as well as demonstrating community capacity.

In addition to the support of the Food Matters Steering Committee and the Food Matters Strategy Coordinator, we are fortunate in our community to have a number of individuals and organizations who are passionate about improving access to fresh food. Great potential exists to build upon these resources, and several examples follow:

Harambee Gardens Project

“Harambee” is Swahili for “working together” and this project strives to build community and develop leadership through the channel of neighbourhood gardens. This initiative was implemented in 2011, and is one of several that are being facilitated under the leadership of Robert Cameron through the Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative, which is a not-for-profit organization. The objectives of the Harambee Gardens Project include:

- Encouraging neighbours to care for neighbours while gathering at a garden on their street;
- Identifying and fostering leadership at the street level;
- Providing affordable, accessible, nutritious food through a produce garden.
- Developing gardening expertise and community development skills;
- Leadership development through mentorship and work experience for students who live downtown and are planning on attending school.

The good work described above, exemplifies the type of partnerships that Administration will make and support as part of the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy*.

Other key partners to the strategy include, but are not limited to: Pathway to Potential, the Windsor-Essex County Food Bank Association, Windsor-Essex County United Way and the Windsor Essex Community Health Centre.

Another mechanism that has the potential to inform the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy* is the newly created Neighbourhood Advisory Council model (NAC's). This model aims to enhance communication between City Council, residents and administration, assist in decision making and be a “stepping stone” to allow priorities of individual neighbourhoods to be determined. NAC's will be a valuable tool for information dissemination with respect to the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy*, and may serve as a valuable means to identify leaders and volunteers who are passionate and interested in investing their time and talents toward furthering the cause of food security in their neighbourhoods.

Work Plan

With Council's approval, the funding for the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy* would be flowed to community garden expansion initiatives via a grant application process. The grant model will see the City allocating grants directly to successful proponents and will include a mechanism to avoid funding duplication for specific initiatives.

In-house existing staffing resources will be used to develop the grant application, criteria and process, and receive and evaluate grant application submissions. The application procedure will also define maximum grants and expectations for sustainability without or with minimal impact on the City tax base, as well as outcome reporting so we are able to measure success.

Grant applications will be received by a designated staff person within the Housing and Children's Services portfolio and an internal committee will be formed to review and evaluate the applications against defined criteria. There will be a continual intake process until available funds are expended.

Appendix 'A' to this report is a work plan that provides the proposed framework for moving forward with the *Community Garden Expansion Strategy*.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

Timing Risks: Since this strategy is tied to the growing season, May-October, implementation timeframes are critical so as to allow sufficient time to prepare and issue the call for applications, evaluate submissions and contract with successful applicants. All of these steps must be completed in advance of the onset of the 2012 growing season in order to provide successful applicants with sufficient time to prepare and implement their garden expansion initiatives. Should the work plan timelines (Attachment A) not be adhered to, it is likely to almost certain that the Community Garden Expansion Strategy will not be successful.

Resource Risks: Sustainability of this strategy is a risk, as funding is limited. As such, one of the key criteria that will be used in evaluating grant proposals will be the applicants' ability to sustain their initiative without or with minimal impact on the City tax base. The goal will be to encourage the building of mutually satisfying long-term relationships with key parties and the understanding that the active pursuit of partnership opportunities will form the basis for a sustainability plan in order to leverage sustainable resources beyond the initial granting process.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The estimated gross cost related to the community garden strategy is \$100,000. This is one-time funding to be drawn from the Provincial Unconditional Grant (100% Provincial), which has a current uncommitted balance of \$185,000. As the strategy is further developed, a report will be submitted for Council review.

Other potential sources of funding may include donations, grant funding and corporate partners.

An example of a recent funding partnership: Windfest Productions selected Pathway to Potential as the organization of choice for Festival Epicure 2011. Pathway received a total of \$12,340 in return for providing the Festival with volunteer operations. Pathway subsequently divided 100% of the proceeds between the 6 community gardens that signed up to benefit from the proceeds.

Consequently, we will collaborate with Pathway regarding a plan for distribution of the funds related to the Community Garden Expansion Strategy.

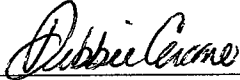
6. CONSULTATIONS:

Colleen Mitchell, Associate Director, Community Impact, United Way Windsor-Essex County
Lynda Monik, CEO, Windsor-Essex Community Health Centre
June Muir, President Windsor & Essex County Food Bank Association
Cathy Shanahan, Pathway Representative on Food Matters Steering Committee
Adam Vasey, Director, Pathway to Potential
Robert Cameron, Executive Director, Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative

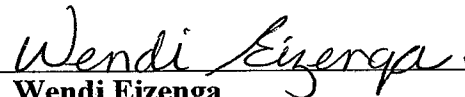
7. CONCLUSION:

Fresh food contributes to the wellness of a community. One of the six (6) pillars within which City Council has been strategizing is that of an "Affordable and Attractive City". The Food Security Initiative, Community Garden Expansion Strategy, aligns with this pillar, as it creates social partnerships which will benefit the entire community.

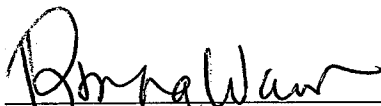
The City of Windsor, through the Community Development and Health Services portfolio, is positioned to be a leader in advancing awareness around food security issues and contributing toward the development and implementation of a Community Garden Expansion Strategy that will benefit the health and well-being of children, youths, adults, seniors and our most vulnerable citizens.



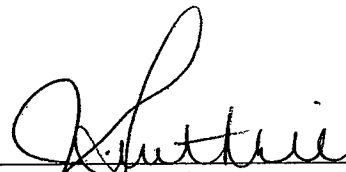
Debbie Cercone
Executive Director
Housing & Children's Services



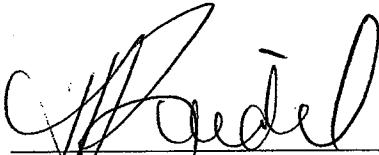
Wendi Eizenga
Executive Initiatives Coordinator



Ronna Warsh
Community Development & Health
Commissioner
Corporate Leader Social Development, Health,
Recreation & Culture



Onorio Colucci
Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Corporate Leader Finance & Technology



Helga Reidel
Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES:**Appendix 'A' – Community Garden Expansion Strategy Work Plan****DEPARTMENTS/OTHERS CONSULTED:****Name: Linda Higgins, Financial Planning****Phone #: 519 255-5200 ext. 5222****Mike Clement, Parks & Facilities****Phone#: 519 253-2300 ext.2736****NOTIFICATION :**

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Robert Cameron	1005 Victoria Ave., Windsor, ON N9A 4N7	robertcecilcameron@gmail.com	(519)903-7629	n/a
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Community Garden Expansion Strategy – Work Plan

Primary Activity	Timeframe
Development of Grant Application and related evaluation criteria	December 2011 - January 2012
Development of evaluation tool and measurement outcomes	January 2012
Report on implementation plan (including grant application process and budget breakdown) brought forward for approval to Council	February 2012
Develop Communications Plan	January-February 2012
Identification of grant submission internal review committee members	February 2012
Issuance of Call for Applications	February 2012
Application Intake	March 2012
Sustainability Plan Development	January-August 2012
Report back to Council on Initiative	Fall 2012 (following end of gardening season)