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**TO:** GENERAL COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

**PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT:** W. FISCHER, B.L.A. *SP*  
SUPERVISOR OF PARKS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (EXT. 5101)

**SUBMITTED BY:** R. W. MCARTHUR, P. Eng. *R. W. McArthur*  
DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

**GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:** R. J. FORWARD, MBA, M.Sc., P. Eng. *R. J. Forward*  
GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE, DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:** CARLA LADD *CL*  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That the Sunnidale Park Community Garden continue as a pilot program in 2012.
2. That Golden Meadow Park Community Garden be started as a pilot program in 2012.
3. That staff makes best efforts to obtain non tax based funding associated with the implementation of community gardens.

**PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

4. The purpose of this staff report is to obtain approval to continue the Sunnidale Park Community Garden on a pilot project basis and to start the Golden Meadow Community Garden as a pilot project in 2012. It is the intention to submit a new program change form for consideration as part of the 2013 budget process to designate the gardens as permanent locations in 2013.
5. Based on the overall positive response to the Sunnidale Community Garden's first year in operation in 2010, the garden program continued as a pilot project in 2011. The gardeners had recommended continuing the program but noted a strong interest in expanding to other locations. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of water on-site and the lack of access (no on-site parking area) which causes gardeners to carrying heavy jugs of water while crossing Coulter Street to the garden.
6. On April 18, 2011, City Council adopted Motion 11-G-104 regarding COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY as follows:
  - i) "That the Sunnidale Park Community Garden continue as a pilot program for 2011.
  - ii) That Golden Meadow Park be implemented as a location for a second community garden as part of the 2011 pilot program.
  - iii) That the existing draft Community Garden Policy be amended based on recommendations contained in Appendix "B" of Staff Report ENG020-11.
  - iv) That staff make best efforts to obtain non tax based funding associated with the implementation of community gardens.

- v) That the 2011 Fees By-law be modified to include a community garden plot rental fee of \$50.00 for a larger (double size) 3 metre by 4.5 metre garden plot and to remove the listed provisional cost for an additional area at a rate of \$1.00/m2. (ENG020-11) (File: R04-CO).”
7. The Sunnidale Park Community Garden is located in Ward 4. The proposed Golden Meadow Park Community Garden is located in Ward 10.

### **ANALYSIS**

8. Overall, the Community Garden Policy seems to function well and staff proposes no changes.
9. Further to public feedback, the current community garden in Sunnidale Park continues to be an acceptable location although lacking in water service and parking. Staff postulate that the long-term success of this location is dependent on water service and parking which would also serve the well used dog off-leash area users. Once this servicing and parking is in place, staff recommend that the existing garden be expanded along its southern boundary to double its capacity based on the expected demand for garden plots.
10. The 2011 gardening experience at Sunnidale Park was further burdened by the increased visits by groundhogs. Most garden produce was lost to the groundhogs, even after continuous replanting. Live trapping was requested and implemented by staff. After removing approximately 14 groundhogs at an approximate cost of \$1,750, staff decided to cease trapping as a means of groundhog control. Gardeners have been advised to assume responsibility for groundhog control and gardeners have responded by installing chicken wire around their individual plots. Staff consulted with the garden coordinator to determine whether to reopen the location for 2012, given the multitude of constraints. Responses indicated a willingness to continue, and currently 21 people have rented garden plots out of 33 available as of April 30, 2012. Staff will consult with the gardeners at the end of the 2012 gardening season to collect feedback on the gardening experience.
11. Golden Meadow Park (See Appendix “A”) was not implemented in 2011 due to an unsuccessful grant application. Staff are currently investigating opening the garden in 2012 as a community-based initiative with minimal staff resources and no capital funding in order to initiate the location. Refer to Appendix “B” for a proposed community garden layout. Gardeners will be required to avoid laying hoses across walkways to prevent trip hazards.
12. Gardeners in the 2010 program resided in most areas within the City. This indicates a willingness to drive leading to the need for a facility best fit rather than tailored local demand at this early stage in the development of community gardens in Barrie (this suggests that staff could explore the suggestion to locate a community garden at the Operations Centre) although, in the long term, local gardens should meet local needs and support active transportation access.
13. Dunsmore Park (see Appendix “A”) was favoured by questionnaire respondents in Fall 2010. Dunsmore Park is scheduled for redesign in the 2012 Business Plan, and a community garden is being proposed in the design feasibility programming based on this favourable response.
14. In Sunnidale Park, the proposed parking lot and a water service associated with the Community Garden and the Dog Off Leash Recreation Area has been considered by staff and will be proposed for budget consideration within the 2013 Business Plan.
15. The City has also received an inquiry this May regarding the availability of accessible garden plots. Results of the March 2011 Public Information Session Community Garden Questionnaire indicated that 53% of the respondents would support a wheelchair accessible garden. This would be feasible in the proposed Golden Meadow Park design on the maintained turf where the garden

is located adjacent to a parking lot and wide turf aisles have been planned to permit turf mowing to continue, should funding be identified for raised garden beds. The Sunnidale garden does not support accessible beds due to the lack of parking, water and mulched pathways.

**ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

The following environmental matters have been considered in the expansion of the Community Garden Program:

- Providing additional community garden locations will reduce automobile use.
- Parkland community gardens strengthen biodiversity by supporting pollinators, improving soil quality for microorganisms and reducing private pesticide use as homeowners share organic gardening methods.

**ALTERNATIVES**

16. The following Alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

**Alternative #1** General Committee could direct staff not to continue to implement the pilot program for 2012 for Sunnidale Park and a new location at Golden Meadow Park.

This Alternative is not recommended based on the extensive benefits and opportunities afforded by community gardens at a very low cost to the municipality. The current occupancy rate (64%) shows that the community values this resource in spite of obvious deterrents, with the hope that the municipality will make the community garden a permanent program for the public to enjoy. This would also require a refund of the plot rental fees for the 2012 session.

**Alternative #2** General Committee could choose to close the Sunnidale garden in favour of Golden Meadow Park.

This is not recommended as it does not reflect the gardener's requests to provide alternate locations across the City and would not account for the intensified residential population within walking distance of the Sunnidale garden.

**FINANCIAL**

17. Staff time, required to continue to administer the Sunnidale Park community garden, is estimated at approximately 80 hours of staff time in 2012 resulting in an approximate value of \$5,000 for both (Engineering Parks Planning and Parks Operations). For a new garden to be administered, staff estimate Golden Meadow Park would add approximately 25% more time to establish due to an experienced community garden coordinator, for a total \$6,250.

Year	Parks Planning Admin.	Operations	Revenue Sunnidale	Revenue Golden Meadow
2010	80 (\$4,500)	20 (\$700)	\$700	
2011	112 (\$6,300)	20 (\$700)	\$620	
2012	100	30	\$660 (Est.)	\$540 (Est.)

18. Maximum community garden revenues for 2012 (subject to rental occupancy) at \$20/single or \$40/double plot would be \$660 for Sunnidale Community Garden (31 single plots and 2 double plots) and \$540 for Golden Meadow Park Community Garden (9 single plots and 9 double plots).
19. Gardeners will obtain water through an existing yard hydrant in Golden Meadow Park that currently supplies water for the winter ice rink. By allowing the gardeners to use this water supply, there will be an increase in water consumption at this park location from May to September. Consumption for this community garden will be monitored through the water meter on the yard hydrant. Determining the actual volume used by gardeners will assist City staff in tracking water service costs and establishing appropriate fees for water usage within the plot rental charges for the 2013 growing season. Rain barrels will be placed beside the water service to avoid hoses crossing the pathway.
20. Other existing costs associated with the operation of the Golden Meadow Community Garden are as follows:

Item	Supplier	Cost
Shed	Gardeners	\$2,000, will seek donation/funding
Rain barrels	Gardeners	No cost, obtain from unused donated rain barrel collection at the Sunnidale Community Garden, which lacks a water source to fill the rain barrels
Water Hose	City	No cost, existing hoses used for winter ice rinks can be supplied
Topsoil	City	\$320 per year (\$32 per delivery using 1 hour of time at \$20/hour labour plus truck rental cost of \$12/hour at approximately 10 loads per year), materials are free through the City of Barrie Landfill. Mulch is not recommended for this site due to mowing requirements.
Community Garden Park Sign	City	\$300 (materials and labour) from existing 2012 Parks Furniture Account

**LINKAGE TO 2010 – 2014 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN**

21. The recommendations included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2010-2014 City Council Strategic Plan:
  - Improve and Expand Community Involvement and City Interactions
22. Creating community garden on public lands has created a venue for residents to expand their community involvement and create positive relationships with the City. Residents are very appreciative of the opportunity created by the City to take up or expand their gardening opportunities and the social relationships that develop as a result of a community based activity. A lot of communication has occurred over the last three years between the City and the gardeners through successive garden coordinators who work at developing positive working relationships with the gardeners to solve problems and supply needs throughout the growing season.

APPENDIX "A"

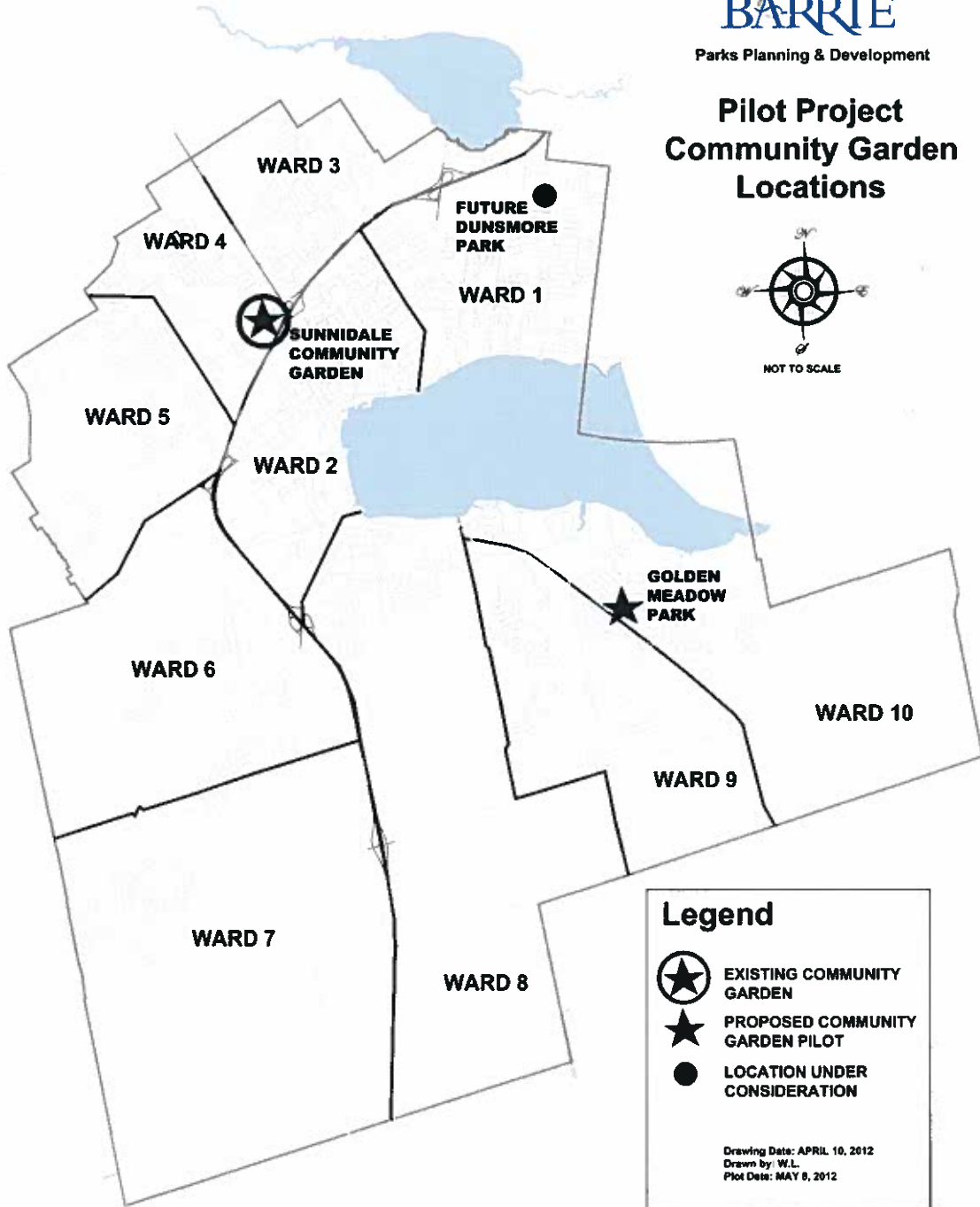
Community Garden Locations Map

**COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM  
2012 REVIEW**



Parks Planning & Development

**Pilot Project  
Community Garden  
Locations**



APPENDIX "B"

**Golden Meadow Park Community Garden Concept**

