



**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM**

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: W. LOEVENMARK, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PLANNER

NOTED: K. BRADLEY, BA, MLA, MANAGER OF PARKS PLANNING

M. BANFIELD, RPP, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**A. MILLER, RPP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH
MANAGEMENT**

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: NEW COMMUNITY GARDENS

DATE: MAY 10, 2021

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning the proposed Community Garden development in 2021.

Motion 13-G-061, Item 3, directs “That staff actively continue to investigate additional sites for consideration as future project sites.”

The Urban Pantry, in partnership with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, secured Trillium Grant funding in 2020 and submitted proposals to open community gardens in three parks: Riverwood Park (representing the closure and transfer of the existing Sunnidale Park garden (Ward 4), Lampman Lane Park (Ward 5), and Batteaux Park (Ward 6).

In accordance with Motion 19-G-150 regarding COMMUNITY GARDEN DELEGATED AUTHORITY, staff followed the Community Garden Site Selection Process outlined in ‘Appendix A’ of Staff Report ENG008-19 to evaluate the suitability for new community gardens in Riverwood Park, Lampman Lane Park and Batteaux Park. Staff determined that the proposals met the required Site Selection Criteria.

A virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) was subsequently held for each Garden Concept to collect public feedback on January 28, February 10, and February 11, 2021, respectively. The following attendance was noted at each of the sessions:

- Riverwood Park: (52) attendees, including Ward Councillor-Deputy Mayor Barry Ward
- Lampman Lane: (24) attendees, including Ward Councillor Robert Thomson
- Batteaux Park: (20) attendees, including Ward Councillor Natalie Harris

At the Riverwood PIC, a number of abutting residents voiced opposition to the proposed Riverwood Park proposal, citing a lack of parking, loss of amenity space and various negative impacts (i.e., privacy, pests/wildlife, noise, and visual). Other residents voiced support for Riverwood Park citing an underutilized park and interest to participate in the program from adjacent residents who live in the surrounding apartment buildings. The majority of attendees at the Lampman Lane and Batteaux Park PICs expressed support for the projects with the only concern regarding the availability of parking being raised in both locations.

The Concepts and a Community Garden Survey referencing all three Concepts were placed online at buildingbarrie.ca. The survey closed February 25, 2021. Staff received one hundred and fifteen (115) survey responses. In summary:

- A majority of respondents were against moving the Sunnidale Park Community Garden to Riverwood Park – (53) against and (47) in-support with those ‘against’ were largely from the abutting residents, not the Sunnidale Park community gardeners who were previously consulted;
- The majority of respondents supported the Riverwood Park concept (66 for, 29 against);
- The majority of respondents supported the Lampman Lane Park location (79 for, 16 against);
- Most respondents agreed that Batteaux Park would be a good location (68 for, 18 against);
- Most people identified “Social and Community Connection” as a reason for participation in the Community Garden Program (70 responses), with “Support Community Groups” next (61 responses) and “Fresh Organic Food” as third (60 responses); and,
- (21) suggestions for additional new community garden locations were offered indicating a city-wide interest in community gardens.

Staff received eleven (11) email responses. In summary:

- Riverwood Park: 8 responses (2 for, 6 opposed)
- Lampman Park: 2 responses (both opposed)
- Batteaux Park: 1 response (for)

All issues raised in opposition to the concepts were considered using the example of the existing garden in Golden Meadow Park (built in 2012) which is located in close proximity to adjacent residential properties. Staff have not received any complaints regarding the Golden Meadow community garden to date from adjacent residents. None of the concerns raised during the community engagement process require physical mitigation measures to offset the impacts raised at this time, other than the addition of a new parking lot in Riverwood Park.

An amendment to the 2021 Business Plan was approved through Motion 21-G-006 to construct a new parking lot in Riverwood Park by 2022 pending the approval of the Riverwood Community Garden Concept. This parking lot will be constructed in 2022 by the Operations Department.

In summary, the three community garden proposals have met the requirements of the Site Selection Criteria. No key issues have been identified that would prevent the installations of this community amenity. The majority of survey respondents were in favour of the proposals and community gardens in the City have been very successful additions to community parks.

Community Gardens are considered a desirable park amenity in response to intensification, food security and social equality. In accordance with the delegated authority granted to the General Manager of Infrastructure and Growth Management, the Riverwood Park, Lampman Lane Park and Batteaux Park community garden concepts have been approved for implementation in 2021.

Public Meeting attendees and everyone submitting feedback who provided an E-mail address will be notified by E-mail of the outcome of the approvals process. The Community Garden Program web page and buildingbarrie.ca will be updated to indicate the garden proposals have been approved.



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

Parks Planning staff will notify the Urban Pantry of the approved community gardens and post the proposed build dates on the web pages noted above. The Urban Pantry will undertake the construction of the three gardens in accordance with Government of Ontario COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Orders and protocols.

The Government of Ontario recognized community gardens as essential services and permitted municipalities to operate public community gardens during 2020 under COVID-19 Protocols. Staff will continue to monitor direction from the Government of Ontario and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit regarding the operation of municipal Community Gardens in 2021.

Staff are eager to observe the community benefits produced by these three new community gardens being integrated into these parks in 2021.