

C	<u>1</u>
SP	Communication
COUNCIL:	<u>Jan 30/18</u>
	Item <u>3</u>

DATE: JANUARY 22, 2018

TO: MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: JASON SCHMIDT-SHOUKRI, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER, PLANNING
AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

STEPHEN COLLINS, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER, PUBLIC WORKS

RE: COMMUNICATION
SPECIAL COUNCIL – JANUARY 30, 2018
MEMBER'S RESOLUTION – FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT
COMMITTEE – NOVEMBER 23, 2017

CITY OF VAUGHAN COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

Recommendation

The Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management and the Deputy City Manager, Public Works recommend:

1. THAT a 2018 capital project with a budget of \$50,000 to fund the establishment of two additional Community Gardens, funded from the Capital from Taxation Reserve, BE APPROVED.

Purpose

To advise Council how staff have responded to a direction regarding Community Gardens received from the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee at its meeting of November 23, 2017.

Background

The City of Vaughan established a Community Garden Policy in 2014

Community Gardens on municipal land are places where volunteers can meet to grow and care for fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, and ornamental plants. The Community Garden Policy was implemented to provide a framework for the establishment of sustainable and successful Community Gardens that will nurture an integrated urban community and increase civic engagement. The link to the Community Garden Policy can be found [here](#):

http://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/environmental_sustainability/Pages/Community-Gardens.aspx

City staff coordinate the implementation and operation of the Community Garden program in partnership with the York Region Food Network (YRFN). YRFN operates programs, raises awareness, and provides policy recommendations for increased access to affordable and nutritious food produced in a sustainable food system. YRFN also acts as a resource for groups interested in starting up new Community Gardens in York Region by eliciting support from local corporations, schools, and service groups.

The City of Vaughan currently has four Community Gardens

The City of Vaughan currently has three operational Community Garden locations, with an additional site located at City Hall which is under construction. The four Community Gardens are located east of Highway 400 in Ward 1 (two gardens), Ward 4 and Ward 5 (see Attachment 1).

Analysis and Options

The year one capital and operating cost is approximately \$25,000 per Community Garden

Staff reviewed the existing Community Garden Policy and Program and its funding model, as well as other municipal programs in similar sized municipalities. Most Community Garden programs are described to require limited municipal funding with respect to set up and operation, with varying degrees of annual operating or capital investment. The City's current policy framework supports a limited municipally funded approach. Based on the jurisdictional scan and a preliminary assessment of possible sites in each ward, staff estimate the capital and "start-up" costs to be \$25,000 per garden.

The annual operating activities of the Community Gardens program include administration, recruitment of garden coordinators, promotion, and connecting volunteers with gardens. On site work includes assisting with seasonal opening and closing, tilling/adding soil and facilitating irrigation. To carry out these activities, the annual operating cost for the City's existing Community Gardens is approximately \$4,000 per garden.

Two new Community Gardens are recommended to be added in 2018

Recognizing the City owns and operates Community Gardens in Ward 1, Ward 4 and Ward 5, staff are recommending that new Community Gardens be added in Ward 2 and Ward 3 in 2018. This will result in having at least one Community Garden in each Ward.

Subject to the new Community Gardens being approved by Council, staff will work within the framework of the approved Community Garden Policy to engage Council

members and the community in identifying appropriate locations for the new gardens on City-owned lands in Ward 2 and Ward 3. Included in this work will be investigating and evaluating potential partnership opportunities with Community Garden and other community service organizations to set out a solid foundation for the continuing expansion and creation of Community Gardens over the long term, and to address on-going operational costs.

A strong public awareness and marketing campaign to raise the profile of the City's Community Garden policy and program, and to increase community engagement for the benefit and operation of Community Gardens, will also be considered and incorporated in the 2019 budget, if appropriate.

Financial Impact

The one-time cost to establish two new Community Gardens is approximately \$50,000 and can be accommodated from existing approved capital funding

Staff have reviewed potential funding sources for the two new Community Gardens and propose to create a 2018 capital project with a budget of \$50,000 to fund the establishment of the two additional Community Gardens. The project would be funded from the Capital from Taxation reserve. The creation of the project will have no net impact to the proposed 2018 property tax rate increase.

The 2018 operating costs for the two new community gardens could be accommodated within the Draft 2018 operating budget. Annual operating costs of approximately \$8,000 for the two new gardens would need to be incorporated for 2019 and beyond into the operating budgets for Transportation Services Parks and Forestry Operations.

Conclusion

Community Gardens promote community building and enhanced levels of civic engagement. Benefits of a Community Garden include inter-generational relationships, increased physical activity, environmental awareness, and access to local, healthy food.

The City of Vaughan currently supports four Community Gardens across the city that attract dozens of resident volunteers every year. It is recommended that in 2018 two new Community Gardens be added to the program in Ward 2 and Ward 3. With these additions, the City of Vaughan would be able to ensure that there is at least one Community Garden in every ward, thereby improving access to Community Garden programs across the city.

The capital costs for establishing the new Community Gardens is estimated at \$50,000. The year one capital costs are proposed to be funded from the Capital from Taxation reserve.

Attachments

1. Map of Existing Community Garden Locations

Respectfully Submitted,

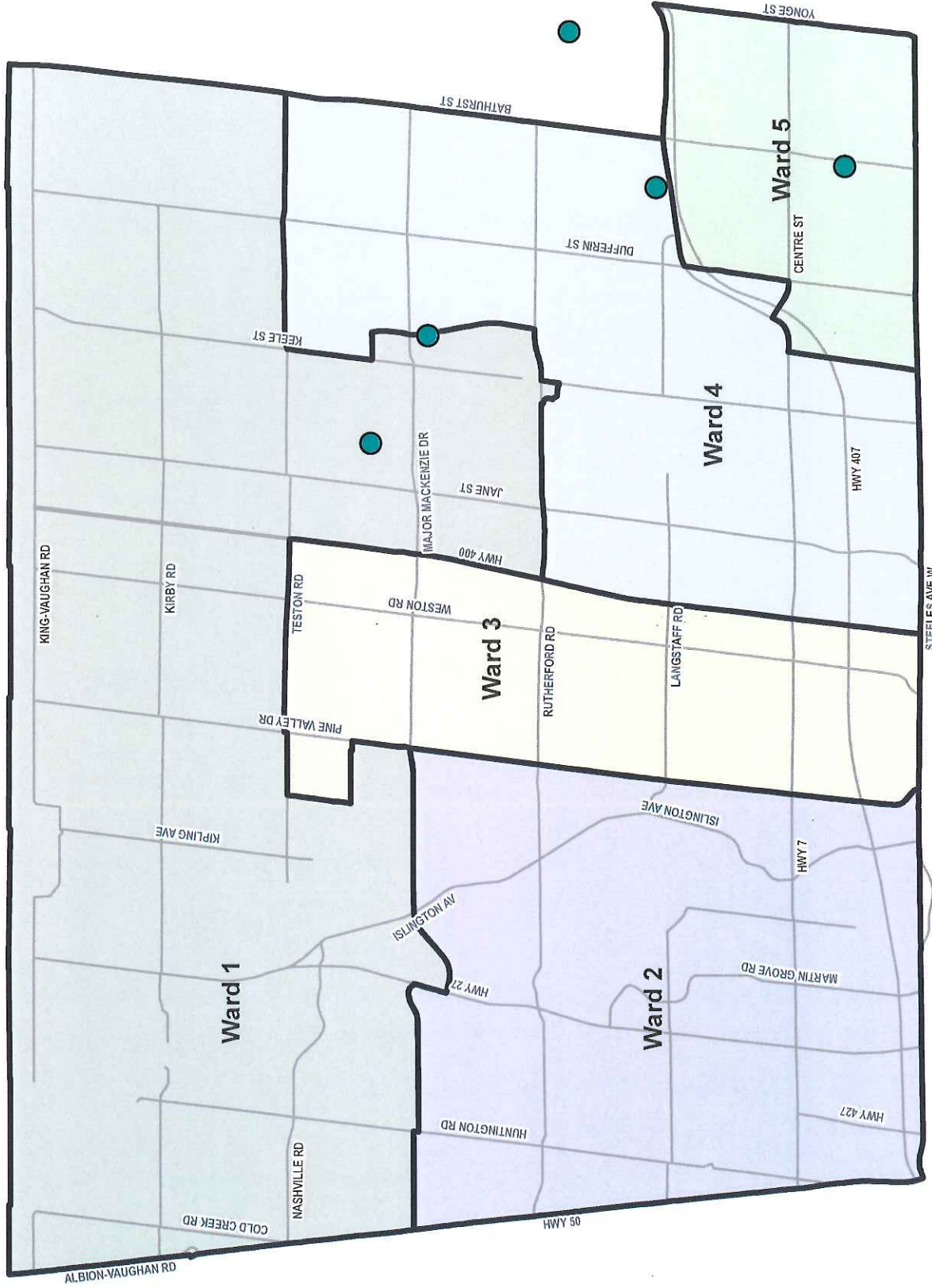
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Schmidt-Shoukri", with a stylized, flowing script.

JASON SCHMIDT-SHOUKRI
Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen Collins", with a stylized, flowing script.

STEPHEN COLLINS
Deputy City Manager,
Public Works

/lm



Existing Community Garden Locations



Attachment

1