

Dear resident,

April 10, 2018

Thank you for providing comments about the proposed community garden in Howitt Park. We're connecting with you to let you know the results of our survey.

Out of 64 participants, 78 per cent of residents were supportive of a new community garden in Howitt Park. Residents commented that it was a "lovely idea", especially for residents without a yard of their own. They also identified it as a great opportunity to foster community togetherness and a love of local food.

As a result of the support, we have decided to move forward with a community garden at Howitt Park. That said, we do recognize that four participants offered their concerns about the community garden and 10 were not in favour of the garden at Howitt Park. These concerns are a good opportunity for us to share our plan to address them as we move forward.

## How are we addressing community concerns

### **Impacts to the garden from dogs or wildlife**

Potential design elements including raised beds and fencing that would make it less accessible to pets and wildlife, yet still accessible for people, will be considered. We will consult the community on design items that work for the community.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism at the other community gardens in public parks in Guelph is not an ongoing issue. Vandalism often occurs in places where people feel like they won't be seen. There is no evidence supporting an increase in vandalism and/or break in's as a result of community gardens.

### **Location, infrastructure and growing conditions**

The location of this garden is the most suitable spot in the park. It has access to water, is accessible to volunteers and has adequate growing conditions. We plan to do soil tests to make sure the soil is adequate for growing and will explore using compost to improve soil quality.

### **Impact of development proposals on the garden**

We are aware of the development application on the property next door. There is potential for the new buildings to cast shade over the park, however this is dependent on final design and location of the garden and the property. Even with shade, the garden should have enough sunlight to support a community garden.

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**The garden is too small for the community's needs**

While the garden size will be limited given the site constraints, there will still be enough space for a garden. The final garden design may be entirely communal or it may include some small plots that will be decided on in co-operation with interested volunteers.

**Increase of taxation based on neighbourhood**

There will be no increase in taxation to support this community garden. It is already supported in the City's budget.

**Increased traffic and parking needs**

The intent of the garden is that it be used by neighbourhood residents already living in the neighbourhood. This wouldn't affect traffic levels or create a need for additional parking.

**There is no demonstrated need for a community garden because home owners have "enough land to grow their own garden"**

Though many people have sufficient space for gardening in their backyards, not everyone in the area has a yard or a yard that can accommodate a vegetable garden. There are also social benefits that community gardens provide like bringing people together, mental health benefits, reducing isolation, improving physical health, providing healthy food and education.

We appreciate the community feedback on this important project. If you had indicated in the survey that you would like to participate in the garden, your contact information will be passed along to the volunteer coordinator. If you did not give permission for your contact information to be passed to the garden coordinator, but you would like to receive further information, please feel free to reach out.

Regards,



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cc (Councillor Hofland, Councillor Allt, Martin Neumann – Manager of Forestry, Randy Drewery – Supervisor of Forestry, Terry Henderson – Supervisor of Turf and Sports Fields)