

# Memo



**Date:** January 21, 2011  
**File:** 6130-01  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** I. Wilson, Park Services Manager  
**Subject:** City Hall Edible Landscaping

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## Recommendation:

THAT Council receives the Report of the Park Services Manager dated January 21, 2011 regarding the options for edible landscaping at City Hall;

AND THAT Council endorses Option C as outlined in the Report of the Park Service Manager dated January 21, 2011 to convert the planting strip between City Hall and the north parking lot into an edible garden, to be managed by volunteer city staff, on a trial basis;

AND THAT Council directs Park Services staff to prepare the site for planting with new soil, and raised garden beds at an estimate cost of \$4,250 to be drawn from Partners in Parks account, 9990-302-2042-\*\*-000-10.

## Purpose:

To report back on progress regarding the following resolution:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION FROM THE JUNE 21, 2010 A.M. REGULAR MEETING:

THAT Council directs staff to consider planting some type of edible landscaping (strawberries) in the area between the parking lot and City Hall; AND THAT staff report back to Council on the feasibility of the proposed edible landscaping.

## Background:

The planting strip between City hall and the north parking lot is in need of landscaping. Previously this area was planted with a hedge. The hedge was removed some time ago as it was considered a safety risk. The area is approximately 136 square metres.

Edible landscaping has a number of potential benefits, in that it could help showcase the growing of food materials in small urban spaces and produce some food for consumption. There is some risk that plants could be vandalized or trampled, or that food might be contaminated. Staff consulted with Interior Health, who passed on the following comments:

- Edible landscaping and community gardening can produce considerable health benefits in terms of local food production, nutrition and socialization;

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- There is a lack of evidence regarding either positive or negative impacts, but some generally positive evidence regarding community gardens; and
- Some potential concerns include soil contamination (depending on the nature of the site), attraction and control of pest animals, and particulate deposition or contaminants from air pollution.

Staff developed three different options (detailed below) and the preferred option, to develop the site as a Community Garden, was also the least expensive. Central Okanagan Community Garden Society (COCG) was approached but COCG did not feel that the site is suitable as a community-wide garden and COCG is working on plans for another community-wide garden that would be located nearby in the downtown area.

The three options included:

Option A: Edible Landscaping, maintained by Parks

- Raspberry canes (situated to reduce sightline concerns), currants (3 varieties), blueberries, and edible herbs
- Includes some trellising materials
- Includes new soil and installation of a drip irrigation system
- **Estimate: \$10,250 for installation, \$1,650 for on-going annual maintenance**

Option B: Butterfly / Bee Garden, maintained by Parks

- Plant materials including *Coreopsis*, *Gaillardia*, Asters, lavender, etc.
- Includes new soil and installation of a drip irrigation system
- **Estimate: \$7,311 for installation, \$1,850 for on-going annual maintenance**

Option C: Edible garden, maintained by volunteers

- Parks Services would install a total of 9 wooden raised beds (6' x 10') and supply amended soil for growing beds and bark mulch for foot paths
- A setback is required from the edge of the parking lot to avoid the overhang of car bumpers
- Does not require new irrigation as a hose bib is available for hand watering. Existing irrigation would need to be capped.
- Volunteers (may include City Hall staff) would supply their own plants and volunteer labour to tend gardens outside of work hours
- Gardeners would be expected to donate some of their produce to the food bank
- The City Wellness Committee has agreed to manage the assignment of plots and volunteers
- **Estimate: \$4,225 for installation, \$450 for on-going annual maintenance**

Staff recommend Option C on a trial basis, as it is the least expensive option and also has additional benefits in terms of socialization, nutrition, assisting the food bank, and as a demonstration garden. Therefore it is recommended that the garden plots are offered to volunteer city staff and Councillors, either individually or in groups. Gardeners would be expected to provide their own plants, and to water and tend their plots on their own time. Gardeners would also be asked to donate some of the produce to the food bank. In the event the

gardens were significantly vandalized, although the area would be made safe, major repairs may not be conducted due to budget constraints.

**Internal Circulation:**

Community and Media Relations  
Human Resources (Wellness Committee)

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

**Legal/Statutory Authority:**  
**Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:**  
**Personnel Implications:**  
**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**  
**Existing Policy:**  
**External Agency/Public Comments:**  
**Community & Media Relations Comments:**  
**Alternate Recommendation:**

Submitted by:



I. Wilson, Park Services Manager

Approved for inclusion



Joe Creron, Director Civic Operations

cc: John Vos, General Manager Community Services