



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** **Members of the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee**

**From:** **Rob Anderson, Recreation Division Coordinator**  
**Phil Jacobs, Parks and Forestry Supervisor**

**Meeting Date:** **February 28, 2017**

**Subject:** **Report APRAC17-002**  
**Water Access for Community Gardens**

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## **Purpose**

A report to inform of the outcome of discussions between City Staff, the Peterborough Utilities Commission, and the Nourish Project about options for the provision of reliable water sources at community garden sites within the City of Peterborough.

## **Recommendations**

That the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee approve the recommendations outlined in Report APRAC17-002 dated February 28, 2017, of the Recreation Division Coordinator and the Parks and Forestry Supervisor, as follows:

- a) That City-owned parks containing an existing municipal water source be considered the preferred locations to establish new community gardens;
- b) That a neighbourhood consultation process be conducted each time a request is made to establish a community garden at any of the preferred locations; and
- c) That requests to establish community gardens on City-owned land not containing an existing municipal water source be considered on a case by case basis, and if approved the land use agreement must clearly identify that it will be the perpetual responsibility of the land user to provide its own water source, at its own expense in a form acceptable to the City.

## Budget and Financial Implications

There is no budget or financial implication to the City resulting from the approval of the recommendations of report APRAC17-002.

## Background

On October 18, 2016, the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee approved the recommendations of report APRAC16-031, as follows:

- a) That a joint presentation on reliable water sources for all community gardens by Jill Bishop from the Peterborough Community Garden Network and Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health and Chair of the Peterborough Food Action Network, be received;
- b) That Staff be directed to initiate discussions between City Staff, the Peterborough Utilities Commission, The Nourish Project, and any other relevant parties deemed necessary to discuss options for the provision of reliable water sources at community garden sites within the City of Peterborough; and
- c) That staff be directed to report back to the Arenas Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee within the first quarter of 2017 on the outcome of the discussions referred to in recommendation (b) of this report.

### Meeting With Peterborough Utilities Commission (PUC)

On November 7, 2016, City Staff met with the PUC's Vice President-Water Utility Services to inform him of the request of the Peterborough Food Action Network (PFAN) to have reliable water access at community gardens within the City of Peterborough.

At that meeting, City Staff were provided with a copy of PUC Report dated October 20, 2011 titled Park, Garden, Rink, and Small Pool/Spray Pad Services. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix "A". The approved recommendations of the report are as follows:

**That** the Commission support community betterment through the provision of free water service to the City of Peterborough-owned park, garden, rink and small pool facilities;

**And That** the installation of new City of Peterborough public park, garden, rink and small pool/spray pad services remain the responsibility of the City unless otherwise directed by the Commission;

**And That** the Commission shall not support private requests for provision of free water services to park, garden, rink, and small pool/facilities on public property.

The report included an attachment showing a list of parks where water services existed at that time.

### **2016 Inventory of City-owned Parks Containing a Water Service**

City Staff have reviewed a listing of all City parks and identified 20 that have a water service installed, and would appear to be suitable sites for establishing community gardens. The list is attached as Appendix “B”. One of the Parks included on the list is King Edward, which already has a garden established within it. While the 19 additional sites appear to have potential to accommodate a community garden, neighbourhood consultation would be required prior to any development taking place.

An additional 15 parks were identified as having good potential for community garden development, if funds become available to install water services at some point in the future.

### **Meeting With the Nourish Project**

Staff met with a representative of the Nourish Project on December 7, 2016. The Nourish Project expressed their appreciation of the efforts made by the City to come up with a solution to support the provision of a reliable water source for community gardens on City-owned land.

City Staff made it clear that the City is able to address the provision of water for community gardens on City-owned land only. It was also clarified that the PUC is only providing its support for free municipal water on City-owned land where the City requests it in support of park, garden, rink and small pool facilities. The PUC has no provision in place for free water to support gardens on properties owned by other parties. The Nourish Project and/or the PFAN would need to work directly with those other property owners to address water access at those sites.

City Staff shared with the Nourish Project the list of parks containing a water service, and suggested that only these sites be considered for future community garden development, to avoid establishing future gardens at City-owned sites where no reliable water source exists. The costs to install a new water service can vary. The backflow and meter chamber and all plumbing is approximately \$8,000 - \$10,000. Water service from the street can vary from \$5,000 to \$15,000. This varies widely based on location of water main, infrastructure in the way, such as curbs, sidewalks and asphalt replacement.

Some locations may not be suitable at all, as there is no water main located in the vicinity, or the expense is prohibitive, such as when running a service for 100's of feet to a remote location. There is currently no budget in place to support these costs, each time a request to establish a garden is made.

While the Nourish Project recognizes their request was to ensure a reliable water source be provided at all community garden sites, they don't want to close the door completely on opportunities to establish gardens on City-owned sites, where a water source isn't present. They are concerned that community engagement would be compromised if there is no ability for residents to develop gardens within their own neighbourhood parks, even in locations where there is no water service present.

### **Recommended Solution**

Staff is recommending the following solution, as supported by the Nourish Project.

The list of Parks containing an existing municipal water source will be considered the preferred sites for development of new community gardens. The list will be made available on the City's website, with a disclaimer that a neighbourhood consultation process must be undertaken before a garden is established at any of the listed sites.

Requests to establish a community garden on City-owned land that does not have a municipal water source will be considered. If approved however, the land use agreement will clearly identify that it will be the responsibility of the land user to provide its own water source, at its own expense, in a form acceptable to the City. The City will not entertain a future request to provide or assist with the provision of water to that site. Plot holders are required to pay a modest fee to the Garden Coordinator. The funds do not go to the City, nor does the City prescribe the fee amount. All cost recovery items, including the provision of water, should be considered by the Nourish Project when establishing the plot holder fee.

As per current practice, requests to establish new community gardens will only occur between October 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> in any given year, to allow time for neighbourhood consultation to take place, and the approval process to be completed, in time for the spring planting season.

### **Water at Existing City-owned Community Garden Sites**

There are six community gardens located on City-owned land. Three do not have a municipal water source, and were established by the community, at the community's request. They were established with the community's knowledge that there was no reliable water source in place. While the City can investigate options to assist with the provision of reliable water at those sites over time, there is currently no budget available to support the provision of water at those sites.

## Summary

Staff from the City and the Peterborough Utilities Commission has reviewed the request of the Peterborough Food Action Network for a reliable water source to be made available for all community gardens. The City can only address the provision of water at gardens located on City-owned land. A list of City owned parks where a water source is present has been created, and will be considered the preferred sites for potential development of future gardens. Additional sites without a water source may be considered, if desired by the community. However, the land use agreement for those sites would explicitly identify the community would be solely responsible for the provision of water at those sites.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:  
Appendix A – PUC Report Dated October 20, 2011  
Appendix B – City-owned Park Sites Containing a Water Service