



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 8, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	McQuesten Urban Agriculture Social Enterprise and Community Gardens (CES14037(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Al Fletcher (905) 546-2424 ext. 4711
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the General Manager, Community and Emergency Services Department be authorized and directed to extend the temporary Neighbourhood Action Strategy Project Manager – McQuesten Urban Farm position through to April 2017, in the amount of \$110,000, to be funded from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project id#20551255204).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2014, Council approved the development of the McQuesten Urban Farm and the hiring of a 16 month temporary Project Manager to oversee the development and implementation. Phase One of the build included clearing of sod, grading and drainage work, installation of pathways, construction of the irrigation pond and installation of underground irrigation pipes, which have all been completed. Phase Two of the build includes planting and harvesting of the farm as well as installation of the windmills, elevated cistern and irrigation system, landscaping around the farm, pond and native plant walk, and construction of the outdoor classroom/community gathering space. The extension of the Project Manager – McQuesten Urban Farm will provide the oversight and ensure completion of Phase Two of the project.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The total cost to extend the Project Manager – McQuesten Urban Farm position for the additional 13 months is approximately \$109,380. Staff will be pursuing funding to offset the cost of this position from an administration subsidy through the Employment and

Income Support Division as well as funding through Environmental Services Division of the Public Works Department for work related to community gardens.

With the approval of the recommendation of this report, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund will have \$133,000 remaining if no other funding sources are determined.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES14037(a)

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CES14037(a)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Action Strategy

In 2010, the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation created a partnership to work with residents to make their neighbourhoods healthy vibrant places for all by addressing the Social Determinants of Health. This collaboration, known as the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) works with 11 neighbourhood community planning teams to develop and implement resident-led Neighbourhood Action Plans, which identify neighbourhood priorities and actions.

One of the themes that emerged across neighbourhood plans was the lack of access to fresh and healthy food. Solutions ranged from food pantries or food banks to community gardens and community kitchens.

Some of the health concerns noted in the McQuesten Neighbourhood Profiles (Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC), 2012) included higher than city average rates of high-school non-completion and poverty. The visionary assets of the residents identified a comprehensive community initiative that would address the priorities of:

- negative neighbourhood perceptions,
- neighbourhood beautification,
- volunteer, mentoring and training opportunities for youth,
- education and apprenticeship programs for residents,
- creation of economic and entrepreneurial opportunities,
- food security through the development of urban agriculture,
- collective kitchen and access to local healthy food,
- promotion of physical activity; and,
- strengthening resident quality of life.

All these components are envisioned and many are underway with the development of the McQuesten Urban Farm.

In September 2014, Council approved the investment of \$350,000 into the development of the McQuesten Urban Farm; including a 16 month temporary Project Manager to oversee the development and implementation (Report CES14037). The Council approved position will end on March 10, 2016 without the full implementation and operation of the farm being realized. To date there has been significant and successful community collaboration in the development of the concept of the McQuesten Urban Farm.

Phase One of the build included clearing of sod, grading and drainage work, installation of pathways, construction of the irrigation pond and installation of underground irrigation pipes, which have all been completed.

As the McQuesten Urban Farm project has developed, the progress has resulted in growing community interest to support the project. To date, we have received the following grants and donations that are directly invested into the farm development:

Hutton Family through the Hamilton Community Foundation	-	\$43,800
TD Friends of the Environment	-	\$ 5,000
Hamilton Industrial Environment Association (2015)	-	\$10,000
Hamilton Industrial Environment Association (2016)	-	\$ 5,000
Trees for Hamilton (product donation value)	-	<u>\$ 4,000</u>
Total Grants and Donations		\$62,800

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications to report CES14037(a).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The McQuesten Planning Team was consulted and endorses the recommendation.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

Social Determinants of Health

The McQuesten Urban Farm will address several of the determinants of health, including social support networks, education and literacy, employment, physical environments, healthy child development and culture. The learned experience from this project can be disseminated throughout the City of Hamilton.

McQuesten Urban Farm

The McQuesten Urban Farm is a project that grew out of the McQuesten Neighbourhood Action plan. This work supported the emerging concept of agriculture within city boundaries, and subsequently the Hamilton Urban Official Plan was amended

in September 2014 to include urban agriculture as a permitted use. Since then, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has worked collaboratively with the McQuesten Urban Farm working group to design the site. Construction commenced in October 2015.

However, there still remains a large component of the work program related to spring planting and harvest as well as installation of the windmills, elevated cistern and irrigation system landscaping around the farm, pond and native plant walk, and construction of the outdoor classroom/community gathering space. Part of Phase also includes facilitating the development of an independent resident-led association to operate the urban farm in the long-term. Critical to the ongoing success of the farm will be oversight of the project throughout the next year. As a result, staff is recommending an extension to the temporary Project Manager – McQuesten Urban Farm for another 13 months to complete the physical and programing implementation and lay the foundation for the successful long-term operation of the farm.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES

None