



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

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	January 22, 2018
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	McQuesten Urban Farm Farming and Community Engagement for the 2018 Season (CES17011(b)) (Ward 4)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Ward 4
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Adam Watson (905) 546-2424 Ext 7806
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Grace Mater Acting Director, Neighbourhood & Community Initiatives Division Community and Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the scope of Contract C5-23-15 Farming Services for McQuesten Urban Farm with Plan B Organic Farms for the term February 7, 2018 to February 6, 2019 be expanded from \$96,000 to \$150,500 to be funded from the Maple Leaf Centre Action on Food Security grant in the amount of \$125,500 and from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Capital fund (#20551255204) in the amount of \$25,000.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The McQuesten Urban Farm became operational in 2016. Staff and McQuesten residents are now preparing for the second full year of farm production in 2018. The McQuesten Urban Farm was awarded a grant in 2017 of \$150,000 per year for 3 years from the new Maple Leaf Foods Centre for Action on Food Security (Maple Leaf). The commitment for this grant is contingent on meeting the identified outcomes yearly.

The grant will cover the majority of farm operating costs, including engagement, staffing, and allow for the urban farm to continue its programming to improve food security for residents, such as weekly popup markets and workshops, and to launch new initiatives.

Staff are proposing an expansion of on-farm and off-farm programming and recommending that the existing \$96,000 contract with Plan B Organic Farms be expanded in 2018 and the value of the contract be increased by \$54,500.

This increase in the contract value permits the following for 2018:

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- the farm engagement staff to be employed by Plan B, who were previously funded through a separate now expired grant;
- will fund increased staffing for farm operations, including resident employment opportunities;
- support a tractor rental to increase efficiency of farming and production; and,
- permit the operation of a mobile cargo bicycle food market serving local housing complexes.

The new total contract amount would be \$150,500, of which the Maple Leaf grant funds \$125,500 and the remaining \$24,500 will support evaluation and other farm capital expenses. The \$25,000 shortfall in the total contract amount is recommended to be funded through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy capital fund.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable***

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:**

Total funding commitment requested from the NAS fund, over and above the \$125,500 paid by the Maple Leaf grant is \$25,000. With approval of this funding, \$27,538 will remain within the NAS Fund (#2051255204).

**Staffing:**

There are no staffing implications related to Report CES17011(b).

**Legal:**

There are no legal implications related to Report CES17011(b).

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The McQuesten Urban Farm project comes out of the McQuesten Neighbourhood Action Plan as a key action to promote greater food security for neighbourhood residents, to improve social connectedness and to provide skills development within the neighbourhood. The urban farm is led by a group of residents who identified the need to address food insecurity by bringing fresh food production and food education to the heart of their neighbourhood. As part of Report CES15023, Council approved \$350,000 from the NAS Capital Fund to fund the main capital works necessary to build the urban farm with staff and volunteers successfully acquiring additional grants and donations of over \$675,000 to fund farm operations, other site features and programming for residents and students.

The McQuesten Urban Farm launched in the spring of 2016 and throughout 2017 staff and volunteers continued to develop the farm through improvements to the soil and beautification of the site as well as growing approximately 15,000-20,000 pounds of

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produce. Although farm field production was lower than anticipated due to the abnormally wet spring and cooler summer, the urban farm is still making progress towards its annual production goal of 75,000 pounds. In addition, new neighbourhood farmers markets were established, weekly food education workshops were run from July to October and a farm school tour program was designed and launched with 30 Hamilton schools participating this fall. The goal for the urban farm is to have 50% of the produce sold in the neighbourhood at cost and the other half marketed outside of the neighbourhood to cover some operating costs and additional programming and skill building opportunities.

The McQuesten Urban Farm is operated by Plan B Organic Farms, the successful proponent for Contract C5-23-15, Farming Services for McQuesten Urban Farm, issued through a request for proposals (RFP) in February 2016. The contract was renewed in April 2017 as part of Report CES17011 and the current term of the Farming Contract expires on February 6, 2018. The renewal recommended for 2018 will be the second and final yearly renewal permitted under Contract C5-23-15.

In April 2017, Council approved Report CES17011 which increased the Plan B contract for 2017 from \$96,000 to \$144,480 as a result of securing additional funds to support the farm through the Maple Leaf grant and the ability then to increase the scope of work provided by Plan B. The additional funds were used to fund the majority of farm operating costs and allow for the urban farm to launch new initiatives to improve food security for residents, such as a mobile farm market (vehicle based) and increased engagement programming, including bringing 30 Hamilton Schools to the property for agricultural/food education in conjunction with health Kids Community Challenge funding,

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

City of Hamilton By-law #17-064, Procurement Policy, allows for Council to approve any extension to an existing contract as proposed in Report CES17011(b).

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The Corporate Services Department, Financial Services Division, Procurement section was consulted and supports the recommendations in Report CES17011(b).

The McQuesten Community Planning Team has been consulted and is in favour of continuing to work with Plan B Organic Farms for 2018.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The McQuesten Urban Farm has been awarded a grant from the Maple Leaf Foods Centre for Action on Food Security. The grant commenced in 2017 to fund farm

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operations, farming and community engagement staff, resident employment opportunities and the development of new and innovative programs to improve food security. This will be the second year of the three year grant with the full funding amount of \$150,000 for year two confirmed by Maple Leaf Foods on November 20, 2017.

The operation of the McQuesten Urban Farm is carried out through a City contract for farming services overseen by a Project Manager in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy office who works in collaboration with McQuesten residents and the McQuesten Community Planning Team. Plan B Organic Farms was the successful proponent for Contract C5-23-15, Farming Services for McQuesten Urban Farm, issued through a request for proposals (RFP) in February 2016. This contract was awarded to Plan B Organic Farms who was the only respondent to the RFP.

Plan B Organic Farms began activity on the McQuesten Urban Farm site in March 2016 and has successfully developed the site into a functioning and productive farm. In order to expand the farm programming to meet the deliverables of the Maple Leaf grant, staff recommends that the existing \$96,000 contract with Plan B Organic Farms be increased by \$54,500 for 2018.

Table 1 outlines the planned expenditures and funding for 2018.

Table 1

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Budgeted Amount</b>
Farming Services contract with Plan B Organic Farms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing (1 FTE Farm Engagement, 1 FTE Farmer, 3 p/t resident farmhands, 4 resident p/t market staff)</li> <li>• Tractor Rental</li> <li>• Operating Supplies</li> <li>• Consulting (Crop Management, Marketing)</li> </ul>	<p>\$123,500</p> <p>\$5,000</p> <p>\$7,000</p> <p><u>\$15,000</u></p>
Total	\$150,500
Program Evaluation	\$15,000
Farm Equipment, Market & Program Supplies	\$9,500
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Maple Leaf Foods Grant	\$150,000
Neighbourhood Action Strategy Funds	\$25,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>

The majority of revenues from the sale of produce and other farm activities, such as paid workshops and school tours, are being placed in a reserve to be used to fund future farm operations once the grant funding from Maple Leaf Foods finishes in 2020.

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Approximately \$2,000 of urban farm revenues received in 2017 will be used to cover 2018 operating expenses, such as the purchase of seed and some farm supplies.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Community Engagement & Participation**

*Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.*

**Healthy and Safe Communities**

*Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.*

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

None