



**Report for the
Hamilton Community Garden Network
By Jeanne Mayo**

October 2008



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1. Introduction

This report follows the public meeting organized by the Hamilton Community Garden Network on March 25, 2008. The HCGN identified the need to have a summary analytical report including a literature review, best practices and interviews with key stakeholders in order to decide how best to ensure the growth of community gardens in Hamilton. Funding for this report was provided from one of the community partners of the HCGN, the Chronic Disease Prevention-Adult Program, Healthy Living Division of the City of Hamilton.

2. The Hamilton Community Garden Network

Members of HCGN

The present HCGN is a coalition of interested people coming from a variety of organizations, most of whom are directly involved in community gardening. Currently, there are representatives from the North Hamilton Community Health Clinic, Green Venture and the Healthy Living Division of the Public Health Services of the City of Hamilton among others.

Actions to date

On October 3, 2007, the HCGN adopted terms of reference and approved the following mission statement:

1. to work collaboratively to support and promote individuals and communities in developing and maintaining community gardens in Hamilton from the perspective of improving food security and increasing community involvement;
2. to maintain a network of potential and current community gardens;
3. to advocate for the development and long-term security of community gardens;
4. to evaluate the process of the network;
5. to assist in ongoing research in the area of community gardens.

Public meeting

On Tuesday, March 25, 2008, the HCGN convened a public meeting *Growing Community: Social capital and community gardens*. Although it was a snowy evening, over 125 people attended the event. Councillor Brian McHattie welcomed everyone on behalf of the City of Hamilton and then Russ Ohrt from the North Hamilton Community Health Centre gave a brief history of the HCGN and introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Troy Glover.

Dr. Troy Glover, from the University of Waterloo and the Healthy Communities Research Network spoke about how community gardens, through the coming together of individuals to create and maintain gardens, strengthen social ties and facilitate further social connections among neighbours, which in turn, ensures healthy communities

<http://www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/rec/research/glover.html>

The participants were then divided into groups: Hamilton East, Stoney Creek-East Mountain, West Hamilton-403, West Mountain, Mountain East, Downtown and Other City-wide and asked

to discuss three topics: what would you like to see in your community and how would you like to see your community; the skills and assets that each could offer; and finally suggestions for the activities of the HCGN. People expressed enthusiasm for the idea of having community gardens in their neighbourhoods, especially to increase the sense of friendliness, offered their skills and talents and gave in-put the role they saw for the HCGN. Many of these ideas and suggestions are integrated into this report.

Finally, the participants were asked to indicate on a large map of the City of Hamilton places where a community garden could potentially be located (Appendix 1).

3. What is community gardening

Community gardening is as varied as the gardens that are created. Many people say that the movement grew out of the Victory Garden movement during the Second World War where people planted food crops just about any where in order to maintain food supplies. The entry found in *Wikipedia* defines the term in its broadest sense. It emphasises the fact that beyond people growing things (vegetables, fruit, flowers, medicinal plants) on a piece of common land, the activity also helps combat social alienation and contributes to ensuring food security http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_garden.

Community gardening is just one strategy to ensure food security. Other strategies include community supported agriculture (CSA) <http://csafarms.ca/> . In this model, CSA farmers receive a set fee from the consumers prior to the start of the growing season. In return, each consumer receives a portion of the farm's produce. In Hamilton, Plan B Organic Farm and Simpler Thyme Organic Farm in Flamborough and Manorun Organic Farm in Ancaster are CSA farms.

Another food security model is the Good Food Box. The GBF generally contracts with local farmers to supply fruits and vegetables that are then put into a weekly box and sold at cost to a pre-determined list of people <http://www.foodshare.net/goodfoodbox01.htm>. Finally, collective kitchens whereby people cook a common meal and then each takes home a portion are another way of ensuring food security. <http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/17/1/75>

Cheryl Lyn Dow has written a detailed overview of the literature on community gardening as part of her Master's thesis at the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen's University, titled "Benefits and Barriers to Implementing and Managing Well Rooted Community Gardens in Waterloo Region, Ontario". This study looks at integrating community gardening into the regional planning process for the Kitchener-Waterloo area and ends by recommending the hiring of a community gardener at the Regional level to coordinate the activities of all the community gardens. <http://homepage.mac.com/cityfarmer/CHERYLFINAL.pdf> .

4. Policies and practices of the City of Hamilton with regard to community gardens

Public Parks

Hamilton has many parks which are classified as follows: neighbourhood, community, city-wide, general open-space and natural open space and small parkettes, all managed by the Department of Public Works.

<http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityDepartments/PublicWorks/Parks/ParkListInfo>

Al Dore is the manager of Public Parks and Mike McNamara is the manager of Forestry and Horticulture. Beth Wheaton is responsible for the leases of the individual plots of the two community gardens operated by the City, Churchill Community Garden and Dundas Community Garden. Managing the two community gardens takes up only a very small percentage of her responsibilities. She also publishes a newsletter *The Community Gardener* about twice a year. However, if more community gardens are added to her responsibilities, Ms. Wheaton says that her job description will have to be redefined.

The Parks Department has also signed leases for a nominal sum with two community organizations, NHCHC and Today's Family, which allowed vacant land owned by the City to become community gardens.

Mr. Dore states that the City has no specific policy with regard to requests to begin a community garden. He says that such a request by a group to turn part of an existing park into a community garden or a piece of vacant City-owned land would be considered on a case by case basis. However, as with any request, the group would have to assume all the capital costs, including the costs related to supplying water, fencing, erection of sheds, etc.

Capital Planning and Implementation

This department of Public Works is responsible for the redevelopment of City Parks. When a park is slated for redevelopment, there is a consultation process with the councillor and the surrounding neighbours to determine the infrastructure and amenities that will be included. As well, future trends such as a growing interest in soccer are taken into consideration. The City's web page indicates the current projects where public consultation is being solicited.

www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityDepartments/PublicWorks/CapitalPlanning/OpenSpace

The consultation process, along with the efforts of the councillor Brian McHattie, ensured that the master plan for the redevelopment of Victoria Park will include infrastructure and amenities for a community garden with 20 to 24 plots which will be operated by the City. However, both Councillor McHattie and Lawrence Stasiuk, the project manager and landscape architect for this project stated that the installation of the community garden might be in peril because of cost over-runs.

5. Policies and practices of the City of Hamilton with regard to Food Security

Hamilton is an agricultural city

The majority of the 227,000 acres within the municipal boundaries is considered prime agricultural land. According to Statistics Canada, there were 1026 farms generating in excess of \$222 million in gross receipts in 2001. The major commodity groups are poultry and egg, nursery, greenhouse and vegetable.

<http://www.investinhamilton.ca/publications/AgReportExecSum.pdf>

Environment Hamilton publishes a local food map and directory indicating the location of almost 60 producers of food stating what is grown and when the produce is available. They also have an electronic version of the directory on their website.

<http://environmenthamilton.org/eatlocal/directory/index.htm>

Community Food Continuum

In 2007, the City published a statement *Community Food Continuum*. Two dimensions of food security are identified: the ability of individuals to reliably access food and the production and supply of food. Three stages to address food security are also identified: short term relief, building capacity and empowering individuals and community, and the systemic shift for sustainability. The creation and expansion of community gardens is one of the strategies mentioned in stages 2 and 3.

Food Security Committee

City Council (following the recommendation of Public Health Services) approved the establishment of a Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee on November 21, 2007 and set out the terms of reference, mandate and structure .

See Appendix 3.

The first meeting of this committee was held in June 2008 and the next one is scheduled for September. Two members of the HCGN are members of this committee.

6. Existing Community Gardens in Hamilton

Athens Street Community Garden

Athens Street Community Garden is a joint effort by Immanuel Christian Reformed Church and nearby Neighbour To Neighbour food bank and resource centre. It is a two-year-old community garden with 27 plots where about 25 gardeners grow some of their own food. People of a variety

of income levels, young and old, Canadian-born and immigrants have the opportunity to get together and share their gardening experiences.

Immanuel Christian Reformed Church members coordinate the goings-on at the garden, provide garden plots, plants, and seeds, and garden alongside the community gardeners. Neighbour To Neighbour encourages its clients to tend a plot and provides water.

<http://www.immanuelministries.ca/>

Churchill and Dundas Community Gardens

Dundas Community Garden, founded in 1978, has 38 plots and Churchill Community Garden, founded in 1996, has 67 plots and both are operated by the City. Individuals sign an annual lease and pay an annual fee. The higher fee at Churchill, \$83 as compared to \$36 for Dundas, is partly historical and partly due to the fact that an irrigation system and fencing have been installed at Churchill. According to Ms Wheaton, the City manager of these gardens, the fees do not cover all the costs associated with the operations. User fees for community activities generally should cover staff time for managing the activity and for carrying out the necessary maintenance, i.e. rototilling and providing the mulch. The plots are leased in the spring with many people returning year after year.

Settlement and Integration Services (SISO) has leased a block of plots in the Churchill Community Garden for the members of the Karen refugees from Myanmar. The City accepted to reduce the fees to \$50 per plot. The gardeners use public transportation to get to the plots and from time to time a staff member from SISO goes out with them.

<http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityDepartments/PublicWorks/Parks/Horticulture/CommunityGardens.htm>

Green Venture

As a result of the initiative of one employee, Green Venture began a community garden a few years ago. There is one large plot of 4500 square feet adjacent to its building. The volunteers who tend the garden take home produce and the surplus is donated to a local food bank. It was hoped that volunteers from the surrounding community would take on the project. However, the outreach in the form of flyers was not successful. The volunteers come from across Hamilton. It is hoped that the experience they gain from this experience as well as from the workshops offered by Green Venture will encourage them to start community gardens near where each lives.

The responsibility for overseeing the community garden was added on to the job description of one employee. This employee is funded through the Naturally Hamilton program of the Hamilton Public Health Department, which targets the reduction of pesticide use.

<http://www.greenventure.ca/>

Jamesville Community Garden

Jamesville Community garden is the initiative of one woman, Mary Lee. It is located on the site of the Workers' Arts and Heritage Centre. At its inception, three years ago, people connected to the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits were encouraged to tend their own plots. However, it was decided the next year, to have only one large plot. About 10 volunteers

tend the garden and share in the harvest. The garden received a \$300 donation from a small foundation but this year the request was refused. However, Volunteer Hamilton helped out by finding a man who delivered soil and rototillers.

Jamesville Community Garden would like to expand by finding homeowners who have unused land suitable for gardening

Morden's Organic Farm

This 6th generation heritage organic farm is located in West Flamborough. A few years ago, the owners decided to offer 5 acres divided into 20 by 20 feet plots to individuals to create their own garden. Several families have rented plots for a fee of \$50; however, there are many more plots available.

NHCHC Paradise and Keith Neighbourhood Community Gardens

The Paradise Community Garden (formerly "North Hamilton Community Garden") grew out of the desire of NHCHC Health Promotion programs' participants to have a place to grow fresh food. With garden planning support from Neighbour To Neighbour, a temporary lease for a plot of land owned by the City of Hamilton was secured by NHCHC. Gardeners began tending their plots in 1995. A second garden, the Keith Neighbourhood Garden began in 2004. NHCHC provides some seeds, seedlings, tools and water and about 60% of a staff person's time to facilitate the operation of the gardens and food/gardening workshops throughout the gardening season. Potlucks and group work parties are held on a regular basis. The plots are leased for \$10/year and there is a waiting list. Plans are being made to expand the number of plots in late 2008. <http://www.northhamiltonchc.org/program.asp?program=2>

Today's Family Community Garden

Today's Family Early Learning and Child Care, a non-profit, charitable agency which provides child care services for more than 4000 children in Hamilton, Burlington and surrounding areas.

In 2007, as a result of the initiative of the staff at one of the centres, a plot of land between the centre and the Lincoln Alexander Parkway was leased for a nominal sum from the City, a grant of \$15,000 from the Trillium Foundation was obtained, planter boxes by the local secondary school were built and advice from the Mount Hamilton Horticulture Society was given, thus creating a community garden measuring 3700 sq ft.

Parents, staff and neighbours, including home child care providers and teen parents from St. Martins Manor, actively participate. No fee is charged for use of the plots. Further information of the living fence (corn and squash), collection of rain in barrels, etc. can be found in the 2007 annual report.

Today's Family hopes to begin community gardens at its other locations.

http://www.todaysfamily.ca/PDFs/Annual_Report_2007.pdf

West Highland Baptist Community Church Victory Garden and Plots

The West Highland Baptist Community Church Victory Garden and Plots is the initiative of one man, Bill Wilcox, who is a member of the West Highland Baptist Community Church. Gradually, the Church amassed 4 acres of adjacent land. Currently, there is a 1 ½ acre victory garden that produced 500 lbs of food for the local food bank last year; this year already 5000 lbs have been donated. Volunteers from the Church and the neighbourhood tend the community garden. However, more volunteers would be welcome.

In addition, there are about 100 plots that can be leased for \$25 per plot. Last year, seven plots were leased and this year the number increased to 42, with even more available for leasing next year.

Community Gardening in Hamilton Social Housing

According to Chris Murray, Director of Housing for the City of Hamilton, several social housing complexes have started community gardens, including one that began this summer at Oriole Crescent in the McQuesten neighbourhood.

Mr. Murray stated that his department is very supportive of community gardening and will give positive support to any tenant group that puts in a request to begin one. He would welcome representatives from HCGN to come and talk to tenant groups to stimulate their interest.

Individual initiatives

Individuals are also creating food gardens in their front and back yards and several have been highlighted by articles in *The Hamilton Spectator*.

7. Community gardening elsewhere

Toronto

As a result of Canada signing the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in 1976, which includes “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”, the City of Toronto voted in 2000 to become a food-secure city by striving to ensure, amongst other actions, a viable and sustainable food production system, including measures for people to grow some of their own food. The next year, the Toronto Food Charter was adopted along with an action plan *The Growing Season* to ensure food security.

http://www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf

The Toronto Community Garden network grew out of this framework. Foodshare, a community organization was founded in 1985 by the then-Mayor Art Eggleton. Its initial mandate was to coordinate food-bank agencies and referrals, through the Hunger Hotline, and to prepare a comprehensive report on the elimination of the growing problem of urban hunger. The establishment of community gardens was one of the strategies adopted and the City of Toronto assigned a staff person for six months to work with a staff person from Foodshare and 12 young people paid through Youth Service Canada to help local community groups start-up community gardens. Another outcome of this initiative was the writing and publication of a manual *How*

does our garden grow: a guide to Community Garden Success by Laura Berman (available at the Hamilton Public Library).

In July 2003, the Food and Hunger Action Committee of the City of Toronto published a report *Tending the Garden*. This report examines the implementation of the recommendations stated in *The Growing Season* and is the result of collaboration amongst many City of Toronto staff and community partners. The very extensive report highlights many projects that have been undertaken and makes very concrete recommendations
http://www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/tendingthegarden.pdf .

Foodshare, along with several other community organizations, created the Toronto Community Garden Network. Several staff members from different community organizations devote some of their time but there is no coordinator and as a result, no one person is formally responsible for the network. The network maintains several committees: organizational development, education, community advocacy, fundraising (although dormant at this time), and representatives from each of these committees are members of the steering committee. The TCGN has its own web site <http://www.tcgn.ca/wiki/wiki.php> and also publishes an on-line newsletter. The web site and newsletter are mostly maintained by volunteers.

According to one staff person at Foodshare, the TCGN offers more organizational development rather than technical expertise to groups. TCGN offers workshops on leadership development and knowledge and seed swaps and also advocates for ensuring sources of compost, etc. ¹ The City of Toronto Parks Department supports the setting up of community gardens and has a stated policy of having at least one per ward. The application form to apply to begin a community garden is found on its web site:
<http://www.toronto.ca/parks/programs/community.htm>.

The Toronto Community Housing also supports community gardening and many initiatives can be found on its web site: <http://www.torontohousing.ca/search/node/community+gardening>. This department has also published a manual on community gardening:
<http://www.torontohousing.ca/node/515>.

Kitchener-Waterloo

The Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region oversees the activities of 39 community gardens in the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge. The Council puts out a newsletter and hosts events at least twice a year. The Healthy Living division of the department of Health of the region of Waterloo, as part of its mandate to increase access to healthy food, provides administrative support to the Council by providing about 20% of the time of a staff person. The Council has also published a very detailed report on how to start a community garden.
<http://www.mycommunityinfo.ca>

1. Interview with Ravenna Barker, Community Food Programs Coordinator, Foodshare (416 363-6441, ext. 225). She states that she would be happy to share resources and have people attend the TCGN's workshops.

Furthermore, a Trillium Foundation grant has resulted in the hiring a full-time staff person on an 18-month contract to help sustain the existing gardens and provide support to community groups

who want to start a new garden. This person also has the mandate to bring about sponsorship and partnership agreements.

The City of Kitchener recognizes community gardens as a community development activity with far-reaching benefits. It has adopted a policy to provide direct grants to encourage beautification and food production. Community groups wishing to begin a community garden, either on city-owned property or elsewhere, may receive cash grant of up to \$500 and \$500 worth of in-kind services, such as soil, compost or rototilling.

http://www.kitchener.ca/award_prog/community_garden.html

Vancouver

The Vancouver Park Board, which operates the City's parks and recreation facilities, has adopted a Community Garden Policy (last revised in 2005). The policy states that "The Board recognizes community gardening as a valuable recreation activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction and community education. The Board will collaborate with interested groups in assisting the development of community gardens."

The policy also states that:

"The Board will support the development of community gardens in Vancouver through the following means:

- Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens.
- Assisting interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of community gardens. This inventory must include City-owned land, land controlled by other government agencies, and privately owned land.
- Assisting in the development of user agreements with the owners of sites chosen.
- Assisting with the development of a community led environmental education program. "

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/parks/comgardnpolicy.htm>

The City has published operational guidelines for Community Gardens on City owned land other than city parks. One notable feature is that the City takes on the cost of bringing water to the site before the first season.

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/projects/pdf/commgardensguide.pdf>

The City of Vancouver currently has 10 gardens on city park land, and many others on other types of land.

In 2006, the city council of Vancouver unanimously adopted a goal of 2,010 new "community shared garden plots" to be created before the 2010 Olympics to be developed by individuals, community groups and neighbourhood associations with assistance from the City. These plots could be traditional community gardens, or part of the City's Grow a Row, Share a Row program (private gardeners who grow extra food for local foodbanks and local neighbourhood programs) or City Farmer's Sharing Backyards program (homeowners who share the backyards with other city residents to form small-scale community gardens)

http://www.sharingbackyards.com/browse/Vancouver,BC&welcome_box=3

So far the “2,010” program has been very successful.

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/projects/2010gardens.htm#policies>

In 2007, the City unanimously adopted the Vancouver Food Charter.

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/policy/charter.htm>

Montreal

There have been community gardens in Montreal since 1936. Now that the new City of Montreal was created in 2002, there are over 97 gardens with more than 8,200 plots. The Montreal Botanical Gardens (MBG) was an important leader in helping to develop the city’s gardens and the program was once administered by the MBG. Currently, each borough, with assistance from the Department of Recreation and Community Development, manages the community gardens within its territory and provides land, water^{2 3}, soil as well as some tools and a garden shed for storage. In addition, garden staff are hired by the city to visit the gardens and provide advice to the gardeners. They have recently added some gardens specifically designed for persons with disabilities. There is a waiting list for plots, with some people having to wait more than two years before one become available.

http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_dad=portal&_pageid=66,3003509&_schema=PORTAL

In addition to the city-run gardens, Montreal has a wide variety of “jardins collectifs” (collective gardens). These are garden projects organized by community groups who recruit volunteers to help maintain the garden and in return the volunteers receive a share of the harvest. There are no private plots for the volunteers, the land and crops are organized in a communal fashion. Often the harvest is shared by giving half to the volunteers and half to the community organization (such as a food bank or a collective kitchen). The collective garden movement is widespread across Quebec, and they created a network in 2007 the “Regroupement des jardins collectifs du Quebec”. Many of the organizations that run collective gardens are local anti-poverty groups that encourage their members to joint the garden to gain access to free fresh organic, local food for themselves in exchange for their volunteer labour. Many collective gardens are part of an employability training project, and these gardens will give a greater portion of the harvest to community groups as the gardeners reap more than the food as their benefit.

<http://www.francvert.org/pages/31dossierlesjardinscollectifsuneinnov.asp>

<http://rjcq.ca/>

²The water is provided each season for free to the community gardeners. Water is not metered in Montreal.

Victoria

The city of Victoria adopted a Community Gardens Policy in September 2005. This policy is very detailed covering such topics as guidelines for selecting new sites on public property, conditions of use of City-owned property as well as a short summary of community gardening in other Canadian municipalities.

http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/cmmnty_garden_policy.pdf?zoom_highlight=community+gardens

Winnipeg

In 2006 the City of Winnipeg adopted a community garden policy which reads in part:

“The City of Winnipeg considers community gardens to be very beneficial in supporting healthy communities and improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods. They serve as a tool to achieve

desirable and quantifiable goals such as food security, neighbourhood stabilization and revitalization, reduction of crime, job training, recreation, therapy, and community building. ...

The City of Winnipeg recognizes community gardens as an asset to both the neighbourhood and the city. The City will work collaboratively with community groups to develop long term affordable plans for development and sustainability of community gardens. The establishment of creative strategic partnerships is key to identifying a wide range of opportunities and resources in support of community gardens.”

The Winnipeg policy also has an appendix with a review of community gardening efforts by other Canadian municipalities

<http://winnipeg.ca/publicworks/ParksandFields/CommunityGardens/communitygardens.asp>

Ontario Parks Association

The City of Hamilton Parks Department is a member of the Ontario Parks Association and, according to Mr. Dore, uses this Association to monitor trends for future planning. It is important to note that community gardens are part of this Association’s web site and that October 1 to 7 is designated as Public Community Gardens Week <http://www.opassoc.on.ca/comparkgarden.php>.

American Community Gardening Network

As expected, the America Community Gardening Network, which was founded in 1979, is very extensive and a vast array of information can be found on its web site

<http://communitygarden.org/>

8. Funding Sources

The following funding agencies could be approached to find out if they would fund the creation of community gardens in Hamilton.

- The Hamilton Community Foundation funds a range of local charities in arts and culture, education, the environment, health and social services. In June 2008, the HCF announced more than \$1.1 million in grants in its on-going grants to reduce and prevent poverty in Hamilton. The HCF has also supported a number of environmental initiatives in Hamilton.

<http://www.hcf.on.ca/>

- The Trillium foundation has funded many community garden projects http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/cms/en/app_materials.aspx?menuid=15

- The Evergreen foundation and Home Depot have funding programs

<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/about/media-press40.html> \

<http://corporate.homedepot.com/wps/portal/Grants> .

- Projects involving seniors and/or persons with disabilities can be funded through the New Horizons program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/community_partnerships/seniors/index.shtml

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/funding_programs/opportunities_fund/index.shtml

- An initiative, again in British Columbia, created a contest amongst community gardens, that was funded by several agencies

<http://www.drsociety.bc.ca/garden.htm>

- Environment Canada funds activities promoting environmental sustainability

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=A99C7098-1> .

- Bell Canada has a community development fund

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0LVZ/is_12_17/ai_90108613 .

- TELUS has a community and environmental involvement fund

http://about.telus.com/community/community_boards/en/community_funding/index.html

- The Toronto Dominion Bank has TD Foundation friends of the environment fund

<http://www.td.com/corporateresponsibility/crr2008/index.jsp>

9. The future of community gardening in Hamilton

Each garden is distinctive

The participants at the *Growing Community* event in March reflected the wide-ranging interest in community gardening. As indicated above, several community gardens already exist in Hamilton, each with its distinctive characteristics.

Need for a strong local promoting organization

Similar to other places, and except for city-run community gardens, the existing community gardens have been created out of the initiatives of one or two people for a variety of reasons. And, as with most successful community activities, the more connected to a local organization in the community, the more likely the endeavour will succeed.

Finding suitable land

Finding suitable land to begin a community garden is also a problem. Toronto has been very proactive in assuming the capital costs of turning some park and vacant lands into community gardens.

The City of Hamilton does not have a specific policy with regard to access to land for community gardens. Any group that has the funds to cover the capital costs could request the City to turn part of a park into a community garden. Furthermore, as in the case of Victoria Park, the consultation process prior to the redevelopment of an existing park could lead to the creation of one. Also, the City has leased vacant lands to several community organizations in order to

allow the establishment of a community garden. However, these leases are temporary and could be ended, thus closing down the community garden that has taken root.

Several sites in Hamilton were suggested at HCGN's March 25th event, which are listed in Appendix 2.

Linking rural with urban agriculture in Hamilton

Except for CSA, the literature on community gardens does not seem to touch on the subject of forging links between rural and urban agriculture.

As indicated above, Hamilton is an agricultural city. The Environment Hamilton map indicates that there are over 50 agricultural operations in the outer wards, including some such as Morden's Organic Farm in Dundas (#17) that offers space for community gardens.

McMaster University OPIRG has sponsored a local food tour in the Fall of 2008 to promote eating locally and sustainably. A bus takes participants on a tour of several farms and gardens and then ends with a locally and organically sourced meal and reception.

<http://opirgmcmaster.blogspot.com/>

More links amongst all agricultural producers in Hamilton, both big and small, full-time and part-time, rural and urban will certainly contribute to food security and enhance all production.

10. Recommendations to HCGN

Membership and structure

Community garden networks are generally loose structures that coalesce around one or two activities such as maintaining a web site and offering workshops. They seem to function through staff time borrowed, either implicitly or explicitly from cities and community organizations, or through volunteer efforts.

In Hamilton, the city has no direct representative on the HCGN. However, as part of its food security strategy, it is important that a city representative be named.

Mandate

The participants at the March 25th event listed numerous activities they would like the HCGN to take on. However, given the limited time and resources of the HCGN, that following roles should be given priority

Advocacy

First of all, every effort must be made to ensure that the Victoria Park community garden is built. To that end, interested people living in the adjacent area need to be found and encouraged to

form a group. Even though this garden will be managed by the City, an interested group could put pressure on the City to realize the plans and then have input into the actual design.

Furthermore, the City of Hamilton should be urged to adopt a more pro-active policy by agreeing to ensure that each ward has a community garden

Also, the HCGN should encourage local groups to ensure that a community garden is installed each time a park is redeveloped.

The establishment of links with existing agricultural producers in the outer wards could lead to positive support for urban community gardens and will greatly enhance their chances for success.

Information/web site/Technical expertise

Maintaining a web site that provides information and links to technical expertise is a crucial function for CGNS.

At present, a minimal web page was created by Green Venture and is found at http://www.naturallyhamilton.ca/community_garden

A web site should have an address that is easily accessible, be kept up to date and have links with other pertinent information. The HCGN should decide how the information is up-dated and then negotiate with Green Venture or another organization to host it.

Education/Training

As mentioned above, the TCGN offers workshops on leadership as well as on specific technical topics related to gardening. One volunteer leader of a community garden said that she found the workshop on leadership very helpful, especially with regard to the organizational aspects of maintaining the garden and dealing with interpersonal conflicts. The TCGN also lists many pertinent events and courses offered by other organizations.

<http://www.tcgn.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=CommunityEvents.FrontPage>.

Promoting community gardening through links with community organizations

Community gardens will always begin on an ad hoc basis. However, the following specific strategies could be pursued.

First, the neighbourhood associations should be made aware of community garden activities in their areas and their support solicited. Representatives from existing community gardens could ask to come and give a presentation at each of the neighbourhood associations' meetings. Even if the neighbourhood association does not undertake to begin a community garden, at least the members of the association will have some knowledge and be able to direct interested people to HCGN. Similarly, representatives could make presentations at tenant associations of Hamilton social housing.

Secondly, links should be made with SISO and other community organizations, whose clients are the most vulnerable and are the least access likely to have access to land for gardening. At the moment SISO has managed to allow a small number of its clients to be able to garden at

Churchill Community garden. However, the interest amongst new immigrants is greater than this small group and the HCGN could help more of their clients find garden space. HCGN could also stimulate the interest of other community organizations to help their clients start community gardens.

Finally, building on the example of Today's Family, approaches could be made to other daycares as well as the schools, colleges and universities.

Celebrating Community Gardens week in Hamilton

The Ontario Parks Association has named the week of October 1 to 7 Public Community Gardens Week. To mark this celebration, the City's Public Works Department could invite representatives from community gardens to celebrate their achievements.

11. Hamilton Community Garden Network Strategic Directions

The Hamilton Community Garden Network held two strategic planning sessions to identify directions for the network over the next six years based on the input from the March event participants. See Appendix 1 for the Timelines and Action Plan. The following immediate structural actions are an outcome of that planning.

Four sub-committees were formed to engage in the work generated by the timeline/Action Plan.

They are as follows:

1. **Fundraising** - This subcommittee is seeking individuals who have had experience in writing proposals, are comfortable with computer skills and who have research skills to investigate funding opportunities both financial and in kind.. The goal is to secure ongoing funding to ensure sustainability to meet our mandate
2. **Raising Our Profile** – This sub committee will address branding, media outreach, promotions, consistent messaging and website development. Skill sets for volunteers on this sub group would include – past marketing experience, writing skills, computer skills, website design, graphic design and public relations.
3. **Education and Policy** - This sub-committee is seeking individuals who enjoy researching, data collection, writing and designing power-point presentations. Interested people would be able to give a few hours per month to help achieve the following tasks:
 - Creation of Database to track the status and effect of community gardens/community gardening in Hamilton
 - Review existing literature linking community gardening to:
 - food security,
 - increased physical and mental health,
 - reduced social isolation,
 - neighbourhood beautification,
 - effect on housing prices in vicinity,

- Research cost/benefit of two main models of community gardens (garden coordinator vs. no garden coordinator)
 - Synthesize data and ideas collected into two powerful presentations: “Why we need more Community Gardens” (for policy makers) and “Start a Community Garden” (for community groups)
4. **Outreach & Communication** – This group will be responsible for HCGN outreach at Community Events and coordinating Public Interest Events (e.g. film screenings, annual garden tours). Helpful skills might include event planning, creative thinking and lots of energy.

These subcommittees will be actively engaged over the next 6 to 9 months. The monthly meeting structure was changed to include time for the subcommittee work.

1.5 hours → subcommittee meeting

1.5 hours → whole network meeting

APPENDIX 1 Timelines and Action Plans

Actions	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015
Raising Our Profile	Website Logo Branding Display Materials					
Funding & Resources	<u>Fund:</u> Marketing Action plan Display *Staff	Garden inputs/infrastructure		Internal, enhanced city staff/committee on community gardens		Sustainable budget Permanent staff Mainstream funding
Outreach & Communication	Special event display (eg. Booth) Public Event (eg. Film screening?) Regular email communication Idea list (for funding)	Annual public community garden tour	Annual public event – Eat food together	Annual Public Event	Annual Public Event “Bring Your Parent to Garden” theme	5 th Anniversary Visioning Event
Education -research -evaluation	Baseline data research -gardens (#s, what’s grown) -people -food security -social capital -environment *finding/augmenting community garden story	Baseline data Toolkit for Community Garden Leaders	Baseline data Evaluation	Baseline data Evaluation	Baseline data Evaluation	
Policy	Present report to CFS committee Present report to Public Works committee Comprehensive political presentation on the importance of CGs	2 year plan Presentation to advisory committees		Internal, enhanced city staff/committee on community gardens	City policy supporting community gardens	A culture of community gardening within Hamilton
Land Security						
Facilitating Partnerships		Have 5 new members invited and committed				

Appendix 2

HCGN March 25, 2008 Event: Report of mapping process

During the Hamilton Community Gardening Network launch event on March 25, a very large wall map with all the streets of Hamilton was displayed. Participants at the meeting were asked to put stickers on the map to indicate where they lived, where they knew of an existing community garden, and where they would like to see a community garden created. Maps 1 and 2 show the result of these questions.

Participants

Map 1 reveals that participants were drawn largely from the lower city within the City of Hamilton, which is not surprising considering most of Hamilton's population is in this area and the meeting was held in the downtown core. There was still a large geographical distribution of participants, from Ancaster to Stoney Creek and even one participant from Caledonia (not shown on map).

Existing gardens

The existing gardens identified by participants were mainly the same as the ones already on the HCGN directory. There were 7 gardens that were locations not yet identified by the HCGN. Two of the se "extra" locations were very close to HCGN identified gardens, and an analysis of satellite imagery from the areas just showed residential areas with private backyards. So perhaps in these cases, participants just were a bit unclear in their "mental map" where exactly the community garden existed and put the sticker in the wrong place. For the other locations, satellite imagery was also used to determine what was the present use of the locations, and most seem to indicate backyards of people's homes. Again, perhaps people may not have indicated the proper location as they were just going from memory or perhaps they were indicating a very informal community garden between themselves and some friends and neighbours. None of the "extra" locations has yet to be determined to be a formal community garden. It would be useful to survey the participants from this meeting by email to ask them to name the existing community gardens (i.e. name the sponsoring agency or land used) they know about and that way it might be easier to determine if these gardens should be added to the HCGN directory.

Potential locations for new gardens

Map 2 shows more detail of the locations identified by participants as potential sites for new community gardens. The most popular location identified was Victoria Park. Parks were in fact the most popular type of location suggested (12 out of 31 potential locations). Schools were also identified by multiple participants (including a few suggestions for McMaster University). At least three participants suggested different churches across the city. Two participants suggested land next to apartment towers including Oriole Crescent a City-owned housing complex in the McQuesten neighbourhood next to the Red Hill Valley (which in fact started a garden this summer). There were many suggestions for various undeveloped lots of privately owned land, such as the large lot at Barton and Ferguson and the undeveloped land near Stone Church and Upper James behind some rows of houses. For three of the locations identified it was hard to determine what they were referring to – again an email survey of participants would be helpful.

An email survey could also serve the purpose of identifying among these potential locations which one have a few participants willing to take leadership and get the ball rolling to take initial steps to determine if the location would be suitable for a community garden and if there is a community of people in the area willing to get involved in the creation and maintenance of garden.

Appendix 3

HCGN March 25, 2008 Event: Compiled Small Group Discussion Questions

1. What would you like to see in your community? How would you like to see your community?

A garden close to me; i.e. old Life Savers site or central
Grow free food – not buy growing
Effective communication – networking – knowledge
Community gardens lead to positive feeling within McQuesten
A place for people to get involved to be positive
Take over site and make garden
Children’s garden, partner with the high school and community at large (educational) – bringing people together (Saltfleet High school on mountain)
Bring congregation together to work at something – working to share food with the community (meal programs) (Fruitland Church)
Help group work as team
HUG revisited – backyards as garden plots
Network bulletin board
Contact landlords, people unable to till land
SISO needs volunteers for Churchill
Support newcomers
Children’s learning garden
Montessori school
St. James United Church, Dundas – small parcel of land to convert
Westdale plots at student rate, Churchill plot is expensive
Flamborough horticultural society – branching off to vegetables
RBG land at end of Bond St. as student plots
Rock chapel, RBG farm lands – buy back from farmers, new use, permaculture, horticulture societies
Dr. James Quinn at McMaster University and greenhouse
Hamilton’s green bin program, where does it go? – waste diversion
Flowers
Less grass
More trees along the road
Walking parties/groups
Less isolation
Food supply
Bike paths
Safe walking
Benches
Community ownership and involvement
Sidewalks

No pesticide use in public spaces
 Cleaner
 More cohesive (greener, colourful/see your community)
 More land for gardening downtown
 Less parking lots
 Municipal support
 Neighbourhood builder; help new comers
 Environmental – sustainability
 Develop resources – pass information
 Upper Gage & Mohawk – works with Scott Duvall, city Councilor
 More community involvement, more awareness of CG
 More education...pesticides use (ban on pesticides), CG's, enviro issues, biodiversity
 More gardens in East mountain/ Upper Gage & Mohawk
 Business involved, but also sharing between Gardeners
 Less vandalism
 Garden social
 Space to organize
 \$ problems
 Garden diversity in infrastructure (e.g., fruit, grapes for wine, bake ovens, etc.)
 gardens on vacant land (former squash club)
 less turf/more naturalized areas
 diversity of gardens and opportunities
 community market for community produced vegetables
 gardens/parks as a place for public art
 more gardens, brownfields—why not? Even green space
 would like to meet neighbours
 more inclusion for Rec Centres
 more markets in neighbourhoods
 bring food closer, bring farmers to neighbourhoods
 more walkable communities
 more greening of gray and brown spaces
 using our resources more responsibly
 like to see people having more control over their food supply

2. “Communities are made up of people that work together, participating on local initiatives. They bring their individual skills, assets, perspectives and abilities to the table.”

(a) What skills or assets could you bring to a community garden in your community?

Labour, digging
 Networking & PR
 Leadership
 Herb use
 Asset based inclusive gardens
 Engagement, McQuestion

Free land – McQueston City Of Hamilton
Bring in the youth
Knowledge of gardening
Role as educator – plan programs for children
Donations from congregations
Land and passion / looking for equipment and people – how to do this? Caistor Centre
Church – sponsors land, institutions
Youth – time, energy, enthusiasm
Gardening experience & knowledge
Commitment
Strategic direction
Fundraising
Canning and preserving
Sharing plants, seeds
Organizing people and actions
Teaching
Engagement/promotions
Seed saving
Garage sale hunting (tools)
Compost
Stonechurch West for finding spaces – Sir Allan MacNab School
Knowledge/teammates/tools
Labour- skills, truck
Knowledge about composting
Teach about medicinal plants (N.D.)
Awareness/publicity – outreach through councilor’s office
Teach about biodiversity! Plants to grow in our climate
Getting businesses involved in CG (to help find support for the gardens)
Garden experience
tools
labour
flowers/plant materials/seeds
ecological knowledge/plant knowledge
permaculture design/IPM experience
grant writing/fundraising expertise
healthy ecosystem approach (expertise) – demonstration/education
knowing how to communicate with disparate groups
raising awareness, education, be an advocate, be a support, use food growing skills
teaching people how to use the food – what’s good for body – Nutritious
freezing workshop
teaching herb workshops
problem solver
doing stretches in the garden – massage therapist
community garden coordinator

(b) What skills/assets etc could you bring to community gardening in the city at large?

Networking & PR
Partnership
Fundraising, computer skills
Importance of networking really helpful
Social housing/director of Public Housing/ community sources, head of City Housing, Hamilton
E.g., Royal Crescent
City council seems ready to discuss, not a hard sell
Approach Brian as a group and find out what he thinks would be needed to get council's support
People who have time – seniors
Technology, neighbours, corps, spaces
Schools, friends, family. neighbourhoods
Radio shows, ads, posters, articles, flyers, fact sheet, multi-skill
A framework for getting it started/promotion
Network
Fundraising
Letter writing
Policy development – briefing notes to councilors, external group presentations
Sharing experience/knowledge
Info and technology – auto lights/water for CGs...in areas with troubles to help maintain CG
IT support/info
How to start ??
Willingness to make an effort
Gut Drive consistence
Proposals, donations, administration, advocacy work
Website design
Good communication skills
Contacts
Good planner
Advocate through work – positive model
Media contacts – writing stories

3. What would you like to see from the Hamilton Community Garden Network?

Web based resource
Email list
_____Supporting committees to develop gardens
Coordinate volunteers – organize the engagement of volunteers
Helping communities share wealth and assets with other communities
Network communities – umbrella
Joint harvesting/canning
Outreach to Six Nations
More events that are city wide - sharing of information

Accessing land
Guidelines on best practices
Advocacy with the City Of Hamilton corporate sponsorship; i.e. Rona, Lowes, Etc.
Network could give credibility
This is a great start, great foundation – getting list
Some sort of hotline
Who to go to with a specific question (soil testing) – how start raised beds – wood, etc.
More workshops
Website with information
List of workshops
Online bulleting board re gardening resources
Find spaces
Promoting spaces through media
Teaching, info, hands-on, getting started rototilling/tools
Ongoing resource for existing gardens
Legal protection for co-gardens (food share)
Promoting volunteerism/getting people involved
Soil testing/analysis – 5 W’s
Mentorship
List community resources – people, networking e.g preservers, seed savers
Sponsorship opportunity strategies
RBG; e.g., get central teaching gardens
Urban and rural folks working together
Student hrs/coop
4H clubs – youth in rural areas
2 resources: Toronto Community Housing Resource – online, pdf; North Hamilton
Garden Improvement helpline
get you outside
bulk purchases
events, social, knowledge events
advocacy/policy
coordinate volunteers
seed trading, plant sales
harvest festival
show you can grow food
self-esteem
contact
local food communities
potential spaces
local food
May FRWY
Deal with issues
Develop partnerships with interested groups & ppl
Creating awareness through different mediums
Workshops – different kinds of gardening, deals on purchasing between individuals,
process/ procedures re getting a garden started

Help – guidelines, different ways things can be run
Lead to get you started (someone who's done it)
Go to person (Resource, someone to come out and help)
Facilitate food sharing with food banks for those in need
Use donated materials from members (facilitate this)
Lawfield Arena, Mountain trail
City providing land
Gardens in the core
Chris Murray – Dir Social Housing
Insurance issues
Whose land? City's? – 3rd party
Ok to clean but not to plant
Public access to information
Access to city property – room, meeting space
Coordination body
Relationship with City Of Hamilton access to funding
Network of skills/expertise
Community garden manual (practical focus)
Legal/zoning help (e.g. waivers)
Respond to questions about gardens
Link gardeners to land
Means of connecting people who garden in their yards – block parent type signs
Think about ecology of neighbourhoods – soils, trees, water movement
Developing positive networks with schools, community centres, city, etc.
Provide seedlings – not just vegetables, also local trees and other native vegetation
“Experts on call” – call in radio show, phone hotline
preserving workshops (organizing knowledge)
seed and seedling exchange
more awareness
more gardens
collective mass for lobbying
focused group to oversee barriers
opportunities for networking inter-garden
increasing knowledge flow
campaigns awareness
grassroots – support (for small groups)
help to centralize – create protocol for City networking

Terms of Reference for the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee

Mandate:

To develop a food continuum policy and strategic action plan that will move Hamilton towards being a place where all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.

Objectives:

- Develop a comprehensive community and city-wide policy that leads to community food security
- Create multi-sector partnerships and networks, including councillors, public health, city departments, non profit organizations, farmers and the volunteer sector to develop the infrastructure needed to achieve sustainable food systems
- Recommend strategic actions and specific policy/by-law changes to support and enhance community food security
- Raise awareness about food system issues among Hamiltonians
- Ensure that a municipal economic development plan supports
 - land use policies that facilitate urban agriculture
 - local food businesses in low income neighbourhoods
 - increased community capacity for self-reliance for nutritious food
- Support local farmers with Eat Local initiatives
- Support Food Disclosure Systems in the food service industry
- Keep apprised of relevant monitoring and research initiatives and identify potential gaps
- Encourage innovation and community development by providing technical support to local organizations (e.g. research, grant writing)
- Advocate for an approach to physical planning that provides for sustainable agriculture
- Ensure that the perspectives of persons and communities who are experiencing food insecurity are taken into consideration
- Develop and maintain an annual work plan

Membership:

Stakeholders (10-12) representing, but not limited to:

- the agricultural community, preferably a member of the City of Hamilton Agricultural and Rural Affairs Advisory Committee
- local environmental groups including Eat Local Committee
- emergency food service providers
- social service advocates and/or providers
- Poverty Roundtable (corresponding member)
- researchers
- relevant labour organizations
- food industry (production, retail and/or food services)
- those directly experiencing food insecurity

City Councillors:

- Councillor Bratina
- Councillor McHattie
- Councillor Pasuta

City of Hamilton staff (6 – 8) non-voting members/technical support representing:

- Public Health Services (3-4 with expertise in nutrition, policy and health protection)
- Community Services (1-2)
- Planning Economic Development Department (1-2)
- Public Works Department (1)

Each stakeholder group will assign a member to sit on the committee. At maximum, membership term coincides with the term of City Council. A person's membership ceases if three consecutive meetings are missed.

In the event that there are more than 12 interested representatives from the stakeholders group, members will be selected through an application and interview process and approved by the Board of Health and Council.

Alternates may attend when necessary, with voting privileges.

Quorum will be reached when 10 members are present, five of whom are community stakeholder representatives (exclusive of the co-chairs.)

Sub-Committees and/or Work Groups will be struck and appointed by the Stakeholder Sub-Committee as per need to address specific topics, issues or questions (i.e., Eat local policy committee for the city, good food box work group.)

Chair:

The Committee will have two Co-Chairs, one a community representative and one a Councillor.

Minutes:

Minutes will follow the City of Hamilton template. Clerical support from Public Health Services will compile and circulate minutes to members within seven days of the meeting. Minutes will be included on the Board of Health agenda for information and any

recommendations needing approval would be included in a report from the committee Chairs. Minutes will be circulated to interested corresponding members.

Reports to:

Board of Health

Frequency of Meetings:

Monthly, or at minimum quarterly and also at the call of the Chair.

No meetings to be held during the months of July, August and December unless called by the Chairs.

Work Group or Sub-committee meetings will be scheduled as required.

Review of Terms of Reference:

To be reviewed on an annual basis, at a minimum.

Approved on: November 26, 2007

Amended on February 23, 2009