

DATE OF MEETING 2023-MAY-17

AUTHORED BY DEBORAH BECK, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLANNER

**SUBJECT DOUGLAS ISLAND GARDEN SOCIETY (DIGS) PARTNERS IN  
PARKS PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To seek committee approval to award Partners In Parks funding to Douglas Island Garden Society (DIGS).

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council award \$25,000 from the 2023 Partners In Parks (PIP) Program Fund, to the DIGS proposed community garden improvements.

## **BACKGROUND**

Douglas Island Garden Society (DIGS) was formed in 2007, as part of a Volunteers in Parks project to create a community garden at Smugglers Park. The park is 10.45 acres in size, located on Protection Island, and is zoned PRC-1 and PRC-2. The majority of the property is naturalized parkland and a wildlife corridor, but a section of the park along Captain Morgan's Boulevard, is the location of a sports court, open field and the community garden. The community garden is approximately 1,200m in size and is operated by DIGS under an agreement with the City.

The DIGS garden is unique in that half of the garden consists of allotment beds and the other half are communal gardening beds. These communal beds are maintained by volunteers who share produce with islanders and are often utilized as teaching beds. The DIGS garden is also the location for the "Little Diggers" program, a program to share the love of gardening with young people. A small greenhouse is also part of the garden property.

The activities of DIGS supports City Plan policy relating to food security. In particular, item C3.4.5 "collaborate and partner with community organizations to support food system activities on City owned land".

The PIP program was initiated by City Council in 1982 to develop neighbourhood parks and projects. Each year, approximately \$100,000 is budgeted to the program and neighbourhood representatives work with City staff to develop their projects to apply to have a portion of the funds allocated to their project.

## **DISCUSSION**

The group are seeking funds to replace the original, aging, beds and to replace the small greenhouse with a larger one in order to support increased activity in the garden. Depending upon

fund raising success, the group would also like to add electrical and water supply to the greenhouse.

It is estimated that the total project cost is \$40,000. The group expects to be able to fundraise \$15,000 with the remaining \$25,000 to be allocated by the City using PIP funds.

If approved, a project account will be set aside for the DIGS community garden amenity improvements. All disbursements from the account will be City-controlled. Fundraising proceeds can be added to the City account and the project will not proceed until the fundraising, as outlined in the delegation's proposal is successful. |

## **OPTIONS**

1. | That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council award \$25,000 from the 2023 Partners In Parks (PIP) Program Fund, to the Douglas Island Garden Society (DIGS) proposed community garden improvements.
  - **Budget Implication:** \$25,000 from the 2023 PIP account will be put towards completing this PIP project in 2023.
  - **Policy Implication:** The PIP program is consistent with City Plan which supports creation of recreation facilities through community partnerships. This project is particularly relevant to policy pertaining to Food security; C3.4.13 "Continue to support local food infrastructure on City owned lands, including ... community gardens".
  - **Engagement Implication:** Community engagement has been carried out under the PIP process.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee provide alternate direction |

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The garden beds located in the DIGS community garden are at the end of their life and need to be replaced.
- With the growing volunteer activity and garden production, there is a need to replace the greenhouse with a larger unit.
- Residents have requested \$25,000 for community garden amenity improvements at this location through the Partners in Parks Program.
- Residents have been actively pursuing fund raising opportunities and additional sources of funding for this project.
- Staff recommends that the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council award \$25,000 from the 2023 Partners In Parks (PIP) Program funds, to the Douglas Island Garden Society (DIGS) proposed community garden improvements.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Douglas Island Garden Society PIP Proposal

ATTACHMENT B: Douglas Island Garden Society PIP Project Site Plan|

**Submitted by:**

Deborah Beck  
Parks and Open Space Planner

**Concurrence by:**

Charlotte Davis  
Manager, Parks Operations

Art Groot  
Director, Facility & Parks Operations

Richard Harding  
General Manager,  
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Laura Mercer  
Director, Finance Department

Jake Rudolph  
CAO