



REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: **Mayor Schaffer and Councillors**

Subject **Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project**

Report #: 18-14

From: Roy M. Beddow, MCIP, RPP
Deputy Director of Development Services &
Economic Development

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive the Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project plan and report prepared by Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Institute for Sustainable Food Systems;
2. THAT Council direct staff to investigate the business case for future phases of the project including funding partners, community resources and neighbourhood support.

PURPOSE:

To consider a proposal from Kwantlen Polytechnic University for the development of an urban agriculture project in the BC Hydro Right-of-Way between 200 Street and 204 Street.

POLICY:

The subject property is designated "Institutional" in Schedule "A" – Land Use Designation Map of "Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2005, No. 2600" and is zoned P1 Public Institutional/Recreation Zone in "Zoning Bylaw, 1996, No. 2100".

The City's *Sustainability Framework* identifies "Exploring partnership opportunities for developing urban farms within the City – Example: within the BC Hydro Right-of-Way" in the "Health, Safety and Well-Being" focus area.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

1. Background

The concept of using this portion of the BC Hydro Right-of-Way for urban agriculture was first identified in the City's 2009-2011 Corporate Strategic Plan which listed as a goal, "Explore the possibility of creating an urban farm at the BC Hydro Right-of-Way". In May 2010 the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture at Kwantlen Polytechnic University shared an illustrative site development concept plan with City staff and in 2011 submitted a Project Proposal including work plan for a "Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project" (LUADP). City staff and KPU used the preliminary plans to seek funding sources for the project and in 2016 made application through Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Innovation Fund. The application was successful and Metro Vancouver provided \$50,000 for the preparation of a detailed urban agriculture plan. Under the terms of the funding agreement, KPU in partnership with the City of Langley will deliver a site development plan and a project report with construction and operating budgets and process and lessons for application in other municipalities in the region.

The objectives of the project were to:

- demonstrate leadership in sustainability,
- transform underutilized city owned lands,
- establish urban agriculture in a utility corridor,
- enhance food system resiliency,
- contribute to local food production,
- broaden the local economy,
- provide recreational opportunities,
- provide educational opportunities,
- leverage partnerships with academic institutions, and
- share process, practices and findings with other local governments in the region.

2. Oversight and Participants

The project partners established an internal stakeholder group to lead the project made up of representatives from Metro Vancouver, KPU, the City of Langley and BC Hydro. This planning team consulted with an "Interagency Group", external stakeholders, neighbourhood residents and the broader public throughout the process. The tables below summarize the participants in the process.

Internal Stakeholders (Project Planning Team)

Staff from:

- Metro Vancouver
- KPU Institute for Sustainable Food Systems

- City of Langley
- BC Hydro

Interagency Group

Staff from:

- BC Ministry of Agriculture
- Agricultural Land Commission
- Fraser Health Authority
- School District No. 35
- Township of Langley
- City of Surrey
- Kwantlen First Nation

External Stakeholders

Partial List:

- Langley Environmental Partners
- Nicomekl Enhancement Society
- Langley Field Naturalists
- BC Food Systems Network
- Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation
- SFU Urban Studies
- UBC Land and Food Systems
- Farm Folk City Folk
- Langley Food Bank
- Langley Community Farmers Market

Neighbourhood Residents

Communication:

- 673 Households in adjacent areas mailed invitations to open houses
- 38 Residents participated in project email list

General Public

Communication:

- Media Release
- Newspaper Advertisements
- Website
- Social Media

3. Process

Kwantlen Polytechnic University conducted soil sampling and analysis in January 2017. A project launch meeting with internal stakeholders was held on February 16, 2017. Having established a project website in April 2017, the team hosted an initial community open house on May 10, 2017. The meeting was well attended and the input received was compiled and analyzed in the following weeks. Throughout the summer, the project team developed three conceptual plan options for the site which were then presented to the public at a second community open house on September 19, 2017. The second open house was also well attended and the project team used the public input on the three conceptual plans to identify the preferred elements and refinements to be incorporated into a final plan. A draft of the final plan and accompanying report complete with management plans and budgets was presented for discussion at a Council Working Session meeting on February 19, 2018.

The table below highlights the key meetings and project milestones:

February 16, 2017		Internal Stakeholder Meeting # 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project launch meeting
March 29, 2017		Internal Stakeholder Meeting # 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review BC Hydro ROW restrictions • Discuss UA amenities
April 20, 2017		Interagency Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intergovernmental consultation
May 8, 2017		City Council Working Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction to project & work plan • review findings of soil testing
May 10, 2017		Community Open House #1 (Alice Brown Elementary School) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce project to neighbourhood residents and the general public • introduce concept of urban agriculture (UA) and provide information about UA amenities • seek input on suitable UA amenities for site and any other comments from public
June 29, 2017		Internal Stakeholder Meeting #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review public input • Evaluate UA amenities
August 29, 2017		Internal Stakeholder Meeting #4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review three conceptual plans

September 19, 2017		Community Open House #2 (Alice Brown Elementary School) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present three conceptual plan options for public feedback
October 25, 2017		Internal Stakeholder Meeting #5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review public input • Identify components for final plan based on feedback on three options from COH #2
February 19, 2018		City Council Working Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on process and consultation • Feedback on draft plan and next steps
March 5, 2018		Regular City Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of plan and project report

4. Public Input

The principal sources of public input on the Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project were the two community open houses noted previously. In addition, City and KPU staff received written correspondence (by mail and email) and telephone calls from a number of residents. In general, while the public supported some specific elements of the conceptual plans presented such as, maintaining and improving the existing trail network and enhancing and restoring environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat, a number of concerns were expressed about developing the site for urban agriculture, including:

- Why was this site chosen for urban agriculture?
- Use serves those not living in neighbourhood
- Increased traffic and non-resident parking in neighbourhood
- Disruption to neighbourhood peace and quiet
- Loss of privacy
- Increased potential for crime and homelessness
- Safety concerns around powerlines (particularly for children)
- Pest infestation, particularly rats
- Poor aesthetics (shabby structures and garden plots)
- Nuisance from agricultural operations – dust, odours, pesticide use
- Loss of wildlife habitat

A majority of those who provided input during the consultation process did not support the use of the site for urban agriculture. The respondents who provided input on preferred amenities for the site generally favoured:

- Low intensity cultivation in limited areas
- Education-themed amenities

- Maintaining or enhancing the trail network
- Maintaining emphasis on passive recreational use
- Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat
- Restoring riparian and other environmentally sensitive areas

5. Site Plan

The site plan provided by KPU is comprised of three urban agricultural production amenities:

The Farm:	Organic vegetable production plots, cut flower gardens and farm hub with storage, water supply and other infrastructure
The Classroom:	Outdoor classroom with demonstration plots and raised beds for instruction
The Orchard:	Production and demonstration areas of dwarf trees and shrubs for fruits, nuts and berries

The production amenities form the heart of the plan but non-production amenities occupy the largest portion of the site area. Non-production amenities consist of:

Buffer Planting Areas:	Areas of natural planting for separating activities or transitioning between uses. Buffer planting areas separate areas of public use from private residential properties.
Habitat Areas:	Riparian (Muckle Creek and Pleasantdale Creek) and wetland areas for restoration and enhancement.
Pollinator Corridor:	Landscaped strips along pathways designed and planted to support wild pollinators including birds, bees, butterflies and other insects.

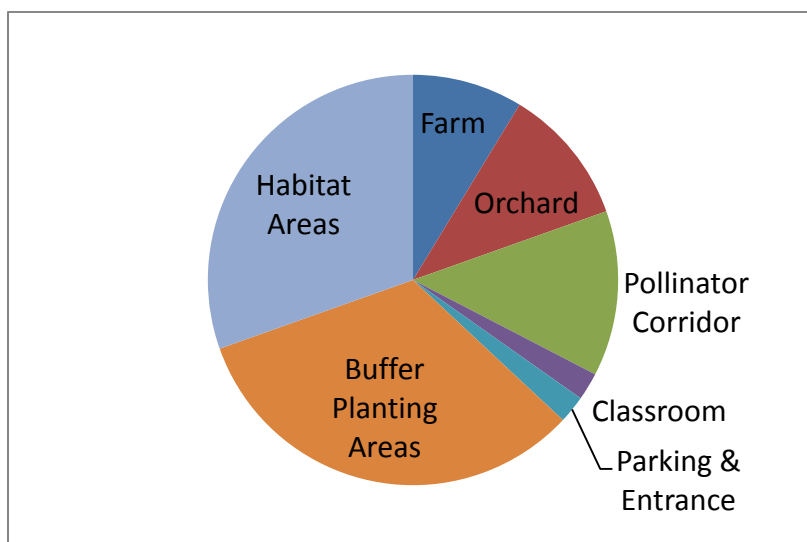
The amenities in the plan are supported by site servicing and infrastructure including:

Vehicular Access:	A single right-in, right-out access at 200 Street
Parking:	A gravel parking area for a maximum 15 spaces near the 200 Street entrance to the site
Toilets:	Pit toilets are proposed to be located in close proximity to the farm hub
Pathways:	All existing pathways on the site will be maintained with some additional connections provided within the site
Fencing:	To be provided as required for delineating and protecting crops from wildlife damage

Water:	A water connection will be provided near the 202 Street right-of-way to provide for drip irrigation of cultivated areas
Electrical:	An electricity connection will be provided to service the Farm Hub
Signage:	Wayfinding, identification and educational signage will be provided to support site operations

The site plan strikes a balance between food production, recreation, habitat protection and neighbourhood integration reflecting the sustainability objectives of the project, the characteristics of the site (including the BC Hydro restrictions) and the public consultation process. In order to minimize the impact of farm operations and infrastructure on the surrounding area, the final plan allocates a relatively small area for agricultural production. The majority of the site area is comprised of habitat areas and planted buffer areas as shown in the following table and chart.

Component/Use	Area (acres)	% Total
Farm	2.0	8.7
Orchard	2.5	10.9
Pollinator Corridor	3.0	13.0
Classroom	0.5	2.2
Parking & Entrance	0.5	2.2
Buffer Planting Areas	7.5	32.6
Habitat Areas	7.0	30.4
Total	23.0	100.0



In staff's view, the LUADP plan offers an attractive vision for incorporating food production and education within the BC Hydro Right-of-Way while restoring or enhancing wildlife habitat, maintaining trail connections and minimizing impacts on neighbouring properties.

6. Management Plan

The LUADP report recommends the establishment of a non-profit society "to manage and coordinate day-to-day operations on the site...." The non-profit society would be governed by a steering committee made up of representatives from the community, the City of Langley, BC Hydro, School District No. 35 and a farm manager (a paid position to be created). The society would oversee the operation of the site through a site use agreement.

The management plan includes preliminary budgets for the construction and operation of the project as follows:

<i>Capital Expenses</i>	
Site Servicing	\$716,000
The Farm	\$61,000
The Classroom	\$34,750
The Classroom	\$32,700
Pollinator Garden	\$26,700
Buffer Planting & Habitat Restoration	\$110,075
Total	\$981,225

<i>Operating Expenses</i>	
General Maintenance	\$17,000
Staffing	\$60,000
Farm Operations	\$9,000
Orchard Operations	\$2,000
Classroom Operations	\$7,500
Total	\$95,500

The report also suggests annual revenue for the project from grants, donations and farm product sales.

Next Steps

The Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project provides a detailed plan for how the BC Hydro Right-of-Way can be developed for urban agriculture. However, there is no funding in place to implement the plan or move forward with any subsequent phases. A significant fundraising initiative is therefore a prerequisite for advancing the project.

In addition to financial support, LUADP also requires strong community support in order to be successful. Community support from organizations and individuals is necessary to operate the project on a sustainable basis. While much can be achieved with volunteers and partnerships, a strong relationship with residents and property owners in the adjacent neighbourhoods is also vital. The public engagement process revealed significant opposition to the project within the adjacent neighbourhoods.

In order to consider the viability of moving forward with the project, it is recommended that a business case analysis be undertaken to assess:

- a) The availability of partners for capital and operational funding;
- b) The level of volunteer support for management and operations from non-profit agencies and individuals in the community;
- c) The potential for gaining neighbourhood support.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

The recommended business case analysis will require City staff time to complete. Where budget may be required to retain assistance from outside consultants, staff will bring forward a report accordingly for that purpose.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Receive the Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project plan and report for information.
2. Receive the Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project plan and report and direct staff to seek external funding sources for implementation of the plan.

3. Receive the Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project plan and report and consider funding future phases of the plan as part of the 2019 budget deliberations.
4. Receive the Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project plan and report and consider incorporating urban agriculture elements as part of a future park planning process for the BC Hydro Right-of-Way.

Respectfully Submitted,



Roy M. Beddow, MCIP, RPP
Deputy Director of Development Services
& Economic Development

Attachment(s):

1. Langley Urban Agriculture Demonstration Project (Plan and Report)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I support the recommendation.



Francis Cheung, P. Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer