

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space
Meeting Date: October 21, 2020
Report Code: CS-20-120
Subject: Stobbe Park Community Garden Request and Transition of Use

Recommendations:

That in consideration of Staff Report CS-20-120 respecting the request to establish a community garden at Stobbe Park, Community Services Committee recommends Council:

- 1) Authorize staff to proceed with a modified process for considering the request to transition the use from a passive park to a community garden site; and
- 2) Authorize staff to facilitate future community garden requests at locations approved by the Community Garden Policy exclusive of section 6.6 of the Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan – Recommended approach for repurposing of park lands.

Strategic Initiative:

3.1 Promote Owen Sound as "Where you want to live"

7.2 Continue to facilitate affordable recreation opportunities

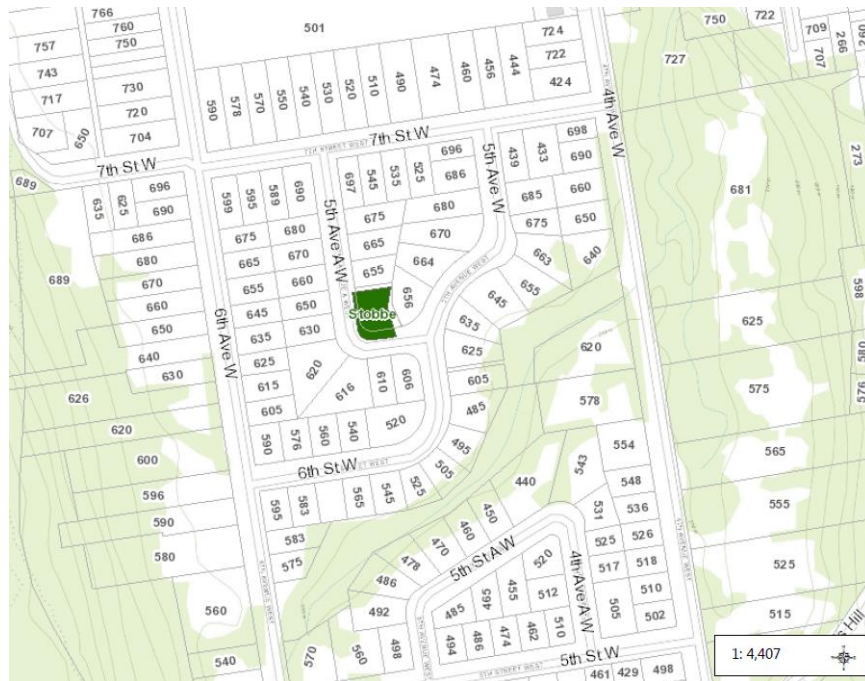
7.3 Encourage lifelong learning opportunities

8.3 Foster and maintain inclusive public spaces by expanding the role of citizen engagement, education and other partnerships

14. Maintain, improve and promote the use of our local parks and trails

Background:

On January 6, 2020, Mr. Jake Bates contacted the City with a request that a community garden be established at Stobbe Park, located between 655 5th Avenue 'A' West and 656 5th Avenue 'A' West.



At the February 19, 2020 meeting of the Community Services Committee, report [CS-20-020 Stobbe Park Community Garden Request – Process for Evaluation and Neighbourhood Consultation](#) outlined the request, and the process outlined in the Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan for transition of use for a park property from an existing passive park to a community Garden.

In 2011, the City developed a [Community Gardens Policy](#) to support opportunities for volunteer organizations to engage in urban agriculture on passively-used green space. As a component of the Community Gardens policy development, a public meeting to gather community input was held on June 2, 2011. The meeting was promoted under the City's banner in the Sun Times newspaper, and direct email was sent to parties who had expressed interest in the project.

The policy states that:

Community garden projects provide the opportunity for numerous community and individual gains, including (but not limited to):

- *Mental and physical health promotion through the activity of food production;*
- *The opportunity for social engagement with family, neighbours and fellow gardeners;*
- *Contribution to the creation of a sustainable local food economy;*
- *Development of important food production and gardening skills;*
- *The opportunity to re-establish the community's understanding of the importance of agriculture and local food systems; and*
- *Contribution to civic enrichment and beautification.*

The Community Garden Policy provides a list of approved community garden sites:

- 28th St. Tot Lot
- Maitland Park
- Stobbe Park
- Comm-r-ette Park
- St. Georges Park
- Ed Taylor Park
- Bill Inglis Park
- Timbur McArthur Park

A map of these locations from the policy is included as Attachment 1.

Since 2011, community gardens have been established successfully at St. Georges Park, Charlie Kelly Parkette, and along the City's harbourfront.

As noted in the February report, the [City's Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan](#) identifies an 8 step process for the transition of use of a park:

Transition of Recreational Use Process Steps
1. City staff identify and recommend park to consider for repurposing to new recreational use. Council consideration to confirm direction, including public input.
2. Assess current conditions of park and assess alternatives.
3. Survey residents within 500 metres of park to gather data on park usage.
4. Hold public meeting with surrounding residents and stakeholders to discuss alternatives.

Transition of Recreational Use Process Steps
5. Based on public feedback, select preferred alternative and present to committee/Council for consideration.
6. Develop a preliminary design and action plan.
7. Hold public meeting to discuss preliminary design and action plan.
8. Present final plan to Committee/Council for approval.

In the interim, since the request was forwarded by Mr. Bates to the City, a community garden was established at Charlie Kelly Parkette at the base of 6th Street East using a streamlined process.

Report [CS-20-067 Request respecting use of Charlie Kelly Parkette- Bruce Hall](#), outlined the transition of the Parkette from one park type use to a community garden type use that was ultimately approved by Council.

The purpose of this report is to address a process where a site has been identified as an approved community garden location in the approved Community Garden Policy.

Analysis

In response to the initial request, Parks staff performed an assessment and inventory of Stobbe Park on June 5, 2020. The report is included as Attachment 2 - Stobbe Park, Existing Conditions and Inventory June 5, 2020.

Specifically relating to community gardens, staff recommend that locations identified in the Community Garden Policy be exempt from the requirement to exercise the full 8 step transition of use process outlined in the Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan. Rather, such a request would be subject to a modified process.

Staff recommend a 4 step process (Attachment 3) to facilitate community garden requests that align with approved locations and clauses of the Community Garden Policy. The revised process still includes a public process to obtain input only where the location is not an approved Community Garden site as per the Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan.

For the purpose of the Stobbe Park request, staff recommend moving forward with a public meeting because both the proponent and neighbours were advised there would be an opportunity for public input ahead of the 2021 gardening season. Staff will evaluate the success of the revised process to incorporate into an updated Recreation Parks and Facilities Master Plan.

Pending the outcome of the neighbourhood consultation and the provision of an approved site plan, a community garden site could be prepped by Parks and Open Space staff as per the City's Community Garden Policy.

Section 4 of the [Community Garden Policy](#) outlines the City's role in supporting the establishment of an approved community garden, including removing the turf and turning soil in accordance with an approved site plan.

Financial/Budget Implications:

Prior to establishing an approved site plan, actual costs cannot be determined. The City's responsibilities outlined in the Community Garden Policy can be achieved within the typical Parks and Open Space annual operating budget.

Communication Strategy:

This report to Community Services Committee for Council's consideration

Consultation:

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Kristan Shrider, Senior Manager of Property and Parks & Open Space

Amy Cann, Manager of Planning & Heritage

Attachments:

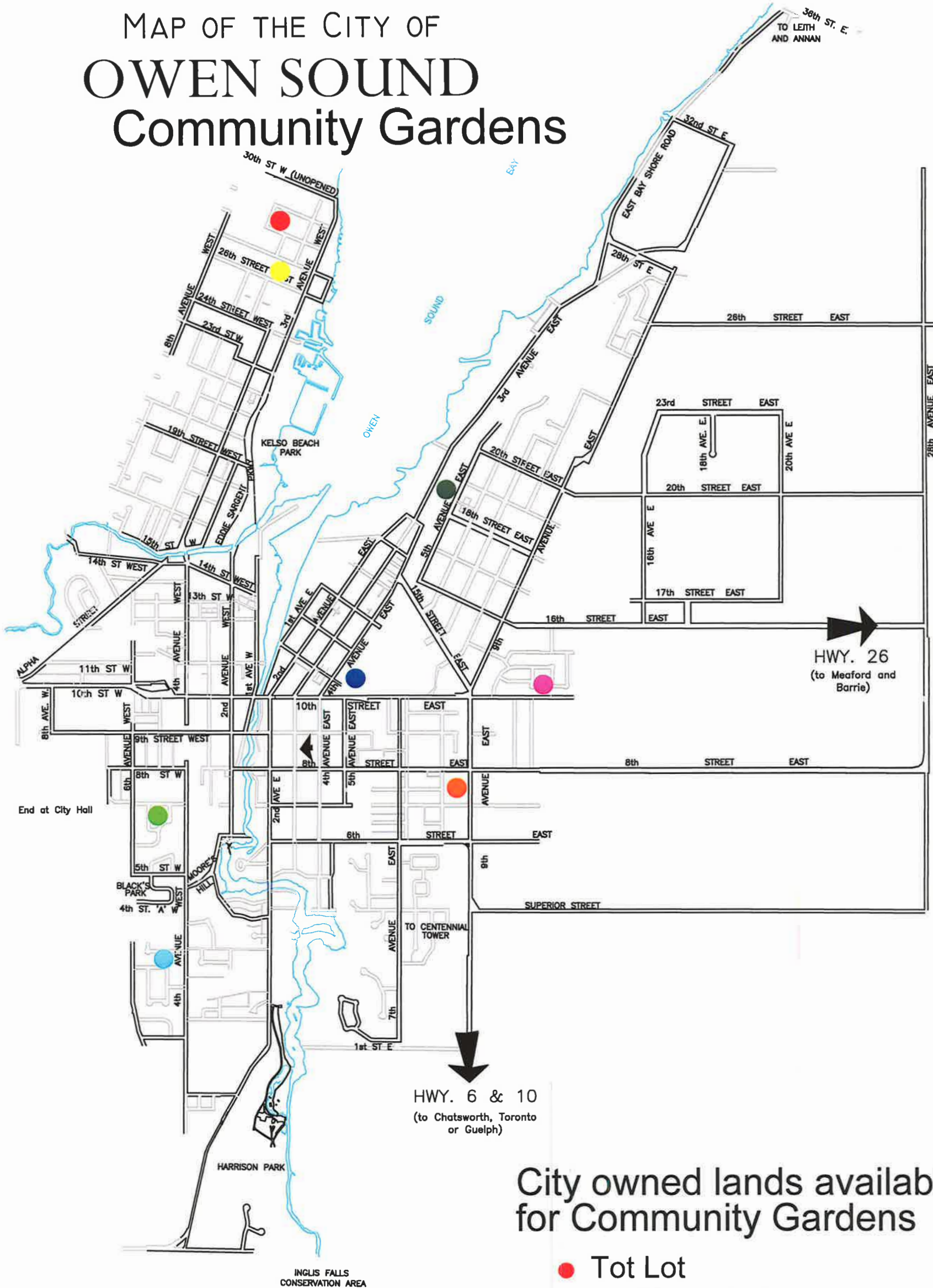
Attachment 1: Map of Approved Community Garden Locations

Attachment 2: Stobbe Park Existing Conditions Report and Inventory, June 5, 2020.

Attachment 3: Recommended Process for Considering Community Garden Requests

Prepared by:	Adam Parsons	Signature on File
Reviewed by:	Kristan Shrider	Signature on File
Supported by:	Pam Coulter	Signature on File
Submitted by:	Tim Simmonds	Signature on File

MAP OF THE CITY OF OWEN SOUND Community Gardens



City owned lands available for Community Gardens

- Tot Lot
- Maitland Park
- Stobbe Park
- Comm-r-ette Park
- St. George's Park
- Ed Taylor Park
- Bill Inglis
- Timber McArthur

Attachment 2: Stobbe Park Existing Conditions Report and Inventory, June 5, 2020

Property Information:

Stobbe Park	Small Passive Municipal Park Located between 655 at 5 th Avenue West and 656 5 th Avenue West
Size	0.241 acres
Street Frontage	62.5 m
Official Plan Designation	Residential
Zoning	R1 (Residential)
Existing Conditions & Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stobbe Park is a passive open space on a corner lot at 5th Avenue East between 655 and 656. • The park is generally maintained grassland with 3 mature sugar maples as boulevard trees lining the 5th Avenue West frontage, and 2 memorial trees, both honey locust. • The east property line is unbounded bordering on residential. • The north property line is partially separated from residential by a cedar hedge. • One street light is present at the bend of 5th Avenue West. • A Hydro One above ground vault is present near the west/south wests corner of the property.
Flora/Fauna & Tree Cover	Passive, maintained grasslands

Stobbe Park Map



Stobbe Park Inventory Photos:

View 1 from 5th Avenue West



View 2 from 5th Avenue West



East Boundary



North Boundary



Attachment 3: Draft Process for Considering Community Garden Requests

