

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025
Department: Community Services
Report No.: CS-2025-05
Submitted by: Robert Lilbourne, Director of Community Services
Approved by: Rob Browning, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Community Garden Update 1

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Report CS-2025-05 “Community Garden Update 1” be received for information and further;

THAT: Council approve allocating \$14,500.00 from the 2025 Progress through Partnership program to the Community Garden project, and further;

THAT: Council approve the naming of the Community Garden to the Arda Falconer Memorial Community Garden.

BACKGROUND:

At the December 2, 2024, Council meeting staff presented report CS-2024-46 titled [Community Garden CS-2024-46](#) for information and Council directed staff to provide a plan at a future meeting. Council further approved the allocation of \$10,000.00 from the Progress through Partnership (PTP) program matching a donation from the Strathroy Rotary Club.

In September 2023, staff presented a proposal to the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) to establish a community garden at Southfield Park. However, the committee recommended an alternative location (PLAN M18 BLKA), which is closer to a cooperative housing complex where residents have limited outdoor growing space. This shift would also allow Southfield Park to be redeveloped with play structures and other features, restoring it as an active park.

In response to CDAC’s recommendation, staff revised the plan and are now presenting it to Council for consideration. The proposal outlines a three-phase implementation strategy (detailed in the concept design).

Benefits of the Community Garden:

1. Social Engagement – Strengthens community bonds by bringing residents together.
2. Health & Well-being – Encourages outdoor activity and access to fresh produce.
3. Environmental Impact – Supports sustainability and local food production.
4. Educational Opportunities – Provides hands-on learning for all ages.
5. Economic Value – Reduces food costs and enhances neighborhood appeal.
6. Food Security – Increases access to fresh produce for residents in need.
7. Civic Pride & Ownership – Encourages community involvement and care for shared spaces.

COMMENTS:

Since Council originally approved matching the Rotary donation with PTP funds, several organizations have stepped forward to support the project through volunteer efforts, construction, and material donations.

Confirmed Contributions:

- Falconers – Parking lot and garden section construction, including materials; construction of walking path to gardens
 - Total value: \$38,500.00 + HST
- Holy Cross Secondary School (HCC) – Constructing garden boxes
- HCC, Construction Guild & TelhaETop – Constructing a timber-frame shade structure
- Acorn Tree Service – Exploration pathway clearing and construction
 - Total value: \$5,000.00

Over the past few months, staff have been approached by **Falconers, HCC, Construction Guild, TelhaETop, and Acorn Tree Service**, to develop a proposal for Council’s approval. The goal is to complete the majority of the project with the generous contributions of our community.

With the current confirmed donations, the Community Garden will feature:

- multiple garden boxes;
- a shade structure;
- parking;
- a pathway connecting Spence to Park;
- exploration trail and;
- fruit trees.



If Council approves the \$14,500.00 from PTP funds, leveraging the \$43,500.00 in contributions from the Falconers and Acorn Tree Service, staff would be able to complete the Community Garden in 2025, with the exception of the sidewalk portion of the project.

Required PTP Funding:

- Tool Storage Shed – \$3,500.00
- Signage – \$5,000.00
- Fencing Around the Garden – \$3,500.00
- Water Tank – \$2,500.00

Total: \$14,500.00

Remaining Funding Need:

- Concrete Sidewalk Connection to Park St. – \$25,000.00

With this funding, the majority of the project can move forward, ensuring the garden is ready for community use in 2025.

Recognition & Naming:

In appreciation of all contributing partners, signage displaying their names will be installed. If approved, and in recognition of the Falconer family’s generous donation, the garden will be officially named the **Arda Falconer Memorial Community Garden** for a period of **20 years**.

CONSULTATION:

Supervisor of Parks and Recreational Facilities
Supervisor of Recreation, Programs and Community Liaison

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

\$14,500.00 to be drawn from the PTP program leaving \$25,500.00 for future PTP projects.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO THE RECOMMENDATION:

1. Council to provide alternate direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

Community Well-being and Quality of Life: Residents of all ages in Strathroy-Caradoc will have access to community amenities and activities that are accessible and support active lifestyles and wellbeing

Local Infrastructure and Capital Investment: Households and businesses in Strathroy-Caradoc will be supported by reliable, financially responsible, and well-maintained infrastructure networks.

ATTACHMENTS:

None