



James Bay Neighbourhood Association

JBNA Policy Paper

November, 2010

Ratified by the membership February 9, 2011

City of Victoria parks and greenspaces in James Bay

The JBNA holds to the following principles:

- Park land within James Bay is a precious public resource.
- There must be no net loss of parkland within the community.
- Existing parks and green spaces must be kept open for all residents to enjoy.
- Additional green spaces should be acquired/re-claimed where possible.

I. Community gardens in City of Victoria parks and greenspaces

There are many possible community garden models. Community gardens can be food producing and/or ornamental. A garden could be an orchard of nut and/or fruit trees.

Gardens can be located on private or public land. Gardens can be established in city parks under special circumstances, in an area of existing city greenspace, on reclaimed city land and on newly acquired land.

There are two main types of community garden: “allotment” and collective”.

Allotment gardens assign plots for exclusive use by individuals and/or a group. For that reason, allotment gardens are not appropriate in city parks because city parks should be open for the public to enjoy. Allotment gardens could be appropriate in small parcels of reclaimed land and other new green spaces.

Collective gardens are maintained by volunteers but remain open to the public. Collective gardens do not assign plots to individuals. A “collective” community garden can be considered in a public park and also in small parcels of reclaimed and new green spaces. Higher standards of design and maintenance as well as year-round appeal would be required for community gardens in city parks as compared to small parcels of fringe public or private land.

II. Existing James Bay Community Gardens in 2010

Allotment Gardens

Two community allotment gardens currently exist in James Bay: the James Bay Allotment Garden on Montreal Street between Simcoe and Niagara, and Michigan Street Community Garden at the corner of Michigan and Menzies. Both have wait-lists for individual garden plots.

Collective Gardens

There is one community collective garden in James Bay. It is located in Beacon Hill Park north of Goodacre Lake at Arbutus Way. This garden, successful for 43 years, is a useful model for future gardens (see IV below).

III. Establishing new community gardens

A community garden must fulfill requirements as stated in the *City of Victoria Community Gardens Policy*, September 2005 (revised March 31, 2009), a ten-page document available online. Among other requirements, a garden must be sponsored by a non-profit society, be supported by the community, and volunteers must be willing to operate and manage the site.

IV. A model community “collective” garden in James Bay

The Rock and Alpine Garden Society garden in Beacon Hill Park is a community garden located in the City of Victoria’s largest public park. Organized in 1967, it continues to be well maintained by the same group in 2010, forty-three years later. This successful community garden can serve as a useful model for future gardens.

This garden is a long-term success because:

1. The garden was organized and funded by a well-established society which could guarantee a steady set of skilled volunteers over time.
2. Garden volunteers had a depth of expertise in the plants and the type of garden they proposed to create and maintain.
3. The garden was designed to look pleasing *twelve months of the year*.
4. The garden is open to everyone. There are no fences, private plots or storage sheds. Paths lead walkers through the site.
5. It is located in a rocky fringe area unlikely to be used for any other purpose. The garden added a positive feature to the park without competing with any other possible activities.