
MEETING DATE: July 8, 2025
PREPARED BY: Rick Kreklewich, Director of Community Services
PRESENTED BY: Rick Kreklewich, Director of Community Services
SUBJECT: **Aspen Community Garden Relocation**

BACKGROUND

The Aspen Community Garden was the first community garden in Blackfalds, which opened in the spring of 2012. It consists of thirty-seven (37) rentable plots. The Pine Community Garden was added a few years later and consists of thirty-five (35) plots. Both Gardens are fully rented for the 2025 season.

At the February 5, 2025, Recreation, Culture, and Parks (“RCP”) Board Meeting, the Parks and Facilities Manager presented to the Board the opportunity to relocate the Aspen Community Garden to Willow Park. Following the RCP Board Meeting, Administration requested the community’s feedback through a survey and a public Open House. The Open House and survey were advertised on the Town of Blackfalds’ website and social media channels. Additionally, door knockers were placed at all homes surrounding Willow Park, as well as at the homes along the east side of Willow Road.

The Open House was held at the Community Centre Multi-Purpose Room on April 30, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. There were three (3) Council members, three (3) representatives from Administration and four (4) residents in attendance. In response to the survey, eight (8) responses and one (1) letter were received.

The survey results and community consultation from the Open House were discussed at the May 7, 2025, RPC Board Meeting. Following community engagement, the RCP Board recommended that Council consider relocating the Aspen Community Garden, having received a majority of positive feedback:

Member Kroetsch moved to recommend to Council to move Aspen Community Garden to Willow Park and reopen discussion about having a smaller garden at Aspen after one year.

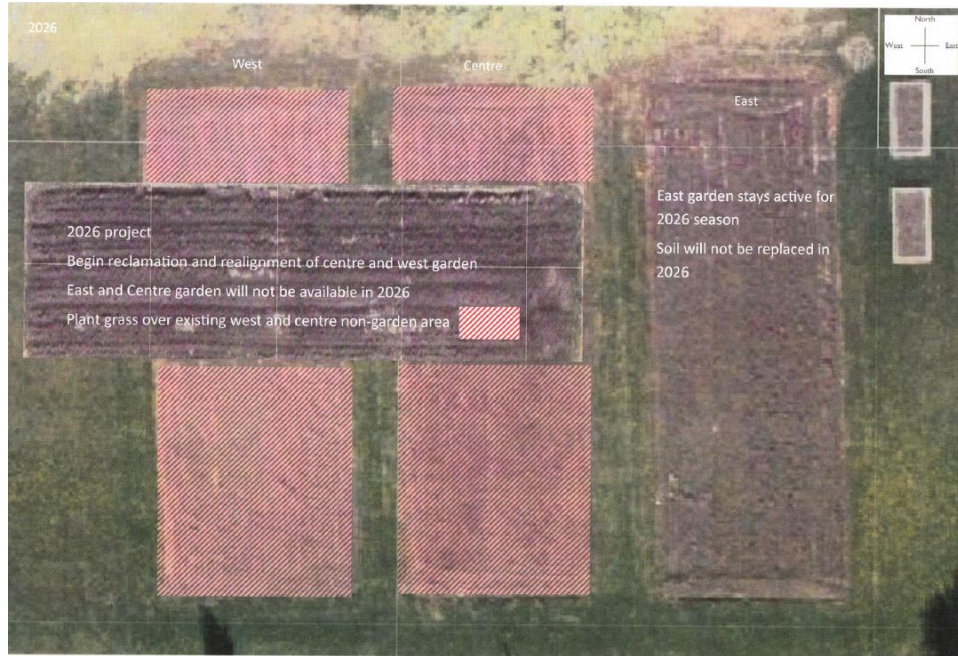
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

This item was discussed at the June 16, 2025, Standing Committee of Council Meeting, where the Committee referred the Aspen Community Garden relocation back to Administration for further review.

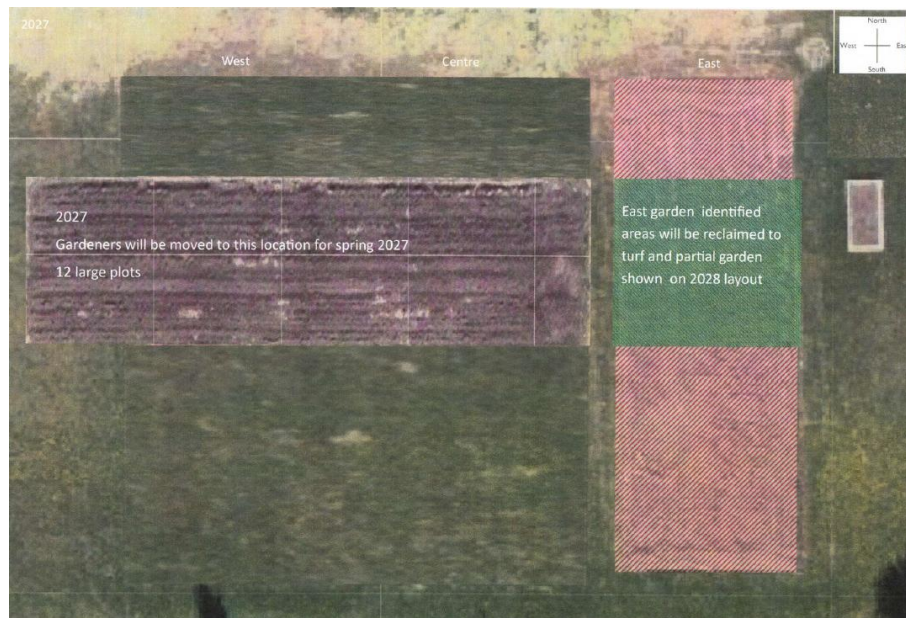
DISCUSSION

Following the recommendation of the RCP Board and the direction of the Standing Committee of Council, Administration proposes to retain the Aspen Community Gardens at their current location for the 2026 season, but to change the orientation of the Aspen Garden to run east/west and add a Willow Park Community Garden. This project would take place throughout the summer and fall of 2025, utilizing the Town of Blackfalds’ resources. Topsoil would be purchased and placed during the fall of 2025, with Willow Park Community Garden scheduled to open in the spring of 2026.

To change the orientation of the west and centre gardens, they would need to be closed in 2026 to allow Parks to reclaim and realign the plots and seed the unused areas with grass. Additionally, the current east garden (plots A26 to A35) and the raised gardens (plots A36 and A37) will remain usable for the 2026 season. As pictured below:



In the following year, to enable Parks to work on the east garden, it would need to be closed for the 2027 season. However, the west and centre gardens, which were worked on in 2026, would be available to rent for the 2027 season (twelve (12) large plots). As pictured below:



For the 2028 season, the Aspen Community Garden would have twenty (20) large plots and the two (2) raised gardens, which would be placed south of the garden, completing the transformation of Aspen Community Gardens as shown below:



The Willow Park Community Garden is proposed to be located as per the drawing below. It was initially designed for twenty (20) large plots, but is expandable in the future to a total of thirty (30) plots when completed.



Proposed Willow garden, 20 plots (5m x 5m, large)

Room to expand to the south in future season if required (10 plots - large)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025 Parks Operating Budget has \$30,000 for soil replacement for the Aspen Community Garden. The majority of this work would be undertaken with Public Works' large equipment and Community Services' smaller equipment. This project will be part of the 2025 Parks Work Plan, which would entail laying out the garden site and removal of organics and turf to a depth of twelve to eighteen (12 to 18) inches.

Additional raised garden beds would cost \$400 per box plus the cost of soil. This could be added to the 2026 Budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

That Council consider the following motion:

1. That Council approve a new community garden at Willow Park and the future reclamation and realignment of the Aspen Community Garden, as presented.

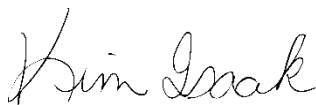
ALTERNATIVES

- a) That Council refers the Aspen Community Garden item back to Administration for further review.

ATTACHMENTS

- *Aspen Community Garden Responses and letter handed to Council*

APPROVALS



Kim Isaak,
Chief Administrative Officer



Department Director/Author