



## STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

### 3620 Kingston Road (Cornell/Campbell House – Centre for the Program of Excellence – Horticulture)

<b>Date:</b>	September 17, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Parks and Environment Committee
<b>From:</b>	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### **SUMMARY**

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This report provides an overview of some of the programming directions planned for the new Centre for Excellence – Horticulture, to be set up in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's newly acquired property at 3620 Kingston Road (Cornell/Campbell House). This facility will be developed into what is hoped to a citywide 'hub' for horticultural education activities. The new facility will allow for horticultural education programs for children, youth and seniors from the surrounding community and will help to engage volunteers and form partnerships with the communities and businesses across Toronto.

#### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications resulting from the receipt of this report.

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#### **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting of November 13, 2007 the Budget Committee approved the acquisition 3620 Kingston Road (Cornell/Campbell House), funded from the City-Wide Parkland Reserve. The Committee also directed that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, be requested to submit a report to the Parks and Environment Committee on a horticultural hub including potential community gardens or allotment gardens.  
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ex/decisions/2007-11-26-ex15-dd.pdf>

The item was subsequently adopted, without amendment, by City Council at its meeting of December 11, 12, 13, 2007.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/decisions/2007-12-11-cc15-dd.pdf>

## COMMENTS

The Cornell/Campbell House became one of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's newest assets on May 29, 2008. This historic farm house, built in 1836 is surrounded by 3.3 acres and adjoined by an additional 8.7 acres of forested parkland surrounding the Scarborough Village Recreation Centre. In total, the combined properties make up 12 acres of largely forested parkland.

The newly acquired property is currently being developed to expand and centralize the current staff training program - Program of Excellence in Horticulture. This program will continue to educate and enhance the expertise of the Division's horticulture staff, as well as horticultural innovation and excellence, which is one of the Division's core businesses. The new facility also will enable Parks Branch staff to develop horticultural programs and educational initiatives for children, youth and seniors from the surrounding community. It will also provide a venue to engage volunteers and to enable staff to form partnerships with the surrounding neighbourhoods and business organizations across the City.

Some possible programs, events and initiatives that are under consideration for the Centre include:

- Heritage Gardens
- Gardens showcasing new Annuals/Perennials each year
- A Children's Learning Garden
- Urban Farm/Allotment Plots which will share produce with food share programs
- A Horticulture Themed Playground and Splash Pad
- A Woodland Walk
- Integrated Plant Health Care– pest and disease education centre
- A Cultural Garden to highlight the diversity of cultures across the city and to showcase the heritage of various cultures through Gardening, Landscape Design and Art.
- A work/information exchange program involving staff from other municipalities (regional, national and international).
- A youth employment training program in partnership with our Youth Employment Partnership and Landscape Ontario.

The Centre's mandate will be to provide horticultural training programs for PFR horticultural staff, as well as, educational programming and activities geared towards children, youth, seniors, volunteers and other interested stakeholders. The Centre will function as a "hub" to educate the public about the environmental benefits and responsibilities of horticulture, while developing life skills for children and youth.

The program is under development and will be phased in over 4 to 5 years. This will allow for the formation of partnerships with other City divisions and other external organizations. With the development of innovative new programming opportunities, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division is endeavouring to create a hub for horticultural excellence in the City.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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