

July 5, 2013

Mayor & Council
District of West Vancouver
750 – 17 Street
West Vancouver, BC V7V 3T3

West Vancouver Community EcoCentre Proposal

EcoUrbia Network is proposing to manage and operate the greenhouses and adjacent property located at 200 Keith Road and transform this underutilized public asset into the **West Vancouver Community EcoCentre**. The **EcoCenter** will be a place where inclusive hands-on education, conservation, research and innovation into sustainable food systems and technologies can be generated and demonstrated. It will provide opportunities for West Vancouver residents and visitors alike to learn new approaches to growing food, native plants and non-invasive species, while protecting and enhancing the local ecology, conserving energy and water, and fostering a greater sense of community.

The West Vancouver Community EcoCenter will rejuvenate the northern portion of Klee Wyck site that includes: six greenhouses; a shade house used for growing plants; soil handling and storage areas; gravel driveway and existing walkways. Specifically it will:

- Produce food, native, and edible plants through a low impact and holistic approach;
- Demonstrate innovative growing methodologies, organic material composting, soil regeneration;
- Host educational workshops on the growing of food, native and edible plants;
- Provide new community garden plots & year-round access to meet the growing demand;
- Include a community gathering area for food-related festivals and workshops;
- Add orchard trees for fruit production and the benefit of pollinators, with a resident apiary;
- Include an outreach program for residents with respect to the management of invasive species;
- Create a local seed bank & free seed library;
- Include renewable energy technologies, rainwater harvesting, and water reuse techniques;
- Engage community volunteers from the West Vancouver Garden Club in conjunction with the West Vancouver Secondary School's Urban Agriculture Program; this would also include the Senior's Centre, Streamkeepers, West Vancouver Community Centre, and others seeking to learn, and access local and organically-grown, produce and plants.
- The greenhouses will include propagation, research and development, production.

The **EcoCenter's** core principle is to engage the West Vancouver community with a strong volunteer base that will provide a variety of education, and recreational benefits including:

- Adds a public amenity where none existed before;
- Inspires a seniors & youth mentorship program with WVGC/WVSS Urban Agriculture Program;
- Supports implementation of sustainable food systems learning in school curriculums;
- Investigates & shares knowledge on innovative sustainable technologies and techniques;
- Provides hands-on learning and interaction among seniors, families, youth & school-age children;
- Provides an outdoor venue for fundraising & community events;
- Supports & enhances a diverse and natural ecosystem;
- Fosters responsible stewardship of the land;
- Becomes a destination for the local community.

EcoUrbia is seeking neither financial assistance nor a capital investment from the **District** to develop, enhance, or operate the **EcoCenter**. As a not-for profit, EcoUrbia will generate capital funding through private donations, grants, and sponsorship in order to retrofit and operate the greenhouses, and secure sponsorship opportunities in support of our conservation and education programs, as well as research and demonstration into sustainable technologies such as renewable energy, rainwater harvesting and storage, composting, etc.

We believe a small investment of **District** staff time (agreement, pre-implementation project review) will be more than offset by the community benefit and revitalization of this public asset, and will significantly increase its long term value. We ask that the **District** take this into consideration, and that by supporting this initiative, you are providing a real ‘on-the-ground’ project that will realize the objectives within section 5.8 of the Parks Master Plan.

Benefits to the community of our proposal:

1. The **EcoCenter** will be self-funded through private donations, grants, and corporate sponsorship.
2. Creates a living legacy & demonstrates an innovative use of a vacant public asset without financial exposure to the **District**.
3. Provides an opportunity for West Vancouver Secondary School’s urban agriculture curriculum to expand.
4. Provides an opportunity for the West Vancouver Garden Club to participate, and grow its membership.
5. New garden plots will help to meet growing demand within the community.
6. Provides inclusive and empowering opportunities for multigenerational engagement (seniors to youth), education, knowledge-sharing, mentoring and leadership.
7. By teaching our children and youth about food and the interdependence of our natural environment in support of our ecosystems, it helps them better relate to and respect the environment, and inspires them to eat healthy, fresh food.

In consulting with the **WVGC** and **WVSS**, access to a dedicated greenhouse for both groups will serve volunteers with mobility issues, provide for covered access and a longer growing season for both programs. They, in turn, will provide an active volunteer contingent to assist us. This includes the production of flowering plants intended to supply the **District** with its annual hanging baskets that would provide carbon credits to **District** for local sourcing.

EcoUrbia has been at the forefront of the urban agriculture movement on the North Shore; we were instrumental in developing the City of North Vancouver’s successful Loutet Farm Pilot Project with a resoundingly supportive public consultation process; we also advocate for, and deliver public outreach programs on food related topics, with a commitment to engage with community members and organizations mandated to protect ecological integrity and environmental sensitivity, habitat creation and diversity, interpretation and education about food systems, our natural and heritage resources; physical activities and social connections.

Sincerely,



Karen Morton
President

Attachments: Letters of Support, WVGC & WVSS