

A vision for TUMC Community Gardens

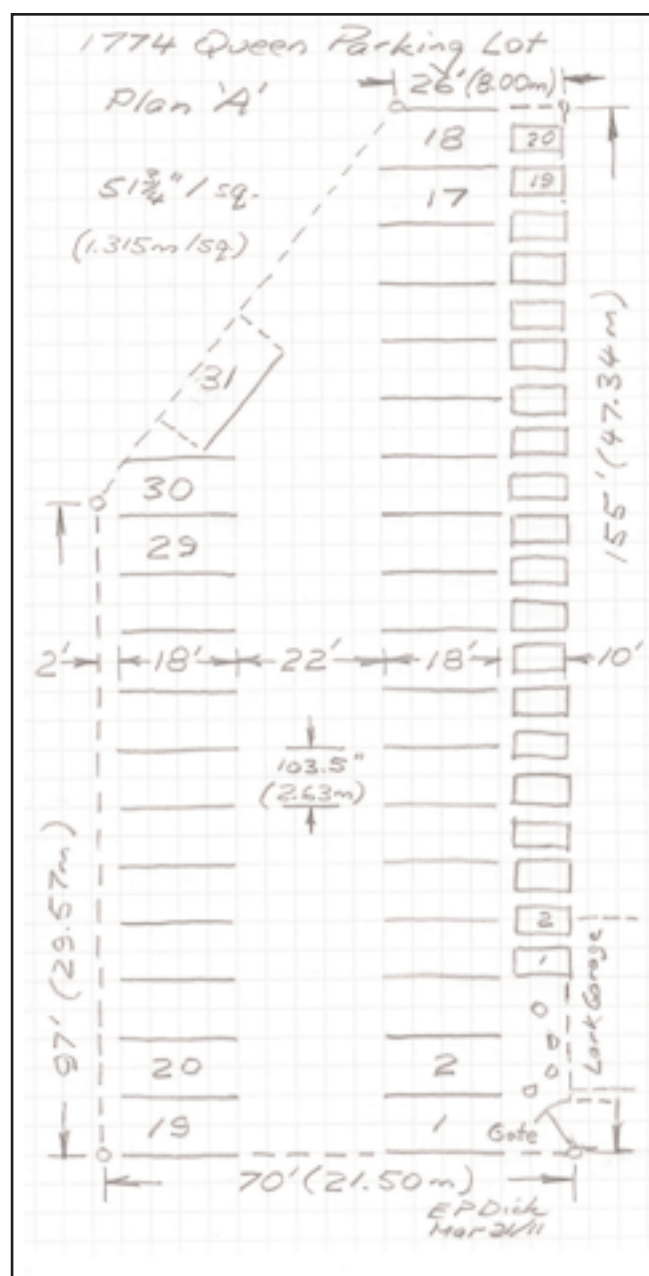
By Carolyn Loewen

Imagine members of TUMC, the New Life Church, and the local community gathering together on a warm summer afternoon, watering cans in hand, around luscious gardens full of beautiful flowers, ripe, red tomatoes, crunchy, orange carrots, and bright red beets. Imagine those individuals sharing gardening stories and personal experiences over a community meal, from the fresh produce grown in their shared garden space. Based on the TUMC initiatives, the Congregational Life Committee and a number of highly motivated members of the congregation would like to propose the development of Community Gardens which would be located along the east side of the parking lot. In conjunction with the Property Committee, under the direction of Peter Dick, we have examined the feasibility of such a venture.

Why enter into this venture?

A community garden would create a situation which would allow for the involvement and integration of all members of our community: all ages, all genders, all sexualities, all cultures. It would provide a way for the church to connect to and engage the local community by inviting and involving local community members to participate in the planning process. It would provide a focal point for community events. Our space would no longer be a Sunday morning space, but rather space that could be utilized throughout the week.

This venture can only be seen as doing God's work by creating order out of chaos, turning ugliness to beauty and showing good stewardship of our land. This initiative provides a unique opportunity to be present in our neighbourhood and with our neighbours, engaging in an inherently



local mission activity in our immediate context.

This initiative allows for creative use of the parking lot. A community garden would not limit the parking, but rather tidy up the area so that weeds, which often infiltrate and interfere with parking at the

A vision for TUMC community gardens

present time, would be eliminated.

The garden would provide a defined place for plowed snow and the retention of parking spots throughout the winter months. (We would ask that TUMC remain environmentally respectful and use only sand to eliminate slipping on ice in the winter).



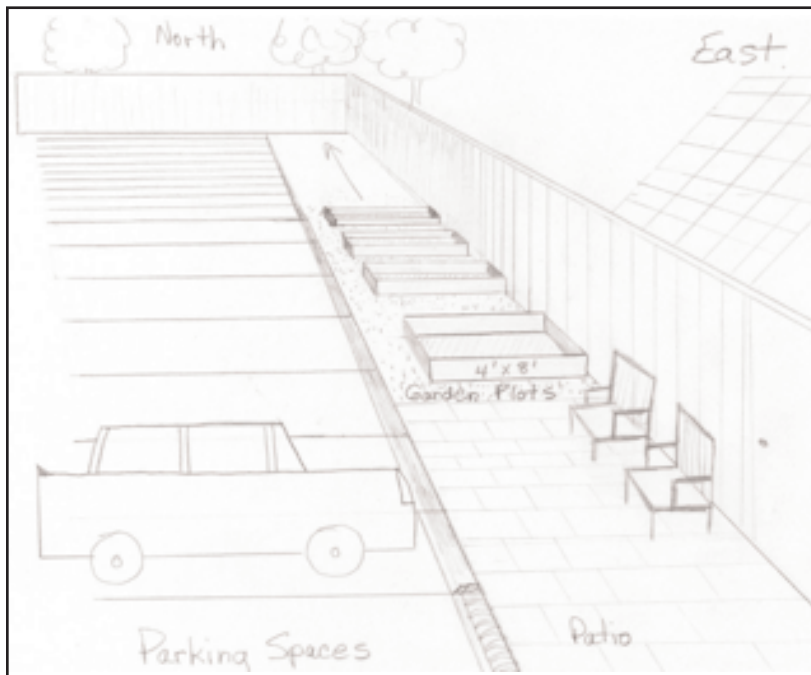
Who would use the Community Garden?

The Community Garden could be used by both TUMC folks and those in the local community. Notification of our intention would be made early in the spring and interested people would sign up for a plot. There is an increased demand for community gardens in the Toronto area and we do not feel there would be any difficulty finding individuals to participate in this venture.

Location and Structure

The community gardens would be located along the property line on the east side of the parking lot. Parking spots would extend as usual to the west and north property line. Under this plan, we would lose the centre parking spots. To compensate, a number of TUMC members who presently park in the lot are willing to park on the street Sunday mornings. Also we may accept that centre parking can be hazardous to pedestrians and risks damage to cars.

Concrete curbing would separate the space designated for the community gardens from the paved parking lot. Within that 10 foot section, 4ft. x 8ft. raised beds would be constructed of wood with pathways on three sides to allow for the tending of the gardens. The beds would be approximately 10 inches in height. Consideration for table level beds would be given to enable wheelchair accessibility to those gardeners who might require it.



View looking north along the east side of the parking lot.



View looking north along the west side of the parking lot.

