

RIVERDALE PARK

Food Forest and Community Garden



The Community Garden planned for 2020 has evolved in concept. Rather than the traditional model of persons or families renting, growing, and harvesting their own crops, the Food Forest is intended to be a communal project to support those residents who are experiencing food insecurity. The Town budgeted \$15,000 and began construction in June of 2020.

Situated on the Town of Riverdale Park (TRP) property in the Riverdale Community Park, and backing onto ballfields and trails on county-owned property, the old Boys and Girls Club at 6403 51st Street is the site for this exciting project. To keep wildlife at bay, TRP has built four 15'x15' fenced areas, each housing four 4'x4' raised beds. The original plan of purchasing beds was thwarted by COVID-19 supply chain challenges. So the Town's Public Works division built their own beds using untreated lumber. The Town contracted to install the flexible fencing they purchased. A hose bib and sink were installed by TRP at the side of the building.

For its first season, the Town staff purchased and planted several varieties of tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers, and basil.

TRP purchased basic gardening tools which are available in the front foyer of the building, providing secure and sheltered storage for volunteers who will have key access. TRP purchased the plants, and with the help of volunteers, planted the first crops in 2020, albeit late due to delays and precautions around COVID-19. There has been no shortage of volunteers to maintain the beds, and "Food Forest Warriors" are excited for their first year's yield. Fruit tree planting is expected to begin in fall 2020. TRP awaits the arborist's final selections and plan.



Signage about good gardening practices, gardening tips, and recommended guidelines per person or per family for those harvesting have been installed. The outreach plan to inform and educate the community about this new resource is being drafted, and will be complete in time for harvesting in fall 2020. Because 2020 is the Food Forest's first year, and because recent restrictions have limited education and outreach, volunteers have

RIVERDALE PARK



suggested adding a distribution plan, whereby food harvested from the Food Forest might be delivered to area schools already engaged in food distribution. The Food Forest could be promoted to families at these events so they have the information and the option to harvest their own food, or to become volunteers themselves.



Raised garden beds installed in June 2020 by the Town in Riverdale Community Park



Tomato and Pepper Plants