

Operational Guidelines for Community Gardens on City Owned Land other than City Parks

Definition:

The City of Vancouver recognizes community gardening as a valuable recreational activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction and community education. The City recognizes that community garden development is a community driven process and will collaborate with interested groups in assisting the development of new community gardens.

For the purposes of these guidelines, a community garden is defined as a place where people grow and maintain plants on City-owned property as a community development and environmental enrichment initiative operated by a non-profit society. Residential boulevard gardens, Green Streets Program gardens and beautification projects are not included in this definition of community gardens.

Community gardens may exist in any area of the city and may be:

- A piece of public land used by a non-profit society to produce edible and ornamental plants for the personal use of society members and/or;
- A piece of public land used by a non-profit society to grow food products for their members' benefit through cooking programs or City approved economic development training opportunities;

Featuring one or more of the following:

- A community development program which encourages the involvement of local schools, youth groups, senior citizens and others who do not have an assigned plot in gardening activities;
- An environmental enrichment program which offers demonstration activities to encourage urban agriculture outside of community gardens;
- Promotes an increase in environmental biodiversity and understanding of local food production;
- Contributes to growing food for charitable purposes;
- Represents the diversity of the community in which the community garden is located.

1. Clause One:

The City will support the development of community gardens in Vancouver by:

- (a) Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens;
- (b) Assisting interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of community gardens;
- (c) Assisting with the development of a city-wide umbrella organization to support the creation of new gardens and provide support and networking opportunities for existing community gardens.

2. Clause Two:

Once a suitable City-owned site has been located for a community garden, the following conditions will apply:

- (a) The garden is developed and maintained at no cost to the City, except that prior to the first season, the City will, at its cost, prepare the site for planting by removing undesirable vegetation, adding compost and bringing water to the site;
- (b) A community consultation process, jointly undertaken by the non-profit society and the City, indicates neighbourhood support for the Garden;
- (c) A garden site plan must be approved by City staff. The plan must include the layout of the plots and indicate any proposed structures or fences;
- (d) A non-profit society (the "Society") agrees to develop and operate the Garden according to a user's agreement which will specify the Licence Periods of use, management responsibilities and access procedures including the following specific terms:
 - (i) The standard term of the user agreement will be 5 years unless the specific terms of use dictate otherwise or the Society has failed to demonstrate the ability to manage and maintain the Garden;
 - (ii) Longer terms are warranted in circumstances deemed relevant or where the Society can demonstrate that the standard five year term would significantly restrict the Society's ability to:
 - (1) Comply with City policies and direction;
 - (2) Conduct community outreach programming beyond the Society's members;
 - (3) Implement a long term plan;
 - (4) Execute significant approved site improvements.
 - (iii) The City may terminate user agreement may be terminated at anytime upon thirty (30) days written notice.
 - (iv) Allotments of space must be made from a waiting list on a first come, first served basis with preference to those with no garden plots elsewhere;
 - (v) Membership in the garden's Society and the opportunity to be allotted a plot must be open to any resident of Vancouver with preference given to residents of the neighbourhood in which the garden is located;
 - (vi) Organic gardening and integrated pest management practices are to be followed. No synthetic pesticides or fertilizers are to be used;
 - (vii) An ornamental perimeter garden must be provided between the community garden and the street to create an attractive buffer with the neighbourhood.
 - (viii) Allotment fees charged by the society must be reported to the City;
 - (ix) The Society must adhere to maintenance standards set by the City;
 - (x) No locked barriers to general public access to the site can be erected;
 - (xi) Garden practices shall comply with all City policies and by-laws.

Although located on public property with the prior approval of the City, community gardens are operated by volunteers from the community.