

PROPERTY ADMINISTRATION

COMMUNITY GARDENS

PRO.34

POLICY

Date Policy Adopted: May 16, 2011

Council Resolution: RC11/294

The District of Mission recognizes community gardening as a valuable community activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, community development, environmental education, connection to nature, protection and use of open space, economical nutritious food production and food security.

The District of Mission encourages community gardening by supporting the development of new municipal sites where feasible, when a need exists, and the retention of the existing one.

A “community garden” is defined as a site operated by community volunteers from a non-profit organization which produces food, flowers, native and ornamental plants, edible berries and food perennials on public lands. A community garden may have the following features:

- Promotes urban agriculture, food security and food production;
- Utilizes a parcel of land in order for the society to: produce organic vegetables, fruit and flowers for the use of its members through allotments or shared plots, and can be an ornamental, native plant and perennial food producing garden for community enjoyment;
- Provides demonstration gardening or other instructional programming to encourage the involvement of schools, youth groups; and citizens (who do not have assigned plots) in gardening activities;
- Donates surplus produce to local food banks;
- Provides to non-profit organization members plots and services such as tilling and shared tools in exchange for a fee or volunteer labour; and
- Ensures that the public has access to the community garden areas.

Goals of the policy:

Community gardens are increasing in popularity. In order to meet existing and future demand for community gardens, The District of Mission endorses the following goals:

- to recognize the need for community gardens;
- to support the establishment of community gardens throughout the District on municipal lands, where feasible;
- to recognize the value of community gardens as a public amenity in land use redevelopment;
- to encourage backyard, multi-family and workplace gardening to complement community gardens, as a way to promote more greening of the municipality on municipal land;
- to maintain the existing community garden and support local food production; and
- to recognize the need for community gardens as development occurs and as parks are being acquired or redeveloped.

Conditions of Use:

The following conditions apply to the community garden sited on District of Mission owned land, and should act as a guideline for the development of other sites in Mission:

- the garden is developed at minimal cost to District of Mission;
- a community planning process is undertaken to determine how the garden and neighbourhood can benefit and support each other through consultation with District of Mission Planning Department, Parks, Recreation and Culture Department and Social Development Department;
- for new or expanded community gardens, District of Mission Parks, Recreation and Cultural Department will offer assistance with designing the site;
- the non-profit organization agrees to develop, manage and operate the community garden according to a user agreement which specifies the terms of use, management responsibilities, user fees, and access procedures which include the following:
 - a. user agreement of at least three years;
 - b. membership to the gardening organization or non-profit organization and the opportunity to garden must be open to any resident of the District of Mission;
 - c. a list of regulations are developed for use of the site by members, and members are required to sign a contract indicating their compliance;
 - d. membership and use of the site can be revoked for non-compliance with the organization's bylaws and regulations;
 - e. participation must be made from a waiting list on a first-come, first-serve basis;
 - f. no pesticides or herbicides are to be used; produce is to be organically grown;
 - g. produce grown on the site is not for private profit; excess produce can be donated;
 - h. access to the site for enjoyment by the general public is permitted and facilitated but supervised by the non-profit organization;
 - i. the Premises are actively used to demonstrate organic gardening techniques, including the provision of free public educational and inquiry sessions; and

- j. the non-profit organization will plan an annual community garden open house to promote the community garden to citizens of Mission. This can be done in consultation with the District of Mission Social Development Department.
- k. hours of operation and noise limitations

Guidelines for Selecting New Sites:

The District of Mission supports the development of community gardens, particularly in urban areas of higher density in the municipality. The District of Mission will assist in locating new garden sites where available municipal land exists, where neighbours are supportive, and where a gardening group or non-profit society demonstrates an interest and commitment.

In identifying new municipal sites for community gardens, the following **guidelines** should be considered:

- interest and commitment of a gardening group or non-profit organization;
- supportive neighbourhood;
- availability of the site;
- proximity to urban neighbourhoods and areas of population density;
- volunteers willing to operate and manage the site;
- site accessibility year-round;
- soil quality and drainage;
- sun exposure;
- accessibility by public transit;
- availability of parking;
- access to municipal water;
- an area to support approximately 20 plots (or approximately 300m²);
- a minimum three-year use agreement; and
- riparian areas and environmentally sensitive areas are protected and not available for community gardens.

Retaining Existing Sites:

Considering the challenge of establishing new community garden sites, the District of Mission will endeavour to protect the existing site as a valuable use of public open space.

Leisure Centre – Community Garden – Talbut Street

Number of plots: 2010/2011- 20 plots – 3 are under construction

Size of Plots - Vary in size. The average plot is 5' by 12'. The new beds are 4' by 12'

District of Mission Community Garden and Contact

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Fees- \$35.00 a plot

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