

**Policy Title: Community Gardens Site Selection**

**Policy Number: 05-01-09**

Section:	<b>Property and Facilities</b>	Subsection:	<b>Use of Public Property</b>
Effective Date:	<b>October 30, 2013</b>	Last Review Date:	<b>January 2016</b>
Approved by: <b>Council</b>		Owner Division/Contact: <b>Parks, Parks and Forestry Division Community Services Department</b>	

## Policy Statement

The City of Mississauga supports and encourages the development of Community Gardens on parkland and other public property.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria for the selection of appropriate sites for Community Gardens and to establish a protocol for obtaining public comment prior to approving the Community Garden.

Community Gardens provide access to lands for City residents who may not have access to land of their own, to come together to grow vegetables, herbs, fruit and flowers.

Community Gardens benefit individuals by:

- Providing fresh, safe and affordable herbs, fruit and vegetables
- Helping to relieve stress and get people active
- Providing social opportunities
- Reducing age and cultural barriers, and
- Providing educational opportunities to learn how to grow, harvest and prepare food

Community Gardens benefit the community as a whole by:

- Promoting safer communities through increased activity in parks and other public property;
- Improving the look of neighbourhoods;
- Reducing pollution and connecting people to nature, and
- Providing a common meeting area where people can learn and share with each other

## Scope

This policy applies to all City-owned land and to all Community Gardens located on City-owned land.

The opportunity to establish a Community Garden on City-owned land is restricted to not-for-profit groups.

## Definition

Community Gardens are community-based, food focussed gardens which involve individual plots for participating gardeners as well as a collective 'community plot', the produce of which may be donated to a local food bank. These gardens are clearly signed "Community Garden" and defined through fencing or other landscape material. The gardens provide opportunities for socializing and also include educational workshops on related issues of importance to participating gardeners.

## Request for Community Garden

Groups wishing to establish a Community Garden on City-owned land must submit a written request to the Manager of Parks, Parks and Forestry Division, Community Services Department.

In order to determine site selection the request must include the following information about the proposed Community Garden:

- The approximate area covered by the community represented by the group requesting the garden
- The size of the proposed community garden, and
- The geographic location of the proposed community garden in the city

Requests will be assessed by Parks and Forestry staff, in consultation with staff from:

- Community services environment division
- Community services park planning section
- Community services park development section
- Corporate services realty services section
- Transportation and works department, and
- The applicable ward councillor

Final approval is required by the Commissioner of Community Services (the Commissioner).

## Criteria for Approval of Community Garden Sites

Community Gardens will be approved only when:

- The establishment of the Community Garden is consistent with the City's overall plans for the land
- The site is suitable for successful gardening
- There is the ability to follow City standards for raised bed construction and soil/compost use
- The establishment of the Community Garden is appropriate for the particular community, and

- Where feasible, the garden complies with the universal accessibility design requirements developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), specifically Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)

The following factors will be considered in assessing a request for a particular site:

- The location of the site in relation to the community represented by the group (the site should be within this community)
- The city's current and future use of the site
- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles
- Access to public transit and availability of parking, and
- The suitability of the site for gardening:
  - The site must be clear of all utilities
  - Access to water is required
  - The site must receive a minimum of six hours of direct sunlight during growing season

## Public Input

If the assessment of the site indicates that the proposed Community Garden is feasible, the community will be consulted.

In consultation with the applicable ward councillor, ratepayers and special interest groups and other community members will be identified and will be notified in writing of the proposal. In addition, notification of a public open house to obtain public comments and input regarding the proposed Community Garden will be mailed to all residents living within 120 metres (394 feet) of the property boundary where the proposed garden site is located.

Public input will be considered by staff as part of their assessment in selecting and approving the site of the Community Garden.

## Revision History

Reference	Description
GC-0196-2009 2009 04 08	
November 16, 2012	Scheduled review – minor admin changes
October 30, 2013	Admin change to reflect compliance with Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)
January 25, 2016	Scheduled review – minor admin revisions