

## **City of Garland Community Garden Program Policy and Procedure ~ Approved May 19, 2009**

This document is intended to guide use of City-owned, property within neighborhood areas as community garden sites by addressing such topics as:

- How the garden sites should be used and operated;
- Providing application process and form;
- Identifying improvements, equipment, supplies, and responsibilities; and
- Enforcement and plot reassignment.

### **1. USE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY:**

#### **Policies:**

- a. City-owned parcels located within residential neighborhoods may be utilized for community garden purposes.
- b. The Director of the Planning Department or his designee shall determine if a City-owned parcel is appropriate for use as a Community Garden.

### **2. PURPOSE AND BENEFITS:**

#### **Policies:**

- a. The purpose of the Community Gardening program is to utilize undeveloped, city-owned parcels within Garland neighborhoods for use by Garland residents.
- b. Recognized benefits of a Community Gardening program are numerous, and include:
  - Creates opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education;
  - Beautifies neighborhoods and contributes to community "greening" and sustainability;
  - Stimulates social interaction;
  - Encourages self reliance;
  - Produces nutritious food, thereby reducing family food budgets;
  - Aids in crime prevention by bringing neighbors together; and
  - Supports increased property values by improving undeveloped properties.

### **3. COMMUNITY GARDEN OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT:**

#### **Policies:**

- a. The City of Garland Community Gardening program aligns with purposes of existing boards, programs, and/or initiatives of various City departments:

- Keep Garland Beautiful (Community Services)
  - Citizens' Environmental & Neighborhood Advisory Board (Environmental Waste Services)
  - Compost Gardening program (Environmental Waste Services)
  - Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods (Planning Department)
  - Neighborhood Vitality office (Planning Department)
  - Adopt-a-Park Program (Parks and Recreation)
  - Street Landscape Beautification (Parks and Recreation)
- b. The Planning Department, through the Strategy for Vital Neighborhood program, will provide oversight and management of the Garland Community Gardening program. A departmental employee will be assigned to act as Community Gardening Manager to oversee Community Gardening program, as listed below in *Section 7. Responsibilities of Community Garden Program and Manager*.
- c. Use of the City-owned parcel as a community garden must be requested by an established organization, such as a Homeowner Association (HOA) or Neighborhood Association (NA), as listed on the register of named organizations maintained by the City of Garland's Neighborhood Vitality Office, or other established civic group or local association. This organization will be the designated Sponsoring Organization for a specific community garden and must complete a Sponsorship Agreement for approval by the Community Garden Manager.
- d. The sponsoring organization for each community garden shall name a Gardening Coordinator from its garden membership to provide day-to-day community garden oversight and to act as point-of-contact between the City's Community Gardening Manager and the garden's membership. Appointment of a gardening committee is recommended and should consist of representatives of the Sponsoring Organization, Garden Coordinator, and active community gardeners.

#### 4. APPLICATION AND USE OF GARDEN PLOTS

##### Policies:

- a. Community garden plots shall be for non-commercial use and planting of typical garden vegetables, fruit, and/or ornamental plantings. Use of endemic, native Texas plant species is encouraged. Invasive and illegal plants are not allowed.
- b. Garden plot layout and staking shall be approved by the Community Gardening Manager prior to approval of a gardening application for the particular community garden.

**5. GENERAL COMMUNITY GARDEN ESTABLISHMENT, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE:**

**Policies:**

- a. All gardeners must adhere to all City of Garland codes and ordinances, Community Gardening policies and application agreement, as well as any rules associated with their particular community garden membership.
- b. Each community garden may elect to establish additional rules for operation of their specific garden (e.g. sponsor membership workdays, donation of produce to local food bank, fundraising, etc.).
- c. By written permission from the Community Gardening Manager, a compost bin may be built within the community garden. A sketch of the proposed compost bin is required prior to approval and must address such issues as location on property, size, screening related to visual aesthetics, smell, animal access, etc.
- d. All tools, equipment, seeds, and transplants shall be provided by individual gardeners, groups, or sponsoring organization.
- e. Mulch is available at the City's Recycling Center, 1426 Commerce Street, Garland Texas 75040. Gardeners are responsible for loading, transport, and unloading of mulch.
- f. Public water source may be available at/near each garden site. Conserve water resources by turning off faucet after each use. Hand watering only. No sprinklers allowed.
- g. Maintain a neat garden keeping garden area and surrounding areas free from weeds. Lack of maintenance will result in revocation of the agreement.
- h. Only small garden tractors are allowed on unpaved surfaces. Cars, trucks, trailers, and similar vehicles must be kept on streets and hard-surfaced parking areas.
- i. The City of Garland will not be responsible for damage to garden plots.

**6. COMMUNITY GARDENING PLOT ABSENCES, ABANDONMENT, AND REASSIGNMENT:**

**Policies:**

- a. As outlined above in Sections 4. and 5., a gardener's lack of planting, maintenance, or adherence to policies, rules, and agreements is grounds for revoking the agreement.
- b. Since community gardens will be on City-owned land, there may come a circumstance where that land is needed by the City. Under that circumstance, the agreement may be revoked by the City of Garland.

**7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GARLAND COMMUNITY GARDENING PROGRAM AND MANAGER:**

**Policies:**

- a. The Garland Community Gardening program is responsible for the following items:
  - property and access to that property for community gardening plots;
  - mowing of contiguous right-of-way areas, along with other areas not part of the community garden;
  - existing water source and supply (hose bib/faucet)
- b. The Community Gardening manager is responsible for management of the gardening program, including tasks such as:
  - securing property use approvals from the Planning Department;
  - review and approval of Garden Sponsorship Applications;
  - receipt and processing of annual applications, gardening fees, and waivers, including plot assignment;
  - review and approval of community gardening plots, including layout, staking, and other related garden establishment tasks;
  - review and approve gardening improvements, such as compost bins, fencing, signage, and similar construction projects intended as a permanent feature;
  - visit community gardens on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with policies and procedures, codes, ordinances, et cetera;
  - coordination with other City staff for needed work;

**8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION AND GARDEN COORDINATOR:**

**Policies:**

- a. The Sponsoring Organization is responsible for supporting the community garden membership. Assistance includes such things as:
  - assist new gardeners by providing orientation to garden membership, rules, gardening support, etc.;
  - organize community garden membership in support of their garden; a gardening committee should be established to organize work days, settle disputes, and similar items.
  - support gardeners with supplies, if available; and
  - solicit funding from individuals and organizations for community gardening improvements.
- b. The Community Garden coordinator is responsible for supporting the community garden and gardeners. Assistance includes such things as:

- oversee operation and maintenance of your community garden;
- coordination and communications with the Community Gardening Manager;
- report problems and concerns to the Community Garden manager;
- check garden plots for compliance to guidelines and policy;
- oversight of all improvements and construction projects within a garden;
- work with garden membership to resolve problems;
- oversee the removal of plant waste following the harvesting;
- oversee the removal of any and all improvements including but not limited to compost bins and fences to return the area back to its original condition once the Sponsoring Organization has decided to cease gardening this specific location