

Community Garden Policy

The Community Garden Policy is intended to foster a positive climate for community gardening and identifies the principles used by city administration in its decision-making around the development, management and maintenance of community gardens on City-owned land.

For the purposes of this policy a *community garden* is defined as “*an open space that a group of citizens voluntarily manage where horticultural activities are practiced.*”¹

There are two aspects to this Policy. The first is the statement of the City's Community Garden Policy, addressed under the five general headings. The second are potential implementation strategies following each policy statement. These implementation strategies may be clarified, adjusted or refined from time to time to effectively implement this Community Garden Policy.

Healthy Living /Active Living

The City of Winnipeg considers community gardens to be very beneficial in supporting healthy communities and improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods. They serve as a tool to achieve desirable and quantifiable goals such as food security, neighbourhood stabilization and revitalization, reduction of crime, job training, recreation, therapy, and community building.

Plan Winnipeg supports this by stating “Promoting healthy lifestyles including the provision of safe environments, education, recreation, arts, and culture to assist citizens in developing to their fullest potential.”²

Potential Strategy

- Continue dialogue with community stakeholders in order that community gardens continue over time to contribute positively to Winnipeg neighbourhoods.

Community Directed

Resident involvement in the shaping of future strategies is a key to ensuring long term community garden success. This involvement requires collaboration, inclusion, communication, and participation. This also allows unique strategies to be tailored for different neighbourhoods which have different characteristics, resources, strengths, traditions, and leadership.

Plan Winnipeg supports this in stating “Encouraging citizens to shape decisions that affect their lives requires sharing of decision-making processes through citizen engagement, promoting local ownership and control, fostering strong local economy, and facilitating ongoing participation.”³

Potential Strategies

- Ensure ongoing assessment of community need and collaborative planning.
- Address specific needs of neighbourhoods and communities balancing residential and other development with green space.
- Encourage neighbourhoods in their development of green plans for the use of existing and future green space.

¹ Concise Oxford Dictionary – City Farmer, Community Gardening in Major Canadian Cities: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver Compared. Paper prepared for Urban Agriculture Policy in Southern Africa, International Conference, South Africa, March 1998.

² City of Winnipeg Plan Winnipeg 20/20 Vision. December 2001, page 10.

³ Ibid

Affordability through Partnership and Collaboration

The City of Winnipeg recognizes community gardens as an asset to both the neighbourhood and the city. The City will work collaboratively with community groups to develop long term affordable plans for development and sustainability of community gardens. The establishment of creative strategic partnerships is key to identifying a wide range of opportunities and resources in support of community gardens.

Potential Strategies

- Determine current and long term management and maintenance/operating costs. The following factors must be considered in determining the costs and benefits in community garden development:
 - social
 - economic
 - financial
 - environmental.
- Explore public/public and public/private partnership opportunities to maximize resources.
 - Determine services, roles and responsibilities of the City and external organizations.

Effective & Efficient Service Delivery

The City of Winnipeg will utilize an integrated, inter-departmental administrative approach to ensure a coordinated, consistent and easily accessible system for the management of community gardens.

Potential Strategies

- Ensure a coordinated, consistent system using an inter-departmental administrative approach for management of community gardens. This includes:
 - Establishment of a one-stop community garden contact for land availability, educational information and related information.
 - Standardized agreements
 - Uniform fees and charges
 - Communication systems
 - Booking processes
- Continue to inventory current community gardens on city-owned land.
- Respond to community enquiries regarding the use of any city-owned land for community garden purposes.
- Ensure communication is clear and concise between the various departments, community networks, community garden organizations, and gardeners to reinforce a positive transparent working relationship.

Sustainable

A common understanding between civic government and the community will ensure a predictable environment for community garden development and support in the near and distant future. This predictable environment is vital to resolving competing land use interests, including the need for green space.

Potential Strategies

- Consult with the community garden network as a link to community garden issues and sustainability.
- Encourage training, networking, and technical assistance of individuals and groups to build self-reliance and interdependence.
- Recognize community gardens as an acceptable land use on appropriate City-owned land.
- Encourage environmentally sound practices.