



CITY OF VAUGHAN

CORPORATE POLICY

POLICY TITLE: COMMUNITY GARDEN

POLICY NO.: 18.C.01

Section:	Recreation		
Effective Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.	Date of Last Review:	April 8, 2014
Approval Authority: Council		Policy Owner: DCM, Planning & Growth Management	

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Vaughan (hereinafter referred to as the “City”) recognizes that the principles of sustainability should be incorporated into our daily activities and that Community Gardens positively contribute to environmental, social and economic sustainability and overall community development.

PURPOSE

This Policy provides guidelines for the successful operation of Community Gardens on City-owned land, by:

- Providing a framework for the establishment of sustainable and successful Community Gardens within the City, which will nurture a more integrated urban community and increase civic engagement through volunteering and collaboration.
- Encouraging a community culture that recognizes and places a priority on sustainability and acknowledges Indigenous traditional and treaty land rights within Vaughan through plantings, education and partnerships.
- Promoting the cultivation of local, healthy and affordable food within the community and providing healthy food to members of the community.
- Raising awareness within the community of collective actions that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food transportation.
- Improving vegetation cover within the community that will build healthy soil and organic matter to sequester carbon, thereby offsetting a portion of community greenhouse gas emissions while working to improve air quality.

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SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Community Gardens located on City-owned land or other public lands in which the City has entered into an agreement with the property owner(s) to utilize a parcel for a Community Garden.

This Policy does not cover urban agriculture issues.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

There are no legislative requirements, however Section 11(2) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* recognizes the ability of lower-tier municipalities to promote, among other matters:

- Economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality, including respecting climate change.

DEFINITIONS

- 1. Allotment Community Garden:** Garden where designated plots are made available for individual or organizational use.
- 2. Collective Community Garden:** Garden that is managed and gardened collectively by a group of people.
- 3. Community Gardens:** Outdoor spaces on designated, underutilized municipal land where City residents and employees of Vaughan-based businesses, organizations and other agencies can meet to grow and care for fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, native and/or ornamental plants.
- 4. Community Garden Coordinator:** Person, organization or agency assigned to oversee the garden operations, manage Gardeners, prepare garden plans and maintain regular contact with the City.
- 5. Community Group Plot:** Garden plot(s) reserved for shared gardening by schools, community groups or organizations or other community members for the purposes of individual consumption, social/environmental stewardship or education.
- 6. Distribution Partner:** School, organization, association, agency or other appropriately insured entity that enters into an agreement with the City for the purpose of gardening and distribution/donation of food or strictly for the distribution/donation of food from Community Gardens.

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- 7. Gardener:** Person(s) whom have been approved by the City to participate in a Collective Community Garden and assigned a plot in an Allotment Community Garden.
- 8. Organizational Partner:** Organization, association, agency or other appropriately insured entity that administers the Community Garden program on behalf of the City. An Organizational Partner may also act as a Community Garden Coordinator and/or Donation Partner.

POLICY

Community Gardens on public lands (i.e. owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) require approval from the property owner(s) and an appropriate agreement in order to implement this Policy.

Amendments to Appendices 1a, 1b, 2 and 3, and any other applicable agreement, to this Policy shall be made by City staff without Council approval.

1. Community Garden Overview

1.1. Community Gardens may be operated as:

- 1.1.1. Allotment Community Gardens;
- 1.1.2. Collective Community Gardens; or,
- 1.1.3. A combination of the two styles.

1.2. Gardens will be administered by the City or an Organizational Partner and will require consistent and adequate funding. These gardens must have a minimum of one dedicated Community Group Plot.

1.3. Community gardening differs from commercial agriculture or other forms of urban food production as community gardening does not involve the harvesting of agricultural and/or animal products for distribution and sale in local or international markets. The goal of community gardening is to produce plants and/or food for the personal use and consumption of the Gardeners or for donation to charitable cause(s) and/or community members. Donation or distribution of food will be carried out by means of a Distribution Partner.

1.4. The City may demonstrate its support for Community Gardens by:

- 1.4.1. Compiling and maintaining an inventory of suitable sites for Community Gardens on City-owned property.
- 1.4.2. Encouraging developers to make available suitable lands for Community Gardens within planned developments.

- 1.4.3. Encouraging other landowners of underutilized, unused, or open parcels (i.e. hydro right of ways) to make available these parcels for Community Gardens.
- 1.4.4. Assisting in the development of a code of conduct and memorandum of understanding for Community Gardens.
- 1.4.5. Establishing a small fund for start-up costs, when approved through the City's budget process.
- 1.4.6. Providing, subject to the availability of staff, equipment and material, rototilling and transportation of topsoil and mulch, as well as water sources if community Gardeners are unable to provide this on their own.
- 1.4.7. Supporting the development of a Community Garden network with the common goal(s) of information and knowledge sharing, skill development, community engagement and interaction, and increased awareness of Community Garden programs within the City.

2. Community Garden Setup

- 2.1. Gardeners must be residents of the City of Vaughan, unless otherwise determined by the City in particular cases.
- 2.2. A community consultation process will occur prior to the approval of a new Community Garden. Special interest groups and other community members will be identified and notified in writing of the proposal for the new Community Garden.
- 2.3. Where there are more Community Garden requests and/or proposals than the yearly plan and budget can support, or where two or more groups express interest in establishing a Community Garden on the same plot of land, and partnership and/or amalgamation is not possible/feasible, the City or Organizational Partner may assign the designated site to the group that presents the most detailed, comprehensive and feasible garden description, layout and community engagement plan.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1. All parties will be required to sign appropriate documentation, as set out in the attached Appendices.
- 3.2. Community Garden Coordinator
 - Represent all site Gardeners. Serve as main contact person for the Garden. Community Garden groups must identify the proposed Community Garden Coordinator in their application. Initial arbitrator for dispute resolution. Assign plots to Gardeners, if applicable, and provide orientation at start of season.

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Provide intake of documentation from each Gardener and distribute garden keys. Provide detailed description of the proposed layout of the garden and any suggested modifications to the City. Develop communications and engagement plan for Community Garden.

3.3. Distribution Partner

Manage donation and distribution of food where applicable. Enter into any required agreements with the City or Gardener groups.

3.4. Organizational Partner

Oversee administration of Community Garden program including daily operations. Provide funding, where applicable, for start-up costs or regular operation of Community Gardens. Conduct inspections of Community Gardens.

4. Community Garden Fees and Expenses

4.1. Where approved through the City's budget process or through in-kind contribution, the City may support ongoing maintenance and operation of the Community Garden.

4.2. The individual garden plots in an Allotment Community Garden may be made available to Gardeners annually in exchange for a structured fee that considers equitable access and opportunity for all community members. This fee will be designated for continual improvement initiatives related to community gardening.

4.3. Community Garden groups/Gardeners will be responsible for all expenses associated with the sustained operation and maintenance of the Community Garden. The City will encourage Community Garden groups to seek additional funding sources as needed. Permitted funding methods include community fundraising efforts conducted in accordance with all applicable permits and/or licenses and the City's Corporate Partnership Policy. Gardeners will not be permitted to sell garden produce or engage in for-profit business practices.

5. Responsibility of City Departments

5.1. Policy Planning & Environmental Sustainability

Point of contact with Community Garden groups, assisting with community garden start-up and carrying out associated administrative tasks.

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5.2. Parks, Forestry & Horticulture Operations

Responsible for opening and closing operations, such as tilling and preparing the sites, and general grounds maintenance surrounding the garden site. Parks, Forestry and Horticulture may assist with installing or repairing infrastructure such as fences.

5.3. Facility Management

Responsible for turning on the water source at the beginning of the season and winterizing the water source at the end of the season. Facility Management may also assist with installing sources of water.

5.4. Corporate & Strategic Communications

Will handle promotion and marketing of the Community Garden program.

5.5. Municipal Partnership Office within the Economic & Cultural Development Department

May assist with identifying and/or securing alternative sources of revenue in cash or in-kind for the Community Garden program, through corporate sponsorship or grant opportunities that will go toward garden start-up costs, enhancement of existing gardens or to offset operational costs.

ADMINISTRATION

Administered by the Office of the City Clerk.

Review Schedule:	SELECT If other, specify here	Next Review Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
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Related Policy(ies):	
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Related By-Law(s):	
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Procedural Document:	
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Revision History

Date:	Description:
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