

# ***CITY OF CHARLOTTETOWN POLICY***

## **COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY**

***Policy Number: P-ES-2***

***Originating Department: Environment & Sustainability***

***Approved By: City Council***

***Date of Approval: April 11, 2023***

---

### **1.0 Introduction**

The City of Charlottetown provides opportunities for residents and community organizations who want to garden collectively and harvest food. Community gardens in the City provide opportunities for community groups to grow food, flowers, and other plants together. Community vegetable planters are located in Charlottetown parks, planted and tended by the City with the harvest available to the general public on a first come, first serve basis.

This Community Garden Policy strives to cultivate a supportive climate for community gardening, enabling the City of Charlottetown to work with interested groups to develop community gardens, and outline the City's responsibilities regarding community gardens.

Community gardens provide residents with the opportunity to grow nutritious food, flowers, and other plants while participating in a healthy, recreational activity. The City of Charlottetown recognizes that community gardens support food production, community-building, environmental education, food skills development, greening of urban spaces, and health and well-being, among other benefits.

#### **What is a community garden?**

For the purposes of this policy, a community garden is defined as a single piece of land, gardened collectively by a group of people and run by a dedicated non-profit community group.

There are many types of community gardens, including:

- Common gardens, a communal garden area maintained and managed by community volunteers, where some or all harvest produced is available to the public or for use by community food programs;
- Allotment gardens, individual garden plots that are rented, maintained and harvested by individual member gardeners;
- Community orchards, a grove of fruit or nut trees where a community organization is responsible for the care, maintenance and harvesting of trees; and,

- A combination of any of the above (e.g. community orchards with a shared communal area for growing herbs).

Each community garden is unique, with different numbers of garden plots, costs for plots and availability.

Community gardens differ from the community vegetable planters located in Charlottetown, common container gardens, coordinated by the City and used for teaching, community demonstration and harvest sharing.

## **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to City support for all community gardens in Charlottetown on both City-owned and privately owned land.

## **3.0 Purpose and Objectives**

- 3.1 The purpose of the Community Garden Policy is to:
  - 3.1.1 Connect people to healthy, local food, nature and each other;
  - 3.1.2 Encourage habitat development and the growing of pollinator plants;
  - 3.1.3 Encourage diverse activities in parks and, in turn, create safer parks; and,
  - 3.1.4 Build community and engage residents.
- 3.2 The objectives of the Community Garden Policy are to:
  - 3.2.1 Encourage and support the community to grow more local food, as recommended in the City of Charlottetown's 2019 [\*Climate Risk and Resilience Recommendations Report\*](#) and 2017 [\*Integrated Community Sustainability Plan\*](#);
  - 3.2.2 Leverage the potential of all lands within the City, as recommended in the City of Charlottetown's [\*Strategic Plan \(2022 to 2026\) – a community for everyone\*](#);
  - 3.2.3 Support the development of community gardens;
  - 3.2.4 Enable the City to work with interested parties that want to start a community garden;
  - 3.2.5 Establish guidelines for the development of community gardens on City-owned lands;
  - 3.2.6 Encourage the development of partner community gardens on private lands.

#### 4.0 Appropriate Site Selection

- 4.1 In accordance with the City of Charlottetown's Zoning and Development Bylaw, community gardens are a permitted use on land designated as 42.1.3 Open Space Zone (OS).
- 4.2 Preference will be given to gardens located on City land:
  - 4.2.1 In neighbourhoods where there is less access to gardening opportunities;
  - 4.2.2 That are compatible with existing park uses if located in a City park;
  - 4.2.3 That have access to a water source.
- 4.3 Additional considerations:
  - 4.3.1 **Soil quality:** is an important consideration for growing food in urban environments. It is recommended that past land uses or current contaminant pathways be considered to assess potential concerns about soil quality or safety. If there is a reasonable cause for concern, it is recommended that the soil be tested. Soil quality may also be an issue in terms of fertility. In this case, soils can be amended, e.g. with compost or organic matter.
  - 4.3.2 **Sun exposure:** A minimum of six hours of sunlight per day.
  - 4.3.3 **Accessibility:** Where possible, community gardens should be located near active transportation routes and be accessible to all persons, including those with mobility constraints. Accessibility requirements may also necessitate the consideration of including raised beds, wheelchair accessible beds and/or barrier free surfaces.
  - 4.3.4 **Other:** Storage or shed access, supportive neighbours, visibility and safety

#### 5.0 Criteria for Community Gardens on City Land

- 5.1 Community groups interested in establishing a community garden on City land must submit a request to the City of Charlottetown by filling out a Community Garden Expression of Interest online. Requests will be reviewed by the Environment and Sustainability Department and the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 5.2 Community gardens and garden groups are expected to adhere to the following criteria:
  - 5.2.1 Are led by an established group of volunteers or non-profit community group of at least five people, which has funds or a funding structure to build and maintain a community garden;

- 5.2.2 Allow members of the public to join the garden;
- 5.2.3 Promote community food sharing, community building and / or inclusive community engagement through gardening activities;
- 5.2.4 Adhere to the City of Charlottetown's Cosmetic Pesticide Bylaw which restricts the application of non-domestic pesticides for the control of pests within the municipality;
- 5.2.5 Submit a site plan for approval by the City prior to beginning construction;
- 5.2.6 Demonstrate support from the community surrounding the proposed garden site;
- 5.2.7 Take responsibility for all construction related tasks and costs to the garden including shed, signage, etc.;
- 5.2.8 Enter into a yearly Memorandum of Understanding with the City outlining rules, roles and responsibilities; and,
- 5.2.9 Operate in accordance with all City of Charlottetown by-laws and maintenance standards.

## **6.0 City Support for Community Gardens on City-owned Land**

- 6.1 The City of Charlottetown supports community gardens by working with garden groups to establish and maintain gardens. Subject to available resources, for community gardens that are approved on City land, the City will:
  - 6.1.1 Provide financial and in-kind contributions toward the establishment of community gardens including the provision of land as well as a stipend towards the cost of materials and equipment (e.g. compost, mulch, garden tools, etc.). Stipend amounts will be established in the Memorandum of Understanding. Water will also be provided to those community gardens located on a site with a City water source. When this is the case, the City will turn water on by the second week of May and turn water off by the second week of October. If no City water source is available, the community garden will be responsible for securing their own water supply;
  - 6.1.2 Assign a main point of contact from the Environment and Sustainability Department to liaise with the Garden Coordinator or other point of contact from the garden group;
  - 6.1.3 Provide liability insurance;
  - 6.1.4 Conduct two (2) spring and two (2) fall pick-ups of yard waste bags;
  - 6.1.5 Make connections between gardeners and potential funding partners; and,

- 6.1.6 Offer funding opportunities through City of Charlottetown grants.
- 6.2 Additionally, for community gardens in City parklands, the City is responsible for:
  - 6.2.1 Parkland maintenance in the area surrounding the garden including: grass-cutting, litter pick-up, tree pruning/removals, community vegetable planters and orchard plantings; and
  - 6.2.2 General park signage, community vegetable planter signage, orchard signage and garden directional signage (member vs. public spaces).

## **7.0 Partner Community Gardens on Private Land**

- 7.1 The City of Charlottetown encourages the creation of partner community gardens on private land, subject to the land owner's explicit authorization, that are in alignment with the purpose and objectives of this Policy and the City of Charlottetown Zoning and Development Bylaw. It is recommended that City of Charlottetown involved partner community gardens on private land adhere to the guidelines for development outlined in the City of Charlottetown's Community Gardens Handbook. Backyard gardening and sharing of backyard gardens or fruit tree harvests are encouraged as additional ways of promoting and making use of food production in the city. Garden groups can apply to partner with the City when they meet the criteria outlined in this Policy. Partner community gardens will enter into a yearly Memorandum of Understanding with the City outlining rules, roles and responsibilities.
- 7.2 The City of Charlottetown offers the following support for partner community gardens on private lands:
  - 7.2.1 An annual stipend towards the cost of materials and equipment (e.g. compost, mulch, garden tools, etc.). Stipend amounts will be established in the Memorandum of Understanding;
  - 7.2.2 Funding opportunities through City of Charlottetown grants;
  - 7.2.3 Makes connections between gardeners and potential funding partners;
  - 7.2.4 Helps connect gardeners to appropriate landowners.