
MM8/20 COMMUNITY GARDEN AND STREET VERGE FRAMEWORK POLICY - Mayor, Councillor Jerome Laxale

File Number: MYR/07/10/20 - BP20/958

Repeated community feedback has indicated that the enhancement and expansion of local green spaces is a priority for residents of the City of Ryde.

Residents have advised Councillors on numerous occasions that they would like the ability to establish community gardens, as well as undertake planting on their nearby footpath verge.

Both these priorities are cost-effective, increase the amenity of the surrounding area and build community spirit and engagement.

In addition, the practices increase the sustainability of our City and reflect the area's orchard and garden market heritage.

Current City of Ryde guidelines prohibit any planting on the footpath verge and the establishment of a community garden is more difficult than it needs to be.

Many other Councils have streamlined their Community Garden frameworks to facilitate greater community uptake and reduce the bureaucratic burden on residents. Further, many Councils have created approval frameworks that allow residents to undertake planting on their street verges while still maintaining pedestrian, vehicle and utility access.

Relevant policies are attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:-

- (a) update the existing Community Garden Framework (2010) and instead, create a dedicated community garden approval process with a view to simplifying the creation of new community gardens on public or private land in the City of Ryde.
- (b) create additional supporting documents that assist residents with the continued management and technical knowledge of community gardens.
- (c) create a draft Verge Gardening policy that enables residents to plant on the verge, while maintaining pedestrian, vehicle and utility access.
- (d) That in the above processes, staff review similar Council guidelines attached and present draft policies to Council by August 2021.

Council, submitted on 22 September 2020.

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 City of Sydney Footpath Gardening Update
- 2 City of Sydney Community Gardening Guidelines
- 3 Woollahra Community Gardens Policy
- 4 Brisbane City Verge Garden Guidelines Update

Report Prepared By:



Councillor Jerome Laxale
Mayor

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ATTACHMENT 1



Footpath Gardening Policy



Sydney 2030 Green Global Connected

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ATTACHMENT 1



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ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy

01
Introduction

The Footpath Gardening Policy (the Policy) allows residents and businesses to put planter boxes on the footpath and/or carry out gardening on footpath verges outside their properties under certain conditions.

Purpose

This policy applies to the City of Sydney Local Government Area. The policy does not apply to the Central Sydney Area as shown on the attached map (see Appendix 4) because of high pedestrian activity.

This policy was adopted by the City of Sydney Council (the Council) in February 2013, and consent was provided by the NSW Division of Local Government in May 2013.

How this policy works

Part 1 – Exempt from approval

Residents and businesses in the City of Sydney do not need approval to install planter boxes or carry out gardening on a public footpath as long as they comply with policy criteria, outlined in the footpath gardening checklists. The criteria ensure any planter boxes or gardening on public footpaths respects other uses of the footpath and maintains access and amenity.

Residents who want to garden on the footpath will be asked to sign and complete a checklist and submit the checklist to the City for record-keeping purposes.

Part 2 – Review by City of Sydney representatives

Planter boxes or verge gardens that do not comply with the checklist criteria are not permitted to be installed. The City's Operations team can provide advice to residents and businesses about how to ensure their footpath garden meets the criteria and can also inspect a proposed site. Once a planter box or verge garden is installed, the City will monitor compliance and may issue clean-up notices or removal orders if the garden is non-compliant or not adequately maintained.

Part 3 – Other matters

- Appendix 1 – How to request a shared zone
- Appendix 2 – Dial before you dig service
- Appendix 3 – Major street planter box types
- Appendix 4 – Map showing policy exclusion zone

Footpath accessibility

The policy encourages residents and businesses to green local streets and footpaths, as long as the footpath remains accessible for pedestrians and other users.

People with limited vision usually use the building line to help safely navigate the footpath, orientate themselves and locate businesses and premises. People with limited mobility and with prams need sufficient space in which to manoeuvre. To ensure the path remains accessible to everyone, planter boxes on the footpath should be positioned along the kerb line, with a sufficient gap between the planter box and the edge of the kerb. The planter box should also be placed away from street furniture and underground service access lids.

Planter boxes may have to be moved to allow access to utility service providers and the roads authority. In these cases, residents or businesses will be required to help the utility service providers to arrange removal or temporary storage and return after the works have been completed.

The City reserves the right to remove or relocate any planter box placed on the public footpath for any reason.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy

02 Creating new gardens

Requests for constructing new landscaped verges

The City has an ongoing street upgrade program, and will take requests from the community to construct new nature strips on public footpaths.

The City's footpaths have variable site conditions which need careful assessment to determine their suitability for landscape planting. Requests will be assessed individually, taking into account the footpath's gradient, soil, drainage, existing trees, access requirements and the location of underground services and utilities.

Where site conditions are favourable and funds are available, the City will upgrade the streetscape and install footpath gardens in consultation with residents and the neighbouring community.



Living Colour

02



Community gardens

Community gardens

The City of Sydney is expanding the network of community gardens which allow local residents to meet and become involved in producing organic food, herbs or native plants.

Community gardens are non-profit, community-based enterprises producing food primarily for member gardeners. They are community managed, multifunctional garden spaces that can provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

Community verge gardens may be established on the footpath verge. These are considered a type of community garden in the *Community Gardens Policy* (2010) when they are managed collectively by a group of local residents and decisions are jointly made.

Residents wanting to set up community gardens are referred to the City's Community Gardens Policy and information provided on our website.

Living Colour

Streets in Central Sydney and busy village shopping streets have high levels of pedestrian and vehicle traffic. The City beautifies these streets with regular upgrades, street tree planting programs and Living Colour displays.

The City's Living Colour Program provides themed floral displays for six-to-12 weeks in summer and spring, creating attractive focal points in civic spaces and main village streets.

These seasonal displays beautify busy streets which are unsuitable for permanent landscaping or planter boxes.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy

03

Footpath planter boxes

The City celebrates the diversity and character of our different village areas, but also places importance in a consistent approach to decorating and maintaining public footpaths

Planter boxes on the public footpath

Planter boxes should contribute to the attractiveness of the street, but must also ensure pathways remain accessible and safe.

Residents and businesses are allowed to install and maintain planter boxes on the kerb side of the footpath outside their properties as long as they meet the requirements of this policy. Interested residents and businesses will be provided with an information package and a checklist which they must fill out and return to the City. The checklists specify the minimum clearances and criteria for access and safety.



The policy requires that planter boxes placed on the footpath:

- Are located within the permissible area shown on the map in Appendix 4;
- Are located on the kerb line and allow a minimum pedestrian clearance of 1.5 metres on residential streets, 1.8 metres on major streets and 2 metres on shared paths;
- Do not create access barriers or hazards for pedestrians, road users including public transport, neighbouring properties, public utilities, trees and services;
- Do not damage the footpath or property;
- Are a minimum height of 0.5 metres to avoid creating trip hazards for pedestrians and a maximum height of 1 metre to maintain clear lines of sight for pedestrians and road users;
- Are a maximum length of 1.5 metres to avoid creating access barriers to pedestrians and road users;
- Are of a contrasting colour with the ground and their surrounds so they are visibly obvious during the day and night;
- Are stable, durable, free of protrusions, sharp edges and spiky vegetation, and continuous to the ground; and
- Are well maintained to ensure they remain safe, tidy and attractive. The City is not responsible for the upkeep, repair or replacement of planter boxes installed under this policy. Clean-up notices or removal orders may be issued to owners of non-conforming planter boxes.

Planter boxes are not suitable for footpaths narrower than 2.6 metres. Footpaths that are too narrow for pedestrians, such as in a laneway, require the creation of a Shared Zone, as described in Appendix 1 of this Policy. Planter boxes may not be placed on traffic islands or blisters.

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Footpath Gardening Policy



Crown Street, Surry Hills

Major village streets and retail strips (listed below) require the use of a consistent planter box design which reflects the character of the surrounding built environment.

Major village streets

Glebe Point Road

Glebe
(Parramatta Road to Cook Street)

Harris Street

Pymont
(Murray Street to the northern end)

Union Street

Pymont
(Harris Street to Murray Street)

King Street

Newtown
(City Road to Sydney Park Road, St Peters)

Erskineville Road

Erskineville
(Wilson Street to Swanston Street)

Crown Street

Surry Hills
(Cleveland Street to Oxford Street)

William Street

Darlinghurst
(from College Street to Darlinghurst Road)

Oxford Street

Darlinghurst and Surry Hills
(Wentworth Avenue to South Dowling Street)

Stanley Street

Darlinghurst
(Yurong Street to Crown Street)

Victoria Street

Darlinghurst
(Burton Street, Darlinghurst, to McElhone Steps, Potts Point)

Macleay Street

Potts Point
(William Street to Challis Avenue)

Redfern Street

Redfern
(Chalmers Street to Regent Street)

Regent Street/Botany Road

Redfern to Alexandria
(Redfern Street to Henderson Road)

Broadway

Broadway
(from Railway Square to Glebe Point Road)

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy

04

Road verges

The City has high standards for its streets and open spaces. Well-maintained public spaces and streets look better, provide environmental benefits and improve property values.

Gardening on road verges

Residents are allowed to plant and maintain nature strips outside their properties as long as they meet the requirements of this policy and after submitting a completed checklist to the City. Residents are not allowed to plant in raingardens, which are designed to capture and filter storm water. Residents should contact the City of Sydney if they are unsure if the verge they intend to garden is a raingarden.

The policy requires that footpath gardens:

- Are located within the permissible area shown on the map in Appendix 4;
- Do not create access barriers or hazards for pedestrians, road users including public transport, neighbouring properties, public utilities and services;
- Do not contain raised edges such as bricks or fences, tall or spiky vegetation which may block sight lines or impede people using the footpath;
- Are well maintained to ensure they remain safe, tidy, attractive, and do not cause runoff of water, soil or other material. The City may take responsibility for verge gardens that are unsafe or untidy. This may mean removing the footpath garden; and
- Do not include the planting or pruning of trees or tree roots. Gardening is not permitted close to tree trunks or within tree pits with grates, crushed granite, granite or porous paving. Residents may request the City of Sydney to enlarge tree pits to allow gardening at such places.



Sydney verge garden

Resource conservation

Residents are encouraged to use native or water-wise plants where possible. Where watering is needed, residents should consider watering planters or road verges by hand with collected rainwater or recycled water. Irrigation systems are not permitted. Water must not flow on to the public footpath or into street drains. Mulch is recommended to retain soil moisture. The City strongly encourages using organic products rather than synthetic fertilisers, pesticides and other chemicals.

Landscaped verges are on the public footway and may be used by pedestrians, people accessing vehicles, or putting out waste bins for collection. The City takes no responsibility for damage to verge gardens or their contents.

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Footpath Gardening Policy

05
**Safe
gardening**

Health and safety

Health and safety precautions are the responsibility of the resident or business, and those interested in footpath gardening will be encouraged to consider basic safety precautions, including appropriate clothing, appropriate and safe use of tools and sun protection.

All planting must be carried out by hand with no excavation deeper than 30 centimetres. Mechanised tools and equipment are not permitted. Care should be taken as drain pipes or other utilities may be at very shallow depths.

Residents and businesses are asked to contact Dial Before You Dig prior to undertaking any digging. Dial Before You Dig is a free service for locating underground service and utilities. See Appendix 2 for more information.

It is important that footpath gardeners confirm the location of underground pipes and cables which carry vital services such as water, electricity, communications and gas.

There are many incidents of damage to underground services each year, costing millions of dollars. Most of this damage results from unawareness, carelessness or disregard. For residents' safety and the safety of others, it is important to avoid damaging underground pipes and cables. Legal action may be taken against individuals or companies.



Consultation

Occupants of neighbouring properties and, where applicable, owners' corporations of strata schemes, must be consulted before placement of the planter box or the creation of a footpath garden.

Public liability insurance

The City will provide public liability insurance to persons who place a footpath planter box or footpath garden provided that they fully comply with this policy and associated checklists. However, the City's indemnity does not prevent a third party from making a claim against the owner for any injury, loss or damage caused by the planter box or footpath gardens.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy

06
The policy

The City will educate and support the community in the appropriate use and placement of footpath planter boxes and gardens.

Legal status of this Policy

The Footpath Gardening Policy (the policy) is a local approvals policy, under section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, for residents and businesses wanting to place **planter boxes on the footway**, (an activity under category E(2) of the table in section 68 of the Act), and/or **garden on footpaths** outside their properties.

Planter box structures and gardening activity on the footpath that meet the requirements of the footpath gardening checklists are considered exempt development under provisions of the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2011, and so do not require consent, in line with section 76 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Planter-box structures and gardening activity on the footpath that comply with the requirements of this policy are taken to have general approval from the City under section 138 of the *Roads Act 1993*. This general approval is granted with the concurrence of Roads and Maritime Services, under section 138, where a planter box is located on the public footpath of a classified road.

This policy has been prepared to support the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and the *City of Sydney Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2007–11*.

Cases of non-compliance

The City will educate and support the community regarding the appropriate use and placement of footpath planter boxes and gardens. As a last resort, the City may issue penalty infringement notices or issue orders under the *Local Government Act 1993*, to cease any gardening activity or remove any planter box on the footpath that does not comply with this policy.



The City may also issue penalty notices under the *Roads Act 1993* and clean-up notices under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, where the planter box or gardening activity does not comply with this policy.

Planter boxes placed by cafés, restaurants and hotels in association with their licensed footpath dining facilities must comply with any associated licensing conditions.

Policy Review

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* (Section 165(4)), a local policy is automatically revoked 12 months after the NSW local government elections.

Further information on footpath gardening and this policy, including the checklists, will be available on the City's website and customer service centres.

Contact the City of Sydney

cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
Tel: 02 9265 9333
Fax: 02 9265 9222

Postal Address

City of Sydney
GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001

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ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy



Appendix 1

How to request a shared zone

A **shared zone** refers to a street section where pedestrians, bike users and vehicles share the road space and drivers and cyclists must give way to pedestrians. Under current Roads and Maritime Services policy, 10km/h speed limits are placed on shared traffic zones.

To Create a Shared Zone

Residents wanting to install planter boxes on a street where footpaths are not wide enough to allow the required 1.5 metres clearance for pedestrian movement should contact the City to see if it is possible to create a shared zone.

If a shared zone is possible, the City must obtain the endorsement of the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee and the approval of Roads and Maritime Services to create a shared zone.

If the shared zone is approved it will be included for consideration for funding in the City's capital works program. Planter boxes can be installed once the shared zone has been implemented.

Guidelines for Shared Zones

Current policies and guidelines require the following criteria to be met for a 10km/h shared zone:

- A shared zone should be less than 250 metres long;
- The traffic volume is to be less than 300 vehicles a day;
- A shared zone road environment must be significantly changed in appearance to distinguish it from a normal road;
- Speed zone signage must be installed by Roads and Maritime Services; and
- Parking within a shared zone must be in accordance with Australian Road Rules and must be within marked bays or regulatory signs.

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Footpath Gardening Policy

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Appendix 2

Dial Before You Dig

Dial Before You Dig is a free referral service for information about locating underground services and utilities.

The owners of a service or utility respond by supplying plans and information about their underground network with advice about how to protect their assets during excavation, or by advising their service is not near the proposed worksite. This information is provided within two working days.

Why should residents or businesses use the service before excavation?

Dial Before You Dig provides important safety information and also ensures gardeners avoid damaging underground pipes and cables. Underground pipes and cables carry vital services such as water, electricity, communications and gas – damaging them can cause widespread disruption. Digging into an electricity cable or gas pipe with a misplaced stroke of a shovel can be a fatal mistake.

There are many incidents of damage to underground networks throughout Australia each year, costing millions of dollars. Most of this damage results from unawareness or disregard for the networks.

Who should Dial Before they dig?

Anyone intending to dig in the footpath or road should lodge an enquiry before starting.

Cost to obtain a location plan

Dial Before You Dig is a free service.

Type of information provided

Plans of underground services provide information about its presence only – they do not pinpoint the exact location of the cables and pipes. Digging should only be carried out by hand or with hand tools. Networks may not be installed in a straight line due to various obstacles. Several small potholes may need to be dug manually to determine the exact locations of cables or pipes to avoid mishaps.

If residents or businesses use the service and excavate, are they still responsible for any damage caused?

All individuals have a duty of care when working near underground plant. A vital component of that duty is to Dial Before You Dig before starting any excavation. When observing this duty of care the following must be considered:

- It is the excavator's responsibility to expose the underground pipes and cables manually;
- Location plans provide an indication of the presence of underground plant only; they do not pinpoint the exact location; this is why manual exposure is required;
- Utilities may hold individuals and companies liable for damage to their networks if negligent or careless behaviour can be shown; and
- Utilities can provide engineering support and advice where necessary.

Contact Information

Lodge an enquiry by calling 11 00 or visit 1100.com.au

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Footpath Gardening Policy

C
Appendix 3

Major Street Planter Box Types



Granite-finish planter boxes – Oxford Street



Sandstone-finish planter boxes – Three Saints Square, Darlinghurst



Granite-finish planter boxes – Victoria Street, Potts Point

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ATTACHMENT 1

Footpath Gardening Policy

D Appendix 4

Map showing Policy Exclusion Zones



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Sydney2030 Green Global Connected

General Enquiries or after-hours assistance

Tel: 02 9265 9333
(24 hours, seven days a week)
Fax: 02 9265 9222
council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
DX: DX1251 SYDNEY

Street address

City of Sydney
Town Hall House
456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Postal address

City of Sydney
Reply Paid 1591
Sydney NSW 2001

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ATTACHMENT 2



Sydney2030 Green Global Connected

CITY OF SYDNEY  

Community Garden Guidelines

A guide to assist groups to develop, implement
and maintain a successful community garden

February 2016

MM8/20 (continued)

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ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

01

Lord Mayor's message

Community and verge gardens are part of our Sustainable Sydney 2030 program to reduce our city's ecological footprint. The gardens are managed by residents and they contribute to the health and wellbeing of whole neighbourhoods – by growing organic flowers, fruit and vegetables, teaching the community and fostering friendships.

In 2010 Council adopted the Community Garden Policy to help the community create local community gardens. Since developing the policy the City has established eight new gardens across the local government area.

The *Community Garden Guidelines (Getting Started guidelines)* provide gardening groups with everything they need to know about setting up and running a community garden in the City of Sydney.

“It is fantastic that local residents are embracing sustainable living in the heart of the city and sharing the experience with others. Our city's community gardens are a great way for people to work together to green our city and grow their own produce.”



Clover Moore

Lord Mayor Clover Moore

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ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

02 Welcome



Community gardening is becoming more popular worldwide with the growing awareness of food security and climate change, and as a way to encourage a healthier lifestyle within the local community.

These guidelines contain everything you need to know about setting up and running a community garden within the City of Sydney. They are based on the City's knowledge of the practices of successful community gardens throughout the city.

Community gardens in the city

Community gardens are a unique form of open space that is self-managed by the community primarily for the production of food, and to contribute to a sustainable urban environment. There are currently 23 gardens across the City of Sydney Local Government Area: 19 community gardens, three footpath verge gardens and one community composting site. By supporting community gardens the City of Sydney promotes environmental education and sustainable production of food, and provides opportunities for social and community development.

Five components of a successful community garden

There are five essential components for a successful community garden, which are summarised below and explained in more detail throughout the guidelines.

People. Your group will need people with a range of skills in gardening, administration and communication. You will need the support of neighbours and the local community to ensure success and minimise vandalism.

Site. Your site will need to be large enough for garden beds, composting systems, and a tool shed. It should have good sunlight, available water, and easy access for pedestrians and deliveries.

Style. The size of the site will determine the style of garden. The City encourages groups to have a communal garden to allow more people to participate.

Structure. A sound management plan will provide structure for all group members by outlining responsibilities, rosters, maintenance and record keeping.

Promotion. Promoting your garden through open days or social media will encourage more people to get involved and support your garden.

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ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

03

Getting started

Consulting your local community

You should inform as many people as possible that you are planning to establish a community garden in the neighbourhood. This includes local businesses and cafes as well as local residents, community centres, schools and church groups. A great way to generate awareness of the project is by holding a community meeting, on the site if possible. This will allow you to get a sense of local support (or concerns), and recruit members to your group.

Promoting the proposal

Promote the proposal or meeting by:

- Creating a flyer for a letterbox drop in the community;
- Doorknocking residents and visiting businesses and cafes with the flyer; and
- Putting the flyer up on noticeboards in shops, libraries and community centres.

The community meeting

Ask people to provide their contact details and get everyone to introduce themselves.

If possible, have a skilled facilitator run the meetings, someone who is able to draw out ideas from the group; and ensure the ideas (and any objections) are recorded.

Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to provide their view, even if they oppose the project.

Take note of any issues and try to work through objections. You will need the support of everyone in the community in order to get the best possible outcome. Take the time to work with people who are concerned about the project, rather than assuming the problems will go away.

Let interested people know how they can become members of the group.

Establishing your community garden group

A community garden needs a working group of committed people with a range of skills and experience. The size of the group will depend on the size of the project. However, all gardens, whatever their size, require similar structures for managing the garden and the members.



Once you have established your group, organise regular meetings to discuss the development of the garden.

Researching your garden project

One of the best ways to find out about community gardens is to visit an existing garden group to hear about the group's experiences and also make connections that could be useful as your project progresses.

You could ask about their organisational structure, decision-making and record-keeping processes, or practical aspects such as sources for soil, mulch, seed, insurance or funding.

When talking to a garden group or visiting a site, take notes and photos to assist with your garden plans.

Setting up a committee

The City recommends a core group with a range of skills and experience should form the garden management committee. This group should comprise at least six people to ensure that responsibility is shared.

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ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

Assessing the proposed site

A new garden group should undertake a detailed assessment of the proposed site to ensure the location is suitable for the needs of the garden project.

When assessing the site you should consider the following:

- Who owns the land? Is it Council's community land? Privately owned? Managed by a department?
- What community groups and businesses are nearby that might support or partner (or object to) the project?
- Is the land near other community facilities? Can it be seen from nearby houses or shopping areas? Is there any graffiti or vandalism in the area? Is lighting available?
- What other land use surrounds the site?
- What is the land currently used for? For example, it may be used as a shortcut by local residents, a place to dump rubbish or for illegal activities, a children's play or sport area, or an off-leash area for dogs. Will the project conflict with these uses?
- What plants are already on the site? Is it infested with weeds? Are there trees that will shade the garden?
- How much space do you require in overall area and how much for garden beds?
- What is the land use zoning category? What does this zoning allow or restrict?
- How does water move through the site? Does it soak in quickly or cause waterlogging? Does it flood? Are there existing water taps on site?

- Does the site have underground services: electricity, water, telephone or sewerage?
- What is the current surface cover? Is it grass, gravel, paving or compacted earth?
- What is the soil type and condition? What is the history of the site? Is there a risk of soil contamination? Is there any asbestos on site?
- How much sun does the site get? Does it receive more than six hours of sunlight a day? Do any buildings or trees block the sun?
- What is the prevailing wind direction? Is the wind likely to affect plant growth? Do nearby buildings or walls create wind turbulence?
- What structures are already on the site? Consider buildings, seating, sheds, walls, fences, paving and existing gardens.
- Are there major roads nearby? If so, are there barriers to pollution and noise from traffic?

Size of the space

The space available will determine the type of garden and the number of people that can be involved. Community gardens can range in size from small footpath verges involving around 15 people to large gardens containing garden beds, composting systems, native bees, pathways and a tool shed, with 25 or more people involved.

A guide to various size options based on growing space and minimum number of members is provided below.

Recommended garden types by size of land and group

	Large	Medium	Small
Size	1,000m ² or more	Around 400m ²	Up to 100m ²
Type of garden	Community	Community	Community or footpath verge
No. of members	40 or more	25 or more	15 or more
Herbs, flowers, vegetables	✓	✓	✓
Miniature fruit trees	✓	✓	
Accessible paths for wheelbarrows, prams, wheelchairs	✓	✓	✓
Composting system	✓	✓	✓
Communal garden bed – forage for herbs	✓	✓	✓
Bushtucker or biodiversity garden	✓	✓	✓
Tool shed	16m ²	7m ²	2m ²
Other	Chickens, ducks, native bees and frog pond	Native bees and frog ponds	



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ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

Choosing the garden type and model

There are several types of community gardens throughout the city. Consider which of these is best suited to the size of your project.

Types of community gardens

Community gardens on City of Sydney community land are self-managed by the community to grow fresh produce, flowers and native plants.

Community gardens on other land may consist of a mixture of plots and common areas. They are open to residents of public housing or private strata developments, or in areas not managed by the City of Sydney. Examples of such gardens are those supported by the Botanic Gardens Trust and Housing NSW Community Greening programs.

Footpath verge gardens are garden beds established on the nature strip adjoining the road and managed collectively by a group of local residents. See Footpath Gardening Policy.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150051/6687_FA2_Footpath-Gardening-Update.pdf

School kitchen garden projects are defined as a community garden when local residents from outside the school community can participate in the garden. The garden may combine individual plots for residents with communal garden beds that the school manages and uses for lessons on cooking, nutrition and the environment, and to provide produce for the school canteen.

School kitchen gardens are not always set up as community gardens due to perceived problems of security. Groups can specify different opening hours for access by the public outside school hours, or members can undergo a working with children check.

Rooftop gardens are established on buildings and structures. These areas usually have less vandalism but may be open to strong winds which can affect plant growth. For additional information:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/200242/Green-Roofs-and-Walls-Policy-Implementation-Plan-Adopted.pdf

Community composting systems consist of a minimum of three compost bins and a worm farm, located in an existing community garden or in a park as a stand-alone project, to reduce waste going to landfill and encourage recycling of food and garden scraps. For additional information:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/206791/7848_Community-Composting-guidelines_DE4.pdf



St Helens Community Garden – garden beds 450mm or higher.

Organisation models

There are several organisational models operating within these community gardens. Consider which of these is most suited to your project.

Communal

This model can incorporate a large number of people and assist members with limited knowledge or skills in gardening. The garden is managed collectively, with members deciding crops and rosters for garden maintenance. The group meets on harvest days to share the produce and sometimes shares with the community. Examples of communal gardens are the Ultimo garden and James St Community Garden Reserve.

Combination communal and allotment

This combination of two models allows members to grow their own produce or learn from each other in the communal garden.

Allotment

Each member has a garden bed or section for growing their own crops. The size of the area varies by garden but is at least one square metre. Where agreed the crops can be shared on harvest days.

Shared

This model builds capacity within the community. A small number of members grow crops in planter boxes for their own use and for the community to harvest. An example of this is the Green Square Growers in Zetland.

Community garden bed

The City recommends that all community gardens have at least one garden bed planted with herbs for the community to harvest. This encourages participation of the local community and reduces vandalism.

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Community Garden Guidelines

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Choosing gardening methods and design

Gardening methods

Consider the skill level of the group and the possible reaction from the public when choosing a gardening method.

Raised soil garden beds are at least 450mm above ground to assist with accessibility and inhibit soil contamination. They are filled with organic soil and enriched with manures.

Wicking garden beds use a wicking system to draw water from a reservoir below the growing medium, allowing plant roots to access moisture when required.

Perculture promotes consciously designed landscapes that mimic the relationships found in nature, while yielding a food and energy for local needs.

Perculture food forest employs the features of the forest to form an edible, resilient and perennial food system with layers that include: canopy, sub-canopy, shrub, herbaceous, groundcover, underground, vertical, aquatic and soil fungi.

Aquaponics combines aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (the soil-less growing of plants) to grow fish and plants together in an integrated system.

No-dig garden uses layers of newspaper, compost, straw, lucerne hay or manure above the ground as a bed for plants, rather than planting them in soil.

Biodynamics works with the organisms in the soil to provide healthy and balanced nutrition in plants and food.

Garden design

The City recommends involving a professional landscape architect in the design stage of a proposed community garden. This person can lead the discussion in meetings to ensure that everyone's ideas are heard and the resulting plan will be something that everyone can 'own'. A professional design will be invaluable when the group is trying to explain the garden or ask for support, and will inspire members and the community.

Consider the characteristics below to help your group develop design ideas for your garden.

Aesthetics

Think about how the broader community will see the garden. The overall look of the garden is important, not only for attracting new members but for ensuring good relations with your neighbours and the landowner.

Services

Ensure existing services are shown on the design (electrical cables, water pipes, water taps and sewer) for construction and future use.

Low-waste

Maximise the opportunities on the site to recycle organic waste by composting and worm-farming systems.

Integrated soil fertility management

Aim to grow the biomass (organic material) or green manures you need for mulch, and incorporate legume species that both produce biomass and fix nitrogen (an essential plant nutrient) in the soil for other plants to utilise. Incorporate crop rotation so as not to exhaust the soil nutrients and to help manage plant diseases.

Sustainability

Use recycled and local materials. Grow a variety of plants for biodiversity and grow heirloom seed varieties so you can collect the seeds from one year to produce plants the following season.

Water management

Ensure there is access to water taps on the site and the opportunity for water harvesting through rain water tanks.

Organic pest management and biodiversity

Consider a range of plants that provide habitat for small birds, frogs, lizards and predatory insects. Include sources of water such as ponds and bird baths. Consider small hives for native stingless bees to improve pollination of produce crops and native plants.

The senses

Think about a garden that engages the senses, which will enable your garden to 'speak' to a wider cross-section of the community. Sensory features could include the scent of lavender, the sound of gravel underfoot, the soft touch of lamb's ear and the taste of fresh beans off the vine.

Accessibility

Think about those with limited mobility. Incorporate raised beds where possible and pathways wide enough for people, wheelbarrows, prams and wheelchairs to pass. Garden beds should be narrow enough for gardeners to reach the centre without strain or over reaching.

Safety

Maintain clear lines of sight and avoid creating enclosed or hidden spaces. With safety in mind, spaces can still be created for people seeking solitude, or to create a sense of intrigue as the garden unfolds along a twisting path. Incorporate seating to encourage people to spend time in the garden. Provide public surveillance by reducing the height or thinning out fruit trees or produce crops. For footpath verge gardens it is preferable to plant crops less than one metre in height to maintain visibility near traffic.



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Examples of community gardens



James St Reserve Community Garden is an example of a communal garden where the entire garden is managed collectively.



Joanna O'Dea Community Garden is an example of a garden with allotments and some shared areas.



Bourke St Community Garden is an example of combined communal and allotment gardens.



Newtown Community Garden is an example of allotment gardens.



Sustainable Chippendale footpath is an example of a footpath verge garden.



Green Growers Garden Zetlands is an example of a shared garden planter box.

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Community Garden Guidelines

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Checklist for a new community garden project

This checklist will assist your group to define the type of garden you would like to have in your community.

What is the purpose of the community garden?

- to grow fresh produce crops
- to supplement the food supply
- to socialise with your community
- to learn new skills
- to foster food security
- to reduce food miles

Proposed site considerations

- located in a high density area
- safety and passive surveillance
- accessibility for all users
- sunlight up to 6 hours a day
- size of the space to accommodate needs
- water on site
- soil contamination
- multiple uses by the broader community

Size of area for a garden

- under 100m²
- between 100 and 200m²
- between 180 and 400m²
- over 400m²

How many gardeners can participate in this project?

- 15 or more
- 25 or more
- 35 or more
- 45 or more

What type of garden

- community garden on Council land
- community garden on other land
- footpath verge garden
- school kitchen garden project
- rooftop garden
- community composting system

Style of garden

- communal
- combination of communal and allotment
- allotment
- shared
- community garden bed

Landowner

- apply for approval

What features will the garden have?

- garden beds
- accessible pathways
- tool shed
- water taps
- compost and worm farm system
- wheelchair access/garden bed
- community garden bed
- seating nearby
- biodiversity habitat
- frog pond
- native bees
- other

What types of plants will we grow?

- herbs
- flowers
- vegetables
- bush tucker
- dwarf fruit trees
- water plants
- medicinal plants
- native bird habitat
- other

What skills and training does our group require?

- soils
- making compost
- worm farming
- crop rotation
- organic gardening
- planting seasonal crops
- fruit trees
- native bees
- biodiversity
- grants and sponsorship
- health and safety
- team building
- conflict resolution
- group coordination
- other

How will we promote/educate/communicate with the local community?

- demonstration and open days
- signage
- flyers
- social media

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Creating your management plan and garden layout

Once you have selected a site and completed the consultation, research and design phases you are ready to create a formal plan for your community garden project. The management plan defines the overall vision and objectives for the garden, describes the roles and responsibilities of the group members, and how the group will work together. The plan demonstrates to the landowner and funding bodies that you have undertaken an appropriate level of planning and research.

The garden layout shows the main features of the garden such as the placement of garden beds, access ways, tool shed and composting systems. A detailed template for developing a management plan is provided in the appendix. You may not be able to fund the whole garden at once but you can stage the project over time as in the example provided below.

Staging your garden project

Ensure you have enough in your budget to fund the basics of Stage 1, which includes garden beds, paving, tools, soil and plants.

Stage 1

- Review the relevant City policies and guidelines.
- Find a suitable site.
- Consult with the community.
- Talk to other community garden groups and contact a mentor.
- Establish a committed group.
- Develop a management plan and garden layout plan.
- Apply and receive approval of your proposal from the landowner.
- Apply and receive approval for grant funding.
- Attend training courses and workshops.

Stage 2

- Construct garden and develop the garden group.
- Introduce garden members to the site.
- Form a committee within the group.
- Grow basic herbs and vegetables.
- Develop a roster system for watering and composting.
- Organise monthly working bees and meetings.

Stage 3

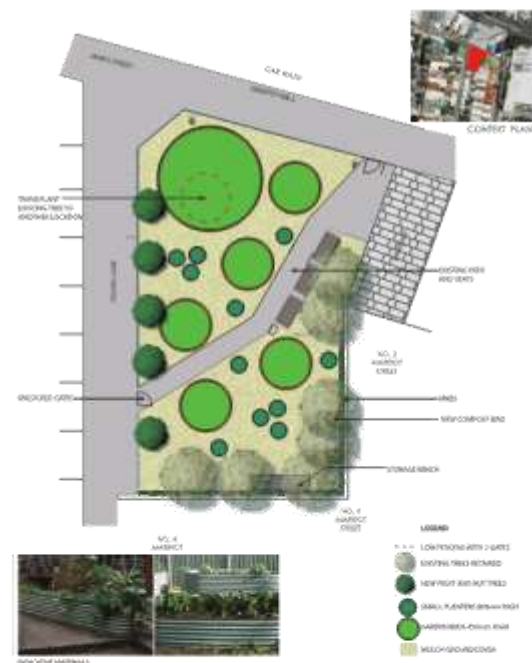
- Install rainwater tanks and pumps.
- Install signage in the garden to educate the community.
- Implement organic pest control and companion planting.
- Review management plan and design layout.

Stage 4

- Monitor the garden and crops.
- Report on the group's success.
- Promote the group through a web page, blog or social media page to recruit more members.
- Organise an Open Day and a demonstration site for the community and participate in the bus tour.
- Review management plan and design layout.

Stage 5

- Develop and network with a local business to assist with funding and sponsorship.
- Provide guided tours for school children and other gardens.
- Introduce bush tucker, native bees or a frog pond.
- Grow advanced crops and incorporate dwarf fruit trees.
- Review management plan and design layout.



James St Community Garden concept design

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Community Garden Guidelines

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Getting funding

To complete your management plan you will need to develop a budget and consider where you will obtain the necessary financial resources.

The requirements for each garden will vary but most new gardens may require to pay for the following:

- Costs of involving the community (e.g. promotional material, mail-outs, local advertising, venues for meetings);
- Public liability insurance;
- Construction materials for garden beds, paving, water taps, tool shed;
- Tools and equipment, e.g. hand tools, wheelbarrows, watering cans and hoses;
- Materials such as soil, manures, plants and mulch;
- Combination lock for tool shed;
- Vandal-proof fittings for water taps;
- Rainwater tanks, including costs of fittings and professional installation and solar water pump;
- Engaging a professional landscape design consultant; and
- Engaging professional trades to construct the garden.

Plan your fundraising efforts carefully, ensuring that the money raised is worth the time and energy expended. Community gardens can raise funds through:

- Annual membership fees, which can be a consistent income stream;
- Raffles, with prizes donated by local businesses;
- Sponsorship, by local businesses of a section of the garden;
- Grants, from the City or other bodies; and
- Donations, from local business for materials, plants, soil or a tool shed.

Applying for grants and sponsorship

The City encourages groups to apply for grants or sponsorship to assist with start-up costs, construction or ongoing costs of new or existing gardens. Contact the Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator prior to applying for grants or sponsorship. The City can provide advice on the process and suggestions for garden materials and costing of items.

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships>

The City's role

The City has adopted a community development approach to community gardens where gardening groups manage the gardens themselves with the support of the City and other partnering organisations. The City intends to develop strong partnerships with garden groups and sponsoring agencies.

Supporting community gardens to be self-managed helps the City achieve the Sydney 2030 Action 10.2.1: 'to maintain and extend roles in decision-making and in current consultation, engagement, education and information procedures'.

Principles for a community garden

To be supported by the City of Sydney community gardens should embrace the following principles:

- The garden must be open to the general community and allow the community to participate in the garden;
- The group should be incorporated or be covered by public liability insurance;
- The group must have interested local residents participating, and support from neighbours in the local community;
- Group members must have the skills to organise, manage and maintain a community garden group, or have a mentor from an existing group to assist in their garden management;
- The group must demonstrate the capacity to fund the garden and the ongoing maintenance requirements of the garden, which includes mulching, pest and weed management;
- The group must have approval by the landowner to develop and construct the community garden on their land and develop a management plan and design layout of the garden; and
- The project must be a long-term community initiative. The group must have at least 25 people for a community garden and 15 for a footpath verge or community composting group.

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Assistance

The City will provide services to support community garden groups such as:

Advice and materials

The City will:

- Provide advice, support and ongoing communication with garden coordinators and members;
- Help new and established community gardens to develop garden management plans and design layouts, and obtain grants and resources; and
- Provide support to establish community composting systems and worm farms.

The City may be able to donate a limited supply of materials such as mulch and manures when available.

Education and training

The City will:

- Deliver workshops and training on an as-needs basis;
- Provide online resources through the City's website; and
- Provide an annual bus tour for gardeners to network and learn from other gardeners throughout the city.

A number of educational workshops are offered by the City. Gardeners are encouraged to attend workshops provided by the City's Green Villages and the Green Living Centre.

Support

The City will:

- Connect local gardens and gardeners to each other to help build relationships and encourage sharing of information and experiences;
- Liaise with Sydney Community Gardens Network, the Australian City Farms, Community Gardens Network and the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance;
- Promote community gardens through the City's website, media releases, publications and events; and
- Facilitate garden meetings when needed and community engagement processes.



Ada Place community composting – example of signs.

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Community Garden Guidelines

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Creating a self-managed garden



Constructing the garden

Once you have approval, landscape design and funding you can commence construction of the garden. You will need to employ qualified tradespeople for this. Be prepared for this phase to take time and require discussion of construction details, quotes and timeframes. Community gardeners are covered under the City's community engagement insurance policy but are not covered to use power tools or machinery.

The City encourages recycling and use of sustainable products where possible.

Take photos through this phase to document the progress of your garden. This is a great time to organise a meeting with the group members to discuss the next steps of soil, planting crops and mulching, and to finalise details of how your group will function such as:

- Devising rosters for specific tasks, e.g. watering the garden or turning compost;
- Starting a garden diary or logbook for recording member activities and hours;
- Allocating specific roles and responsibilities, e.g. composting coordinator;
- Creating working groups for specific tasks, e.g. promotion or events; and
- Planning regular working bees and social activities.

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Community Garden Guidelines

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Maintaining the garden

Once the garden has been planted and crops are starting to grow you need to maintain it in an attractive, safe and functional state. A well-maintained and well-presented garden promotes the community gardens network and reduces the risk of vandalism and damage. Your garden must be kept clean and tidy, regularly weeded and free of damage to facilities.

Some gardens may appear unkempt due to the garden methodology, such as permaculture which is a self-sustaining ecosystem garden. These gardens still require weeding, maintenance and safety for all those using them.

Maintenance should consider the look of the garden to ensure:

- Overhanging plants do not grow across the pathways;
- Plants do not decrease the width of the pathways;
- Rubbish and litter is removed by garden members;
- Tools and materials are stored safely;
- Produce plants are trimmed to allow access and remove disease; and
- Garden beds are maintained with pest and weed management.

Community gardens must not be used for storage of personal items such as garden furniture, pot plants or BBQs.

If planning any changes or modifications within the garden you should seek the approval of the landowner. Any unapproved facilities or gardens that are not maintained to the required standard may be removed at the City's discretion.

Organic gardening

The City encourages community gardens to be organic and chemical free. We recommend a combination of cultural practices such as growing seasonal crops, crop rotation and other techniques. To reduce pest and disease problems from occurring before using organic sprays on the pest or plant.

Natural pesticides, such as pyrethrum or tea tree oil extracts, are subject to the same control as synthetic pesticides. Gardeners using eco oils should read the safety data sheet and sign a record of gardeners using the spray.

Approved organic sprays and the requirements for using these sprays are listed under the City's public liability insurance. Community gardeners are required to print out the safety data sheet, and sign a form confirming they have read the information and will use the organic spray safely. The signed form showing the users of the organic sprays should be forwarded to the City. The garden members must be 18 years and over to use the sprays. Using these sprays should also coincide with the pesticide spray application schedule plan for your area.

Organic sprays include:

- Eco oil;
- Pyrethrum;
- Garlic and chilli sprays;
- Vinegar spray;
- Eco fungicide; and
- Beat-A-Bug.

Gardeners need to be aware of the City's pesticide use notification plan which enables residents to avoid or minimise contact with the organic sprays.

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/council/our-responsibilities/permits-and-notifications/pesticide-notification-plan>

Community garden groups can register their garden to be on the Pesticide Notification Plan: Sensitive Site and Hotspot Register. The City will contact its staff and approved contractors will then be advised to avoid spraying on the footpath directly in front of the garden. This will provide your garden with a 2-metre buffer zone from the park. Controls already in place will reduce the risk of spray drift.

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‘Biodiversity is the foundation of ecosystem services to which human well-being is intimately linked.’

Biodiversity in a community garden

We live in a large city that connects living systems (plants, animals), the built environment and the natural physical world (rocks, streams). The health of this natural and man-made environment is vital for our own health and wellbeing, and relies on biodiversity.

What is biodiversity?

‘Biodiversity is the foundation of **ecosystem services** to which human well-being is intimately linked.’
– Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005.

A common measure of biodiversity is the number of species in a given area. A healthy, complex and biodiverse environment is the basis of human health and wellbeing, and economic prosperity.

In cities, biodiversity provides the following ‘ecosystem services’. It:

- Improves air quality – ensuring breathable air;
- Purifies water – ensuring potable water;
- Controls stormwater runoff – reducing pollutants going into rivers and oceans;
- Maintains healthy and fertile soil;
- Supports a healthy urban climate – minimising urban heat; and
- Recycles wastes.

Creating habitat for local wildlife and enhancing biodiversity in urban areas will contribute to making gardens healthier and increase our urban biodiversity.

Frog ponds and water gardens

Water features are a great way to increase biodiversity and to grow water produce plants such as chestnuts. All ponds must have a strong mesh cover to prevent children falling into the water.

Native bees

The inclusion of native bees in a garden will assist with pollination and increase seed production. Native bees are quite small and are ideal for native plant pollination. The City recommends the *Trigona* species to community gardens in public areas.

Exotic bees

Exotic bees are a risk to people who have an allergy. Not all people are aware of this allergy. The City recommends stingless native bees.

Trees in a community garden

The city’s trees are valuable assets that provide numerous environmental, social, economic and aesthetic benefits.

Apparently harmless actions can compromise the health and stability of trees. The following activities and works must not take place within the drip zone of trees (extent of canopy spread):

- Soil cut or fill including excavation and trenching;
- Soil cultivation, disturbance or compaction; and
- Stockpiling, storage or mixing of materials.

If excavation is required for any reason, consult with the City’s Tree Management Team through the Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator.

Do not place material such as wire, nails or signage in or around the trunks of trees.

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Avoid placing any item or structure within the drip zone of a tree. Any item or structure that prevents the infiltration of surface water and occupies a ground surface area greater than three square metres will require approval by the City's Tree Management Team.

Pruning or removal

Street and park trees: Trees in streets and parks are owned and managed by Council and should not be removed or pruned (including root pruning). Requests to remove or prune these trees can be lodged through the City's Customer Service Centre.

Council-owned properties: The removal or pruning of trees (branches or roots) on Council-owned property (other than parks or streets) requires an application and assessment in accordance with the City's Tree Preservation Order.

Privately owned trees: The removal or pruning of trees (branches or roots) on private property requires an assessment in accordance with the City's Tree Preservation Order through lodgement of a private tree pruning application with the City.

Further information is available on the City's website at:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0009/123993/Application-to-Prune-or-Remove-a-Tree-on-Private-Land.pdf

Animals in a community garden

Will you allow pets into your community garden? Will you want to keep chickens or ducks for the eggs or the beneficial droppings?

Pets

The City requires that pets in a garden are under the control of a competent person and restrained by an adequate chain or leash.

Pet owners have a legal and social responsibility to pick up after their animals. Uncollected faeces poses potential health risks, particularly near growing food crops in a community garden.

Chickens or ducks

The City will consider proposals to have chickens or ducks in community gardens. The proposals must describe how the birds will be funded, how their good health will be maintained, and how complaints from neighbours will be resolved. Roosters will not be allowed.

The keeping of fowl must not cause any nuisance to neighbouring premises such as noise, waste that could attract vermin, odour, or other issues that could deem the land or premises to be unhealthy. The City can serve legal orders and notices for these matters under the *Local Government Act 1993*.



James St Reserve community garden - native bee habitat hotels.

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Waterloo Estate community garden – mosaic art.

Art in a community garden

The City encourages community gardens to display creative art pieces. If you wish to have permanent or temporary artworks in your garden these need to be included in the management plan and design layout, and approved by the City to ensure safety and compliance with the City Public Art Policy. Art displays may not be approved, or may be removed if they are considered a risk, could be used as a missile or could cause a nuisance to the community.

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/explore/arts-and-culture/public-art>

Managing community gardeners

Community gardens need the assistance of interested community members who are willing to donate their time and effort towards the project. Community gardeners may wish to make a difference in the community, learn new skills or make new connections. Your group will need

a person to coordinate the activities of gardeners, and processes for training them.

Community garden coordinator

The City recommends that all groups have a community garden coordinator position within the group. This is the main contact person for group members and the community, and the liaison person between the landowner and the City.

The person in this position requires strong interpersonal skills to maintain gardeners' involvement in the long term, as well as skills in communication, e.g. listening, problem solving, decision-making. Other skills like leadership, project organisation and ability to work with a diverse range of people are important. Contact details of the coordinator should be widely publicised.

Induction for new community gardeners

Having a process to welcome new gardeners will encourage their participation and make them valuable members of the group. A garden induction process is essential to ensure that all new gardeners are aware of:

- The vision for the garden and the aims of the project;
- The names and positions of other members;
- Their rights and responsibilities in the garden;
- Health and safety protocols, and risks;
- Training and learning opportunities; and
- The value of their contribution.

Training for garden members

Community garden members should be encouraged to attend workshops to enhance their skills. A garden with multiskilled members will make it easier to work together. Encourage skilled members to share their expertise and knowledge. Your group should have skills or knowledge in the following:

- Healthy and safety protocols;
- The local area, networks and community organisations;
- Gardening including pest and disease identification and control methods;
- Administration, budgeting and financial management;
- Communication and computing;
- Leadership and group facilitation;
- Grant applications, promotion and marketing; and
- Research and writing, reporting and monitoring.

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Community gardener activities and recognition

Organised activities can help build friendships among your team of gardeners through:

Socialising in the garden to get to know each other, share skills, ideas information and build friendships.

Celebrating milestones such as the date your garden was approved, completion of construction, seasonal crop harvests, or member birthdays.

Sharing meals by cooking and eating together with BBQs, picnics, morning teas, lunches, and to share or swap produce.

Recognising the work of gardeners through a simple thank you or perhaps a certificate, morning tea or small gift to show appreciation for individuals who have put in a lot more effort to ensure the garden is working well.

Retaining members is about matching their skills with a role that makes them feel valued and appreciated within the group. Take the time to get to know the gardeners and find out about their skills and experience.

Employment programs

Community gardens can develop work-skills programs for the unemployed. These can build confidence, skills and motivation in participants while they provide significant assistance in the garden. Participants should be afforded the same respect and opportunities as other gardeners, and encouraged to participate in training, social events and decision-making. If considering a work-skills program it is advisable to get advice and assistance as there are administrative, coordination and financial responsibilities involved.

Corporate groups

Corporate groups usually request a one-day project for 10 to 20 people. A corporate group can assist in a major task that could take a garden group a month to complete, such as moving soil or mulch to fill garden beds.



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Managing communication

A self-managed garden needs an efficient communication system to ensure that all members have the opportunity to share their ideas, issues or success stories.

Communication methods include:

- Noticeboards for listing events, working bees and special events;
- Newsletters, emails or minutes of group meetings;
- A garden record or diary to show member details, tasks and times;
- Social media discussion; and
- Phone calls or text messages.

The City recommends that all community garden groups develop an information flyer, website or social media page to explain the overall vision for their garden.

Group meetings

Regular meetings provide members with opportunities to discuss what is happening in the garden, their achievements and concerns, and news about completed projects. Meeting minutes should be distributed to all members to keep them informed.

An annual meeting can plan events for the year ahead including training workshops and harvest days. It is also an opportunity for the group to review the management plan and a great opportunity to celebrate the year's achievements.

The City recommends that garden groups make their decisions democratically and transparently to ensure all members have their say.

Networking

Links with other community gardens are an important means of increasing your skills, as well as your access to funding and resources. As your garden develops it will become a great example of sustainable living. Other organisations may want to visit your garden for field trips, practical activities or workshops.

Encouraging involvement and a sense of ownership within the local community will minimise problems of vandalism. Welcome and engage those who might be potential vandals and avoid excluding anyone. Even non-gardeners can still enjoy the space for relaxation or social interaction.

Open days/demonstration days/special events

Events are a great way to involve local residents, businesses and the broader community in the garden. They assist with socialising, networking and helping to reduce conflict, and promote the growing and eating of healthy fresh food.

There are a variety of events that can occur in the garden. Groups with gardens on Council land can hold:

- A "pop in" event that provides a cup of tea and a biscuit.
- A formal event that includes amplified music, catered food and temporary structures. This will require City approval.

Additional public liability insurance may be required.

The City may be able to assist with resources for your event.

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/235830/Event-Guidelines-V2.3.pdf

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/112058/EventApplication.pdf

Catering or food stalls at the event must comply with the City's temporary food stall requirements. Additional insurance may be needed for food stalls, music and the larger than usual number of people attending the event. A risk management plan will must be submitted for approval prior to the event.

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/regulations/food-and-drink-businesses/temporary-food-stalls>

Where community gardens are established on Council land, the City retains the right to use the garden as a demonstration site for community education activities such as tours and workshops.

Signs

Signs in a community garden are a way to communicate to other gardeners and the local community. The City can provide signage which features a blackboard to promote working bees, harvest days or good news stories.

We recommend signs for the compost systems (compost bins and worm farm) to advise gardeners what can be placed in the systems and what should not be included. These could be in several languages and illustrated.

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Media

The City can assist in promoting your garden, a project or event. At times the City receives requests from the media to do a story on a community garden team. We would like all groups to participate in these activities to demonstrate what a community can achieve.

Social media

Social media is a useful online tool to connect gardeners, the community, networks and the City. It may include a website, Facebook, blog or Twitter account. These provide gardeners with an opportunity to share ideas, knowledge and information through online networks, and to communicate with others.

The City's website

The City of Sydney website has a community gardens section that lists locations of community gardens and the group coordinator contact details. These are provided for people who would like to participate, or learn more about gardening, or for media requests. Community garden profiles showcase the individual gardens. Please advise the City's Community Gardens and Volunteer Coordinator if there are any changes to your group's coordinator or contact details.

The City of Sydney logo

Permission to use the City of Sydney logo must be made in writing, accompanied by the artwork, prior to using it on materials to promote your garden.



05 Managing a community garden



Community gardens should be managed by the community in a way that takes the needs of all stakeholders into account.

Responsibilities of community gardeners

You should maintain your garden so that the health and safety of the surrounding community is not adversely affected. In particular, your garden group should:

- Maintain effective relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood, partnering organisations and other gardeners;
- Comply with the City's policies, guidelines, procedures and code of conduct;
- Maintain the garden and facilities to minimise risks for gardeners and visitors;
- Include health and safety protocols in induction processes;
- Wash all produce before eating or cooking;

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- Not use machinery, power tools or synthetic chemicals;
- Control weeds and pests using organic methods;
- Store materials safely so they do not create an unpleasant environment;
- Maintain clear access paths with no trip hazards;
- Not discriminate due to differences in race, culture or sexuality;
- Communicate regularly with the City and/or other landowners and stakeholders;
- Employ democratic, transparent and inclusive decision-making;
- Ensure that any water leaving the garden is not contaminated by sediment, fertiliser, manure or excessive organic matter that might pollute waterways;
- Ensure noise levels within the garden are not disturbing to neighbours;
- Ensure compost, worm-farming systems and fertilisers do not to attract vermin, cockroaches or produce unpleasant odours;
- Maintain rainwater harvesting systems to ensure water is of a high quality; and
- Welcome visitors to the garden, and ensure members of the public can access the community garden during daylight hours.

Rights of community gardeners

Community gardeners have the right to:

- Develop their own internal policies, rules, organisational procedures and management plans, providing they liaise with and get support from the landowner; and also ensure their policies comply with City's policies;
- Be consulted about any decision that may affect the project and be advised by the City in a timely manner of any policy changes that affect them;
- Be treated with respect by other gardeners, local residents and partnering organisations; and
- Negotiate a secure and reasonable agreement with the landowner.

Insurance and risk management

Your group should be aware of the risks associated with undertaking a community garden project with public access. Each group has a duty of care to the people who visit the garden areas so a minimum of \$10 million of public liability insurance is required. Small community groups with limited funds for this insurance could consider the following options.

1. The City's community engagement insurance policy may be extended to cover a garden on Council land where an extensive risk management process has been undertaken (the City's insurance policy does not automatically cover community gardens located on Council land).
 - This policy provides \$10 million public liability insurance cover.
 - This policy will not cover use of machinery or power tools or synthetic chemicals except organic sprays approved for use by community gardeners.
 - This policy will not cover groups who sell their produce or participate in any off site activity or fundraising effort.
 - If a group is approved for cover under this policy it will be a named insured and responsible for payment of the policy excess (currently \$500) in the event it makes a claim.
2. The group can become an incorporated association through the NSW Department of Fair Trading and manage their own insurance.
3. The group may be auspiced by another organisation or agency, such as a neighbourhood centre, and be covered by their insurance.
4. A group of community gardens with similar objectives might obtain insurance together.

Incorporation of the garden group

The City encourages community garden groups to have a clear and identified legal structure. Your group can apply to NSW Fair Trading to become an incorporated association. This will give the group some flexibility in the management of funds and enable you to open a bank account, obtain public liability insurance cover and apply for government grants.

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Health and safety obligations

The City recognises the significant contribution made by community gardeners within our community, and has an obligation to ensure they are provided with a healthy and safe workplace (community garden) and to ensure they are aware of their work health and safety responsibilities.

The City's responsibilities involve discussing the following matters with community garden groups:

- Induction procedures;
- Awareness of documents, e.g. code of conduct
- Personal protective equipment;
- Safety data sheets about sprays and hazardous substances;
- Risk assessment of the garden or site;
- Information, instruction and training in safe work methods;
- Tool maintenance; and
- Hazard, accident and incident reporting.

Gardeners are required to be aware of the risks that may affect their health, safety or welfare in the workplace (community garden) and act in a way that does not put themselves or others at risk. Your garden group needs to provide the following information to new garden members:

- Introduction to other garden members;
- Awareness of the Community Garden Policy and garden group rules;
- Requirements of being a gardener on site;
- Location of facilities such as first-aid kit, storage shed, toilets and noticeboard;
- Emergency and evacuation procedures; and
- Methods for communication with garden members.

Financial support for community gardens

Funding is essential for the success of any community garden project. Your group should aim for long-term financial sustainability so that you are not dependent on unreliable sources of funding, such as grants or sponsorship.

The City will support the development of community gardens through its grants and sponsorships programs. The grant will be provided once the Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator has approved the group's grant application, management plan and design.

The City will also consider providing funding for:

- Urgent repair of items that pose a significant safety risk. This will be mainly for community gardens on Council-owned land;
- Public signage and educational materials for the community garden; and
- A limited supply of mulch, manure, soil and plants.

Funding for all these items will depend upon budget constraints and demand. For more information on the City's grants programs visit:

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships/community-grants-sponsorships/community-matching-grants>

Resolving conflicts and complaints

Your garden group should promote an environment that is tolerant and caring. If a conflict arises the group should take steps immediately to resolve the issue by communicating respectfully with those involved and engaging the assistance of a mediator where appropriate.

The City recommends that your management plan contains a gardener's agreement that all members agree to follow. The agreement should include expected behaviour on site, the management of shared garden areas and plots, and a conflict resolution process.

Community gardeners must also be aware of the City's Bully and Harassment Policy, Code of Conduct and Equal Opportunity Principles.

Using gardens as demonstration sites

The City's vision is to promote the development of community gardens as demonstration sites for sustainable living that, through careful design and management, can be utilised for educational and community activities. To demonstrate sustainability best practice, community garden groups are encouraged to include outdoor learning, performance and meeting spaces; interpretive signage; and to use recycled materials and practice water-efficient and organic gardening. Council also encourages groups to participate in the educational garden bus tour.

Garden inspections

The City carries out inspections of community gardens throughout the local area. New gardens have random inspections for a trial period of 6 to 12 months. Existing gardens are assessed throughout the year.

The garden facilities are assessed on their condition from the highest at excellent condition through to the lowest at non-compliant.

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The City will look for a well maintained, loved and cared for garden as this shows a high participation level and a group of gardeners working well together.

A well maintained garden includes:

- Pathways – clear of debris, no trip hazards, weeded and accessible for all users;
- Garden beds – safe, without sharp edges and splinter free;
- Fences – safe, working and clear of debris and vegetation;
- Vegetation – crops have minimal pests and diseases, are weeded, and not shading other garden plots;
- Materials – to be looked after and kept tidy;
- Tool shed – organised and tidy with clear access;
- Water tanks – in working order;
- Existing trees – clear of material around base, branches and trunk;
- Composting systems – well maintained, free of pests and odours;
- Stakes – to be installed in garden beds and to have cross bars flush with post to avoid injury to passers-by; and
- Signage – free of graffiti.

Sustaining your garden and group

Measures of the success of your garden

The City would like all the community gardens to be successful and self-managed for a long time. Thinking about long-term goals provides an opportunity for the group to assess how it has evolved.

Success can be measured by considering:

- When did the group start?
- How long has the group been gardening or composting on the site?
- Has the group achieved the aims and objectives of the project?
- What skills and knowledge have been learnt?
- How popular is the garden in the community?
- Has your garden received awards or media attention?
- Does your garden have sustainable innovations and re-use and recycle materials?
- How many garden members do you have compared to when you started?
- How many hours of gardening work has the group completed each year?

- How many people have visited or contacted the garden to join or to ask questions?
- How much fresh, healthy and organic produce does the group produce for consumption?
- Does the garden look great and is it maintained to minimise weeds, pests and diseases?
- Is there minimal conflict within the garden group and with local residents ?
- How many garden tours, open days or demonstration days are provided to the community throughout the year?
- Does the garden group have its own social media accounts to share information and ideas?
- How much publicity, media or acknowledgement of your garden has been provided throughout the city?

Record keeping

Keeping accurate records can help to showcase your group's progress and measure the success of your garden. Records may also be required by the landowner or to show how grant funding was spent. Groups can keep a garden diary or have a record sheet on their noticeboard to record the progress of the garden on a daily basis, which can be used in future grant applications or for the landowner. For gardens on Council land the City requires the following information to coincide with the annual public liability and management plan review.

- Number of active members;
- Number of people in the community who support the garden;
- Number of gardening hours;
- Amount of produce grown;
- Amount of funding received;
- Amount of waste recycled in a compost system;
- Amount of promotion and media about your garden;
- Photographs of your gardeners, events, garden or produce; and
- Good news stories.

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Establishing a community garden on Council land



In order for the City to consider supporting the development of a new community garden, applicants will need to ensure they address the City's principles for a community garden (see page 12). For gardens on City-owned or controlled land, applicants will need to address the site selection criteria and procedure for starting a new community garden outlined below.

The first steps in this procedure include establishing a community garden group, conducting an assessment of potential sites and discussing the proposal with the City to identify any possible issues.

Once a preferred site has been established, applicants will need to contact the City's Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator to assess the site. Once the site is approved the group can submit a completed management plan and design for the proposed garden. If the application is supported, then the City will organise community consultation with local residents and work with the community garden group to address any concerns.

The proposed garden information will then go to a Council meeting for approval. Once approved the group can apply for grants to fund the construction of the garden.

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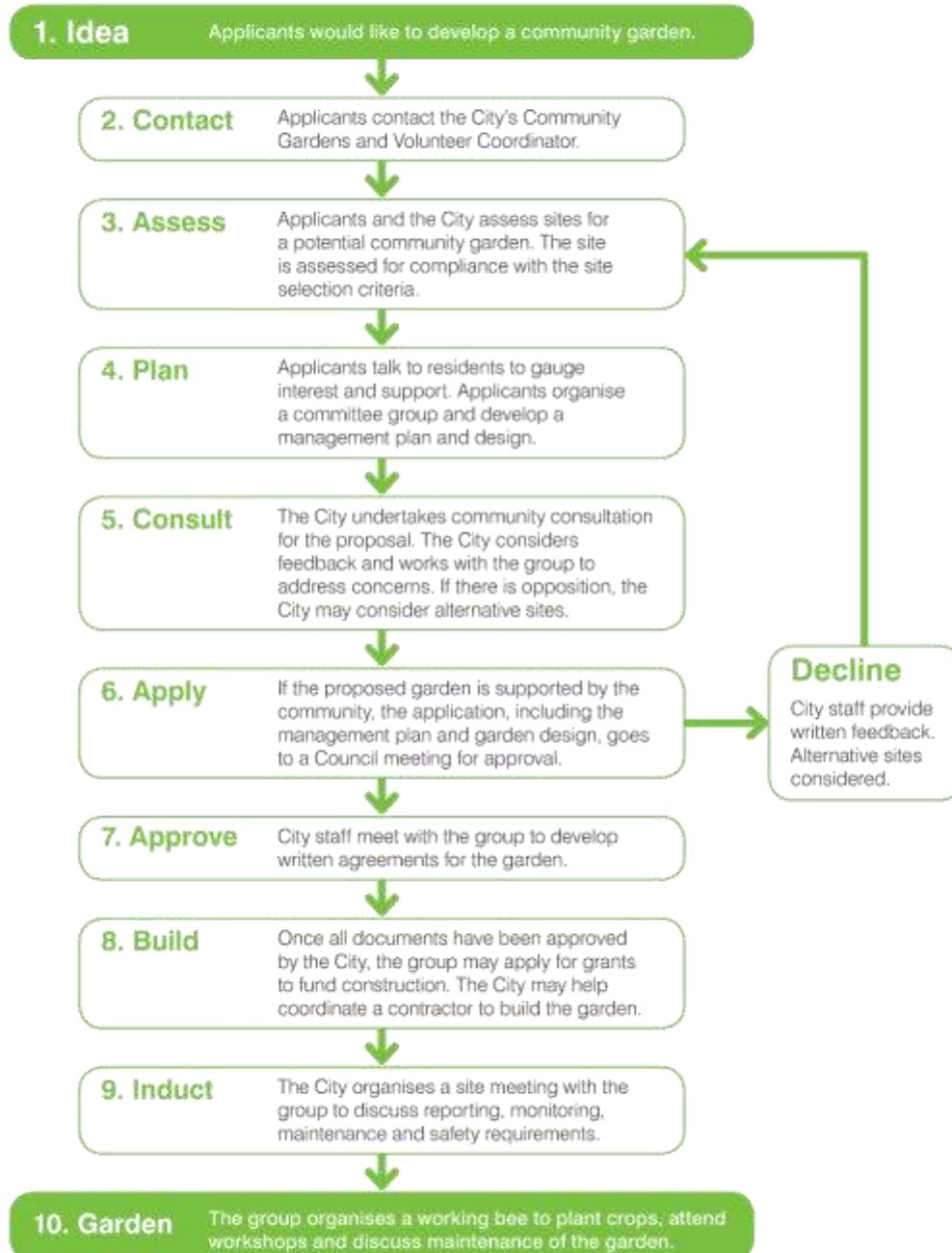
Community Garden Guidelines

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Procedure for starting a new community garden on Council land

The timeframe to establish a community garden on Council land may vary. It can take 12 months to obtain approvals as community consultation and endorsement through a Council committee meeting are required.

The group's management plan should be reviewed and approved by the landowner or Council.



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Community footpath verge gardens

Establishing footpath verge gardens requires special design consideration by the City to ensure that pedestrian and traffic access is not affected, and that environmental issues such as stormwater capture and street trees are considered in the design.

Applicants wanting to establish a community garden on the nature strip need to contact the City to see if their street is suitable for the installation of garden beds or planter boxes. Applicants will also need to form a community garden group, get support from their neighbours and develop a management plan and design.

These community footpath verge gardens can be approved by the City and do not need a Council meeting for approval. The City recommends crops smaller than one metre to so that garden stakes are not necessary, to reduce risks to the public. For more information refer to the Footpath Gardening Policy and checklists:

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150051/6687_FA2_Footpath-Gardening-Update.pdf

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/150052/6687_FA2_FootpathGardeningChecklist1_PlanterBoxes.pdf

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/150053/6687_FA2_FootpathGardeningChecklist1_GardenBeds.pdf

Community composting facilities

Where feasible, the City will work in partnership with community gardeners to establish community composting and worm farm systems within community gardens. Composting facilities in parks will only be set up on a trial basis when there is a group of local residents willing to attend training and maintain the compost systems.

Composting systems in parks can be approved by the City and do not need to go to Council for approval.

For further details on composting please refer to the Community Composting Guidelines.

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/community-composting>

Security of tenure

New gardens established on Council land will be provided with an option to have an initial licence for a trial period of one year. The City will not charge community garden groups for the licence preparation fees. If the garden group fulfils all its responsibilities in managing the garden, a longer arrangement may be negotiated.

Site selection criteria for new community gardens on Council-owned land

The following criteria should be considered when selecting a site for a new community garden.

Location: Sites classified as community land under the *Local Government Act* may be appropriate. These sites are usually established for community use such as parklands, open spaces and community centres that have outside areas. Priority will be given to sites located in high density areas and near community centres or community organisations that might be able to support or partner the project.

Safety: Sites should have no major safety or health concerns, and have good passive surveillance (e.g. can be easily seen from nearby houses or shopping areas).

Accessibility: Sites should be accessible for a range of user groups. Sites should be located close to public transport, allow disabled access, have vehicle access (e.g. for delivery of mulch and soil) and accommodate groups wanting to visit the garden.

Solar access: Sites need to be suitable for growing vegetables and receive full sunlight – ideally for at least six hours per day.

Size: Sites should be large enough to accommodate garden beds, composting systems, rainwater tanks, seating areas, shelter for gardeners and for community workshops and demonstrations.

Water: Sites should have easy access to water or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected.

Soil contamination: Sites may need to be checked for soil contamination. If high levels are present then expert advice will be needed on whether it is suitable for growing food.

Multiple use: Consider sites where a community garden can be integrated without conflicting with other land uses and where the community garden can still be used by non-gardeners for passive recreation and educational workshops.

Existing features: Consider existing buildings, facilities and vegetation that may be utilised or retained in the gardens.

Land suitability: The location should have good passive surveillance of traffic and pedestrians. The topography of the land should be fairly flat without the requirements of cut or fill to develop a garden.

Note: It may not always be possible to find a site that meets all of the above criteria. The City will prioritise the sites that can meet as many of the requirements as possible.

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Land use planning

A community garden may require development consent depending on the land ownership. Community gardens on a park or public reserve owned or controlled by Council can be created without consent under State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. Development consent may be required for a community garden on privately owned land or NSW Government-owned land, such as schools and public housing.

Some works and structures may not need development consent if they meet specific criteria under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. These include:

- Garden sheds, fences, poultry houses;
- Landscaping structures, pathways and paving;
- Rainwater tanks, water storage containers; and
- Water features and ponds.

The City's planning staff at the Neighbourhood Service Centre can help applicants find out whether a proposed development is permissible and whether a development application is required.

Council's planning requirements are set out in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.

The City will prioritise support for new gardens in areas that do not have a community garden within a short walk of a major residential area. This includes suburbs such as Surry Hills, Kings Cross, Green Square, Beaconsfield and Roseberry.

Open space management

There is a high demand for the City's open space (Council-owned community land), which is why the City encourages diverse gardens, and use of footpath verges and rooftops, as spaces to grow produce plants. Where appropriate, community gardens may be incorporated into plans of management for public open space.

The City's Open Space and Recreation Needs Study (April 2007) identified a number of neighbourhood and 'pocket' parks within the City that are under 2,000 square metres and not suitable for sporting activities. Some of these parks may be considered as potential sites for new community gardens. Existing community facilities can be ideal sites for community gardens because they may already have infrastructure such as toilets, shelter and storage areas.



St Helens community garden - before establishing a community garden.



St Helens community garden - after establishing a community garden.

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07 Appendix

Definitions

A number of terms are used in these guidelines to describe community gardening and associated activities.

Allotment gardens are community gardens where gardeners have exclusive access to a plot or small area of the garden.

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal species that exist in a particular area.

Biodynamics is an approach which incorporates caring for the life and organisms in the soil.

Community gardens are garden spaces that are self-managed by the community for the production of fresh produce crops and to contribute to the development of a sustainable urban environment. The gardens are open to the public and anyone may become a member.

Community gardener is a person that volunteers their time for gardening activities. If younger than 18 they must be directly supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.

Community garden coordinator is the person that coordinates the garden group and liaises with the Council. This person requires minimal supervision and is able to induct new members to the garden site.



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Composting systems break down vegetable scraps, garden waste and other materials into a rich organic matter to fertilise the garden. These can be compost bins or worm farms.

Demonstration sites are spaces within community gardens to share the ideas, skills and knowledge of the group with the local community.

Food forests are areas used for the production of food where the design mimics a natural ecosystem by including structured layers of plants such as edible groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

Food security is defined by the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance as the condition where all people at all times are able to access and prepare sufficient, safe, appropriate, nutritious and affordable food necessary to enjoy an active and healthy life.

Footpath verge gardens are garden beds established on the nature strip and managed collectively by local residents rather than the City.

Garden design is a landscape design plan showing details of the garden beds, pathways, composting area, tool shed or rain tanks. It may also show the materials used and development stages.

Grants are funds provided to assist a group with the services or projects they undertake, where the City only receives acknowledgement as the grant giver.

Harvest days are usually held once a month to distribute the grown produce to the garden members and provide the surplus to the community.

Interpretive signage explains a feature of the landscape to enhance interaction with the site and educate readers.

Management plan is a document developed by the community garden group to describe their vision for the garden, the details of the garden, their objectives, and the responsibilities of the group.

Open days are organised by the community garden group to encourage local residents and businesses to visit the garden and ask questions.

Open space is land designated for parks, trees and green spaces.

Organic growing is a food production system that does not use toxic chemicals such as synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. It aims to improve the long-term fertility of the soil.

Permaculture is a holistic approach to landscape design and human culture. It employs consciously designed landscapes that mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding food and energy for local needs.

School kitchen gardens are developed within or outside school property. They help educate children about food production, and supply school kitchens with fresh food for teaching children cooking skills and serving them fresh food.

Self-managed describes a garden group that can work together and manage their garden without supervision or assistance from the City. They have regular working bees and on-site meetings to discuss the garden, and a management plan and garden design that is reviewed annually.

Soil contamination is the presence of chemicals or other harmful substances within the soil.

Sponsorship describes an agreement between an organisation and the garden group where the group receives a benefit to the value of the sponsorship.

Sustainability is an approach that is mindful of not harming the environment or depleting natural resources.

Trial period for a project ensures that it meets all of the requirements and receives few complaints from the community. A trial period may last for 6 or 12 months.

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Map and list of community gardens in the City of Sydney (February 2016)

The map shows the 19 community gardens and three footpath verge gardens in the City of Sydney. The circles indicate the area around each garden that is within a short walk (750 metres).



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Community Garden Guidelines

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List of community gardens in the City of Sydney (February 2016)

Contact details for each garden are listed on the City's website at:
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens>

Community gardens		
1	Alexandria Park Community School	Alexandria
2	Angel St Permaculture Food Forest	Newtown
3	Bourke St Community Garden	Woolloomooloo
4	Charlie's Garden Community Garden	Darlington
5	Glebe St John Community Garden	Glebe
6	Greg Hewish Memorial Community Garden	Redfern
7	Green Square Growers	Zetland
8	James St Reserve Community Garden	Redfern
9	Joanna O'Dea Community Garden	Camperdown
10	Mission Australia Rooftop Community Garden	Camperdown
11	Newtown Community Garden	Newtown
12	Poets Corner Community Garden	Redfern
13	Salvation Army Community Garden	Redfern
14	St Helens Community Garden	Glebe
15	St Michaels Community Garden	Surry Hills
16	The Eden Community Garden	Redfern
17	Ultimo Community Garden	Ultimo
18	Waterloo Estate Community Garden	Waterloo
19	Woolloomooloo Permaculture Community Garden	Woolloomooloo
Footpath verge gardens		
20	Arthur St Footpath Verge	Surry Hills
21	Phillip St Footpath Garden	Redfern
22	Sustainable Chippendale Footpath Gardens	Chippendale
Community composting		
23	Ada Place Community Composting	Ultimo

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Community Garden Guidelines

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References and acknowledgements

City of Sydney and Thomas, F, *Getting started in Community Gardening. A guide to planning, design and implementation of community garden projects (2008)*

City of Sydney, *Draft Social Sustainability Strategy*. City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2011, *Corporate Plan 2011–2014*, City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2012, *Interim Waste Strategy*, City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2007, *Open Space and Recreation Needs Study*, City of Sydney Council, Sydney

City of Sydney 2008, *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, SGS Economics and Planning, Sydney

City of Sydney 2011, *Volunteer Policy*

City of Sydney 2013, *Social Media Policy*

City of Sydney 2012, *Grants and Sponsorship Policy*

Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network

Brisbane City Council, *Brisbane Community Garden Guide*

Randwick City Council, *Community Garden Guidelines*

City of Melbourne, *Street Garden Guidelines*

Auckland City Council, *Community Garden Policy*

Gold Coast City Council, *Gold Coast Parks Community Gardens Start-up Kit*

City of Melbourne, *Draft Community Garden Policy*

San Francisco City Council, *Community Garden Policies*

City of Sydney, *Green Roofs and Walls Policy*

City of Sydney, *Green Roofs and Walls Policy Implementation Plan*

Contact

Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinator
City of Sydney GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001
Phone: (02) 9265 9333
Email: council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

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Links to assist garden groups

City of Sydney community gardens

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens>

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/getting-started>

Footpath Gardening Policy

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150051/6687_FA2_Footpath-Gardening-Update.pdf

Community composting

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/participation/community-gardens/community-composting>

Workshops

<http://www.greenvillages.com.au/upcoming-workshops/>

<http://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/green-living-centre-1110083569>

Grants and sponsorship

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/grants-and-sponsorships>

Australian Community Gardens Network

<http://communitygarden.org.au/>

Royal Botanical Gardens

<http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>

List of vegetables and herbs to grow in Sydney

<http://www.yates.com.au/herbs>

<http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/>

Poisonous plants

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/SafetyandtheEnvironment/Poisoning/Pages/Plant-safety.aspx>

<http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/>

Organic materials

<http://www.greenharvest.com.au/>

Alternative plants to grow

<http://www.growmeinstead.com.au>

Biodynamic Sydney Inc.

biodynamicssydney@gmail.com

NSW Food Authority

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>

EPA - Integrated Pest Management

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/pesticides/integratedpestmgmt.htm>

Biodiversity in the garden

<http://sydneyweeds.org.au/wp-cms/wp-content/uploads/Your-Hidden-Garden-08.pdf>

Companion planting

<http://www.yates.com.au/vegetables/tips/companion-planting/#KWKmvfWwxLTGjSc.97>

Crop rotation

http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/vegieguide/crop_rotation.htm

<http://www.todayshomeowner.com/vegetable-garden-crop-rotation-made-easy/>

Worm farming and composting

<http://www.tumbleweed.com.au/Composting.aspx>

<http://www.tumbleweed.com.au/WormFarming.aspx>

Dwarf fruit trees

<http://www.daleysfruit.com.au/fruit%20pages/dwarfcitrus.htm>

Trolley tracker

<http://www.trolleytracker.com.au/>

Phone: 1800 641 497

Asbestos

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/residents/health-and-safety/asbestos>

Illegal dumping and needle hotline

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/waste-and-recycling/clean-streets>

Green roofs and walls

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/towards-2030/sustainability/greening-the-city/green-roofs-and-walls>

Dial b4 you dig

<http://1100.com.au/#>

phone: 1100

Needle clean up hotline

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/waste-and-recycling/clean-streets>

Phone: 1800 633 353

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Community garden management plan and garden design template

We have provided this template to guide your group of all aspects that could be considered when developing a management plan. To assist your group to create a comprehensive plan that defines the overall vision for the garden, describes the roles and responsibilities of the group members, and outlines the benefits to the broader community. To assist your group gain funding, sponsorship, landowner approval or assist with new members. The plan should also include a landscape design layout to show the placement of the garden beds, pathways, tool shed and composting systems.

Title page – Group name, picture and date

1. Vision

Describe the overall vision for the garden.

- a. What is the purpose of your community garden? Is it be a place for gardeners and the community to meet and learn about growing food? Is it to assist with food security? Is it to demonstrate food production to residents, schools and educational institutions?
- b. How will this garden benefit the broader community?
- c. Will you develop the garden in stages over a couple of years?
- d. How will you achieve your objectives within the community garden?

2. Site of the garden

Describe the site location of the garden or footpath verge.

- a. Who owns the land? Do you have permission for a garden?
- b. Does the location fulfil the site selection criteria?

3. Management of the site

Describe the resources you will require as part of your garden design.

- a. Garden beds – Describe the design and size of your garden beds, and what they will be made of.
- b. Sustainable materials – Will you use sustainable materials?
- c. Garden tools and storage – Will you have a tool shed? What will it be made of? Will it be big enough to store all the materials or will you need somewhere to store additional items? How will you maintain the tools?
- d. Accessibility – Have you allowed for people with disabilities on the pathways? Or provided disabled access to at least one garden bed? Will your garden be open to the public? If not, will you hold open days for the community?

- e. Managing waste and contamination – How will you deal with organic and non-organic waste on site? Or any dumping of rubbish? How will you deal with soil contamination?
- f. Water management – Do you have access to water on site? How will you deal with water runoff from the site?
- g. Facilities repairs – How will you manage or fund repairs if facilities are broken or vandalised?
- h. Signage – How will you provide notices to other gardeners or members of the public in your garden? (The City provides two types of signage. Which type do you prefer?)

4. Gardening

Describe the gardening methods you will use and the resources required, and the structure to maintain these.

- a. Type of garden – What type of garden will you have?
- b. Style of garden – Is the chosen style suitable for the current number of gardeners? Does it allow for new gardeners to join?
- c. Methodology – Does this method of gardening suit the site? Does your group have the skills to develop this method of gardening?
- d. Allotment gardens – What happens when members are on holidays or sick? Do you have a communal garden for new gardeners on the waiting list for a plot garden?
- e. Communal or shared garden – Will the group meet to discuss what to plant for each season? Do the members harvest throughout the year or will you have a harvest day?
- f. Crops in the garden – What will you grow? Will you grow vegetables, fruit, herbs, medicinal herbs, flowers, bush tucker, native or other crops? Does your group have the skills to manage pests and diseases? Does your site have enough space for these crops? Can you purchase miniature varieties?

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

- g.** Surveillance – How will you provide surveillance of the garden, and reduce shadows on other gardeners' crops?
- h.** Watering roster – Will you have a roster to ensure watering throughout the year? How will you measure the amount of water or rainfall in the garden?
- i.** Composting system roster – Does your group have skills in composting? Will new members attend a composting workshop? Will you have a composting roster to ensure maintenance?
- j.** Odours, noise, and vermin – How will you manage these issues in the garden? How will you deal with complaints?
- k.** Vandalism and undesirables – How will you deal with issues of stolen produce, misuse of the garden or graffiti in the garden?
- l.** Poor aesthetics and messy gardens – How will you manage the overall look of the garden and ensure members understand the importance of keeping it well maintained?
- m.** Organic gardening – How will you apply organic gardening practices? How will you control pests, diseases and weeds organically? Will you use organic sprays? What will your process be for using these sprays?
- n.** Maintenance – How will you ensure maintenance of the garden? What if gardeners are on holidays or sick? Or a gardener does not maintain their garden? Will you have processes in place to manage these situations?
- o.** Access – Will members require keys or combinations to unlock the gate or access the tool shed?
- p.** Animals or native bees – Does your garden have enough space for animals or native bees? How will these creatures be maintained? And funded?
- q.** Tree pruning approval – How will you fund tree pruning or removal of a tree? (The City of Sydney can fund your application fee for approval for trees to be pruned or removed.)
- r.** Council Licences – Does your group have a licence agreement with the City?
- s.** Timeframes – The City considers community gardens to be long-term features of the community. How will your group ensure the garden is sustained over the long term?
- t.** Monitoring – The City will carry out random assessments of the garden and will contact the group coordinator if there are any issues.

5. Management structure

Describe your group's structure and how it will be managed.

- a.** Member coordinator – Who will be the group's contact person and liaison between the City and the group? The City will need their contact details to promote the group on the City's website.
- b.** Roles and responsibilities of members – Can you provide a list of roles, responsibilities and contact details for the gardening group?
- c.** Children in the garden – Will you have children under the age of 18 working in the garden? Will they be supervised by a parent or guardian? Is your garden within a community school? If so, your members will need to have a working with children check.
- d.** Communication – How will you communicate within the group and to other stakeholders?
- e.** Meetings and minutes – How often will your group meet to discuss the garden? Annually? Quarterly? Monthly? Will your group take minutes of the meeting and send a copy to the City?
- f.** Community – How will the community benefit from your community garden?
- g.** Structures – What structures will you have in the garden and for what purpose?
- h.** Working bees – Will you have weekly or monthly working bees? Will you invite new members to these working bees?
- i.** Demonstrations, open days, bus tours – Will you have special events when the garden is open to the general public for guided tours, or gardening demonstrations, or to share excess food produce? Will you provide guided tours to other gardens, or to school groups?
- j.** Festivals and displays – Will you participate in community festivals or set up displays to promote your group to the local community?
- k.** Community education – How will you educate the community about the garden and composting system?
- l.** Committee – Will you have a committee or a smaller group to make decisions?
- m.** Gardener's agreement – Will your group have a gardener's agreement or a set of rules to follow for a gardening plot? What happens if a gardener disobeys the rules? Will these rules be incorporated in the management plan?

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

- n. Garden beds – Will residents go on a waiting list if there is no garden bed available or can they still participate? If a member forfeits their garden bed how long will it be before a new member is allowed to take it over?
- o. Decision-making process – Will decisions be made by all group members or by a smaller group or committee?
- p. Corporate groups or unemployment schemes – Will your garden be available to assist these groups to participate in gardening for one-off or short-term projects?
- q. Conflict resolution and resolving disagreements – How will your group deal with conflict within the group, or with neighbours or local residents?

6. Budget

Provide a detailed budget of the costs of developing and running the garden. This should include:

- a. Proposed budget for the development and construction of the garden
- b. Costs for planting out the garden
- c. Ongoing maintenance costs including plants, mulch, manure.

7. Health and safety

Describe how your group will meet the health and safety requirements.

- a. Induction to site – How will you induct new members to health and safety procedures?
- b. Personal protective equipment – Will you supply personal protective equipment to gardeners or will they have to supply their own? Will you ensure all gardeners are wearing covered shoes when gardening?
- c. Risks and safety – How will you assess and manage risks in the garden?
- d. Needles and asbestos – How will you deal with these items? The City can provide training for your group.

8. Garden membership

Describe how your group will manage garden membership and partnership.

- a. Membership – Will you have an annual membership fee to participate in the garden? Will you have a process for new gardeners?
- b. New memberships and friends of the garden – Will you have a category of membership for friends of the garden?

- c. Organisations and schools – Will you allow local cafes, businesses, schools or organisations to participate in the garden or composting system? How will your group manage this?
- d. Communication and promotion – How will your group promote and communicate to existing members and to the broader community?
- e. How will you communicate with the landowner and the City of Sydney? Will this be via phone, email, on-site meetings or when required?

9. Communication

Describe how your group will communicate with each other about meetings, issues, new ideas or suggestions.

- a. Community consultation – Will you require assistance with community consultation?
- b. Social media – Will you use social media (Facebook, Twitter) or websites to promote your group? How will you manage this?
- c. Media and sponsorship – Will you send out media releases about your garden? Will you apply for sponsorship to assist fund the garden?
- d. Media – Will your group be available for photos and media interviews through television, radio or magazines?

10. Policies and guidelines

Describe how your group will educate members about policies, procedures and documents.

- a. Policies, procedures and supporting fact sheets – How will you educate your gardeners about these documents? Where will you store these documents so they are available to gardening members?
- b. Alcohol and smoking on site – How will you deal with gardeners who wish to drink alcohol on site? How will you deal with gardeners who wish to smoke on site?
- c. Pets – Will you allow pets into the garden? How will your group manage this?

11. Funding

Describe how your group will fund the garden for short-term and long-term goals.

- a. Membership fees – Will you charge fees to become a member? Will you provide discounts to members on low incomes or benefits, or who wish to become friends of the garden?

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 2

Community Garden Guidelines

February 2016

- b. Budget – What will it cost to develop your garden and acquire materials? Can you develop the garden in stages over time to coincide with your budget?
- c. Applying for grants – Will your group apply for grants? Will you require assistance with this?
- d. Fundraising activities – Will your group organise fundraising events?

12. Training and education

Describe how your group will gain new skills and education for gardening, team building, administration and health and safety.

- a. Training workshops – Will members attend training workshops or courses to increase skills and knowledge? The City provides workshops and can provide specialised training if required.
- b. Sharing knowledge and skills on site – Will members share their skills and knowledge on site, during meetings or working bees? Will you share skills with other groups, or mentor new groups?

13. Reporting

Describe how your group will report outcomes, measure the success of the garden and lessons learnt.

- a. Frequency – How often will the group report to the City? Monthly or quarterly?

- b. Measurement – How will your group measure success and report on the lessons learnt?

14. Garden design

Describe in detail the overall garden design and placement of materials on the site.

- a. Design principles – What materials and styles will be used?
- b. Garden design layout plan – Provide an overall plan of the garden design, showing stages if appropriate.

15. Layout

Include a detailed layout design of the garden.

- a. Show the boundary of the garden area and the neighbouring properties.
- b. Show the placement of the garden beds, composting system and tool shed.
- c. Show the types of crops you may grow to indicate the size and height.

Agreement

This is an agreement of the _____ group

Date: _____ Review date: _____

Signature of authorised person

Signature of authorised person

Full name and position of signatory
Community Garden Group Coordinator

Full name and position of signatory
City of Sydney

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 2



General enquiries or after-hours assistance
Tel: 02 9265 9333
(24 hours, seven days a week)
Fax: 02 9265 9222
council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
DX: DX1251 SYDNEY

Street address
City of Sydney
Town Hall House
456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Postal address
City of Sydney
Reply Paid 1591
Sydney NSW 2001



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city of villages

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ATTACHMENT 3



Community Gardens Policy

Adoption Date	12 December 2011 by Council Resolution
Review Date	12 December 2019
Version	1
Division/Department	Technical Services/Open Space & Trees
Responsible Officer	Environmental Education Officer
HPE CM Record Number	18/126538

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

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MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

What is a Community Garden?

A 'community garden' is defined as a parcel of public open space operated by the community (with Council assistance) where the site is used for:

- The production of produce for the personal use of its members through allotments or shared plots, and
- Demonstration gardening, or where other environmental activities are undertaken, also encouraging the involvement of schools, youth groups and citizens in gardening activities.

Community gardens are not-for-profit, and can provide for a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

Different Types of Community Gardens

There are different forms a community garden can take, they are:

Community Garden - a mixture of allotments for each member and some shared areas.

Verge Garden - garden beds that are established on the nature strip, or road reserve that are communally managed by a group of local residences and decisions are made jointly.

School Kitchen Garden - a community garden in a school, in which local residents outside of the school community can join and manage the garden in partnership with the school. Gardens may include individual plots for residents and communal garden beds that the school can manage and use for lessons on cooking, nutrition and the environment and provide produce for the school canteen. Council recognises that many schools in our local area have established productive and thriving school kitchen gardens. Many of these are developed like a community garden, in that the whole school community (teachers, parents and students) are involved in its development.

Note: Should you have a connection to a school in the area, you may wish to contact them directly to volunteer to help with their garden, or to help set one up. However, the approval of outside involvement is at the discretion of each school and is not the role nor responsibility of Council.

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

Our Policy

Woollahra Council recognises community gardening as a valuable recreational activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, community development, environmental education and sustainable principles, protection and use of open space.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy include:

- To recognise the need and benefits of community gardens.
- To establish community gardens throughout Woollahra on public open space, where feasible and appropriate.
- To recognise the value of community gardens, as a public amenity.
- To ensure that all community gardens are managed in an efficient manner and maintained to an acceptable standard.
- To ensure all community gardens are chemical free, water efficient and sustainable.
- To acquire, share and increase knowledge and practice of organic gardening with various educational institutions and the local community.
- To offer a suitable site for Council environmental workshops and educational days.
- To standardise processes and procedures for the development of the community gardens.
- To clarify the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in community garden projects with reference to public liability, maintenance, safety and access.

Woollahra 2025 – Woollahra Community Strategic Plan 2010 to 2025

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the following strategies from the Woollahra Council Delivery Program 2009 - 2013:

Goal 5: Liveable places from the Woollahra Community Strategic Plan, strategies include:

- Enhance local community, cultural and recreation facilities to become more attractive, integrated and accessible.
- Provide attractive, accessible, connected and safe parks, sportsgrounds, foreshore areas and other public spaces.

Goal 8: Sustainable use of resources:

- Provide programs and projects to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint.

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

Council Support

Woollahra Council supports community gardens by working with community partners, in assisting to identify and contribute to site development activities. Subject to available resources Council will:

- Promote and raise awareness of community gardening
- Provide information to the public about the operation of community gardens
- Assist interested groups in searching for suitable public land for the development of community gardens
- Assist with site development such as site planning and design, surveying, and site preparation
- Provide in-kind support where feasible (i.e. water options, mulch etc.)
- Host workshops on practical skills, and group management (i.e. governance); and
- Provide grant funding opportunities and advice.

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Establishment of Community Gardens

Woollahra Council supports the development of community gardens, particularly in high density areas in the Municipality. Woollahra Council will assist in locating new garden sites, where available land exists, where neighbours are supportive, and where a community group demonstrates interest and commitment.

For Council to consider supporting the development of any new community garden, applicants will need to address the site selection criteria outlined below. The first step is to establish a community garden group and conduct a site assessment of the potential site. If the site meets the criteria, applicants should then discuss the proposal with Council and go through the potential issues.

1 Site Selection Criteria – Community Gardens

Location

- Consistency with relevant plans for open space
- Informed and supportive neighbours
- Proximity to high density living areas
- Close proximity to supporting infrastructure and services, such as power and water
- An area of approximately 750m²

Usability of site

- The site should have no major safety or health concerns
- Good passive surveillance
- Sun exposure
- Soil quality and drainage

Accessibility

- Should be accessible for a range of user groups
- Accessibility to public transport (where possible)
- Vehicle access

Multiple Use

- Community garden should be integrated without adversely conflicting with other land uses
- Community gardens can still be used as information sites for Council and School Workshops.

Upon Council review of a proposal and meeting the relevant criteria, a report to Council will be presented recommending that the proposal be exhibited to the public for comment. A follow up report will be submitted to Council for its consideration.

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ATTACHMENT 3

2 Site Selection Criteria – Community Verge Gardens

Establishing verge gardens requires special consideration by Council to ensure that accessibility on footpaths, traffic and road conditions are not affected and that other environmental issues such as stormwater capture and street trees are considered in the design of new garden beds.

Applicants wanting to establish a new community garden on the nature strip will need to first speak to Council to see if their street is suitable for the inclusion of garden beds. Applicants will also need to form a community garden group and get support from neighbours.

Location

- Woollahra Council is the owner or are trust managers of the land
- Land is un-utilised or under utilised
- Community support to implement and maintain the verge garden

Usability of site

- The site should have no major safety, health or traffic concerns
- Good passive surveillance
- Sun exposure
- Soil quality and drainage

Accessibility

- Should be accessible for a range of user groups
- Access ways to be maintained at all times

Multiple Use

- Community verge gardens should be integrated without adversely conflicting with other land uses
- Community verge gardens can still be used as information sites for Council and School Workshops.

Community verge gardens where available land exists, where neighbours are supportive, and where a community group demonstrates interest and commitment will be favoured.

Where community verge gardens are proposed to be created close to adjoining residents, Council will consult with the affected residents and, where objections are raised, report on the matter to Council for its consideration.

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ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

Community Management of Gardens

Community gardens should be managed and implemented by the community, however this must be undertaken in such a way that the needs of all stakeholders are taken into account.

Incorporation of the Garden Group

The Council encourages community garden groups to have a clear and identified legal structure. Garden groups can apply to the NSW Office of Fair Trading to become Incorporated Associations. This arrangement affords the group some flexibility in the management of funds and enables them to open a bank account, obtain public liability insurance cover and apply for government grants.

Incorporation as an association requires groups to establish a management committee with annually elected office bearers and to commit to regular meetings. This can be beneficial for the Garden as it maintains a structure that can address management issues. Having a committee also helps share the tasks of garden management and avoids excessive responsibility being placed on a few people or the garden management becoming dominated by one person.

Insurance and Risk Management

Community Gardens will be licensed to an incorporated community group with an approved Public Liability Cover of \$10 million that indemnifies Council. Each garden group has a duty of care to the community who access the garden areas. This community group will be required to manage safe access in and around the site and, if necessary allocation of garden plots. Management of the site will also need to follow Council's direction in the issue of Environmental Sustainable Development and encourage all members, through its functions and activities, to act more sustainably.

The incorporated community group will liaise with Council staff in regards to any new infrastructure or projects planned for the garden. Prior to erection / installation of any infrastructure, written approval from Council or, where required, Development Consent may be required.

User Agreement

A licence for use agreement must be signed between Woollahra Council and the organisation for the purpose of developing and maintaining a community garden. The licence agreement would also contain conditions for the use of the site.

At the initial set up of a new garden, a license will be granted for 12 months with an option for a 3 year agreement after this period. All community gardens will operate on a not-for-profit basis.

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

A licence or other agreement with the group could be revoked or not renewed if:

- The group disbands or ceases to function due to internal conflict;
- The garden is not maintained or becomes unsafe for public access;
- Appropriate insurance cover is not maintained.

The group will be required to report annually to Council on the function of the garden and how they are meeting Council objectives.

Council retains the capacity to use the garden as a demonstration site for community education activities such as tours and workshops. The Council will work with the garden group to ensure that organised activities do not conflict inappropriately with other garden uses, such as regular working bees.

Information regarding community gardens will be advertised through Council's website and publications. It will also be advertised to the community at Council's community centres and during Council promotions and events.

The non-profit organisation agrees to develop, manage and operate the community garden according to a user agreement with their members, which specifies the terms of use, management responsibilities, user fees and access procedures, which include the following:

- Residents of the Woollahra Municipality will be given priority for membership, however, it will be open to all on a first served basis.
- The association may set rules with the assistance of the Office of Fair Trading. Rules must not be inconsistent with Council's Community Garden Policy.
- A list of by-laws are developed by the association and must comply with Section 11 of the Associations Incorporation Act 1984 approved by Council (Staff). Members are required to sign a contract indicating their compliance.
- Membership and use of the site can be revoked for non-compliance with the organisations by-laws, the applicable user agreement or this policy.
- Gardeners need to commit to work within the communal garden and may need to undertake various courses before being allocated an individual allotment. Gardeners must be nominated by two current members.
- Allotment gardens must be maintained to a minimum standard of aesthetics and orderliness. Year-round produce is encouraged.
- Produce is to be organically grown, chemical free, and not to be sold for private commercial profit. Funds from selling produce must be invested in the garden. Excess produce can be donated.
- The organisation is to have its own Public Liability Insurance (becoming a member of a Landcare group can reduce the cost of the PLI).
- Allow monitoring and review as stipulated by the agreement.
- Allow the provisional inclusion of poultry/ livestock within community gardens that are deemed appropriate.
- Any requests for poultry/ livestock be approved by Council staff and assessed regularly.
- Any approval granted will be subject to a trial period with a review to be undertaken twelve months from commencement.

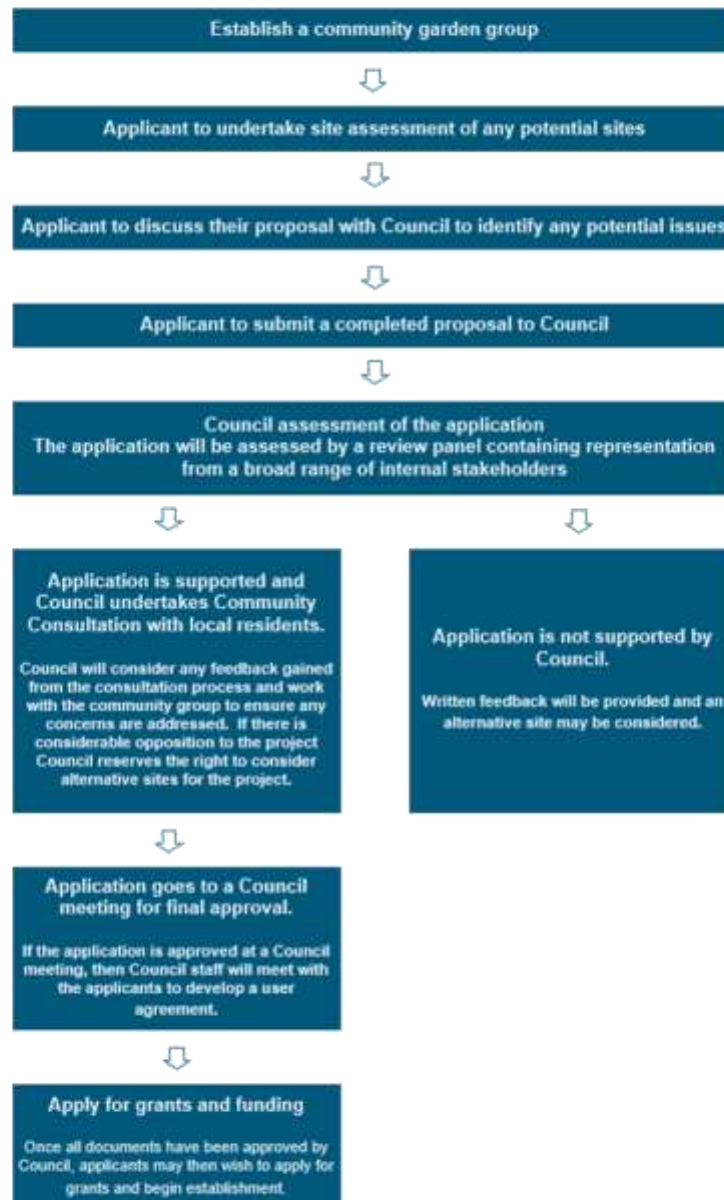
MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

Procedure for Implementation

Once a preferred site has been established, applicants will need to submit a proposal to Council. If the proposal is supported, then Council will organise community consultation with local residents and work with the community garden group to address any concerns.



MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 3

Community Gardens Policy

Want to Know More?

For further information on this policy, contact our Open Space and Trees Department.
Advice is available from Councils:

- Environmental Education Officer on 9391 7095

Version: Final

Approval date: 12 December 2011

This part of our policy provides an overall summary of the intention and reason for a policy. Specific implementation procedures are available on request. The General Manager has approved this policy and the attached procedures.

Policy Amendments

Date	Responsible Officer	Description

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 4

Verge Garden Guidelines

Brisbane City Council has developed the Verge Gardens Guidelines to help residents who are interested in establishing a verge garden. The guidelines will also help ensure the safety of pedestrians and road users by minimising trip hazards and ensuring community safety and access on this public space is maintained.

These guidelines support Brisbane's vision of a clean, green city that protects and supports our environment by sustainably managing and caring for our natural environment and resources.

What is a street verge?

A street verge is the area of public land located between a property boundary and the adjacent road kerb. The verge provides access from the street to private and public properties. It also accommodates above and below-ground public service utilities such as postal service, lighting, power, water, sewerage, gas, telephone and optic fibre cables.

Do I need permission to plant a verge garden?

Council is not issuing permits for verge gardens but has developed a checklist (included in this guideline) to ensure it will not impact on the safety of the community, the environment and surrounding infrastructure. If your proposed verge garden meets the requirements of this checklist, then you may proceed to plant.

Please note that if you are not able to comply with the requirements of these guidelines, you will not be able to establish a verge garden.

Who is responsible for the verge garden?

The householder is responsible for any verge garden adjacent to their property. While verge gardens are planted in public spaces, priority must always be given to maintenance and access for pedestrian movement, postal and utility services, water and sewerage, power, gas, telephones and optic fibre cables. If adequate access is not provided, householders may be asked to remove or make changes to their garden.

Council is not responsible for reinstating any landscaping or any damage to verge gardens or their contents, caused by animals, persons or weather events. Utility services (e.g. electricity, water or telecommunications) may need to upgrade or service their infrastructure, and where this is necessary, advance notice will be given to the householder if the verge garden is to be disturbed. Please note, utility service providers will not reinstate verge gardens after work.

Council is responsible for planting, removing and maintaining all street trees on the street verge. Council reserves the right at any time to remove any verge garden and landscaping:

- to perform works that are required to manage any service or infrastructure
- that does not comply with this guideline.

In the event that you move into a home with an established verge garden, it is your responsibility to ensure that the verge garden complies with Council's current guidelines. You may choose to:

- retain the garden
- remove the garden and reinstate the verge to the standard of the surrounding surface.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 4

Where do these guidelines apply?

These guidelines apply to verge gardens at properties that are identified as a 'Residential zone' within Brisbane City Plan 2014 and are between the property boundary and the road kerb (allowing a minimum width of 1.2 metres for pedestrian access). You cannot plant on your neighbouring property without their permission.

To find out whether your property is within a Residential zone, visit Council's website at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au and search 'Zoning maps' or call Council's 24-hour Contact Centre on (07) 3403 8888.

How do I ensure safe gardening?

Health and safety precautions are the responsibility of the resident establishing the garden. If you are interested in verge gardening, please consider basic safety precautions such as appropriate clothing, appropriate and safe use of tools and sun protection.

To ensure the protection of any underground public utility services such as water and electricity, you should call 'Dial Before You Dig' on 1100 (during business hours) or visit their website at www.1100.com.au prior to gardening. In the event that damage is caused to public utility services due to gardening activities, this must be reported to the appropriate authority as soon as possible and repaired at the property owner's expense.

Before I start a verge garden who should I consult with?

If you follow these guidelines and can tick the checklist, there is no requirement to contact Council. It would be a good idea to first consult with your neighbours and see if a shared 'community garden' is achievable. It's important to remember that the verge is a public space. If you plan on growing any edible plants, pedestrians passing-by may harvest from your verge garden.

If your verge is currently asphalted, please contact Council to see what options may be possible.

Do I need to provide space for pedestrian access?

Yes. It is important that pedestrians can use the public footpath without being obstructed by verge gardens. To ensure this, you must provide a pedestrian way with a minimum width of 1.2 metres as per Council's current accessibility standards.

In choosing plant and garden bed location, consideration should also be given to:

- visibility of motorists using the road, and those entering or exiting a residential driveway
- maintaining adequate distance from above-ground utilities such as electricity pillars, street lights, and telecommunication cables
- access to post boxes (mailboxes) allowing space between your verge garden and the edge of the footpath (if established) for footpath maintenance
- adequate distance must be maintained between the kerb and the edge of the verge garden at all times to allow access from vehicles to an established footpath or an unestablished pedestrian path.

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ATTACHMENT 4

What materials can I use?

Organic mulching is permitted and should be flush with the footpath or grass area. The use of non-organic materials such as loose gravel, crushed brick or other stone aggregate is not permitted. The use of any hard landscaping materials or irrigation systems is also not permitted.

The use of garden structures such as wood planter boxes is not supported by Council. Should residents use such materials, Council will ask for their removal.

What type of plant species can I use?

Trees or tall shrubs must not be planted in verge gardens. Any plants chosen for use in verge gardens must be groundcovers or low growing species.

Residents are encouraged to use native or water-wise plants where possible. Council has a number of resources to help you select the right plant species and create a sustainable, water-wise garden. Please visit Council's website, www.brisbane.qld.gov.au and search the following options to find out more:

- Green Gardening Guide
- Native plant species for residents.

When planting species, height of the mature plant or plants must be taken into account to ensure there is no obstruction with the visibility of motorists using the road or exiting a residential driveway, and there is no potential for the species to grow into the power lines. It is also necessary to ensure the species will not create overhanging branches that might be a hazard for pedestrians.

Many attractive garden plants have a secret life as weeds in our bushland. There are more than 200 backyard beauties that become bushland bullies when they jump the garden fence. Once there, they smother and kill native plants, removing food and shelter for our wildlife. Residents can use Council's weed identification tool and Brisbane Invasive Species Management Plan for assistance. Both of these are available via Council's website.

Residents are reminded that planting is at their own risk and you must consider the impacts of allergies, thorns and poisonous plants to residents, animals and surroundings.

MM8/20 (continued)

ATTACHMENT 4

Checklist	
Task	
I have called 'Dial Before You Dig' on 1100 to locate my underground pipes and cables and confirmed that there are no underground pipes or cables that will be impacted by the garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden will not obstruct access for: - the normal use of footpaths (made and unmade) for pedestrians and cyclists - utility service providers - Australia Post delivery service - rubbish collection - access from vehicles onto the verge	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that planting species is at my own risk, and I have considered the impacts of allergies, thorns and poisonous plants on residents, animals and surroundings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden is within a Residential zone as identified in Brisbane City Plan 2014 and will be established adjacent to the front of my property.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden will not include raised edges such as bricks, fences, guide wires or protrusions which may cause a hazard to footpath users.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My garden will not include the planting of trees or tall shrubs and will not result in the pruning or removal of street trees.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will maintain my verge garden to ensure it is safe and tidy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden is located between the property boundary and the road kerb while allowing a minimum width of 1.2 metres for pedestrian access (as per Council's current accessibility standards).	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden does not obstruct the visibility of motorists using the road, entering or exiting a residential driveway.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden will not have an irrigation system.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that utility providers may need to service or upgrade their infrastructure and this may result in the removal of my verge garden (Utilities will provide adequate notice).	<input type="checkbox"/>

These guidelines support Brisbane's vision of a clean, green city that protects and supports our subtropical environment by sustainably managing and caring for our natural environment and resources.

Updated 28 March 2017.