

	Title: Community Gardens	Policy No: CO-50
	Category: Council Policy	Classification: Engineering

1. Purpose:

To create a policy for the development and administration of Community Gardens on City of Langley (hereinafter called the “City”) owned land and the community garden at Nicomekl Elementary School (hereinafter called “Community Garden Sites”). This does not include land that is owned by the City but leased to a private entity, unless the City is involved in a partnership to develop the Community Garden Site.

2. Scope:

This policy shall apply to all City employees responsible for the development and administration of Community Garden Sites, organizations or groups established as non-profit societies who may be assigned the responsibility of administration and operation of the Community Garden Sites, and residents who are members and are assigned plots at Community Garden Sites.

3. Policy Statement:

The City recognizes community gardens as more than places to share a passion for gardening. Community gardening is a valuable activity that can contribute to food security, community development, education, increased self-reliance, health and positive social interaction.

Community gardens on City owned land may be developed in any area of the City and should serve one or more of the following purposes:

1. produce edible and ornamental plants for the personal use of members;
2. grow food for the garden members’ benefit through skill building programs or City approved economic development training opportunities;
3. grow food to donate to charitable causes.

4. Development of Community Garden Sites:

The City of Langley is supportive of new community gardens, where there is neighbourhood interest and need. The City may collaborate with interested groups to develop and maintain Community Garden Sites. Community Garden Site requirements are:

- Each Community Garden Site will be divided into garden plots and assigned to residents (members) by the City or non-profit groups responsible for the Community Garden Site.
- Community Garden Sites shall be developed with the goal of being self- governed through a non-profit group with a focus on volunteer effort and community involvement.
- New Community Garden Sites shall operate in such a way as to be cost neutral through membership fees and member involvement, and at no additional operating cost to the City.

- Garden site plans - indicating the layout of the plots, and any proposed structures or fences, compost area, pathways, trees and any other site amenities, must be approved by the Director of Engineering, Parks & Environment.
- All Community Garden Sites shall include provisions for accessibility for seniors and/or disabled persons as well as fully accessible paths
- The City will construct the garden beds, supply the first year's soil, and provide other amenities as agreed upon by the City of Langley based on available budget.
- Signage must be approved by the Director of Engineering, Parks & Environment

5. Terms of Garden Membership

All members assigned a garden plot at a Community Garden Site must adhere to the following Operational Procedures:

a) Membership:

- Plots will be assigned upon receiving an application, fulfilling any site specific application requirements and submitting payment of yearly fee established by the City Fees and Charges Bylaw or through the operating non-profit society.
- New applicants will be assigned garden plots on a first-come, first-served basis to residents of the City of Langley, with priority given to residents who do not already have a garden plot. Each plot holder is considered a member of the Community Garden Site to which they have been assigned.
- Each existing plot holder will be given the option of retaining their previously assigned plot annually as long as they submit their application and fee by March 15. Plots that have not been re-applied for by March 15th of that calendar year may be reassigned to applicants on the waiting list.
- Plot rentals start the date a plot is assigned and run to the end of the current calendar year.
- Plots must be actively used by May 25, with exceptions made for extreme weather. Plots not utilized by this date may be reassigned;
- Keys to the Community Garden Site are not to be given to people who are not members.
- Community Garden Site's may have additional membership requirements (to be approved by the Director of Engineering, Parks & Environment) such as criminal record check, minimum volunteer involvement with the Community Garden Site, or other, as established by the community partner or non-profit group operating the Community Garden Site.

b) General Site Management:

- Each plot and surrounding area (including entire Community Garden Site enclosure) is to be weeded and maintained by the members.
- Green waste shall be composted on site.
- Anyone using the Community Garden Site must close the gate when entering and leaving the garden to provide a safe and secure environment for people using the Community Garden Site and to prevent theft and vandalism of plants and property.

c) Plot Maintenance:

- Garden plots must be actively used by May 25st; maintained throughout the season, then harvested and cleared by November 1st of each year, not including winter crops that are being actively maintained.

- Plot holders are responsible for the maintenance and weeding of plots and surrounding pathways at all times.
- Plot holders must not allow crops to rot, as this attracts unwanted pests and rodents which may damage neighbouring plots.
- Plots must be tidied and prepared for winter, preferably by mulching, planting cover crops, and/or planting winter crops.
- Small gardening structures such as trellises and cloches are allowed if they do not encroach upon paths, community spaces, or cast shade upon neighbouring plots.
- Plants must be kept within one's own plot boundaries.
- Taking things from garden plots other than one's own plot is considered theft.
- Remove garbage and diseased plants and dispose of them offsite. (Not in the Community Garden Site compost container).
- If a plot becomes unkempt, a two week written notice will be sent to the plot holder. Failure to upkeep the plot will result in the plot being tilled and reassigned.
- At the end of the gardening season, all dead/spent plants must be removed or composted, leaving the plot clean in preparation for winter.

d) Irrigation:

- The City will provide a water source/spigot for each Community Garden Site.
- Garden members must be present while watering their plots.
- Water is a limited resource, and should be used sparingly. Where feasible, gardeners are encouraged to collect and use rainwater for irrigation.

e) Compost Bins and Refuse:

- Weeds must be disposed of in designated compost areas only.
- Food waste from outside of the Community Garden Site cannot be brought into the Community Garden Site for composting, in order to avoid rodent problems.
- Garbage should not be left on site at any time.

f) Pesticides/Toxins

- Gardeners should follow organic growing practices, and may not use chemical fertilizers or pesticides in the garden, including animal poisons. The City of Langley Pesticide Bylaw bans the use of cosmetic pesticides, as well as herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.
- Chemically treated wood or railroad timbers must not be used.

g) Hours of Operation:

- The garden is to be open from dawn to dusk, seven days per week, year round.
- Locked barriers preventing public access to the site is not permitted, unless previously approved by the City.

h) Pets:

- No pets, with the exception of visual aid dogs, are allowed in the Community Garden site at any time.

i) Parking:

- No vehicles are permitted access within the Community Garden Site, with the exception of Emergency Services (Fire, Police and Ambulance) and City service vehicles.
- Parking and delivery of supplies shall be restricted to designated parking areas within the site.

j) Garden Tools:

- When leaving the Community Garden Site please store all communal tools and equipment belonging to the Community Garden Site in the tool shed, and ensure that the shed is locked.
- Equipment and tools belonging to the Community Garden Site are not to be removed from the Community Garden Site.

k) Code of Conduct:

- No messy, unkempt garden plots;
- No foul language, loud or offensive behaviour and no unlawful activity will be tolerated.
- No alcohol, drugs or tobacco use is permitted within the Community Garden Site, nor may illegal substances be grown or stored in garden plots.
- It is understood that neither the governing non-profit group nor owners of the land are responsible for member actions.

l) Dispute Resolution:

- One of the main goals in community gardening is to work together or next to each other in relative harmony. Please be courteous in all interactions, and work together to resolve any disagreements.
- All complaints must be presented to the governing non-profit group responsible for the gardens site (if applicable).

6. Definitions:

Community Garden Site: For the purposes of this Policy for Community Gardens, a Community Garden Site is defined as a place on City-owned land or through partnership such as the Nicomekl Elementary School Community Garden, operated or overseen by the City or a non-profit society, where people grow and maintain ornamental and edible plants.

References

Policy Number:	CO-50
Policy Owner:	Engineering
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Amendments:	
Related Policies:	
Related Publications:	

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