



MITCHAM

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Adopted by Council 25 October 2016

public

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE3

2. PURPOSE3

3. SCOPE3

4. DEFINITIONS3

5. PRINCIPLES3

6. POLICY STATEMENT5

7. POLICY REVIEW7

8. VERSION HISTORY7

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL8

MITCHAM

1. PREAMBLE

The City of Mitcham recognises community garden activities contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities and local neighbourhoods achieve positive social interactions, community capacity building, environmental education, environmental sustainability and increased physical activity. Council supports the development of community gardens activities.

2. PURPOSE

This policy provides direction to the Community and Council in relation to Council's role in Community Gardens.

3. SCOPE

Council will consider community gardening opportunities in relation to:

- a) Small scale Community garden activities on Council owned land
- b) Small scale community garden activities on Non Council owned land
- c) Larger scale community garden activities on either Council owned or non-Council owned land.

Whilst there is a different funding process for each of these, all community garden activities will be assessed against the Key Principles (Section 5).

4. DEFINITIONS

A community garden is defined as a dedicated area of open space where the site is used by the community for horticultural based activities that achieve community benefit.

Horticulture is the branch of agriculture that deals with the art, science, technology, and business of growing plants. It includes the cultivation of medicinal plants, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, herbs, sprouts, mushrooms, algae, flowers, seaweeds and non-food crops such as grass and ornamental trees and plants. It also includes plant conservation, landscape restoration, landscape and garden design, construction, and maintenance, and arboriculture. Inside agriculture, horticulture contrasts with extensive field farming as well as animal husbandry.

Therefore, community Gardens include not only the growing of food plants and other plants, but can also include the demonstration of gardening and environmental best practice and the sharing of gardening information and ideas.

Importantly, a community garden should have:

- Strong community involvement and community commitment; and
- Cater for a diversity of people.

5. KEY PRINCIPLES

All community garden activities seeking council support will be assessed against the following key community gardening guiding principles:

5.1 Distribution

- City of Mitcham seeks to support Community Garden activities that support communities across the Council area. Where there is an

inequitable distribution, Council will favour activities that address that inequity.

5.2 Diversity

- A mix of community garden types and allied activities is encouraged to meet diverse community needs and a variety of community garden objectives including social connection, physical and mental health, education and information and environmental sustainability.
- The community garden activity should aim to support as many people in the community as possible. It should not be held for the exclusive use of a small number of people or discriminate on the basis of race, culture, social status, ability or sexuality.

5.3 Environment

- Community gardens should facilitate environmental sustainability by adopting environmental best practice including Water Sensitive Urban Design, water capture and reuse, reduced use of chemicals, composting, and energy efficient design.

5.4 Community Need

- Community gardens should facilitate social sustainability by addressing a particular community need (such as social isolation or mental health or active living for aged etc) that also aligns with Council Strategies relating to health and wellbeing, community connectedness, place making, and sustainability.

5.5 Community Involvement & Viability

- Community gardens should be delivered in partnership with the community.
- Community gardens should facilitate demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge, governance experience, collaborative will, and pragmatism to effectively plan, deliver and manage their own community garden.

5.6 Policy and Legislative Requirements

- The provision, location, design and management of community gardens or allied activities must be in accordance with relevance Council plans, policies and procedures including but not limited to those described in this policy.

5.7 Link to Community Centres and Other Community Facilities

- Community Gardens or allied activities should aim to support and add value to existing community facilities such as community centres, libraries, churches and halls and/or the activities occurring within them. This can be demonstrated through (for example):
 - using or improving existing facility infrastructure rather than developing new infrastructure
 - supporting activities in these facilities that promote connectedness between members in our community
 - generally bringing increased vibrancy and activity to these facilities

5.8 Multiple uses

- Community garden activities should be located on sites that can be integrated without conflicting adversely with other land uses.
- Community garden activities should still be able to be used by non-gardeners for passive recreation and educational workshops.

5.9 Safety

- Sites should have no major safety or health concerns and have good passive surveillance including being easily seen by nearby houses or areas of activity.

5.10 Accessibility

- Activities should be located close to public transport, be accessible to people with disabilities, be able to receive commercial vehicle access for delivery of mulch and soil as well as be accessible by cars, bicycles and pedestrians.

5.11 Services

- Community garden activities should have easy access to water or buildings nearby from which rainwater can be collected.
- Activities should have access to a power supply and toilets.

Note: Depending on the nature of the community garden activity, it may not always be possible to achieve all of these principles. They are a guide to informing council in its considerations of its level of support. Other factors such as community support, competing interests and site specific factors may also inform Council.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

Council notes the variety of forms in which community gardening activities may be undertaken. These include but are not limited to shared community gardens, individual allotment gardens, school gardens and memorial gardens. Activities that may meet community garden objectives and involve different kind of garden activities include verge vegetable plantings, fruit and vegetable swapping, learning about bee keeping or seed collecting, community orchards, vertical gardens, roof top gardens, seed swaps and community composting.

Each community gardening activity requires differing levels of financial and human resources, management inputs and capabilities, land, design, and physical infrastructure. Given this diversity, a “one model fits all” prescribed approach by council is not appropriate.

For this reason, Council has adopted a flexible and encouraging approach to groups that seek Council support in further exploring a community gardening idea. In considering the level and nature of Council support, Council will be informed by the *Key Principles* outlined in Section 5 of this Policy.

6.1 The Role of Council

Subject to assessment of the relative merits of a proposal in relation to the Key Principles, resourcing availability, strategic considerations and competing priorities, Council may support community gardens or allied activities through varying levels of involvement depending upon the scale, location and level of adherence to the Key Principles. Council's role may include:

- Managing a community garden;
- Assist interested groups in further exploring and developing their idea including consideration of site selection, feasibility, management and implementation;
- Provide in kind support where feasible (such as mulch etc);
- Provide a venue to promote information exchange and learning
- Promote and raise awareness of community gardening opportunities;
- Assist to identify grant opportunities; and
- Where the idea may result in a medium to large scale community garden activity and a significant role / expenditure is required of Council, formal Council endorsement is required (see Section 6.2);
- Where the idea may require a small role by council as facilitator or in a minor funding role, community garden activities are encouraged and will be assessed through the community development grant scheme (See Section 6.2).

6.2 Council's Level of Involvement

Council's level of involvement will depend on the location and scale of the community gardening activity as below:

	Level of Council Involvement	Scale and Location	Initiator	Delegation and Implementation
1.	Low	Small scale community gardening activity located on Council land (generally not a dedicated community garden, but other allied activities such as community gardening information or training sessions, planting of small scale vegetable or herb seasonal plots, building planter boxes etc).	Can be council or community initiated	<p>The activity will be assessed by staff against the Key Principles of this Policy.</p> <p>If approved by staff, Council will implement and manage the community gardening activity</p> <p>Council's ability to implement and manage the community gardening activity will depend upon financial/staff resources available.</p> <p>The relevant Ward Councillors will be advised in advance of the activity.</p>

	Level of Council Involvement	Scale and Location	Initiator	Delegation and Implementation
2.	Low – Medium	Small scale community gardening activity on non-Council land.	Community initiated	<p>The community gardening activity will be assessed against the Key Principles of this Policy and Community Development Grant criteria in the Community Development Grant Policy.</p> <p>The activity will be determined by the Community Development Grant Committee for potential Community Development Grant funding.</p> <p>The relevant Ward Councillors will be advised in advance of the activity.</p>
3.	Medium - High	Larger community gardening activities or those that are deemed to be of significant interest to the broader community.	Community or Council initiated	<p>The activity will be detailed in a report to Council for council consideration and decision.</p> <p>Council will consider/allocate funding as deemed appropriate</p>

7. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be subject to review every four (4) years or sooner at the discretion of the relevant General Manager.

The CEO has delegated authority to endorse any amendments to the Policy that do not vary the intent of the policy

8. VERSION HISTORY

VERSION	AUTHOR(S) POSITION	CHANGES	DATE
1	Manager Community Development	New Policy	25 October 2016
27	Governance Officer	Refer to Full Council Resolution 12 November 2019 Item 9.4	12 November 2019

MITCHAM

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Responsible Department	Community Development		
Delegations Apply	For Council's Low Level of Involvement relating to small scale activities on council land, delegation is to staff For Council's Low to Medium Level of Involvement relating to small scale activities on non-council land, delegations are to the Community Development Grant committee For Council's Medium to High Level of Involvement relating to larger scale activities, there are no delegations		
Classification	Social, Cultural and Community Services		
Applicable legislation	Development Act Disability Discrimination Act 1992		
Related Policies & Corporate Documents	Strategic Management Plan Development Plan Tree Management Policy Tree Strategy Public Consultation Policy Open Space Asset Management Plan Community Land Management Plans		
Additional references			
Endorsed by Council:	25 October 2016	Item No:	7.6
Effective Date:	31 October 2016	Next Review Date:	31 October 2017
TRIM Record Number:	16.118920 / ECM 1292409	TRIM Folder No:	FF/2016/2191
Template Folder No:	FF/2012/245	Template Record No:	12.60143[v4]