



Food Gardens in Neighborhood Parks

Food Garden Policy *(January 2010)*

Goals for the NEW Food Gardens in Neighborhood Park policy

1. VCPRD will work with interested Neighborhood Associations (NHA) to review their proposals for food gardens in their neighborhood park to ensure it successfully meets the terms and conditions for development and use. All food gardens are meant for neighbor use and not for commercial ventures.
2. VCPRD will provide the appropriate amount of land in the park to the neighborhood.
3. VCPRD will work with the NHA to update the parks master plan to ensure the public has a chance to review and comment on the change to the park plan.
4. VCPRD will draft the agreement language for the garden in their park for approval by the Parks Director and the president of the NHA.
5. VCPRD will assist with the development of the garden in the park including the water connection for watering access.
6. All costs associated with the maintenance and operation of the garden will be the responsibility of the NHA. If the sites are not maintained to the level per the agreement, the garden can be removed by the governing authorities.
7. Each agreement between VCPRD and the NHA shall address, at a minimum:
 - a. Location and size of garden
 - b. Approval of the master plan update to include the garden
 - c. Role and responsibilities of the various parties (including VCPRD, City/County, NHA, partnerships, etc.)
 - i. Development
 - ii. Maintenance (annual, seasonal, on-going, water fees, etc.), compliance with local regulations for weed control, amenities, etc.
 - iii. Operation and type of rentals, equitable use of garden space
 - d. Improvements beyond basic garden development
 - i. Level of improvements allowed in the park (i.e. sheds, gazebos, etc.)
 - ii. Signage
 - iii. Trash / composting
 - iv. Use of chemicals in the gardens
 - v. Additional features
 - vi. Review and approval
 - e. Hold-harmless / liabilities
 - f. Cancellation terms

Food Gardening Program in Neighborhood Parks PROCESS and CHECKLIST

Neighborhood Park - Food Gardening Partnership with Neighborhood Associations

This document is intended to be a guiding vision that will be modified per neighborhood association and individual park site to allow for food gardening. These guidelines are meant to ensure that the interest and expectations of all parties are identified, articulated and agreed to prior to a project moving forward.

Below are the steps for creating a food garden in a neighborhood park:

- 1. Does your Neighborhood Action Plan include interest in Community/Food Gardens in your park?**
 - Yes - Provide information from NAP
 - No - Neighborhood Associations should consider an update in their neighborhood action plan that addresses their interests in having a food garden site within the association boundaries. Typically neighbors will have identified a key site or sites for neighborhood gardens. An update of the action plan will include input from the neighbors so as to support the idea moving forward, including immediate neighbors to the park.
- 2. Which type of property is your neighborhood considering for a food garden?**
 - Private property - You will need to work out an agreement with the property owner. Visit the www.communitygrown.org website for information about setting up the garden. Good luck with your project!
 - City of Vancouver property – other than parks – these projects may be possible if the site has no existing use which would preclude a community garden – i.e. stormwater swale, or future development plans. Please include a map/location to Parks and we will connect you with the correct staff person who can assist you with your request.
 - City or County Park property – Contact the Parks Department for more information and continue with this checklist.
 - Other - Depending on the ownership of those properties, the neighborhood leaders should work with the jurisdiction to clarify the department ownership and current restrictions or future uses/programs for the property.
- 3. Is the neighborhoods food garden proposal for a developed Park?**
 - Is there a Park Master Plan developed for the site?
 - o Yes – please continue with this checklist
 - o No - A master plan update will need to be processed through the VCPRD staff and Park and Recreation Advisory Commission. Staff will work with the NHA to verify the location and size of the food garden is compatible with the future site improvements, utilities, access, etc.
- 4. Is the neighborhoods food garden proposal for an undeveloped Park site (meaning there are no improvements beyond fencing and mowing)?**
 - Yes - VCPRD will want to meet the NHA to confirm that there is interest and support for a food garden site at this park site. Staff will identify a potential location and size that works well on the site and will not preclude future development options on the site. If the park is undergoing master planning and development, the NHA should work with staff to identify and clarify the location and specific guidelines and agreements for that particular site.

5. **In the event that a food garden is compatible on the Park property, the following steps would be utilized to move the project forward:** (VCPRD = Parks Department; NHA = Neighborhood Association)
- NHA – NHA leaders work within the citizens within the NHA to determine level of interest for the garden plot. It is recommended that a minimum of 4 individuals/families will work on the garden each year to ensure appropriate labor is available to maintain the site.
 - NHA – update the Neighborhood Action Plan, as necessary
 - NHA – complete a request to the VCPRD to review the potential for a garden in their park (see attached)
 - VCPRD and NHA – meet on site with interested neighbors to discuss parameters of the garden project. Ensure that there is adequate space to serve the number of plots, etc.
 - Discuss the type of operations for garden (i.e. one communal garden or divided plots, rental policy, fees, necessary amenities, etc.).
 - Once the governing authorities have determined that the project is feasible, VCPRD will conduct a master plan update process to ensure adequate neighborhood support and that any issues or concerns are addressed. This will include at least one neighborhood meeting, on-site is preferable. Master Plans (or updates to) need to be approved by the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission.
 - VCPRD will develop an agreement for development and maintenance per this policy and guidelines, to be reviewed with the NHA. The document will be approved by the Parks Director and the President (Chair) of the NHA. The agreement will outline a schedule for garden improvements.
 - VCPRD will coordinate an appropriate water connection for neighborhood use. A water meter may be utilized to determine water use. If a water meter is in place, the VCPRD will determine a rate for use based on historical data for community gardens in Vancouver. The NHA will be responsible for an annual payment to the City or County for the water use for the garden area, per the agreement.
 - NHAs are responsible for the development of the food garden. Partner or volunteer options may be available. VCPRD may be available to assist with the initial development of the garden including sod removal, tilling, soil amendments, etc. This will be determined in the agreement.
 - The NHA will manage the annual maintenance for the garden including weeding, control of the unauthorized expansion of the garden, litter removal, delineation of plots in the spring, rental of the plots, end of season clean-up, etc. per the agreement.
 - The NHA will be responsible for managing the use of the gardens. The intent is to allow local neighbors to have access to food gardens, but the gardens are required to be open to the general public. All garden agreements will comply with the City/County anti-discrimination policies.
 - Terms and Conditions will be identified in the agreement, including timing of development, water payment due date, terms for cancellation of the agreement, dispute resolution, and other conditions.

End of Checklist

Food Garden in Park – APPLICATION (please type or print):

Date: _____

Neighborhood Association: _____

Contact Person: _____ **Phone:** (____) _____
e-mail: _____

Park Name: _____ **Location:** _____

1. Does your Neighborhood Action Plan include interest in Community/Food Gardens in your park?

- Yes - Provide information from NAP _____
- No - _____

2. Will the neighborhood food garden be in a developed Park in your NHA?

- Yes
 - o Are food gardens identified in the Park's approved Master Plan?
 - Yes – Location: _____
 - No
- No (see 3 below)

3. If your neighborhood Park is undeveloped, do you have a recommendation for a location for food gardens in the park?

- Yes – Location: _____
- No

Parks staff will work with NHA leaders to identify a site based on expectations for future development.

4. Determine how many neighbors are interested in this project for the initial development:

- 1-2 families
- 3-5 families
- 6+ families
- Includes neighborhood leaders

5. What size garden is your neighborhood considering for the food garden?

- 10' x 10'
- 20' x 20'
- 30' x 30'
- 40' x 40'
- Other: _____

6. What type of garden does your NHA expect to operate:

- One communal garden – everyone decides to work one garden and share the harvest
- Divided plots – What size plots: _____
- Raised beds with pathways – Size/height: _____

- What are the NHA goals for rental (policy, fees, etc.)

7. How will the NHA expect to pay for the water source?

- Hook-up – (circle one) Parks funding NHA Rentals
- Seasonal Water Bill – (circle one) NHA treasury Rentals

8. What type of amenities will the NHA consider for the site:

- Pathways
- Raised beds
- Storage
- Benches
- Other: _____

9. How does your NHA plan to development the gardens:

- Seek assistance from Parks for development
- Host NHA work parties to build gardens
- Seek volunteers to build gardens
- Other: _____

10. Briefly describe your anticipated users for the gardens:

- Immediate neighbors: _____
- Neighbors within ½ mile radius of Park: _____
- Neighbors within the NHA: _____
- Open to the general public for use: _____

11. Briefly describe how the NHA will maintain the site:

- Weeding: _____
- Litter pickup: _____
- Trash removal: _____
- Watering (spray hoses, sprinklers, drip hoses): _____
- End of season clean-up: _____
- Plot delineation (if applicable): _____
- Other: _____

12. Please describe other ideas/considerations for your NHA food garden in your local park:

Thank you for your consideration of a food garden in your park. Please email this form to jane.kleiner@ci.vancouver.wa.us or mail to Jane Tesner Kleiner, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation, 610 Esther, Vancouver, WA 98668