



**City of Kingston**  
**Report to Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee**  
**Report Number ARCP-24-006**

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**To:** Chair and Members of the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee

**From:** Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services

**Resource Staff:** Amy Elgersma, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services  
Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Community Development & Well Being and IIDEA

**Date of Meeting:** August 8, 2024

**Subject:** Community Garden Policy Update

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.2 Help address food insecurity and sustainability.

**Executive Summary:**

The review and update of the Community Garden Policy is identified as a strategic priority in Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan: 4.2.1 'Review community garden policies, and coordinating by-laws, with a view of removing barriers to urban food production'.

This policy update provides revisions to the framework and guidelines for the development and operation of community gardens on municipal lands. The City of Kingston continues to support and recognize community gardening as a means of providing active and social opportunities to enhance health and well-being, connecting people to nature, providing protection to and use of public open spaces, environmental education and assisting in reducing food insecurity.

In 2023 and 2024, the Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy and the Community Garden Policy were reviewed by staff, amalgamated and revised based on amendments identified by staff from various departments, feedback from community members and key participants. The newly combined policy (Exhibit A) includes updates that are intended to create further efficiency and clarification regarding the Community Garden, Community Orchard and Edible Forest program's processes and administration.

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**Recommendation:**

**That** the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee recommend to Council:

**That** Council rescind the Community Orchard and Edible Forest and Community Garden policies, and approve the Community Gardens Development and Operations Policy, attached as Exhibit A to Report Number ARCP-24-006.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Jennifer Campbell,  
Commissioner, Community  
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston                               | Not required                        |
| Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives         | Not required                        |
| Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer                     | Not required                        |

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**Options/Discussion:**

The City of Kingston currently has 16 food producing community gardens and three non-food producing community gardens on City property, mostly in City parks. An additional 17 gardens are located on private properties. All gardens are managed by individual community garden groups. The City values community gardens to improve the health, wellbeing and sustainability of neighbourhoods in the community.

The overall coordination of edible gardens is managed by Loving Spoonful through the Kingston Community Garden Network (KCGN). KCGN was established by the City in collaboration with partner groups to support the creation of new community gardens on public or private lands, and to assist with the retention of existing community gardens. The current network of community gardens includes space for allotment plots, tasting gardens, donation gardens and training gardens. KCGN runs a series of gardening workshops and organizes an annual Community Garden Celebration.

The City's annual operating budget supports the development of new community gardens and the enhancement/maintenance of existing ones.

**Background**

In the spring of 2009, the Recreation & Leisure Services Department initiated a process to research, develop and implement a policy to guide the development and operations of community gardens located on municipally owned lands. This work resulted in the first Community Gardens Policy that was approved by Council in 2010.

The policy was last updated in 2016 with the main policy updates addressing location considerations, garden and growing requirements, accessibility and streamlining of the application and granting policy. The policy speaks to renewal every three years; however, due to the pandemic and ongoing community feedback the update was delayed to 2024.

**Analysis**

Staff engaged in an extensive review of the Community Garden Policy and the Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy to ensure they align with best practices, support municipal operations and are conducive to community members. The draft revised Community Garden Policy is attached as Exhibit A.

The review process involved an analysis of the day-to-day operations and considerations on how to best support the Community Gardens Program. City staff reviewed various community garden policies and procedures from other municipalities to ensure best practices are being followed.

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The Community Garden Policy and the Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy have been amalgamated into a single policy to streamline the approval process for food-producing gardens and ensuring a more efficient and consistent approach. This integration aims to enhance public accessibility to eligible food-producing spaces, promoting community engagement and sustainable food production (Exhibit B). The amalgamation of the policy also aligns with the endorsement by City Council in February 2024 of the community perennial/wildflower/pollinator garden model, which has been incorporated in the update. With these changes, the entire policy, layout, design and language was updated. The main changes to the policy are as follows:

- **Form and Language Changes:** the entire policy was amended to reflect the combined policies. For most of the policy, the merging of information was consistent and has minor implications to the policy.
- **Policy Goal:** the City recognizes additional positive contributions of the community garden program, and the policy goal has been updated to support the goals of Council's Strategic Plan 2023-2026.
- **Responsibilities:** very minor language changes due to merging of the two policies. Separation of Edible Community Gardens and Non-Edible Community Gardens.
- **Related Definitions:** many of the definitions remained the same. There were some minor updates and language changes due to the merging of the two policies. Two new definitions were added:
  - **Community Gardens Program:** an updated umbrella term used to describe the various components of community gardens, edible forests, little forests, etc.
  - **Little Forests:** a new term within the policy that speaks to non-fruit bearing trees that are designed for ornamental landscapes and biodiverse ecosystems.

### Public Engagement:

For five weeks (June 2 – July 7, 2023), an online survey on the City's Get Involved platform was conducted to gather feedback regarding the upcoming Community Gardens Policy review. Feedback was recorded at meetings of the Garden Network in June, September and November of 2023. In total, 144 engaged participants completed surveys, 752 aware participants visited the project page and 17 participants created a new Get Involved Kingston account. The following themes were identified:

- Community gardens can address food insecurity
- Simplify the application process
- Improve physical access to gardens
- Increase the number of gardens

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The following items were raised:

- The need to have raised garden beds (instead of in-ground)
- Insurance requirement and cost
- Grass maintenance
- Water access
- Environmental soil testing
- Communication

A revised draft policy was shared with all community garden coordinators and virtual meetings with the garden coordinators took place on November 14, 2023 and May 27, 2024 addressing all themes and identified concerns. Exhibit C provides the slide presentations given to the coordinators during the open session dialogue in November and May, and Exhibit D provides the minutes and feedback captured from the meetings as well as feedback received from the open public engagement survey.

### **Next Steps**

Each community garden has unique circumstances and features such as location, size and access to amenities. Many City departments are involved in supporting the successful operations of gardens and in providing a safe, accessible and inclusive environment. In consideration of the feedback received from the community as well as the desire to enhance efficiency in internal coordination and support, staff from the Community Development & Well Being and IIDEA department are reestablishing an internal review process for new location requests and for addressing any issues that might arise in existing gardens, with the aim to improve internal coordination and communication. Loving Spoonful continues to lead the community garden coordination and will continue to operate as the conduit between garden coordinators and City staff.

The City will continue to provide access to operational funding for community gardens which can be used for new garden set-up and ongoing operational costs such as insurance, water use, grass cutting and materials. This funding will ensure some sustainability for garden operations and removes barriers.

Staff have started a pilot project measuring the use of water through water meters and are exploring the opportunity to identify garden locations on City properties that are conveniently located and could be used for in-ground planting.

Staff will continue to review the community garden process and anticipate reviewing the policy again in 2027 as per the policy cycle.

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### **Climate Risk Considerations**

The policy speaks to promoting ecological corridors and quality greenspace through the expansion of forest canopy, creating inclusive spaces that offer refuge and connection to the natural world.

Part of the policy's goal is to increase the protection of green infrastructure through existing greenspaces, new trees and pollinator gardens in alignment with 'Kingston's Community Trees in Trust Program'.

Environmental innovation and demonstration is encouraged throughout the policy as well as the intention to create a positive impact on the environment.

### **Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations**

The policy speaks to IIDEA considerations, including growing plants that are deeply connected to Indigenous cultural and sustainable land stewardship practices, as well as providing inclusive, healthy and safe communities by removing barriers to urban food production and supporting the development of a broad community food sustainability plan.

The policy follows the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act regarding the Community Gardens Programs site plans, layouts and designs, ensuring accessibility requirements are met. Additional considerations are given to the accessibility of parking as well as all new walkways must meet the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces.

### **Financial Considerations:**

None

### **Existing Policy/By-Law:**

2016 Community Garden Policy

2016 Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy

### **Contacts:**

Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Community Development & Well Being and IIDEA, 613 546-4291 extension 4916

Tony Gargaro, Manager, Recreation Services, Recreation & Leisure Services, 613-546-4291 extension 1805

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**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Speros Kanellos, Director, Facilities Management & Construction Services

Karen Santucci, Director, Public Works & Solid Waste

Kevin Gibbs, Director, Heritage Services

Alan McLeod, Senior Legal Counsel & Deputy City Solicitor, Legal Services

Neal Unsworth, Manager, Parks & Shoreline, Engineering Services

Brodie Richmond, Manager, Environment Operations & Programs, Business, Real Estate & Environment

Erica McPherson, Supervisor, Recreation & Community Development, Recreation & Leisure Services

Ben Leslie, Community Development Coordinator, Community Development & Well Being and IIDEA

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A - Community Garden Development and Operations Policy - Draft

Exhibit B - Policy Updates and Changes Comparison

Exhibit C - Community Garden Network Slide Presentations 2023 & 2024

Exhibit D - Community Garden Network Minutes from 2024 and Community Garden Public Engagement Summary





# Community Gardens Development & Operations Policy

<b>Policy #</b>	POL-43
<b>Effective Date</b>	
<b>Status</b>	Under Review
<b>Final Approver</b>	Council

## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy, that is amalgamating the previous Community Garden Policy and the Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy is to establish guidelines for the development and operation of Community Gardens on City-owned lands. This policy establishes the City and its designates' role as a facilitator and provides a framework to ensure equal access for all residents.

## 2.0 Persons Affected

This policy affects any person, organization, community member, and/or community group interested in developing or operating a Community Garden on the City's owned and operated lands.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

### 3.1 Policy Goal

The City recognizes that Community Gardens contribute to community engagement, community awareness, education, increases in self-reliance, community health through nutritional and physical activities, environmental awareness, improved wellbeing, and positive social interaction. Community Gardens are an important tool for the development of healthy communities and quality of life improvements for residents. People can grow healthy and nutritious food, and create more collaborations between plants, soil, organisms, climate, and geology while having a positive impact on the environment. The City supports and encourages the development of Community Gardens on City owned lands.

Community Gardens and this policy support the goals of the [Kingston Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#). Specifically, through Council Priorities – Caring & Inclusive Community and Leading Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action.

Supporting Community Gardens:

- i. Ensures an inclusive, healthy, and safe community by removing barriers to urban food production and supporting the development of a broad community food sustainability plan
- ii. Assists in the protection and conservation of the natural environment through less waste generation, proactive environmental management and building a resilient local food system, in alignment with the development of a community food security plan.
- iii. Promotes ecological corridors and quality greenspace through the expansion of forest canopy, creating inclusive spaces that offer refuge and connection to the natural world.
- iv. Promotes healthy, living soils and biologically diverse ecosystems.
- v. Maintains and increases the protection of green infrastructure (i.e. existing greenspaces, new trees, and pollinator gardens) in alignment with Kingston’s Tree Equity Program.
- vi. Supports the identification and implementation of pollinator garden locations and determines opportunities for ongoing maintenance.
- vii. Ensures respect, responsiveness, and transparency by embedding sustainable leadership through public education and community engagement.
- viii. Continues to ensure economic growth and sound financial future through wise land use and continued self-reliance.

### **3.2 Community Gardens Definition**

For the purposes of this policy, “Community Gardens” are defined as any piece of City owned land gardened collectively by members of the community, in partnership with the City. Community Gardens may include, but are not limited to, the following types of activities and/or features:

- i. Growing annual and perennial crops for food and/or seed, medicinal plants, and flowers.
- ii. Growing Indigenous, cultural, and native plants.
- iii. Pollinator gardens
- iv. Little forests
- v. Community orchards and edible forests including fruit trees, nut trees and/or shrubs.
- vi. Demonstration farming

- vii. Edible landscaping
- viii. Seed saving
- ix. Providing gardening, seed and food sovereignty, and other environmental education activities to encourage the involvement of schools, youth groups and senior citizens in gardening activities.
- x. Hosting harvest festivals and other family-oriented activities that encourage positive social interactions among all community members.
- xi. Encouraging partnerships with other community organizations.
- xii. Donating to local food distribution organizations, food pantries, food banks, and meal programs.

The City recognizes that community led planting and management on City owned lands promotes community development, increases opportunities for recreation, socialization and healthier lifestyle, provides access to healthy food, local seed production, permits sustainable agriculture, and contributes to an increased tree canopy.

These benefits align with goals identified in the Sustainable Kingston Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Kingston's Urban Forest Management Plan. The policy is to be applied with consideration of the By-Law to Provide for the Regulation Use of Parks and Recreation Facilities (2009-76), the Community Gardens Development and Operations Policy, and other applicable law.

### **3.3 City Support for Community Gardens**

The City supports Community Gardens by working with non-profit societies and gardening organizations. Subject to available resources, the City:

- i. Promotes community gardening projects and provides contact information to the public of existing Community Gardens (i.e. through the [City of Kingston website](#)).
- ii. Provides access to information on the development and operation of Community Gardens.
- iii. Provides opportunities for grants for funding to start, develop, and manage Community Gardens.
- iv. Facilitates connections between project proponents and other potential partners by providing liaison contacts.
- v. Assists interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of Community Gardens.

- vi. Where appropriate, assesses the suitability of City-owned land for food consumption and production through a Phase 1 Environmental Analysis (a historical search of the property to determine possible soil contamination from past land uses).

### **3.4 Policy Application for Edible Community Gardens**

#### **3.4.1 Site Selection and Permission Requests**

##### **3.4.1.1 Community Garden Process**

Garden groups interested in developing a new Community Garden on City-owned land must follow the steps referenced in the City of Kingston's "Application Process For New Community Gardens" document.

##### **3.4.1.2 Site Requirements**

The City, or its designate, and the Community Garden group will work together to assess potential Community Garden locations and determine the maximum Community Garden's Footprint and Active Gardening Space for proposed sites.

In identifying new Community Garden location(s), priority and consideration will be given to the following and proposed inground Community Gardens will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis:

- i. Supportive community members where there is evidence that the Garden Group has consulted with neighbouring residents on the proposed new Community Garden.
- ii. For food producing gardens, availability and suitability for growing food for human consumption as per Ontario Regulations (see 3.4.1.3 for more information).
- iii. Sites that do not require site clearing (if required, the Community Gardens group is responsible for site clearing); and in compliance with all regulations including, but not limited to, species at risk, migratory birds and habitat protection).
- iv. Satisfactory underlying soil quality and drainage.
- v. Adequate sun exposure for plant growth.
- vi. Close proximity to urban neighbourhoods and areas of population density.
- vii. Site accessibility during the gardening season.
- viii. Does not create potential public safety issues and is consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

- ix. Availability and accessibility of parking.
- x. Access to existing City treated water infrastructure.
  - a. The City cannot guarantee approval without already existing water hook up capabilities. Community Garden approval would be contingent on existing water supply and hook up capabilities.
  - b. The City agrees to use reasonable diligence in providing a regular and uninterrupted supply and quality of water but does not guarantee a constant service or the maintenance of unvaried pressure or quality or supply of water and is not liable for damages to the Owner or Occupant caused by the breaking of any water service pipe or attachment, or for the shutting off of water to repair or rehabilitate watermains or to tap watermains.
- xi. Site complies with any regulations or development controls (Deeds), including the site's zoning, classification and management plans (Future Development) where applicable.
- xii. Site does not adversely impact existing or future recreation programming, park structures, amenities or other City infrastructure or purpose.
- xiii. Site is not in the presence or proximity of significant natural, cultural or heritage sites.

#### **3.4.1.3 Changes in Land Use**

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 153/04 (as amended) pertaining to prohibited changes of land use, only municipal lands where the current or last known use was residential, parkland, or agricultural will be considered. Sites with a historical commercial, industrial use, or contaminated sites, shall not be considered. The soil quality has to be suitable for agricultural use. The site will be reviewed to determine its suitability for growing food for human consumption.

In most cases, food producing gardens will require above ground, raised garden beds and elevated planter beds. The City may approve in-ground beds on a case-by-case basis.

#### **3.4.1.4 Enhancements & Expansions**

The installation of a Community Garden enhancement is not permitted without the City's written approval. The Garden Coordinator or Executive must send a written request to the Community Garden Coordinator a minimum of 30 days in advance of the proposed installation.

Any proposed expansion of the Active Gardening Space within an existing Garden Footprint (i.e. building new raised beds, etc) will be subject to City approval. This expansion within the Active Gardening Space must be suitable for the site, and meet health and safety, Design of Public Spaces Standard regulations, and Facility Accessibility Design Standards.

Any proposed expansion of the Community Garden Footprint will:

- I. Be subject to the same application processes and conditions of approval as a new Community Garden (see the City of Kingston's "Application Process for New Community Gardens" document).
- II. Only be considered after a minimum of three years of a new Community Garden being established or previous expansion of an existing garden.

#### **3.4.1.5 Site Plan**

The City, or its designate, and the Community Gardens group will work together to prepare a site plan. A Community Garden's site plan must:

- i. Identify the location and size of the Community Garden Footprint. The Community Garden Footprint is determined in consultation with the City and garden group based on the property size and existing/proposed amenities.
- ii. Indicate the location of the active gardening space.
- iii. Include proposed site map, plot layouts, dimensions and construction materials.
- iv. Demonstrate a commitment to sustainable construction and operating practices such as methods of water conservation, composting and waste diversion.
- v. Demonstrate a willingness of volunteers to develop, operate, manage and maintain the community garden including the grass within the garden footprint.
- vi. Not include structures or barriers preventing access to the general public, unless there are specific security concerns.
- vii. Comply with applicable legislation and City by-laws.
- viii. Required setbacks and the designated space between garden plots will be site specific.
- ix. Receive overall community and neighbourhood support to the satisfaction of the City. City staff will work collaboratively with other City departments as applicable.

### **3.4.1.6 Funding Requirements**

All applications will be subject to confirmation of availability of funding for related costs associated with the proposed Community Garden. Grant funding is available on an annual basis subject to application approval.

### **3.4.1.7 Community Consultation**

Community consultation is required for all new (and enhancing) Community Garden requests (except for repairs). The City, its designate, and the garden group will work together to develop the necessary information for community consultation. City staff will work collaboratively with other City departments as applicable. The community consultation will consist of a three-week online survey posted to the City's Get Involved platform, unless in-person consultation is deemed necessary by the City. Proposed designs are required to receive overall community and neighbourhood support to the satisfaction of the City. Constructive feedback gathered during the consultation process will be addressed collaboratively with the garden group. A consensus of support must be demonstrated, and significant opposition or concern must not exist to the development of the proposed Community Garden as deemed by the City, or its designate.

### **3.4.1.8 City Authority**

City staff will work collaboratively with other City departments as applicable throughout the Community Garden approval process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- i. Business, Real Estate & Environment
- ii. Engineering Services (Parks Development)
- iii. Public Works & Solid Waste Services
- iv. Heritage Services
- v. Facility Management & Construction Services
- vi. Communications & Customer Experience

The City, or its designate, may deny any proposed Community Garden site for any reason at its sole discretion.

## **3.4.2 Construction**

### **3.4.2.1 Requirements**

Prior to the construction of a Community Garden, the City requires that the Community Garden group enter into a Community Garden Partnership Agreement.

Raised garden beds, separated from the existing ground by a geotextile membrane, are required for new Community Gardens unless otherwise authorized by the City. The raised garden beds and clean soil are to be provided by the Community Garden group. The City may assist with the cost of the geotextile membrane layer, subject to available funding.

#### **3.4.2.2 Accessibility**

Community gardens are required to meet AODA standards. New Community Gardens must consist of 10% of the area of the plant beds but not less than one shall be an accessible bed (Refer to 9.3); and located on an accessible route to be provided by the City. For existing gardens, the pathways will be incorporated during redevelopment or expansion to the surrounding City-owned land. All new walkways must meet the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces. Standard Gardens shall be located in areas where accessible routes to the garden are deemed reasonable by staff to implement.

#### **3.4.2.3 Additional Conditions**

Community Gardens proposed within 30 metres of a Floodplain, Stormwater management facility, wetland, drainage swales, watercourse or lake shall be subject to the following conditions:

- i. The use of City water to irrigate the Community Garden may be restricted or require discharge control measures that reduce the chlorine so as not to harm aquatic plants and animals.
- ii. Soil conditioners such as compost are prohibited.
- iii. Only native species may be planted in floodplains in an Environmental Protection Area.

The City reserves the right to waive conditions relating to the construction of new Community Gardens for site specific applications.

#### **3.4.3 Operations**

- i. The City will maintain an annual fund to support the development of new Community Gardens and the enhancement/maintenance of existing Community Gardens. The City, or its designate, may provide information to the Garden group on other sources of funding.
- ii. The City, or its designate, will provide information on how to develop and maintain Community Gardens.
- iii. The City, or its designate, will support and encourage community gardening projects with the common goals of sharing knowledge and skills, enhancing interaction between garden members and increasing awareness of and access to the City's Community



Gardens.

- iv. The City will dispose of non-organic waste from a Community Garden site from existing City garbage containers located within designated City parks.
- v. Community Garden groups are responsible for grass cutting within the Community Garden Footprint itself.
- vi. The Community Garden group is responsible for obtaining the required Comprehensive General Liability Insurance.
- vii. Vehicle access is not permitted without written City approval, and confirmation of the required Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance.
- viii. The installation of Community Garden enhancements is not permitted without the City's written approval (as per 3.4.1.4).
- ix. The site shall be open for public access at all times. Locked barriers are not permitted.
- x. Installations of any permanent structures or any permanent signage requires prior consent from the City.
- xi. Where water access is provided, the Community Garden group may be responsible for all costs associated with water usage. Water consumption and access may be controlled by locks and metering systems.
- xii. A fee structure may be developed by the Community Gardens group in consideration of the expected operating costs of the Community Garden as well as the ability of garden members to pay. In order to ensure equal access and opportunity to all community members, the fee structure must provide a fee waiver or sliding scale fee for those that indicate they are unable to pay the garden plot fee (if applicable). Fee structuring and collection will be the responsibility of each individual Community Garden group.
- xiii. Community Garden groups must agree to abide by the Province of Ontario's Pesticide Act 63/09. Chemical insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and synthetic fertilizers are prohibited in all Community Gardens.
- xiv. The City encourages biodiverse, resilient and ecological gardening practices, as well as the use of local seeds. Environmental innovation and demonstration is encouraged.

### **3.4.4 Conditions of Use**

The Community Garden group must agree to develop, operate, manage, and maintain the gardens according to the terms of this Policy and the Community Garden Partnership Agreement, which shall include, but are not limited to:

- i. The standard term of the Community Gardens Land Use Agreement will be five years; with an option to renew.
- ii. The City, or its designate, will provide written notice to the Community Garden when they enter the last year of their Community Garden Land Use Agreement term. The Community Garden group must submit a written request for renewal.
- iii. The Community Garden group must submit an annual report that details its activities, amenities and current membership, subject to the requirements laid out by the City or its designate. The City or its designate will provide an annual report template.
- iv. For gardens without oversight from a designated staff member from a community organization, a Garden Coordinator or Executive must be selected and/or elected through an open and transparent process.
- v. Injury and/or removal of any existing tree on City owned lands shall not be permitted unless authorized by the City.
- vi. All food-producing tree and shrub varieties proposed to be planted as part of a Community Garden, shall be subject to City approval prior to planting.
- vii. Existing food-producing trees and edible landscapes on public lands may be foraged or informally harvested for personal consumption at the participant's own risk; those participating in foraging or informal harvesting should make themselves aware of the risks associated with the growing conditions, environment and plant and food materials. For informal foraging and harvesting, the site of the existing tree(s) or shrub(s) will not be reviewed by the City to determine its suitability for growing food for human consumption.
- viii. The produce harvested from Community Gardens, as described in this policy, shall not be used for commercial purposes. The selling of produce for the purpose of fundraising may be permitted given that all applicable permits and licenses are in place.
- ix. Where growing food from existing trees for human consumption is determined to be unsuitable, through the processes described in this policy, the City reserves the right to remove the tree if it poses

an obvious potential health risk to the public.

- x. If a Community Garden group requests to remove a food-producing tree or bush from a site, then approval from the City shall be required. The removal of trees on City land may be subject to a tree permit under the Tree By-Law.
- xi. The City may inspect, at any time, a Community Garden site to ensure adherence to the terms and conditions of the Community Garden Land Use Agreement. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the Community Garden Partnership Agreement or this policy will result in a written warning. Failure to correct deficiencies in a timely manner or further neglect of the terms and conditions of the Community Garden Land Use Agreement or this policy may result in termination of the Community Garden Land Use Agreement. The City has the authority to remove a Community Garden site if it is not being used or maintained by a Community Garden group before the following harvest season of its abandonment, the City reserves the right to remove the Community Gardens site.
- xii. Each Community Garden group must provide proof of comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount specified by the City and shall agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City from and against any damage or injury to any person or any real property.
- xiii. Each Community Garden group must provide proof of automobile comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount specified by the City if vehicles are required to access the garden and where a vehicle access permit has been issued by the City, or through its designate.

Use of the site can be revoked for non-compliance with any conditions related to the Community Garden Agreement, City by-laws and/or Provincial regulations or if the property is required for any other purpose. The City may remove the Community Gardens at any time if not actively utilized and/or maintained by the Community Gardens Group, to the satisfaction of the City, or its designate. The City, or its designate, may deny any proposed Community Gardens program activity for any reason at its sole discretion.

## **4.0 Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Community Garden Requests**

City staff will work with its designate to review requests from residents for community gardens on City-owned lands. Staff will work to designate sites for approved applicants for the purpose of community gardening as per the terms of the policy.

## **4.2 Community Garden Conflict Resolution**

The Director of Recreation & Leisure Services, or designate, is responsible for resolving any issues or conflicts related to this policy.

## **4.3 Breach of Policy**

Employees are responsible for compliance with this policy and shall be aware that any employee who breaches this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

## **5.0 Policy Application Non Edible Community Gardens and Forests**

The City supports Non Edible Community Gardens by working with non-profit societies and gardening organizations. Subject to available resources, the City:

- i. Promotes community gardening.
- ii. Provides access to information on the development and operation of Non-Edible Community Gardens.
- iii. Based on licensing agreements, provide trees and/or plant material for the initial set up and ongoing maintenance of the garden or forest.
- iv. Facilitates connections between project proponents and other potential partners by providing liaison contacts.
- v. Assists interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of Non-Edible Community Gardens.

### **5.1.1 Site Selection and Permission Requests for Non-Edible Community Gardens**

#### **5.1.1.1 Community Garden Process for Non-Edible Community Gardens**

Garden groups interested in developing a new Non-Edible Community Garden on City-owned land must follow the steps referenced in the City of Kingston's "Application Process for New Non-Edible Community Gardens" document.

#### **5.1.1.2 Site Requirements**

The City, or its designate, will work together to assess potential Non Edible Community Garden locations and determine the maximum footprint for proposed sites.

In identifying new Non-Edible Community Garden location(s), priority and consideration will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, looking at the following:

- i. Supportive community members where there is evidence that the Garden Group has consulted with neighboring residents on the proposed new Non-Edible Community Garden.
- ii. Sites that do not require site clearing (if required, the Non-Edible Community Gardens group is responsible for site clearing).
- iii. Satisfactory underlying soil quality and drainage.
- iv. Close proximity to urban neighborhoods and areas of population density.
- v. Site accessibility.
- vi. The site complies with any regulations or development controls (Deeds), including the site's zoning, classification and management plans (Future Development) where applicable.
- vii. Site does not adversely impact existing or future recreation programming, park structures, amenities or other City infrastructure or purpose.
- viii. A site is not in the presence or proximity of significant natural, cultural or heritage sites.

#### **5.1.1.3 Changes in Land Use**

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 153/04 (as amended) pertaining to prohibited changes of land use, only municipal lands where the current or last known use was residential, parkland, or agricultural will be considered.

#### **5.1.1.4 Enhancements & Expansions**

The installation of a Non-Edible Community Garden enhancement is not permitted without the City's written approval. The Community Group must obtain written approval in advance of the proposed installation.

Any proposed expansion of the non-edible Community Garden Footprint will:

- i. Be subject to the same application processes and conditions of approval as a new non-edible Community Garden (see the City of Kingston's "Application Process for New Non-Edible Community Gardens" document).
- ii. Only be considered after a minimum of three years of a new Non-Edible Community Garden being established or previous expansion of an existing garden.

### 5.1.1.5 Site Plan

The City, or its designate, and the non-edible Non Edible Community Gardens group will work together to prepare a site plan. A non-edible Community Garden's site plan must:

- i. Identify the location and size of the Community Garden Footprint. The Community Garden Footprint is determined in consultation with the City and garden group based on the property size and existing/proposed amenities.
- ii. Include proposed site map, layouts, dimensions, and construction materials.
- iii. A listing of all species to be planted on the site. Species must be native to this area or native to growth zones immediately adjacent to Kingston.
- iv. Demonstrate a commitment to sustainable construction and operating practices such as methods of water conservation, composting and waste diversion.
- v. Demonstrate a willingness of volunteers to develop, operate, manage, and maintain the community garden for a minimum of 3 years.
- vi. Not include structures or barriers preventing access to the public unless there are specific security concerns or concerns with damage by animals during the early phase of garden or forest development.
- vii. Comply with applicable legislation and City by-laws; and
- viii. Receive overall community and neighborhood support to the satisfaction of the City. City staff will assist in consultation with other City departments as applicable.

### 5.1.1.6 Funding Requirements

When funding is available Public Works will fund a portion of the cost of the plants and/or supplies for the initial installations. Support will be specified in each individual licensing agreement.

The Public Works Department will maintain a small budget for ongoing maintenance support for community groups. On an annual basis, based on requests from community groups maintaining gardens or forests, the Director of Public Works will determine what supplies or plantings will be made available for maintenance of existing gardens are available for the community groups maintaining the gardens.

### **5.1.1.7 Community Consultation**

Community consultation is required for all new (and enhancing) Non-Edible Community Garden requests. The City, its designate, and the garden group will work together to develop the necessary information for community consultation. City staff will assist in consultation with other City departments as applicable. The community consultation will consist of a three-week online survey posted to the City's Get Involved platform, unless in-person consultation is deemed necessary by the City. Proposed designs are required to receive overall community and neighborhood support to the satisfaction of the City. Constructive feedback gathered during the consultation process will be addressed collaboratively with the garden group. A consensus of support must be demonstrated, and significant opposition or concern must not exist to the development of the proposed Community Garden as deemed by the City, or its designate.

### **5.1.1.8 City Authority**

City staff will work in consultation with other City departments as applicable throughout the Non-Edible Community Garden approval process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- i. Business, Real Estate & Environment
- ii. Engineering Services (Parks Development)
- iii. Public Works & Solid Waste Services
- iv. Heritage Services
- v. Facility Management & Construction Services
- vi. Communications & Customer Experience

The City, or its designate, may deny any proposed Community Garden site for any reason at its sole discretion.

## **5.2.1 Construction**

### **5.2.1.1 Requirements**

Prior to the construction of a Community Garden, the City requires that the Community Garden group enter into a Licensing Agreement with the City of Kingston.

### **5.2.1.2 Accessibility**

Any walkways developed through a Non Edible Community Garden or Little Forest are required to meet AODA standards. Non-Edible Community Gardens must meet the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard. Gardens shall be located in areas where accessible routes to the garden are deemed reasonable by staff to implement.

### 5.2.1.3 Additional Conditions

Non-Edible Community Gardens proposed within 30 meters of a Floodplain, Stormwater management facility, wetland, drainage swales, watercourse or lake shall be subject to the following conditions:

- i. The use of City water to irrigate the Community Garden may be restricted or require discharge control measures that reduce the chlorine so as not to harm aquatic plants and animals.
- ii. The development of the site will not result in additional cost to the City, such as environmental remediation or archaeological potential clearance;
- iii. Soil conditioners such as compost are prohibited; and
- iv. Only native species may be planted in floodplains in an Environmental Protection Area.

The City reserves the right to waive conditions relating to the construction of new Non-Edible Community Gardens for site specific applications.

### 5.3.1 Operations

The City will maintain a minimal fund to support the maintenance of Non-Edible Community Gardens. The City, or its designate, may provide information to the Garden group on other sources of funding.

- i. The City, or its designate, will approve non edible community garden plans and plant selections.
- ii. The City, or its designate, will support and encourage community gardening projects with the common goals of sharing knowledge and skills, enhancing interaction between garden members and increasing awareness of and access to the City's Non-Edible Community Gardens.
- iii. The City will dispose of non-organic waste from a Community Garden site from existing City garbage containers located within designated City parks.
- iv. Vehicle access is not permitted without written City approval.
- v. The installation of Community Garden enhancements is not permitted without the City's written approval (as per 3.4.1.4).
- vi. The site shall be open for public access at all times. Barriers shall be utilized only when there are concerns with damage by animals during the development phase of garden or forest development.



- vii. Locked barriers are not permitted.
- viii. Installation of any permanent structures or any permanent signage requires prior consent from the City.
- ix. Non-Edible Community Gardens groups must agree to abide by the Province of Ontario's Pesticide Act 63/09. Chemical insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and synthetic fertilizers are prohibited in all Non-Edible Community Gardens.
- x. The City encourages biodiverse, resilient and ecological gardening practices, as well as the use of local seeds. Environmental innovation and demonstration is encouraged.
- xi. Seed stock produced through the regular operation of the Non-Edible Community Garden will be available for use by the community group managing the garden.

#### **5.4.1 Conditions of Use**

The Community Garden group must work within the requirements of the licensing agreement. The following additional requirements shall be met:

- i. Non-Edible Community Gardens Injury and/or removal of any existing tree on City owned lands shall not be permitted unless authorized by the City.
- ii. No food-producing tree and shrub varieties shall be planted as part of a Non-Edible Community Garden.
- iii. All Plant species shall be approved by the Public Works Department prior to planting.

Use of the site can be revoked for non-compliance with any conditions related to the Community Garden Agreement, City by-laws and/or Provincial regulations or if the property is required for any other purpose. The city may remove the Non-Edible Community Gardens at any time if not actively utilized and/or maintained by the Non Edible Community Gardens Group, to the satisfaction of the City, or its designate. The City, or its designate, may deny any proposed Non-Edible Community Gardens program activity for any reason at its sole discretion.

### **5.5 Responsibilities for Non-Edible Community Gardens**

#### **5.5.1 Community Garden Requests**

Public Works staff will work to review requests from residents for Non Edible Community Gardens on City-owned lands. Staff will work to designate sites for approved applicants for the purpose of non-edible community gardening as per the terms of the policy.

**5.5.2 Community Garden Conflict Resolution**

The Director of Public Works, or designate, is responsible for resolving any issues or conflicts related to this policy.

**5.5.3 Breach of Policy**

Employees are responsible for compliance with this policy and shall be aware that any employee who breaches this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

**6.0 Approval Authority**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>
Legal Review	Senior Legal Counsel	
Management Review	Supervisor, Rec & Com Dev Manager, Rec Services Manager, Rec Facilities Manager, Public Works Manager, Parks	
Final Approval	Council	

**7.0 Revision History**

This policy and its associated procedures shall be reviewed in three (3) years.

<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Revision #</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>

**8.0 Appendix**

**8.1 Related Procedures and Forms**

Community Garden Land Use Agreement

Annual Report Template

**8.2 Related Policies, Legislation & Bylaws**

Parks and Recreation Facilities By-Law, By Law Number 2009-76

## **9.0 Related Definitions**

### **9.1 Accessible**

A product or service with features that are intended to remove barriers for people living with exceptionalities in accordance with the AODA.

### **9.2 AODA**

Means the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11

### **9.3 Accessible Garden Bed**

A plot or garden space raised 18 inches above the ground surface with a width of 36-48 inches if accessible from both sides, 12-24 inches if accessible only from one side, and located on an accessible path of travel in compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standards.

### **9.4 Active Gardening Space**

The approved area within the Community Garden Footprint that is being used for a Community Garden.

### **9.5 Allotment Garden/Plot**

The garden space for cultivating vegetables, fruits, herbs, native plants and/or ornamentals that is available to individual garden members.

### **9.6 City**

Or Corporation means the Corporation of the City of Kingston, or its representatives.

### **9.7 City's Designate**

A third-party organization contracted by the City to support implementation of this policy.

### **9.7 Clean Soil**

Imported soil that is free of contaminants, refuse and putrescible wastes.

### **9.8 Collective Garden/Plot**

A shared Community Garden space for cultivating vegetables, fruits, herbs, native plants and/or ornamentals that is available to all garden members.

### **9.9 Community Garden**

A site operated by community members and/or a community organization where

City-owned lands are used for the growing of annual and perennial food plants, seeds, medicinal plants, growing Indigenous, cultural, and native plants, pollinator gardens, little forests, community Orchards and Edible forests including fruit trees, nut trees and/or shrubs, demonstration farming and edible landscaping plots.

#### **9.10 Community Garden Coordinator or Executive**

An individual (Coordinator) or group (Executive) that governs the Community Garden and serves as the contact point for the City or its designate.

#### **9.11 Community Garden Enhancement**

An improvement or augmentation to an existing garden (i.e. rain barrels, compost, picnic tables).

#### **9.12 Community Garden Footprint**

The approved maximum area a Community Garden can occupy.

#### **9.13 Community Garden Group**

A minimum of ten individuals who participate together in a Community Garden project in the function of member, Garden Coordinator or Executive.

#### **9.14 Community Garden Partnership Agreement**

The written terms and conditions that the City and garden members agree to abide by. Previously referred to as Community Garden Partnership Agreement.

#### **9.15 Community Orchard**

Means an area of land containing one or more fruit or nut trees and/or shrubs that is managed by a community gardens program group. These lands may include Edible Landscapes, Permaculture, and Food-producing Trees.

#### **9.16 Donation Garden/Plot**

A plot where food is planted and harvested by a group of garden members and donated to a local food distribution organization such as a food pantry, food bank, meal program or other such related organization.

#### **9.17 Drainage Swale**

A low tract of land, especially one that is moist or marshy for the purpose of capturing surface runoff.

#### **9.18 Edible Landscape**

Means an installation of plants that serve a decorative landscaping function, including trees, shrubs, and perennials, where some or all of the plants or the fruits

or nuts produced by the plants, are suitable for human consumption.

### **9.19 Food-Producing Trees**

Means a tree or shrub that produces fruits or nuts that are suitable for human consumption.

### **9.20 Floodplain**

Lands subject to flooding as regulated by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA).

### **9.21 Geo-Textile Membrane**

A synthetic membrane or barrier similar to landscape fabric but constructed to higher standards which are impermeable. Common uses include pond liners and landfill liners. For this application, the requirement is to ensure no deep root penetration and as such a variety of products would be acceptable.

### **9.22 Liability Insurance**

Coverage that provides protection from claims arising from injuries to other people or damage to other people's property.

### **9.23 Little Forests**

A shift from planting trees for ornamental landscapes to planting forests as flourishing, biodiverse Indigenous ecosystems.

### **9.24 Membership**

The privilege conferred upon garden members to access a Community Garden for gardening or non-gardening purposes in exchange for certain responsibilities fulfilled by each member.

### **9.25 New Community Garden**

A Community Garden in the first 12 months of operation, or an approved Community Garden expansion.

### **9.26 Raised Garden Bed**

A plot or garden space that is raised above ground level, underlined completely by a geo-membrane layer, filled with only clean soil, and provides the area required for the growth of the plants including all root structures.

### **9.27 Stormwater Management Facility**

A pond and surrounding lands, channel, ditch, overland flow route or any element of the City drainage system used to control flooding.

Policy Updates and Changes Comparison

#	Category	Community Gardens Policy	Edible Forest Policy
1.0	Purpose	2.0 No change	1.0 Merge (minor change)
2.0	Persons Affected	2.0 No change	1.0 Merge (minor change)
3.0	Policy Statement	1.0 No title change	3.0 No title change
3.1	Policy Goal	1.0 Updated language (moderate)	1.0 Merge (moderate change)
3.2	Community Gardens Definition	New definition (updated)	New definition (updated)
3.3	City Support for Community Gardens	N/A	3.1.9 (moderate changes)
3.4	Policy Application	5.0 No title change	N/A
3.4.1	Site Selection and Permission Requests Edible Community Gardens	5.B Merge (minor changes)	3.1.10 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.1.1	Community Garden Process	5.B Updated language (minor)	N/A
3.4.1.2	Site Requirements	5.B Merge (minor changes)	3.1.11 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.1.3	Changes in Land Use	5.B Merge (minor changes)	3.1.11 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.1.4	Enhancements & Expansions	5.D Merge (moderate changes)	3.1.19 Merge (moderate changes)
3.4.1.5	Site Plan	5.B Merge (minor changes)	3.1.11 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.1.6	Funding Requirements	5.B Updated language (minor)	N/A
3.4.1.7	Community Consultation	5.B Merge (moderate changes)	3.1.13 Merge (moderate changes)
3.4.1.8	City Authority	5.B Merge (moderate changes)	3.1.2 Merge (moderate changes)
3.4.2	Construction	5.C Merge (minor changes)	3.1.17 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.2.1	Requirements	5.C Merge (minor changes)	3.1.12 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.2.2	Accessibility	5.C Merge (minor changes)	3.1.9 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.2.3	Additional Conditions	5.C Merge (minor change)	3.1.11 Merge (minor changes)
3.4.3	Operations	5.D Merge (moderate changes)	3.1.22 to 3.1.27 Merge (moderate)
3.4.4	Conditions of Use	5.D Merge (moderate changes)	3.1.1 to 3.1.16 Merge (moderate)
4.0	Responsibilities for Edible Community Gardens	4.0 No title change	4.0 No title change
4.1	Community Garden Requests	4.0 Merge (minor change)	4.1.2 Merge (minor changes)
4.2	Community Garden Conflict Resolution	-	4.1.1 No changes
4.3	Breach of Policy	-	3.2 Updated language (minor)
5.0	Policy Application Non-Edible Community Gardens and Forests	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1	Site Selection and Permission Requests NON-Edible Community Gardens	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)

5.1.1.1	Community Garden Process	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.2	Site Requirements	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.3	Changes in Land Use	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.4	Enhancements & Expansions	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.5	Site Plan	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.6	Funding Requirements	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.7	Community Consultation	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.1.1.8	City Authority	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.2.1	Construction	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.2.1.1	Requirements	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.2.1.2	Accessibility	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.2.1.3	Additional Conditions	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.3.1	Operations	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.4.1	Conditions of Use	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.5	Responsibilities for NON-Edible Community Gardens	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.5.1	Community Garden Requests	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
5.5.2	Community Garden Conflict Resolution	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)

5.5.3	Breach of Policy	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)	New definition (Non Edible Community Gardens)
6.0	Approval Authority	-	5.0 Very minor changes
7.0	Revision History	8.0 No title change	6.0 No title change
8.0	Appendix	Language change (minor)	7.0 No changes
8.1	Related Procedures and Forms	6.0 No change	N/A
8.2	Related Policies, Legislation and Bylaws	7.0 No change	N/A
9.0	Related Definitions	3.0	No change
9.1	Accessible	Language change (minor)	Language change (minor)
9.2	AODA	N/A	No change
9.3	Accessible Garden Bed	No change	N/A
9.4	Active Gardening Space	No change	N/A
9.5	Allotment Garden/Plot	Language change (minor)	Language change (minor)
9.6	City	No change	No change
9.7	Clean Soil	Language change (minor)	N/A
9.8	Collective Garden/Plot	Language change (minor)	N/A
9.9	Community Garden	Updated definition (minor)	N/A
9.10	Community Garden Coordinator (or Executive)	No change	No change
9.11	Community Garden Enhancement	No change	N/A
9.12	Community Garden Footprint	No change	N/A
9.13	Community Garden Group	Updated definition (minor)	Community Orchard Group
9.14	Community Garden Partnership Agreement	Merge (minor change)	Merge (minor change)
9.15	Community Orchard	N/A	No change
9.16	Donation Plot/Garden	No change	N/A
9.17	Drainage Swale	No change	N/A
9.18	Edible Landscape	N/A	No change
9.19	Food Producing Trees	N/A	No change
9.20	Floodplain	Merge (minor change)	Merge (minor change)
9.21	Geo-textile Membrane	No change	N/A
9.22	Liability Insurance	Merge (minor change)	No change
9.23	Little Forests	New	New
9.24	Membership	No change	N/A
9.25	New Community Garden	No change	N/A
9.26	Raised Garden Bed	No change	N/A



9.27	Stormwater Management Facility	Merge (minor change)	No change
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**City of Kingston**

# **COMMUNITY GARDENS**

**Monday, May 27th 2024**

**6:00PM - 8:00PM**



**Community  
Development**  
Create, Connect, Innovate



# AGENDA



- Introductions
- New Community Development Department
- Community Garden Policy Outline
- Feedback from previous meetings
  - June
  - September
  - November
- Challenges & CoK/KCGN Strategic Plan moving forward
  - Water, grass cutting, soil testing
- Next Steps
  - Annual Community Garden Application Process
  - New City of Kingston Website launch
- Questions?



# INTRODUCTIONS



## Recreation & Leisure Services Department

- Tony Gargaro - Manager, Recreation Services
- Erica McPherson - Supervisor, Recreation & Community Services

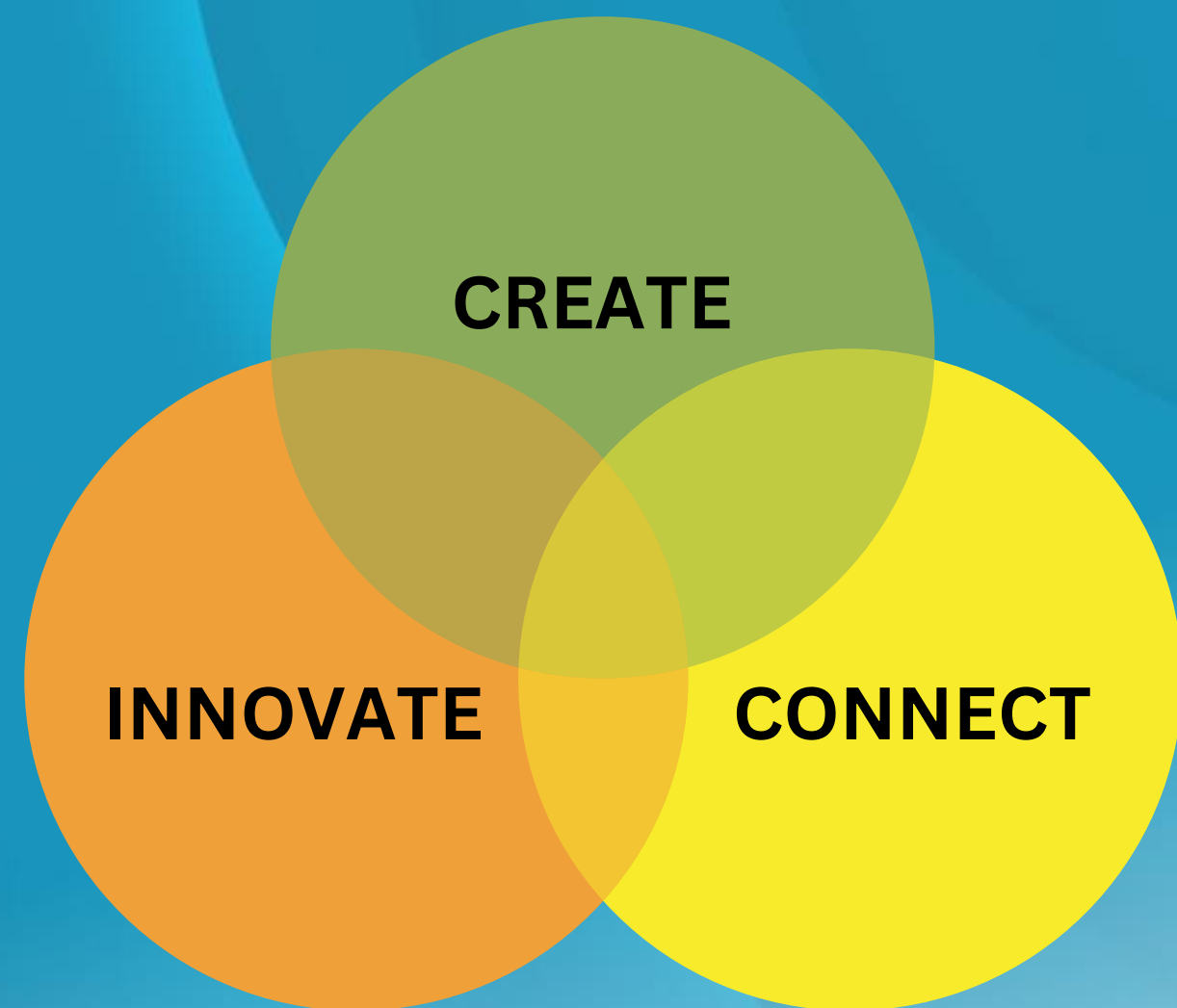
## Community Development & Well-Being

- Ben Leslie - Community Development Coordinator

## Loving Spoonful

- Marie Bencze - Community Gardens Manager
- Ayla Fenton - Agriculture Manager

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



The Community Development & Well-Being Framework:

- **Food Security Plan**
  - Increase access to affordable fresh food options
  - Fresh Farm Market Stands - Lionhearts
  - Community Gardens - Loving Spoonful
  - Community Hub & Social Market - SVDP
- **Age-Friendly Plan**
  - Increase community support and Health Services in Kingston
  - Social participation, respect, and social inclusion: Encouraging community engagement
- **Community Safety & Well-Being Plan**
  - Establish an Indigenous cultural and gathering space
  - Enhance 24/7 community-based addictions and mental health services



**Community  
Development**  
Create, Connect, Innovate



# COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY

## INTERPRETATION

### PURPOSE

- To establish the overall framework and guidelines
- To provide high-level direction on how an organization (CoK) should operate

### DIRECTION

- Typically, they indicate what the organization expects to help reduce institutional risk while promoting operational efficiency.
- Can be difficult to navigate

### LIVING DOCUMENT

- The need to create simpler procedure process:
  - Internal
  - External
- A living document (outside of policy) to address the evolving needs of community gardens

### NEXT STEPS

- Procedures can evolve and improve.
- They provide specific guidance and adapt as needed to enhance performance and productivity



# FEEDBACK & CONSULTATION

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- Get Involved (online platform)
- Community Garden Policy Review (144 Responses)
- Main items raised:
  - Raised garden beds
  - Insurance Costs
  - Grass maintenance
  - Water access
  - Soil testing
  - Communication



# UPDATES

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY GARDEN APPLICATION PROCESS

- Step-by-step process to start a new garden
- Helps to organize and streamline the process

## CITY WEBSITE SUMMER '24

- Increased Communication and Coordination
- Improved system navigation
- Step by step included with drop down menus

## FUTURE IN-GROUND GARDENS

- Rodden Park chosen as a potential pilot location
- Working with Environmental on 2-3 sites total
- City-led soil testing
- Water access dependent



**Community  
Development**  
Create, Connect, Innovate





# QUESTIONS?



**Community  
Development**  
Create, Connect, Innovate





## COMMUNITY GARDENS

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- TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023
- 5:30PM-7:00PM
- INVISTA CENTRE – HALL C

# AGENDA

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- **Welcome & Introductions** All
- **Internal City Departments** Rec & Leisure
- **2023-2026 Council Priorities** Rec & Leisure
- **Policy & Updates** Rec & Leisure
- **Process Mapping & Timelines** Community Garden Network Coordinator
- **Next Steps & Additional Info** All
- **Questions/Comments** All
- **Resources** All

# WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

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## **Recreation & Leisure Services Department**

- Tony Gargaro                                      Manager, Recreation Services
- Amanda McDonald                                Supervisor, Rec & Comm Development
- Ben Leslie    Coordinator, Community Development

## **Community Gardens Network Coordinator**

- Ayla Fenton    Food Systems Manager, Loving Spoonful

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# INTERNAL CITY DEPARTMENTS



Public Works



Parks &  
Shoreline



Environment



Heritage Services



FMCS  
Facility Management &  
Construction Services

# 2023-2026 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

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The City of Kingston has addressed community gardens, little forests, and vertical farming in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan:

- **2.0 Environmental Stewardship & Climate Change**
  - **2.3 Maintain the City's natural heritage and environmental assets**
    - 2.3.3 Expand the tree canopy and review the tree bylaw
      - Report to Council on piloting little forests projects on public lands (Q4 2024)

# 2023-2026 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

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- **4.0 Caring & Inclusive Community**
  - **4.2 Help address food insecurity and sustainability**
    - 4.2.1 Examine policies to support urban and vertical farming
      - Review community garden policies, and coordinating by-law, with a view of removing barriers to urban food productions. (Q4 2024)
      - Research and report back with options to support vertical farming in partnership with post-secondary institutions and partners (2024-2025)

# FEEDBACK & CONSULTATION

---

- Get Involved (online platform)
- Community Garden Policy Review (144 Responses)
- Main items raised:
  - Raised garden beds
  - Grass maintenance
  - Soil testing
  - Insurance Costs
  - Water access
  - Communication



# COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY

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- Updated format, layout and completed language changes
- Merge policies (Community Gardens & Edible Food Forests)
- Additional Community Garden Programs – Little Forests, Pollinator Gardens, etc.
- Provide clarity regarding regulations (change of land use, soil sampling etc.)
- Update liability insurance: Five Million

# PROCESS MAPPING & TIMELINES

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- Proposed Annual Process for New Community Garden Applications on Municipal Land
- Internal process
- Referenced in the policy
- Clear timelines & expectations

# NEXT STEPS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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- **Community Gardens Main Point of Contact:**
  - Ayla Fenton @ [gardens@lovingspoonful.org](mailto:gardens@lovingspoonful.org)
  - ContactUs
- **Next Steps**
  - Internal Departments Review Policy
  - Arts, Recreation and Community Policies Committee

# QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

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# RESOURCES

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- City of Kingston – Community Gardens
- City of Kingston – Community Orchard & Edible Forest
- City of Kingston – Council Priorities
- Kingston Community Gardens Network
- Community Garden Policy
- Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy

## KCGN Policy Information Session Minutes

Re: Draft: Community Garden Development and Operations Policy

May 27, 2024, 6-8pm

On Zoom

### 1. New Community Development Department:

The Community Development & Well-Being Framework:

Food Security Plan

- Increase access to affordable fresh food options
- Fresh Farm Market Stands - Lionhearts
- Community Gardens - Loving Spoonful
- Community Hub & Social Market - SVDP

Age-Friendly Plan

- Increase community support and Health Services in Kingston
- Social participation, respect, and social inclusion: Encouraging community engagement

Community Safety & Well-Being Plan

- Establish an Indigenous cultural and gathering space
- Enhance 24/7 community-based addictions and mental health services

### 2. Community Garden Policy Outline

Purpose:

- To establish the overall framework and guidelines
- To provide high-level direction on how an organization (CoK) should operate
- From policy itself: *"The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the development and operation of Community Gardens on City owned lands. The policy establishes the City and its designates' role as a facilitator and provides a framework to ensure equal access for all residents."*

Direction:

- Typically, they indicate what the organization expects to help reduce institutional risk while promoting operational efficiency.
- Can be difficult to navigate

Living document:

- The need to create simpler procedure processes (internal and external)
- A living document (outside of policy) to address the evolving needs of community gardens

Next steps:

- Procedures can evolve and improve.

- They provide specific guidance and adapt as needed to enhance performance and productivity
- Policy is now separated into two groups, governed by two separate groups. Non-edible gardens- pollinators, Little Forests, etc. will be governed by Public Works, and edible gardens.

**3. Feedback from previous meetings and consultations:**

- o Policy was due to be updated in 2020, because of Covid and capacity issues, it was delayed
- o Incredible amount of growth and increase in Community Gardens in Kingston
- o 144 responses in policy review, and again email feedback was received in September/October, and another meeting in November
- o All feedback was addressed to the best of our abilities, but there is work underway to create process documents that can be more flexible than policy (policy is intentionally broad to evaluate things on a case by case basis)
- o 6 main categories (as well as aspirational/philosophical pieces) to the feedback we received:
  1. Raised garden beds- contentious issue for a number of years, that all gardens were required to be on City land. We have worked to change the language- the City may authorize in-ground plantings. The conditions to approve in-ground plantings are included in the policy.
  2. Insurance costs- the cost of insurance, the need for garden groups to pay for insurance. The wording of the policy- garden groups must “hold” liability insurance, but the cost of insurance is currently covered by the City. The requirement to hold insurance is unchanged. We are also looking into less expensive options.
  3. Grass maintenance- they cannot commit to doing grass maintenance. There is always an issue of scale and budget- budget is required (for insurance, water, grass, etc.) for any new gardens. New gardens will be responsible for grass maintenance- ideally there would be enough grants available for
  4. Water Access- the existing/previous policy was confusing (suggesting garden groups could apply for municipal water taps, but without a clear process in place for that application, or a budget to pay for this). Now, the City will only approve garden sites that already have water.  
-Gardens “may” be charged for the use of the water- this is on a case-by-case basis, and existing gardens will not be suddenly charged for the use of water, but it is
  5. Soil testing- outside of the policy, we are looking at budget allocations to allow more soil testing to take place.
  6. Communications & processes- starting of new community

gardens, how long it takes to get responses to things. This isn't covered in the policy itself but we are working on operations

#### 4. Next Steps:

- New [Annual Community Garden Application Process](#)
  - The City (across various departments) has put in place this new process to help streamline the process for starting a new community garden. This will apply to community gardens that grow food including food forests, and also for those that grow medicinal plants. New documents are available to help with this process including an Expression of Interest form and a New community garden application form.
- Internal KCGN Meeting planned for November- Loving Spoonful's strategy is to operationalize food sovereignty and we aim to work towards that within KCGN as well.
- At that internal KCGN meeting, we can set our own strategic priorities for the next 3 years, and these can guide the KCGN coordinator so that when it's time to do another revision, KCGN will have headway into a policy that suits everyone better, reflects our values, etc.
- New City of Kingston Website launch - summer 2024.

#### 5. Questions?

Q. Section 3.4.1.7 Community Consultation - how would you define "significant opposition"? Initial proposal for LCG in Jorene Park got shot down because of one "significantly opposed" neighbour- concerns have had to be satisfied/resolved, on a case-by case basis

A. Somewhat subjective process, dependent on the location, at the discretion of City staff.

Q. Who is developing the timeline for application of pollinator gardens and little forests, and when will that be available?-

A. Public Works. It isn't ironed out yet.

Q. How will the non-edible gardens work with Public Works?

A. Process still needs to be clarified, but there will be fewer hurdles to jump over, so hopefully it will be less onerous.

Q. 3.4.4vi- All food producing shrubs must be approved before planting. Why?

A. This part hasn't changed from previous policy- we are trying to streamline this approval. The language has to be in there because there is a Forestry policy. We can put together a list of approved trees to make this process easier.



Q. Is it the new community gardens that need to have all raised beds or is this becoming the policy for existing community gardens as well (specifically Elmwood)?

A. Elmwood is all in-ground plantings, so it has been grandfathered in.

Q. 3.4.2.2 accessibility- accessible pathways- At Lakeside, the City is putting in a new parking lot, could they not have expanded the work into Lakeside?

A. The wording here is meant to say that the City requires a path *to* community gardens (but not throughout).

Q. Add "leased" land

A. "City-owned or leased land"- Lakeside- leased property at Correctional Services of Canada.

Q.. Enhancements - what is the process?

A. send an email to Marie at [gardens@lovingspoonful.org](mailto:gardens@lovingspoonful.org) to request an enhancement, and Marie will liaise with Ben who will coordinate with various City departments to seek approvals.

Q. Soil testing- increase the amount of in-ground sites?

A. The City has made a commitment to test 2 to 3 locations over the next 2 years, for pre-approved sites to allow for more in-ground plantings. Rodden Park is one of these sites. The City departments often don't have the budget approved to do all of the soil testing. If there is a desire to advocate for more budget put into soil testing, there needs to be general advocacy around the City's budget

Q. Contaminants in soil don't travel up into tree fruit & nuts, so should edible forests be allowed without soil testing? I would ask that this issue be pushed further

A. We had brought this research forward to Environmental, and the response was that Food Forests need to meet the same standards. Perhaps someone from Environmental could speak to the liabilities around this issue. The new policy, when passed, already allows for in-ground plantings.

Q. Who is environmental? Who works there?

A. They are their own department and they fall under Real Estate. Their Manager can speak to a garden group. (Marie can set up a meeting with Environmental)

## Community Garden Policy Public Engagement Summary

### Why we engaged

The City of Kingston's Community Gardens Development and Operations Policy is up for review and renewal. To improve the new policy, we asked for community feedback on what is and isn't working within the current policy.

### How we engaged

- A survey was published on Get Involved Kingston for community members to provide feedback on the policy. The survey was open June 2 – July 7, 2023. It was promoted on social media and through the Get Involved Kingston newsletter.

### Who we heard from

- 144 engaged participants completed surveys
- 752 aware participants visited the project page
- 17 participants created a new Get Involved Kingston account

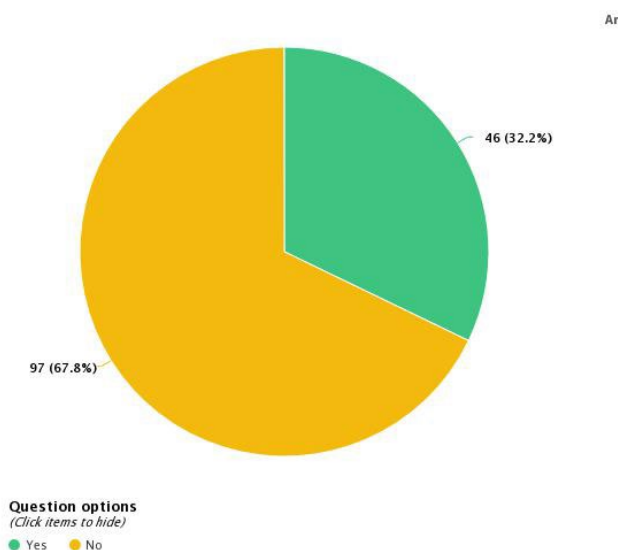
### Next steps

This feedback will be collected and taken into consideration to inform the updated Community Gardens Development and Operations Policy. Once an updated policy is drafted, it will be presented to Kingston City Council for review and approval. The final policy will be posted on Get Involved Kingston.

### What we heard

The survey asked participants to tell us about their use of community gardens, input on the policy and additional feedback.

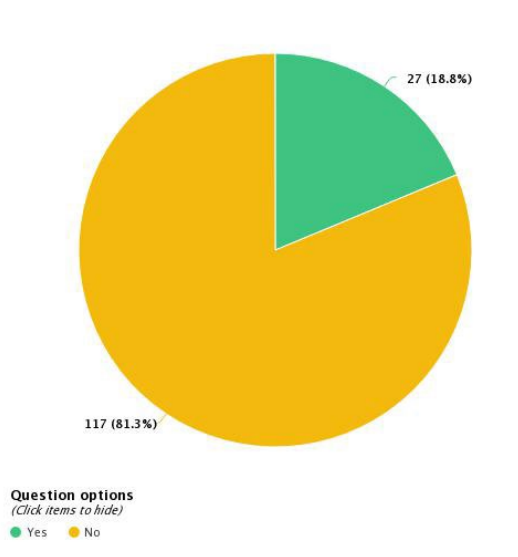
### Q1. Are you a resident who uses a City-owned community garden?



*Green and yellow pie chart illustrating that 97 survey participants are not a resident who uses a City-owned community garden, while 46 are.*

**More than half of participants (67.8%) do not use a City-owned community garden.**

**Q2. Are you a part of a non-profit organization who runs a community garden?**



*Pie chart illustrating that 117 survey participants are not part of a non-profit organization who run a community garden, while 27 are.*

**Most survey participants (81.3%) were not part of a non-profit group who run a community garden.**

### **Feedback themes**

Staff reviewed feedback shared in the open response questions to better understand the opinions of survey participants. The following themes were identified.

#### **Community gardens can address food insecurity**

A significant amount of feedback (22) suggested that community gardens could help improve access to food and address food insecurity concerns in Kingston. Suggestions included placing gardens next to shelters and having gardens on unused land.

Example: "The more community gardens the better. Make use of land that serves no other purpose. We need better food security".

#### **Simplify the application process**

Many participants (27) stated that the current application process for community gardens is challenging. Example: "... The application process is arduous and time

consuming, there should be assistance, ease and encouragement for anyone to explore having a community garden. Pre Approving a community garden is important”.

### **Improve physical access to gardens**

Some participants (7) expressed concerns that there may be physical barriers that can prevent people from either volunteering to support community gardens or harvesting food. Example: “As a disabled person, 18 inches isn't high enough. People who have had their hip/s replacement have restricted reaching for bending over. Furthermore, anyone using mobility aids could benefit from garden beds that are at least 24 inches high. My personal gardens are 36 inches high as an example.”

### **Increase the number of gardens**

Many participants (70) suggested that the number of community gardens could be increased. Ideas for increasing the number of gardens included having a garden in every new park, adding gardens next to highways and increasing the size of gardens. Example: “Gardens should be expanded as often as possible. Stop planting flowers and only plant edible plants on City owned beds. Plant nut trees and fruit trees only.”

### **Verbatim feedback**

The following are a list of comments submitted by registered Get Involved Kingston participants. Feedback that did not follow the City of Kingston's [Guidelines for Participation](#) were omitted from the feedback.

### **Question 1: Are there any changes you'd like to see made to the current Community Gardens Development and Operations Policy?**

1. Yes. When the garden is in a park, I'd like members to be able to drive up to the garden if they have to bring something heavy.
2. Both community gardens and 'little forest' reforestation areas are great for community values and health. There should be MORE of them. Kingston should be the Garden City of Ontario.
3. There should be many more on all underused park spaces.
4. All members should have to bring their compost to the garden, eliminating the need for green bins by the group using the garden. Membership should be free. The city should pay for the insurance. The city should pay to help build the plots and for the soil. The city should pay the organizer of each community garden a fee for their time and effort to make the garden a success. Money for these gardens should come in part from the money saved by the city in terms of pick up of green bins and tipping fees to Tomlinson Environmental in Joyceville.
5. The process is far too onerous and expensive for community groups to apply for and run a community garden. For instance, the requirement for liability insurance, having to develop and facilitate a community consultation process, and having to pay for raised garden beds. Make the process easier and cheaper-- we really want to encourage community gardens!!!!
6. No just to encourage more gardens throughout the city

7. Within the gardens listed as part of the community gardens listing there is some inconsistency in size. Are the fees the same for all? There should be a standard size for a standard fee.
8. Please don't use municipal resources to fund these projects.
9. There have been issues of theft and vandalism (people have come and stolen vegetables or harvested flowers, or blatant destruction of the vegetables by people passing through the garden). Some members garden due to lack of food security, and to be a paying member that has their vegetables stolen is very saddening. More saddening, was the response that security cameras were not permitted, nor decorative fencing to discourage theft/vandalism. The allowance of decorative fencing, signage and/or cameras could easily lessen the theft/vandalism.
10. Because community gardens are a tool to foster community, community care, and equitable food access, the city should better support groups that are engaged in community gardens. The City should: -provide contact information for city personnel who can assist in logistics within parks and with public works - provide access to water -increase budget allotment to allow for adequate equipment (for example our garden has largely been funded by individuals).
11. I think the requirement that the plots consist of Raised garden beds, separated from the existing ground by a geotextile membrane, is unnecessary and significantly raises the costs involved, it also results really small plots that require more frequent watering Not include structures or barriers preventing access to the general public, unless there are specific security concerns; I was a member of the oak street community garden when I lived in Kingston quite a few year ago and there were problems with theft. At community gardens that I was a part of in London and Hamilton Ontario, there was some fencing around the gardens (not locked) and this really reduced the issue.
12. Making all new community gardens be raised beds is very cost prohibitive. I know the city is concerned about contamination but they should simply pay to have the soil testes for contaminants on sites. The policy should also be updated to stipulate a maximum time it takes the city to come to decisions or get back to us on things. Some projects have taken years for us to start simply because we are going back and fourth waiting for permission.
13. I think there are. I would have to read the current policy first.
14. Community gardens and homeless temporary shelters should always be adjacent. Feeding the homeless is quicker that way.
15. Your definition of composting being a banned soil amendment. Compost and many organic gardening soil amendment techniques have low percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. They pose little risk to the natural environment. And if you are creating compost on site to be used on site, it is part of the natural process of decomposition of living matter on site. All soils need a top up when you are actively harvesting produce from it.
16. Adding new gardens!

17. Highlight need for equity in garden placement. Allowance for promotion and education around the program and how to participate, garden effectively etc.
18. The process for starting a new garden is left to the citizens. It seems to me that the city and its departments could be more proactive in getting the process going. This is particularly relevant in the inner core where large housing developments are contributing to the "densification" effort. Community gardens should be included in the planning and permitting system for such projects. Soil testing (and even site preparation) could be part of this process. I do not see why new gardens should be raised beds only. Certainly raised beds are important for accessibility but in most gardens crops are grown in compost on top of the existing soil which is very clay rich (and essentially impermeable). Is the concern contamination of the soil from the garden plots or vica versa? The size and percentage of "active gardening space" (p.7-8) should be more flexible and be a function of need and demand for plots. It took me 2 years on a waiting list to acquire my plot even though there appeared to be unused space available. The food forest idea should be included as a separate line item in the policy.
19. I would like to see more community gardens overall. There is a lot of untapped potential in Kingston, and lots of need for community and food.
20. Raised gardens are NOT good for the environment (bagged in soil, require more water, etc) and do not educate gardeners to the benefits of integral soil management with compost and mulch -geotextile membranes are outdated, fossil fuel products and do not take advantage of the local microbes and soil biota, they should not be used -insurance requirement must be removed as the City has already agreed to cover this in the City policy that we are all paying for - the City should be proactive about new gardens, identify and sign places where they could go for every locality - a 'Victory-type' garden should be in walking distance of every citizen within the urban area and short drive in rural Kingston communities -every park and community centre should have a community garden -the City should NOT require applications from community groups before initiating a new garden, let's make this easy for citizens to grow their own food! - ideally the community gardens section should be in the Climate Action section rather than parks and recreation -soil testing should be done by the City for every new/potential garden -applications for gardens must be a priority for whatever department, currently parks and recreation, deals with this so that they go through with the understanding that garden prep begins in April! -community gardens should be considered a necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate crisis, so please make it easy for everyone to take part in this activity!
21. Include requirement for listing a contact person for each Comm.Garden Group, then compile and make public to residents, on the City website.
22. Highway roadsides need to be planted with flower seeds and be allowed to bloom all summer, instead of grass cutting.
23. Would recommend Indigenous involvement in each garden.

24. Dictating the use of geotextile is limiting. adding in wording to suggest "or other weed protective barrier such as cardboard, newspaper...." would be more in line with current best practices. geotextile is often the bane of gardeners especially in a raised bed, because once it disintegrates it has to be totally dug up. So removing this clause could also be good! Not sure why compost is prohibited in some gardens, but if chemical fertilizers are also prohibited then this is very limiting.
25. Clarify that weed cannot be grown. Who carries ultimate liability insurance? The City, coordinator, users? How will this be open to all residents in the neighbourhood? Do people need to live within the vicinity or can someone take over a plot that is not where they love?.
26. More community gardens in west end and more advertising for people to sign up.
27. Relax obligations for only raised beds and full membrane coverage for "native plant" garden spaces.
28. I would guess that the high cost of an insurance requirement is largely responsible for the fee level charged for a plot. Could the insurance requirement be reviewed?
29. I would like to see more community gardens in Kingston.
30. I think it is unreasonable to make the gardens responsible for liability insurance and cost of water. Does a garden plot user risk the liability of paying a huge bill if it is, say \$1000 and all other members resign? What if strangers maliciously leave the water on? Who ultimately is responsible if others don't pay up their share? Perhaps a cap on the max amount eg \$1000 per year for water, so that members can prepay the amount at the start of the year. Permission for temporary structures seems like an overreach of power. Eg. Once you set a picnic table you can't move it without city permission? This is unnecessary. Limits like 1 rain barrel per 1000sq ft of garden beds, again, not needing permission for each barrel. God forbid a garden wants to lower it's utility costs and footprint and have too many rain barrels!
31. I wonder if it would be helpful using wording specifically permitting water barrels? To collect rain water, for watering.
32. My experience is with ornamental gardens in Portsmouth Village. It isn't clear if the policy is intended to cover ornamental gardens as well as vegetable gardens. There is reference to here and there to ornamental/flowers in the body of the policy but not in the purpose.
33. Build more community gardens.
34. Section 3.1.24 discusses the Disposal of waste etc. Household green bins only have a maximum of 66 lbs, so without storage on site this creates an accessibility barrier to those who would need to transport their waste across town to participate (or rely on other members). I would recommend looking into a policy for on-site composting in compliance with city ordinances that would be the responsibility of the group to maintain as this would benefit the local soil and if limited to brush at first would not attract any wildlife.

35. I am interested in community gardening in the very underused Oakridge Park. I was involved in the Grow gardens for years and would like to see the community garden process simplified. First, applications for new community gardens should be prioritized by the City to ensure quick approval so that garden prep can begin in April. Soil testing should be done by the City for every new/potential garden. The community garden policy should encourage food forests, pollinator patches/native plants/pocket forests to increase biodiversity and attract beneficial insects. It is time for the City to be proactive and not require lengthy applications and wait times for new gardens. All parks and community centres should have community gardens.
36. I would really like to see the process for establishing new community gardens streamlined. It is not easy to get a community garden established, and it should be something that the city requires for all parks and for all apartment buildings. And perhaps we should be looking at community gardens beyond the simple individual plot and shared plot structure of annual plants. I think that pollinator gardens, permanent edible perennial plant gardens (rhubarb, garlic chive, asparagus, good king henry, herb robert, etc.) and fruit/nut forests (including berry bushes) should be considered an important part of community gardens. This supports biodiversity (advanced draw down of carbon, sustains our diversity) and would provide greater food security, which is so greatly needed, as food is very expensive and a lot of food from grocery stores is not very nutritious (grown for shipping and shelf life, not nutrition). I like the high raised beds for people who cannot easily access the ground or a low raised bed, but otherwise I would discontinue the raised beds. Most wood is pressure treated with chemicals, and this wood should not be used for raised beds. Soil testing would be a good policy. (Some plants can clean the soil--like lupines, sunflowers, mustard greens, and pennycress--and such plants could precede the planting of the garden in contaminated soil.) Also, using the soil of the ground (rather than soil in a raised bed) means less watering and generally a better microbial soil, which means healthier plants. For this reason, even with high raised beds, I would not use a geo-membrane layer. Generally, I think that community gardens need to be much easier to establish and need to be much more extensive in what they offer. I think there is great urgency to establish these gardens, given climate change and food insecurity-- and even the great lack of community (gardens tend to foster community, which can lead to better mental health--another issue for our world). I think that this should not be part of parks policy but rather as part of Kingston's climate and biodiversity policies. Also, I think that education on planting and maintaining edible plants, bushes, and trees should be prioritized. The library but also community gardens are excellent places for instruction and education. Seed exchanges at the library would be a good idea. This education would help not only people with community gardens but also people wanting to alter their own lawns for greater biodiversity and edible plants. I am involved in



the horticulture society/Gardening Kingston, and I am sure that we could work with the city to increase our educational programming.

37. I would like to see more city-funded solutions to water for CGs. Cisterns, hoses, weekly tanks stopping by - whatever it takes. And this should be available for all CGs that register with the city, whether on city property or not, as there are often impediments to finding city owned land for gardens.
38. 1) Remove blanket raised bed requirements and institute a test-based judgement. This will reduce the cost of establishing a new community garden. 2) Develop a framework for liability insurance to be pooled across all community gardens, reducing cost and red-tape around establishing a new community garden. 3) Prioritize the establishment of community gardens in new densification and development projects.
39. The more community gardens the better. Make use of land that serves no other purpose. We need better food security.
40. I am of the view that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". This is a successful and popular program generating a lot of healthy food locally. one improvement might be to have a more efficient way of growers donating food to worthy causes.
41. A strong component of the Policy that directs arms length City entities, in particular housing providers where the City is the sole shareholder, to work collaboratively and provide support to tenants to create community gardens in their spaces and places. This policy would need a reporting function so those organizations are accountable for the outcomes. Often, housing providers place the onus on the tenants for not 'wanting' to participate - and the policy could include some clear language that puts the onus on the providers to, well, provide meaningful, respectful and informed supports and resources for the gardens to be successful.
42. When building new parks, allot a section for community gardens. Provide the water lines needed. Allow gardens to be fenced off and lockable to only allow access to members of the garden site. Having had a couple plots at various community gardens in the past, theft from passers by is rampant and this leads to disappointment from the gardeners that their time, effort and hard work went to waste.
43. I'd like the barrier to site expansion be lowered. Why do there have to be many people on the waiting list in order to consider expanding gardens? Open gardens create interest. People who face barriers may decide that a garden is not a priority if they have to wait a long time.
44. There needs to be more community gardens. Red tape can be cut by hiring a city employee to oversee the creation of community gardens when groups ask to build one. One person as a facilitator.
45. Have the City provide an insurance policy that community garden groups can be added to provide the required coverage.
46. At least a small parcel of land set aside in every small urban park.

47. Need quicker approval of new gardens to make it easier for more people to participate which will enhance Kingston's climate resilience -move community gardens from Parks and Rec to the Climate Action department -C of K should do a soil test for each new proposed garden, it's expensive and onerous to ask someone trying to start a new garden to do it -encourage new and existing gardens to embrace more than conventional vegetable gardening by educating about forest gardens, hedgerows, pollinator patches and pocket forests and developing policy to support these -outlaw use of geotextile membranes which are nothing but bad in every way, provide education for alternatives -coordinate local tree companies to deliver woodchips to community gardens who would like to use them (a much better alternative to geotextile membranes), their use as ground cover revitalizes soil and encourages soil biodiversity especially mycelial networks -City should identify places on City lands where community gardens could go, especially around community centres, libraries, arenas, etc.... and encourage and support the local residents to start a garden there.
48. As a disabled person, 18 inches isn't high enough. People who have had their hip/s replacement have restricted reaching for bending over. Furthermore, anyone using mobility aids could benefit from garden beds that are at least 24 inches high. My personal gardens are 36 inches high as an example.
49. More gardens adjacent to the sports fields and schools.
50. Just make more of them.
51. Current one is way too proscriptive and laden with unnecessary bureaucratic burdens seeking to mitigate theoretical risks not actual ones. Set backs, geo-permeable barriers, onerous governance provisions, site plan requirements - none of these are reasonable for people who just want to grow food.
52. Not at this time.
53. Community Gardens section needs to be in the Climate Action or Environment and Sustainability of City documentation, not Parks and Rec. Insurance requirements must be removed as the City has already agreed to cover this. Suggest an umbrella group hold insurance (Loving Spoonful) Insurance raised to \$5 million as per other requirements for the City. Page 7 of the policy indicates that "where water access is provided, the Community Garden group will be responsible for all costs associated with water usage" I've been told by City employees that the City covers this cost now. Needs to be stated in the policy as so. Raised beds and geotextile membrane is outdated, and cost prohibitive for many groups. Also not sustainable. The City should be responsible for mowing between beds if there is room (which there is in Skeleton Park). 4.4 needs to be removed, thank you. Policy states the city will dispose of non-organic waste, however, what about organic waste? Don't understand "need for written request for renewal" if there is an annual report and application, Gardens require long term planning. Especially Little Forests. Find it very discouraging that the Policy does not encourage growth, instead, thwarts expansion, gives limiting time frames and gives dedicated community people no rights, "5.3 ...lands exists at

the sole discretion of the City and that such right may be revoked, without any notice whatsoever, in the event the City..." Wording of policy needs to be inclusive, supportive and match the purpose of the mission. Inclusivity, sustainability, diversity, education, connecting people to nature, reducing food insecurity etc.

54. Community groups should not have to pay insurance in a city park for a city supported project. As well, the water usage policy needs to be updated. Community groups should not be responsible for "all costs associated with water usage".
55. More emphasis on encouraging more community gardens. It's been great to see more going in (eg at Calvin Park library) but we need still more. Food security is a serious problem in Kingston and it is only going to get worse.
56. More sites
57. Policy seems very bureaucratic, with too many rules. Also, there are significant costs for gardeners.
58. It would be nice to see the City or its designate promote the availability of community gardens to the public once a year each spring.
59. Access to water needs to be made easier - summers are getting hotter and drier - rain barrels should be available where there is no municipal water access.
60. The City should allocate resources to identifying plots of land that are pre-approved for in-ground gardens and food forests. The current structure of needing to seek permission and find out about sites after the fact is very slow and cumbersome, and we could be a much greener City if there were spaces pre-approved to grow our projects into. -For sites that require soil testing, the City should cover the cost. I work for Loving Spoonful and my program's proposed Food Forest at KECC hasn't moved forward because of the prohibitive cost of getting a soil test done. -The City should guarantee municipal water access to all new community gardens upon approval of the garden proposal. Having to wait three years to become established and successful is a confusing set of terms because it is difficult to be successful without regular and continuous water access. -I would like to impress on you the importance of changing the water turn-on date to April 15! Farmers turn their water on for irrigation before this date; the risk of frost at that point in the season is not a potential risk of freezing underground pipes, but rather damaging tender plants. -In the case of raised bed gardens with grass in between the beds, if beds are spaced according to the minimum required clearance for mowers, the City should take responsibility for grass maintenance, written into the policy and not leave this up to the mowing staff teams. At Calvin Park Community Harvest Garden this year, we have a bad vole problem because the grass was left unmowed until a few weeks ago, when we contracted a landscaper to clean it up. The voles moved in while it was a meadow and now are major pests. Last year we didn't have this problem with grass going unmowed, so we know our bed spacing was correct. -Many gardens and new garden applications include elements of traditional vegetable gardens,

pollinator/biodiversity gardens, AND perennial “food forest” plants such as fruit & nut shrubs and trees. The separate garden and orchard policies make it very challenging to have diversified mixed gardens. I recommend that you combine the two policies to create a single policy that covers the development of diversified garden spaces.

61. Use of geo-textile fabric and constructed raised beds in new community gardens is unsustainable. Adding top dressing or soil amendments to existing soil is acceptable, but wherever possible, citizens should be encouraged to farm in the native soil. City-funded testing should be available to determine whether there is any environmental impediment to agricultural use. Otherwise, we might as well be gardening on roadways and parking lots. If soil is not suitable for agriculture, it is not suitable. I think that a limited number of accessible raised beds is a great idea, but not lined with geo-textile fabric.
62. Not at this time
63. Allocate resources to identifying plots of land that are pre-approved for in-ground gardens, for sites that do require raised beds due to history of soil contamination - the City should increase grant funding to support the start-up costs for building, for sites that require soil testing, the City should cover the cost - the City should guarantee municipal water access to all new community gardens upon approval of the garden proposal - When a municipal water hookup is not possible, the City should dedicate funds to support commercial water delivery to fill water totes - Change water turn-on date to April 15 - In the case of raised bed gardens with grass in between the beds, if beds are spaced according to the minimum required clearance for mowers, the City should take responsibility for grass maintenance - the City should amend the Policy to formalize that the cost of insurance will be covered by the City - The City should enact a single insurance policy to cover all community gardens. The policy should be held by the City itself.
64. Have more locations in public parts and more on city housing properties.
65. Not specifically, though I would like to see something added as per climate change and the difficulty in collecting water for these gardens. I'm in a new community garden as a participant, not the organizer. I think it would benefit the gardens if the city could help with a water collection system. I visited another well established garden and it seems the lack of water is also a problem. The garden I'm in doesn't have a structure yet and we have a budget for some water to fill tanks once a month. Could assistance be made to have a standard plan for water collection of sufficient size (per number of plots) so that the gardens can thrive. Perhaps a type of structure that facilitates this. Perhaps the school carpentry programs could build them as part of their program. Climate change seems to give us droughts and deluges but not the consistent rainfall that helps a garden grow. Just some thoughts to consider.
66. The city needs to rethink and reframe the community gardens. They are part of the solution to food insecurity and sovereignty. As such I think they should be in

the Climate Action or Environment and Sustainability of City documentation, not Parks and Rec. \* Definitions: Donation Plot or Garden definition should be expanded to include community sharing gardens. For example, the McBurney Donation plot not only supplies food to Loving Spoonful, but community people can harvest produce for their own use. The garden is also used as an education tool for neighbours and school kids. \* The city has agreed to cover insurance, so the Insurance requirements should be removed. I think the city should hold the insurance, but if that isn't possible, an umbrella group (I recommend Loving Spoonful) could hold insurance. \* Water: Page 7 of the policy indicates that "where water access is provided, the Community Garden group will be responsible for all costs associated with water usage." As the City covers this cost now, the policy needs to reflect this. The City should guarantee municipal water access to all new community gardens upon approval of the garden proposal. When a municipal water hookup is not possible, the City should dedicate funds to support commercial water delivery to fill water totes. Change water turn-on date to April 15. \* I have mixed feeling about raised beds. They are hard on the environment (increased watering and excessive use of materials), and the cost is prohibitive for many groups. However they do provide access to more people. \* Geotextile membrane requirement should be removed. They are outdated gardening practices (not sustainable), are hard on the environment (plastics, and the cost is prohibitive for many groups. \* Grass maintenance: The City prohibits the installation of garden sheds for mower storage and other essential tools. Therefore, the city should be responsible for mowing between beds if there is room (which there is in Skeleton Park). \* Soil testing: This requirement should be removed. It is excessively costly and takes way too long. If the policy must remain, it should only be in cases where the soil is known to be, or is highly likely to be contaminated. The City should allocate resources to identifying plots of land that are pre-approved for in-ground gardens. For sites that do require raised beds due to history of soil contamination, the City should increase grant funding to support the start-up costs for building. For sites that require soil testing, the City should cover the cost. \* The Community Gardens Development & Operations Policy is separate from the Community Orchard & Edible Forest Policy. Many gardens and new garden applications include elements of traditional vegetable gardens, pollinator/biodiversity gardens, AND perennial "food forest" plants such as fruit & nut shrubs and trees. The separate policies make it very challenging to have diversified mixed gardens. Recommendation: Combine the two policies to create a single, congruent policy that covers the development of diversified garden spaces. \* Organic waste: Policy states the city will dispose of nonorganic waste, however, organic waste should also be removed. The policy should also include allowance for at least 2 compost bins. \* Shouldn't require "need for written request for renewal" if there is an annual report and application, Gardens require long term planning. Especially Little Forests. \* Timeline for Applications There is currently no timeline for how

long it takes to process and approve new community garden applications. The Problem: Some applications are fast tracked if the City seems it to be a priority project for some reason, while others are left hanging for months and months. Recommendation: Create a clear annual timeline for applications, review and approval process for new community garden proposals Create and publicize a list of pre-approved locations for in-ground gardens \*funding: the costs for establishing news beds is costly, and prices are going up. The funding for new gardens needs to be increased. \* Find it very discouraging that the Policy does not encourage growth, instead, thwarts expansion, gives limiting time frames and gives dedicated community people no rights, "5.3 ...lands exist at the sole discretion of the City and that such right may be revoked, without any notice whatsoever, in the event the City..." Wording of policy needs to be inclusive, supportive and match the purpose of the mission. Inclusivity, sustainability, diversity, education, connecting people to nature, reducing food insecurity etc.

67. I don't know.

68. Yes, I would like to see noise restrictions, especially equipment operation (lawn mowers, rototillers, etc.) restricted to after 9 a.m. instead of starting at 5 or 6 on the weekends.

69. 1. Please add some community gardens in the north end. E.g. Shannon park, marker acres. 2. We could also use 1-2 tennis courts out here.

70. 1). The City should allocate resources to identifying plots of land that are pre-approved for in-ground gardens. 2). For sites that do require raised beds due to history of soil contamination, the City should increase grant funding to support the start-up costs for building. 3). For sites that require soil testing, the City should cover the cost. 4). The City should guarantee municipal water access to all new community gardens upon approval of the garden proposal. 5). When a municipal water hookup is not possible, the City should dedicate funds to support commercial water delivery to fill water totes. 6). Change the water turn-on date to April 15. 7) Combine the two policies (food forests policies and community gardens policies) and create a single, congruent policy that covers the development of diversified garden spaces. 8). The City should amend the Policy to formalize that the cost of insurance will be covered by the City. 9). The City should enact a single insurance policy to cover all community gardens. The policy should be held by the City itself. 10). Create a clear annual timeline for applications, review, and approval process for new community garden proposals. 11). Create and publicize a list of pre-approved locations for in-ground gardens. 12). If the city wants to improve equity of access to community garden spaces, they need to allocate more funding to support new garden establishments (and remove the raised bed requirement). 13). The City should also allocate more funding to support on-the-ground coordination of gardens.

71. More community gardens, acces to water and shed for tool storage

72. Since the city will already mow grass around the perimeter of the gardens, I suggest they also mow grass in between garden beds where no geo-textile

material /other walkway material exists. In order to encourage use of community gardens, the city should assume costs of water usage where water access is provided, although use of rain barrels should be first.

73. The policy that all new gardens need to be raised beds would make it very expensive to start new gardens. Instead, I believe that it is well worth the expense for the city to pay for soil testing. I would also like to see more red tape removed in the communication process with the city so that, for example, it doesn't take over a year to get permission to build a shade structure. Given the urgency of dealing with climate emergency, it is very important that the Community Garden section be moved into Climate Action and Sustainability, not Parks and Recreation. In the interest of climate mediation, every park and community centre in the city should be encouraging a community garden. In addition, the City should make it easy for gardens around town to be pre-approved.
74. The City should identify specific appropriate locations every park or community centre should have a pollinator garden and published information The City should provide a general maintenance plan in particular for fruit tree management. As trees are a long term project, the locations should be permanent and in-ground without geotextile.
75. I would like to see the following: 1) Community Gardens seem to be understood as a recreational program. However, that de-prioritizes them when, in fact, they are an essential food security and sovereignty solution as well as a climate change and resilience strategy. They need to be prioritized as such. The City itself recognizes that we're in a climate crisis! We need to act as such. Food forests and community gardens are especially important when the science tells us that the best way to mitigate climate issues locally (and to a lesser degree globally) is to grow more trees and related plants. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvHco\\_GL4Mo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvHco_GL4Mo) for a well done and brief description of the hydrological cycle. 2) Raised beds are not ecologically sustainable due to needing much more water, not supportive of perennials and native plants and they cost a lot in labour and lumber which is problematic given community groups typically lacking funding. The barriers to in ground gardens and food forests are prohibitive. Expecting a community group to pay thousands of dollars for extensive soil testing is unreasonable. Why can't the City do the following: a) identify plots of land that are preapproved for in-ground gardens b) provide additional support if raised beds are required c)cover the cost of soil testing 3) Water access is an issue and will be even more so as we go through increasing periods of drought and heavy rainfall. As a city and community we should be looking at strategies for collecting, storing and reusing rainfall where possible. We are already looking at stormwater runoff causing massive costs to the sewer systems, we need to find a better way than thinking we can just build our way out of this. Part of the solution will require some decentralizing of water collection. This can include rain barrels but should also include larger catchment

approaches. This is particularly important for those gardens that do not have access to municipal water till the 3rd(?) year. How can a garden survive without water for two years? Further, when the current municipal water system is being used the taps should be open earlier than mid-may. The growing seasons will be lengthened given climate change and gardening typically start in early April. 4) Grass Maintenance: there are many issues with grass including the ecological and financial costs of maintaining lawns. There is no reason for the reliance of grass as a ground cover when there are other ground covers that are ecologically superior. If the ground cover doesn't require as much maintenance then costs to the City and community gardens would be lowered with the benefit of an increase in biodiversity. 5) Separating the Community Gardens Development and Operations Policy from the Community Orchard and Edible Forest Policy appears to be based on the assumption that community groups won't want both traditional vegetable and pollinator gardens with food forests. From an ecological perspective it is better to plant these together further, it allows for those who are interested to care for both food forest and garden in the same space. It would be preferable if these policies were combined. 6) It is a good step that the City is now attempting to cover insurance but asking a volunteer to be personally liable for deductibles is a significant barrier. Can the City get an insurance policy that would cover gardens/food forests across the whole city? 7) The timeline for approval is opaque. Can it be streamlined and made transparent. It is very hard to sustain interest when you have to go through a sometimes year long process without any knowledge of whether an application will be accepted or not. It would be great if this could be combined with a list of preapproved sites (see in-ground comments above). 8) Given the costs to purchase food and all the benefits of a community garden/food forest, I'd like to see the City focus on increasing the number of community gardens and food forests in lower income areas where folks who would most benefit are the ones who are most constrained. This will likely require the City to increase funding to support on the ground garden/food forest coordination and the mitigation of costs including the in-ground testing referenced above.

76. Community garden contract should be written in plain language and not legalese <https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-case-for-plain-languagecontracts> Clauses such as the following are extremely offputting to potential applicants and may prevent them from being willing to start a new community garden contract states that the City can terminate their agreement with us at any time “without giving cause or reason” (5.2) and, in such an instance, we would be required to “restore the Lands as close as reasonably possible and appropriate to the condition of the Lands immediately prior to the execution of this agreement.” (4.4) If we failed to do this they would charge us to have the work done. (4.4.1) 4.4 is unenforceable and should be removed entirely. If the City gives permission to put in a food forest -- something that they agree has social benefit -- then they should pay to have it removed when and if that becomes necessary. Clause 5.3 basically says



we have no rights “The Licensee acknowledges and agrees that its right to occupy the Lands exists at the sole discretion of the City and that such right may be revoked, without any notice whatsoever...” Contract term is too short (5 years)... the contract is essentially backwards and should have no end date. It should require that the City justify why it may require taking the land back and that it move the soil that has been improved to a new garden location. Soil testing should be done by the City for every new/potential garden (currently to have an in ground garden the City requires applicants to pay approximately \$2000 for a soil test) The process needs to be much much faster, currently it takes over a year to work through the policy and a lot of continued effort on the part of the applicants to get answers to questions or to find out why an application has been delayed A few vocal individuals should not be able to block the creation of a new community garden Current policy requires raised bed which aren't good for the environment (bagged in soil, geotextile fabric, require more water, etc) and do not educate gardeners to the benefits of integral soil management with compost and mulch Geotextile membranes are outdated, fossil fuel products and do not take advantage of the local microbes and soil biota, and devastating to soil life and shouldn't be used insurance requirement must be removed as the City has already agreed to cover this in the City policy that we are all paying for the City should be proactive about new gardens, identify and sign places where they could go for every locality - a 'Victory-type' garden should be in walking distance of every citizen within the urban area and short drive in rural Kingston communities every park and community centre should have a community garden city should dedicate resources to identifying a list of pre-approved locations for in-ground community gardens/food forests. Community garden and edible orchard policies should be combined and should encourage in ground pollinator gardens in the design Little Forests should be included in the community garden policy ideally the community gardens section should be in the Climate Action section rather than parks and recreation applications for gardens must be a priority for whatever department, currently parks and recreation, deals with this so that they go through with the understanding that garden prep begins in April! community gardens should be considered a necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate crisis, so please make it easy for everyone to take part in this activity!

77. Many changes : Fencing policy Who we contact for issue resolution (Loving Spoonful does not provide much support, nor timely support) Water tap installation Lawn maintenance.
78. A raised bed is not the same as an accessible bed. Right now, we are splitting the difference on accessibility and its to the detriment of ALL gardeners. Truly accessible gardens are available at seat height and the design of the raised bed includes room for a person's feet, be they in a chair or using a walker to sit comfortable at the correct height. An 18" high bed isn't truly accessible and it also limits access for gardeners who don't have the start up resources to obtain the

materials and put in the labour to create a raised bed. Allow people to plant in the ground and include truly accessible planters. Right now, this is working for nobody.

79. More wildflower gardens and features from local artists
80. Please transfer Community Gardens into the Climate Action Or Environment and Sustainability section. Update the insurance needs since the City has agreed to cover it. Put it under an umbrella group perhaps. Water usage is best covered by the City - very difficult to change and not a good idea to try to change it. A plan to deal with the organic waste should be made. The renewal process should be revamped to assume continual usage.
81. I want to see more community garden in the City
82. Raised beds - why does the City require them? There are several problems with them, including the expense and labour to build them. They require more water and are not conducive to growing perennials or native plants. Could the City identify plots that are pre-approved for in-ground gardens? Soil - for sites that require soil testing, the City should cover the cost. If raised beds are required be/c of soil contamination, there should be increased grant funding. Water - the current policy is that a water supply will not be installed until the 3rd year of operation, and that rain barrels will be installed instead. Rain is increasingly unreliable and without water, gardens cannot succeed. Municipal water should be available for all new community gardens or there should be funding for a commercial water delivery. The water turn-on date needs to be changed to April 15th to support spring planting. Grass mowing - could the city mow between beds if there is space between the beds? Food Forest policy - why are the policies governing community gardens and food forests separate? Insurance - please enact a single insurance policy to cover all community gardens, held by the City. Applications - please create a clear annual timeline for applications, review and approval for new proposals. Please create and publicize a list of pre-approved locations for inground gardens. Equity - the City needs to prioritize the needs of lower income neighbourhoods with increased funding.
83. Would love to see more of them. They're a wonderful addition to our parks with multiple excellent purposes and side effects.
84. I think the addition of city support with water after the third year is too late, as it without water assistance during the first three years, the community garden may not survive. New gardeners will be very discouraged
85. Ensure there is sufficient water supply available at sight
86. No, I've read the Policy, and it seems reasonable to me. I have experience volunteering with Comm. Garden Org. in the past.
87. raised gardens are NOT good for the environment (bagged in soil, require more water, etc) and do not educate gardeners to the benefits of integral soil management with compost and mulch -geotextile membranes are outdated, fossil fuel products and do not take advantage of the local microbes and soil biota, they should not be used -insurance requirement must be removed as the

City has already agreed to cover this in the City policy that we are all paying for - the City should be proactive about new gardens, identify and sign places where they could go for every locality - a 'Victory-type' garden should be in walking distance of every citizen within the urban area and short drive in rural Kingston communities -every park and community centre should have a community garden -the City should NOT require applications from community groups before initiating a new garden, let's make this easy for citizens to grow their own food! - ideally the community gardens section should be in the Climate Action section rather than parks and recreation -soil testing should be done by the City for every new/potential garden -applications for gardens must be a priority for whatever department, currently parks and recreation, deals with this so that they go through with the understanding that garden prep begins in April! -community gardens should be considered a necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate crisis, so please make it easy for everyone to take part in this activity!

88. I was informed that there are no structures allowed on the Lakeside Community Garden Property. I am concerned that there is no shade on the property, which would be a problem with persons with disabilities as well as everyone who would like to garden for a longer stretch of time. If it is an issue of permanent structures, they can be made moveable much like the sleeping cabins are.

**Question 2: Do you have any other feedback about what is or isn't working?**

1. I think community gardens are very important to any community. I am very pleased to see Kingston support this important initiative.
2. Too much emphasis on grass and the rights of people with grass. Too much pesticides (why bother have a pesticide law if people just relabel their chemicals and continue using them?). We need to take STRONG and DIRECT action on greening our city, and changing our values to align with the climate crisis, consumption crisis, and corporatist focus of so many of our policies.
3. This builds community and provides food security. Use the prison farm and Lemoines point farm lands for organic soil regenerative farming to feed insecure members of the community.
4. I have been to many parks in Kingston and have only seen one community garden in McBurney Park. There should be a community garden in most every park, and the members should not have to pay to use it. If each community garden had its own composting area, and if members brought all their compost to this area, that would actually save the city money in terms of green bin collection and tipping fees at Tomlinson Environmental. You need to incentivize people to do this - and asking them to pay a membership fee and hold their own indemnity insurance is a definite drawback.
5. I think there needs to be more communication regarding community gardens to increase community engagement.
6. Please especially talk with existing community gardens for their input.

7. Ensure all residents can access garden plot who wish to with high cost of produce and housing
8. I would like to see trash bins as well as composters at all sites.
9. Community Garden at Centre 70 is a real eye sore in the Spring. From the road it looks like everything was left from the Fall. White bags everywhere looks like garbage.
10. Many of these are downtown
11. More plots should be built, and the city should help prevent garden theft/destruction by allow security cameras and/or decorative fencing.
12. The Compton garden requires water access closer to the garden site and a reliable city contact.
13. More positive ground level connections need to be made with rural farmers within Kingston and also with those small farmers coming to market on Saturday.
14. Hoping to see more community gardens soon
15. The changes you made last time to this policy were an improvement. having the loving spoonful contact has been great, although you should give them more money so that they can dedicate more time to communications. The larger and more generous grants have also been incredibly helpful.
16. What isn't working is the lack of response from the city on issues that arise regarding the gardens.
17. I would like to see more community gardens in all our parks, green spaces and schoolyards.
18. Community garden investing!
19. I love Calvin Park's community Gardens, and buy their fresh produce all summer, as I live on a pension.
20. Communication with the group who developed the community garden in Shannon park was not great. I got in touch with them early in the process, and followed up via email multiple times during the two years they were in the planning stages. While my emails were replied to promptly, the information I was given was always that they were still getting information together and that they would start assembling community "soon". I was never contacted by them, plans were never shared, and participation in what was eventually installed was never offered. It was a bit disappointing, actually. I live less than a five minute walk from Shannon Park, but the community garden I am most involved with is Lakeside, all the way across the city. I am an active volunteer with maintaining the site and work in the donation garden. I would love to devote some of my time closer to home, but I feel like they did not want the community to be involved with getting the garden started, and I have no idea who even to get in touch with to ask about opportunities to volunteer or work with what was eventually put in place. Because of this, I don't even go in the garden when I'm walking by. For all that it is presented as a "tasting garden" I don't find it to be a welcoming space because someone else put it there, I wasn't involved, I don't know if I'm allowed in. I imagine whatever garden community exists in the north end that would have

wanted to be involved with the planned community garden probably feels the same way.

21. This program could be better communicated to the public so that citizens know it exists and how they can participate. Partnership with community groups could allow for better communication around the program and be practiced for participating successfully.
22. Typically, garden members donate excess crops and it seems that the "grow a row" philosophy is alive and well in Kingston. This is an excellent way to help with food security. It has been my observation that garden members take great pride in the appearance of their plots and the garden as a whole.
23. Your gardens sound wonderful especially raised beds which makes it easier for seniors to help with gardening. Food costs are high and if Kingston can grow vegetables and fruit to help out that is a wonderful thing. Do not let arable land go to waste. Thank you.
24. Why is the city talking about community gardens when the gardens in the downtown area are a mess! Around the back of city hall, beside St George's church, walkway behind the landmark (dinosaur bones) the paint is peeling and the flower containers have weeds three feet high). Try and come us on those things please.
25. Raised gardens are NOT good for the environment (bagged in soil, require more water, etc) and do not educate gardeners to the benefits of integral soil management with compost and mulch -geotextile membranes are outdated, fossil fuel products and do not take advantage of the local microbes and soil biota, they should not be used -insurance requirement must be removed as the City has already agreed to cover this in the City policy that we are all paying for - the City should NOT require applications from community groups before initiating a new garden, let's make this easy for citizens to grow their own food! -ideally the community gardens section should be in the Climate Action section rather than parks and recreation -soil testing should be done by the City for every new/potential garden - applications for gardens must be a priority for whatever department, currently parks and recreation, deals with this so that they go through with the understanding that garden prep begins in April! -community gardens should be considered a necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate crisis, so please make it easy for everyone to take part in this activity!
26. Great program, keep supporting the efforts
27. More dog friendly!
28. I don't really have any experience to comment.
29. All community gardens should include an educational component on sustainable native plants, including native vegetables, and locally grown seed to preserve biodiversity and promote growing plants that have adapted to our specific region.
30. Rain barrels and above-ground barrels are not sustainable long term as drought will empty barrels quickly. If a group could get funding it would be great to also

allow subterranean large scale rainwater catchment (ie concrete tank and pump) and note it in the policy that this is acceptable. If the City were to provide funding or staff support to implement above ground grading/bioswales/passive rainwater harvesting channels, this would help to capture stormwater and prevent runoff, targeting other City priorities. Credit Valley Conservation is a wealth of resources for this type of rainwater harvest.

31. Great use of City land. What happens if the City needs the land for development / housing?
32. Let more people know about community gardens so they can get involved and participate. Encourage schools to participate and help build a sense of community.
33. A reliable source of fresh water is always important for gardens.
34. Raised garden beds that are accessible are notorious for having poor dry soil quality and get excessively hot reducing their viability as gardens. Their requirement seems excessive, wasteful, and pointless.
35. My experience to date, is that the City has been very supportive of the community ornamental gardens.
36. More info about plot availability needed
37. I wasn't aware of this program until today despite being interested in participating, so maybe advertising this program more to encourage support.
38. Not working: The long application process, the lack to access to water in some places. (Please also see comments above for Question 5.)
39. Community gardens are necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate & biodiversity crises, so make it easy for everyone to take part in community gardening! ideally the community gardens policy should be in the Climate Action section rather than Parks and Recreation soil testing should be done by the City for every new/potential garden as a first step the community garden policy should encourage food forests, pollinator patches/native plants/pocket forests to increase biodiversity of the space and attract the beneficial insects necessary for organic gardening (as part of new Strategic Plan Kingston)
40. Would love to see more small orchard/mixed plantings (food-bearing trees/shrubs/ground cover) throughout the city, whether connected to CGs or not. This could be a priority for the city and should replace the watering of giant planters on utility poles that currently passes for city landscaping.
41. The present set-up works well.
42. The challenge I see is that this policy anchors the process of creating a community garden, on municipally owned lands, for those with the skills, capacity and resources to make it so. I'm thinking of newcomers, Indigenous folks, or those experiencing poverty - who might not have access to outside supports to walk through the process (or be able to do things like secure required insurance) without having someone step up from outside their community to lead the process. It doesn't mean they don't have the know how to create community,

- create a garden and/or build the necessary components, often they do, though may lack experience (often as there is a lack of opportunity to build such), to navigate the system of setting it up. Maybe these components are addressed in how the program roles out - though the policy as is doesn't seem to suggest it.
43. Open gardens do not work... enclosed access restricted spaces are needed.
  44. I love my community garden and it gives me a chance to get to know my neighbours and to get outside. I'd love to see more proposals for community gardens in our more urban areas of town. Many people who are unable to purchase their own homes and must rent instead, miss out on the chance to connect with the land we live on. Gardening creates a sense of stewardship and helps people develop self-sufficiency skills.
  45. I would like to know why the rules for community gardens near floodplains are so cautious and careful but developers can do anything to floodplains in Kingston. They can even fill in wetlands and build where endangered species live. Why are the rules strict for groups who want to grow a few tomatoes and lax and adjustable for developers? Also why does city hall ask if we'd like to be contacted and even after saying yes over and over, no one ever contacts citizens who actually care?
  46. Would like to see corporations that have large grass areas to allow a community garden to be setup on their property.
  47. Not too many people know about this programme. Reach out to more people through schools, community groups etc. This can be done via fliers, social media or even local news.
  48. "The City will provide grass maintenance around the perimeter of the community garden located in designated City parks. Community garden members are responsible for grass cutting within the garden itself." I understand that this policy is likely written to provide flexibility, but in practice, it seems to lead to some confusion about who is responsible for maintaining which parts of the community gardens.
  49. The City of Kingston should actively champion community gardens to encourage and support one in every neighbourhood.
  50. I hope there will be a chance at some point to comment on some beds of flowers that are already in place in some parks in Kingston. I did notice, for example, that in Churchill Park, all the beds are replanted every spring, I see multiple employees working for multiple days in a row and some of the flowers planted are... perennials and I have no idea why these flowers are not left in the ground if they are perennials, why get rid of them in the fall? Why not focus on long term plants that can bloom spring to fall, and that could come back every year? This is sustainable gardening. So good thing Kingston wants more gardens, but we should also look at the actual way of gardening in our parks and get things moving in the right direction.
  51. I would love to see an increase in the number of Community Gardens if possible.

52. There are not enough garden plots throughout north Kingston. It is hard to get a spot, and no garden area I. The south of Railway. What about the land by the city building on Montreal /Patrick -the old Rideaucrest. There is lots of land and even if it's allocated or use undecided for the future what is the harm of having some gardens until that time? Perhaps it's time to look at smaller areas of land and a few rain barrels to allow more people to garden. - particularly those on lower incomes. Is there any useable smaller strips of land on Daly beside the library?
53. Too few.
54. Plant more "food" plants in city managed planters (fruit trees in front of city hall) kale for greenery etc.
55. For every community garden on the books, there are 10 who just did their own thing anyway with neighbours and 100 who read the rules and said 'not worth the hassle'. Best advice? Get out of the way and let the people who pay your salaries just do their own thing.
56. Every Park and Community Centres should have/encourage a Community Garden. We deliberately left space between beds for the City to mow, it is easy to do. It should be changed in the policy that Garden groups are responsible for mowing between beds. Raised Garden Beds in Skeleton Park makes sense, however otherwise, City should be responsible for soil testing pro actively for potential gardens. Raised beds are not appropriate for sustainable gardening. Geotextile membrane is outdated and eliminates necessary microbes and soil biota. The City really must dedicate resources to identifying and posting an easily accessed list of pre-approved and potential locations for gardens and food forests. The application process is arduous and time consuming, there should be assistance, ease and encouragement for anyone to explore having a community garden. Pre Approving a community garden is important. All KFHC housing needs options and supports for community gardens. The City could be much more pro active about new gardens, front yard gardens, pollinator gardens, demo gardens, boulevards with pollinator plants to inspire people. Identify where Little Forests could thrive and create canopy and carbon exchange. Provide Education so that people who have concerns learn about the benefits of Community Gardens (social, sustainable, economic, environmental). It would be good to have a map of all the areas in the City and outlying areas where land could be used for gardens. What is working is the joining together of neighbours, offering food, education, social and community connections over a shared community garden. We appreciate the opportunity to develop and explore ways of sharing and working together.
57. What is working? This project is brining together people in the neighbourhood and educating about growing food. What isn't working? This city needs to cut the grass around the riased garden boxes in all parks. In Skeleton Park we purposefully placed the boxes to allow space for a city lawn mower to fit (as requested). This is another part of the park and needs to be kept neat and tidy by the city.



58. I don't think raised beds should be required—I assume this is for aesthetic reasons? The Spire/Sydenham St United has a beautiful community garden on its front lawn and it looks fabulous!
59. We need more sites
60. I would love to see better signage at the garden so people not involved know how it works. Until I became involved I had no idea who was caring for and able to take from the gardens
61. I pass by various community gardens fairly often, and while I think that they are a good idea, many seem to be unintended or unkempt. I wonder what provision is made to real lot plots that neglected or abandoned.
62. Need more community gardens in the downtown area.
63. The policy mentions garbage pails but last summer none were available close to the pollinator garden at the Memorial Centre. We spent a lot of time picking up garbage and had to bring it home to dispose of it.
64. Create a clear annual timeline for applications, review and approval process for new community garden proposals. -I said it above but I'd like to reiterate that you please create and publicize a list of preapproved locations for in-ground gardens. -The City should also allocate more funding to support on-the-ground coordination of gardens. Thank you!
65. In the case of the Calvin Park and Shannon Park gardens run by Community Harvest Kingston (of which I am an Advisory Board member), it would be helpful if the city could change the mowing policy to include regular mowing between raised beds that were specifically designed to accommodate city mowers. My understanding is that mowing between beds is left to the discretion of city staff as only perimeter mowing is mandated in the community garden agreement. It would also be helpful if the city could make every effort to facilitate water use at these sites, which has sometimes been disrupted in the past. Moreover I would like to see a broader public engagement about the use of civic lands such as parks. In my experience, city consultation has been cosmetic. I would like to see the development of a citizens working group with city staff and volunteers meeting with the public at large to discuss land use issues on civic land. In this era of climate emergency, it seems to me that we have too much civic land that is under-utilized with turf grass monocultures and lonely trees. I would like to see a more flexible and community driven approach to neighbourhood parks, allowing for additions such as Little Forests, food forests, community orchards, native pollinator gardens, community gardens, edible perennial gardens and communal gardens. I would be happy to serve on such a working group, helping to vision and establish a consultation framework.
66. As a member of the Kingston Horticultural Society, I help maintain the Pollinator garden on the site of the Memorial Center During the hot dry months of summer we have no access to water to maintain the garden Many of our plants & shrubs suffer/die from lack of water. We would appreciate some assistance & support to get water to the garden.

67. Not a lot awareness. Need to have more in food scarcity zones.
68. Our group organizer is a hard worker and has given us great guidance on following the guidelines and policy. This is my first year to participate.
69. Every Park and Community Centres should have/encourage a Community Garden. \* Encourage bed spacing so that the city can mow between them. It is easy to do. \* The application process is arduous and time consuming, there should be assistance, ease and encouragement for anyone to explore having a community garden. Pre Approving a community garden is important. \* All KFHC housing and City rentals needs options and supports for community gardens. \* The City could be much more pro active about new gardens, front yard gardens, pollinator gardens, demo gardens, boulevards with pollinator plants to inspire people. Identify where Little Forests could thrive and create canopy and carbon exchange. \* Provide Education so that people who have concerns learn about the benefits of Community Gardens (social, sustainable, economic, environmental). \* It would be good to have a map of all potential areas for gardens. \* There is a need for education of citizens and there is no link to the Gardens or Orchards Policies on these sites. The 2019-22 Strategic Plan is woefully deficient in promoting any 'active' food security projects. Under the 'Resident' tab there is no link to anything about food security or food growing. Similarly under the sub-tab 'Environment and Sustainability'. \* Applications for gardens must be a priority for whatever department, currently parks and recreation, deals with this so that they go through with the understanding that garden prep begins in April. \* Community gardens should be considered a necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate crisis, so please make it easy for everyone to take part in this activity! \* What is working: the joining together of neighbours, offering food, education, social and community connections over a shared community garden. This has been transformative at the Skeleton Park Sharing Garden.
70. There is a lot of noise and commotion associated with the community garden.
71. Survey could have been better designed. Give users information on current community gardens and ask incisive questions that allow users to answer yes/no/maybe or preferential rating of various amenities or needs they think various community gardens should have.
72. Unfortunately with the new garden shed out by the Calvin Park Community Gardens, there has been some vandalism involved. Wondering if positioning it in a more visible, lit, street facing location, it would deter from continued activity. The south side of the library building seems to be a shady and ideal spot for unwelcomed visitors.
73. Gardens need to be placed where food security is an issue.
74. I would like to see the City cover the costs for insurance, water and soil testing because not all Community Gardens can afford this. Also, it would help if the City did the mowing between beds.

75. Community Gardens are a wonderful concept and I am pleased to see the extent of the City's support.
76. Speed of the process
77. I'd like to commend the City for revisiting these policies. There are so many people who are interested in volunteering with a community garden and food forest. Given all the benefits that will accrue, please unleash this energy to the benefit of the whole City!
78. The city legal department should provide a standard liability waiver for community gardens and signage with the waiver, accidents will happen and how do we ensure the possibility of a lawsuit doesn't influence people's willingness to start or join a community garden
79. A streamlined approach to building and implementing shade structures or similar. Offer an approved blueprint, private groups cannot afford to spend thousands to create a shade structure that will enhance the usability (and safety) of the space.
80. It would be great if there were more community gardens in the Westend communities.
81. Given the severe housing shortage in Kingston and the attendant food insecurity crisis, I would want to see the city of Kingston reduce as many barriers as possible to community gardens and increase the number of community gardens across the city.
82. A Community Garden should be a portion of most, if not all, parks and community centres. The City could identify and post an easily accessed list of pre-approved and potential locations for gardens and food forests. It would be very helpful if assistance and encouragement could be provided to those interested in and/or applying for a community garden. Pre-approving a community garden is important. All KFHC Housing and City rentals need options and supports for Community Gardens. Please provide education about the process to establish and the benefits of having a community garden. Having a map of all the community gardens would be helpful. Community Gardens should be considered a necessary and vital response of the City and its citizens to the climate crisis (and food inflation crisis, and the income inequality crisis...). The City could be pro-active about new gardens, front yard gardens, pollinator gardens, demo gardens, boulevards with pollinator plants to inspire people. Identify where Little Forests could thrive and create canopy and carbon exchange. Neighbours joining together offering food, education, social and community connections over shared community gardens is a great benefit of the program. The program has grown well over recent years and many solutions have been reached by the good work of the City and the volunteers and organizations.  
Thank you.
83. Gardens should be expanded as often as possible. Stop planting flowers and only plant edible plants on City owned beds. Plant nut trees and fruit trees only.
84. While community gardens are recreational, they are also an important strategy for food security and for climate change mitigation and should be an important

priority for the city. New building developments could also be including space for community garden plots.

85. It would be nice to get some assistance in establishing a municipal source of water for a private site in the city. Grenville Park has a one-acre piece of land that the residents would like to convert to a little forest, an orchard and a donation garden - a site for everyone to enjoy. When asked about the cost of putting in a tap, the quote was upwards of \$30K. For a neighbourhood that maintains its own parkland and amenities but is enjoyed mostly by Kingstonians who don't live in the community, and school children who use the space during the school year (please see this 2 minute video clip for more info <https://gofund.me/9ff16f9a>), it would be nice to partner with the city in sharing the cost of a tap.
86. More gardens everywhere!!
87. I have recently moved from a house in the centre of town to a townhouse in the east end. Although this may be deemed a reasonably affluent area, there is little space to have a garden of one's own and I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a community garden. I'm concerned about the support required to get it going and think the city could provide more support to something that would enhance an otherwise empty space. Having low cost gardening workshops during the winter and spring would assist in getting more people engaged.
88. I love the community gardens. I'd like to see more of them.
89. We loved participating in our community garden, but water was a real issue. We had to transport water from our homes. Too much work for senior citizens.
90. Alongside improved Community Garden Access through this "improved policy" from the City would it also be possible to get the City to come to the Community Gardens and perform Maintenance as I Volunteer at the Elmwood Community Garden on Elmwood Street and had to purchase my own Tree limb loppers and remove all the undergrowth and clean up the Tree's that the City planted along the adjacent Sidewalk leading to The Overlook apartment buildings and a reminder that this is a garden that takes Sun not Shade to Operate and that I can go no higher than 6 Feet and a crew of City worker's drove through the Baptist Church and looked directly at me and left onto Bath Road. Also, our water pressure is low and is out of date for more than 2-3 Hoses to currently run at the same time. Thank you.
91. I'd like to see more and have the city encourage apartments and especially condos to have community gardens for their residents to use.
92. Simply that I approve the move to expand community gardening as a community building activity.
93. As it is the gardens do not seem accessible. Does or can the city provide incentive for making gardens accessible? Persons with disabilities are often among those who can benefit from the gardens the most.