

Wellington City Council Guidelines for Community Gardens

September 2009

1.0 Wellington City Council's role in community gardens

Wellington City Council supports community gardens through:

- Strategic partnerships, for example with organisations like the Sustainability Trust and Operation Green Thumb.
- Facilitating the development of a local community gardens network
- Funding from the Council Grants Social and Environment Pools
- The provision of public land

These guidelines have been developed to help provide prospective community gardeners with some useful contacts, and to describe how the Council will consider applications for community gardens on Council land.

2.0 Defining community gardens

A community garden is generally defined as:

A small scale low- investment neighbourhood communal gardening venture, where the primary purpose is growing vegetables or fruit. Community gardens may have an explicit gardening philosophy, i.e. organic growing, they may be treated as one garden or they may allow participants with individual plots to manage them as they see fit.

Within Wellington City there are already a number of examples of community gardens.

- Community gardens on private land: for example on church land, on large private gardens, in school grounds or individual private gardens where the produce is shared.
- Community gardens on public land: for example the Tanera Community Gardens run by Mokai Kainga located on Wellington's Town Belt.
- Gardens which are co-ordinated within some of our own City Housing sites.
- There are also some areas where community orchards have been established, these are places with open access where crops are freely harvested.

3.0 Community gardens on Council land

For requests for a community garden on open space land the Parks and Gardens Business Unit will assess applications in accordance with the criteria and process described below. For requests on other Council owned land (for example land managed by City Communities) this same process will be applied.

3.1 Application process for a community garden on Council land

Process and assessment

Wellington City Council will assess each proposal to establish a community garden on a case-by-case basis.

A flow chart showing the process is shown in *Appendix 1*.

Proposal in writing

Prospective gardeners are required to submit an initial proposal outlining:

- The location of the proposed community garden and what other location options have been considered
- The purpose of the proposed community garden
- The objectives of the community garden group
- Benefit of the garden to the local area and community (including who will benefit from the produce)
- What opportunities exist for links and synergy with other community activities, for example schools, training facilities and church groups, volunteers
- Whether the proposal outlines innovative techniques for demonstrating urban sustainability, for example, water conservation
- The proposed legal/organisational structure (including membership fees if applicable)
- If possible, estimated start date.
- Any resource input sought from City Council.

Applicants can use the request form as a guide (*Appendix 2*).

Assessment criteria

In considering a request for establishing a community garden on Council owned public land, the following criteria will be considered:

1. Wellington City will seek to maintain the public use and open space values of the land in accordance with Capital Spaces the Open Space Strategy for Wellington (1998), any Reserve Management Plans and other relevant policies.
2. Have other open spaces such as schools, vacant or temporary lots, and community housing been considered?
3. Community gardens are not appropriate in Coastal Management Areas, or in Wellington's Outer Green Belt.

4. The location of Community Gardens within an open space should consider and complement the primary function of the open space, and its associated uses and users.
5. Community gardens should be located to minimise potential conflict with open space uses and users.
6. Community gardens should not dominate the primary useable area of local or community parks.
7. Community gardens must retain their public character and community gardens must be not-for-profit.
8. Community gardens on Council-owned land must follow the Wellington City Council Leases Policy for Community and Recreation Groups (2001).

Lease and license process

Successful community garden applications will then be considered for a lease or license in accordance with the Wellington City Council Leases policy for Community and Recreation Groups (2001).

Community garden tenancies will generally be for a term of three to five years, though community orchard tenancies are likely to be longer term (ten years). Leases and licenses must be with an incorporated society or a trust, and lessees must hold public liability insurance.

All leases or licenses of public land require final approval by a subcommittee or committee of Council. Council officers prepare a paper for committee who will then decide whether to approve the lease in principle. This approval is subject to public notification and no objections received and/or sustained. One month is allowed for public comment/objection. If objections are received consideration is given to whether a hearing is required. Hearings may take 1 month.

If objections are sustained, the application either does not proceed and/or is modified to accommodate the concerns raised during the objection period. Consultation would occur with the applicant and the objectors.

Applicants are liable for legal costs associated with document preparation, and public notification costs, but will not be charged for any Council administration costs.

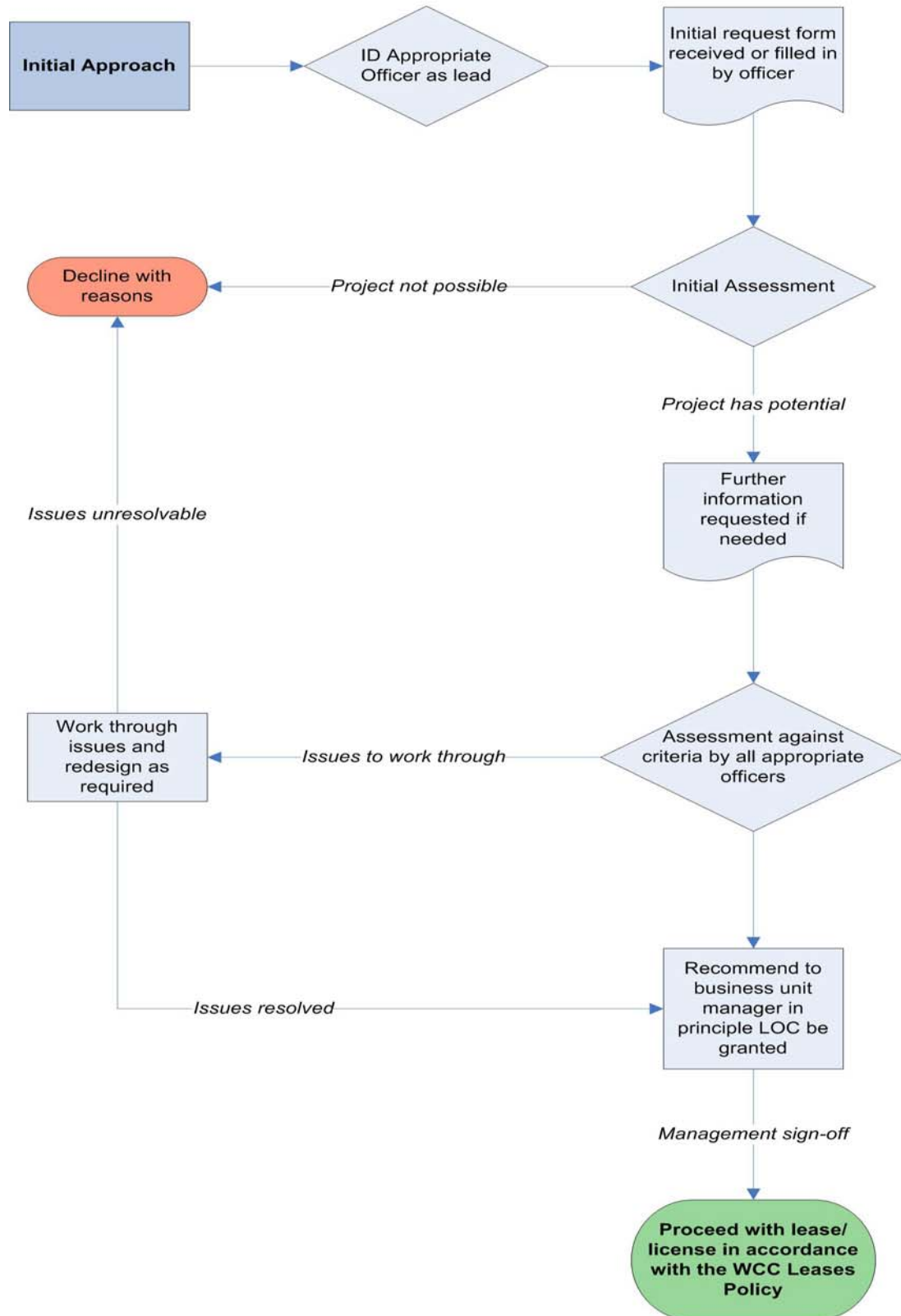
4.0 Key contacts for community gardening in Wellington

The following list is a helpful list of contacts if you're interested in finding out more about community gardens in Wellington.

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| Sustainability Trust | The Sustainability Trust is a Wellington based non-profit charitable trust which supports local communities in addressing sustainability related issues. The Trust's project portfolio is currently focused on energy efficiency, waste minimisation, transport, climate change and community. The trust also supports home gardening projects in the city, a support networking hui and community events. | Rebeka Whale 04 389 3400 rebeka@sustaintrust.org.nz |
| Operation Green Thumb | Operation Green Thumb supports a number of community gardens in the City which include those within City Housing complexes. Their aim is to set up and maintain community gardens for people on low income or who are disadvantaged and don't have land on which they can grow their own food. | Sue Boyle 04 934 2629 greenthumb@paradise.net.nz |
| Wellington City Council | Signposting and information contact within Council | Georgie Rhoades, Community Advisor Citizen Engagement Ph 803 8793 georgina.rhoades@wcc.govt.nz (Please note Georgie is on leave from 8/9 to 12/10) |
| Parks and Gardens, Wellington City Council | For any queries regarding the use of open space and/or reserve land | Amber Bill Manager, Community Engagement & Reserves Parks and Gardens Ph. 803 8150 amber.bill@wcc.govt.nz |

Appendix 1

REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN – DECISION PROCESS



Appendix 2

REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN ON COUNCIL LAND

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---------|-------|---|------|
| General | Where is the proposed location for the community garden? | | | | |
| | Have you considered other locations, if so why were these rejected? | | | | |
| | What is the purpose of the proposed garden? | | | | |
| Physical Parameters | Is there a water source readily available? If not what work will be required to get water to the site? | yes | no | Work required to get water to the site: | |
| | Will the vegetation be sheltered from northerly and southerly winds. If not, what work will be required to shelter the site? | yes | no | Work required to shelter the site: | |
| | Which direction does the garden face? | north | south | west | east |
| | Will the garden be shaded by existing buildings, trees etc? If so please describe. | yes | by: | | |
| | | no | | | |
| | What kinds of plants would you like to grow? | | | | |
| | How much space will you need? Do you intend to use raised garden beds? | | | | |
| | Please describe the soil in terms of its colour, e.g. red clay, black compost <i>and</i> texture e.g., rocky, sandy, etc | colour: | | texture: | |
| Anything else you would like to tell us about? | | | | | |
| Maintenance | Will you require any storage facility for tools and any toilets for gardeners? | yes | no | | |
| | Do you have tools available for installation and maintenance? | yes | no | | |
| | Do you have enough on going volunteer labour to ensure the garden is maintained? | yes | no | unsure | |

Is the site easily accessible to the public? yes no

Community

Does anyone else use this site at the moment? If so please describe type and frequency of use.

| | |
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| yes | <i>Others type of use and frequency:</i> |
| no | |

What impacts will the garden have on those close by?
E.g. smell, improve aesthetics, block views

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How will you promote the garden to the local public?

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Money

Please attach a budget for the project which outlines estimates for *all* the costs. These will include, compost, tools, plants, stakes, irrigation, etc

Does your group have its own funding to make the project happen?

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|-----|----|
| yes | no |
|-----|----|

Have you identified potential funding sources? If so please list these

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|-----|--------------------------------------|
| yes | <i>Potential sources of funding:</i> |
| no | |

Design

Please attach a concept sketch showing the existing structures close by, any new hard structures and the location of the planting.

Care group

Can you please give us a brief outline of your group. Please include number of people involved

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Please briefly outline any other projects you have been involved in with WCC

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Please advise your group's legal status, e.g. incorporated society

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