

City of Cambridge Community Garden Program Policy for City-Owned Property

Revised January 2009

- (1) The City of Cambridge (hereinafter "City") reserves the right to revise this policy at any time. Only one community garden plot per household is permitted.
- (2) Priority for garden use will be given to Cambridge households with no alternative access to land on which to garden. Cambridge residents with disabilities (where the disability results in the need for an accessible plot) will be given priority for accessible (e.g. raised bed) garden plots. If in any given year, no residents with disabilities apply for a given accessible plot, that plot may be assigned to a nondisabled applicant, with that applicant's explicit understanding that the applicant will relinquish that plot in subsequent year(s) to a resident with a disability.
- (3) The distribution of plots will be based on a lottery system for each garden, conducted by the City. Gardeners will be given a plot for three years, with the exception of the initial plot distribution for a new garden where one-third of the gardeners will be given a plot for a two year term. In no case shall a gardener have a plot for more than five years.
- (4) A minimum of one-third of the plots must turn-over annually (e.g. 10 out of 30 plots). This one-third turnover can be met during the course of a year in one or more of the following manners:
 - non-compliance with garden policy
 - voluntary departure
 - random distribution of garden plots from gardeners who have had their plots the longest. Persons with plots for five years must give up their plots at the conclusion of the fifth summer gardening season. If the vacancies based on the above reasons do not total 1/3 of the plots, then additional plots will be randomly selected from gardeners with plots for four years. Again, if the vacancies based on the above reasons do not total 1/3 of the plots, then additional plots will be randomly selected from gardeners with plots for three years.

The lottery system will be random distribution in two tiers: first preference will be for households who do not have land on which to garden. All of these names will be grouped together, and a random draw will be conducted. If there are more plots available than new households interested, a second draw will be conducted from a pool of applicants that includes community gardeners whose term has expired and wish to continue, and Cambridge property owners who do have land on which to garden. In no case may current gardeners apply for a second plot.

The only exception to this system will be given for garden coordinators, as indicated below.

- (5) A Garden Coordinator must be elected annually by the community gardeners. A coordinator must be a community gardener in the garden for which s/he is the coordinator. Coordinators play a critical role in each garden, and in general, handle the following tasks: orient new gardeners to operating procedure, coordinate trash, mulch, composting activities and clean-up days, answer questions, settle disputes. If a garden coordinator is elected to a term that exceeds the length of his/her garden term, the coordinator, subject to City confirmation, will be allowed to continue to

garden on his/her plot for the next year not to exceed five years. (Example, the garden coordinator has a three year term for the garden plot. At the expiration of this term, the coordinator is elected for a next year. In this case, the coordinator may be allowed to garden for a fourth year.)

- (6) The City will conduct a site assessment and preliminary tests for the presence of lead and petroleum in the soil, prior to a garden being initiated.
- (7) Garden operations must be conducted safely. Herbicides and Pesticides are prohibited. Fertilizers must be used per manufacturers' instructions; and shall not be left on-site or unattended at any time. Tools must be stored off site, unless otherwise approved by the City; installation of a shed or any other structure must be in compliance with zoning and building requirements, and approved by the City.
- (8) The City will provide composters for the community garden. Different composters may be used subject to City approval.
- (9) Community gardens (plot layout) shall be designed with the assistance of the City. Pathways (and other common areas) and watering facilities (and other shared features) within community gardens shall be accessible, consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) standards and shall follow universal design principles wherever possible. In newly established community gardens, a minimum of five percent (5%), but not less than one, of the garden plots shall have raised beds (minimum 18 inches above the ground). A three-foot high, black perimeter fence will be installed by the City, as will an appropriate water service. The City does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.
- (10) Gardeners must make efforts to keep gardens clean. Fall clean up of the garden is required: at the end of the season, all material, including stakes, must be removed.