



TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Jaime A. Valdez, Neighborhood Services Director

CONTACT: JoAnne Plummer, Parks and Recreation Manager

SUBJECT: Adoption of Policies and Fees for the Goleta Community Garden

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the application process, policies and fees associated with the Goleta Community Garden.

BACKGROUND:

In the adopted 2015 Recreation Needs Assessment, one of the priority recommendations was to have a community garden in Goleta. The location identified for this garden was the undeveloped southern portion of Armitos Park in Old Town. The project was approved in the City's Capital Improvement Program budget and Staff is currently moving this project forward.

In October 2019, the Conceptual Design was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission and was supported, with the incorporation of suggestions provided by the Commissioners and residents.

In February 2020, the City Council awarded a Professional Design Services Contract to RRM, Inc. to prepare the construction documents for the development of the community garden, as well as improvements to Armitos Park. These documents will be coordinated with the documents for the middle segment of the San Jose Creek Multipurpose Path that will connect this location to Jonny D. Wallis Neighborhood Park.

In October 2020, the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the draft guidelines for the Goleta Community Garden and provided recommendations for consideration. The final document was reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission in June of 2021, but was brought back for another review at the regular meeting in July of this year.

In March of 2023, the City Council awarded a construction contract to JJ Fisher Construction for the Community Garden and the Multi-Purpose Path from Jonny D Wallis Neighborhood Park to Armitos Avenue.

DISCUSSION:

As construction progresses on Goleta's first Community Garden, there have been many inquiries on how residents can secure a garden plot. Staff had worked previously on this document and as the project becomes a reality, the document was taken back to the Parks and Recreation Commission to confirm their recommendation to City Council.

As mentioned in the background section of this report, Staff has been working on the development of the guidelines associated to the operations of the garden for quite some time. Utilizing examples from a variety of organizations, draft guidelines have been created for consideration of use at the Goleta Community Garden in Armitos Park. These draft guidelines are included as Attachment 1 and have been developed in collaboration with a group of community members that have been working with City staff throughout the entire process of this project. While these individuals are speaking as residents of our community, they are also associated with various gardens and gardening organizations in our area with a plethora of experience.

In June of 2021 and again in July of 2023, the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the draft guidelines and unanimously supported the document. There are a few items that staff is still working to finalize, but those elements are listed below and will not change the context of the document.

- Inclusion of waiver and release of liability form
- Information available in Spanish
- Financial Aid consideration/volunteer opportunities in lieu of fees

The waiver and release of liability form, as well as the Code of Conduct Contract have not yet been developed. These documents will be created in coordination with the City's Risk Management Division and included in the final application packet made available to the public. The Parks and Recreation Commission has strongly suggested a financial aid consideration and/or volunteer opportunities in lieu of fees. The development of such a policy is a separate work effort that would need to consider opportunities beyond the Community Garden. In addition, staff continues to explore the development of a list of prohibited species in the community garden to be added to the community garden application. Applicable documents will be translated to Spanish upon final approval.

The fees and deposits for this program will be established by the City Council and adopted into the City of Goleta's Fee Schedule. Currently in the draft document, there are some areas that are highlighted because they have not yet been finalized. For example, the fees are highlighted because they have not yet been approved, the dates for the application process and the Parks and Recreation Manager is listed as the contact person for the operations of the Community Garden. Staffing contact information will be finalized based on staffing levels, work efforts and further direction related to operations.

As the construction project is underway, the intent is to finalize the application process and have the opportunities available to the public no later than mid-September 2023. Once approved, the supporting documents would be finalized, translated into Spanish,

and the application process will be made available to the public. Construction is anticipated to be complete by the end of October and it is our intention to have the fees begin no earlier than November 1, 2023.

The proposed fees for rental of the plots are discussed under the fiscal impact section of this report.

Once complete, the Goleta Community Garden will have 50 plots available for individuals or organizations to rent for the purpose of gardening (i.e.: flowers, food, etc.). The pizza oven and picnic area will be available to reserve, similar to the picnic areas at Stow Grove Park, and the area in the center of the park will be utilized for workshops and demonstrations as opportunities exist through collaborations. All marketing materials will be available in English and Spanish, and additional outreach efforts will focus on areas of the City with condensed housing.

GOLETA STRATEGIC PLAN:

City-Wide Strategy: #2, Support Community Vitality and Enhanced Recreational Opportunities.

Strategic Goal: #2.2, Support programs that enhance quality of life in the Goleta community such as recreation, public safety, human services, and cultural arts.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

The design for the Community Garden has 40 small plots and 10 large plots. The purpose of the variation in size is to accommodate the needs of different types of plantings, not to have different fees. Staff has researched the current fees for the community gardens in Santa Barbara County and are currently recommending a monthly rate of \$10/month or a \$120/annual fee, with a refundable \$25/deposit. Assuming all 50 plots are rented, approximately \$6,000 in fees would be generated to support the program. The fee will be used to offset portions of the maintenance costs of the garden but is not a cost recovered rate. Any type of subsidy or fees set lower, relative to full cost recovery, General Fund dollars are required to maintain the service.

The table below provides information on the agencies in our area that offer a municipal community garden.

Agency	Monthly Fee	Annual Fee	Population
Lompoc	\$10/mo	\$120/yr	48,000
Carpinteria	\$10/mo	\$120/yr	13,000
Santa Barbara	\$6.16/mo average	\$74/yr	88,000
Santa Maria	\$3.33/mo average	\$40/yr (resident rate)	110,000

As mentioned previously, the Parks and Recreation Commission has requested the consideration of a financial aid program that could be a reduced fee, a sliding scale based on income or volunteer work in lieu of fees. If this is a desire of the Council, staff will

research options that could be applicable to the community garden and other areas within the City of Goleta and return later. As this is another work effort, it is not likely that a financial aid program will be available before the first year of plot reservations are in effect.

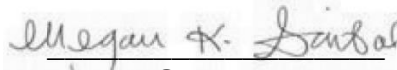
ALTERNATIVES:

Council may provide alternate direction for the policies, procedures, and fees for the Goleta Community Garden.

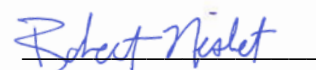
Reviewed By:


Kristine Schmidt
Assistant City Manager

Legal Review By:


Megan Garibaldi
City Attorney

Approved By:


Robert Nisbet
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Application and Policies for the Goleta Community Garden

ATTACHMENT 1

Draft Application and Policies for the Goleta Community Garden



DRAFT

City of Goleta Community Garden Application and Policies

The Goleta Community Garden is a beautiful and healthy space for community members to grow their own food. There are over fifty beds available, including 10 oversized garden beds for larger gardening options. Goleta's Community Garden is managed by the City of Goleta, under the Neighborhood Services Department. In addition to the space and resources to create nutritious gardens, Goleta's Community Garden will provide continuing education for gardeners and the general public on topics related to organic gardening, healthy eating, sustainability and more.

If interested, please complete the application, read and sign the Goleta Community Garden Conditions for Use Agreement. **A complete application consists of these two forms, the waiver and release form, code of conduct contract must be turned in or mailed to Goleta City Hall at 130 Cremona Drive Suite B by (Date TBD) in order to be considered for the first round of plot assignments. Applications may also be scanned and emailed to the City of Goleta at communitygarden@cityofgoleta.org.**

Community Garden Rules and Regulations

Plot Rental

Goleta residents over the age of 18 may rent a garden plot. All gardeners must agree to, and sign, the Goleta Community Garden Use Agreement, Waiver and Release, and a Code of Conduct contract.

Garden plots are issued on an annual basis. The annual registration fee of **\$120 (\$10/month or \$120/year)** and a **\$25** refundable security deposit will provide access to a raised bed, water, watering supplies, some gardening equipment, and a green waste compost system. Gardeners must pay the fee of **\$120** by cash or check to the City of Goleta before they may begin gardening. The purpose of the security deposit is to ensure that the gardener cleans up their garden plot prior to relinquishing their plot or the end of the contract period. Quarterly payment plans are available.

Application Process. At this time, the process to secure a garden plot at the Goleta Community Garden will be as follows:

- City of Goleta residents will have priority access to reserve a garden plot
- Residents are required to submit completed paperwork by **XXX** date
- Two weeks from the document due date, a lottery process will take place to assign the garden plots by City staff. This date and time will be provided to the applicants after paperwork has been received and deemed complete.
- Only one plot will be granted to each applicant during this process.
- After the initial lottery system for resident priority has been completed, remaining beds will be available and assigned on a first come, first served basis.

If there are less than 50 initial applicants, extra plots will be available. If the demand for additional plots is greater than the number of plots available, additional plots will be granted on a first come first served basis, regardless of residency. Additional plots may or may not be adjacent to the gardener's first assignment. Additional plots will be available at the same annual fee of **\$120** will apply.

Secondary plots are provisional and only applicable for one year. When the Garden goes through another application cycle, gardeners with more than one bed will be asked to relinquish any additional beds to new gardeners without a plot assignment if needed. The gardener will be able to choose which of their beds to keep.

Plots will be assigned to gardeners by the City of Goleta. Applicants who indicate on their application a need for the higher, more accessible beds will be given priority for those beds.

The primary listed garden member is responsible for ensuring that all responsibilities and fee obligations are fulfilled. Subletting of garden plots is not permissible. Gardeners who are not able to fulfill their contract period should contact the Parks and Recreation Manager in writing to relinquish their garden space.

If a plot is rented by an organization, the organization is responsible for ensuring that all members who enter the garden understand the rules and have a signed form on file with the City.

Gardeners in good standing may renew their plot for up to two years. Please communicate your intention in writing to keep or let go of your plot at least two weeks before the annual term is over. Transferring to a different plot also requires written communication with the City of Goleta. When you vacate a plot, it is your responsibility to ensure that the bed is clear of organic debris and waste. Once the renewal period has been exhausted, gardener will be required to re-apply for a plot.

If there are no vacant garden plots, prospective gardeners may add their name to a waiting list. Once the waitlist reaches 25, no more prospective gardeners will be added.

Plot Use and Maintenance

All garden beds must be maintained year-round. Plots are to be maintained by the gardener and free from debris, and weeds always. Plots that are not maintained will receive a written notice. Details on this process is outlined in the Non-Compliance section. Please let the Parks & Recreation Manager know in writing if you need to be absent for an extended period, and appropriate accommodations may be made by the gardener. Gardeners choosing not to plant during a given season must mulch over the entire plot to prevent unwanted weed growth.

Gardeners may grow annual or perennial vegetables, herbs, and flowers in the boundaries of their plot. NO planting is allowed outside of the garden plots. No woody shrubs or trees, cannabis, invasive vines or plants or water gardens are permitted to be grown in the Goleta Community Garden. Your neighbors' access to sunlight is important—do not plant tall crops or create trellises that will cause excessive shading. Plants, trellises or cages may not exceed five feet in height, not placed in a location where it shades adjoining plots and the width should not impede other plots. Garden beds must be fully planted and/or maintained, and pathways surrounding the beds must be free of weeds, overhanging plants, hoses (except when watering), and debris at all times. Row covers may be used on a temporary basis.

Gardeners must practice water conservation. Hoses, quick-connect bibs, and water is provided by the City. Watering is only allowed for gardening purposes, with gardener present (i.e. no automatic or timed watering). You are welcome to make arrangements for someone else to water your bed during an extended absence. Organic, plant-based amendments and heavy mulching are encouraged to reduce the need for water. Please observe posted watering use instructions. In the event of a line break, contact City Hall immediately at 805-961-7500 during regular business hours and the non-emergency dispatch number **805-xxx-xxxx** after hours and on the weekend.

Beds must be maintained according to organic standards. Organic gardening relies on techniques such as crop rotation, compost, and biological pest control. The use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides is not allowed. Only products that are labeled as OMRI approved, or USDA Organic approved, are acceptable. For more information and a list of approved products, visit the Organic Materials Review Institute at www.omri.org or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program web site. In addition, feel free to email any questions to communitygarden@cityofgoleta.org.

Composting green waste is encouraged in shared, on-site compost bins. Compost is available to the garden community as a whole and should be used responsibly. Compost materials may NOT INCLUDE material NOT grown at the Goleta Community Garden. Compost piles are allowed only in the designated areas or in approved containers on individual plots. Please be mindful not to introduce weed seed into the compost—it will not get hot enough to kill the seeds, and they could be transferred to another plot. Weeds that have gone to seed should be bagged and disposed of in the trash cans available on site.

Gardeners have access to a garden shed with shared tools—please do not store tools anywhere in the garden except for the shed. Since tools are a community resource, please take care to properly use and maintain them, returning them to a garden shed after use. Any tools belonging to the gardener may be left in the shed but is the responsibility of the gardener. The City of Goleta is not responsible for items left in the sheds. If you have any questions or issues, please contact the Parks & Recreation Manager.

Common Areas

The garden is open from 8am to sunset. There are locks on the gates and tool shed. The access code will be changed occasionally for security reasons, and that change will be communicated to gardeners in good standing. The gates will be on a timer and will only open during park hours. All tools are to be returned to the sheds after use and gardeners must leave the property at sunset.

Do not harvest from anyone else's garden plot.

The picnic area and shaded pergolas are available to all. These areas are available on a first come, first served basis, unless previously reserved for classes, workshops, or other reserved uses. Please respect shared space and keep these areas tidy. Please notify the Parks & Recreation Manager of any maintenance issues.

The community bulletin board is a place to post relevant upcoming classes and events, as well as requests or trades within the garden community (i.e. exchanges of surplus produce, extra plants available, etc.). Please respect this limited space, and keep all postings relevant to garden related events, activities, resources, etc.

No personal property is to be left in the garden. The City is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Children and guests are welcome in the garden. Children must be supervised at all times.

No pets are allowed in the cultivated garden areas, including near the raised beds, fruit trees, or other plantings. Dogs visiting the park or using the multi-purpose path must always be on a leash. Service animals may be exempt, but still must be leashed at all times. Please appropriately dispose of your pet's waste.

The City of Goleta's municipal ordinances for public parks apply (Chapter 12.15 of GMC). Smoking, glass, fires, alcohol, and littering are prohibited.

Non-Compliance

Please keep the comfort and safety of your fellow garden members in mind at all times. **Failure to maintain plots, or other violations, will result in a warning.** Any rule violations must be corrected within two (2) weeks. If the situation is not corrected, a second warning is issued. If the violation persists after two (2) weeks from the second warning, the gardener shall be dismissed from the garden, unless there are extraordinary circumstances. Any three (3) warnings within a given nine-month period are also grounds for dismissal.

Immediate termination from the garden will result for the following violations: false or misleading information on application, theft, violent behavior, drinking or drug use, urinating on premises, harassment of any kind, or any other behavior deemed hazardous to the health and safety of members.

Leaving the Garden

Please give written notice to the Parks & Recreation Manager at least two (2) weeks in advance of the end of the one-year term. Ensure that all organic matter and debris are removed from the plot before you leave, so that it is in an immediately rentable state for the next gardener. No refunds of garden fees are available.

Questions?

Contact the Parks & Recreation Manager:

JoAnne Plummer
jplummer@cityofgoleta.org 805.562.5505

Community Garden Plot Application

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Email Address: _____

List family members of your household (name and relationship) who will be gardening with you. If an organization, state the primary members:

- ☐ I require a wheelchair accessible raised bed, if available. Provide any additional comments on your needs in the garden, as they may relate to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:

- ☐ I do not otherwise have access to space to garden.
- ☐ If email address is provided above, I agree to receive any notices regarding this agreement by electronic communication.
- ☐ I understand that I have the responsibility of maintaining my own garden.
- ☐ I understand that anyone working in my plot must have a signed City of Goleta Form on file.
- ☐ I intend to garden the following types of items (specific to high/low vegetation):

Goleta Community Garden Use Agreement

This agreement is made and entered into on _____, between _____ hereinafter referred to as "Gardener," and the City of Goleta, hereinafter referred to as "City." Subject to the terms and conditions listed herein, City allows the use to Gardener, for organic gardening purposes only, a garden plot at Armitos Park, Goleta, CA 93117. The term of this Use Agreement shall continue for a period of twelve months thereafter, with the option to renew for gardeners in good standing. Should Gardener not pay their annual fees, violate any of the Rules and Regulations (attached to this Agreement), or abandon the plot, this Use Agreement can be terminated by the City and Gardener will lose the privilege to use the plot. Upon signing this Agreement, Gardener shall pay to City a use fee in the sum of **\$120** every twelve-month period. The City has the right to terminate use without cause. All terms of the Use Agreement are subject to change. Fees may increase from time to time.

I have read, understand, and accept the above terms and conditions.

Gardeners' Signature: _____

Gardeners' Name (printed): _____

Date: _____