



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: February 13, 2009

TO: Distribution

FROM: Stacey LoMedico, Park and Recreation Department Director and  
William Anderson, City Planning & Community Investment Department Director

SUBJECT: Community Gardens on City Property

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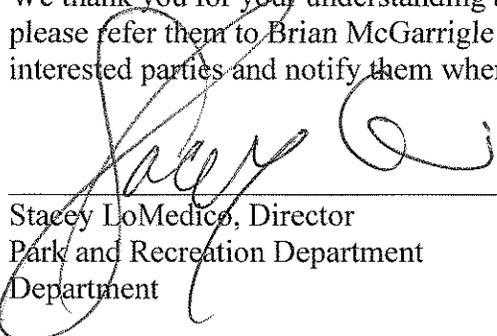
The purpose of this memorandum is to address the increased interest by community groups to develop community-based gardens on City property. The newly adopted City General Plan Update includes in the Recreation Element an acknowledgement that community gardens are a recreation opportunity that should be pursued on underutilized City-owned land along with mini parks and plazas. The Recreation Element also encourages community participation in development and maintenance of community gardens, mini parks and plazas. Although it was not intended that community gardens be allowed to displace current uses within existing City parks, in some cases they may be appropriate in underutilized areas of parks, subject to a public input process pursuant to Council Policy 600-33, Community Notification and Input for City-Wide Park Development Projects.

Staff has been fielding many inquires as to the steps and procedures of developing the gardens, which requires researching and assessing a multitude of variables, such as:

- zoning regulations
- property ownership (e.g., Transportation, Water, Park and Recreation, etc.)
- potential deed restrictions for use of the property
- status of the property (e.g., is the property currently on the open market for sale, is the property scheduled for capital improvements, etc.)
- potential hazards or sources of contamination
- suitability of existing topography and soils
- consistency with existing community plans, existing park general development plans and other land use documents
- insurance and liability issues
- accessibility and environmental regulations
- protection of sensitive native habitats and species,
- standards for sustainability, and
- funding appropriateness and availability for capital improvements and staffing/administration.

In addition, as the City faces the potential of mandatory water conservation, creating community gardens prior to the final policy decision on water allocation methods, or until there is clearer direction as to the severity of the State's drought conditions, is not prudent. Therefore, due to these factors, City staff will continue to take names of specific groups who may be interested in pursuing the creation of community gardens, but the approval process, design and development of any community gardens will be placed on hold until such time as City Planning & Community Investment (CPCI) and Park and Recreation staff have developed evaluation criteria, and best management and design guidelines, for the development of community gardens on City-owned property. Staff expects to have some policy guidelines drafted by the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 2009.

We thank you for your understanding and patience. If you are contacted by interested parties, please refer them to Brian McGarrigle in CPCI at (619) 236-7027 who will keep the list of interested parties and notify them when a policy decision is being considered or made.



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Stacey LoMedico, Director  
Park and Recreation Department  
Department



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William Anderson, Director  
City Planning & Community Investment

SL/DS

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