



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

March 1, 2007

Julie Osborn  
4149 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. #15  
San Diego, CA

Ellee Igoe  
3316 B St.  
San Diego, CA

Reference: General Plan Update

Dear Ms. Osborn and Ms. Igoe:

Subject: Community Farms and Gardens Policy Language

Thank you for your interest in the City's General Plan Update, and specifically your suggestions to emphasize community farms and gardens in the Recreation and Conservation Elements. Based on the policies in the General Plan Update and the input staff has received, the city's remaining agricultural lands are an important factor in our local economy. We also agree community gardens can benefit our neighborhoods by offering recreational and educational opportunities.

The General Plan anticipates that future park land and recreation facilities will be needed within urbanized areas to meet public demand and current community deficiencies. The Recreation Element establishes policies to encourage the city to utilize remnant parcels, joint use agreements and land acquisition to provide additional park and recreational opportunities and focuses on community input in order to balance the recreational needs of the neighborhood and maximize public use.

Staff has reviewed your comments and the following changes will be incorporated into the Recreation and Conservation Elements:

- A brief discussion in the Recreation Element introduction on community garden opportunities.
- RE-D.7 - Design public facilities, such as municipal water storage facilities, public parking structures and libraries, to incorporate recreational elements, such as children's



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play areas, rooftop parks, courts and arenas, plazas, mini-parks, and **community gardens**.

- RE-D.8 - Pursue partnerships and agreements with public agencies and not-for-profit entities to provide additional recreational space within the City such as parks, greenbelts, trail connections, parkways, bike paths, **community gardens**, and other recreation facilities. Potential partners for recreation land and facilities may include, but are not limited to: (add "School Districts" to partners list)
- CE-L.3 - Encourage agricultural operations such as **community farms and gardens** (especially on City-leased lands) to provide for educational experiences which demonstrate the history, importance and value of agricultural operations.
- A definition for "community farms" and "community gardens" in the General Plan glossary.

Your proposed changes to policies RE-D.2, RE-F.6a and RE-F.6b were considered, however staff decided to keep the existing policy language. In the Recreation Element, policy RE-D.2 refers to the Park and Recreation Department's established joint use agreement program. Joint use agreements are primarily utilized for active recreational opportunities and this type of agreement would not typically be used for community gardens. Therefore, staff felt policies RE-D.7 and RE-D.8 were more appropriate for advocating cooperative partnerships for community gardens and we have added language to these policies. In addition, "School Districts" will be added to the list of potential partners identified in policy RE-D.8.

Policies RE-F.6a and RE-F.6b regarding mini-parks were not changed since the policies currently mention "community gardens." Staff felt including "community farms" should be reserved for larger agricultural areas. Community farms, as defined in your letter, are regional-based and primarily focused on food production. We felt the term "community farms" was appropriate in the Conservation Element under the Agricultural section and included "community farms and gardens" in policy CE-L.3, as your letter suggested.

The Park and Recreation Guidelines and Equivalencies Table, RE-3, identifies potential alternatives and equivalencies to help meet the immediate recreational needs in neighborhoods where population-based park deficiencies exist. "Community farms" was not included in the Equivalencies Table, however, community gardens are cited in the above policies as a recreational opportunity and allowed under the Municipal Code, and will be cited as an Alternative in the Equivalencies Table for neighborhood and community parks. As new opportunities for parks occur, the recreational uses for the land will be determined through the public outreach process during the park design phase. It is during the public outreach process that a community can recommend to incorporate a community garden on their park site. Please see Council Policy 600-33, Community Notification and Input for City-Wide Park Development Projects, available on the City's website, for the specific process.

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Staff recommends that community farm and garden opportunities may be considered along with other recreational uses at the park design and program operations level. Although community gardens are a form of recreation, future community garden programs should be established to maximize public use and benefit. Another vehicle for identifying specific recreational opportunities associated with community farm and garden programs will be through the future Parks Master Plan. The development of the Parks Master Plan is intended to begin next year, assuming funding is identified, and we encourage your participation.

Overall, staff believes the changes made to the Draft General Plan provide the most relevant policy language for addressing community gardens as an alternative recreational opportunity. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (619) 533-5931.

Sincerely,

Sara Osborn  
Associate Planner, General Plan

SO/so

cc: Nancy S. Bragado, Program Manager  
Deborah Sharpe, Project Officer II  
Howard Greenstein, Park Designer