



City of Portland: Community Garden Site Criteria

1. Demonstrated Need

There must be a bona fide need for a garden. Is the neighborhood without gardening opportunities? Do existing gardens have an unusually long waiting list?

2. Neighborhood Support

The neighborhood must be in favor of actively supporting a garden in the proposed location. Usually this is indicated by members of the neighborhood who are interested in gardening and petition for, and work towards the garden implementation. These gardeners should have the backing of community and business organizations and work with Portland Community Gardens as members of a steering committee.

3. Parking

An assessment of participant parking needs should be part the planning process. Participant parking should not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood. Other means of transportation should be available, such as light rail, buses, bicycle routes, etc.

4. Property

Ownership or an agreement should be in place that allows use by the program for five years or more, 10 years if considerable capital is expended. Ideal sites are 7,000-13,000 square feet in size.

5. Security

The site should be located in a safe place.

Location: The site should be located so that it enjoys a large amount of visibility from several vantage points. Sites in neighborhoods are more satisfactory than in industrial or remote areas. Neighbors watch over gardens, which reduces vandalism and theft. Gardeners feel an added degree of comfort and security within in a neighborhood.

Fencing: This protects the gardens from most theft, illegal dumping, roaming animals, vehicles, and other intrusions. One of the gates should be large enough to allow access to tractors or large trucks for maintenance purposes.

6. Water

Gardens need water from the city's water system (with a backflow prevention device between the service and the garden) so that there is an adequate amount for the size of the garden. Hose bibs should be provided within the garden so that 50 feet of hose will reach every plot from an outlet.

7. Soil

The soil needs to be free of contaminants and hazardous materials. It should be sandy loam, relatively free of stones and debris, and capable of growing plants. The site will need to be graded, plowed and roto-tilled to be acceptable for initial gardeners. Gardeners are encouraged to be good stewards of the soil by using organic methods and employing cover crops during the winter months.

8. Light

The site should have at least 8 hours of unobstructed natural light. Trees, buildings, obstructions, adjoining buildings, or other obstructions on the site or on the adjoining property reduce the productive value for gardening.

9. Resources

Current funding is tied to current garden locations. New projects need funding for capital development and ongoing operation and maintenance.

10. Other Considerations

In addition to gardening, there are other positive factors that can encourage a neighborhood to request a garden. They can be significant issues in the neighborhoods. Gardens add value as a healthy activity, provide fresh food, reduce crime, cultivate neighbor connections and improve the quality of life. They can convert or enhance and transform activity into a wholesome green space that adds social cohesion to the community.