

**Community Garden Pilot
Program
Assessment and Materials**

Community Garden Pilot Program

Overview—

The City's Comprehensive Plan, *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, recognizes the role community gardens play in promoting access to good nutrition, improving the ecological footprint of the city, and providing spaces for human interaction, food production and beauty in our daily lives. Specific policy references include:

- Support the creation and improvement of community gardens and food markets which sell locally and regionally grown foods, and
- Where appropriate, support the planting of edible fruit and vegetable plants.

In addition to the policies in the Comprehensive Plan, the city's zoning code identifies community gardens as a principal use in all but two zoning districts in the city.

The Community Garden Pilot Program is one of nine City Council recommendations in the June 2009 resolution regarding Homegrown Minneapolis. The Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) undertook this Pilot in partnership with the Departments of Health and Family Services (DHFS) and Public Works (PW). A work group representing city departments, Gardening Matters and city elected officials developed an application process and requirements for the pilot program. CPED conducted an analysis of city-owned parcels and development and application of criteria to determine suitability of parcels for community gardening. In addition, the Community Garden Pilot Program considered these issues:

- 1) Geographic locations of current community gardens to determine areas of the city where community gardens are not present;
- 2) Community garden programs and practices by other cities nationwide, and
- 3) Regulatory and legal requirements of the city.

This report describes development and implementation of the Pilot. It also suggests future actions related to communities gardening on city-owned parcels.

Geographic analysis—

Geographic analysis for the Community Garden Pilot included a) identifying locations of existing community gardens in the city, b) creating a tool for analyzing suitability of city-owned parcels for community gardens based upon analysis of approaches in other cities nationwide, c) conducting a review of parcels in CPED and PW inventories and d) applying the tool to determine the number of parcels that could be available for community gardens. The analysis also took into consideration previous City Council policy direction regarding the sale of parcels for side yards and ordinance changes regarding residential development on narrow lots. A goal of the analysis was to determine which parcels in the city inventory are considered undevelopable and unbuildable and thus could be available for community gardens over the longer term, or permanently.

CPED developed an analytical tool after review and study of approaches used by cities including but not limited to Cleveland, Chicago, St. Paul and Seattle. CPED considered the governance structure

of these cities regarding management of open space and parks. Most community gardens in the aforementioned locales are on open spaces and park lands managed by city-operated parks and recreation departments. No properties owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board were considered in this analysis as Minneapolis has a different context.

The sample below demonstrates information necessary to judge the suitability of a parcel for use as a community garden. The lot description is a list of characteristics of the site that may impact the ability to create a successful garden. The lot assessment allows for a more detailed description of a site based on the characteristics from the lot description as well and information available through aerial photography and site visits. The analysis includes consideration of zoning, adjacent land uses, access to water, proximity to other existing community or beautification gardens, access to sunlight and visibility of the parcel in terms of public safety. CPED conducted on-site analysis for each parcel that passed a preliminary screening by CPED and PW staff of being unbuildable or undevelopable.

Lot Description Attribute		Value	
Address		1213 Spring Ave NE	
Neighborhood		Beltrami	
Property owner / agency		CPED	
Parcel size (sq. feet)		3089 sf	
Parking availability		On-street	
Proximity to transit		2 bus lines within 2.5 blocks	
Zoning		R2B	
Overlay zoning		None	
Adjacent land use(s)		Single family and duplex	
Attribute	Value	Attribute	Value
Impervious surface (approximate %)	0	Critical area (wetland, shoreland, Mississippi River overlays) (y/n)	N
Slope percent (steep slopes?) (y/n)	N	Significant trees/plant communities/ habitat (y/n)	N
City water access (y/n)		Suspected brownfield (y/n)	
Building(s) (y/n)	N	Tree canopy (approximate %)	0
Lot Assessment Proximity of Nearest Community Garden(s)		0.31 miles from a 'no data' garden; 0.43 miles to a beautification garden.	
Solar Access		Most of parcel receives uninhibited full sun.	
CPTED Analysis		Good visibility, good access.	
Location on Block		Located on the north side of an east/west street adjacent to the alley.	
General Site Condition/ Characteristics		<p>There is one medium sized boulevard tree that will inhibit a small portion of the lot's solar access. This looks like a great site. Adjacent house has a driveway that would act as a buffer to a community garden.</p> <p>The neighborhood is surrounded by industrial land and is cut off from nearby community gardens.</p>	
Consistency with comp plan and guidance for future land use		<u>Urban neighborhood</u>	

Suitability: Bad _____ Medium _____ Good X _____

The CPED list of available parcels was initially 35, but based upon analysis of buildability from both housing and economic development perspectives, the list came to be 19 parcels. Adjacent property owners were noticed that these parcels may be used as community gardens. After neighbor objections to the use of one proposed parcel, the list of properties was reduced to 18. The 18 parcels were made available for community gardens in March 2010.

Community Garden Pilot Application Process—

A Homegrown Minneapolis Work Group developed the application materials and process for the Community Garden Pilot. The materials included:

- Map of eligible sites and information sheets
- CPED Zoning guidance handout
- Sample site plan
- Applicant profile form and pilot program check list
- Resource list

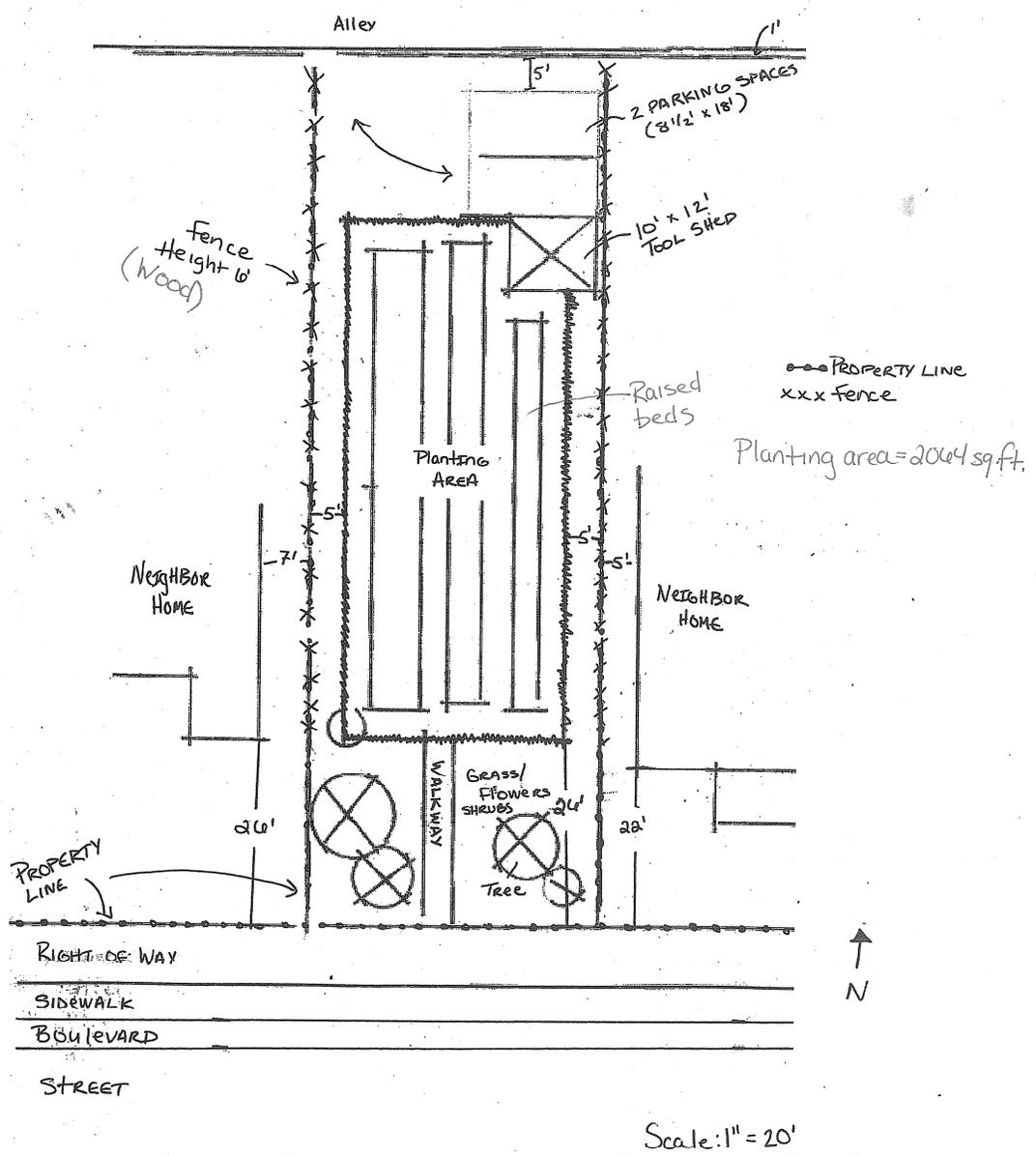
Staff designed a pre-lease checklist to help the neighborhood or not-for-profit group proposing the community garden prepare a management statement that describes how the site will be managed year-round and a community benefit statement describing how the garden would engage and benefit the surrounding community. A two-pronged process followed where part one is a pre-lease consultation and approval of a site plan, and part two is execution of the lease.

In March 2010 the City Council approved the new community garden lease, the first of its kind for Minneapolis. The lease defined a qualifying group for the pilot program as a not-for-profit or a group with a not-for-profit sponsor. The lease set out requirements for community gardens on city-owned parcels including: a) a refundable \$250.00 deposit as well as a lease fee of \$1.00 per year, an administrative fee of \$25.00 per lease, b) a certificate of liability insurance in an amount of no less than \$2 million with the City of Minneapolis listed as an additionally insured party, and c) a site plan illustrating the layout of the proposed community garden. .

PW provided analysis of water availability to each parcel identified for the pilot. Hennepin County conducted the soils analysis for the parcels. It was determined that any parcel with significant contamination would be removed from consideration under the pilot.

Sample Community Garden Site Plan

prepared: March 22, 2010



The hand-drawn sample site plan was intentional to demonstrate that the exercise of developing a site plan was accessible. CPED required a site plan to ensure appropriate setbacks from property lines and to preserve lines of visibility for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The Homegrown Minneapolis website hosted the application materials, including the checklist provided on the next page, for the Pilot.

✓ When complete	Review and complete this checklist. A completed checklist is required to enter into a lease for a community garden in the City of Minneapolis.
	Set up pre-lease consultation with Aly Pennucci from CPED Zoning to review list of parcels, zoning standards, site plan requirements and to obtain copy of leasing requirement. (aly.pennucci@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5342)
	Complete applicant profile form
	<p>Develop a site plan for the community garden and submit to CPED Zoning Staff for review (sample attached) Indicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All property lines ▪ Indicate north arrow and date plan was drawn ▪ Streets, alleys and sidewalks including existing curb cuts. ▪ Adjacent property uses ▪ Number of garden plots, plot size, and overall garden area (sq. ft.) ▪ Lay-out of garden plots and pathways: <input type="checkbox"/> raised beds or <input type="checkbox"/> in ground garden plots ▪ Size and location of signage ▪ Type, location and height of fencing ▪ Location of storage for gardening equipment ▪ Access point to water ▪ Location of and compost, refuse and recycling storage containers
	Receive approval from CPED Zoning Staff for the community garden site plan.
	Provide certificate of liability insurance an amount of no less than \$2 million with the City of Minneapolis listed as an additionally insured party.
	Copy of a letter or email, sent to the applicable neighborhood group(s) and city council office, explaining the proposed community garden project. The letter must contain the address of the selected site, the primary organization name and contact information and the garden contact's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, if available.
	Provide a 300-word maximum typed (12 pt. font) Community Garden Management Statement which describes the use of the property for the duration of the lease, including but not limited to the storage of gardening equipment and materials, watering supply, frequency of visits, etc.
	Provide a 300-word maximum typed (12 pt. font) Community Engagement and Benefits Statement which describes how the sponsor organization will garner support for the garden, what methods of engagement will be used, and what benefits will the garden bring to the community.
	Consult with Gardening Matters to secure support for your community garden from property owners within 100 feet of the subject site.
	A check payable to the City of Minneapolis for \$276 (lease fee of \$1.00 per year, an administrative fee of \$25.00 per lease and a refundable damage deposit of \$250.00).
	Provide two copies of the completed checklist and required documents to CPED Real Estate Development Services. Contact Kaye Anderson in CPED Real Estate Development Services to schedule a an appointment to submit (kaye.anderson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5051)

Implementing the Community Garden Pilot—

Homegrown Minneapolis promoted the Community Garden Pilot in early March 2010 at the Gardening Matters Resource Fair and noticed the initiative via a press release and press event and through direct emails to neighborhood organizations.

CPED launched the Community Garden Pilot in March 2010 and executed the first lease one month later. The list of eligible parcels went through several iterations after soil testing and after input from council members and residents. A fifth lease was executed in November 2010.

Number of inquiries (estimate, includes email, phone calls and 311 inquiries): 50

Number of consultations: 18

Number of approved site plans: 8

Number of executed leases: 5

Analyzing the Community Garden Pilot—

Policy considerations—the initial analysis of suitability is complicated by the reality that most lots, depending upon the proposed use, are buildable. For example, in 2006 City Council adopted an amendment to the zoning code entitled the *Minimum Dwelling Width, Authorized Variance* Ordinance No. 2006-OR-103 (adopted 9/22/06). This amendment authorizes property owners to apply for a variance to reduce the minimum width of proposed residential buildings, from single-family dwellings though four-unit buildings (Chapter 525). This means that narrow lots, previously deemed unbuildable could now be developed for residential uses. This is one example of policy that makes the analysis of parcels for community gardens intricate and challenging.

The policies related to a damage deposit and certificate of liability insurance were viewed by a few organizations as burdensome. The damage deposit being refundable provided the gardening organization maintained the site year-round, including shoveling in the winter did not incent some groups to enter into leases even with approved site plans.

Extending the term of a lease from one year to three to five years depending on the gardening experience of the group was neutral in impact. It did not incent or discourage organizations from entering into leases. The added certainty that these parcels could be available for community gardening for the long-term did not generate the anticipate demand for land. That the majority of current community gardens are on sites affiliated with churches or other institutions and the demand for city-owned parcels was less than robust raises the question of whether community gardens are appropriate for city-held parcels.

Timing considerations—the timing of the pilot was not optimal in several respects: a) by the time the pilot was launched all compost provided through the Gardening Matters and Public Works partnership was spoken for, b) availability of soil testing results came after the pilot was launched and may have contributed to a slow start to the program; and c) by March and April most groups interested in creating a community garden are beyond the planning phase.

Market considerations—understanding the market for urban agriculture, be it community or beautification gardens or market gardens seems to be an issue as more inquiries were received from individuals seeking land to raise produce for-profit rather than for community use.

Coordination considerations—presently there isn't a mechanism for new community gardens to access the PW-Gardening Matters composting program. New community gardens then must seek soil and compost from other sources which adds to the up-front development costs for a community garden. Encouraging on-site composting, or improving the link to the program or increasing the capacity for composting at various locales city-wide may warrant exploration in future iterations of the Pilot or Homegrown Minneapolis.

Next steps—The Community Garden Pilot will be continued through 2011 at which time another assessment may be appropriate and City Council will determine whether to continue the effort.



City of Minneapolis Community Gardens Pilot Program

A community garden is ...

A community garden is a lot where a group grows and maintains plants for food, for beauty, or both. Community gardens make Minneapolis more beautiful, provide healthy food and build community.

Minneapolis supports community gardens in its commitment to promoting access to good nutrition, improving the ecological footprint of the city, encouraging active and healthy living and providing spaces for human interaction, food production and beauty in our daily lives.

The pilot program

The Homegrown Minneapolis Community Gardens Pilot Program will make leases available for community gardens on 18 City-owned lots. These 18 lots were selected for their “non-buildable” qualities. This means that they will remain available for years of gardening even as the economy changes and redevelopment picks up. Lots are available first-come, first-served to qualifying groups. Experienced community garden groups may be eligible for three- to five-year leases, while groups gardening for the first time will start with one-year leases.

A qualifying group is a not-for-profit or a group with a not-for-profit sponsor. The garden will need to have liability insurance. Be ready to discuss the layout of the community garden, how it will be managed and how it will engage and benefit the community.

The process

You'll begin with a consultation to go over the process and the program requirements. If you decide this program is right for your group, you'll draw a site plan. Once it is reviewed and approved, you'll complete an application checklist and set up an appointment for a lease consultation. If everything checks out, you'll sign a lease.

Gardening Matters!

Gardening Matters is an important resource for you and a key partner in this pilot program. Call (612) 492-8964 or e-mail info@gardeningmatters.org, and make sure to visit www.gardeningmatters.org to take full advantage of the help available.

For more information

For more information about the Minneapolis community gardens pilot, call (612) 673-2597 or watch www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp for the rollout announcement.

HOME GROWN MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY GARDEN PILOT PROGRAM
APPLICATION PROCESS

1) Contact Aly Pennucci from CPED Zoning to schedule a Pre-lease consultation (aly.pennucci@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5342) and receive the following:

- Map of eligible sites and information sheets
- CPED Zoning guidance handout
- Sample site plan
- Applicant profile form and pilot program check list
- Resource list

****Please note: A qualifying group for the pilot program is a not-for-profit or a group with a not-for-profit sponsor.****

2) Applicant submits 3 copies of completed community garden site plan to CPED Zoning staff (Aly Pennucci). One copy will be retained by CPED Zoning, one copy is submitted to CPED Real Estate Services by the applicant with other documents required for the lease agreement, and one copy is retained by the applicant. Zoning review of site plan may take 15 days.

Please note: CPED Zoning approval of the site plan does not complete a lease agreement. Leases are subject to review and approval by CPED Real Estate Development and Public Works Departments.

3) Supply a certificate of liability insurance in an amount of no less than \$2 million with the City of Minneapolis listed as an additionally insured party. The certificate can be faxed to (612) 673-5036. No applications can be executed without proof of insurance coverage. The certificate of liability insurance should include the following

Garden Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Certificate Holder
Attn: Kaye Anderson
City of Minneapolis
105 5th Avenue South, Room 200
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2534

4) Following approval of the site plan, the applicant completes the community garden pilot program checklist and contacts Kaye Anderson in CPED Real Estate Development Services (kaye.anderson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5051) to schedule an appointment to submit. *Submittals for parcels available for community gardens are accepted on a first come, first served basis.*

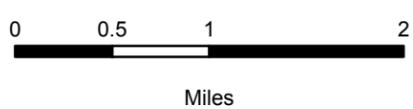
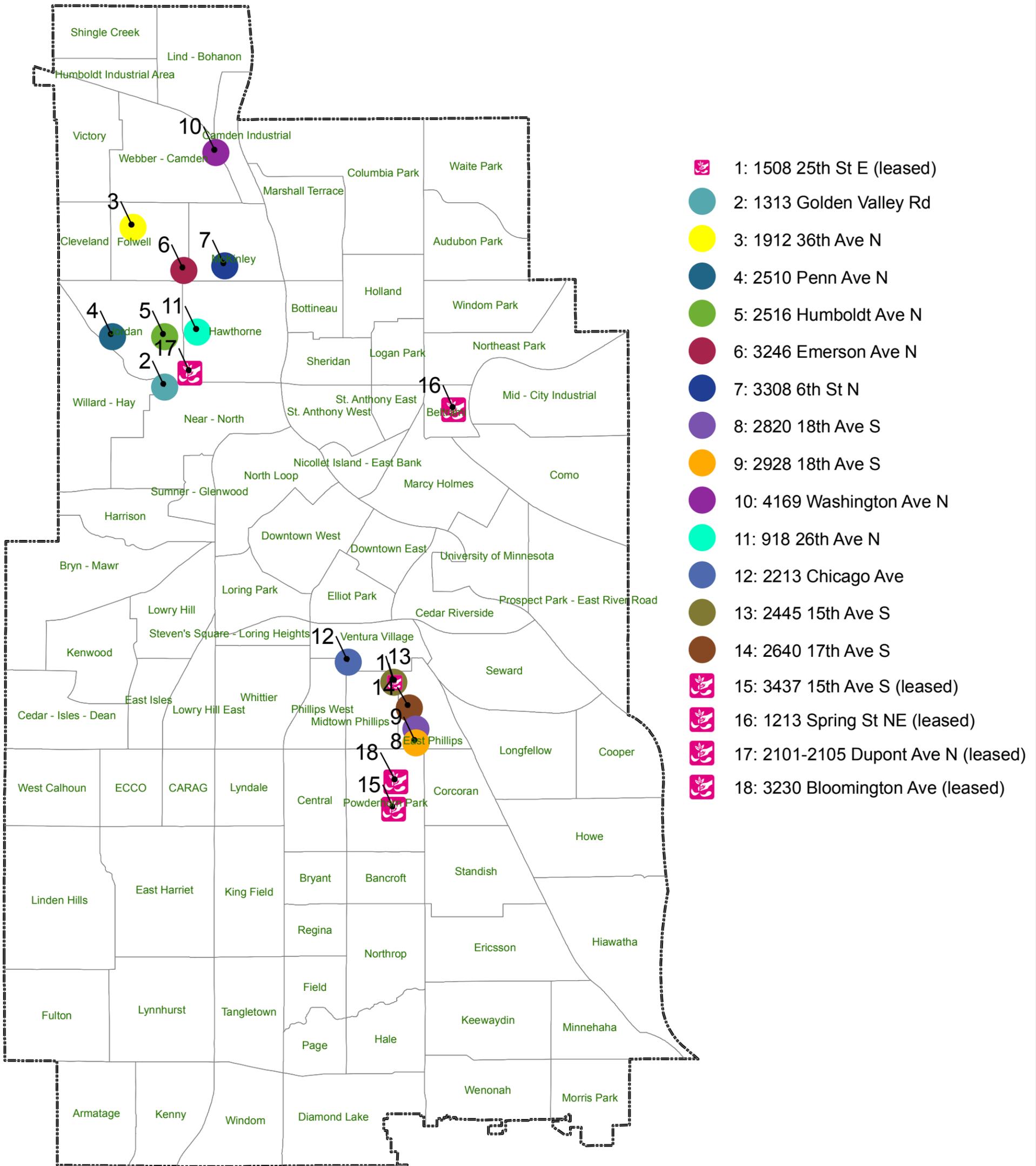
5) Letters will be sent for incomplete submittals. Complete proposals will be processed in advance of incomplete proposals, no parcels will be held in a queue pending submission of a complete proposal.

6) Complete submittals that are approved may proceed to leasing.

7) Lease agreement will be drafted by Kaye Anderson in CPED Real Estate Development Services (kaye.anderson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5051).

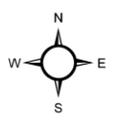
8) Applicant and City finalize lease agreement

City Parcels Available for 2010 Community Garden Pilot Homegrown Minneapolis



City of Minneapolis

Created by: Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division
Updated on: December 1, 2010





City of Minneapolis
Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis MN 55415-1316
612-673-3000

A community gardens is a permitted use in all zoning districts apart from the B4 Downtown Business District and the I3 General Industrial District, provided that the use complies with all other applicable provisions of the district in which it is located and all other applicable regulations of the zoning code. This document outlines the regulations that generally apply to community garden uses across all districts. For information on a specific location please contact CPED Zoning staff.

535.220. Purpose. Yard controls are established to provide for the orderly development and use of land and to minimize conflicts among land uses by regulating the dimension and use of yards in order to provide adequate light, air, open space and separation of uses.

535.230. Required yards. Yard requirements shall be as specified in the applicable zoning district.

535.240. Yard requirements for outdoor uses. Where a lot is to be occupied for a use without buildings, the required front, side and rear yards shall be provided and maintained, except as otherwise provided in this zoning ordinance.

535.80. Screening of refuse and recycling storage containers. Refuse and recycling storage containers shall be enclosed on all four (4) sides by screening compatible with the principal structure not less than two (2) feet higher than the refuse container or shall be otherwise effectively screened from the street, adjacent residential uses located in a residence or office residence district and adjacent permitted or conditional residential uses.

536.10. Purpose: Specific development standards are established to provide supplemental regulations to address the unique characteristics of certain land uses.

536.20. Specific development standards. Community garden.

- (1) Overhead lighting shall be prohibited.
- (2) Signage shall be limited to a single, non-illuminated, flat sign of four (4) square feet.
- (3) No more than two (2) vehicles shall be parked on-site, excluding those parked within an enclosed structure.
- (4) No retail sales shall be permitted, except as an approved temporary use, as specified in Chapter 535, Regulations of General Applicability.

City of Minneapolis
Community Gardens Pilot Program

Community gardener resources

Gardening Matters serves as a central clearinghouse for community gardening resources in the Twin Cities: <http://gardeningmatters.org>. The website includes a Gardening Matters fact sheet on building community support for your garden:
<http://gardeningmatters.org/resources/gaincmtysupport.pdf>.

University of Minnesota Extension provides a variety of resources on gardening, including information on plants, sustainable design, insect identification and management, and soil analysis. www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo

American Community Garden Association works to create new resources for community gardens, coordinates an annual conference, and has online resources and informative lists of all topics involving community gardens. www.communitygarden.org

National Gardening Association is a resource of plant information, has a free newsletter, and provides links for gardeners. Periodically, information about grants and other available funds is available. www.garden.org

Do It Green! Minnesota is a resource for gardeners interested in sustainable gardening and healthy communities. www.doitgreen.org

Plangarden is a software tool made exclusively for vegetable gardeners. www.plangarden.com

Guidance on at-home composting from the City of Minneapolis Public Works Department. www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/compost.asp

Obtaining compost for Minneapolis community gardens from the City of Minneapolis. Find out if you are eligible and how to get it. www.gardeningmatters.org/resources/compost.html#mpls.

Garbage removal. The community garden leaseholder is responsible for keeping the site clean and free of debris and trash. www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/clean-city.asp

Yards 2 Gardens. Whether you have extra space in your yard, extra tools in the garage, extra seeds or seedlings, or are just looking for a space to garden, Y2G makes it easy to share what you've got or find what you're looking for. www.y2g.org

The **Minnesota State Horticultural Society** offers a wealth of resources to gardeners ranging from classes, gardening information and assistance and a resource library. <http://www.northerngardener.org/index.asp>

For information about the **Homegrown Minneapolis Community Gardens Pilot Program**, call 311 or visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp.