



To: Mayor and Council

Agenda Item #: V. A.

From: Jordan Gilgenbach, Communications Coordinator

Action

Date: Sept. 16, 2014

Discussion

Subject: August "Speak Up, Edina" Report

Information

Action Requested:

Receive report on August 2014 "Speak Up, Edina" discussion about community gardens.

Information / Background:

Since June 2012, the City of Edina has used the online engagement website, www.SpeakUpEdina.org, to collect ideas and opinions from residents. One of the City Council's six strategic priorities for 2014-2015 is Communication and Engagement: "To clearly understand community needs, expectations and opinions, the City will consistently seek the input of a broad range of stakeholders in meaningful and interactive communication." A goal of that is to host a monthly discussion on www.SpeakUp.Edina.org. In August 2014, the discussion topic centered on community gardens. In this online discussion, the City posed the following questions:

- Should the City add more community gardens?
- If the City were to add more community gardens, where should they be?
- Do you currently use a community garden? If so, which one? If not, would you if more were available?

The discussion was open for comments between July 31 and Sept. 2. During that time, 59 comments were made. Additionally, 681 people visited the site 949 times, garnering 3,909 page views. About 33 percent of all site traffic during that period was from Edina (according to their internet provider). Ninety-three percent of commenters were from Edina.

The discussion was promoted through various means, including a press release, Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor posts, City Extra messages and direct outreach.

Attached are the comments on this topic.

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Speak Up, Edina!

We're always looking for feedback and ideas for how we can make Edina an even better place for living, learning, raising families and doing business. Take a moment to provide your feedback and ideas on any of the forums you see here or start your own discussion. It's your chance to speak up, Edina!

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Discussion: [Community Gardens](#)

The City of Edina began its first community garden in 2013. The [Yorktown Park Community Garden](#), next to Edina Fire Station No. 2, contains 10 10-by-10 foot plots and 40 10-by-15 foot plots. Plot priority is given to those who have rented a plot in the past, then new plot renters who are Edina residents, followed by new renters who work in Edina, then new renters who do not live or work in Edina. The Yorktown Park Community Garden has filled up very quickly in its first two...

3 Topics 59 Answers Closed 2014-09-01

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [More Gardens?](#)

Should the City add more community gardens? Why or why not?

29 Responses

29 Responses



[Larry Cipolla](#) about 1 month ago

Should more community gardens be added? Yes. The City is promoting a healthier lifestyle and the theme of "going green." What better action to take than

to provide more access to more residents through more community gardens? The concept is sound, proven, and popular. It is the execution that often is the issue, not the concept. The City prides itself on the quality of life and of doing things right the first time. Quality, going green, doing it right the first time all apply to the execution of any community garden. Adding a community garden on poorly located and poorly prepared sites is self-defeating and a waste of taxpayer money.

Community gardens will be successful and self-sustaining when the community garden is properly located. The site must have at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight. The soil must be "garden-friendly and sustainable." The soil must not be in a low area and water should easily and quickly drain from the area. Any sub-soil that prevents proper drainage or is not "veggie-herb-plant viable" must be removed to a depth of at least 24" and replaced with better soil. That soil could include a mix of black dirt (45%), compost (45%), and sand (10%). Preferably the site should not be on a land-fill or area that was used to dump construction waste, whether from roads, parking lots, or buildings. When you build the soil properly, the gardens become self-sustaining. Community gardens are almost maintenance free—no mowing, no application of insecticides or herbicides as is often required on our parks. The City should not need to return to the site to fix problems regarding drainage, poor soil, or water overflow from adjacent areas. Community gardens are for growing healthy plants that are pesticide-free allowing people to have a healthier lifestyle. As seen in the current community garden, people socialize, help each other, and take it upon themselves to make their plots more viable and productive.

8 Supports



[Catherine Fuller](#) 15 days ago

Hello: I am in favor of adding more community gardens, particularly in locations where residents can walk. I live in the Birchcrest neighborhood, and would love to see a garden in Birchcrest Park. It is a sorely underutilized park, has plenty of all day sun, is flat, accessible, and surrounded by young families. Aside from the play area, the vast "playing field" is used hardly at all. And as another commentator mentioned, in spite of the large yards that many of us have, the mature trees make full sun vegetable gardening impossible.

3 Supports

comment...

Reply to Catherine Fuller

comment...

Reply to Larry Cipolla



[Fran Fabrizio](#) about 1 month ago

Yes - the popularity of the first one would suggest that there is plenty of demand. I'd love to see this model replicated in other neighborhoods. I'd sign up for a plot if there was a garden available near the Community Center or St. Johns, Pamela, Arden or Garden Parks.

5 Supports

comment...

Reply to Fran Fabrizio



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer about 1 month ago

Larry is a master gardener who has volunteered hundreds of hours and several wonderful classes that have helped novice community and home gardeners

to start successfully growing vegetables and flowers. The City of Edina owes him a debt of gratitude for getting our first community garden "off the ground." He is absolutely right about everything he talks about.

I'd like to add another point - garden location. The Yorktown garden near the Southdale Y is in the SE portion of Edina, immediately adjacent to Richfield and not that far from the boundary with Bloomington. It is very convenient for those of us (I garden there) who live within 10 minutes of the garden. If I lived in the NW part of Edina - e.g. by Van Valkenberg fields - it would be very inconvenient to drive that far for a community garden. Before Edina had a community garden, I started community gardening in Chanhassen, where my sister's family lives. A truly mature garden - what every community garden looks like after all the bugs get worked out - but at least a one-way 20 minute drive. It is very hard to get to the garden often enough if you live too far away. I would suggest that the ideal community garden set up for Edina would be to attempt to have one community garden in each of the four quadrants of the city, because then everyone who lives here could get to one in a reasonable time.

There are some misconceptions about community gardens. One is that people who live in homes with large lawns and trees don't use community garden. The fact is that often given the size of established trees, that it is difficult to find a good space with full sun, and that a community garden is a good solution. Also for these homeowners, if they love gardening, that love doesn't go away if they decide to downsize when their kids leave home. So it isn't home garden vs. community garden - but both - in other words giving people choices.

Another misconception that community gardens are "socialist" or subversive in some vague way. Just think of our parks. Many of them are devoted to youth sports - used by different groups of people - really anyone who qualifies for the team and pays their activity fee. The city prepares the garden (just like it sets out the bases rakes the field and waters the grass), so people can exercise and enjoy the outdoors. A community garden is like any other community group - the city gets things organized and the group takes it from there.

Also, there is little realization of what a community garden actually is. It doesn't require government intervention to set up a community garden. A church, a school, a residential association or a business can set up a community garden - and you will see that many have done so in Edina. If you are a small government type who doesn't want government put in a position of starting everything, then start a community garden yourself. If it is your land, a community garden is a statement about your values, .

7 Supports

comment...

Reply to Joel Stegner



[Sandy Radeke](#) about 1 month ago

I think the city should add more community gardens because there is a waiting list at the Yorktown Garden. However, I would recommend waiting until the Yorktown Garden is working the way it was meant to work. Whoever chose that location failed to notice that the YMCA skate park drain empties right into the community garden so that whenever it rains all the rain comes whooshing out across and flooding the community garden. There apparently is a plan to deal with this but I think it is important to make sure the original garden works before starting another one.

4 Supports

comment...

Reply to Sandy Radeke



[Liz Jergensen](#) 30 days ago

This is a wonderful idea! Our Yorktown Garden has been a guinea pig of sorts. We have had a few bumps in the road, which will only help the City of Edina create new Community Gardens more smoothly. We now have a "list" of what to do to quickly set up Community Gardens that will work almost from the start. Larry's response lists the most important items to consider for the decision maker(s) to use. This is a community builder, we at Yorktown have been slowly gathering names of people in our garden by word of mouth to create a list of Gardeners who "Opt In" to be listed publicly in our own gardener driven "newsletter". Using this newsletter, we are (1) finding individual gardeners interested in getting together to buy "good black dirt" and pay someone to till individual plots, to save money and (2) build a group that wants to be part of a more "social set", getting together to tour the Arboretum, have a pot luck, and so forth. Getting names and/or email addresses and telephone numbers to communicate with each other and help each other. One

Gardener used this to ask about identifying a pest. I used this when I recently went on vacation, other gardeners watered my garden and I will do the same for them. A gardener might ask for help if sick or unable to keep up with weeding due to a physical ailment.

When new Community Gardens are created we could add them, just adding a column for which garden the gardeners belong to. This could be a central list used for ideas, identifying pests, suggesting successful techniques, catalogs we enjoy, whatever we think is useful.

The City of Edina offers opportunity's for many demographics. This is adding an opportunity for many kinds of gardeners. It also displays that yes, food comes from the earth. With our great education system our children know that, but a visible demonstration is always a good reminder! Who knows those kids participating and the kids walking by may be our dedicated hobby gardeners in the future!

4 Supports

[Reply to Liz Jergensen](#)



[Larry Cipolla](#) 29 days ago

I agree! Most surrounding communities include one or more community gardens. They are widely used across the entire country. I just visited an Urban Farm in Cleveland, Ohio. Phenomenal response and use by families, seniors who have moved from their home to an apartment or condo, single people, and by people who want to know what is in their food. The current community garden in Edina includes a wide cross-section of individuals, including people who have lost part of their mobility. Raised beds afford access to the young, old, and anyone in between. There is a major disconnect between the food we eat and where it comes from. This Nature Deficit Disorder is common in children and many parents. Food comes from a can, from a plastic or cardboard box, from the pantry or the freezer, or simply from the "store." Community gardens and gardening in general provides people with the opportunity and experience of making the connection between food production and food consumption. Sitting in front of a computer reading about food production and consumption is handy. Getting your hands in the soil, even if a small community garden plot, is dandy. It builds self-confidence and provides people with a sense of accomplishment.

3 Supports

[Reply to Larry Cipolla](#)



[Anne Marie Gromme](#) 29 days ago

Yes, more gardens and in various locations so more people have access to them. I think raised beds for some of the space is a good idea, as long as there are plenty of others available so people can get down in the dirt with hands and hoes.

4 Supports

[Reply to Anne Marie Gromme](#)



[Victoria Kent](#) 27 days ago

Yes!! A great way to teach adults and children about gardening, and a source of healthy food.

3 Supports

comment...

Reply to Victoria Kent



[Mindy Ahler](#) 23 days ago

Yes, for all the reasons others have mentioned and to provide more healthy food options to more people. Also great way to build community as neighbors gardening together get to know each other at the same time.

3 Supports

comment...

Reply to Mindy Ahler



[Angela Lee](#) 16 days ago

I have been gardening at the York Av community plot for two summers and I support the idea of adding more community gardens. Gardening in community plots promotes a healthy lifestyle, healthy eating, and an activity that people of all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic levels can enjoy.

4 Supports

comment...

Reply to Angela Lee



[Laura Nisi](#) 15 days ago

I am definitely in favor of more community gardens. For all of the well-made points above, especially those regarding connecting more to other residents.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Laura Nisi



[Matthew Sikich](#) 15 days ago

My Daughter, Angelina (age 6), and I have been gardening at the York Av community plot for two summers and I support the idea of adding more community gardens. Gardening in community plots promotes a healthy lifestyle, healthy eating, and an activity that people of all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic levels can enjoy ! It helps the "city" youth who do not have gardens at their residence understand where their FOOD actually comes from,

and appreciate the enormous work, love, and dedication that farmers and growers make in their efforts to feed us. It is an incredibly valuable experience....I love the gardens that the Edina Schools have begun to bring to the students and feel most neighborhoods would enjoy such an opportunity. We are all for more gardens !

2 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Matthew Sikich



[Louise Weaver](#) 15 days ago

With the problems that come with large-scale farming, such as ongoing drought, flooding, and shipping costs, community gardening is a very valuable resource for food security in all communities. Home gardeners have more control over their own food supply. Community gardens offer residents a wholesome source of recreation and opportunity to share their enthusiasm with like-minded neighbors, developing a stronger sense of community. Small business opportunities increase around local food gardening as it becomes part of the culture. Gardening gives people precious renewal from a connection with nature. Everyone from young children to seniors love to learn to grow something with which they can then nourish themselves. Summer is so much more enjoyable harvesting food at its nutritional peak, like fresh tomatoes or salad greens, that you grew yourself. Zinnias are nice in a vase. Food can become a simple daily creative pursuit. In a community garden, gardeners have access to more food variety when they share produce, seeds, tools, and growing tips with each other.

2 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Louise Weaver



[Dave Bender](#) 15 days ago

Seems like a good use of public property to me. How does the city deal with derelict gardeners, though? People who start out with the best of intentions but, uh, get busy as the summer wears on?

0 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Dave Bender



[Louise Weaver](#) 15 days ago

I recommend everyone participate in Community Garden Day Saturday, September 13th, 2014. Get information at <http://www.gardeningsmatters.org/community-garden-day>

1 Support

comment...

 Reply to Louise Weaver



[Judith Felker](#) 15 days ago

Dave, it seems to me that the gardener who can no longer care for his/her plot should let the other gardeners know and they can take it over, including reallocating it to someone on the waiting list. This problem doesn't qualify, it seems to me, as a "city problem". I support community gardens for all the reasons others have mentioned, and also because growing our own food cuts down on the need for trucking fresh vegetables and fruit, which reduces air, soil, and water pollution from use of fuel. Also, with Big Ag, like Monsanto, working to control the seed supply (actually suing farmers who have Monsanto's patented seedlings blown into their crops). Growing our own food would preserve seeds other than Monsanto's, and keep us from being totally dependent on Big Ag for our food, a direction we seem to be going in. Community gardens? OH YES, the more the better!

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Judith Felker



[Katherine Stelberg Bass](#) 15 days ago

I would love to see the add at least one more community garden - scalable and sustainable growth in the number of plots. With the waiting list for existing plots, there is clearly a demand for gardening space.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Katherine Stelberg Bass



[Donna DAquila](#) 15 days ago

If you want a garden...put one in your own back yard.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Donna D'Aquila



[Eleanor Carlson](#) at August 28, 2014 at 11:37am CDT

I believe community gardens are a wonderful thing for the city to be thinking about. I am all about supporting honey bees, and having community gardens is just what they need! One of the reasons their population is decreasing is because they don't have enough clean and local pollen to eat. Having community gardens in neighborhoods will not only benefit people in so many great ways, but also the honey bees in Edina.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Eleanor Carlson



[Janey Westin](#) at August 28, 2014 at 2:55pm CDT

My husband and I are very fortunate to have space and light on our own property for a large veggie garden and lots of wildflowers to help out the bee populations, as well as butterflies and birds. Community garden space in our public parks is an excellent use of publicly owned land. If I were in an apartment or had a shaded lot, I would be signed up for community garden space. Because many surrounding suburbs have now restricted use of their community garden space to their own residents, there is a great need for Edina to expand the number of community garden sites, tapping Larry Cipolla as key advisor. I would like to see garden space added at the south end of Pamela Park, just north of 62nd Street where there is now no athletic field, lots of sun and the south parking lot nearby. This is a no-brainer for location. A hand pump for water access could easily be put in (not far down to the groundwater). A 6' ht. deer fence with gates would be necessary in this location. Let's do this! I do not appreciate Donna DAquila's comment.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Janey Westin



[Janey Westin](#) at August 28, 2014 at 2:55pm CDT

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1 Support

comment...

Reply to Janey Westin



[Janey Westin](#) at August 28, 2014 at 2:56pm CDT

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comment...

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1 Support

comment . . .

[Reply to Janey Westin](#)



[Dianne Latham](#) at August 29, 2014 at 4:36pm CDT

Before adding more community garden plots, the City of Edina needs to carefully review the usage of the Yorktown garden. 50% of those having community gardens at Yorktown Park in 2013 did not renew their plot. Although there were 38 on the waiting list for the 2013 plots, there were only 10 on the 2014 waiting list. At least 7 of the 2014 plots were officially abandoned (4, 18, 44, 47, 32, 40, and 50). This would appear to be an opportunity for the plots to be offered to those on the waiting list because late season crops can still be planted mid summer. When I visited the Yorktown Park community garden on 8-27-14, there appeared to be at least 8 abandoned plots given the weeds and lack of crops in them. Either those on the waiting list did not avail themselves of the opportunity to rent a plot, or more than 10 plots were abandoned. The cost of setting up a community garden is substantial, with Yorktown Park costing the City of Edina over \$30,000 including staff time, soil prep, fencing, benches, adding plumbing for water, picnic tables, redirecting the bike path, adding a sidewalk in front of the garden, and adding a parking lot.

The real value of community gardens are not the small amount of produce they provide. The real value is that they are another source of recreation for residents and that they are a learning site, which result in residents returning to the place where they live and beginning vegetable gardens on their own property. At a community garden, residents come and learn how to vegetable garden with the help of commendable volunteers like Master Gardener Larry Cipolla. But it becomes readily apparent to those with plots that community gardening is pretty inconvenient, even if the community garden is in your neighborhood. The result is that community gardeners often take their new skills home, trim their trees, remove their sod and plant a garden on their own property. Those that live in townhomes or apartments lobby their landowners to allow a community garden, which then becomes an amenity and selling point for their facility. That is what has been happening at Yorktown Park and explains, in part, why some do not renew their plot. Former Yorktown Park community gardeners Louise Weaver and Lisa Childs are to be commended for starting (Louise) and expanding (Lisa) a community garden at their apartment complexes.

Before considering other community gardens on city property, the City of Edina should wait until there is a more robust waiting list at Yorktown Park such that few, if any, plots are standing fallow at the end of the season. The city should nevertheless encourage owners of multi family housing, companies, schools and churches to establish community gardens on their property, which if successful, will meet many more residents' community gardening needs than a city community garden ever could.

0 Supports



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer at August 29, 2014 at 5:34pm CDT

I agree with Diane's comment regarding encouraging other organizations to set up community gardens, because that gives many more people the opportunity to be in community gardens that would be true if only the city does this. Also, it is a way to build interest among young people for gardening and is a way for an organization like a church that wants to provide food assistance to the poor to do so, as fresh produce is more difficult for food shelves than canned goods to obtain. She is also correct in saying that community gardens are an excellent way to build a sense of community, particularly among families without school aged children, who develop many connections through school. However, there isn't a person in Edina who wouldn't benefit from the opportunity of meeting a wider circle of people than those who live in the neighborhood, go to their church or are parents of student's in their child's grade or team. It gets people off the couch and out breathing fresh air, which is a plus for everyone. Of course, some people have properties that are suitable for gardening, but many people aren't so lucky. The City of Edina provides park facilities to serve a wide range of interests, but frankly the focus is one youth sports - with millions spent in facilities. Edina could probably put in a community garden in every city neighborhood for the cost of putting in the new sports dome, or the expanded ice arena, It isn't a matter of choosing one over the other - but choosing both. Gardening is a life-long activity that involves fresh air, exercise, social connection and fresh flowers and vegetables. Expecting the city to invest in it is reasonable. As the gardeners who have been in Yorktown (such as myself) would tell you, it is a learning experience - and we have had some tough issues to deal with, but year 2 is a vast improvement over year 3. However, compare losing a few plants to the cost of losing a bunch of balls in a really bad round of golf - much less frustrating. I have gardened for four years in a community garden and if you saw what a mature community garden looks like, you would be amazed. I have pictures to show it. And I wouldn't minimize the excitement of the harvest and the ability to eat the best tasting tomatoes you can ever imagine, without having to go to a farmer's market to get them.

So there are voices of caution like Dianne's which make some good points, but there is no reason why the City can not thoughtfully plan additional community gardens that are located throughout the city.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Joel Stegner

comment...

Reply to Dianne Latham



[Kathy Tran](#) at August 31, 2014 at 8:38pm CDT

I agree. Would love to see community gardens scattered around Edina. Such a great way to bring people together, share ideas and eat healthier.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Kathy Tran

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Speak Up, Edina!

We're always looking for feedback and ideas for how we can make Edina an even better place for living, learning, raising families and doing business. Take a moment to provide your feedback and ideas on any of the forums you see here or start your own discussion. It's your chance to speak up, Edina!

▶ **SHARE** your feedback! ▶ **POST** your ideas! ▶ **JOIN** the discussion!

This Discussion channel is currently closed.

Discussion: Community Gardens

The City of Edina began its first community garden in 2013. The Yorktown Park Community Garden, next to Edina Fire Station No. 2, contains 10 10-by-10 foot plots and 40 10-by-15 foot plots. Plot priority is given to those who have rented a plot in the past, then new plot renters who are Edina residents, followed by new renters who work in Edina, then new renters who do not live or work in Edina. The Yorktown Park Community Garden has filled up very quickly in its first two...

3 Topics 59 Answers Closed 2014-09-01

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Location, Location, Location](#)

If the City were to add more community gardens, where should they be?

18 Responses

18 Responses



[Larry Cipolla](#) about 1 month ago

Where would others benefit the community? Adding a second garden in the NW corner from the present garden would be one site, though this site has

sub-soil and drainage problems that would need to be corrected. Building raised beds, at least 18" high would help (after the sub-soil has been removed and replaced with higher quality soil). Other sites could include Pamela Park (2 locations, one each on the north and south ends), Utley Park (on the south side of the tennis courts), Highlands Park (north of the soccer field), Lewis Park, Normandale Park (north side by the ice rink/building), Fred Richardson park, and Highlands Park (north of the soccer field).

I would also suggest that school yard gardens be placed on the Creek Valley School grounds (2 locations, plus a functional rain garden in the lowest area).

In addition to community gardens and school yard gardens, the Edina City Council should consider recommending that new and/or existing condo and apartment rental units include resident gardens on their grounds or on the roof. Roof top gardens are very feasible and many cities around the country are incorporating them into their designs (new construction) and where feasible on existing buildings. These gardens would be for the residents of those buildings only.

Community gardens can be diverse. In addition to providing land-plots for gardeners, community gardens can incorporate educational rain gardens, butterfly and hummingbird gardens. Benches, picnic tables, and perhaps a covered pavilion for socializing, conducting gardening classes and other educational events could be added. Community gardens build community. They include people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. They bring people together.

The City is planning to spend millions of dollars on its parks for new sports fields and facilities. There will be significant on-going expenses to maintain those new facilities and grounds. Can not the City find dollars to include community gardens in other parks? Gardening is very popular and growing throughout the country and they are not expensive to maintain. They are pesticide and herbicide free zones. Indeed, when constructed properly the general on-going maintenance is almost none, saving taxpayers' money.

Community, school yard, church, and roof-top gardens are not a novelty. They are not one-off projects or novelties. They are a way of life. They promote healthy eating habits. They are generally chemical free and require almost no on-going maintenance once the sites have been properly established. Edina taxpayers win.

6 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Larry Cipolla



[Fran Fabrizio](#) about 1 month ago

Locations I'd utilize would be (in order of preference) the Community Center, St. Johns Park, Arden Park, Pamela Park, or Garden Park.

3 Supports

comment...

 Reply to Fran Fabrizio



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer about 1 month ago

Community gardens need to be properly situated for optimal growing conditions (see Larry's comments) and also need to be welcomed by the neighbors - or the neighborhood association if one has been formed. Given natural skepticism, it is also helpful to have someone speaking for community gardens who has experience, knowledge and passion for them. In addition to looking at city parks, around the metro area, some community gardens are set up on land controlled by a government unit - such as highway right of ways - so they don't have to be located in a park, just in a good site with access to water. It probably makes sense to look at all potential pieces of property around the city, with the goal of finding at least 2-3 possibilities in the three quadrants for the city without a community garden. Public lands that are in the process of redevelopment (e.g. Fred Richards) should consider a community garden as part of their overall set of amenities. Community gardens don't have to start out with as many plots as Yorktown, but it is desirable if they have some expansion space if demand is heavy enough.

3 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Joel Stegner](#)



[Sandy Radeke](#) about 1 month ago

When deciding where to locate a new community garden, I hope the city will pay closer attention to the site conditions than was done at the Yorktown site.

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Sandy Radeke](#)



[Victoria Kent](#) 27 days ago

i think the Pentagon Park area OR part of Fred Richards would be a logical site. It is near high density housing.

0 Supports

comment...

[Reply to Victoria Kent](#)



[Laurel Fischbach](#) 27 days ago

I love the idea of using St. Johns Park. This piece of property is never used by anyone and it is in an easily accessible location from Hwy. 62 and 2 elementary schools, Southview Middle School and the Family Center. The teaching and volunteer reach with this location would be ideal. I would be thrilled to help work in this garden to make it great. I also love the idea of making one portion a butterfly garden.

1 Support

comment...

[Reply to Laurel Fischbach](#)



[Mindy Ahler](#) 23 days ago

Consider schools - can include school garden that community members could help maintain. This can be a beautiful, healthy and educational use of land that might otherwise just get mowed but not used as play space. Weber park or some other location in or near the Morningside neighborhood would also be great.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Mindy Ahler



[Laura Nisi](#) 15 days ago

Many schools are already doing this and the city should focus on areas that are city-owned. The site(s) should be easily accessible and placed equally around the city.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Laura Nisi



[Joel Acker](#) 15 days ago

Perhaps Lake Edina Park would be a good location. There is a heavy concentration of apartments near that park and the residents who live in apartments are those who are most in need of a community garden since they do not have the option of having a garden at home.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Joel Acker



[Louise Weaver](#) 15 days ago

I think creating a master plan, of viable garden sites in each Edina neighborhood, would be very productive. The building of gardens then could be prioritized by areas, such as those serving the most people or where there is the most interest locally to be developed first. They could be anywhere in each neighborhood where they will be visible and lead to food gardening becoming part of the local culture.

The idea of a special focus on gardens at multi-housing complexes is a good place to start, such as condos and apartment buildings, on site or within a short walking distance. I met a gardener like myself, at Yorktown Garden, who wanted to garden, but questioned adding thirty minutes round-trip travel time by car to garden. I don't drive, so I found I had to take three buses and walk a few blocks each way. This amounted to about two hours travel time per visit. Community gardens in more locations would help.

My parents learned gardening and worked the gardens on the school grounds to supply their school cafeteria. Children can learn this important fundamental skill and enjoyable pastime at school, which will be with them for their whole lives.

I have been a member of a community garden elsewhere previously, where we had 12'x 3' x 8" raised beds. It was on an elevated demolished home site with excellent drainage, which was on loan by the owner. I could sit on the edge of the bed to weed, plant, or water; and it was low enough to use a tiller in each spring, which was done by the organizing staff. It had a system of pvc pipes above ground that had hoses connected at the end of each section of beds. The system then connected to a nearby house by agreement with the owner. It worked very well and made watering doable in July and August.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Louise Weaver



[Louann Waddick](#) 15 days ago

Yes, more gardens! We have mostly shade at our home and it's difficult to grow veggies.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Louann Waddick



[Bonnie Guari](#) 15 days ago

Not every open park area will be suitable for gardens. For example, St. Johns park is designed to collect water runoff when we receive heavy rain. The park spent several days as a pond earlier this summer!

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Bonnie Guari



[Katherine Stelberg Bass](#) 15 days ago

I love the idea of adding some community gardening space in another part of Edina - perhaps NW or SW quadrants. It's an interesting idea to consider a public-public partnership with Creek Valley Elementary, with some plots available for residents and some plots available for the schools' use.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Katherine Stelberg Bass



[Donna DAquila](#) 15 days ago

if you live in an apartment...shop Trader Joe's. If your yard is too shaded for a garden...cut some trees down.

0 Supports



[Louise Weaver](#) at August 28, 2014 at 2:14pm CDT

comment...Please don't advocate for cutting down trees. We need as many trees as possible for our environment.

0 Supports

[Reply to Louise Weaver](#)

[Reply to Donna D'Aquila](#)



[Janey Westin](#) at August 28, 2014 at 3:01pm CDT

I completely agree with Louise.

0 Supports

[Reply to Janey Westin](#)



[Dianne Latham](#) at August 29, 2014 at 4:38pm CDT

Soil conditions in city parks are generally poor. Often low areas were filled in with construction debris and then filled with soil to make a level park area. Although some park areas look suitable to the casual observer, they are not. The August 11, 2009 John Keprios staff report identified 3 locations for possible city community gardens. These were Yorktown Park (currently completed), Pamela Park (the area has since been taken over by an athletic field and is not available) and Lake Edina. Lake Edina (the site of the former Fred Richards golf course) is located proximate to high density housing, a desirable feature. But this location serves the same SE area of Edina as the Yorktown Park community garden does. If Yorktown Park is not renting at capacity (at least 8 vacant plots during the 2014 season), would a Lake Edina community garden fill?

0 Supports

[Reply to Dianne Latham](#)



[Kathryn Thomas](#) at August 31, 2014 at 11:29pm CDT

I would like to see the city add on to the existing garden off York by the fire station. I would also like to suggest adding community garden space in the

smaller parks in the city such as Birchcrest Park on Hansen Road. Another suggestion is to have community gardens in the outside hockey rinks where the ground space could be used for hockey in the winter and garden space in the spring and summer.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Kathryn Thomas

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Speak Up, Edina!

We're always looking for feedback and ideas for how we can make Edina an even better place for living, learning, raising families and doing business. Take a moment to provide your feedback and ideas on any of the forums you see here or start your own discussion. It's your chance to speak up, Edina!

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This Discussion channel is currently closed.

Discussion: Community Gardens

The City of Edina began its first community garden in 2013. The [Yorktown Park Community Garden](#), next to Edina Fire Station No. 2, contains 10 10-by-10 foot plots and 40 10-by-15 foot plots. Plot priority is given to those who have rented a plot in the past, then new plot renters who are Edina residents, followed by new renters who work in Edina, then new renters who do not live or work in Edina. The Yorktown Park Community Garden has filled up very quickly in its first two...

3 Topics 59 Answers Closed 2014-09-01

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Garden Use](#)

Do you currently use a community garden? If so, which one? If not, would you if more were available?

12 Responses

12 Responses



[Larry Cipolla](#) about 1 month ago

I do not currently use a community garden. I am the master gardener volunteer who has presented several gardening classes--from beginning to advanced--

and have volunteered my time to help gardeners with their questions. Do people use community gardens? Absolutely! The rental response for these first two years has been great. The waiting list suggests that the demand is there and that people will use the gardens. And people will continue to rent and use a community garden when the garden soil is viable and productive. Almost all of the surrounding communities have community gardens.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Larry Cipolla



[Fran Fabrizio](#) about 1 month ago

I have used a community garden in the past when I lived in a different state, and I would do so again if there were one within walking or biking distance. I don't have a great location on my property to place a vegetable garden, and I also enjoy the social aspect of talking to the other gardeners. Now that I have a son, I would also bring him to the garden, and he would love to explore and learn how things grow.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Fran Fabrizio



[Joel Stegner](#), Community volunteer about 1 month ago

I have been in the Yorktown Community Garden the last two years. I also have had a plot at a community garden in Chanhassen the last four years, three of the four years in a raised bed. As I am a Y member, the location of the Yorktown garden is very convenient for me - one drive accomplishes two purposes. As I just turned 65, I can speak for people who aren't as young as they once were. Elevated gardens tend to be smaller, but are a real back saver. I believe that Yorktown could use more elevated gardens, to be placed in the parts of the garden that are naturally wetter, as the dirt remains looser and the roots have better growing conditions. This might be accomplished at a somewhat lower costs if a partnership could be formed with young men wanting to be Eagle Scouts, as often building something for a public purpose is part of their program, or with a group of local wood workers, who have an interest in using their skills for community service. When additional community gardens are planned, I'd suggest that at least 10% of the plots are elevated beds, primarily to serve Edina's older residents who don't need to grow as much food and would find the elevated bed much more appealing.

3 Supports

comment...

Reply to Joel Stegner



[Lisa Nelson](#) about 1 month ago

I have a garden in my yard, but I have nevertheless enjoyed the Yorktown Community Garden. Members of the Edina Garden Club who live in condos or have heavily shaded backyards have cultivated plots there. I have toured the gardens and talked to several gardeners; had meetings with EGC members who garden there where we had "tastings" of the produce; met new friends through it; and had people join the EGC because of it. EGC members have learned from other gardeners there and through their own experiences gardening there and they have shared that knowledge with others. I wholeheartedly agree that this is a valuable use of public property, just as athletic facilities are. I also agree that adequately preparing the site, adding raised beds and placing additional gardens in other areas of the city is very important to provide opportunities for more segments of the populations geographically and age-wise.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Lisa Nelson



[Sandy Radeke](#) about 1 month ago

I have had a plot at the Yorktown Community garden for the past two years.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Sandy Radeke



[Anne Marie Gromme](#) 29 days ago

I have also had my plot in the Yorktown Garden for two years. We have had to deal with some adverse conditions, namely poor soil quality as well as lack of adequate drainage during very wet years. The adversity probably has a silver lining, as people have shared ideas on what works under such conditions etc. Those with a sense of humor have done best e.g. celebration over the harvest of the first bean - yes I said "bean" not "beans."

The city is working to improve the quality of the basic structure of the garden, with the addition of a permanent water source for dry weather and is apparently working on designing a tiling system to deal with the drainage from the adjoining skate park.

I am fortunate in living within walking distance and I think placing gardens in different areas of the city would be most beneficial, or perhaps expanding the area of the current garden in addition to placing others in other areas. The garden concept provides opportunity for people of all ages and abilities and is valuable in terms of socializing, exercising and healthy eating.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Anne Marie Gromme



[Anne Marie Gromme](#) 29 days ago

Valuable asset.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Anne Marie Gromme



[Victoria Kent](#) 27 days ago

I am part of the group renting plot 43. Last year I had my own plot. This year i find it enjoyable to share with others the work and produce.

0 Supports

[Reply to Victoria Kent](#)



[Mindy Ahler](#) 23 days ago

I do not currently use a community garden plot, but would like to use one because my yard is too shady to effectively grow vegetables. The Yorktown garden is a little too far to easily bike to for me and filled up before I was able to get a plot. I just moved to Edina two years ago and was able to garden in my yard in my previous home and miss it terribly. I'm happy to have big trees that shade the house and keep it cool in the summer, but it prohibits vegetable growing, so a community garden would be the perfect solution for me!

0 Supports

[Reply to Mindy Ahler](#)



[Laura Nisi](#) 15 days ago

I would definitely use one that was easy to get to from my house. The Yorktown one is not. In fact, I didn't know until this discussion that it was open to people other than the residents there!

0 Supports

[Reply to Laura Nisi](#)



[Louise Weaver](#) 15 days ago

I have been gardening at the Yorktown Garden two years, but travel to the site by bus has been difficult for me. However, I have been advocating, along with others, for a community garden at our seniors apartment building. With a grant from Wells Fargo, we will have raised beds ready to plant next spring. I have to tell you that some people here are starving for the chance to have a garden, with people competing over space for pots on our small common patio; they only had room for a tomato plant or two.

0 Supports

[Reply to Louise Weaver](#)



[Dianne Latham](#) at August 29, 2014 at 4:41pm CDT

I do not use a community garden. When we relandscaped our back yard we created a sunny area suitable for fruits, berries and vegetables as well as flowers.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Dianne Latham

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Participants



Jordan Gilgenbach

From: Lynette Biunno on behalf of Edina Mail
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2014 3:35 PM
To: Jordan Gilgenbach
Subject: FW: Speak Up About Community Gardens!



Lynette Biunno, Receptionist

952-927-8861 | Fax 952-826-0389

lbiunno@EdinaMN.gov | www.EdinaMN.gov

...For Living, Learning, Raising Families & Doing Business

From: Harriet Busdicker [<mailto:harrietbusdicker@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2014 3:14 PM
To: Edina Mail
Subject: Re: Speak Up About Community Gardens!

COMMUNITY GARDENS ARE GREAT FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO USE THEM AND KEEP THEM UP.

On Tue, Aug 26, 2014 at 3:09 PM, <mail@edinamn.gov> wrote:



Speak Up, Edina!

We're always looking for feedback and ideas for how we can make Edina an even better place for living, learning, raising families and doing business. Take a moment to provide your feedback and ideas on any of the forums you see here or start your own discussion. It's your chance to speak up, Edina!

▶ **SHARE** your feedback! ▶ **POST** your ideas! ▶ **JOIN** the discussion!

Speak Up About Community Gardens!

As part of the City's 12-month discussion series, weigh in on this month's discussion about community gardens! Let us know if you'd like to see more gardens, where they could be and whether or not you currently use a community garden.

But hurry! This discussion ends Tuesday, Sept. 2!

Nextdoor:

REPLY 



Speak Up about Community Gardens!

26 Aug

City Staff from City of Edina

Only one week left to speak up on this month's "Speak Up, Edina!" discussion about Community Gardens! To read the comments and post your opinion, visit <http://bit.ly/VgSOkH>.

Shared with City of Edina in General

REPLY 2 

★ Sandy thanked you



Katherine B. from Braemar Hills

26 Aug

Yes, Edina is a residential community with lots of people who reside in apartments. They have no yard in which to garden. Further, I live in a single family home that is entirely shaded and cannot grow vegetables though I have tried. I would love to see the city add some community gardening space since the available plots we offer (and residents pay to rent) fill up quickly and have had a waiting list every year it's been offered. There is a demand for this public service.

Thank Remove



Shea H. from Braemar Hills

26 Aug

As long as it doesn't cost the tax payers anything then fine, i.e. the rent should at least cover the cost (ALL the costs) just like any other business that doesn't want to go bankrupt.

Otherwise I'd like to see the city focus on lowering taxes and reducing the size of government please!

Thank Remove

Write a reply...