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Our ref: F09/1124
Contact: Kevin Ayrey –Landscape Architect. Ph (03) 9205 5770*

Wednesday 27 January 2010

Owner/Resident
Princes Hill
VIC 3054

Dear Owner/Resident,

Seeking Community Input into the Selection of a Community Garden Site

Yarra Council is keen to involve members of the local community in its decision about where a new community garden will be located within Yarra.

Council has a strong commitment to sustainability and fostering community, and believes that community gardening is one way of furthering both goals. At its November 2009 meeting, Council resolved to establish one new food-producing community garden in Yarra before July 2010, and allocated \$95,950 to the project.

Council officers have identified two potential locations:

George Street Park, Fitzroy

210 George Street, Fitzroy (corner of George and Charles streets)

As this land is owned by the Department of Human Services, Council will be required to obtain DHS approval before it can be used as a community garden.

Hardy Gallagher Reserve, Princes Hill

Two sites within Hardy Gallagher Reserve are being considered. One north of Holtom Street West, and the other encompassing a car park adjacent to the Carlton North Neighbourhood house, on Park Street. These can be seen more clearly on the enclosed map.

Council is yet to select a site, as we want to ensure the community has a say in this important decision.

Have your say

Please find enclosed information about the proposed sites, some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about community gardens and a feedback form, which you are encouraged to fill in and send back to Council.

Residents are also invited to attend a community gardens public workshop, where people will have the chance to assess the three possible sites and provide feedback to Council on the most appropriate.

When: Thursday 11 February
Time: 6.00pm – 8.30pm
Where: Fitzroy Town Hall - Reading Room
201 Napier Street, Fitzroy

RSVPs are essential, and light refreshments will be provided.
Contact Kevin Ayrey, Council's Landscape Architect, on 9205 5770 or email OpenSpace@yarracity.vic.gov.au to book your place.

Residents who cannot attend this session or who want to provide additional feedback are encouraged to fill out the enclosed form and return it to Council.

All feedback must be received no later than **5.00pm on Wednesday 24 February 2010**.

Council's new Community Gardens Advisory Committee will then assess the sites and the community feedback. Council officers will prepare a report detailing the community feedback and the Committee's advice. That report is expected to be presented to Council's April 2010 meeting, where Council will then make the final decision on a site.

More information

More information about the process of selecting and establishing a new community garden is available at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/consultation

For more information, or to book your place at the upcoming workshop, please contact Kevin Ayrey on 9205 5770, or email OpenSpace@yarracity.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



Cr Jane Garrett
Mayor

**Proposed Community Gardens – Princes Hill
Consultation Feedback Form**

Do you support the establishment of Community Gardens in Hardy Gallagher Reserve?

Yes / No - (please circle your answer)

If No, please let us know why –

.....
.....
.....

If Yes –

Of the 2 proposed locations for a community garden in Hardy Gallagher Reserve, please mark your preferred site.

- Hardy Gallagher Reserve 1 (Holtom Street West), Princes Hill**

- Hardy Gallagher Reserve 2 (Park Street), Princes Hill**

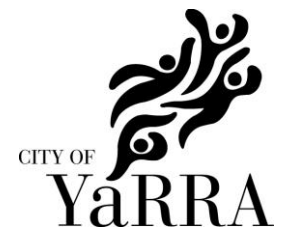
What are your main considerations when making your decision on community garden locations?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Please include your address and suburb in your response -

Address:.....
Suburb:.....

Community Gardens Frequently Asked Questions



- **What is a community garden?**

A community garden is a place where people come together to grow fresh vegetables, share gardening knowledge, make new friends, and take part in a creative outdoor activity. The land is often divided into separate plots, with plots allocated to individuals or groups. The produce grown in community gardens is for personal or shared use, not for commercial sale.

- **Who can access, and who would benefit from a community garden?**

Gardens are managed and maintained by a community gardens group that consists of interested members of the local community. People wanting to use the community garden will need to be a member of the group. Plots can be allocated to individuals or organisations, and are maintained and planted by the group members. Often gardens have a list of people waiting for an allocated plot to become available. To manage this waiting list, some community gardens also provide 'walk in' garden areas which can be used by individuals. In some cases a number of garden beds may be allocated for use of nearby public housing tenants.

- **Why would the gardens need to be fenced?**

Fencing community gardens manages access to the area. It prevents dogs from getting into garden beds, and provides a deterrent to vandalism of the gardens. Fencing can be designed to reflect the character of the surrounding area. Gates can be kept unlocked when gardeners are present to encourage general enjoyment of the gardens by all.

- **Why have these locations been chosen for consultation?**

In May 2009, Council engaged a consultant to carry out an audit on potential community garden locations in Yarra. The three proposed sites were among those assessed as feasible in the report. The consultants examined a range of criteria, including public accessibility, existing land use, safety, access to nearby facilities, access to water, and adjoining land use.

A community garden needs interested locals to organise themselves into a garden group, establish and manage the garden. The proposed Fitzroy and Princes Hill sites have existing and enthusiastic community groups looking for a suitable location to establish a garden.

- **Does this mean the permanent loss of public open space?**

The land is generally leased to the community garden group under a license agreement with the land manager (usually Council). This agreement would be a renewable short term contract, however, Council could choose to return the land to its former use if it wished. The land is not sold or permanently rezoned, but is used for a specific purpose (community garden) for a period of time.

- **What about the dangers of using potentially contaminated soil to grow food crops?**

The City of Yarra includes some of Melbourne's oldest suburbs. Many of these are former industrial areas, which means some soil in these areas may still contain contaminants that make it unsuitable for planting food crops because of the long-term health risk. If a garden is to be set up on one of these sites, fresh soil would be put into built-up garden beds (separated from the base soil) to provide clean soil for planting into. Any community garden established in Yarra will be assessed, and the appropriate work carried out, to ensure the site is safe for planting food.

- **Why would you remove healthy trees?**

Where possible, a garden would be sited where there is not the need to remove existing healthy and desirable trees and native vegetation. Established trees could also be incorporated into the garden design to provide shade for users. However, Council may propose that some trees be removed to provide the garden with adequate sunlight to operate and grow produce successfully. At all three proposed sites, the removal of trees is likely to be required.

- **Will the community garden become a messy unattractive sight?**

The site is leased to the community garden group by the authority responsible for managing the land (usually Council). The lease conditions generally require the group to maintain the garden and keep it in a tidy condition. Also, the community garden group's Committee of Management would provide garden users with guidelines to ensure plots are well maintained, and the garden is kept tidy.

- **How will the gardens be watered?**

Some community gardens have garden taps connected to the mains water supply – **these are subject to the same water restrictions as residential properties**. They are allocated as either even or odd numbered properties. Where possible, they also include rainwater tanks to harvest water from shelters on site, or neighbouring buildings.

- **Isn't it problematic to promote vegetable gardening when there is a lack of water?**

Generally, locally based vegetable gardening is more environmentally friendly than buying vegetables from the local supermarket. Growing vegetables yourself generally requires less water, pesticides, fertilizer and herbicides. Locally produced food also reduces the pollution created when food is transported around the country.

- **Where can I see an example of a Community Garden?**

An existing community garden can be viewed in Thomas Kidney Reserve, North Fitzroy. The garden is situated between the 'Poa mound' and train tracks, accessible from Park St/ Rushall Crescent. A new community garden would be designed to 'best fit' the site chosen for it.

**Hardy Gallagher Reserve
Possible Community
Garden locations.**



Hardy Gallagher Reserve location plan



Hardy Gallagher Reserve - Site 1
Holtom Street West (1600m²)
2 small and 2 mature trees would likely need to be removed.



Hardy Gallagher Reserve - Site 2
Park Street (800m²)
11 mixed sized trees, and the carpark, would likely need to be removed.



Markham Reserve Community Garden



North Fitzroy Community Gardens



Fencing would be in character with the area (as in this example).