

Policy: Chatham-Kent Community Gardens  
Section:  
Approved by: Chatham-Kent Board of Health  
Implementation Date: January 15, 2014  
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## The Chatham-Kent Community Gardens

### Policy

The Chatham-Kent Board of Health recognizes community gardening as a valuable recreation activity that can contribute to food production, enhancing food skills, community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction, and community education.

The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit (CKPHU) will collaborate with interested groups in assisting the development of community gardens.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

**“Community garden”** is defined as a plot of land which is used to produce food, native and ornamental plants, edible berries and food perennials. It is an area of publicly or privately owned land, rooftop, or other space managed and maintained by individuals, and/or organizations, to grow and harvest food crops and/or non-food ornamental crops, such as flowers for personal or group use, consumption or donation. Community gardens may be divided into separate plots or may be farmed collectively and may include common areas maintained and used by community garden members.

### Purpose

Community Gardens provide residents of Chatham-Kent with an opportunity to engage in healthy recreational activity while providing opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in agricultural and horticultural activities to grow and harvest nutritious food that promote healthy eating including, fruits, vegetables, and grains and improve food skills through experiential learning.

A Community Garden may include the following features

- A piece of land is utilized by the community to produce food, herbs and flowers for the personal use of individual gardeners
- Bench or areas for seating
- Structures to provide shade ( in accordance with municipal by-laws)
- Communal composting area
- Access to water
- Small shed for tools and equipment (in accordance with municipal by-laws)
- Raised beds built from various materials or in ground

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## Procedure

- Criteria for selecting new Community Garden Sites:

The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit will support (based on a limited annual budget), the creation of a Community Garden and will assist in locating a new Community Garden on suitable land where:

- a) An individual or group expresses, in writing using the application available on the CK Food Policy Council website, an interest in developing a community garden;
- b) Permission from the owner of the land has been provided in writing
- c) The Chatham-Kent Community Garden Committee has determined that the location of the proposed Community Garden is available and is suitable for use;
- d) Whenever possible, property should be accessible to pedestrians and persons requiring the use of mobility devices (wheelchairs, scooters, etc)
- e) Community Garden sites must not present a conflict to existing uses of the property;
- f) Community Garden sites must not require the removal of any significant vegetation, landmarks or amenities;
- g) Community Gardens sites should be in a location that is visible for surveillance purposes;
- h) Property must have sufficient parking available in the vicinity of the garden;;
- i) A community garden will be considered where it benefits at least 7 separate households;
- j) Community gardens must be organized, planned, administered and managed by community volunteers
- k) Community gardens must be available to the community-at-large or to the community served by a sponsoring organization and must not be used to grow commercial produce or plants.

- Role of the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit:

The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit will assist in the promotion of and help to raise awareness of Community Gardens through the CK Food Policy Council website and other opportunities that are available. The Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit, with the support of the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee will support the development of community gardens, in accordance with available resources by:

- a) Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens
- b) Helping develop user agreements with the owners of sites chosen for new gardens
- c) Helping develop a community-led environmental education program
- d) Assisting in the evaluation and approval of potential community garden sites;

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- e) If approved by the Community Gardens Committee, provide some funding for initial start-up of approved gardens. All requests for start-up funding will be submitted in writing and are subject to the approval of the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens Committee;
  - f) Monitoring the Garden Sites periodically during the gardening season.

- Role of the Volunteer Community Garden Site Leaders

The role of the Volunteer Community Garden Site Leaders will include:

- a) Allocate garden plots in a fair and equitable manner
- b) Oversee the use of garden plots and conduct of gardeners
- c) Ensure compliance with legislation and Municipal by-laws, policies and regulations as well as the Community Garden Code of Conduct;
- d) Ensure that the necessary services for the community garden are coordinated (eg composting, waste removal, watering, plant distribution, etc)
- e) Maintain ongoing communication with the Overall Community Garden Coordinator and the CKPHU as to status and issues related to the site
- f) Fill out all appropriate applications as a municipal volunteer and complete police background check.

Additional Documents that have been created to support the development of the Chatham-Kent Community Gardens include:

- Manual for Development
- Community Garden Application Checklist
- Form #1 – Application/Proposal for a New Garden
- Form #2 – Site and Usage Survey
- Form #3A – Letter of Commitment
- Form #3B – Liability Waiver
- Form #3C – Gardeners Code of Conduct

**Policy Location:**

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