

**Sent:** Mon, January 17, 2011 11:22:20 AM

**Subject:** Community Garden Survey Feedback

Thank you all for participating in the Patterson Park Community Garden survey. This is to provide you with feedback on the results of that survey and to address specific comments/questions/and concerns from the survey.

We have met recently with the PARD district manager responsible for Patterson Park, Jimmy Cone, who expressed support for our proposal if we did not take over the existing volleyball court amenity. Given the response from the survey, we believe we will still have plenty of room for the garden without using the volleyball court. Our next step is to meet with PARD planner D'Anne Williams to review City rules and discuss what we need to do next. Look for a Friends of Patterson Park meeting notice for early February during which we will discuss latest news and address questions/comments regarding the community garden.

The survey was completed by 34 individuals. 31 of those expressed an interest in obtaining a garden plot at the proposed site (this number does not include 3 members of the steering committee), 3 were not interested in a plot but wanted to state their opposition to the proposal. See below for details - responses to comments are at the end.

*Question 1: We are considering offering at least two garden plot sizes for lease. The following are possible sizes that will be offered. Please check one of the sizes you would consider.*

*4' x 25' - 22 respondents indicated a preference for this size*

*8' x 25' - 9 respondents indicated a preference for this size*

*Question 2: Please indicate if you are interested in a wheelchair-accessible plot.*

1 respondent indicated an interest in a wheelchair-accessible plot.

Question 3: *There are a range of yearly plot fees charged by other community gardens in our area. These fees are driven by water costs, land leasing costs, infrastructure costs, etc. Please indicate whether you would consider the following price range reasonable for the offered plot sizes.*

*4' x 25' garden plot: \$30 to \$50 per year* - 26 respondents indicated they thought this was an appropriate range, none against.

*8' x 25' garden plot: \$60 to \$100 per year* - 20 respondents indicated they thought this was an appropriate range, 3 were against.

Question 4: *A community garden is labor intensive. If you lease a plot you will be expected to not only maintain your own plot, but also provide service hours for maintaining common areas, maintaining community plots, and/or organizing/participating in community garden events as they are an essential part of any community garden. Based on other community garden estimates for maintaining individual plots and requirements for community garden service hours, please indicate below if you would be willing to make the following time commitments.*

*Individual plots: Up to 4.5 hours/week during prime growing season* - 27 respondents indicated a willingness to support this requirement, 2 respondents indicated they would not be able to support the requirement.

*Service hours: 4 - 6 hours per 6 month growing season* - 30 respondents indicated a willingness to support this requirement, none were against.

Question 5: *If you would like to be contacted periodically with more detailed information regarding the progress of the Patterson Park Community Garden, please provide your email address below.*

26 respondents asked to be included on future information.

### Question 6: *Comments*

We had 15 general comments from respondents, in addition to 12 comments to the other questions

### **Comments/Responses:**

#### Question 1 Comments/Responses:

1. *Actually I'd recommend square, 10 x 10*

Response: Our original proposal was based on feedback received from another community garden coordinator that a 4' by something plot was optimal for reaching into one's plot from either side of the plot without having to step into the plot itself, thereby minimizing compaction of the soil. Furthermore, we've been told that a 100 square foot plot (4' x 25') should be the minimum offered to ensure a viable, productive plot. Our 8' x 25' (200 sq ft) offering was actually intended to be two adjacent 4' x 25' plots, which would give the same benefits with additional area for the plot owner. *However*, we have recently learned that the City intends to pass new rules governing community gardens on public property at the end of this month. Those new rules evidently require a minimum plot size of 10' x 20'. We will be discussing this with the City when we meet with them in early February.

2. *Either would be a good size*

3. *4' x 12' ? Or something a little smaller*

Response: See response to comment 1 above. We may be restricted to plot size offerings by City requirements.

4. *25' might even be too long*

Response: See response to comment 1 above.

#### Question 3 Comments/Responses:

1. *Those prices are very fair*

*2. I prefer the lower end of the range.*

*3. As little as possible. lots of neighbors live on fixed incomes*

Response: If we were to follow the example of Festival Beach Community Garden, the last CG to be established on public property, then a 200 sq ft plot would rent for \$30/year (assuming equivalent water usage and stable water prices).

Question 4 Comments/Responses:

*1. It's not clear if the service hours are in addition to the individual plot hours.*

Response: Yes, service hours are in addition to the individual plot hours. They are used for maintaining common areas (pathways, community plots, compost bins, tool shed, etc.)

*2. Uncertain about weekly commitment at this time.*

*3. 4.5 hours may be more than I can commit so maybe it wouldn't work for me but I am still interested.*

*4. Would be interested in a year round garden.*

Response: The CG will be open year-round. If a plot owner chooses not to plant during a given growing season, they will still be required to weed and maintain the appearance of their plot to protect the overall aesthetics of the garden and to prevent weeds from spreading to other plots.

*5. don't know what "up to" 4.5 hrs means*

Response: 4.5 hours is a rule of thumb based on experience from other gardens and is driven by what and how much is planted in a given plot. Some plants require more care than others, being more disease/insect prone, or requiring more feeding or watering. Balancing what you plant

with what you are willing to commit in time will be very important as there will be a garden bylaw which allows garden administrators to take away a plot that is not being properly maintained. Unmaintained plots is probably one of the biggest issues faced in community gardens, but the success of other community gardens in the area show that this problem can be dealt with.

#### Question 6 Comments/Responses:

*1. I have a community garden plot in Wells Branch. I just moved to Cherrywood. They were 10x20 plots and that size worked well. It's important to outline how many plots a family can have, whether a person can "give" their plot to another in mid or at end of term (bypassing administration), and notification systems for renewal notices. Allowing fences to put around gardens is important to prevent stealing. Thanks for doing this!*

Response: Regarding plot sizes, see response to Question 1 comments above. The number of plots a family can have will be determined when the City rules are established, but the preliminary draft rules from the City stated no more than 1 plot per family (but did not define what constituted a "family"). Also, there will likely be no ability to transfer plot ownership without going through the CG administration, as there may be a waiting list of others wanting to obtain a plot. The draft City rules require a locked, black-coated chain link fence to secure the perimeter of the CG.

*2. I generally love community gardens, but I do not think one would be a positive addition to Patterson Park. The open space is in regular use and a great addition to the neighborhood. I just moved several blocks closer to the park, and am looking forward to the day my baby is big enough to run all over the park.*

Response: The specific location of the proposed CG was selected because there is currently minimal activity observed in that space (south of the skateboard half pipe). But we want the community to know that

we intend the CG to be an enhancement to the park, and not a takeaway. Although the garden itself will be fenced in, as long as a member is inside, others in the community will be able to access the garden to enjoy the plants and other planned amenities, and we will have organized events, such as gardening demonstrations, during the year for the public. We are also planning to have native plantings (such as butterfly shrubs and vines) along the outside perimeter of the garden fence for the community at large to enjoy. We are also discussing following other community garden models which provide some public perimeter access to common plots for herbs, etc. Additionally, City rules will require at least two plots be dedicated to a school or retirement home. We would like to work with the Dell's Children hospital to make a plot available to the families of patients.

*3. I've been a gardener for many years at Sunshine Community Gardens, and served as board president for a year there.*

Response: Great to see someone with your experience getting involved with our effort! If you'd like to share your experience with our steering committee, please contact one of the steering committee members.

*4. Wonderful idea all around!*

*5. Would only be interested if a water source was readily available.*

Response: There is a water source near the small pavilion next to the basketball court. We will have to work with the City on installing a meter for our use and running a line to the proposed site.

*6. The current proposed location is what makes this particular community garden most appealing to me.*

*7. I would like to see composting facilities, preferably not containerized "fill from the top" type, but those that allow frequent turning of the compost.*

Response: We share your sentiment and intend to have compost bins

for hot composting of vegetative material.

8. *Thanks.*

9. Request to add partner on correspondence.

10. *Have alternative ideas been investigated? I do not think Patterson is suitable for a community garden.*

Response: We could not determine if this comment was related to the suitability of the soil in Patterson or to a similar concern as stated in comment 2. If the former, then we have pretty much determined that raised beds will be required in the CG due to the apparent poor soil conditions of the existing area. If the latter, then please see our response to comment 2.

11. *Thank you to the volunteers for this project!*

12. *I am against this at Patterson. I like wide open spaces. I have seen community gardens and they often look unkept. I know the intentions are good on so many levels but the reality it looks bad. I do not think Patterson needs any more clutter.*

Response: Please see our response to comment 2 and to Question 4 comment 5. We intend for the garden to be as aesthetically appealing and well-maintained as possible, and will have a published communication channel to its administrators so that the public can register any complaints about the operations or conditions of the garden.

13. *Glad to see this moving along! Everything sounds great so far.*

14. *It would be good if we could have rain water collection barrels to use, too!*

Response: We share your vision, and intend over time as we collectively can afford it to install rain-water collection facilities as part

of our planned tool shed. We must first however, ensure that the basic infrastructure is in place: water lines and hose bibs, raised beds, tool shed(s), and composting bins. Over time we would like to add rainwater collection and amenities such as benches and art.

15. *great idea, much needed*

End of survey results and responses.

Mark Smolen  
Chair, Friends of Patterson Park