



Agenda Report

Parks and Community Services Commission

File #: 26-258

Meeting Date: 4/23/2026

TITLE: COMMUNITY GARDENS UPDATE

DEPARTMENT: PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PRESENTED BY: BRIAN GRUNER, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

CONTACT INFORMATION: BRIAN GRUNER, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
DIRECTOR (714) 754-5009

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of staff that the Parks and Community Services Commission:

1. Receive and file this update on the Community Garden program and;
2. Provide direction on identifying new locations for additional garden centers in Costa Mesa.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Costa Mesa has two (2) community gardens, the Del Mar Community Garden on Del Mar Avenue, and the Hamilton Community Garden on Hamilton Street. The Del Mar Community Garden has been in existence for over 20 years and has 60 garden parcels and 5 raised garden beds. The Hamilton Community Garden was established in 2004 and has 42 parcels. The parcels are rented by residents to grow vegetables, fruits, flowers and plants for their consumption and use.

The annual cost to rent a parcel is \$60, plus a one-time \$20 key deposit and a \$100 clean-up deposit. Raised garden beds are a \$20 annual cost, since they are smaller. Each calendar year, gardeners pay the annual fee and sign an acknowledgement that they have read and will abide by the current Community Garden Rules and Agreement (Attachment 1). In late Fall of each year, staff prepares renewal packets that are sent to all gardeners. If the parcel is not renewed by the designated deadline date, the parcel will be assigned to the next person on the waitlist. Currently, Del Mar Community Garden has an average waitlist of 183 names and Hamilton Community Garden has an average waitlist of 59 names.

The Community Gardens were designated by the City as a self-governed entity monitored by the Parks & Community Services Department, with support provided by two (2) part-time City employees. The staff members are responsible for the administrative oversight of the gardens, including on site communication with gardeners, ensuring trash is picked up and portable restrooms are cleaned, and monitoring the tools, equipment, and water in use at the gardens.

ANALYSIS:

On an annual basis, staff explore opportunities to maintain and enhance the gardens. This year staff performed a major clean-up, disposing of items in the common area deemed unsafe or unclaimed by current gardeners.

As indicated by interested residents on the waitlist, there is a high demand for parcel space. Staff researched viable options to increase the number of available parcels within both community gardens. As garden plots are vacated, the plots will be resized to 6.5 feet wide by 7.5 feet long allowing two garden plots for every one plot as currently configured. While this doesn't solve the waiting list issue, it is still a positive use of that space and an opportunity that does not currently exist.

In preparation for this meeting, staff notified all current gardeners including those on the wait list to attend the meeting to share any thoughts, recommendations, or concerns regarding either the Del Mar Community Garden or the Hamilton Community Garden.

FISCAL REVIEW:

The Commission recommended that City Council allocate \$50,000 toward community gardens as part of the Fiscal Year 2027–28 Capital Improvement Program.

LEGAL REVIEW:

There is no legal review required for this report.

CONCLUSION:

It is the recommendation of staff that the Parks and Community Services Commission:

1. Receive and file this update on the Community Garden program and;
2. Provide direction on identifying new locations for additional garden centers in Costa Mesa.