



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**(1) Receive and File Culver City Community Garden Relocation Sites; (2) If Desired, Recommend to City Council Staff's Suggested Sites of Veterans Memorial Park and Syd Kronenthal Park; and (3) If Desired, recommend to City Council to Consider Non-park Property for Additional Communal, Hybrid, and/or Rentable Community Gardens.**

**Meeting Date:** March 9, 2023

**Contact Person/Dept:** Francisca Castillo/PRCS

**Phone Number:** (310) 253-6645

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes  No

**General Fund:** Yes  No

**Public Hearing:**

**Action Item:**

**Attachments:**

**Public Notification:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission (03/02/2023); (E-Mail) Parks, Recreation & Community Service Department Updates (03/02/2023)

**Department Approval:** Armando Abrego, PRCS Director (03/02/2023)

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission (1) receive and file Culver City Community Garden Relocation Sites; (2) if desired, recommend to City Council staff's suggested sites of Veterans Memorial Park and Syd Kronenthal Park; and (3) if desired, to recommend to City Council to consider non-park property for additional communal, hybrid, and/or rentable community gardens.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Culver City Community Garden (Garden) was established to provide a place for active participation in gardening for residents of Culver City who would otherwise not have the opportunity. The earliest Community Garden photograph on file is dated 1975. For many years, the Community Garden has been managed by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department.

To be eligible for a Garden plot, you must: 1) be a Culver City resident; 2) live in an apartment, condominium, townhome, or other dwelling unit; and 3) have no gardening space available to you. One plot is allowed per family/household. Plots are non-transferable to family members, friends, or

others, regardless of the circumstances. The PRCS Department maintains a waiting list of interested plot renters. These guidelines are contained in the Community Garden Rental Agreement (Attachment 1), which was last updated by staff in 2021. The Community Garden Plot Rental Fee is \$30.00 annually. A new and/or a replacement key to the Garden may be purchased for \$11.00.

### Wende Museum Creative Community Center and Housing

On January 24, 2022, the City Council adopted Ordinance Number 2022-001, approving a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, P2021-0174-CPA, subject to conditions of approval and code requirements, to allow the construction of a 3-story community center, up to 12 affordable housing dwelling units, a reconfigured community garden, and associated site improvements. The Project site is located at 10808-10860 Culver Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90230. The Community Garden is located at 10860 Culver Boulevard. *The Conditions of Approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment contained the following condition related to the Culver City Community Garden:*

- Revision allowing the Project replacement open space community garden at a City park as reflected in Condition of Approval No. 20 pertaining to fences/security barriers as follows: “*The Project will provide an equivalent amount of open space on the Project site to replace the displaced community garden. The City will work to relocate the community garden space at a Culver City Park*”, in order to implement the above revision.

The City Council directed staff to investigate potential alternative locations for the Garden and return with a report. On August 8, 2022, the remaining gardeners at the Garden were given notice that they must complete their harvest and remove all personal belongings by the end of the day on Sunday, September 18, 2022. This was done in order to make way for construction staging activities for the Creative Community Center and future construction of affordable housing units.

At the September 19, 2022, City Council Meeting, PRCS staff presented a discussion regarding potential alternative locations for the Garden. At that meeting, members of City Council and the public discussed their desire to not have any trees removed in the process of finding a new area, the importance of community outreach in identifying a new location, the possibility of having multiple locations, and the importance of equity in the use of the Garden. A motion was unanimously carried to return the item to the PRCS Commission to research locations for the Garden and engage with the community with alternatives to taking down trees, with the potential to include multiple sites for multiple use, and a set of rules, which include an analysis to allow for equity and access.

At the November 1, 2022, PRCS Commission, members discussed the need for alternative locations, the possibility of thinking outside of the parks in Culver City, and the need to investigate different models used by nearby cities. The commission unanimously approved the creation of the Community Gardens Ad Hoc Subcommittee to work with staff and engage with all members of the community.

## **DISCUSSION**

In order to have a better understanding of the logistics operating a community garden, PRCS Recreation and Community Services (RCS) Manager Francisca Castillo along with members from

the Community Garden Ad Hoc Subcommittee toured various community gardens and spoke with staff, volunteers, and master gardeners. These locations included Ishihara Park Learning Garden and Main Street Community Garden in Santa Monica, where they met with Community Gardens Program Coordinator Teague Weybright. An urban farming tour in Assembly District 55 was also scheduled and included visits to Seeds of Carver, Red Tails Farms, Asante Microfarm, and Heart Beet Gardening at Marina Del Rey M.S.

On January 30, 2023, RCS Managers Francisca Castillo and Dani Cullens, along with the members of the Community Garden Ad Hoc Subcommittee, toured the various park options in Culver City to discuss the pros and cons of each location. Using the knowledge, which they had learned from their earlier tours of the community gardens in other cities, they evaluated different models for a community garden in Culver City.

### Park Recommendations

After touring the parks in Culver City, staff and the members of the Community Garden Ad Hoc Subcommittee met to evaluate each of the parks. Criteria that they considered included ADA accessibility, the availability of free parking lots versus street parking and the proximity to public right of ways. They identified three potential areas for the Garden:

- **Veterans Memorial Park (Primary)**- This location has the potential for 10 or more raised bed plots. It has easy access to free parking and walkways and is within close proximity to the previous Garden. Tree removals are not needed at this location. An issue that is being considered for any future planning is the number of unhoused individuals in this park.
- **Syd Kronenthal Park (Primary)**- This location has the potential for up to 10 plots. It has easy access to free parking. There are some issues being considered for the future planning at this site. The area is next to the outdoor basketball court and across from a baseball field. Behind the area being considered is a commonly used bike path. The number of unhoused individuals in the park is also being considered.
- **Tellefson Park (Secondary)**- This location has the potential for 10 or more plots. Instead of being a heavily used park with programming and scheduled activities, Tellefson Park is classified by PRCS as a passive park. There are some issues being considered for the future planning of this site. There is no access to free parking at Tellefson Park. Only street parking is available. In order to get the park ready to have the Garden, a Capital Improvement Project would be needed, and multiple departments would have to approve it.

Staff and the members of the Community Garden Ad Hoc Subcommittee also discussed options for non-park property; however, none have been identified at this time.

### Community Outreach

On Monday, February 20, 2023, PRCS staff and the Community Garden Ad Hoc Subcommittee, held an in-person discussion with community members regarding the Garden. The power point presentation (Attachment 2) included information regarding the previous community garden policies and procedures, staff's research on multiple use gardens such as communal, hybrid, and rental, the potential relocation options, and the justification as to why some of the parks in Culver City do not offer a feasible location. Staff addressed the rules for the Garden as related to the PRCS department's operation. A virtual meeting with community members was held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, and covered the same information that was discussed during the in-person meeting.

### Marketing and Outreach Efforts

In order to make sure that the community was involved in the discussion about the future of the community gardens, PRCS staff completed an outreach plan that included flyers, posters, and digital announcements. These outreach materials announced the community meetings that took place in February and gave notice that the topic would be on the PRCS Commission's agenda in March.

Digital marketing included:

- Facebook announcements on February 7 and February 16,
- GovDelivery email notifications sent to the public on February 2 and February 14,
- Listings on the Community Calendar located on the City's website,
- Cable Crawler displayed at the February 27, 2023, City Council Meeting for the March 9, 2023, PRCS Commission Meeting,
- Emails to past Garden Renters, and
- Community ad posted on Culver City Patch website.

Non-Digital Marketing included:

- 150 letters to the residents surrounding Veterans Memorial Park distributed on February 17, 2023,
- 150 flyers to the residents surrounding Syd Kronenthal Park distributed on February 17, 2023,
- 500 Flyers were dropped off at the First Southern Baptist Church, the Kirk Douglass Theater, the Julian Dixon Library, Good Morning Stanley's, and the UPS Store,
- 15 posters were hung at high traffic PRCS sites throughout the City,
- *Culver City Crossroads* posted an article on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, and
- Past Gardeners were called.

Based on the staff's research of community gardens, community input from community meetings and statements at City Council Meetings, staff recommends that the PRCS Commission recommend to City Council to (1) recommend staff's suggested sites of Veterans Memorial Park and Syd Kronenthal Park; and (2) consider non-park property for a communal, hybrid, and/or rentable community garden.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this discussion.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

### **MOTIONS**

That the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission:

1. Receive and file Culver City Community Garden Relocation Sites;
2. If desired, recommend to City Council staff's suggested sites of Veterans Memorial Park and Syd Kronenthal Park; and
3. If desired, to recommend to City Council to consider non-park property for additional communal, hybrid, and/or rentable community gardens.