

Engagement summary

Community gardens

Engagement for four proposed community gardens closed on February 14, 2020. We've reviewed the feedback and, based on the results, will be moving forward with community gardens in each of the proposed locations starting with Burns Drive Park in spring 2020. Gardens at St. George's Park, Mollison Park, and Stephanie Drive Park will be built in fall 2020 so they are ready for planting in 2021. This gives us time to plan these spaces as we navigate community gardens during COVID-19.

The following is a summary of what we heard for each of the proposed gardens and how we plan to move forward. Please visit guelph.ca/communitygardens for detailed summaries for each garden.

Burns Drive Park

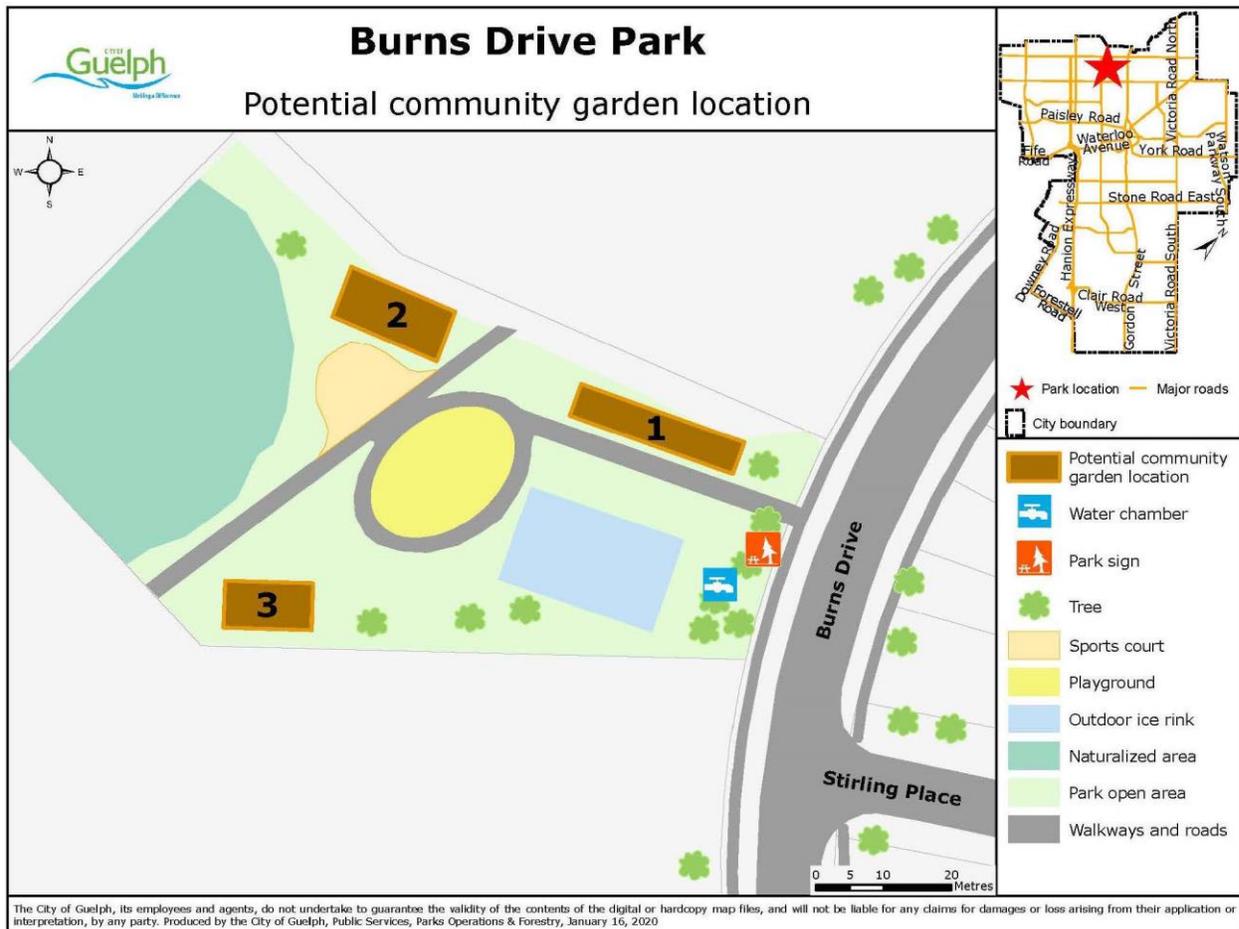
Survey results

- 32 residents responded to the survey
- 91 per cent fully support a community garden
- Three per cent somewhat support a community garden
- Three per cent have concerns about a community garden
- Three per cent do not support a community garden

We reviewed three potential locations for a community garden at Burns Drive Park:

- Location one is opposite the pathway and near the northeastern corner of the park, about 20 metres away from water access.
- Location two is behind the multi-use court, about 60 metres from water access
- Location three is about 60 metres from the west entrance to the park and about 60 metres from water access.

We've selected location one for the garden based on community feedback. It was the most popular option with community members because it's closest to water access, set back from the playground and multi-use court, and likely to receive the most hours of sunlight during the day.



St. George's Park

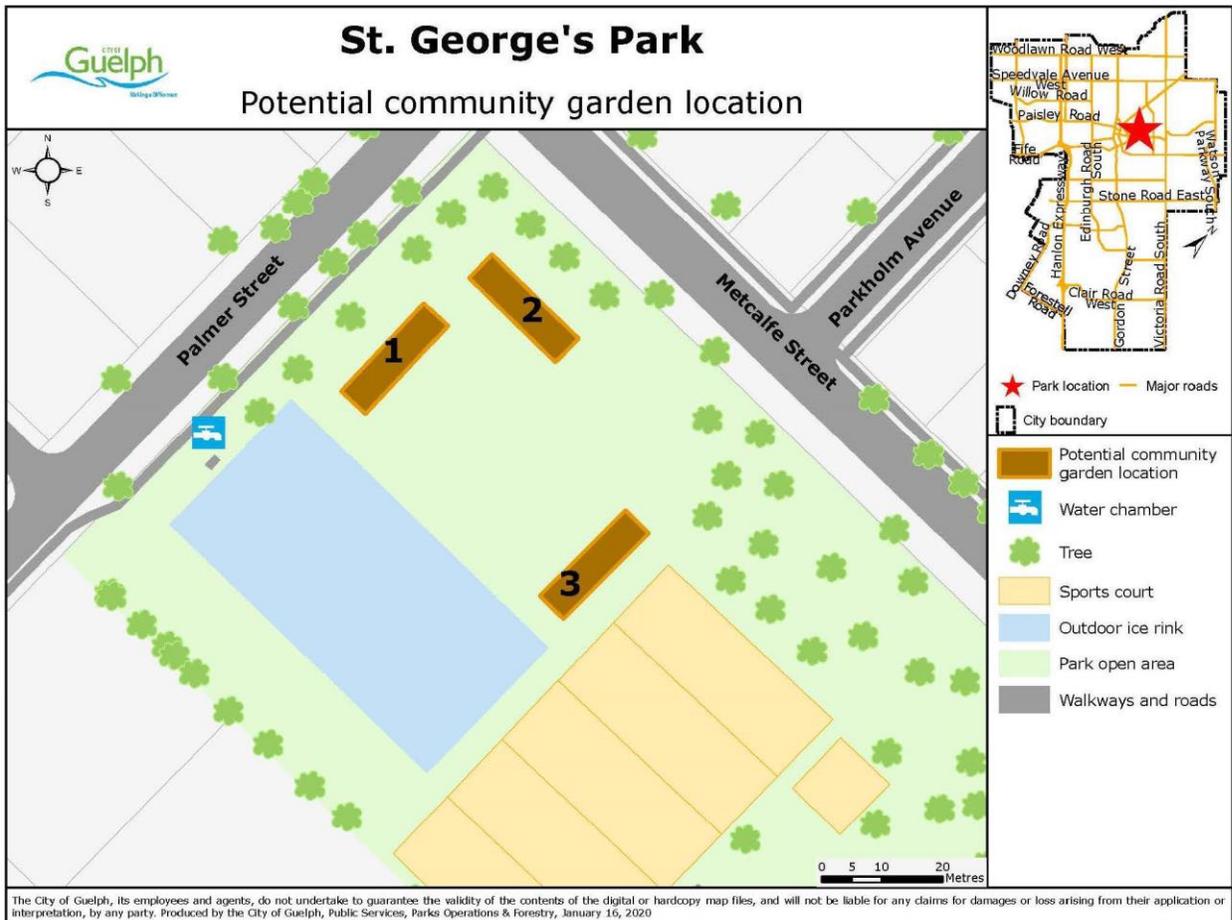
Survey results

- 121 residents responded to the survey
- 71 per cent fully support a community garden
- Five per cent somewhat support a community garden
- Seven per cent have concerns about a community garden
- 17 per cent do not support a community garden

We reviewed three potential locations for a community garden at St. George's Park:

- Location one is in the north side of the park, parallel to Palmer Street, near the skating rink. This location has the nearest water access.
- Location two is in the northeast corner of the park near the intersection of Palmer Street and Metcalfe Street and about 50 metres away from water access.
- Location three is on the south side of the central green area near the northeast corner of the tennis courts, and about 65 metres from water access.

We've selected location one for the garden based on community feedback. Although location three was more popular with survey respondents, location one was chosen because it is closest to water access and unlikely to be disrupted by future work on the tennis court.



Mollison Park

Survey results

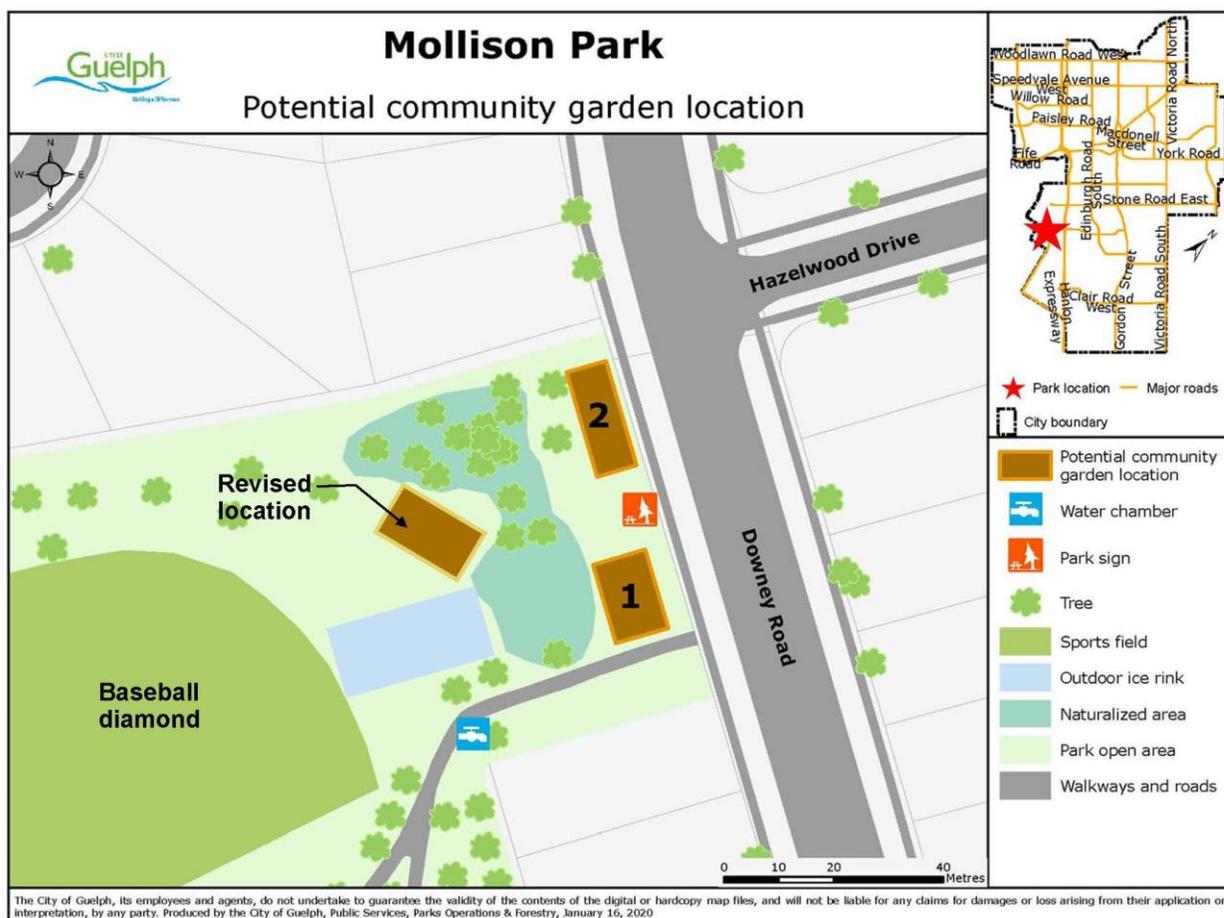
- 42 residents responded to the survey and we received two emails
- 73 per cent fully support a community garden
- Seven per cent somewhat support a community garden
- Five per cent have concerns about a community garden
- 16 per cent do not support a community garden

We reviewed two potential locations for a community garden at Mollison Park:

- Location one is in the northeast corner of the park, parallel to Downey Road, and about 60 metres from water access.

- Location two is closest to the pathway entrance off Downey Road and about 40 metres from water access.

Based on community feedback, we selected a different location than the two options presented to the community. The garden will be set up on the west side of the berm, beyond the baseball diamond outfield. Concerns raised by the community about the original locations' proximity to Downey Road and the park entrance prompted us to review the site for a better location.



Stephanie Drive Park

Survey results

- 41 residents responded to the survey
- 68 per cent fully support a community garden
- 7.5 per cent somewhat support a community garden
- 7.5 per cent have concerns about a community garden
- 17 per cent do not support a community garden

The only proposed site for a community garden at Stephanie Drive Park is beside the pathway near the south entrance to the park, opposite the intersection of Stephanie Drive and Hollyberry Place. The

survey highlighted some concerns about having a community garden in this park including specific concerns about the location. Concerns potential privacy concerns for neighbours, and that more people parking on Stephanie Drive could affect sight lines. Some people suggested the garden could be set further back in the park near the community skating rink.

Because there isn't enough room for a community garden closer to the community skating without moving the lighting that serves the rink and playground, and the site topography and space occupied by the playground limits the potential to set the garden elsewhere in the park without using school property, we'll be proceeding with the garden location originally proposed. We will explore ways to address concerns about privacy for neighbouring residents as part of the garden design and layout.



Following is a summary of key themes we heard across all four proposed garden sites. Feedback included supportive comments, key concerns and ways to address common concerns.

Supporters believe community gardens will:

- Create opportunities to meet neighbours and build community connections
- Provide opportunities to teach or learn more about food gardening especially where there are schools nearby
- Help improve food security

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- Be conveniently located and within walking distance of their home
 - Provide some space to garden where there isn't enough room and/or sunlight at their home.

The survey also highlighted some concerns and questions about community gardens. For more information about comments on specific community garden locations, visit guelph.ca/communitygardens.

Garden aesthetics and maintenance

Concerns were raised that community gardens can look untidy. All volunteer community garden coordinators enter into a written agreement with the City which includes a requirement for the garden to be maintained to specified standards. If the standards are not met, the garden may be removed and the space returned to its former state (e.g. grass). The coordinator communicates these requirements to garden members to ensure they do their part in maintaining the garden, and the City monitors the garden to ensure that maintenance standards are met.

Increased traffic and on-street parking

We expect most people using the community garden will be from the immediate neighbourhood and will walk or cycle to the garden. There may be occasions during the season when gardeners need to deliver materials to the site by car and gather to work together during garden plot prep, spring planting and fall cleanup. These activities may have a minor impact on street parking however, based on experience with other community gardens across the city, we expect that garden activity and the number of gardeners on site at any one time will be spread out during the day, week and season. If you see someone parked in a signed no parking area, please report it to bylaw at 519-837-2529.

Use of park space for community gardens

Concerns were raised that parks should not be used for community gardens because residents have ample space on their own properties to grow vegetables, and open, unprogrammed park space should be left for informal activities such as ball throwing, children playing and frisbee.

Not everyone has sufficient space, light or other conditions for a food garden in their yard, nor a yard in which to plant. Garden spaces in parks are specifically chosen to maximize needed sunlight to grow food. Every effort is made to place community gardens where they will have no or only minimal impact on other informal park play activities.

Gardens and wildlife

Concerns were raised that community gardens attract pets and wildlife including rabbits that could ruin plants, reduce the garden's success and discourage gardeners.

Raised beds and fences are design elements that volunteers can use to make gardens less accessible to pets and wildlife. Each garden design will be developed collaboratively based on community need and site conditions and may include some of these elements.

Next steps

The City will lay out and help volunteer coordinators plan and design garden space in these four parks over the next few months.

The garden space in Burns Drive Park will be prepared in the coming weeks so it is ready for planting this year using the COVID-19 community garden guidelines developed in collaboration with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.

Garden spaces in St. George's Park, Mollison Park and Stephanie Drive Park will be prepared this fall so they are ready for planting in spring 2021.

About Guelph's Community Gardens

The community garden program encourages volunteers to use City parks as locations for fruit, vegetable and pollinator gardens that benefit the community. Having fruits and vegetables grown just around the corner in your park brings a whole new meaning to local food. Pollinator gardens provide a food source for a variety of wildlife including insects and some bird species. Visit guelph.ca/communitygardens to learn more.

For more information

519-837-5626

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