



Agenda Report

Parks and Community Services
Commission

File #: 26-317

Meeting Date: 6/11/2026

TITLE: NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN LOCATION STUDY
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:

Staff recommends the Parks and Community Services Commission (PACS) review and finalize the Commission members who will be assigned to the new community garden location evaluation team.

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.

On April 23, 2026, staff provided a Garden Center update to the PACS Commission during a Special Meeting, informing the Commission of recent facility improvements, maintenance projects and the current wait list. The Commission received and filed the community garden update report and identified interested Commissioners to serve on a new community garden center location evaluation team.

ANALYSIS:

At the May 21, 2026 special meeting, the Commission selected Commissioners Cristian Garcia Arcos, Jason Komala, and Brandice Leger to serve on the new garden center evaluation team. The team will work with staff to evaluate potential alternate locations for future community gardens and return recommendations to the Commission for review and discussion.

To assist in determining a new location, the evaluation team will analyze the following criteria's:

1. Compatibility with Existing Park Uses
 - a. Water access, drainage, and estimated costs
 - b. Maintenance requirements
 - c. Storage needs
 - d. Sun exposure
 - e. Garden Center accessibility (point of entry)
 - f. Accessibility for residents (walking, biking, parking)
2. Cost Considerations
 - a. Site preparation costs
 - b. Irrigation installation
 - c. Fencing/infrastructure costs
3. Recommendation Framework
 - a. Identify Strength and challenges of each location
 - b. Recommend a preferred site and one or two alternatives
4. Review and analyze current management practice and conduct a comparative analysis with other local municipalities that operate garden centers.

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:

Staff recommends the PACS review and finalize the Commission members who will be assigned to the new community garden location evaluation team.