

Staff Report

COMMUNITY GARDENS

December 17, 2013

BACKGROUND:

The City Council referred to staff a correspondence from David Hoffman requesting the City acquire property between Mesa Verde Place and Garfield for a community garden. (see attached map).

The policy questions before the City Council are:

- Should the City expand its financial commitment to provide community gardens?
- If so, what level of service should be provided?
- And, where should the gardens be located?

In 1998, City land was converted to community garden plots at the Squaw Creek Park which is located on South Maple, south of the IDOT headquarters. There currently are 39 garden plots (10 by 40 feet) available for rent for \$20 per year. Services provided include spring and fall tilling, water, and mulch. Fencing is provided on one side of each row of plots. The number of plots rented for the last five years are listed below:

YEAR	AVAILABLE	RENTED
2013	39	39
2012	39	39
2011	37	25
2010	37	37
2009	37	34

As indicated from the information provided above, all of the plots have not always been rented over a five year period. However, over the past two years the Parks and Recreation Department staff has received more requests than plots available. Therefore, there appears to be a demand for additional community garden space.

The Council should be aware that there are also other community gardens available in the City. These sites include: Food at First (Trinity Christian Reformed Church), Eastwood Community Garden, Beloit Garden, 13th Street Garden "The Farm", Iowa State University Village Garden, Iowa State University Organic Farm, School Gardens (High School, Middle School, Mitchell & Sawyer), and Mustard Seed Community Farm.

If the Council would like to expand this service, Staff believes that rather than purchase more land to create gardens throughout the community, existing park land can accommodate this need. Staff has identified the following four neighborhood park locations in the quadrants of the City where potential garden plots could be placed: Patio Homes West, Christofferson Park, Carr Park, Lloyd Kurtz Park. These sites would be in addition to the current community garden site on South Maple.

The estimated costs to develop a portion of these neighborhood parks for community gardens are as follows:

Site	# of Plots	Water on site	Estimated Cost*	Parking
Carr Park	12	Yes	\$1,500	Yes
Christofferson Park	15	Yes	\$1,200	Yes
Lloyd Kurtz Park	10	Yes	\$700	On street
Patio Homes Park	8	Yes	\$850	On street

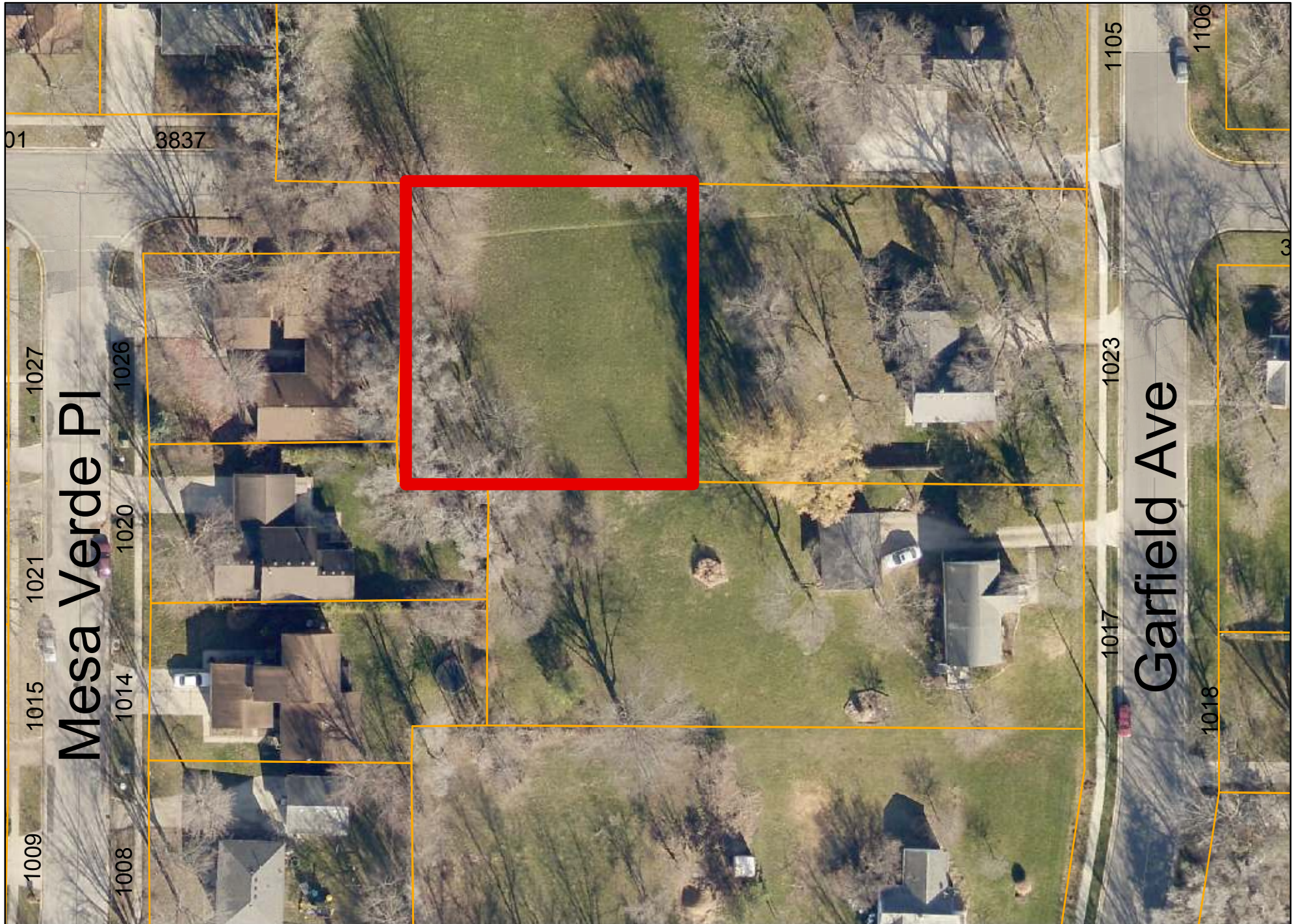
*Cost includes installing water source.

Community gardens can be established with open garden space, a fenced in garden space, or individualized raised plots. The staff's preference is to continue the current garden arrangement utilizing open garden space.

STAFF COMMENTS:

In the last two years the Parks and Recreation Department has received a number of requests for garden plots in addition to those currently offered at the Squaw Creek Park. Because of the costs associated with the purchase of land and the installation of infrastructure (water source, walking path), it appears that the preferred approach to providing additional community garden plots, if the Council wishes to do so, is to locate these gardens in existing parks. If the City Council wants to increase this service as described above, then a motion directing the staff to include the necessary funding in the FY 2014-15 operating budget would be in order.

These garden spaces will then be phased in according to the community interest for a particular site.



1023 Garfield Ave
Proposed property for purchase highlighted in red.



1 inch = 54 feet
Date: 12/12/2013