

Pkts. 7/10/2020

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Keith Abraham, Parks and Recreation Director
Date: July 14, 2020
Subject: Community Gardens

On April 14, 2020, City Council asked staff to provide a memo on what could be done to either utilize the current community gardens better or increase the community garden space.

CURRENT GARDENS:

Parks and Recreation currently manages two community garden spaces which are at 1) Squaw Creek Park, and 2) Carr Park. More information on each of these garden areas is below:

Squaw Creek Park

This park at the south end of South Maple Street is the main community garden area in the park system and it contains 63 garden plots that are 10' X 25' or 10' X 40' in size. There are three water hydrants available and space is provided for garden debris and composting. Gardeners pay \$20-\$25 per year for the space and most gardeners use the same garden plot year after year. Due to demand, 17 plots and two water hydrants were added to bring the total to 63 and three respectively. As you can see in the picture below, there is little, if any, room to add additional plots to this garden area.



Carr Park

In 2016, four raised garden beds were installed at Carr Park, 1704 Meadowlane Avenue, to provide a gardening opportunity for individuals with disabilities or mobility issues. Since then, an additional 10 raised beds have been added to bring the total to 14. This site does not have

a water hydrant but it is planned to add one in the future. Gardeners pay \$15 per year for the bed and most gardeners use the same one year after year. As you can see in the picture below, additional raised beds could be added to this garden area.



POTENTIAL AREAS FOR EXPANDING COMMUNITY GARDENS:

Staff reviewed parkland and non-parkland owned by the City and determined that there are three areas described below that warrant consideration for use as a community garden. If the City Council directs staff to explore any of these areas further, staff would need to reach out to the neighbors for feedback. The potential areas with descriptions and associated development costs are highlighted below:

1) Harrison Road Right-of-Way

This area is just west of Welbeck Drive and is approximately 1.8 acres. It does not appear Harrison Road will be extended over the railroad tracks so this could be a good use for this land that has sat vacant for many years. It is currently being mowed by an adjacent property owner. The lot is large enough that other amenities could be added in the future (e.g. play equipment, shelter, etc.) if a need is determined. The cost to connect water to this site, delineate garden plots, and signage would be approximately \$8,000. Additionally, this lot currently does not have a sidewalk and if it is decided to add one, there would be an additional cost (approximately \$4,000) to developing this site.



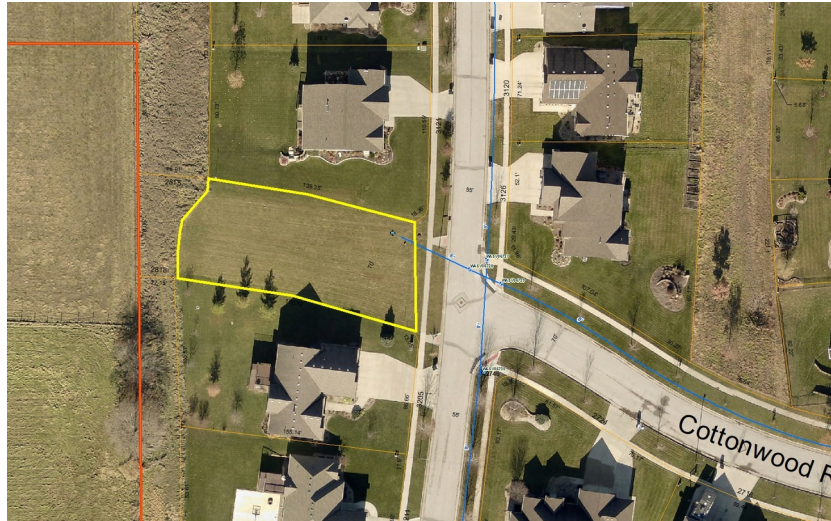
2. Between North Dakota Avenue and Delaware Avenue (Former water tower site)

This area is just east of Utah Drive between North Dakota and Delaware. There is an electrical substation south of the approximately one acre open area which could be used for gardens. When the water tower was removed, the footings were cut at a depth of three feet below ground level which should not interfere with gardening. It is currently being mowed by the City. The cost to connect water to this site, delineate garden plots, and signage would be approximately \$6,500. Additionally, this lot currently does not have a sidewalk and if it is decided to add one, there would be an additional cost (approximately \$12,000) to developing this site. For reference, there is sidewalk to the north of this lot, but not to south.



3) Cottonwood Road Right-of-Way

This area is just west of Red Fox Road and is approximately 0.3 acres. Unlike Harrison Road, Cottonwood will be extended west to State Avenue at some point in the future. Until that happens, this site could be used for community gardens. It is currently being mowed by the City. The cost to connect water to this site, delineate garden plots, and signage would be approximately \$5,000. This lot does have a sidewalk, so there would be no additional cost to developing this site.



STAFF COMMENTS:

The three new sights mentioned for consideration would spread community gardens to the north, south, and west of the city limits in addition to the two existing gardens which serve central and east Ames.