

Gold Hill Community Garden Development and Management Plan

Rational:

- Interest has been expressed on social media in having a Gold Hill Community Garden.
- The Gold Hill Parks Master Plan lists “Botanical Gardens” as being of “Moderate Importance”
- The Parks Advisory Committee is reviewing a draft plan for Wildfire Reduction and Vegetation Management for the Gold Hill Sports Park and Beach Park
- City Council member Bill Rigney has proposed plan for volunteer groups to manage portions of the park in line with the Vegetation Management plan.
- There have been at least two previous community gardens near Gold Hill, near the Moose Lodge and on Lampman Rd. near the Fire Station. These are no longer active and the groups previously involved have no plans to restart them.

Proposed Primary Objective:

- Provide Community Garden space for Gold Hill Citizens and surrounding community.

Proposed Secondary Objectives:

- Enhance the visual appearance of the Gold Hill Sports Park
- Focused volunteer efforts that will complement the Wildfire Reduction and Vegetation Management plan for the Gold Hill Sports Park.
- Provide community access for volunteers to garden food or ornamental plants for private use, resale and donation to other community organizations such as churches or the IOOF Food Pantry.
- Healthy opportunities for youth and adult outdoor work, development and education.
- Opportunity for expanded K-12 education programs.
- Utilize community garden volunteer labor to eliminate impacts to Gold Hill employees of presence of garden and reduce Gold Hill employee labor required for vegetation management in the area of the garden.

Proposed Resources

- New group of volunteers dedicated to the development and ongoing maintenance of the community garden and nearby areas. To be formed as a non-profit volunteer group, either a new organization or as a sub-committee of an existing community based non-profit organization.
- Land within the Gold Hill Sports Park
- “Rinseback” waste water from the Gold Hill water intake treatment plan.
- Additional development costs (fencing, garden beds, community tools, tool storage) to be finance by fundraising efforts of the Community Garden volunteer group and any available grants or matching funds from interested existing community organizations.
- Occasional vehicular access to the interior of the garden area would be required to bring in materials such as fencing or lumber and composted soils for construction of garden beds. This would not be a typical daily use by the gardeners. Gardeners bringing in tools or fertilizer weighing less than 60 lbs would use hand carts from the parking lot to the garden area.

Guidance

Once the community garden is established its visibility may increase interest and demand for garden beds. Or volunteers might loose interest and demand could fall. Therefore the following guidelines should direct the development of the garden.

- Start small and keep costs low, allow for expansion if interest builds.
- Use durable materials that should last 10-15 years if interest is maintained or grows
- Use designs and materials that can be easily removed and reused elsewhere if interest wanes.

Land Study

It is proposed that the community garden be placed on land between the bike path and private residences near the Gold Hill water (intake) treatment plant in the Gold Hill Sports Park. For the analysis of use, this area has been delineated as 6 pieces. See Figure 1.



Figure 1: Aerial view of study area

In this picture the water treatment plant is on the left middle, The Little League baseball field is bottom left, the old Power House is middle right, the bike path runs up the middle, the private residences are at the top half of the left edge.

Areas (boxes) 1, 2, and 3 are possible garden areas. Gold Hill City Council has approved the use of Area 1 for the Community Garden with the possibility to expand to Area 2 and 3 in the future.

Garden development in this area, and possible associated events (garden market) or other park features in this area would greatly encourage the use of the bike path as a central corridor of city owned public access and transportation.

It is proposed the garden area be fenced with lockable gates sufficiently to keep out deer and other nuisance animals. Fencing should be low cost, durable and easily removed if needed. Fencing should leave a 10' unfenced area from the edge of the paved bike path to ensure access for emergency vehicles and easy maintenance by city staff. Volunteer gardeners should maintain the fence line free of wildfire fuels. Details below.

It is proposed that water for the garden come from the sediment settling pond. This pond is feed by water used to rinse the sediment filters in the water treatment plant. Currently water from this pond eventually flows back into the Rogue River. Details below.

Area 1



Figure 2: Study Area 1

Area 1 is the smallest of the 3 garden areas in the study. With the 10' setback from the bike path this area measures 32' on the south end closest to the baseball field, 115' along the west side aligned with the chain link fence surrounding the treatment plant, 68' along the north side and 100' along the east side adjacent to the bike path. This is an area approximately 5,160 sq feet.

This area has great direct sunlight, limited only by the actual horizon (hills). This area is closest to the water source. One concern for this area is the recent use of herbicides to aid removal of blackberries. Another is the closeness to potential construction or deconstruction work on the Power House a few years in the future and the possible impact of dust and noise on gardeners.

This area would require 200' of new fencing, utilizing the existing chain link fence along the west side. This area could accommodate 24 garden beds 4' x 10' each leaving plenty of room for equipment access and tool storage.

Water Feature?



Figure 3: area for possible water feature / rock garden

There is a small piece of land between area 1 and the parking lot which includes the drainage ditch from the treatment plant settlement pond. In the future this could be developed into an attractive water feature / rock garden with open access and even garden benches.

Area 2

Area 2 is immediately north of Area 1. The eastern side of Area 2 follows a slight curve in the bike path. With the 10' setback from the bike path this area measures 55' on the south side, 115' on the west side, 75' on the north side and 100' on the east side along the bike path. On the west side 12' – 15' is unusable as a garden because it is a steep rocky slope. This reduces the garden area size to approximately 6,500 sq ft.

Area 2 is heavily shaded from early afternoon onward because of large trees on the private residence land (see Figure 4)



Figure 4: Study Area 2



Figure 5: Property line west side Area 2

The private residents have built a haphazard fence along this rocky slope (Figure 5). The property line between the residences and the park was surveyed in 1994, but the established landmarks are covered in brush or piles of wood. Discussion with the resident and close examination reveals this rocky slope is fill, consisting almost exclusively of 18" - 24" quarried rock (see Figure 5). Adding a fence on the west side of Area 2 would be extremely difficult because of this. This area would require 230' of fencing. The 12'-15' at the west end of both the north and south side would be difficult to install on the rocky slope. The west side would not be fenced, instead the garden would depend on the existing private resident's fencing to keep deer out. It would be difficult to install a good fence in this area.

The area could be considered for future expansion or a native or pollinator garden, increasing the gardening options in the area without requiring fencing or raised beds.

Area 3



Figure 6: Study Area 3

Area 3 is immediately north of Area 2. With the 10' setback from the bike path this area measures 75' on the south side, 130' on the west side, 80' on the north side and 120' on the east side along the bike path. On the west side 10' – 15' is unusable as a garden because of the slope. Some of the slope is the same rocky fill as Area 2. To allow 10' unfenced access along the edge of the bike path and a 10' wide strip of flat land long the rocky slope for access by mowers or the forest mulcher equipment to keep the rocky slope blackberry free we would end up with a fenced garden area that could be 45' on the south side, 55' on the north side and 120' on the east and west side.

The fenced garden area size would be approximately 6,000 sq ft., accommodating over 30 garden beds 4' x 10' each.

The area has good sun exposure most of the day, much better than Area 2, but not as good as Area 1.



Figures 7 and 8: Property line west side of Study Area 3

Management of Garden Area

Once the Community Garden infrastructure is developed, a group of community garden focused volunteers will manage it. They would utilize best known practices of other community gardens. This team would be responsible for fundraising for development and ongoing maintenance. This group of volunteers is currently developing the detailed guidelines specific to Gold Hill Community Garden, but based on established guidelines from successful community gardens. There would be one or more “Head Gardeners” to ensure responsible maintenance of the common areas, tools, and supplies and to ensure proper utilization of the garden beds by individual gardeners. Common area maintenance includes maintaining the fences, plumbing and mowing pathways and fence lines to 2' outside the fence to eliminate wildfire fuels.

Garden beds may be assigned to individuals or groups for the growing season. A small seasonal rental fee may be required to ensure ongoing use and maintenance of the garden bed. We are considering having some of the garden beds allocated for free use by low-income gardeners. Garden beds that fall into disuse will be reclaimed and reassigned.

The team will establish common rules for gardening methodologies (i.e. organic?) and would like to provide training classes to the public. We have interest from Master Gardeners to do this.

The team will decide the layout of the garden space including placement of beds, benches, picnic tables and large perennials or trees for shade. People interested in getting involved can register at <https://www.candogoldhill.org/communitygarden>

For the Gold Hill Community Garden, gardeners may grow any food or ornamental plants legal to grow on City property. No growing of cannabis would be allowed. They may utilize the produce of their assigned garden bed however they choose. Planting of perennial plants must be approved by the head gardener(s).

See the Appendices for example Community Garden Guidelines from other organizations.

Fencing Details

The primary goal of fencing is to keep deer and other nuisance animals out of the intensely gardened areas. One or more lockable gates would be needed to allow both pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

One fence company provided an estimate to install 300' chain link fencing 8' high with one 4' gate and one 10' gate for \$11,590.00.

Alternatively Red Brand fencing recommends fencing with wood corner posts and in-line T-posts (Figure 11). Wood posts can be spaced up to 50' apart with T-Posts every 10'. This fencing could be easily removed by rolling up the wire and pulling up the posts. With these materials, two 6' gates, 8' high Deer and Orchard fence and volunteer labor a 300' fence would cost about \$2,000.



Figure 11, Wood Post, T-post, Field Fencing

Water

The Gold Hill City Council has approved the use of water from the Treatment Plant “rinse back” settlement pond. This is the water used to rinse sediment from the Treatment Plant water filters. Currently all of this water eventually flows back to the Rogue River. Mike Bollweg of Southern Oregon Water Treatment has confirmed there are no “water rights” restrictions on the use of this water and highly recommends that it is being used for irrigation in the park. While “rinse back” happens intermittently, on the order of twice daily, the outflow from the settlement pond never stops and is considerable. There is a concrete sump at the outlet of the holding pond that previously had a water pump installed. The pump is gone, but wiring for the pump remains.



Figure 12 and 13: Sump and Sump Electrical Box

To supply the community garden a pump will be installed at the Sump area, powered by the existing electrical box. Piping will be buried to a pressure tank in the fenced garden area and then distributed to the garden beds. This will be used seasonally and will be drained and unused from October 1 to April 15 each year. This system while having some cost to the city (for electricity during the growing season), and to the community garden (pump, tank and piping) would provide a surplus of pressurized water that is currently not being used. It would be non-potable water in the garden and signs would have to be posted warning not to drink it.

Electrical costs are estimated to be \$1 to pump 15,700 gallons of water. This is based on a calculation of 1.75KW for a 1HP pump to run 1 hour and pump 3,300 gallons of water at 12 cents per KW. It is very unlikely to cost more than 50 cents a day for all the garden water we need.

Estimated costs to develop Community Garden.

The development costs estimated for Area 1 are:

- \$1,600 for 200' of 8' fencing with two 6' gates.
- \$1,500 for water pump, pressure tank, piping and hoses/
- \$2,400 for 10 garden beds to start with room for 14 more later at an additional cost
- \$100 or Common tools, shovels rakes, hoes, purchased from garage sales
- \$200 for donated tool shed for water tank and tools, fixed up and painted
- \$0 for all volunteer labor to install above. Counted as in-kind park volunteer hours

Area 1 cost \$5,800

Recommendation

Area 1 is the ideal area for a Community Garden with flat land, good sun exposure, closest to available water, and the lowest cost of development.

Area 2 and 3 would be good for possible future expansion of the community garden or for outside the fence flower area, possible similar to the “Pay it forward” garden at Del Rio.

The **Gold Hill Parks Advisory Committee** has recommended approval of the Community Garden Development. This recommendation was **approved by the Gold Hill City Council** with the following contingencies:

- Establishment of a volunteer organization with at least 5 volunteers committed to using and maintaining the garden for at least 2 growing seasons.
- Receipt of Park Volunteer Waivers for all gardeners
- Publication of Community Garden guidelines that address assignment of garden beds, maintenance of community garden common areas, any fees, and role of Head Gardener.
- Proof of \$5,000 of funds, discounts or credits, available for development of Community Garden.

The Gold Hill City Council also set aside \$1,500 to \$2,000 as matching funds to encourage volunteers to raise funds to complete the development of the community garden. The benefits of encouraging volunteer work in the Park and wildfire fuel reduction and vegetative management are well worth it.

Conclusion

A community garden will be an attractive and compelling addition to the Gold Hill Sports Park and complement near by use by the Little League and possible future children's play area or Splash Park.

Appendices

Sample Community Garden Guidelines:

<https://gatewaygreening.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Garden-Guidelines.pdf>