

# P-Patch Community Gardening Program

## Choosing a P-Patch Site

TIP

PP201

5/22/15

*P-Patch TIPS are reference documents that address topics related to the development and ongoing management of P-Patch Community Gardens.*

### Where can I site a P-Patch?

Ideal sites are vacant lots near relatively quiet streets with easy public access and lots of sun exposure. Publically owned property like City or County land private land like church property, un-used parking lots, hospitals, etc. are all possibilities to consider. The 2010 document [Growing Green: An Inventory of Public Lands Suitable for Community Gardening in Seattle](#) provides a useful map of some potential garden sites.

### What is an appropriate size for a P-Patch?

Gardens should be *no less than 4000 sq. ft in a residential area or 2000 sq ft.* in dense areas. As a general rule, every 200sq. ft. will provide space for one additional garden plot. Generally, a garden should have room for at least 20 garden plots when built in order to have enough participants involved in the site to collectively care for the space.

### What Makes a Good P-Patch Site?

There a number of elements to consider when choosing a site for a new P-Patch:

- Sun Exposure: full sun in residential area/ best available in dense urban area
- Access/Terrain: flat terrain and material drop off access. Is the site easy to access from street level. Is it possible to provide ADA-acceptable access?
- Size:
  - 4,000sf or greater in residential areas (for example SF 5000+ zones);
  - 2,000sf minimum in denser areas
  - Number of residents impacted
  - Best available in high priority urban zones
- Water (existing source versus need for meter)
- Innovative programming already exists or is in development to address community needs
- Land Ownership (publicly owned)



*Future site of Bitterlake P-Patch on the edge of Seattle Public Utilities land.*

- **Existing Trees:** Seattle has specific rules on how and when trees can be removed. A heavily wooded site may be difficult and/or costly to clear. See the [Tree Protection Regulations CAM](#) for more information on trees.
- **Neighbors:** Neighbors of a site should be comfortable with a new community garden near them. Contact neighbors early in the process to get them involved with development.

### How do I get permission to garden on a site?

Once you've located a promising site, you will need to contact the owner to see permission. You can find owner data through the Department of Planning and Development's [online GIS map](#). Hover over the parcel and right click the resulting arrow for a menu of additional information, including the property owner/ taxpayer.

If the site is *privately owned*, then either a sale or lease agreement is needed with the owner. The [GROW](#) can provide assistance in purchasing a property. Lease agreements are done through P-Patch staff, and should be at least 5 years in length. If the site is *publicly owned* (Parks, SPU, Transportation right of way, etc.) you will need to contact the government agency to work out a contractual agreement for



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## P-Patch Strategic Framework for Developing New Gardens

The P-Patch program staff and management developed a two step framework. The first step analyzes and prioritizes neighborhood areas based on a set of attributes. The second step analyzes possible sites based on a set of criteria for acquiring, developing and/or managing the specific sites.

**Step One: Establishing Neighborhood Priorities.** Using “Community Reporting Areas”, P-Patch program developed a framework of seven key neighborhood-level attributes. They are divided into two categories: Highest Priority and High Priority.

### **Highest Priorities -- 2 points:**

- ◆ Area is currently underserved by P-Patch program (gardening space in relation to population density and/or existing P-Patch waitlists).
  - ◆ Area is a neighborhood specifically called out in the Parks Levy (namely Queen Anne, Ballard, West Seattle, and Rainier Valley).
  - ◆ Area has relatively high percentages of historically and currently underserved populations, including low-income, seniors, immigrants and refugees.
- Area has feasible site(s) already identified and community organizing in place.

### **Higher Priorities -- 1 point:**

- ◆ Area contains designated urban village(s) under the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.
- ◆ Area aligns with Mayoral revitalization focus on Southeast Seattle and South Park.
- ◆ Area has relatively limited food access as documented by the Sound Food Report.

### **Tools Used to Establish Neighborhood Priorities.**

The following data sources were used in conjunction with the framework:

#### **Census Maps showing:**

- ◆ P-Patch Gardens in relation to Population Density
- ◆ Language Groupings: Spanish, Vietnamese, E. African, etc
- ◆ Households with 200% of Poverty Level and Below

- ◆ Affordable housing and senior housing locations
- ◆ P-Patch Community Gardening Program database and waitlists
- ◆ Sound Food Report: a relatively recent UW analysis of food deserts in the city.

**Step Two: Analysis of Candidate Sites.** Staff developed a set of attributes to assess site feasibility in the priority areas. This assessment tool uses 10 criteria, ascribing one point for each:

- ◆ Sun Exposure: full sun in residential area/ best available in dense urban area
- ◆ Access/Terrain: flat terrain and material drop off
  - ⇒ Size: 4,000sf or greater in residential areas (for example SF 5000+ zones); 2,000sf minimum in denser area
  - ⇒ Number of residents impacted: Best available in high priority urban zones
- ◆ Water (existing source versus need for meter)
- ◆ Innovative programming already exists or is in development to address community needs
- ◆ Expansion of existing P-Patch
- ◆ Land Ownership (publicly owned)
- ◆ Security (neighbors able to view site)
- ◆ Capacity to serve neighborhood priority (site may be on border of priority neighborhood)
- ◆ Ambiance (busy street, windy)

### **Community Impact 2009-10**

New acreage in food production added: 1.75 acre

Number of new garden plots added: 400

New gardeners added: 400

### **Strategic Framework for Community Gardens and P-Patches**

With the support from the Levy Oversight Committee, this framework will guide allocations of the remaining Parks and Green Spaces Levy funds for the next three years. Recently, the Mayor and City Council appropriated \$1.0 million of the Levy for community gardens and P-Patches. This front end appropriation recognizes the wait list of over 1,900 families and individuals who are currently waiting for a plot. It also recognizes the growing community need as well as interest in community gardening, local food production, and food security.



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