



HOSFORD-ABERNETHY
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Chloe Eudaly

Portland City Council
1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 130
Portland, OR 97204

April 20, 2018

Re: Letter Opposing 40% Plot Fee Increase for Everett Community Garden and other affected Community Gardens

The Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND) joins the Friends of Portland Community Gardens in opposing the proposed 40% plot fee increase for Clinton Community Garden, an increase focused on just 8 other community gardens.

The fee increase comes just one year after plot fees were increased by 10%.

The plot fee increase has been explained as a way to raise \$9,000 in funds, and shorten 3-year or longer waitlists. We believe that community gardens will play an increasingly important role as our city grows and densifies. Many new residents have no access to opportunities for gardening, and we agree a 3-year wait for a garden plot is too long. Rather than trying to increase plot turnover through increasing fees, which will hit our lowest income residents hardest (our neighborhood is not uniformly affluent), we would ask that you increase the amount of land available for gardening in the communities where long waitlists demonstrate demand is highest. Simply subdividing plots is not sufficient; we need more garden area. (To that end, we note that there is some unused room at the Clinton Community Garden near the main entrance, formerly occupied by a now-defunct tree, where you should consider adding additional plots).

Renting a community garden plot is not analogous to the rental of other park amenities, such as picnic tables or ball fields. A community garden plot provides sustenance for individuals and families, and it enables people to grow affordable, nutritious, and organic produce of a quality you cannot get in a grocery store. Many gardeners develop a spiritual connection to plots they have worked on for decades, and they value the community of fellow gardeners developed over years of gardening together in a diverse community of mixed ages, incomes, race, and ethnicities. The city's fee policy should not be driven by a desire to increase plot turnover.

Everyone should have access to gardening opportunities, not just those able to afford higher fees, or those willing to drive to more affordable plots farther out. \$9,000 seems a modest sum. That amount could be

raised by smaller increases throughout the Community Gardening system (and the scholarship fund can continue to provide support for gardeners who need assistance in paying their plot fees), or perhaps gardeners could be asked to make a voluntary contribution to support the program.

Our Community Gardens are valuable to a growing number of people in our community. We ask that you scale back the funding increase, and find ways to expand the program to keep up with the demands of our growing community.

Sincerely,

Chris Eykamp
Vice-chair, Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood District

Cc: Friends of Portland Community Gardens
Mike Abbate, Portland Parks Director
Laura Niemi, Community Gardens Program Director