

**Twin Cities
Community Garden Sustainability Plan
Final Report**

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**Prepared by
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**For
The Green Institute
Minnesota State Horticultural Society
Farm In The City**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	3
Methodology.....	4
Research of Local Community Gardens	4
Research of Regional models.....	5
Results.....	6
Results.....	7
Summary of Plan.....	11
Description of Recommendations.....	12
Create a Community Garden Association.....	13
Partner with Public Sector	18
Collaborate with Organizations	24
Conclusion	28
Appendix A: Defining Community Gardens	30
Appendix B: Study Findings.....	33
Appendix C: Community Gardening Myths.....	37
Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions	39
Appendix E: CGA Implementation	45
Appendix F: Recommended CGA Activities	56
Communication among Community Gardeners	56
Events.....	59
Data Collection	62
Appendix G: Garden Survey.....	65
Appendix H: CGA Partnership	66
Appendix I: Summary of Recommended Research.....	69
Appendix J: A City’s Comprehensive Plan	70
Appendix K: Zoning	72
Appendix L: Land Trusts	73

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Garden Sustainability Plan documents the challenges facing community gardens in the Twin Cities and recommends a strategy to preserve and promote community gardens. Three organizations partnered to sponsor this study: Farm in the City, The Green Institute, and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society, with funding from the McKnight Foundation. The plan is the result of interviews with gardeners and other stakeholders that formed a working group to refine the recommendations.

All community gardens have basic needs and share common challenges, but they are unique garden communities.¹ They result from the skills, talents and contributions of their members and local community in building both the garden and a community around the garden. Consequently, securing the future of community gardens will require a diverse set of resources and solutions. For example, those gardens located on public lands need public sector support to secure the garden site, whereas gardens located on privately held lands require the support of organizations and individuals. Other needs, such as supplies and technical assistance, are required to a varying extent by all gardens. Consequently, community gardeners, through a cohesive network, are best suited to meet the complex and different needs of garden communities, including advocate and promote community gardens. What happens with one community garden affects all, and therefore it is in the best interest of community gardening that gardeners are organized and work collectively for its future.

This plan recommends that garden communities, gardeners, friends of community gardens and organizations form a community garden association (CGA) that advocates, negotiates and collaborates on behalf of community gardening. Its primary mission must be to strengthen and broaden the network of gardeners, to facilitate their communication, and to assist them in building the garden's community, deepening the garden's relationship with the local community and resolve conflicts when they occur. Ultimately, the CGA should provide members affordable, high quality insurance, help negotiate leases to secure garden land and receive tax-deductible donations and grants on behalf of gardeners.

A CGA gives community gardeners a unified presence and the capacity to educate the general public on the benefits of community gardening, and to partner with public entities and interest groups to achieve common goals. Given decreasing funds for both the public and the nonprofit sectors, garden communities must start to rely on other methods of sustaining themselves. They must create cross-sectional partnerships with these entities to ensure the future of community gardening while assisting these sectors achieve mutual goals.

In addition to the recommendation for a community garden association, two collaborative efforts for the CGA are outlined in this plan.

The first effort is to develop a partnership with public entities, where the CGA works with gardeners to create vibrant supportive communities that serve public, social and ecological goals. In return, public sector entities, such as neighborhood organizations, cities, schools and counties,

¹ Gardeners and supporters of a specific garden site

will develop a compact with the CGA to secure garden land, keep fees to a minimum, and provide access to materials and goods.

In the second collaboration, the CGA works with other organizations and businesses to advocate for public policy changes. Community gardens and gardeners contribute to public life in many ways, and thus, already share common interest with a broad spectrum of organizations, including, but not limited to: affordable housing, anti-hunger, green space, nutritionists/anti-obesity, healthcare, cultural nutrition, social services and more.

The three recommendations are listed in order of priority, but can be developed simultaneously:

- 1) Form an association of Twin Cities community gardens
- 2) Develop a partnership between the public sector and the CGA
- 3) Collaborate with social and environmental justice organizations for policy changes and projects conducive to community gardening.

The recommendations are largely about building community, whether at the garden site, with the local community, between all community gardeners, or with the public and private sectors. Building community relations is necessary in order for the gardens themselves to be an ongoing success.

INTRODUCTION

A number of studies have attempted to establish the value of community gardens within their city or region, in part to advocate for public support for their existence. Community gardens are not a business venture, but they do require substantial resources and commitment from a community in order to establish and maintain them. Land, labor and water are the basic resources needed by a community garden. Supporting resources, such as garden tools, seeds and plants, topsoil compost/soil amendments, garden structures (benches, fence, arbor, etc.), art, hoses, etc., contribute to the success of the community garden and promote the sense of a shared space and project. Support from the public sector can ultimately determine the fate of a community garden; if government has the will, it can facilitate the maintenance and creation of community gardens through

- Protecting existing gardens from development pressures
- Working cooperatively with garden communities
- Sharing public goods and services when available
- Keeping land and water fees to a minimum to promote the creation of new garden spaces

Community gardens are about building community in addition to creating a garden space. They are started by a core group of gardeners, and often build a sense of community that extends beyond the immediate founding group. In community gardens in Minneapolis, Julie Filapek² of Stevens Square Community Organization, Minneapolis, found that the majority of gardeners and neighbors state that the garden site must be for the local community, not solely for use by the gardeners.

Gardens are important to the social and natural landscape of the Twin Cities, and their loss means a loss of opportunity in community-building and raising environmental awareness. Gardening connects people to the soil and is an important vehicle for understanding how nature operates; it shapes perceptions and values of the natural environment, fostering a respect that will ultimately reduce pollution and improve all our green space. While our cities become more densely populated, it becomes increasingly more important to have green space and for people to have access to space to grow plants and vegetables. Gardens enable the knowledge and skills of growing food (and their preparation and storage) and flowers to be passed on to citizens from one generation to the next. Last, they are one of the few spaces where people of different ethnicities and ages can connect and form a bond across these usual boundaries.

Like parks, community gardens provide a public green space, and provide a sense of a shared project that inherently builds connections and community. And like sports facilities, community gardens restrict public space to a certain defined use. However, community gardens are a comparative bargain. Community gardens use relatively little land, labor and water, compared to seasonal use facilities such as athletic fields and public golf courses. For community gardens, 80% of the cost is in the labor, and that is volunteered by gardeners (Schmelzkopf 1996). Moreover, community gardening requires much less land compared to other seasonal land uses.

² 2004 Masters Thesis, Tufts University, Boston, MA.

Community gardens also offer a range of activities beyond gardening. They become sites for educational and art programs, extra-curricular activities for you, and spaces for the community to meet informally and formally. Gardens appeals to people across the age, ethnicity and physical ability spectrum and provides a strong sense of local community while similarly defining the use of public space. Community gardens are wise investments for any city. Supportive governmental policies can produce huge dividends as density increases, pairing shared open space with high-density development to maintain a high quality of life in the Twin Cities.

A healthy urban landscape includes the ability of all residents to join a community garden within the Twin Cities, and, consequently, for there to be gardens located where there is need and desire. Community gardens are a type of green space that is important to the social, environmental and economic landscape of our cities. They can, and should, be community assets, providing a number of benefits to residents:

- Restores relationship to the land
- Connects people to the source of our food
- Exercise and social time in the outdoors
- A space where people can get to know their neighbors
- Green relief from the built environment
- A space and community where organizations, agencies and institutions can extend their programming

BACKGROUND

In the 1980s and early 1990s, a time of stagnant or even declining property values, many vacant lots in the core neighborhoods of Minneapolis and Saint Paul were converted to community gardens. Many gardens were established on lots left derelict when buildings were razed, and their establishment often encouraged by the city's economic arm³ and the police department as community crime prevention (eyes on the street) and help the city maintain these sites. As long as property values and development pressures remained low, these gardens continued to exist. In the last ten years, the real estate market became very strong and most of these gardens have disappeared as leases have been denied to existing and new gardens. Vacant urban lots are now desired for development, and variances in building codes have enabled previously unbuildable lots to be developed. Losses should be expected,⁴ but a lack of policy providing gardeners recourse destroyed several vibrant communities associated with the lost garden and does not facilitate the establishment of new gardens when the economy cycles again.

An additional pressure on community gardens is the mounting financial burden placed upon them as governments face yearly budget cuts. Community gardens are required to pay increasingly higher fees for leases, water and water maintenance. For community gardens sited on municipal and county lands, leases often include year-round maintenance of the site. Taxes can also be burdensome to community gardeners, and do not make sense when garden sites are open for the entire local community to enjoy.

Through its Urban Lands Program, the Sustainable Resource Center provided liability insurance and negotiated leases with landowners for the nominal fee of \$35 per garden – a highly subsidized price for community gardens. The Sustainable Resource Center served gardens across Ramsey and Hennepin Counties for nearly 30 years. With little warning in the winter of 2002, SRC announced that it was canceling its Urban Lands Program, leaving community gardeners few means to fulfill these essential services.

In 2004, the Twin Cities Greening Coalition (TCGC), a group of community gardening and greening programs based in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, began the process of developing a plan to comprehensively meet the needs of community gardens. With funding from the McKnight Foundation, TCGC was able to hire a staff person to lead the planning process with community gardeners and staff from green space organizations and public agencies to create a Sustainability Plan. As implied by its name, this plan proposes methods and initiatives to meet two goals: 1) strengthen community gardening within the Twin Cities⁵ and 2) begin to develop a strategy to protect existing community gardens within the Twin Cities. In addition to having the capacity for continuous operation, long-term sustainability depends upon the gardening community meeting three components of sustainability: economic viability, beneficial to the natural environment, and social inclusiveness.

³ In Minneapolis, this process was supported by the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) to keep these vacant lots from being a community blight. The Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) similarly supported such efforts in St. Paul.

⁴ Kurtz, Hilda. 1996. "Constructions of "Community" and "Garden": An Approach to Community Gardens in Minneapolis." Masters Thesis, University of Minnesota.

⁵ At this time, "Twin Cities" refers to Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, and sub-jurisdictions, such as cities, parks and school districts.

METHODOLOGY

This study had two objectives consisting of: 1) interviews of regional stakeholders about challenges and issues they face with community gardening, and 2) research regional models for trends and ideas. The project manager conducted the majority of the research between September 2004 and January 2005. The study was supervised by an advisory committee, which consisted of staff from the Green Institute, Minnesota State Horticultural Society, and Farm in the City.⁶

A local community garden working group (CGWG) was convened for the primary purpose of providing further input and guidance on the development of this sustainability plan. The CGWG consisted largely of community gardeners and supportive organizations, including members of the advisory committee. In December, interview findings were presented at the group's first meeting for their feedback and input. January through April 2005, members of the CGWG, GreenSpace Partners (GSP),⁷ TCGC and the Advisory Committee reviewed the first draft of this sustainability plan and provided feedback both in writing and during a meeting. The advisory committee, and a member each from the CGWG and GSP reviewed the final draft.

Research of Local Community Gardens

In September 2004 the advisory committee and the project manager developed a definition and typology of community gardens (see Appendix A for more details) to understand the “landscape” of community gardening within the Twin Cities. The definition (below) was further refined by the CGWG in December 2004 and it is the working definition for this plan.

A community garden is any space where plants are grown and maintained by a community to meet the needs of that community.

In this definition, a community garden is primarily a physical locality and all operations occurring on or in conjunction with that space. The community of people who work together to define that space (i.e. maintaining it and any activities related to it) are defined as a garden community for the purposes of this report. Some garden communities, such as a garden club, can maintain more than one garden.

Initially, the project intended to interview garden coordinators that represented the diversity and geography of community gardens in the Twin Cities metro area. There were five separate lists of community gardens, but for all but the Minneapolis community gardens there was insufficient information for any analysis other than number of gardens per city or county. In addition, it was difficult to ascertain how the databases were created and their operational definition of community garden. The job was more complicated than anticipated and would require more hours than were available, so it was postponed until much later in the project and the research method was adjusted.⁸

⁶ Corrie Zoll, The Green Institute; Vicky Vogels, MN State Horticultural Society; Anna Wasescha, Farm in the City

⁷ GSP meets in the evenings every six weeks at the Green Institute and consists largely of community gardeners within south Minneapolis.

⁸ In the summer of 2005, a limited effort was made to conduct an online survey of community gardens. The MN Green program of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society put out a simple questionnaire by email, which resulted in over 50 responses statewide. This effort will be renewed in the second phase of the sustainability plan.

To maximize the time available, the advisory committee decided to focus efforts on interviewing garden coordinators, landowners, and public servants that they felt could speak effectively to the issues and challenges of community gardening. The advisory committee provided names and contact information to the Project Manager who conducted the interviews. Preference was given to interviews conducted in person and on the garden site, or for a non-gardener stakeholder, at their office or a neutral location such as a café. If it was not possible to interview in person, then interviews were conducted over the phone. Hand notes were taken during the interviews and typed up within 24 hours. Not all persons were interviewed and some interviews were shortened due to one of three reasons: they could not be reached, they did not have the time, or the interview phase of this study ended.

Interviews were open-ended. Information asked of non-gardener stakeholders included, but was not limited to the first three topics listed below. When appropriate, community gardeners were asked about the items listed below.

- The history of the community garden, or involvement in community gardening
- The issues and challenges the garden or its community face
- Any thoughts, models or principles of sustainability which should be included in the plan
- How the community garden operated
- Whether the garden community has a planned or defacto mission, goals and objectives

The advisory committee expressed concern over interviewing landowners and insurers and the possibility that an interview may threaten current understanding between them and the garden community. Input from these two stakeholders required a different approach. Two student interns helped gain an understanding of public landowner issues in spring and summer of 2005. Hired through an NPCR research internship, a student researcher asked public entities their policy and procedure for a land lease for a community garden. He also met and talked with the St. Paul District Councils (17 total) about supporting existing or future community gardens within their districts. The second intern adapted the survey for Minneapolis Neighborhood Associations (85 total), and had a 40% response rate. Their results do not appear in this plan.

Research of Regional models

The project manager was responsible for exploring community garden programs or organizations that worked with a number of community gardens over a region. Potential models or respondents (persons interviewed) were identified in one of three ways:

1. Received recommendations from the advisory committee and respondents
2. Extensive literature research and internet searches
3. Attended two national conferences in October 2004: The American Community Gardening Association Conference held in Toronto, Canada, and the Community Food Security Coalition Conference held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Apart from those who were interviewed at either of the conferences listed above, the interview process was similar for remaining respondents. Once a program or organization was identified

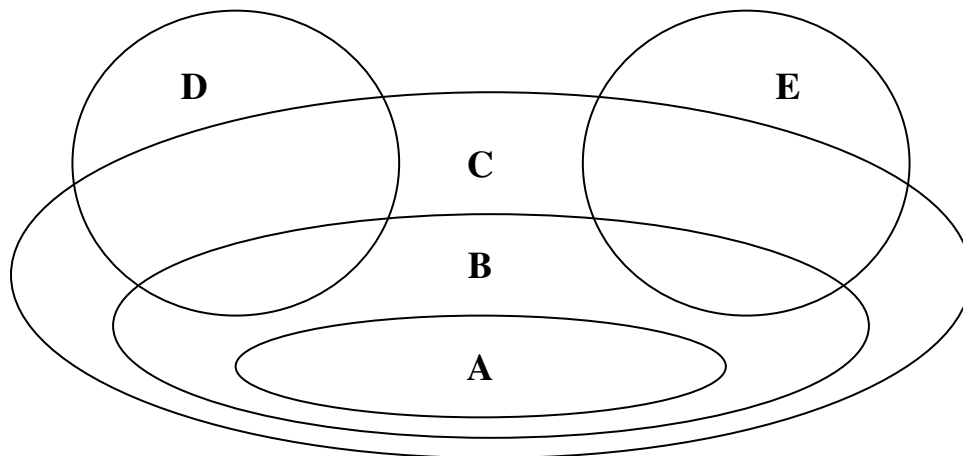
for relevance to the project, a telephone interview was requested by email. In the absence of email, the interviewee was first contacted by telephone. The potential interviewee was informed of the project and asked for a convenient time for an interview. Interviews were either conducted at that time or later at an prearranged time. Some respondents provided reference material through email, website or the mail.

Respondents were asked open-ended questions about the following topics (when appropriate):

- Land tenure: rent or own, partners, securing land for the long-term, cost
- Liability insurance: availability, partners, cost, coverage
- Services they provide to gardeners and how they are organized
- Funding the organization/program and related projects
- Relationships to public, private and charitable sectors
- History of the program/organization and factors were responsible for shaping it
- Their perception of sustainable for their organization, their garden sites and communities, and vision for their program/organization

Research, analysis and presentation of findings followed a political ecology approach,⁹ which examines the data at several levels and accounts for relationships within a level and between levels. Respondents identified five types of relationships. These are listed below and presented in a venn diagram to show their interrelationship.

- A. The garden’s relationship to its user (physical and social issues in operating the garden successfully)
- B. The garden and the local community
- C. Between garden communities
- D. The potential allies (i.e. green space advocates)
- E. The public sector



⁹ Kottak, Conrad
1999 “The New Ecological Anthropology.” *American Anthropologist*, 101 (1): 23-35.

RESULTS

Status of Twin Cities Community Gardens

There are a wide variety of community gardens within the Twin Cities. They vary in how they operate, organize key functions, and define their mission and goals. They can be coordinated by a volunteer (typically a gardener), or by an organization, such as a nonprofit organization, social service organization. An organization can either support or operate a community garden, and may work with more than one community garden. Other gardens are supported through the volunteer efforts of a block club, church or other loose organization, and can offer free participation or provide plots for rent. As a result, gardens are organized in very different ways; some provide access to people to grow plants that may or may not produce food, other gardens specifically grow food to donate to those in need, while others only grow plants for beautification purposes. Community gardens can be loosely organized or can establish their own nonprofit status. Moreover, a community garden can have any combination of the above elements. See Appendix A for a fuller description of community gardens and their components.

There are 219 *known* community gardens in the seven county metropolitan area. The cities with community gardens are listed below including the number of community gardens they contain:

Number of community gardens per municipality and county

Anoka County		Hennepin County	115	Ramsey County	100
none known		Bloomington	1	Saint Paul	98
		Brooklyn Park	2	Roseville	1
Carver County	1	Eden Prairie	1	White Bear Lake	1
Chanassen	1	Hopkins	1		
		Minneapolis	104	Scott County	
Dakota County	2	Minnetonka	1	none known	
Farmington	1	Richfield	1		
Hastings	1	Saint Louis Park	4	Washington County	1
				Stillwater	1

The vast majority of gardens fall within Minneapolis and St. Paul (93%) and nearly all *known* community gardens fall within Ramsey and Hennepin Counties (98%). As mentioned there is a heavy bias toward Minneapolis and St. Paul community gardens as three out of the five databases had only gardens from these two cities. This analysis excludes data from the University of Minnesota Design Map, “Growing Together: The Twin Cities community in Gardens.”¹⁰ This map lists 288 community gardens, including more cities and more community gardens for some cities. However the data was not included because neither the operational definition of a community garden nor the methodology could be ascertained.

Consequently, while the plan initially intended to address the needs of community gardens in the entire metro area, it was recommended by the study’s working group that implementation of the

¹⁰ Fernstrum, Wendy, Chris Faust, and Mike Tincher
2003 “Growing Together: The Twin Cities community in Gardens.” Knowledge Map Series. University of Minnesota Design Institute. Minneapolis, MN.

plan focus on these two counties and their respective cities. Once implemented, the sustainability plan can include the other metro counties.

Over 100 community gardeners from a wide range of community gardens within Ramsey and Hennepin Counties, community garden advocates and organizations (locally and nationally) and government staff were interviewed about their experiences with and suggestions for supporting community gardens, including issues, needs and challenges.

Five major needs emerged from local interviews (Appendix B for a complete list of findings):

- Improve/maintain public relations for community gardens within Ramsey and Hennepin Counties
- Strengthen the regional community gardening community
- Foster public partnerships to sustain gardens
- Strengthen the internal functioning of individual gardens
- Establish new community gardens where needed

Research revealed several needs – some existing within the garden’s community, and others existing regionwide within the community of gardeners (for the complete list, see Appendix B). While every garden is unique, there are basic needs common to each garden in order for it to become and continue to be sustainable. These include:

- Land tenure – While land use within a city changes over decades and centuries, nonetheless, the garden and the community formed around it cannot easily be replaced or moved. Without some means of securing their land tenure, the garden’s community will not fulfill the goal of making the community garden an asset to the neighborhood.
- Liability insurance – This is a basic need. While not all landowners may require it, it is good practice to have insurance. Not only does it protect the immediate gardeners, but it demonstrates that the community gardening community is responsible and worthy of support.
- Leadership within the garden – Too often a few gardeners take on all the leadership roles within the garden. Coordinating a garden can be very time consuming. For a community garden to become a true community asset, more of the leadership needs to be shared by the gardeners and garden supporters. This sharing insures greater sustainability, because the garden has the leadership skills to continue if the coordinator should no longer be able to fulfill the role.
- Greater public support of community gardens – Public perceptions of community gardens are not always positive, and there are a sufficient number of myths that must be overcome (Appendix C). We must work to challenge these myths while asserting all the positive effects of community gardens.
- Gardener training and assistance – All gardeners need access to training and assistance in public outreach and in strengthening relationships within their local community.

- Coordinate resources for gardeners – Garden materials and training can become available for free or reduced price, but there is limited means of connecting those in need with available resources.
- Central clearinghouse – There is no one place that the general public can access information about community gardening within the Twin Cities. A central clearinghouse, such as a website, serves to educate the general public on past and current gardens, refer people to gardens and help others start a community garden.
- Strengthened community of community gardeners – An engaged and active network of community gardens mean that no one garden community is alone, isolated and reinventing solutions to problems they face. Problems of one garden are shared with many. There needs to be regular and reliable means of communication to give gardeners 1) the capacity to inform, advise and support each other and 2) information on relevant events and activities within the Twin Cities.

Regional Models

Organizational models within the United States and Canada were researched to see what could be applied for sustaining community gardening in the Twin Cities. In summary, there are no organizational models, other than the ACGA, for a community garden association.

Organizational models fell into three categories:

1. A nonprofit organization supporting community gardens
2. A city program supporting community gardens
3. An informal network of community gardens

Programs offered services to community gardeners. Networks facilitated communication among members and organized gardeners. I found that where community gardens are well served, nonprofit organizations had either gardening or community gardens at the core of its mission. Additionally, these nonprofit organizations had some partnership or working relationship with their city government. In one instance a non-profit was adopted by a city and became a program of the city (P-Patch) delivering services to garden communities. However, there is still a complementary nonprofit (P-Patch Land Trust) which provides insurance free of charge, purchases garden sites, and provides services where the city program is unable or in a timely manner. There were no examples of a county program or program supported by multiple jurisdictions.

Examples of organizations serving community gardens within a region or an urban center typically have a mix of public and nonprofit organization programs serving community gardens. Other findings:

- Where there is a program or organization serving all community gardens in a region, city government is almost always involved in either creating a city-run program or in partnership with a community garden organization.
- There are no county or state community garden programs.

- Typically a nonprofit organization will serve an area that contains more than one jurisdiction.
- There is no nonprofit organization serving community gardens statewide.
- Where there is a government program, there tends to be one or more complimentary nonprofit organizations that serve community gardens, which often meet the needs that the city program that can not, such as filling in when a city cutback reduces services for the garden community, or having the flexibility to respond to immediate needs quickly (purchasing a community garden site).
- No program had a paid membership, although some annual requirements of gardeners, such as annual registration.

SUMMARY OF PLAN

Three major organizational efforts are recommended for community gardeners and organizations to secure land for community gardens and have ongoing support for their existence. The plan requires an implementation period for developing the resources and relationships needed to achieve the three outcomes listed below, in order of priority:

1. A member-driven central **CGA** that works solely on behalf of community gardens. The primary purpose of this association is to coordinate existing resources, facilitate communication among gardens and work with gardens to strengthen their communities both within the garden and regionally. This association will require annual dues, and, in return, be able to purchase liability insurance, and have lease assistance and other services. Furthermore, the CGA will either work with existing land trusts or form its own to secure land for community gardens.
2. The CGA will form a **Partnership with public agencies** to facilitate support for and services to community gardens and to negotiate reasonable leases. The goal is for the public sector to remain community garden landlords, to work with the CGA in identifying areas where community gardens are needed and to facilitate gardens in these areas when they become available. Changes in public policy will be necessary in order to solidify public sector support for community gardens.
3. **Collaborating with social and environmental justice organizations** is a priority for the garden community once the CGA is established. Since community gardens have the potential to offer the community a wide range of unique benefits, it is not difficult to assert that community gardens should be part of any policy and funding changes designed to protect and promote green space within Ramsey and Hennepin Counties.

DESCRIPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages describe the three major recommendations of this sustainability plan.

1. Form an association of Twin Cities community gardens
2. Develop a partnership between the public sector and the CGA
3. Collaborate with social and environmental justice organizations for policy changes and projects conducive to community gardening.

These recommendations, listed in order of priority, stress the need for community building, whether between gardens, with the local community or regionally, as well as across sectors. Sustainability for community gardens means building community across many levels and diversifying support. Community must come before the garden in order for the garden itself to be a success.

These recommendations recognize:

- The role of the public sector in land use decisions and the untapped potential of community gardens in helping local bodies of government achieve civic and ecological goals.
- The amazing energy and commitment of citizens to volunteer their time and contribute money and supplies to create and maintain green spaces for which they don't even own.
- That change is a collaborative process, and the formation and strengthening of relationships between gardeners or across sectors requires ongoing work.

These recommendations work together to strengthen the role of community gardens within the social, environmental and economic landscape of our cities. All activities associated with the recommendations fulfill at least two of the four criteria listed below:

- Facilitating communication between community gardeners, and communicating with gardeners about relevant news. This includes written and in-person communication
- Promoting community gardens
- Growing leadership skills among gardeners
- Building a stronger, more inclusive community gardening community.

Samples are included in the plan to be used for initial reference. There are still many areas requiring further research as the plan is implemented. A list of questions not addressed specifically in the plan are in Appendix D "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)."

CREATE A COMMUNITY GARDEN ASSOCIATION

An association serving community gardeners would be dedicated to the preservation and promotion of community gardens in the Twin Cities area. The association would initially start as a collaborative program of several supportive organizations and would serve gardeners by:

- Facilitating communication between gardeners
- Providing a strong, united presence within the metro area
- Assisting in securing affordable, quality liability insurance
- Assisting in securing land and negotiating leases
- Coordinating advocacy within both the public and private sector
- Serving as an information clearinghouse on community gardening within the metro area
- Being a fiduciary agent for garden communities, so they can accept tax-deductible donations of goods, services, and grants

These needs are immediate. While organizations can have programs that serve community gardeners with some of these needs, it is important to have an organization that has the promotion of community gardening as its primary mission. Organizations supporting community gardens are vital to the associations work, particularly as in its start-up phase. These supporting organizations must cooperate in the first year of the plan's implementation to carry out many of the services that benefit community gardens. This plan endorses a community garden program carried out by organizations located throughout the metro area. With time, the program would evolve into an association of community gardens. While the association will initially exist as a collective program, for ease of discussion the following description refers to the end goal, the association. This evolution should remain flexible to fit current resources and assets. It may be that one or more of the services the CGA offers will be carried out through partnership with another organization.

Six goals are recommended to the CGA:

1. Grow leadership among community gardeners
2. Assist gardeners with building a supportive community around the garden
3. Assist gardeners in securing necessary goods and services
4. Act as a central clearinghouse – a liaison to the general public, public entities, donors
5. Be the outreach arm of the gardening community through enhancement of public relations, advocacy, and collaboration and coalitions with the public and private sectors.
6. Assist in the establishment of more community gardens

However, the CGA ultimately will be responsible for the accessibility and quality of these services, and the CGA should find alternative means to delivering the services if the partners are no longer able to do so. Key services are:

- Monitor and protect existing community garden land from development through tax-incentives, and purchases and property transfers
- Secure land for community gardens in areas where they are needed or desired
- Advise and train community gardeners on community organizing and public outreach
- Coordinate distribution of existing physical and social resources, rather than recreating services or resources found elsewhere
- Enable non-gardeners to participate within the organization
- Receive grants and accept financial contributions that only go to tax-exempt organizations
- Act as a liaison with government, individuals and businesses on behalf of metro area community gardeners
- Provide signage for member gardens that gives information about the garden, including contact information
- Establish protocols and standards for member gardens, covering issues such as aesthetics, community outreach and conflict resolution.¹¹

As the CGA develops, we propose that paid staff work toward getting the organization established, forming its services and building relationships with green space organizations and public agencies. Paid staff ensures that the association/program has a Monday-Friday daytime presence in order to work better on building these essential relationships, provide goal continuity and serve as a one-stop shop for information about community gardening.

It is advised that CGA staff be oriented toward community organizing rather than gardening and help connect gardeners to those who can provide gardening assistance rather than offer it themselves. Staff time is best utilized in establishing relationships with the public and private sectors to support the development of the CGA and in assisting community gardeners with community organizing and public relations for the longevity and vitality of their garden. Over the last several years, we have seen that support from the local community, and an active, dedicated group of gardeners were essential in the continuation of gardens facing challenges from development and other pressures.

At this time, possible locations and partners are being explored. Immediately, an office space and some storage are needed. Other desired amenities are a meeting room, ample parking, the ability to park close to the entrance, and access to storage space. For further information about CGA development, see Appendix E.

¹¹ It is hoped that the CGA, by providing this service, can help keep local situations from escalating and help facilitate local resolution. The goal is never to step in and take over, but to provide an outside perspective to help the garden group address the concern on its own. This is an important distinction from many programs/associations, where there is an expectation that staff will resolve a garden's problems, often staff do step in and appear to take over. It is incumbent upon gardeners and staff to be aware of this pitfall and take steps to avoid it.

RECOMMENDED CGA ACTIVITIES

For a more detailed listing of these CGA activities, please consult Appendix F.

Communication among Community Gardens

The primary responsibility of the CGA is to facilitate communication among gardeners, between gardeners and their local communities, with the larger community of green space advocates and with public agencies. Of these, communication between community gardeners across the region is most vital, and a diversity of communication methods is necessary to meet the variety of needs of gardeners, their gardens and the CGA. These should be established as soon as possible in order to begin the dialogue between gardeners about issues, resources needs, and upcoming events.

- **Listserv:** established March 2005, in collaboration with UMN-Extension, the COMGAR-L listserv is the gardeners' venue to share timely messages, updates, information and advice. It is a vital first step in building a network of community gardeners. In order for the listserv to be effective, it will be necessary for each garden to secure at least one communications person who frequently uses their email and will reliably share information with the other gardeners.
- **Email List/Telephone Tree:** to be constructed from updated information provided by CGA member gardens. It would be used exclusively by CGA staff and directors for periodic updates and may be used in conjunction with the listserv. In order to save the CGA money and labor, all gardens should be encouraged to find a reliable gardener who will be the internet contact for the CGA (whether or not the coordinator has internet access). Depending upon the number of gardens that do not have internet access through one or more gardeners, a telephone tree/list may be used to reach these gardens.
- **Brochure:** to promote the association in events and be used by every member garden for relationship-building in their local community. Its main purpose is to provide contact information, and encourage gardeners and non-gardeners alike to call about community gardens in general.
- **Newsletter:** a vital link to many gardeners who do not have internet access, or choose not to have internet access. It will also allow gardeners to share community gardening and the CGA with those interested in participating or contributing. It will contain information to help garden maintenance and community relations, as well as update gardeners on regional community garden activities.
- **Website:** an important vehicle for distributing information about the CGA and about community gardening in general. Depending upon resources and skills available, the website should be updated at least quarterly (i.e., with the distribution of the newsletter); it can be an interactive and engaging site with more resources (depending upon funding and volunteers).

Community Garden Events

Events are important for both recognizing gardeners' hard work and accomplishments and increasing public awareness of the community gardens. They are also an opportunity for

gardeners and other community members to contribute to the garden, gain organizational skills and assume more leadership within the garden. However, events can easily burden those who have already taken a leadership role if they are not able to delegate to others.

There is no comprehensive inventory of all local garden events. But, anecdotally, it is common for community gardens to host two events when all gardeners are present: a spring clean-up event and a fall clean-up event. However, attendance at these events varies from garden to garden. Well-established gardens have their own local harvest festival or possibly a mid-summer event, which is advertised to the public. It is highly recommended that local festivals should serve to 1) create another opportunity for gardeners to come together to celebrate gardening and the growing season and 2) be an opportunity for community outreach. In the case of local harvest festivals sponsored by one (or more) community garden, the harvest festival is an excellent opportunity to recognize existing relationships with local community members and foster new relationships.

In addition to local events, there are a few harvest events gaining momentum within their neighborhood or locality. These harvest festivals are typically local events, allowing gardeners from within an area to network, as well as celebrate community gardening, and recognize the contributions of individual gardeners. Open to the general public, local events give garden supporters an opportunity to celebrate the season’s good work along with the gardeners. Regional harvest festivals are more conducive to celebrating the larger garden community and to garnering public attention from politicians, neighborhood associations/districts and funders/sponsors rather, than helping gardeners strengthen their relationships with local community members (neighbors, businesses, social organizations). Funders, sponsors, and landowners should always be invited.

Calendar of General Events

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Community Garden Resource Fair		Spring Clean-up Events				Community Garden Week	Harvest Festivals			

Metrowide events invite residents from throughout the Twin Cities area to participate, and are one of the few opportunities to meet other gardeners from the entire region. There was a history of a community garden fair through the Urban Lands Program, but in recent years this event was subsumed into the larger Living Green Expo. Held on or near Earth Day, the timing is late for community gardeners, and the celebration and networking was lost in such a large event.

To recapture the success of the earlier Community Garden Fair, the TCGC held the first *Community Garden Resource Fair* on March 12, 2005 in conjunction with the Minnesota State Horticultural Society’s annual Minnesota Green Seed Donation. It featured workshops and demonstrations on community garden topics, such as garden safety and vermicomposting. In addition, it provided a place for community gardeners to promote their gardens and programs,

and an excellent opportunity for gardeners to connect and share information. Future fairs will provide gardeners the opportunity to sign up for a garden and to join the CGA.

A *Community Garden Week* is a new metrowide event that is recommended for the garden community. It would be a coordinated event, with several layers of activities. It calls for getting a city and county resolution to recognize the contribution of community gardening to the social and ecological landscape. In return, the garden community would use the opportunity to 1) recognize the contributions of city and county government, and highlight successes from the prior year, and 2) hold a Community Garden Openhouse, advertised in the newspaper like the Home Fair, to promote community gardens and allow the general public to tour the gardens. Held in July or August, Community Garden Week would be the garden community's main promotional effort of the year.

Data Collection

Data on community gardens and gardeners is essential in helping the CGA meet its goals. The CGA needs to speak confidently about its member gardens, how many gardens and gardeners there are in the Twin Cities, what types and where they are located (see Appendix G for a sample garden survey). Secondly, the CGA needs to regularly assess how it is meeting gardeners' needs and addressing issues they face. Last, as a community of gardeners, the CGA needs data to advocate for permanency and to promote community gardens. This includes testimony from gardeners, as well as sound research and analysis of how community gardens fit into the economic, social and environmental landscape as compared to other land uses. Continuity of data collection across all community gardens is important to spot trends and take positive action. Data collection will likely need collaboration with academic institutions (for a list of some potential institutions, see Appendix H)

When and where possible, gardeners should be encouraged to collaborate with the CGA and conduct research, collect and analyze data about their garden and its community. Facilitated by the CGA, data collection would empower a garden community to learn skills that help support their garden through advocacy and community building. On an individual level, data collection would provide another type of opportunity for someone to take a leadership role, fostering the growth of leaders. In addition, the process of collecting data can help build community support and connect the garden to the local community as long as the process is transparent and encourages participation by the community in both collection and analysis.

As a central clearinghouse on community gardens within Twin Cities, the CGA should become the repository of history of community gardens. As long as immediate needs are being met, a committee should oversee the collection and organization of CG history. This is a more important function than at first glance. The history that is recovered and how it is presented will affect how the community gardening movement in Minnesota sees itself and how it is seen from non-gardeners. Appendix I summarizes the research projects recommended within the plan.

PARTNER WITH PUBLIC SECTOR

Community gardens play important roles in building community and educating residents about the natural environment within the city. Additionally, community gardening helps a city meet the goals of its comprehensive plan in a cost-effective manner (for an example, see Appendix J). Community gardens require relatively few dollars and resources to deliver an active and engaged citizenry.

Community Gardens are a means to achieving a city's social, economic and environmental goals.

A partnership between the CGA and the public sector can improve the outcomes of the community gardens, through coordinating available resources, and establishing supportive policies. In Minneapolis, no agency or department is responsible for community gardens, although Solid Waste is supplying compost and CPED issued leases for vacant lots. In St. Paul, The Department of Parks and Recreation has allowed community gardens on parkland and maintains a website which advertises community gardens both on city land and private land. In Richfield, the Woodlake Nature Center coordinates a large community garden. And in Chanhassen, the city has a community garden program that coordinates a community garden. Otherwise, there is no coordination between departments, agencies nor governments.

We propose that departments and agencies contract with the CGA to oversee the development and operation of community gardens within the metro area. In this way, no one city or other government entity needs to create its own program. As a consortium of government entities, each make a relatively small investment and get greater returns, by drawing on the experience and relationships with the community gardeners. We are seeking annual commitment that will cover the basic operating expenses of the CGA. For many years, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul relied upon SRC, which did much of the work on state money.¹²

Why government entities should support community gardens:

1. Community gardens help a city meet the livability goals of its comprehensive plan (for an example, see Appendix J)
2. In meeting the city's goals, community gardens serve the public good by providing services on behalf of the city and its residents (i.e., environmental education, crime reduction, food provisioning, community-building, etc.)
3. Community gardens, as both community assets and culminations of community efforts, should be recognized and have an opportunity to challenge being supplanted by development or other land use. Their establishment represents a heavy investment by gardeners and the local community in both funds and sweat equity and should be recognized a catalyst of community revitalization.
4. Community gardens, as citizen-managed green space, enhance the effort of municipal parks to fulfill their mission to provide accessible green space for every citizen. Where residences cannot access their neighborhood park because of a heavily-trafficked street,

Community gardens must be community assets in order to receive public support

¹² State grants from the Legislative Commission on Managing Resources (LCMR)

community gardens provide a pocket park for people to reconnect with nature or gather together within this common ground.

It is in the interest of city and local government entities to support the CGA as it will assist residents and organizations to maintain green space in the urban environment, and enable citizens to identify with the green space. While government can provide green space, if citizens don't identify with it, it can detract from cohesion in communities. The CGA can partner with the public sector to assist community garden development and their maintenance within the region; utilizing the expertise and experience of many gardeners and supporting organizations and businesses. The CGA will be a cost-effective liaison between cities and community gardens.

What the gardening community needs from the public sector:

Community Gardens require support in the form of policies and financial contributions from municipalities, counties, school districts and other government agencies for their long-term protection and promotion.

Funding

Government budgets have been under-funded in recent years. It is reasonable to expect them to remain so in the near future. However, the CGA is seeking a consortium of financial support from the city government, school board, and parks. An annual investment of \$5,000 from each entity to support the functioning of the CGA, will in turn assure that community gardens continue to provide a unique and valuable service to the public, in terms of providing a green space, strengthening the community, and environmental outreach and training. These services ultimately benefit the public sector through better environmental management, increased land values, improved quality of life of residents, decreased crime and safer communities.

Public funding is core to the steady delivery of services by the CGA. With basic services to community gardens funded by government and membership dues, these fairly consistent income streams ensure that service is maintained without worry, set-backs or irregularity. Public funding would ensure that the community garden program or association could continue to provide necessary services to gardens when other income sources did not materialize. The projects and initiatives that take community gardening to new and innovative heights could be funded through foundations and charitable giving. This income stream has the necessary flexibility and can provide resources with relative speed to enable such projects.

Policy Change

The CGA will be seeking policy changes that recognize the public responsibility of community gardens. In partnering with the public sector, the CGA would ensure that the gardeners of a member community garden continuously provide service by maintaining the space, and the public sector would support gardens through policy enabling community gardens on public land, and providing access to water, compost, and pavers. The partnership between the public sector and the ACGA highlights the import and need for the public sector to be involved and supportive of community gardens, while placing responsibility for the development of the garden

community upon a non-governmental organization (NGO). With a good working relationship, these two sectors complement the unique needs and characteristics of community gardens. The CGA would oversee the management of the community gardens on public lands, while the public sector would grant the leases and provide water, compost, etc.¹³

Quantifying public support for community gardens and making this support available in a visible way will make community gardens a more legitimate community development tool. Indeed, community gardens can help municipalities fulfill their comprehensive plans in regard to building community and a healthy natural environment. For instance, within the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan, community gardens contribute to the overall quality of life for residents and have the strong potential to build a sense of community across ethnicity and age (both goals of the plan). The plan clearly states that community gardens contribute to the overall quality of life for citizens, but the city currently has no formal role in their development, maintenance, or safekeeping (from development pressure), and support for community gardens comes from city staff rather than policy.

In order to be successful, a partnership with the public sector must:

1. Be tailored for individual cities and counties
2. Develop a procedure whereby community gardeners can protect the continued existence of their community garden
3. Develop a protocol for the promotion and development of future community gardens

Examples of other partnerships

Gardens and cities do support each other through such a partnership in other regions of the country. Where community gardening is strong, the public sector (through a city department, county, school, etc.) actively supports community gardens and partners with an NGO. This organization usually communicates to the garden communities on behalf of the public, and has the flexibility to work with gardens on private lands, and to help gardeners in ways that the public program may not be able, such as being a financial agent and accepting tax-exempt donations.

Partnering with the public sector

City government and its policies have a major impact on the protection and promotion of community garden sites and, consequently, are largely responsible for their success or demise. Counties must be cooperative partners by working with cities and other local jurisdictions (parks, school districts, etc.) to transfer publicly held lands to them.¹⁴ There are three scenarios, where a partnership with the public sector will have an impact:

- Protecting existing community garden sites

¹³ It will be most effective if there is a CGA staff person each for east and west metro in order to ensure a good working relationship with government staff.

¹⁴ In Hennepin County, tax-forfeiture office staff are paid from land sales. They estimated that the labor cost involved in transferring land to another government entity at \$100 per parcel.

- Working with interested community gardeners to secure a garden site
- Promoting/securing a community garden site in critical need areas

There are several approaches to building a partnership with the public sector. There is no one single approach that would fit every situation or political structure. It is important to tailor partnerships to the political system in place. One possible approach is described below, utilizing the issue of land tenure as a starting point.

Land Tenure

Many community gardens are on publicly owned land, and there is great potential to establish more community gardens on public lands. Short-term leases and the lack of a policy that gives gardeners the ability to petition for their garden put community gardens at risk and diminish their capacity to become community assets. A partnership with the public sector must secure community gardens access to publicly owned land, yet still enables the public sector to develop that land.

A partnership is proposed between the CGA and all public entities that own land which currently or potentially could host a community garden. A consortium of public entities and the CGA would draft a policy whereby community gardens petition for protected or permanent status. In the case of protected status, community gardens are granted certain protections, such as long-term leases (2-5 years), which provide gardeners with a process to appeal a decision to end the garden lease. Under the lease agreement, gardeners would be granted a period to make their appeal, or allowed to end the season and leave the premises. Gardeners seeking permanent status would make an application to some yet-to-be-determined body. Permanent status could be secured through one or more of the following options:

1. Private option: conveyance of the garden site to a garden trust
2. Public option: conveyance of the garden site to Parks or another government department or entity, which will hold the deed and title on behalf of the gardeners
3. Public option: a consortium of public entities and community garden organizations negotiate long-term leases between gardeners and the public entity that owns the garden site.

In the first two land holding options, the CGA would work with a consortium of public entities (mainly those owning land containing community gardens, but also those entities owning land that could be used for community gardens in the future) to develop a policy whereby community gardens could gain security either in one application, or through a graduated process where gardeners could apply for increasingly more secure status as the community garden develops into a viable and valuable community asset.

In the example of a graduated process, it is proposed that gardeners apply for approved, protected or permanent status depending upon which criteria they meet. Approved status guarantees gardeners a 2-year lease and recourse if the city or a developer proposes an alternative use for the land. Protected status gives gardeners a longer lease (up to 5 or 10 years), greater protection of the site and recognition of the value of the community garden. Permanent

status provides the strongest protection to community gardens, with the greatest rights and responsibilities afforded gardeners. In order to retain their land status, the community gardeners need to demonstrate that they meet criteria for that status and enter into a management agreement with the administering agency/consortium/partnership program agreeing to continue to meet the criteria or have the status revoked or reverted to a lower status.

The CGA would provide support to gardeners and assist them in attaining and maintaining criteria needed for approved, protected or permanent community garden status. The CGA would also monitor member gardens on behalf of the administering agency/program to ensure that they continue to maintain the garden site and provide services to the local community as per their management agreement. This management agreement would be developed by the CGA and the public entities that own land hosting a CGA member garden. The CGA would coordinate any public service to the gardens on behalf of the municipalities, counties and other government agencies.

The third land-holding option, a Community Garden Program would be developed and supported by a consortium of public entities. The disadvantage to this type of program is that it does not draw on the grassroots knowledge of a non-profit, non-governmental organization. It may not have the energy and advocacy that a non-profit organization would exhibit, but still an option. The program should have the participation of all public entities that own land containing community gardens or could potentially host a community garden in the future. The program would provide leases and insurance to community gardeners, and coordinate publicly available resources to gardeners (i.e., woodchips, compost, pavers, etc.). In order for this type of program to be successful, however, it must have an advisory board largely consisting of community gardeners who can help guide the program's services to best meet the needs of community gardening. However, a community garden is more than soil and plants; it is the community of people who work together to grow the plants and tend the soil. It is the personal relationships between members of the local community. Because community-building is so essential to a successful community garden (and, thus, one that is a community asset), an NGO dedicated to community gardens must play a key role in a public community garden program.

The GreenThumb Program of the Parks and Recreation Dept. of the City of New York provides a framework to create a municipal public policy protecting community gardens on public lands. A section of proposed policy for securing community garden sites is highlighted below. Italics and bold type were added for emphasis.

Protected Garden Status:

All registered GREENTHUMB Gardens shall be transferred to Department of Parks and Recreation (hereby referred to as Parks in following text), to be administered by the GreenThumb Garden Trust. The GreenThumb Garden Trust shall enter a management agreement with Parks for management of all GreenThumb Gardens and shall establish sub-management agreements (“Management Agreements”) with each GreenThumb Garden.

Permanent Garden Status:

*Registered Garden groups will have an opportunity to apply via the **Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)**...for permanent garden status through transfer of title of such property to the GreenThumb Garden Trust, under the jurisdiction of ...Parks and Recreation. [When approved, property title conveyed to the trust, pursuant to a resolution adopted by the City Council, for the sum of one dollar.]*

1. **IF NOT APPROVED:** they can continue in program as before, eligible for a 2-year lease from the date of the denial (gives them the opportunity to clean up or get their act together to better advocate for permanency).
2. **IF APPROVED:** Garden group manages property in accordance with rules established by the GreenThumb Garden Trust, which holds the title/deed.
3. If the Garden Group does not manage the garden in accordance with established management rules, **Parks and Recreation** and the **GreenThumb Garden Trust**, which has the “right of reverter,” determine if the garden property shall revert to Parks and Recreation.

Development of a GreenThumb Garden

If any city-owned property containing a registered GreenThumb Garden is requested by any City agency or private developer for development for any use other than as a GreenThumb Garden, such action must be approved through a full review in accordance with the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure....*The property so requested for development must be identified as a GreenThumb Garden in all plans, documents, meetings and hearings related to such development proposal.*

IF APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT or some use other than as a GreenThumb Garden, the Dept of City Planning shall work with the Garden Group to identify a nearby alternative site or at least the same size for a replacement GreenThumb Garden, or shall seek to incorporate space for a replacement within the proposed development *before the original GreenThumb Garden property is altered in any way or title for such property is conveyed.* The provisions of this local law relating to Management Agreements and the opportunity for permanent garden status shall apply to such replacement GreenThumb Garden.

COLLABORATE WITH ORGANIZATIONS

A broad coalition is important not only for the greater voice and mutual support that members can lend each other, but for networking and building relationships to foster collaboration, whether writing public policy or finding connections between programs (i.e., finding someone who can provide programming at a community garden). Such a coalition would emerge out of the Twin Cities Greening Coalition (TCGC) meetings and focus on advocacy and policy changes on areas of mutual interest, as well as actively recruit more members (Appendix H for a list of potential partners). In the meantime, the CGA should survey potential partners, particularly those who are some of the strongest advocates at the city and county level (such as affordable housing and anti-hunger organizations) to learn how community gardens and gardeners can assist them to meet their goals and objectives, while supporting community gardening.

In the immediate future, the CGA should focus on supporting policies that address community garden sustainability and finding organizational partners who share an interest in policy change. It should be noted that a collaboration/coalition should not necessarily be restricted to the Twin Cities area. Policy committees should be formed for both Ramsey and Hennepin Counties to identify possible public policy changes around issues of land tenure for publicly held lands hosting community gardens, and for services to community gardens (i.e., water, compost, woodchips) in exchange for services rendered by the gardens.

A summary of the benefits of a broad coalition includes:

- Have a stronger political voice for community gardens
- Share expertise, resources and experience
- Help address community garden issues that fall outside the CGA mandate, such as guerrilla gardening.¹⁵

The garden community needs to take a role in building a broad coalition to preserve, support and expand green space. As a coalition, an immediate goal could be to identify a process to protect green space through two mechanisms: project collaboration and advocacy for new/alternative policies. The coalition will want to consider mechanisms used in other cities/regions.

A number of policy changes and partnerships are recommended below as starting places to build working relationships with organizations:

- Advocate for the creation of a green space preservation fund to be used to purchase lots, as they become available in critical need areas, for community gardening or other green

¹⁵ While guerrilla gardening falls outside the program's responsibility, guerrilla gardening is still perceived as community gardening and thus impacts the perception of the general public and the public sector. During discussions about the first version of the sustainability plan, several folks liked that guerrilla gardening was recognized as something the gardening community needs to be cognizant of but that it should not be a responsibility of the CGA.

space uses.¹⁶ The City of Chicago has such a fund. A green space fund in St. Paul with about \$100,000, which is earmarked for development of another park. Further research is needed to understand how the fund is governed. Creation of a green space preservation fund into which developers pay an amount in accord with the impact of their housing project on green space (function of how many new households are created and if any green space is developed). As they increase the number of households within a neighborhood, the fee reflects the land per capita lost.¹⁷ This fund would be tapped for immediate needs for buying green space within the neighborhood as the opportunity arises.¹⁸ In Chicago, the money is used by any government entity and needs to be paid back. In the Twin Cities, advocating for a fund that requires only partial payback and gives limited accessibility to nonprofit organizations should be considered. Further research is required to identify other models and how they operate.

- Work with greening organizations to create zoning supportive of community gardening. Currently, Friends of Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County are working to create open space zoning code for St. Paul. The city of Boston has a zoning code specifically for community gardens. See Appendix K for zoning language.
- Strengthen neighborhood organizations. Whereas the role of neighborhood associations in Minneapolis has diminished as a result of reduced operating funds (and we can expect this to continue), the neighborhood associations should be strengthened by giving them an enhanced role in the development of their neighborhoods. The coalition could advocate the granting of tax credits and other tax incentive tools. Neighborhood organizations could use this clout to negotiate for high-density development that preserves green space conducive to establishing a community garden.¹⁹
- Work with CDCs, Parks, neighborhood associations and district councils, housing, and others to develop and implement an evaluation protocol for prioritizing current green space (including community gardens) for sites that should be preserved, those that can be strengthened and those that can be let go. Evaluation protocol should include identifying areas that lack sufficient green space (including community gardening).
- Work with green space advocates and organizations to see how community gardens can help serve their needs such as a gathering space for a community workshop or as a growing space for seedlings for backyard gardens. In this way the community garden builds alliances with other organizations, and forms a working relationship with that organization. Second it could be a potential revenue for the garden as the relationship may be contractual. Third, such a relationship generally promotes community gardens, exposing potential new gardens, garnering good public relations and highlights the many

¹⁶ There is a green space fund in St. Paul with about \$100,000, which is earmarked for development of another park. He did not, however, find out what policies govern its operation or contributions into it. More research is needed in order to determine whether to pursue this per municipality or for the region as a whole (i.e. Met Council).

¹⁷ This would need to be explored further, in particular what land uses would be considered green space and eligible for compensation (For example, would the lawn of a single home lot be considered green space?).

¹⁸ Friends of Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County has been working on this for several years

¹⁹ Currently developers are required to notify the neighborhood association of a pending development project, but they are not required to consider or respond to input by the neighborhood association. By allowing neighborhood associations to access these incentives, it gives them some leverage in requesting green space and requiring it in development projects that purchase these tax incentives from them.

public goods, which community gardens can provide. It is strongly suggested that a community garden work with an existing organization or community advocates toward making the garden a community classroom. This would strengthen the community building and support, and provide programming and teaching at the garden. It also has the potential to enhance leadership by providing additional opportunities for gardeners to participate in a garden program. This activity will likely require some nominal funding to cover the cost of materials.

- The CGA should explore mutual interest in green space with housing land trusts (See Appendix L for a description of land trusts) to determine if an interested community land trust has the organization/structure to lend in terms of purchasing and maintaining green space in conjunction with a community garden organization (not necessarily the CGA). Further research is needed to see if the CGA needs to partner with one or more community land trust due to geographical restraints. While their mission is housing, one needs to ensure that a partnership agreement is not based solely upon the word of staff, but written into their bylaws or into the conservation easement to keep the land as a community garden. An exploration of this partnership would be a good and focused first conversation with the affordable housing folks to demonstrate a shared interest in the same population. Even if a partnership does not arise, this is a group well-versed in the financials and legalities of owning land and would be a good resource if we had to establish our own land trust through the CGA.²⁰

Examples of affordable housing projects with community gardens:

- Trellis Gardens apartments: Toronto, Canada
http://www21.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/news/pressreleases/11-14toronto_e.pdf
 - Amistad Farm Laborers Housing: Hereford, Texas
<http://www.designadvisor.org/gallery/amistad.html>
 - Eden Housing Affordable Housing Developments: Petaluma, CA
http://www.edenhousing.org/html/PR_April_01.htm
 - Oak Hill CDC: Worcester, MA. <http://www.oakhillcdc.org/housing.htm>
- Providing insurance for gardens will be a difficult challenge for the CGA in the next couple of years. It is critical to immediately explore potential partnerships such as with an existing land trust to provide gardens with more comprehensive and affordable insurance that is available to members of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). Several regions have gone this route, finding the LTA insurance to be the best option for them. Another option to explore is asking for loaned executives from insurance companies to examine possibilities for high quality, affordable insurance not only for community gardens but other organizations holding green space (see next suggestion). One possibility is the CGA covers community gardens, particularly where insurance was not available through a rider, for example, by the neighborhood organization, adjacent

²⁰ In January 2005, we broached a possible relationship with City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT). While the director acknowledged that green space and community gardens are important to the quality of life within the cities, CLCLT could not purchase land nor development rights on behalf of gardens without rewriting their mission.

business, or on public land.²¹ Lastly, the CGA should develop an inventory of how gardens and other similar spaces are insured.

- CGA could sponsor a green space insurance forum within the next year. This would include any government agencies and private organizations that own green space and need to insure it. This issue requires educating both insurers and insurance seekers as to the real risks and potential liability associated with insuring green spaces. The ACGA found that when CGOs found that when they educated insurance brokers about the actual risks associated with community gardening, they were then offered quality insurance at an affordable price.²² Attendees would include land trusts and nonprofit organizations owning urban green space, as well as insurance brokers who are currently providing insurance to these green space keepers. If the forum has sufficient support, the LTA's insurance holder could also be present.
- A Twin Cities Green Space Coalition could hold a one-day regional conference on building an advocacy movement, similar to one Philadelphia held in February 2005. Session topics listed by the sponsor, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, were: Casemaking for Greening, Best Practices, Working with Elected Officials, Art and Advocacy, Building Coalitions, Grass Roots Advocacy, Working with the Media, and The Internet as an Advocacy Tool.
- Work with organizations and public sector to evaluate the availability of online data for any given parcel or property within the Twin Cities, including zoning, ownership, district and ward. Address gaps and make these resources available on the CGA website.
 - Ramsey County has property information accessible on both the internet and by phone. Ramsey County Online Maps and Data is a GIS (Global Information Service) online program and can be found at <http://maps.metro-inet.us/RamseyCoGIS/Viewer.htm>. The program has the ability to display aerial photos (from 1940 through 2003), road maps, utility information, data on every property in the county (landowner, value, etc.), and much more. This service is extremely valuable since the aerial photos can help locate vacant and open spaces and the property information feature allows organizers to know who to speak with in regards to possible garden sites. Property information can also be provided by Ramsey County's Department of Property Records & Revenue which can be reached (651) 266-2000.

²¹ The Minneapolis Park System is self-insured, and thus not willing to cover insurance for any vacant lot community garden. Currently on parks land, only staff are allowed to operate mechanized tools.

²² ACGA "How to start a community Garden" teleconference, July 2005

CONCLUSION

Sustainability exists in two respects: sustainability for each community garden and sustainability for the entire garden community. This sustainability plan recommends that community garden longevity is the result of a combination of both a top-down and a bottom-up approach – where we strengthen gardens from within as well as from without. Creating an association of community gardens will help in both of these respects. The long-term success of each community garden is dependent to some extent upon the long-term success of other community gardens. An organization coalesces the political and social clout of all community gardens to surmount challenges and issues that no single community garden could do on its own.

To summarize, the major challenges facing community garden sustainability are:

1. An engaged local community
2. Isolation from other community gardeners
3. Access to materials, supplies and technical assistance
4. Land tenure
5. Insurance

The development of the Community Garden Association will immediately address the first three issues by working with gardeners to build their local community around their garden and across garden communities to support each other with advice, advocacy and sharing materials, skills and experience. In addition, the association will act as an information clearinghouse and a central place to receive donations and coordinate available services to gardens.

The issue of land tenure requires building relationships between the association and the public and private sectors. In reality, not many gardens are located on public lands, but the potential for establishing more gardens on public lands is great as long as there is a partnership between the public sector and the garden community through an organization or program.²³

Community Gardens on privately held land are simply subject to the landowner's decision. The association, in working with other organizations, can provide some incentives to landowners for keeping community gardens on their land. They are:

- Forming a land trust or working with an existing one (not yet found) to purchase an easement thus decreasing the value of the land and subsequently the property tax. The trust could also buy the land should it become available.
- Maintaining good relations with the landowner. This is a role of the community-building aspect of the association, as it would work with gardeners to recognize landowners for their generosity, give them good publicity and work as a community to ensure that we

²³ There is often the perception that building relationships with public sectors means having the support of elected politicians. While this is important, it is equally, if not more important to have good relationship with government staff. Politicians come and go, but staff has the institutional memory, understand specific policies and operational procedures, can identify possible areas for cooperation, and receive early notice of proposed developments.

maintain good relations even when a landowner wants to develop the site (good public relations).

Liability insurance is an issue that requires both short-term and long-term solutions. Liability insurance offered by The Green Institute was intended in 2004 as a stop-gap measure when 50+ garden groups lost coverage through the Sustainable Resources Center. Over a year later we can see that coverage offered by The Green Institute does not always meet the needs of garden groups. At this point, it is not known how many community gardens have been lost in the Twin Cities due to lack of access to affordable liability insurance.

Long-term solutions lie in collaborating with public and private sector to explore partnerships, which give us an advantage in buying liability insurance. However, insurance may be a quilt of solutions, ranging from partnerships with public sector, non-profits, and land trusts. It may be that a collaboration of nonprofits in the Twin Cities will want to form a land trust specific to the urban environment (which could provide an easement, and therefore lower taxes to private land owners donating land for community gardening, for example).

The fate of community gardens in the Twin Cities rests on gardeners and supporters of community gardens, and will be determined by their ability to organize and the strength of their network. This plan recommends a number of activities that can be used for organizing gardeners, and growing their collective voice. We have already seen success through the listserv in terms of securing and sharing resources, experience, and insight. The challenges and hurdles can be accomplished within the existing network.

The CGA is the first goal, but the long-term difficulties will remain as long as myths and perceptions are not challenged, and the community gardens remain green space that solely serves the gardeners. Building partnerships with the public and private sector, strengthening ties to the local community, and evolving the community garden into a community asset will require dedicated staff to advise and assist gardeners. Along with gardeners, staff can ensure that the association has a positive public persona and help garden communities fulfill their objectives.

This plan suggests that the long-term success of community gardens is as much a matter of good public relations and securing the things that make a garden work, such as insurance, leases, garden materials and supplies and gardening know-how. Shifting the public consciousness toward a perception of community gardens belonging to gardeners and garden supporters could be a frustrating process as progress can be relatively slow and is not readily measured. But if not addressed, all community gardens remain at risk and thus, are not sustainable. We must grow the community in order to have the garden. The resources vital to sustaining a community garden as a place worthy of investment and community use already exist, but they are not equally attainable and won't be until gardeners are connected throughout the region.

APPENDIX A: DEFINING COMMUNITY GARDENS

The definition of community garden must contain the variety and diversity of community gardens that do exist and could exist. Yet, it does not create a clear image of what a community garden looks like, precisely because there is no typical garden. There is, however, an archetypical garden – one that shares the need for land lease, insurance, goods and materials, and technical knowledge in order to create a beautiful space that is enriching to the eye and good for the stomach. They all share an outcome – the garden – but how the garden comes to be depends upon situational and community factors. The components that make up a garden are included in the sidebar (next page) to demonstrate just how different they can be. Further in this description, a typology of community gardens is included, and a proposed operational definition. The current definition (below) was established by the advisory committee, which has provided input into the process and to the plan itself.

For the purposes of this sustainability plan, the definition of a community garden is broadly defined in order to capture the full range of gardens existing within the Twin Cities, such as mission gardens, beautification gardens, rental gardens, youth gardens, etc. The definition proposed by community gardeners is:²⁴

A community garden is any space where plants are grown and maintained by a community to meet the needs of that community.

Community needs can include, but are not limited to, beautification, food production, community building, crime prevention, environmental education, and cross-cultural and inter-generational learning.²⁵

Typology of Community Gardens

In researching community gardens, we found eight categories of community gardens that appear to share common characteristics. However, these definitions are arbitrary, more subjective than objective. They are largely sorted according to how they are organized (the social component of the garden). Existing typologies for the Twin Cities are largely determined by what is grown in the garden, but we found the typology the advisory committee developed is more useful for the purposes of the sustainability plan. The questions are:

- What is the purpose of the garden?
- How is it organized and/or coordinated?
- Who is responsible for the garden?

²⁴ Much discussion went into this definition. It was agreed that any general references to green space could be problematic as it could include a lawn or field. Members of the Community Garden Working Group felt it was important to include some reference to plants, growing and long-term maintenance for a community garden. They also felt that the definition should not include anything further, but that the definition would be followed up with a reference to the types of community needs that a community garden could address in order to provide deeper context for the definition.

²⁵ From the Community Garden Analysis by the City Council Study Session and presented on August 15, 2003, Minneapolis, MN

- Who works in the garden?

The garden categories are not exclusive from each other. A garden’s characteristics may mean that it could fall into two or more categories. The eight categories are listed below with brief descriptions.

Block Club Garden

These often organized by a champion and served by gardeners who reside within a couple blocks of the site. There are 10 gardeners on average per site, and they are loosely organized. While many are rental gardens, many are also organized collectively with common garden beds. A garden may have both rental plots and common beds, and designate a vegetable bed for food donation. Often a garden will clearly fall into one of the two categories even while sharing characteristics with the other category: allotment or rental garden, and beautification garden (focused on being aesthetically pleasing)

Citizen Gardens

These are intended to build identity or commitment by the community. Often, they are very small and are not about food production, but promoting neighborhood pride and beautification. They can also be called “beautification gardens” (as described above), and do not have individual plots.

Established Gardens

These gardens have a strong history and a core group of volunteers who run the garden and its various programs. Typically there’s a community outreach component (i.e. fair, festival or programs within the garden.). Historically, they have secured the garden from development. Mostly rental plots, typically they charge for plots and usually have a waiting list. While members live in the neighborhood, established gardens draw from a larger area and often have members who used to live in the area.

Government Garden

Organized and run by a governmental agency, a government garden encourages community volunteers (individuals and gardening clubs) to garden at its site. Responsibility for maintenance and appearance ultimately falls upon the government agency.

What is a Community Garden?

The community of gardeners can be

- Local residents (such as block clubs)
- People from outside the local community
- Garden club members
- Clients and staff of a social service/affordable housing organization
- School students or youth participating in an extra-curricular program

Garden site may any space owned by

A governmental entity

- State or federal department or agency
- County department or agency
- City department or agency
- City or County Parks and Recreation
- School district
- Library

A nongovernmental entity

- A business or nonprofit association
- A church
- A private landowner
- Community Development Corporation
- A neighborhood organization

Garden may be coordinated by

- Volunteer Gardener
- Paid Program Staff
- Social Service Staff

A garden can meet one or more community needs

- To create a beautiful space
- To provide a gardening opportunity for local residents or specific groups, such as youth, New Americans or senior citizens.
- To provide produce for low-income gardeners, or for a foodshelf or other social service organization.
- To enhance community crime prevention initiatives
- To provide opportunity for cultural expression

Institutional Gardens

Similar to youth and school gardens, these gardens serve clients of a social service organization – whether they live next door or within the metro area (i.e., homeless shelter, battered women’s shelter, nursing home garden, etc.). The garden is organized and run on behalf of these clients. It may or may not have programming.

Mission Gardens

These provide a service to the community at large, such as growing produce for a foodshelf. They are typically organized and coordinated by a faith-based organization.

School Gardens

These gardens are engaged with the school’s curriculum and are typically on school grounds. Children will have an active role in the garden. They can be operated by the school or by an outside organization that manages the garden on behalf the school.

Youth Gardens

These have extracurricular programming for kids, and the garden’s focus is on benefiting the youth. In this case, the “community” is the youth.

Operational Definition

Operationally, there may be criteria that a community garden (or gardening club) would need to meet in order to receive some public services (city or county) or services from a potential CGA. Ultimately, garden requirements for receiving public services will be determined by the respective city or county in collaboration with the CGA. Criteria may differ slightly for member gardens receiving CGA services than those receiving public services. These criteria will need to be discussed and negotiated as the implementation of the sustainability plan evolves.

Some proposed criteria include:

- The garden group can demonstrate permission from the property owner to use the site as a community garden
- The garden group can describe the community served by the garden (i.e., local community, youth group/school, etc.)
- The garden group can provide accurate contact information annually
- They provide at least one opportunity during the year for the public to visit the garden (host event, participate in a tour, etc.)
- They submit a simple annual survey for basic information about their garden

APPENDIX B: STUDY FINDINGS

Twin Cities community gardens face internal and external threats to their long-term success and sustainability. Interviews of gardeners, staff from supportive organizations and the public sector revealed that many, if not all, gardens must deal with certain threats and needs. In addition, respondents offered several suggestions to guide the development of the sustainability plan. These findings are described and grouped below as:

Community Garden Needs

1. The Local Community
2. Regional Networking
3. Public Relations

Suggestions from Respondents

4. Suggestions for the Sustainability Plan

1. The Local Community

The CG community would like the activity of community gardening to be recognized as a valuable asset to neighborhoods. This recognition would be achieved through supportive public policies and a broad coalition of CG supporters. Such a coalition could reach out to individuals and corporations that do not garden but strengthen community gardening through their financial support.

It is important to maintain general goodwill toward community gardens. It is necessary to maintain good relations with neighbors and the landowner, so that one poor experience with a community garden doesn't sabotage other and future gardens. Last, the community garden community needs to recognize current and past contributions to community gardening by the private and public sector.

Individual garden groups need assistance in increasing the visibility of their garden sites. Gardeners would like people to know about their garden, its part in the community and its availability to those who would like to participate.

Reliable assistance should be available to groups who wish to establish new community gardens. This assistance is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of new gardens and to ensure that unnecessary garden failures do not become liabilities for the garden community.

Leadership development training is needed within individual garden groups. It was reported that several garden failures could be attributed to insufficient leadership capacity to continue the garden when the coordinator left. One or two key leaders take on the responsibilities of a garden site that may serve dozens of gardeners. This structure often leads to burn-out and creates a barrier to accomplishing more than minimal garden maintenance. With a wider leadership structure, gardens will be more sustainable and better able to interact with the wider garden community.

There needs to be fuller participation by gardeners in all gardens. Currently, there is a range of gardener participation among community gardens; some rely almost exclusively on gardeners, while at the other end of the scale, others rely upon “Sentence-To Serve,” “Restorative Justice Volunteers” and similar programs to maintain gardens. While “Sentence-To Serve” and similar programs are very useful, they are not reliable in the long run. While these programs show no sign of dissolving or changing, there is always the possibility that the terms of the program may change and make community gardens ineligible for assistance. These programs must be recognized for the contributions they make to community gardening and the potential for workers to become engaged in community gardening (or just gardening) for the first time. They also provide assistance to gardeners and garden programs during times of need.²⁶

Within the public sphere, community gardens are not the responsibility of any one department or agency. However, St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation does keep a listing of community gardens in the city and enables community gardens to exist on park land. This department, however, does not facilitate water or other services to community gardens off park property. In Minneapolis, the Park Board is exploring ways that they can support community gardening. However, public services provided to community gardens are largely dependent upon staff personalities and goodwill toward gardens (i.e., individual staff become champions, not the government). A commitment to community gardening is needed from municipalities, counties and parks systems, particularly as community gardens contribute to the public good, have a low demand on public services and are a unique asset for the public sector in accessing the grassroots.

2. Regional Networking

A regional community gardening network is needed to provide a unified voice/presence for community gardens in Ramsey and Hennepin Counties, in addition to sharing resources, knowledge and advice. There are no better experts at community gardening than those engaged in it.

A reliable source for specific community gardening services is needed. Community gardens need training, technical assistance, liability insurance and lease-holding services. Community gardens would also like assistance with on-site translation, written materials and other items. The Sustainable Resources Center’s Urban Lands program provided much of this assistance for a number of years, and in the two years since these services ceased being available from Urban Lands, gardeners have expressed concern that their loss is a serious threat to community gardening in the Twin Cities.²⁷

²⁶ There is disagreement among community gardeners whether use of these programs benefit the participants – namely that they don’t necessarily build community either the participants with the local community, nor the local community with their garden. In some cases, the program workers are from the community, and in other cases they are not. Several gardeners suggest that use of these programs should be considered short term as to avoid dependency on them.

²⁷ Twin Cities refers primarily to Hennepin and Ramsey Counties and sub-jurisdictions, such as cities, parks, and school districts.

A Community Garden Association (CGA) is needed to work on behalf of gardens. Such an organization could coordinate gardens (i.e., the community garden network), address problems on behalf of gardens or problems with gardens, provide technical services and advocate on behalf of gardens. This entity should provide an attractive array of services as an incentive for individual gardeners and garden groups to become members, paying a membership fee and providing up-to-date information on each garden.

3. Public Relations

Respondents reported that they deal with a general perception that community gardening is an adult hobby and has no benefit to the overall social good of the community. Overcoming such a perception can be difficult even as community gardeners strive to make the garden a positive space and place and perceive the wide range of social goods the community garden provides.

In the last decade as land values have increased and government budgets decreased, we see more fees placed upon gardens for services provided. These costs communicate that community gardening is perceived as an adult hobby and, thus, gardeners should pay for the privilege. This is part of a cyclic pattern: when socio-economic conditions are poor, community gardening is more highly valued. A consistent partnership with the public sector which promotes and maintains garden sites and gardening communities will help to stabilize this cyclical pattern, and recognize the contributions of citizen leaders to their community.

There is no central clearinghouse to disseminate and provide information about community gardening in the Twin Cities. Interested gardeners find community gardens through many different routes, none of them exact: typically by walking by or calling an organization (i.e., Land Stewardship Project). A number of organizations still refer calls to the Sustainable Resource Center, which has an online list of community gardens, but without contact information. Moreover, it is no longer active, and the information was last updated at least two years ago. Barriers to accessing a local community garden weaken the garden and the community gardening movement.

4. Suggestions for the Sustainability Plan

Securing gardens from development must take a two-pronged approach: building strong community relationships (being valued by the neighborhood) and being in a position to buy the land or remove it from auction.

A unified regional approach to community gardening in the Twin Cities would facilitate working with the public sector (cities, departments, etc.), as well as the private sector, for policies and services impacting community gardens.

Each community garden is unique and should be respected as such. It is a reflection of neighborhood character, the resources available and the synergy of the people's skills and talents, which contribute to it. This is both the beauty and the challenge of networking among community gardens. Even while differences should be honored, many people felt that gardens would benefit from uniform standards and guidelines relating to behavior in the gardens by gardeners and nongardeners, garden looks nice, and safety standards, for example. This would create a set of expectations of the garden for both gardeners and nongardeners.

A CGA should:

- Coordinate existing gardening resources (technical assistance and garden supplies) and secure needed resources for gardens
- Have more than one site in the Twin Cities: better serving area community gardens and better able to work with city and county staff on policy
- Be member driven

The development of a community gardening program or organization should:

- Have long-term and short-term goals and outcomes
- Include a vision of community gardening within the Twin Cities
- Honor the diversity of gardens and their communities within the Twin Cities
- Address the very different government structures, operations and policies within Ramsey County/Saint Paul and Hennepin County/Minneapolis

A program or organization serving community gardens should avoid duplicating existing community garden and green space programs and services, and avoid competing with them for limited resources (i.e., funds or grants).

Primary responsibility for community gardens should remain at a city level, as land uses and community investment are a city's primary responsibility.

Gardeners and garden groups are fluid, but the garden sites are not. There is a strong reluctance to have formal organizations at the individual garden level. However, there is an acceptance that gardeners should contribute financially to the community garden, and, increasingly, gardeners are asked to use their plot or lose their plot.

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY GARDENING MYTHS

Myths are public perceptions, regardless of facts or reasoning, and need to be addressed in any public relations initiative. They can be addressed through publications, events, and partnerships which demonstrate the value of community gardens and the benefits to society. The myths listed below are a few that arose during research. After each is a response. These are the barriers and challenges that must be overcome to garner support for community gardens.

Publicly subsidizing means of producing food that could be sold for a profit.

While some gardeners are terrific at growing produce, there is not substantial profit to be made. Often gardeners are growing items that they cannot access through grocery stores, either because it is not available, too expensive, or of poor quality. Many are low-income and growing produce provides their family with healthy alternatives they would not be able to afford otherwise. For many gardening families, children participate in the gardening and learn healthy eating habits. All of these benefits outweigh any possible financial profit that may be gleaned from a garden. Possible profit motives are also undermined by a relatively high incidence of theft and vandalism in the gardens and the fact that a number of gardens grow produce to be donated to a food bank or a social service organization.

Housing should have a higher priority than community gardening in claiming publicly-held property.

There has never been any competition between community gardens and public housing. Community gardens have never comprised more than 5% of all publicly-held land, including vacant lots. Instead, community gardens complement the city's effort to create high-density housing within the city that appeals to seniors and empty nesters. Those who are downsizing may wish to have a plot of land for a small garden and have an opportunity to know nearby residents. Regardless of income, community gardens provide a means for people to get to know each other and feel connected to their new neighborhood, thus combating isolation and potential depression. Community gardens will become even more necessary as the city achieves its goal of greater population density.

Community Gardens provide havens for criminal activity.

The opposite is true of community gardening. Criminals do not participate in community gardening, but can be thwarted by gardeners as they act as "eyes on the street." The Emily Peake Community Garden was established to enable residents to have a presence and report criminal activity. In a couple years, that area saw a major reduction in on-street criminal behavior. In Minneapolis, the police department supported community gardening because of its role in reducing crime, but the funds are no longer available due to budget reductions in the last several years.

Community gardening is a hobby and thus gardening on public land is a privilege.

This myth has led to the belief that gardeners should have to pay for the opportunity to garden on publicly owned lands through higher leases, and service fees. In truth, gardeners contribute to a more livable city in many unrecognized ways. There are hundreds of hours of sweat equity and donated materials and time. Gardeners often act as informal environmental ambassadors, teaching kids and adults how to garden and ways in which they can reduce their environmental impact through composting, mulching and sustainable landscaping.

Consequently, gardeners can often act as the social glue of a local community, letting people know about events or issues and helping connect people. Community gardening is more than a hobby; it is putting values into action and sharing these with others. It is a means through which neighbors can meet neighbors and children can be meaningfully engaged. Other benefits:

- Improved health benefits of gardening – value to city by providing services and opportunities for healthful activity
- Environmental education -- Provides an opportunity for communities to get in touch with nature and educate children and teens about gardening and ecology – allows them to get their hands in the soil and nurture something living.
- Provides a space and activity that bridges distances between generations, cultures and physical and mental abilities.
- Increases adjacent real estate values.
- Horticultural therapy for an individual or a community
- Support community policing efforts, by putting eyes on the street, and enables community improvement opportunities for people who feel alienated from civic life and by working with young people. Builds community and decreases anonymity.

APPENDIX D: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does the proposed community garden association address community gardens only in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties?

At this time, 95% of the identified community gardens lie within these two counties. In fact, 90% of the community gardens are within the city limits of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. It makes sense to focus our initial efforts on securing and maintaining these gardens and then adapt what we've learned to gardens in the other 5 plus metro counties. In addition, by focusing on these two counties, the CGA can better focus limited time and capacity to develop a partnership with the public entities and collaborate with other green space organizations – both of which are crucial to the CGA's long-term success.

How will the Community Garden Association (CGA) form?

Initially, the CGA will be established through a partnership of community garden organizations. It will eventually evolve to become its own organization. The interim organization (aka joint program) will be a collaboration of organizations already serving community gardens, and will coordinate their efforts in order to provide membership services. The goal is to utilize the resources the community already has available and to assess where and how the CGA will reside in the Twin Cities.

Is it wise that the plan separates the community-building from the gardening aspect of community gardening?

Instinctively, it seems that gardening helps to create the community, especially among fellow community gardeners. Assuming this is the case, the garden activity should be recognized as not only providing ecological benefit, but social and community benefit, as well. In terms of CGA operations, however, it may be a moot point. Those who help with gardening techniques will understand this relationship and respect it in their work with community gardens.

What is the CGA's role in a partnership with the public sector and why is it important to work with neighborhood associations (aka district councils)?

Neighborhood Associations (NA) or District Councils (DC), as local governing arms of the city council and Mayor's office respectively, know their communities better than those who oversee the entire city. They can be the best or worst advocates of community gardens. They have the ability to hold and insure land, and assist in creating and strengthening beneficial relationships between community gardeners and their local community. Through their leadership, NAs and DCs have the potential to weaken and destroy community gardens (as we have seen in the past). Therefore, the CGA is a necessary entity in order to advocate on behalf of gardens when the city and/or the neighborhood organization is opposed to them. Ideally the CGA and its member community gardens could draw on local relationships with other organizations and individuals to "disable" negativity toward community gardens and dissuade any movement to dissolve a community garden.

Why was this development process used for the community garden sustainability plan?

No plan can be successful if it doesn't first meet the needs of its primary clients, in this case, the community gardeners. It was necessary to first listen to leaders in the community gardening movement and then to convene them into a working group for the plan to make sure it meets with their needs, perceptions, and experience (see Appendix B). The plan had to be feasible

to community gardeners who will ultimately oversee and support its adoption. Once community gardeners have given feedback on the first draft of the sustainability plan, the second draft can be distributed more widely for feedback from the public sector and green space organizations (supporting and potential allies), as they are also stakeholders in the sustainability plan. With each successive draft, the sustainability plan becomes more finalized and feasible for all involved.

How is the Community Garden Association (CGA) different from the (former) Urban Lands Program (ULP) of the Sustainable Resource Center?

In some ways, the services that the CGA will provide resemble those of the ULP, such as land protection, insurance and lease negotiations. Unlike the ULP, however, the CGA will not provide training for gardening and technical assistance, and instead, provide training and assistance in community-building for long-term garden support both within the garden and the community surrounding the garden. Its primary goals would be to empower community gardeners and improve public perceptions of community gardens. Although important, gardening techniques and advice would have a lower priority. To address this need, the CGA would foster a network of community gardeners and garden supporters, such as master gardeners, local nurseries, volunteers, other local organizations. The ULP worked on the community-building, but its strength lay in providing gardening assistance (i.e., plants, soil maintenance, etc.). The second way the CGA will differ from the ULP is in its organizational structure. The ULP was a program of a nonprofit that had a larger public service mission, of which community gardening was one piece. The CGA, on the other hand, is member-driven and member-supported, with the preservation of community gardening at the core of its mission.

How can Minnesota Green effectively be part of the benefits package of CGA membership?

One possibility is that the Minnesota State Horticultural Society could provide office space for the East Metro Coordinator in addition to incorporating membership in Minnesota Green into the CGA membership fee. In this way the CGA could partially pay for Minnesota Green's operations. Enrollment in Minnesota Green would still be open to those not participating in a community garden. However, the partnership between Minnesota Green, the Minnesota State Horticultural Society and the CGA is worth exploring to see how each organization and the program can benefit. At the least, such a partnership supports the traditional mission of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society and assists the CGA in its establishment.

Why is public ownership preferable over private ownership in this plan? Isn't the only way to insure that garden land will remain for use as a garden is to own the land? How do we ensure that public land always stays public and used as community garden land?

It might be preferable for the land to remain within the public sphere, but there is no guarantee that it won't be taken for development or taken for another open space use such as ball fields. However, even if owned by a nonprofit organization, there is no guarantee that the land won't be sold, especially if there is a funding crisis. Community gardens, by this plan's definition, are community assets providing public services, and, thus, it makes sense that the garden sites become publicly owned land, yet protected in some fashion from short-term development trends and available to the city for long-term development needs.

Does the Association need to be based in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul? Won't that cost more?

There are pros and cons for having two offices instead of one. Cost is one of the negatives. By co-locating with supportive organizations, we can keep the office costs to a minimum. A significant expense would be the loss of synergy because staff is not housed within one location. However, given the very real differences in politics and the political process and the large area (consider all the organizations, public entities and people one has to know just within one city), it is best for the organization that there are two bases and that the synergy of place is captured rather than the synergy of staff. In addition, CGA staff can develop procedure and protocol to address the added challenge of working together from different locations.

Should the city or the neighborhood organization own community garden sites?

Further research and conversations are needed before a recommendation can be made. It is likely that the answer will depend upon the specific situation of the garden in question. Each garden has a unique set of circumstances that determines the best landowner for the garden, be it city, neighborhood organization, nonprofit organization, land trust or neighbor.

Which groups would the CGA market community gardens to and why?

The CGA should develop a PR committee that could provide suggestions and rationales. I hope that the PR committee will consider those groups that are not often approached by green space organizations, and market the benefits of community gardening to them. One suggestion was to market to real estate agents who often tout the characteristics of a neighborhood to potential buyers. By making a positive statement that there is a nearby community garden, we hope to raise awareness of community gardens and promote them as a community asset – desirable in any neighborhood.

What is the difference between a community garden program and a community garden association? Why are both mentioned in the plan?

The community garden program precedes the establishment of an association, and its primary goal is to work toward the establishment of the association. An association is impossible until community gardens are networked and organized. Only then can an association be discussed. While there are some networks in existence, they are geographically oriented and do not include all metro area gardens. The Minnesota Green Program of the Minnesota Horticultural Society connects the largest number of community gardeners and garden communities throughout the metro area. While it has the ear of many gardeners, as a program its role is to distribute donated garden materials and supplies. Consequently, several gardens do not need this program and either never belonged or may no longer belong and are not within this network.

Why not simply establish a community garden program with a supportive organization – wouldn't it be less expensive, less work and easier to maintain?

The lesson learned from the demise of the ULP is that community gardens need to have an organization solely dedicated to preserving and promoting community gardening. One way to insure that there is an organization that will always be dedicated to community gardeners is to have an organization of gardeners, for gardeners, and by gardeners. A community garden program might fall victim to a board or director who doesn't value it or eliminates the program

in order to balance the budget. Then the garden community could find itself trying once more to reinvent the program. For long-term stability, an organization run by gardeners means that even if the organization does not succeed, the institutional knowledge and relationships will still exist within the garden community.

Why an association of community gardens and not some other structure, such as a co-operative?

Co-operatives have an economic imperative, in that they enable small producers or sellers to form a larger entity that has the economic scale and volume to either purchase goods and services at a lower price or sell their goods or services for a better price or to more customers. There is room in the future for community gardens to organize and create a product or service that could be sold, and then it would be appropriate for a co-operative to be created as a sub-entity of the CGA. Given that most community gardens are not now producing a good or service, there needs to be an organization that meets the needs of every garden. Similar to a co-operative, an association is member-driven, meaning that the organization is created by gardeners, for gardeners and is guided by gardeners. While this does not insure that there won't be differences among gardeners, at least this structure provides for gardener input, and the growth and development of leadership among community gardeners.

Community Gardeners tend to dislike structure and organization and are typically interested in just gardening. Can CGA membership and participation appeal to them?

A CGA membership MUST appeal to them or community gardening remains the vision and effort of a few people. Everyone who has access to a community garden has the responsibility to work to expand this opportunity to others. Because community gardening is not considered a right by this society, we must work together to ensure that there is equal access. If the garden community doesn't work for equal access and cooperate regionally, then community gardening will always be a privilege benevolently granted by both private and public sectors. But this is not how community gardening began or how it has evolved during this development boom – it has been about reaching out, sharing knowledge, building friendships, learning new skills, sharing the harvest, and creating a space for everyone to improve their physical and emotional well-being.

We recognize that gardeners are primarily interested in gardening, but if you value equity and security, then each gardener needs to find their political voice and join the CGA in order to make that voice louder. Otherwise, we can expect gardening to be considered a hobby and not a right, as athletic fields have become.

There is a big difference between a garden that is on private land vs. one that is on public land. Many of the items for the Community Garden Week don't apply to gardens in private hands and there may be restrictions on how many or what kind of events you can have. Negotiating leases on private land will be different than for public land. How does the new CG organization account for these differences and become relevant to all?

Negotiating leases should be the same whether it is for publicly owned or privately owned land. The CGA should be offering negotiating services to those gardeners who have not successfully negotiated a lease with the landowner. This is different from SRC's ULP, in that gardeners are expected to take a hands-on approach to their garden from leasing to identifying and securing resources. The CGA is essentially training and technical assistance for managing and coordinating a community garden. As noted repeatedly in this plan, each community garden

is a reflection of its community relationships and resources. It is in the best interest of the gardeners if they are ultimately responsible for negotiating leases and the CGA is a resource for the gardeners when negotiations sour.

Community Garden Week events, again, are up to the community garden to carry out. However, it is in their best interest and the best interest of the gardening community for each garden to open their garden up to their local community. Privately owned gardens face many of the security issues facing publicly owned lands. Under a garden's current lease, it may not be possible to hold events on the garden property. It then becomes an opportunity for gardeners to be creative in celebrating their garden and honoring the landowner for permitting the garden's existence (thus giving the landowner a good public face). Activities may include having a low-key event, posting a sign, or assisting another community garden in their celebratory events. There are many ways to celebrate a community garden – we just need to do it publicly.

Is government funding truly necessary for the CGA or some similar supportive program?

Public funding is significant in two respects. It should be a fairly consistent source of income that along with membership dues would fund the basic community garden services of the CGA. Secondly, public funding is itself a tangible valuation of the contribution of community gardens to city life. While one cannot expect it to be simple to attain, government funding should be pursued if only for this second reason. Earned income should be used as a buffer for low-revenue years and to create an endowment (no matter how small) that could be used for land purchases, land maintenance, etc. Funds from foundations and charitable giving would enable projects and initiatives that take community gardening to new and innovative heights, as these funds are necessarily flexible, are a one-time gift, and are available relatively quickly.

What kind of role should neighborhood organizations play in the preservation and promotion of community gardens?

Several recommended that neighborhood organizations play a major role in the CGA, if not a key role. One person suggested that some of the CGA services could be run through the neighborhood organizations such as land ownership and liability insurance, but the CGA would help with maintenance of the garden and its associated community. All agreed that there is an affinity between neighborhood organizations and community gardens.

Should CGA directors receive a nominal stipend? Wouldn't this create conflict with others who have already dedicated tremendous time and resources into their community garden and will continue to do so once the CGA is established?

This recommendation received mixed reviews and was eliminated from the plan. The issue can be raised again during discussions of the CGA's structure. Some reviewers suggested that it would not be prudent to pay directors, while others appreciated that the board's time and energy would be compensated, although nominally. Several reviewers suggested that the CGA should be analogous to a well-run food co-operative – a strong philosophical base, a strong lobbying role for change, and an organizational structure founded upon a rationale. This question highlights the need for the CGA's structure to be developed by a committee with assistance from organizational consultants.

Is it fair to ask community gardeners to make their garden into a community asset?

Good question. This has to do with how a community garden would be defined by the CGA. If the garden seeks no support from the city or CGA, then they need not follow our guidelines. As a CGA, though, we need a quid pro quo in order to survive. If we give support to a garden site, there should be some definable set of things we can expect in return (like a set of community garden criteria).

In thinking how the garden community can help individual community gardens benefit their local community, should we be asking gardeners to become more purposeful? Should they identify their own objectives or should the garden community do so for all member gardens?

A long-time community gardener stated, “Gardeners should become more purposeful and should receive a set of objectives because we gardeners don’t always see our connection to improving the world.”

This plan proposes creating a community garden “brand” – forming an image in the public eye – of community gardens in the Twin Cities. This means that the garden community needs to establish a set of expectations for both gardeners and nongardeners, in terms of how to behave in the garden, what to expect from the garden community and realize that the garden -- the site and its community -- is for the public good. In addition, a common set of standards reduces the personal politics over creating rules and regulations for each garden community, allowing people to move forward with creating a healthy and vibrant community garden.

A number of items in the third recommendation “Collaborate with Other Organizations,” such as advocating for a green space preservation fund and holding an insurance Forum, suggest that we should be pushing the discussion toward forming a larger coalition of greening organizations, of which, the Community Garden Organization (program or association/network) could be an independent arm. Why doesn’t the plan just recommend forming a broad-based coalition, rather than just partner with one or two organizations around a single issue?

In many respects the existing Twin Cities Greening Coalition (TCGC) serves as a coalition of greening organizations, however, it has largely been focused on community garden issues. Forming a greening coalition or revamping the TCGC was initially in the plan, but this recommendation was scaled back from the original suggestion that the Community Garden Association be a founding member. This effort is too much for a new organization to work on while it is in its development stage. Even in the eventuality that an existing program is expanded to cover all the services needed for community gardens, there are still considerable challenges that need to be faced before either the organization or program invests in activities outside its immediate realm.

The Green Coalition is an obvious outcome from the Collaboration Section, but it can not be an initiative that the CGA dedicate too much energy towards in the first year or two of implementing the plan. There are likely to be networks of greening organizations within the twin cities region and it may be simply having a gardener step forward who will represent community garden interests. There was strong interest in the initial recommendation for a Green Coalition, and there other groups interested in having such an organization in both Minneapolis and St. Paul and the larger metropolitan region.

APPENDIX E: CGA IMPLEMENTATION

During conversations with stakeholders, the concept of a Community Garden Association (CGA) arose and gained momentum. Many appreciated the Urban Lands Program of SRC as a resource they could call on when in need – it was something they could turn to for assistance. They also appreciated its ability to provide services, such as liability insurance, leases, training, and technical assistance. Stakeholders increasingly envisioned an organization that advocated for gardens with public agencies and private landowners. Lastly, many expressed the desire to communicate with other gardeners. There was a perception that all gardens shared similar difficulties and consequently everyone had some insight or experience to share. Furthermore, they saw that only by working together could there be the political clout to promote and protect community gardens in the metro area. All these factors led to concept of the community garden association: an organization of community gardens that combines the strength of individual garden communities to create a strong and effective voice and presence that can garner more resources and lower costs than any one garden community could do on its own.

Role of CGA

- Collective voice of community gardeners
- Actively advocate with one solid presence
- Serve as mediator in conflicts or negotiations as needed
- Facilitate communication among member gardeners
- Assist in establishing new community gardens

There are several words to describe this type of organization: Alliance, Coalition, Union, Partnership, League, Co-operative. Association was arbitrarily chosen to describe this type of organization throughout the plan. The organization’s actual name should be chosen by community gardeners that reflects the spirit and goals of community gardening.

Any organization, whether formal or informal, should have a mission from which to derive goals and objectives and thus give the organization purpose. A mission statement below was developed by John McDermott, Totem Town Community Garden coordinator. It was revised by gardeners at the second stakeholder meeting held January 27, 2005 in Saint Paul.

Community gardens contribute significantly to the quality of life in Ramsey County and Hennepin County. As community gardeners, we are working to promote gardens as an increasingly valuable, permanent community asset for the present and future. We are working with our neighbors to use wisely the land, water, and other resources needed to grow successful communities through gardening.

John McDermott, December 2004

At the same stakeholder meeting, everyone expressed a desire to keep the mission statement timeless and broad enough to include many gardening activities. There was also a brief discussion about whether “community building” aspect should come before the “gardening” aspect. Unanimously, we agreed that while most gardeners become involved in a community garden in order to garden, the community garden must have a community-building role at its core for its long-term survival and success. In addition, we expected that the definition (see Appendix A) and mission statement would be adapted to fit the needs and goals of the

Community Garden Association as it evolves to meet future needs (for example, to include all seven metro counties or the entire state of Minnesota²⁸). The definition and mission statement offered in this plan give gardeners a foundation from which to begin developing the association, including its public outreach and advocacy efforts.

Below is a table summarizing activities needed to develop the CGA, and includes the activity’s purpose and development steps.

CGA Activities

Item	Purpose	Development Steps
CGA Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide coordinating umbrella for area community gardens and provide services most efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners to assist • Convene committee to determine organizational structure, work with subcommittees • Determine Saint Paul and Minneapolis locations • Develop organizational structure • Recruit CG members & friends of community gardens
CGA Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop diversified income streams in order to provide more stability in serving community gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a CGA finance committee • Convene a membership committee • Develop funding relationship with public sector • Explore earned income revenue streams • Develop grant proposals to foundations/businesses
Listserv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and enlist suggestions on the development of the CGA • Encourage a community of gardeners that is self-supporting and active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners to establish listserv, including moderator(s) • Test listserv • Develop promotional materials • Send out invitations to email lists & coordinators • Evaluate listserv (Fall 2005)
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as information clearinghouse and public relations for CGA • Broaden communication to ESL speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners to assist with website development, determine who will be webmaster • Draft outline of website • Develop PR strategy • Collect funds to develop website (buying domain name and possible design assistance)
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide another communication channel for gardening community • Highlight upcoming events, gardening tips, ties in listserv conversations • Provide advice on issues on listserv 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a printer – evaluate costs of various formats • Determine software needed (quark, photoshop, word>publisher) • Identify any possible partners/subcommittee • Publish and mail issues 2-4 times a year • Distribute newsletter electronically by email
Public Policy Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring the collective voices of organizations to advocate for policies supporting community gardens • Develop this core feature of the CGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene policy committee • Develop policy priorities • Develop strategy • Execute strategy

²⁸ In our efforts to subscribe gardeners to the listserv and inventory gardens via email, we have found a fair number of gardens are responding from greater Minnesota.

Item	Purpose	Development Steps
Gardener Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly connect with every community gardener • Elicit gardener information to be used for public relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene small committee to develop the surveys and survey procedure • Draft and test survey • Distribute and collect surveys • Analyze results and present back to CGA
Cost-Benefit Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential tool in advocacy “toolbox” for financial and political support of community gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify academic (and other) partners • Develop a CBA Taskforce to direct the study • Design study • Execute study • Present findings and recommendations
Form Partnership with Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure better leases, public services and a reduction of fees for community gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify immediate stakeholders • Develop relationships • Convene an advisory committee including gardeners and staff from public agencies to oversee this partnership

Timeline of Recommended Activities

The chart below provides an estimate of the time needed for recommended CGA activities and approximately when they would occur. This timeline assumes the best possible working situation; most of the gardening community will work effectively together and with staff paid to implement the plan to fulfill these activities. The timeline will need to be adapted to fit actual circumstances. The items are sorted chronologically and by expected length of project.

Timeline (by Start Quarter)	Expected Length of Project	Project Title
2005, 2Q	Ongoing	Listserv
2005, 4Q	Ongoing	Inventory of Metro CGs
2005, 4Q	3 years	Cost-Benefit Analysis
2005, 4Q	Ongoing	Partnership with public sector
2006, 2Q	Ongoing	Public Policy Advocacy
2006, 2Q	6 months	CG Week: Resolutions/ Proclamations
2005, 4Q	1 month, ongoing	Newsletter, CGA
2005, 4Q	1 year, ongoing	Website development and maintenance
2005, 4Q	1.5 years	CGA, Establish
2005, 4Q	Ongoing	Develop Funding for CGA
2006, 1Q	1.5 years	Gardener Surveys
2006, 1Q	6 months	CG Openhouse, plan and implement
2006, 3Q	1 month	CG Picnic, plan and implement

CGA Budget

The CGA budget is only an estimate and one can expect costs to change as the CGA evolves. It may be that some costs can be donated in-kind and there will be unanticipated costs, such as those associated with events. This budget relies heavily upon the likelihood that the CGA will be run from a home office or can be hosted by one or more organizations that would provide access to phones, copying, computers and the internet. These costs have not been specifically included in the budget. As recommended previously in this plan, the budget includes two staff positions at 32 hours per week, their 40% overhead is assumed to cover the costs of maintaining nonprofit status, such as yearly fees and dues.

Proposed Budget

One year	Annual	One-time	Comments
Salary, Benefits, and overhead costs (40%), Project Manager, Hennepin County Organizer	\$31,500		0.75 FTE with 40% overhead, 12 months, based on \$30,000 salary
Salary, Benefits, and overhead costs (40%), Saint Paul Organizer	\$28,350		0.75 FTE with 40% overhead, 12 months, based on \$27,000 salary
Newsletter (3/yr)	\$3,000		
Brochure Development and printing		\$1,000	Will need to add in as annual expense once need is determined
Garden Survey Materials	\$350	\$1,000	Initial survey is one-time cost Annual cost of subsequent surveys is averaged over three years
Establish the CGA as a nonprofit organization		\$1,000	
Logo and Brand development		\$1,000	
Web site and e-mail list development		\$1,000	
Incorporation costs		\$1,000	Estimate relies on pro bono legal assistance
Tool library: tools and storage	\$2,000	\$5,000	
Garden signage (100 signs @\$100)		\$10,000	
Events (Community Garden Week, Fall Harvest Festival, Spring CG Resource Fair)	\$5,000		
Total	\$ 82,200	\$4,500	

Building The Community Garden Network

Strengthening the network of community gardens is necessarily the first step in achieving sustainability. It is clear that each garden community has solved a set of challenges and once communicating and working together, gardeners can learn from each other and discover new and better solutions for all the challenges gardeners face. The Twin Cities Greening Coalition (TCGC) can take three specific steps to build a regional network of community gardens that is vibrant and politically active.

1) Encourage the Listserv to be a resource for gardeners to help other gardeners, whether it is sharing information, distributing goods and assistance, discussing issues. This can be done in two ways: Setting an example and sending out topical discussion emails.

Setting an Example: TCGC leaders should be vigilant about sending out emails on garden updates, local politics, events and resources. In this way, they can demonstrate the usefulness of the listserv and how subscribers can contribute to it.

Send out a topical email (when the listserv has been quiet). Be sure that there is the capacity to collect and analyze the discussions. It is important that this information does not reside solely among TCGC members, but is given to all gardeners back through the listserv. A list of possible topics includes:

- Any thoughts or suggestions about incentives to entice private landowners to host a community garden.
- A community garden association for the Twin Cities: how do you feel about community gardens becoming members? What would be needed?
- Any ideas or thoughts on developing an earned income stream for the entire community garden community? Is there something that an association of community gardens could accomplish that no one community garden group could do on their own?
- Should there be a set of universal standards that every garden should aspire to? Any suggestions for these? Some possible areas are: volunteer hours, aesthetic standards, rules of the garden, dogs in the garden, gardening safety rules, use of motorized tools and synthetic pesticides/fertilizers, protocol for conflict resolution between gardeners.
- From whom do you have liability insurance? How much does it cost? If you don't have insurance, why not?
- What kinds of events does your garden host or sponsor? Please describe
- Does your garden work with or have a relationship with another community garden? If so, could you describe it?
- What kinds of advice do people have in establishing a garden on school property? How should one go about it? What kinds of relationships should be established? What kinds of things should one think about?
- How do you raise money for your community garden?
- History is vital in this community garden movement. It helps us make arguments for or against policies, helps for advocating for gardens, and gives us a sense of how community gardens ebb and flow and why. Help us gather information on gardens that no longer existing: when established, what kind of garden, number of gardeners/plots/approximate size, and when did the garden cease and why? Is there a former gardener available to interview about the garden?

2) Encourage regional events that bring gardeners together in person and purpose. It is important that community gardeners throughout the metro area have the opportunity to meet other gardeners and work with each other in person on a common project, goal, or objective. A diversity of events can help draw a wide array of gardeners. Even if there is not immediate response to invitations, the opportunities and invitations must continue for at least a year – if not

longer.²⁹ An updated inventory of community garden coordinators will be helpful with this. Suggestions for events are:

- a) Hold the CG Week – any portion of this week will work.
- b) Continue regional CG celebratory events and advertise broadly
 - Spring CG Resource Fair
 - Farm in the City/MULCH Harvest Festival
 - Green Tomato Festival, GreenSpace Partners
- c) Topical forums are a new format, but they will be vital in solving widespread problems and deficiencies, as well as building a sense of community and partnership. It is critical to use land tenure and liability insurance issues as focal points around which to organize garden groups for an early organizing effort to build a membership base in the program. The CGA goal will be to have short-term solutions to consider in October 2005, when many community gardening leases and insurance policies expire.

If these two issues do not bring gardeners from throughout the metro area, then there are two options: have forums on less political issues but helpful to gardens, such as garden safety, creating a brand/identity for community gardens, universal standards, securing one's garden site (i.e. strengthen relationships with landowners and the local community), or 2) hold forums for specific kinds of community gardens, such as youth gardens, or for a geographic area.

3) Develop a website specific to the regional network of community gardens. There is currently no website dedicated to community gardening metrowide, although several websites do serve the garden community, such as:

- Farm in the City
- GreenSpace Partners, Green Institute
- Minnesota State Horticultural Society
- St. Paul Parks and Recreation

A CGA website should serve as an information clearinghouse on community gardening within the Twin Cities. The website also needs to connect with other community gardens around the metro area and list the online and actual resources available. The garden community could ask or advertise for a volunteer who will design and operate the website. While volunteer assistance has been a valuable asset in other organizations, it can also be a hit or miss proposition. The volunteer may have limited website development skills or limited time to invest in updating and refining the website. Please consult Appendix F for a complete list of suggested components. In its basic form the website should have:

²⁹ Building the CGA can be expected to take 3-4 years before the association is institutionalized. Some garden communities can be expected to join only once the association is established.

- a) A calendar (or a link to an all-inclusive one) – call for all gardeners to place their local events on the calendar (including clean-up days).
- b) A chatroom where gardeners can utilize the internet to discuss issues freely (the listserv should remain a tool for everyone thus emails should be focused on advice, thoughts, feedback, and suggestions of the garden community).
- c) A listing of community gardens, including a procedure whereby gardeners could update their data so that it is current. Should include the website links of metro community gardens.
- d) List of references and resources for gardening locally, including links to partner catalogues and publications available for purchase.

Incorporation

Incorporation allows the CGA to ensure that it will be operating under a structure devoted to community gardening. Ultimately, it is in the best interest of the community gardening community to establish a 501(c)(3). The option of being a program of another organization is not sufficient for the long-term. While a supportive organization could host the CGA as a program or a subsidiary, the CGA would still be vulnerable to many of the same issues that the Urban Lands Program faced at SRC in terms of funding and dedication by the board or executive staff. Furthermore, it again places reliance upon an organization to carry out the services, rather than building the social capital of gardeners. The objectives of the CGA necessitate that the garden community move to incorporate the CGA and let it assume the respective risks and responsibilities. While it may be tempting to expand the mission of an existing organization already serving community gardening to either include the goals and objectives of the CGA or to create a subsidiary of an existing organization, the board would not be representative of the metro area and thus divest gardeners of their own organization or program.

A nonprofit corporation is formed for a purpose that does not involve monetary gain nor distribution of dividends to members. It can conduct commercial activities (MN Secretary of State),³⁰ as long as profits are returned to the organization. It has bylaws and rules to govern its operation. The Clinton Community Garden (New York City) is incorporated and has its bylaws available online.³¹ While a useful reference, the CGA's bylaws should also draw from other organizations serving community gardens. In addition, the American Community Garden Association can help with bylaws and rules for incorporation.

Incorporation has its advantages: it keeps garden processes open and honest, because all meetings and financial dealings must be fully accounted as required by law. It requires discipline and transparency and makes the organization more democratic. A contributor to the listserv of the American Community Garden Association (ACGA-L) noted that incorporation gives the garden group or community more political weight whether or not the garden community is small, the garden site is small, or it has little money. In addition, a nonprofit organization has the ability to raise funds from foundations and the flexibility to respond to immediate needs.

³⁰ <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/business/nc.html> (6/25/05)

³¹ <http://www.clintoncommunitygarden.org/bylaws.htm> (6/15/05).

Incorporation has liabilities and responsibilities: namely, you have to abide by state and federal nonprofit corporation rules and regulations. It requires an annual funds and a structure that can make sure the organization remains legitimate. The advantages should be weighed with the disadvantages. There are several organizations and government agencies to assist in the process of incorporation. A list of state links can be found at (<http://www.ag.state.mn.us/charities/CharResources.html>). Three specific resources are recommended to help with this process.

1. **The Minnesota Council of Non-Profits (MNCN).** Founded in 1987, its mission is to inform, promote, connect and strengthen individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector, particularly in regard to management, governance, and public policy. They hold several courses on non-profit issues. Of note, they hold a daylong course called, “Non-profits 101,” useful for those wanting to start one. The cost for 2005 was \$80 for non-members. <http://www.mncn.org>
2. **Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits (MAP).** Based in Minnesota, it provides basic management information and services needed to run a nonprofit. For approximately \$1,000 it will help establish a nonprofit organization, including legal assistance. <http://www.mapfornonprofits.org>
3. **The American Community Gardening Association (ACGA).** Has a helpful factsheet and periodically offers training in starting a garden, which includes advice for establishing a gardening organization with organizational considerations and bylaws. [://www.communitygarden.org/starting.php](http://www.communitygarden.org/starting.php)

In addition, two government agencies need to be consulted before establishing a nonprofit:

1. **Internal Revenue Service** has an accessible website with easy to read descriptions and explanations and includes links to necessary forms. <http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html>
2. **Minnesota Secretary of State, Business Division** reviews and files the articles of incorporation for non-profits. At this time, the total filing fee is \$70. Nonprofits must register annually, but there is no charge for this. Website includes a link to the actual state legislation covering nonprofits (Chapter 317A) and necessary forms. <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/business/nc.html>

Once the decision is uniform to pursue non-profit status, it is recommended that all gardeners are notified of the association, its purpose and goals, and are surveyed for skills and knowledge that will be useful in getting the association up and running. Such skills include, but are not limited to: web page design, journalism/public relations, video/film/photography, public-speaking, community organizing, legal assistance, development/fundraising, and event organizing.

Membership Recommendations

Below are several recommendations received from interviews with gardeners and other stakeholders and ones that the CGA development committee should consider. Criteria, benefits,

membership fees, and expectations of members need to be developed by the membership committee.

With membership one gets:

- CGA Identification sign: A sturdy sign that states the name of the garden, that it is a member of the CGA and contact information for the CGA allowing folks to call if there is a question, concern or interest in participating in the garden.³² It will also provide the street address or reference number that one can use to report illegal activities or emergencies to 911.
- Free Resource Guide (The TCGC Resource Guide should be maintained and sold by the CGA)
- Available for purchase at a reduced fee: other signs, such as “no dumping” or “curb your dog” and a weather- and vandalism-resistant bulletin board

Expectations of Members:

- Those starting a new garden must attend a workshop, in which they will learn about the basics of having a community garden (signs, noteboards, fencing, ways to dissuade theft, rodent control, access to various resources, suggestions of what to grow or not to grow, access to water, etc.) and the community-aspect of gardening (making a garden publicly accessible and having a common space for gathering, notifying the public of the garden and its activities, checking in with the neighbors, holding public events, etc.)
- Member gardens commit to meeting universal standards for community gardens, as determined by the membership committee. The membership committee should be formed to decide on standards and expectations of each member community garden and have a vote on it by member gardens (to encourage as much investment in the standards as possible). It will be expected that these universal standards will apply to every member of the CGA and they will be expected to fulfill them in order to remain members and receive the benefits of membership. This committee is likely to address issues that are common to many, if not all, community gardens, and may decide that this requirement is more appropriately addressed through a series of suggested guidelines and protocols. Areas to consider are:
 - Volunteer Hours and Tasks
 - Rules of the garden
 - Safety within the garden
 - Use of tools
 - Use of synthetic pesticides or fertilizers
 - Dogs in the garden
 - Protocol for conflict resolution

³² With such a heavy investment in signage, it is important to have select information that is unlikely to change. Garden coordination can easily change, and thus the CGA can serve gardeners by being the contact listed. Inquiries and concerns would then be passed along to the respective garden community.

Assessing Our Progress

The CGA must evaluate its progress regularly to assess how it is meeting its objectives and fulfilling the needs of its clients (community gardeners), as well as assess its operations and look for areas of improvement. While this effort takes time, labor and money, in the long-run assessments save all these, as well as make organizations more effective and improve public relations.

Community Garden Association

In addition to the recommendation for a periodic survey of gardeners to evaluate the performance of the CGA, it is important to ask whether the CGA is inclusive of all ethnicities and abilities and whether these typically marginalized groups have a voice and are fully represented within the CGA. A strong recommendation is to apply for funding to hire a consultant to ensure that there is no structural racism as the organization develops. There is a strong potential for funding from The Minneapolis Foundation, which is interested in helping organizations address structural racism and to facilitate the inclusion of New Americans into the mainstream. Structural racism is much easier for everyone to address early in the organization's life and the organization will garner even greater grassroots and community support for this early and initial effort.³³

There are a number of consulting organizations available, one of which is headquartered in the Twin Cities.³⁴ However, others may have affiliated consultants located in or near the Twin Cities. The Community Food Security Coalition's board had a training from Crossroads Ministry (Chicago, IL)³⁵ in October, 2004.

Coalition Building

Recommend having an assessment of the coalition once it has determined its mission, goals and objectives, operational procedures and guidelines.

Some questions that the evaluation should assess are:

- What can we expect the coalition to actually change?
- What is the operational definition or what are the operational definitions of that change?
- How can we translate that definition or those definitions into measurable variables?

Three possible resources are:

1. The American Community Garden Association has very useful manual on community-building: "Cultivating Community: Principles and Practices for Community Gardening As a Community-Building Tool" by Karen Payne and Deborah Fryman in 2001.

³³ The Food Project (Boston, MA) is a community garden/urban agriculture organization, which is undergoing reorganization as a result of training. They strongly advise this type of assistance, and noted that it has made the organization stronger and better able to meet its objectives and mission. <http://www.thefoodproject.org>

³⁴ Progroup (800/651-4093, <http://www.progroupinc.com>). Found through an internet search, but at this time, have not yet asked them for references.

³⁵ <http://www.crossroadsministry.org>

2. The Community Food Security Coalition is developing an outcome/output based evaluation survey that will measure the impact of building a coalition. It will be included in the next edition of the Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit, which can be found at http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#cfp__eval.
3. "The Partnership Development Tool: A Guide to Assess and Develop Your Community Partnership" by Guila Muir and Associates. It uses measures to look at direction, yields/outputs, networking/communication, accountability, management, inclusive membership and competency. Gail Feenstra recommends using it as part of a focus group rather than a survey as the questions can be interpreted in various ways.

More investigation is needed to find the best applicable resources for evaluating or assessing coalition building in the context of this plan. One approach is to simply ask community gardeners via the listserv for their input into how best to evaluate progress toward building a cohesive and effective coalition of organizations supportive of community gardening and community green spaces.

APPENDIX F: RECOMMENDED CGA ACTIVITIES

This appendix further details and provides specific suggestions for the CGA activities recommended in the Plan. Activities fall into three categories.

1. Communication among community gardeners
2. Events
3. Data collection

COMMUNICATION AMONG COMMUNITY GARDENERS

The primary responsibility of the CGA is to facilitate communication among gardeners, between gardeners and their local communities, with the larger community of green space advocates and with public agencies. Of these, communication between community gardeners across the region is most vital, and a diversity of communication methods is necessary to meet the variety of needs of community gardeners, their gardens and the CGA. These should be established as soon as possible in order to begin the dialogue between gardeners about garden-specific issues, and resource needs and upcoming events.

Listserv

Established March 2005, in collaboration with UMN-Extension, the COMGAR-L listserv is a gardeners' venue to share timely messages, updates, information and advice. As there had been no listserv before, we will evaluate its use and activity in six months to determine if any others are needed (i.e., one specifically for youth gardens or rental gardens) or if the listserv needs to be more closely monitored.³⁶ At this time, it has two moderators, who confirm subscribers but do not monitor its content. A member of the listserv can post a message without permission from the moderator. In order for the listserv to be effective, it will be necessary for each garden to secure at least one communications person who frequently uses their email and will reliably share information with the other gardeners. It is recommended that every gardener who has email subscribe to the listserv, as we can expect some gardens to have difficulty finding a reliable volunteer.

Garden site issues will initially be dealt with via the listserv, and indeed many issues can be resolved in this fashion. Outstanding issues can be addressed through workshops at the Community Garden Resource Fair (March), and potentially at workshops held during the summer at a community garden or at one of the program bases (particularly if weather is bad). Some issues that we hope will be addressed via the listserv are:

- Garden surplus: connecting with those in need
- Theft, site security and maintenance

³⁶ Make sure that only subscribers can post, but there is the likelihood that someone will have to unsubscribe an abuser.

- Volunteer coordination and community involvement: community garden as a community asset
- Safe gardening techniques
- Accessing resources: low- to no-cost resources for garden goods
 - Soil, woodchips, raised beds, tools, tillers/tilling, plants, water, sheds, mowers, landscape architecture
- Land tenure, zoning and government support
 - Examples from here, across the nation and internationally
- Valuing community gardens: tools for advocacy
 - Cost-benefit analyses, investments, and payoffs in community
- Community garden standards: community involvement, aesthetics, signage, working with ESL folks, etc.

If these are not addressed through the listserv, then the CGA should pointedly discuss them through the newsletter. However, any hot items on the listserv should automatically be included in digested format in the newsletter and refer readers to the webpage for a more complete discussion.

Email List/Telephone Tree

The Email List would be constructed from up-to-date information provided by CGA member gardens. It would be used exclusively by CGA staff and directors for periodic updates and may be used in conjunction with the listserv. In order to save the CGA money and labor, all gardens should be encouraged to find a reliable gardener who will be the internet contact for the CGA (whether or not the coordinator has internet access). Depending upon the number of gardens that do not have internet access through one or more gardeners, a telephone tree/list may be used to reach these gardens.

Brochure

A brochure with a logo that identifies the CGA will promote the association in events and could be used by every member garden for relationship-building in their local community. The brochure should be easy to copy (B/W or color and letter-sized), and its distribution encouraged. Its main purpose is to provide contact information, and encourage gardeners and non-gardeners alike to call in with concerns or questions about a garden. The brochure will include:

- Description of the CGA and services provided
 - Free to members
 - Fee-based services regardless of membership
- Mission and purpose statement
- Invitation for gardeners and non-gardeners alike to join

- Information on how to donate to the CGA³⁷

Newsletter

A newsletter is a vital link to many gardeners who do not have internet access, choose not to have internet access. It will also allow gardeners to share community gardening and the CGA with those interested in participating or contributing. The newsletter will be produced 2 – 4 times each year and will contain information to help gardens in maintenance and community relations, as well as update gardens on regional community garden activities. The newsletter should belong as much as possible to the gardening community, and, thus, non-CGA staff will be encouraged to write for the newsletter whenever possible. In addition, a portion of the newsletter will be translated into Hmong, Somali and Spanish. The newsletter and website (discussed below) will be the main vehicles for the CGA to communicate to those who don't read English well. The CGA will work with native speakers to provide a limited translation of newsletter articles and more complete translation of items on the website (perhaps including newsletter articles). While not everything may be translated in the newsletter due to space, it is desirable that articles are then translated and available on the website for non-English speaking gardeners.

Suggested components of the newsletter include, but are not limited to:

- Information on gardening, gardening tips
- Updates on regional/CGA activities
- Projects such as plant a row for the hungry: with a list of food pantries that are accepting fresh produce
- “Garden of the Month,” a story about a garden in the area
- Recipe for items in season, could have a multicultural spin (along with cultural context)
- Food preservation tips for surplus (herbs, eggplant family, greens, etc)
- Tips/cautions for preparing for the fall/spring, etc.
- Advertisement for gardening classes offered either through CGA or a partner organization or business
- Advertisement for projects of community gardens within the association (for example, in Des Moines, they have 9 edible landscape sites to combat hunger. They are facilitated by a landscaper who gathers community input as to needs/wants)
- Advertisement for associated garden/food security events
- Celebration of garden volunteers
- Advertisement for sustainable products, such as compost bins, rain barrels, etc.

³⁷ Do many people become members through a donation form attached to a brochure? Further investigation may reveal that to include such a form is wasting space.

Website

The website is an important vehicle for distributing information about the CGA and about community gardening in general. The homepage should have a style and content resembling that of the brochure for identity purposes. Depending upon resources and skills available, the website should be updated at least quarterly (i.e., with the distribution of the newsletter); it can be an interactive and engaging site with more resources (funding and volunteers). Components recommended for inclusion on the website are:

- Printable version of the brochure
- Archived newsletters
- Full translations of the homepage and other crucial sections in Hmong, Somali and Spanish. Depending upon resources, it is recommended that complete translations of the newsletter are online, as well
- Membership and donation form/information
- Funder recognition page – should also include recognition of city/county support (fiduciary and services provided)
- Timeline of annual community garden events
- Association Board information (how to be on the board, expectations of board members, etc.)
- Detailed pages for each or a category of services provided by the CGA
- Map of community gardens, plus a list of gardens by geographical area or type of garden
- Ability to find detailed information about any property in the area, including zoning, ownership, and district/ward (find a partner to assist with this)
- Resource guide
- Calendar

EVENTS

Events are important for both recognizing gardeners' hard work and accomplishments and increasing public awareness of the community gardens. They are also an opportunity for gardeners and other community members to contribute to the garden, gain organizational skills and assume more leadership within the garden. However, events can easily burden those who have already taken a leadership role if they are not able to delegate to others.

There is no comprehensive inventory of all local garden events. But, anecdotally, it is common for community gardens to have two events to bring their gardeners together: a spring clean-up event and a fall clean-up event. Attendance at these events varies from garden to garden. Some gardens will hold a harvest festival or another event held mid-summer, which is advertised to the public.

In addition to local events, there are a few harvest events gaining momentum within their locality. These harvest festivals are networking opportunities between gardeners from different gardens, a celebration of community gardening, and recognition of the contributions of individual gardeners. Open to the general public, these local events enable garden supporters an opportunity to celebrate the season’s good work along with the gardeners. Funders, sponsors, and landowners should be invited to these harvest events.

Calendar of Events

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Community Garden Resource Fair		Spring Clean-up Events				Community Garden Week	Harvest Festivals			

Community Garden Events – sponsored by the community garden and typically held within the garden itself. However, they could involve two or more community gardens in close proximity.

Spring Clean-Up Events – a day when community gardeners gather in the garden and prepare the ground for the summer, such as cleaning up litter, fixing paths, ameliorating plant beds. Also Fall Clean-up.

Local Harvest Festivals – a day or evening when community gardeners celebrate the season.

Other Festivals – these often celebrate the garden and invite the community into the garden. An example is Dowling Community Garden’s “Taste of Tomatoes” event in August featuring heirloom varieties.

These festivals should serve to 1) create another opportunity for gardeners to come together to celebrate gardening and the growing season and 2) be an opportunity for community outreach. In the case of local harvest festivals sponsored by one or more community gardens, the harvest festival is an excellent opportunity to recognize existing relationships with local community members and foster new relationships.

Local Events pull together the efforts of gardeners from more than one garden and invite members of a geographic region (i.e., North Minneapolis, South Saint Paul or an entire city).

Harvest Festivals – ongoing and sponsored by an organization supporting community gardens (i.e., Twin Cities Greening Coalition/Green Space Partners or Green Saint Paul) and typically by region (i.e., a neighborhood, citywide, etc.). We recommend evolving these regional harvest festivals to be inclusive of the entire CGA Chapter.

Chapter or regional harvest festivals are more conducive to celebrating the larger garden community and to garnering public attention from politicians, neighborhood associations/districts and funders/sponsors rather than to helping gardeners strengthen their relationships with local community members (neighbors, businesses, social organizations).

Regional Events invite residents from throughout the Twin Cities area to participate. Historically there have been two regional events for community gardeners: one sponsored by

SRC's Urban Lands Program (ULP) and another by the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. The first was subsumed into the Living Green Expo, which increased exposure to community gardens, but lost the connection between gardeners. The second run was a celebration event for members of the MN Green Program of MSHS. It had decreasing attendance and was eventually cancelled. The last fair was held in 2000. A number of gardeners said that they missed the ULP event, because it was a chance to meet other gardeners from around the metro area.

Two events are described below. The first was initiated in 2005 and coordinated by the TCGC. The second event is an event recommended for coordination by the CGA. It is further recommended that a committee be formed to oversee both or each of the events.

Community Garden Resource Fair – regionwide (metro area)

The first Community Garden Resource Fair was held on March 12, 2005 in conjunction with the Minnesota State Horticultural Society's annual Minnesota Green Seed Donation. It featured workshops and demonstrations on community garden topics, such as garden safety and vermicomposting. In addition, it provided a place for community gardeners to promote their gardens and programs and was an excellent opportunity for community gardeners to connect and share information. Future fairs could provide gardeners the opportunity to sign up for a garden and to join the CGA.

Community Garden Week – regionwide

This is a coordinated event, with several layers of activities. The timing hinges upon two items: an annual day/week of recognition from state, county and/or city governments that occurs in a productive time of the year. We recommend an early week in August as nearly all items are ripe, it does not conflict with the beginning of school and it encourages gardeners to maintain their gardens throughout the season (instead of letting them go to the weeds as the season ends).

Activities include:

1. Community Garden Openhouse to occur the Saturday prior to Community Garden Week. It would have press coverage and public announcements saying that all community gardens will be open to the public and gardeners will be available for tours, gardening advice and information on how to participate in your local community garden. Hopefully, the paper would also list community gardens in the region to help the public locate one near them. This is primarily a community outreach event for each community garden and should encourage gardeners to take on some role to make the event a success. Ideas and recommendations are made in the next section.
2. Each chapter of the CGA would make a positive presentation to an appropriate government body in accord with Community Garden Week, highlighting the positive benefits of community gardening, thanking the government for services provided and being open to discussing how government could better serve community gardens. A presentation would include personal testimonies and a gift of produce and flowers, and would note the success of the Community Garden Openhouse. Depending upon

resources, it might include a public display of community gardening within the government building for the day/week.³⁸

3. Community Garden Picnic would occur the next Saturday (after Community Garden Openhouse) and would be primarily for gardeners and their supporters, including funders, sponsors, landowners and volunteers. This is an opportunity for gardeners to network, and to share and celebrate their experiences with the government presentations and Community Garden Openhouse. It is a casual, face-to-face, family-friendly, regionwide affair (for both chapters). This would be the second event where all CGA members can come together in one place and 5 months after the Community Garden Resource Fair (March).³⁹

DATA COLLECTION

Data on community gardens and gardeners is essential in helping the CGA meet its goals. The CGA needs to be able to speak confidently about its member gardens, how many gardens and gardeners there are in the Twin Cities, what types and where they are located. Secondly, the CGA needs to be able to regularly assess how it is meeting gardeners' needs and addressing issues they face. Last, as a community of gardeners, the CGA needs data to advocate for permanency and to promote community gardens. This includes testimonies from gardeners, as well as sound research and analysis of how community gardens fit into the economic, social and environmental landscape as compared to other land-uses. Continuity of data collection across all community gardens is important to spot trends and take positive actions

When and where possible, gardeners should be encouraged to do data collection and analysis about their garden and its community. Data collection would help the gardening community. It would also help the garden's sustainability by growing more leaders through providing more opportunities for someone to take on a leadership role, learn new skills and become more invested in the welfare of the garden community. Moreover, data collection can be more valuable as a means of building community support and ties with the local community than the actual data, when data collection is transparent, and encourages participation by the community in both collection and analysis.

Three types of data collection are described below:

1. As part of membership, community gardeners will need to annually update their information with the CGA. This will enable the CGA to speak with authority about

³⁸ Some discussion as to whether this opportunity should be used to appreciate city/county or highlight the instances when they have not been supportive of community gardens. In asking for annual public recognition of community gardens, this opportunity is best for relationship building with the city and county. Through diplomacy we can address areas needing improvement (i.e., granting longer leases or lowering the fees). We want government to celebrate community gardens with us, not to be defensive with gardeners and resent community gardens.

³⁹ Comment: two CG weekend events in a row during the busiest time of the year (in terms of gardening and vacation) is asking too much of gardeners. Response: I agree with this statement, but it is important to highlight the gardens when they are at their best (August). Gardeners will likely find an opportunity to garden during the openhouse and the picnic should not require much preparation. Time will tell, but the first events occur in 2006.

community gardening in the Twin Cities, as well as facilitate communication between gardeners through newsletters, the website, and email. Such information should include, but is not limited to

- a. Community Garden Coordinator for that year and contact information
- b. Garden site information and landowner
- c. Number of gardeners participating in the garden
- d. Types (youth, rental, beauty, etc.) of gardening occurring
- e. Annual garden events
- f. Summary of publicity the garden received over the course of the year.

Other types of annual data would also benefit the CGA, such as documenting the number of garden users (non-gardeners), public outreach efforts, insurance, fundraisers and sponsorship. This would include surveying nearby residents and garden users (other than gardeners) on their perception of the garden, including its impact (positive and negative) and areas for improvement. We strongly recommend that community gardeners are charged with doing data collection, including collecting testimonials not only from gardeners but from neighbors (i.e., anyone within sight of the garden or within a block of the garden), sponsors, funders, landowners and beneficiaries of the garden (i.e., those receiving food from the garden, doing programming with the garden, etc.). Not only would it keep gardeners connected with the local community/neighborhood, this effort in itself would build good relationships with their local community and strengthen the social capital of the gardeners.

2. Surveying community gardeners serves two purposes: assessing CGA performance and providing gardener testimonials. The first will gauge the effectiveness of the CGA and areas of improvement. The latter will be used for public outreach and advocacy:
 - a. The CGA needs to regularly assess their performance to their members. A survey of community gardeners would elucidate any concerns and issues, and provide feedback on how the CGA is achieving its goals. After the initial survey, gardeners can be surveyed every three years (balancing the cost and labor of getting it done with the need for regular assessment), but it may turn out to be more often depending upon gardener turnover.
 - b. Even before the CGA is established, a survey may be a tool to garner testimonials about the impact of community gardening on gardeners' lives and those around them. Testimonials would then form the core of the CGA's advocacy and outreach to different stakeholders (developers, neighborhood associations/organizations), and in public relations/marketing community gardens (i.e., real estate agents). The CGA needs a good (75%+) response rate during implementation of the plan in order to collect a range of responses with a high degree of confidence.

The CGA should collect surveys as soon as possible. However, surveys must be field-tested before they are distributed to all community gardeners.⁴⁰

3. A **Cost-Benefit Analysis**, which evaluates the costs and benefits of community gardening as a land-use, is a crucial advocacy tool. Such an analysis would put to rest arguments on both sides as to the value of community gardening to a neighborhood. It would include home and land values, crime statistics, and an evaluation of the contribution of community gardens to the environment's health, food security, community development and other social and environmental benefits. The gardening community needs sound research and analysis in order to demonstrate the economic and social benefits of community gardening as a land-use versus other forms of land-use, such as seasonal recreational activities, vacant lots, and lawn/manicured green space. This study would be conducted early in the life of the CGA, be revisited every ten years, and involve the expertise of local universities and colleges.

Several studies already exist, but none are comprehensive. They include:

- Whitmire Study (Saint Louis, MO)
- Milwaukee Study (by Dept of Urban Planning, UW on behalf of MUG)
- *The Economic Benefits of Open Space* report, by Trust for Public Land

The CGA could work with local universities and colleges to draft the components of a cost-benefit analysis, and to begin collecting data:

- a) Compare community gardens in a cost-benefit analysis to other seasonal uses of public lands, i.e., the cost of operating a baseball field, or a pool. Include the number of users, and the demographics of these users. A study is needed to demonstrate whether or not community gardens are indeed the lowest cost of land uses, and to demonstrate to what extent community gardens are accessible to the community, i.e., serving multiple generations and cultures and open to participants at any skill level (and actually a training ground for gardening and community-building skills). Anecdotally, we expect this to be the case, but a study is needed to substantiate this.
 - b) Compare community garden use to "higher and better" land uses, such as housing development. This comparison must include externalities, which are rarely included in an economic analysis, such as the impacts on the natural environment with each land use, and the social benefits attributed to each land use.
4. Community Garden History
 - a. Document the history of current and former community gardens.
 - b. What is the trend in terms of costs to gardeners for having a garden over time? Cite specific fees and how they went up over what period of time.

⁴⁰ One option for distribution is to have the community garden coordinators give them to gardeners during an event, such as a Fall Clean-up Event, in order to save money (and to reiterate the importance of filling out the survey). A system of returning the surveys to CGA staff must insure confidentiality, while encouraging the highest rate of return. This may include sealing each survey in an envelope when the gardener is finished filling it out during the Fall Clean-up. Or each gardener could mail their survey to the CGA.

APPENDIX G: GARDEN SURVEY

This questionnaire below is a tool to assess the current status of community gardens within the metro area. The survey process and presentation of the results should also foster a sense of community among garden communities. The recommended survey process is:

- 1) Put the survey on COMGAR listserv to alert community gardeners that the survey is occurring. Encourage subscribers to ask other gardens to fill out survey.
- 2) Contact community garden coordinators (for whom we have contact information) by phone, email or through the mail
- 3) Keep a hardcopy of the survey for each garden, including any defunct gardens. Results can also be organized within an ACCESS database.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Name of Community Garden: _____
2. Street Address of community garden: _____
If *unknown* or *not applicable*, please give best description of garden location, such as a neighboring house or the closest intersection (i.e., "NW corner of Snelling and University")
3. Garden Coordinator and contact information:
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Phone: _____
 - c. Email: _____
 - d. Mailing Address: _____
4. Number of gardeners involved: _____
5. Landowner: _____
6. Year Established: _____
7. How is garden site insured?
8. What languages are spoken in the garden?
9. Brief description of the garden, including mission and goals
10. On average, how many plots are available to new gardeners per year? _____
11. What events does the community garden host or sponsor?
12. Does the garden support any other forms of outreach to the public?
13. Does your garden community work with or have a relationship with another garden community? If so, please describe in a couple sentences.
14. Do you or any other gardeners have internet access and can you disseminate information from the internet (email or website) to the rest of the gardeners?

APPENDIX H: CGA PARTNERSHIP

Below is the list of organizations/entities recommended for possible partnership with the CGA. This list is not exhaustive, but is the start of a list that should evolve. Some organizations have been involved in the development of the Sustainability Plan or have a relationship to the TCGC.

>>>If you have organizations or public agencies to add, please contact author.⁴¹

- ❖ Partner with organizations that currently serve community gardening
 - Garden clubs as listed on www.northerngardener.org
 - Ascension Garden Club
 - Bryn Mawr Garden Club
 - The Riverview Garden Club
 - Community garden organizations
 - Youth Farm and Market
 - Dowling Community Garden
 - East Phillips 17th Avenue Gardeners
 - Farm in the City
 - The Green Institute
 - Organizations supporting or sponsoring community gardens
 - Minnesota Horticultural Society
 - Catholic Charities
 - Committee on Urban Environment
 - Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
 - Midtown Greenway Coalition
 - Tree Trust
 - The Trust for Public Land
 - YWCA of Minneapolis, Midtown
 - Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
 - Minnesota Environmental Initiative

- ❖ Partner with organizations who receive inquiries from those seeking to join a community garden or start one.
 - Findings to date:
 - The Land Stewardship Project (White Bear Lake)⁴²
 - For Saint Paul, HRA and the Ramsey County Master Gardener Coordinator⁴³

- ❖ Partner with non-profit organizations with whom we share common goals
 - Neighborhood Organizations
 - *Saint Paul*
 - Macalester-Groveland Community Council

⁴¹ Kirsten Saylor, GreenSpace Partners, The Green Institute. 2801 21st Ave., Ste 110, Minneapolis, MN 55407. ksaylor@greeninstitute.org. 612-278-7123.

⁴² LSP reported receiving several dozen phone calls each spring and referred them to SRC. LSP was told that the program was cancelled and referrals could go to The Green Institute.

⁴³ They each get several phone calls each spring. HRA was surprised that there were none this year. They both referred people to Parks and to Farm In The City.

- *Minneapolis*
 - Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.
 - Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association
 - Southeast Como Improvement Association
 - Stevens Square Community Organization
 - New Americans – cultural and resource centers: Hmong, Somali, Korean, Latino
 - Public Housing
 - The Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council

- ❖ Partner with businesses and citizen groups
 - Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA)
 - Civic society groups: Rotary Club, Kiwanis, etc.

- ❖ Partner with public sector entities that own land which host or could potentially host a community garden
 - *State*
 - MN Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry
 - *East Metro* (Saint Paul and Ramsey County)
 - Saint Paul Parks and Recreation
 - Department of Planning and Economic Development, Saint Paul (PED)
 - Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), City of St. Paul (HRA)
 - Housing and Redevelopment Authority, City of South St. Paul
 - *West Metro* (Minneapolis and Hennepin County)
 - Hennepin County Taxpayer Services
 - Minneapolis Parks and Recreation
 - Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)
 - *Other*
 - City of Hastings Parks Department
 - Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
 - Three Rivers Park District (formerly Hennepin Parks)

- ❖ Partner with academic and educational institutions which could provide land, research and/or labor supporting community gardens
 - *Academia*
 - Augsburg College, Minneapolis
 - Concordia University, Saint Paul
 - Macalester College, Saint Paul
 - Metro State University,
 - The College of Saint Catherine, Saint Paul
 - University of Saint Thomas, Saint Paul
 - University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
 - Humphrey Institute
 - College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA)
 - Department of Geography
 - Department of Economics
 - Extension Service

- Walden University, Minneapolis
- William Mitchell College of Law, Saint Paul
- K-12 Schools
 - Minneapolis School District
 - Saint Paul School District

- ❖ Partner with organizations that promote green space
 - Friends of Parks and Trails of Saint Paul and Ramsey County

- ❖ Partner with organizations that build community or enhance social capital
 - Micro-enterprise organizations
 - Churches

- ❖ Partner with organizations that advocate for sustainable and equitable urban life
 - Affordable Housing
 - Minnesota Green Communities; an initiative that supports the production of affordable housing, which promotes health, conserves energy and natural resources, and provides easy access to jobs, schools, and services.⁴⁴
 - Energy Conservation
 - Neighborhood Energy Consortium, St. Paul

⁴⁴ <http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/minnesota/>

APPENDIX I: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED RESEARCH

Below is a summary of research recommended in this Sustainability Plan.

Description	Focus	Timing	Goals
Survey By CGA	Community Garden Coordinators: Basic information about their community garden	First in 2005 by CGA supporters, then on an annual basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the CGA to be a central clearinghouse on Community Gardening issues in the Twin Cities
Survey By CGA	Community Gardeners: What are Community Gardeners experiences with their local garden, local community and the services of the CGA	First year of CGA existence and then every three years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify areas for improvement to be addressed by the CGA • To collect gardener testimonials regarding the value of their community garden
Survey By gardeners	Local Community Members: Perceptions and investment in the community garden by neighbors of the garden, social service organizations, local businesses, etc. ⁴⁵	No later than the second year of the CGA. Consider conducting survey periodically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help gardeners initiate contact with members of their local community • To raise awareness of the garden within the local community • To collect testimonials about the value of the community garden to the local community and the garden's contribution to the public good
Research Study By CGA	Potential Garden Allies and Supporters: areas of mutual interest and collaboration for mutual benefit	By 2007. To be resurveyed as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify potential projects that would ultimately foster a broad coalition of community garden supporters • Identify the mutual areas of interest between community gardeners and other public interest groups • Identify how we can help each other achieve our goals
Research Study By CGA	History of Community Gardens in Twin Cities Metro Area: comprehensive documentation of the changes in community gardening in the metro area	To be completed in stages. Ongoing, with a first edition available by 2008.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the histories of current and former community gardens • Track the changes in specific costs to gardeners and how they changed over time.
Study: Cost-Benefit Analysis By academic partners	Study: What is the economic value of community gardens as compared to other land-uses	To be completed in its entirety by end of 2008. Expect some findings to be released earlier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate that community gardens have a relatively smaller public cost compared to other land uses • To demonstrate benefits of community gardens to city, local community and participants

⁴⁵ Survey proposed by Julie Filapek. A version is in her thesis.

APPENDIX J: A CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community gardening can contribute to the Comprehensive Plan of any municipality, often meeting the goal of community-building and ecological health in a number of aspects as demonstrated below. Text from the municipal plan is italicized below and the community garden response indented.

Community Gardens contribute to the success of several goals of the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan as described below:

Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan

Minneapolis will offer many choices to city residents for living, working, and recreation, and seeks to broaden choices currently available.

We propose that community gardens provide an experience unique to any other that the city currently provides.

Minneapolis will maintain its excellent quality of life.

Even while **community gardens are mentioned as a valued component**, we know that they contribute to the other elements: safer city, attractive parks, desirable recreation programs and cultural events. Not only do community gardens in and of themselves promote a higher quality of life in all these aspects, but they augment efforts by others by providing a space and opportunity to expand their programming.

Minneapolis will be a safe place to live, work, and play.

Community gardens create community within the grassroots, empowering individuals to work together within their community on creating a healthy place and learning space that is accessible to all. Their very nature requires residents to make new relationships, seek out gardeners, encourage new participants, canvas the community for support through volunteering or donated materials and skills. Community gardens are terrific vehicles for fulfilling this component of the plan:

“Building a sense of community by talking to the new residents on the block, or learning the name of the child who lives next door, establishes links between neighbors.” (1.i.3)

Moreover, community gardens provide space and opportunity to allow non-programmed and unstructured exchange between generations and across cultures, fostering genuine friendships and understanding. Many community gardens celebrate their cultural diversity, opening such celebrations to the local residents. Gardening is a unique and powerful means of not simply growing plants, but of growing people and communities. Traditionally, gardening is an important aspect of every culture and is a common “language” between cultures. It enables gardeners and local residents to overcome perceived barriers and begin the process of communicating and building trust and respect.

“Minneapolis will be a “people-oriented” city that values and respects its cultural and racial diversity, as well as the histories and traditions related to that diversity....It is more than shared geography that brings people together along city streets and across backyard fences....Building bridges of understanding, teaching

respect and finding shared values in unfamiliar environments is important to building the strength of a community.” (1.i.3)

Community Gardeners know this to be true from personal experience.

In addition to meeting a city’s social goals, Community Gardens can partner with the city to help meet the city’s measurable ecological goals as described in chapter seven, “Natural Ecology,” of the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan

Goal 7.4 Minneapolis will encourage the planting and preservation of trees and other vegetation.

Goal 7.5 Minneapolis will protect and sustain its water resources.

Goal 7.6: Minneapolis will take measures to reduce water consumption and encourage water conservation.

Goal 7.11: Minneapolis will operate waste management programs that focus on reducing solid waste, reusing and recycling materials.

Community gardens, as low-cost endeavors by gardeners, exemplify how residents can reduce their impact on the environment, lower energy costs and contribute to the health of the natural ecology within the city. They routinely compost, mulch, and select plants for wildlife habitat to help with pest control, and use landscaping practices to reduce erosion. Moreover they utilize practices to capture rain to be used in the garden. In terms of recycling materials, community gardeners are resourceful and often utilize materials that have been donated or thrown out to create a comfortable, beautiful common area in the garden.

Community gardens need the support of the city in order to improve their outreach to the grassroots and connect to residents where they live – which few programs can do even with adequate funding. Community gardens can become an outdoor school room that lets the University of Minnesota Extension Service train gardeners who, in turn, involve residents in the garden. The garden is a living example and demonstrates to residents what they can do in their own yards.

Implementation steps that Community gardens can contribute to by being a living example of:

- *“[T]he use of plant communities native to the Twin Cities which achieve native biodiversity and wildlife habitat...”*
- *“[E]rosion control measures and best management practices that manage storm runoff.”*
- Practices that *“allow water to be slowed or detained in vegetated areas”* and reduce runoff.
- The selection and maintenance of plants which will reduce the overall need for watering.

An innovative pilot project would form a partnership with community gardens (via the Community Garden Association) in order to meet both the city’s and community’s goals. Community Gardens are cost-effective, reach the grassroots, and can be implemented in every corner of the city. The gardening, the education, the outreach and events are not carried out by city staff, but through community programs, organizations and volunteers. Such a program would wed the inherent properties of community gardens with the needs and goals of the city as it strives to make Minneapolis an even better place to live.

APPENDIX K: ZONING

Zoning is a very effective municipal tool to protect community gardens from development pressures. As the process to reassign land use designations can be long and cost prohibitive, zoning acts as a barrier to short-term political changes or interpretations of policies.

Several cities have zoning or are developing zoning that explicitly supports or protects community gardens. The City of Boston has the strongest zoning ordinance (below). It is excerpted from the report, *Zoning and Greening: A Resource Review*, prepared by DIG IN Design and Consulting in March 2005 for the Southside Community Land Trust and Citywide Green in Providence, Rhode Island. Please consult the report for further examples of zoning.

SECTION 29-1. Statement of Purpose. The purposes of this article are to preserve and protect the amenities of the city of Boston; to preserve and enhance air quality by protecting the supply of vegetation and open space along the city's Greenbelt Roadways; to enhance and protect the natural scenic resources of the city; to protect the city's Greenbelt Roadways from traffic congestion and to abate serious and present safety concerns.

SECTION 33-1. Preamble. This article supplements the creation of an open space district (OS) designation, which under Text Amendment No. 101 can be given to public lands or, with the written consent of the owner, to private property. The open space district and nine open space subdistricts, taken together, present a comprehensive means for protecting and conserving open spaces through land use regulations. The open space (OS) designation and an open space subdistrict designation can be used in conjunction with each other, thus establishing for the land so designated the particular restrictions of one of the subdistricts: **community garden**, parkland, recreation, shoreland, urban wild, waterfront access area, cemetery, urban plaza, or air-right. Land can be given the OS designation, however, without the simultaneous designation of a particular subdistrict, such as "park" or "garden," where the desired subdistrict designation is yet to be determined. This system instills flexibility into the regulation of open space.

SECTION 33-2. Statement of Purpose. The purposes of this article are to encourage the preservation of open space for **community gardens**, parkland, recreation, shoreland, urban wild, waterfront access area, cemetery, and urban plaza purposes; to enhance the quality of life of the city's residents by permanently protecting its open space resources; to distinguish different open space areas in order to provide for uses appropriate to each open space site on the basis of topography, water, flood plain, scenic value, forest cover, urban edge, or unusual geologic features; to prevent the loss of open space to commercial development; to restore Boston's conservation heritage of Olmsted Parks; to coordinate state, regional, and local open space plans; to provide and encourage buffer zones between incompatible land uses and mitigate the effects of noise and air pollution; to promote and maintain the visual identity of separate and distinct districts; to enhance the appearance of neighborhoods through preservation of natural green space; and to ensure the provision of adequate natural light and air quality by protecting the supply of vegetation and open space throughout Boston.

APPENDIX L: LAND TRUSTS

A land trust is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, organized to preserve and protect the natural and man-made environment by working with interested landowners and communities to find ways to protect their land from development, so it can continue to provide open space, habitat, and other values of public benefit.⁴⁶ This type of land trust is also known as a conservation land trust. Under chapter 501 (c)(3) of the federal tax code, the land trust can receive donations of money, property or development rights, and may use its assets to purchase property or development rights⁴⁷ (aka conservation easements⁴⁸). The land trust then holds the land and administers use of the land according to the charter of the organization.⁴⁹ A nonprofit organization (NPO) applies to become a land trust and this status is granted by their respective Secretary of State.

The purchase of development rights is typically under a limited time agreement, which can range from 30 years to 99 years. This provides the landowner with a tax break – an incentive to host a community garden.

A conservation land trust should not be confused with another kind of land trust, often called a community land trust (CLT), which typically buys the land on which affordable housing is built. In this way, new homeowners are able to afford the new homes as they are only paying for the house and not the land. There are several CLTs around the Twin Cities, such as the Rondo CLT, and the City of the Lakes CLT (CLCLT). There is the possibility of partnering with CLTs to purchase land for community gardens, but CLCLT said that they would need to change their mission in order to allow it without development on or adjacent to the site.⁵⁰ For an extensive description, see website for Madison Area Community Land Trust at www.affordablehome.org/MACLT/Marketing-Outreach/FAQ/index.htm.

Established in 1993, The Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) is a conservation land trust serving the entire state (<http://www.mnland.org/>). They will consider getting involved with conservation projects that have 10 acres or more of consecutive urban lands, and 40 acres or more for rural land. Their criteria exclude all existing community gardens from involvement with the MLT.

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA), a national organization, has over 1,500 member land trusts across the nation. Membership gives access to training, publications, census of land trusts, lobbying, and affordable comprehensive insurance. They also have a digital library and can provide grants to land trusts. In addition, they developed guidelines, “Land Trust Standards and Practices,” for ethical performance by land trusts. Membership has been recommended by other land trusts for the services and assistance they provide. Consult their FAQ webpage for more information about how land trusts work (<http://www.lta.org/faq/index.shtml>).

⁴⁶ www.pacificforest.org/about/glossary.html

⁴⁷ ilrdss.sws.uiuc.edu/glossary/glossary_allresults.asp

⁴⁸ For more information on conservation easements, visit the webpage, <http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1261.html>. It is a factsheet from Ohio State University. Also contact the Land Stewardship Project, which has done much work on conservation easements over the years.

⁴⁹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_trust

⁵⁰ The Madison Area Community Land Trust owns Troy Gardens, one of the largest community garden sites in the country.

Currently, there are three land trusts in the United States dedicated to community gardens. The first two are LTA members and highly recommend LTA membership.

<p>1) Southside Community Land Trust http://users.ids.net/~sclt/</p>	<p>109 Somerset Street Providence, RI 02907 ph: (401) 273-9419, fax: (401) 273-5712 email: sclt@ids.net</p>
<p>2) NeighborSpace http://neighbor-space.org/main.htm (description on following page)</p>	<p>25 E. Washington St., Suite 1670 Chicago, IL 60602 ph: (312) 431-9406, fax: (312) 427-6251 email: info@neighbor-space.org</p>
<p>3) The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) http://www.ngalandtrust.org</p>	<p>100 N. 20th Street, Suite 309 Philadelphia, PA 19103 ph: 215-988-8797, fax: 215-564-5572 email: nga-staff@ngalandtrust.org</p>

Two organizations with staff in Minnesota can be helpful in exploring land trusts and the use of conservation easements.

1. The Land Stewardship Project (www.landstewardshipproject.org) has long advocated for the use of conservation easements as a means of preserving farmland.
2. The Trust for Public Lands (www.tpl.org) is not a land trust, but provides funding and technical assistance for land trusts, non-profit organizations and government agencies in purchasing open space quickly. It was instrumental in helping SRC and The Green Institute acquire 9 community garden lots in 2000, when MCDA made them available.

Several good questionnaires are available for land trusts to help gardeners consider issues related to permanency.

- SRC’s Community Garden Profile & Application for Purchase (still available online at the time of this report)
- Saint Paul Parks Community Garden Application (ask for most current version)
- Application form from NeighborSpace, Chicago, IL (available online)

NeighborSpace: A land trust for community gardens

Chicago, Illinois
www.neighbor-space.org

NeighborSpace is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to acquire and support the community based management of gardens, small parks, natural areas and other open spaces in Chicago. In response to a study showing Chicago ranking low in terms of green space per capita, a partnership between the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District and Forest Preserve District of Cook County worked with community leaders to establish NeighborSpace. Their aim was to protect the small intimate green spaces that communities had developed from vacant lots and other such neglected lands from redevelopment, yet continue supporting community control of and engagement in local green open spaces. They found that site acquisition makes a statement to others about the community's long-term commitment to the area and to preserving open land in the neighborhood.

The three government entities committed to provide NeighborSpace leadership and financial support for 20 years: serving on the board of directors, providing significant funds for operations and purchases, giving NeighborSpace first bid, and initially selling publicly-owned land for a nominal fee. Under this arrangement, NeighborSpace provides a space for government and nonprofit organizations to work together, learn about each other and build trust between them.

NeighborSpace's primary mission is to acquire and own land on behalf of community partners who will maintain the site. NeighborSpace holds the title or deed to all properties it has acquired. Once they acquire the property, they apply for a tax exemption, offer liability coverage, install a water hydrant and apply for water rate exemption. NeighborSpace receives liability insurance through its membership with the Land Trust Alliance. NeighborSpace currently owns 44 sites and holds long-term leases for another 4 sites. An additional 30 sites are currently in the review or acquisition process (per website). The decision to buy depends upon three factors:

1. Is the landowner willing to sell?
2. Does it have the capacity to succeed over time?
3. Does it meet environmental standards?

A community group applies to NeighborSpace for a site to be acquired, agreeing to sign a long-term agreement to be the "Site Manager." A local nonprofit or other group must also sign on to be the long-term "Site Management Entity." In this way, NeighborSpace creates long-term opportunities for local nonprofits to expand programs that include gardening or park activities. When a community partner can no longer maintain the site, NeighborSpace will work to find another community partner.

NeighborSpace also refers people to gardens and gardeners to partner organizations, which can assist gardeners in obtaining materials, funding and technical assistance and training. When available, NeighborSpace can provide additional garden- or park-related materials. Mary Jo Schnell, the Executive Director, said that she was willing to help with establishing a community garden land trust.