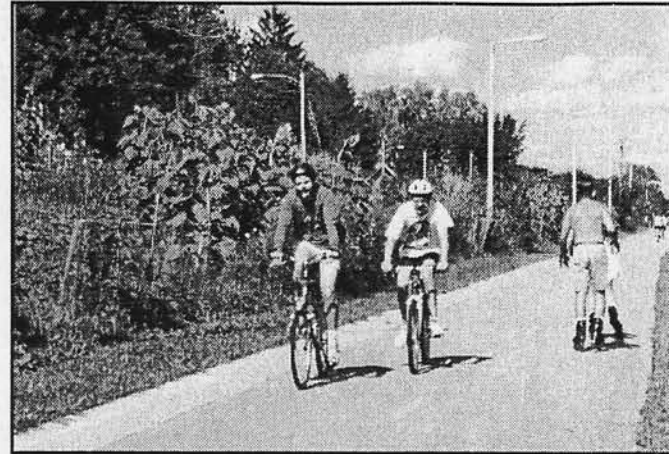
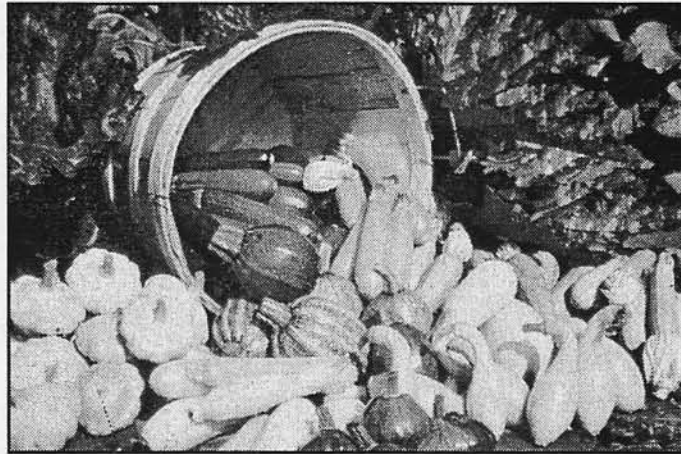


# Growing a Stronger Community with Community Gardens: An Action Plan for Madison



A Report by the City of Madison Advisory Committee on Community Gardens

July 1999

***FINAL DRAFT***

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## **Introduction**

***“It’s a lot of work. It’s not as simple or easy as most people think to garden. It’s been a lot of work for me and lots of other people. I think without everybody we couldn’t have done it. Unity, that’s what it takes.”***

***J.W., garden leader***



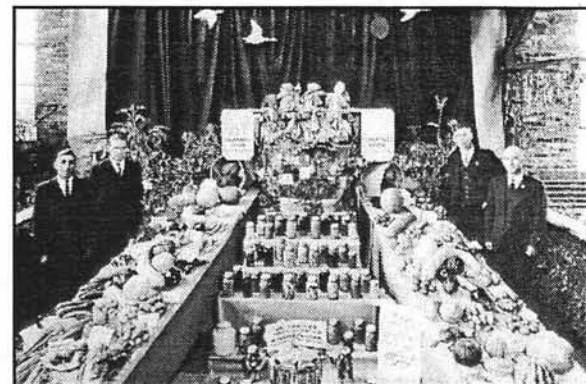
Community gardens are common ground for growing plants that feed, heal and give aesthetic pleasure. They are civic spaces where people work and recreate to nourish themselves, their families and friends; the gardener's shared labor also builds a stronger sense of belonging to their physical environment and connection to other gardeners. Community gardens are the collective effort of people with the patience and determination to make things grow.

The individuals, families and households with plots in Madison's current 24 community gardens are a varied lot. They include people of all ages, many races and various levels of income. Many of them live in apartments or condominiums, others in homes on lots that are too small or shaded for growing food crops. Many have come to Madison from other parts of the United States and from other countries, bringing with them their connection to the earth and a wealth of gardenings skills. Many of the gardeners live near their gardens, while others are neighbors in the community of their garden. For some, the strongest appeal of gardening lies in the private hours of building the soil and raising their plants; others enjoy the chance to share their passion and expertise with other gardeners.

Many community gardeners have taken plots to reduce their food costs. Some of them want the assurance of eating produce that was grown locally without synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides. Most gardeners take satisfaction in having filled some part of their diet with food they have grown themselves.

Historically, American government has given its strongest support to community gardening during the world wars. More recently, community gardens have blossomed in the vacant lots of inner cities. Community gardens have been adopted by schools and other youth programs, by churches, jails and neighborhood centers and as part of urban food security programs. Whatever their setting or sponsor, community gardens provide places to raise food crops and enhance the physical and emotional health of the gardening community.

Like community gardeners in most cities, those in Madison have struggled to secure their plots and hold them against the pressures of development. Too often, community gardens are seen as an interim use of land that is eventually developed for other uses. Between 1983 and 1993, Madison lost 11 community gardens to roadways, parking lots, a car dealership and other buildings. Madison's Parks Division and the city-administered Community Development Block Grant program have provided critical support to many of the city's community gardens, but the city has yet to embrace community gardening as a viable, long-term land use or support the gardens with comprehensive planning policies or secure sources of funding.



*Harvest bounty from the Madison Community Union  
Garden program in 1935*

*“There’s clearly a strong social function to a community garden, it’s very much a family function.”*

*J.B., Troy gardener*

In 1990, Madison's Common Council directed city staff to set policies for the creation and management of community gardens on city-owned land. The report was never completed. The City's Parks and Open Space Plan of 1991 set a goal of 2,000 new community gardening plots on public land. In fact, Madison has about 400 fewer community gardening plots today than it did in 1991.

More recently, the community gardening movement in Madison has undergone its own greening. Community gardeners have organized themselves and worked with allies to advocate for more secure land tenure and greater recognition for the role that gardens have taken to bring the people of Madison closer to their physical environment and to each other.

Since 1995, community gardeners have worked with neighbors, land trusts and representatives of city and state government to preserve their plots on Sheboygan Avenue and Troy Drive. A community garden in the Broadway-Simpson neighborhood will soon start its third season, and Old Market neighbors are now organizing the first formally recognized community garden on the City's Isthmus. Without advertising, most of Madison's community gardens with unrestricted access are fully subscribed each growing season.

We, the members of this committee, feel the time has come for the City of Madison to recognize community gardening as a valued resource for growing food and fostering community, and we call on the City's residents, Mayor, members of the Common Council, and City staff to support, adopt and implement the following report and its proposals to make community gardens a permanent and fully productive feature of our landscape.

In addition to compiling and synthesizing information on the status and role of community gardens in Madison, we hope this report will help readers to recognize the importance and need for protecting and creating new community gardens in Madison. The report is divided into eight sections. Sections I and II provide the introduction and background to the working of the Community Gardens Advisory Committee and the report.

Section III of the report provides a definition of community gardens, discusses the qualities that make them necessary to a community and profiles the interest groups that are involved in community gardening.

Section IV of the report is devoted to the current state of community gardens in Madison. The section discusses in detail the number, location, and size of the City's community gardens and describes some of their success stories. Many community gardens in Madison are in imminent danger of closing; this section also discusses local gardens that have been lost.

In addition, Section IV profiles community gardeners and community gardening organizations in Madison. The section concludes with a discussion of the support that the City's community gardens receive from local government.

Section V offers criteria for locating additional community gardens in Madison. The criteria are based on site characteristics and socio-economic factors of the potential garden sites.

Section VI discusses possible strategies for preserving and starting new community gardens in Madison, while Section VII concludes the report with action plan recommendations to implement these strategies. The report also contains appendices of supportive maps and tables.

*“Potential gardeners have missed opportunities to get plots because of the long waiting lists – now more than three years.”*

*C.P., Atwood gardener*



## II

# Background

*“Gardening is one interest that virtually everybody has from every different culture and enjoy at any age and that’s what happens in our community garden...There’s a wide range of types, all of whom interact in ways that they normally wouldn’t because they wouldn’t come into contact with the same kind of ease you have in a community garden.”*

*J.K., gardener*

On September 16, 1997, the City of Madison established “an ad hoc community gardens advisory committee to identify potential roles for community gardens in stabilizing and improving neighborhoods and possible City actions to facilitate such efforts.” (City of Madison Resolution 22346)

The current advisory committee is the city’s second effort to study community gardening. In May 1990, the Common Council created a task force to establish policies favoring community gardens in Madison. The task force was asked to submit specific recommendations to the mayor and council to establish permanent community gardens on city-owned land, including parks. The group was also expected to recommend zoning ordinance changes that would encourage the creation of community gardens in newly platted areas of the city or as part of landscaping requirements for certain types of developments. However, the 1990 task force did not complete its study, and no recommendations were submitted to the Common Council.

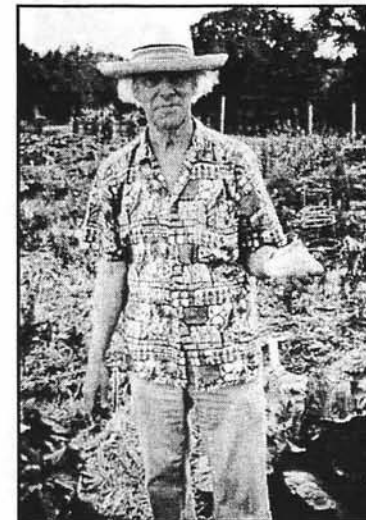
A proposal from residents of the Old Market Neighborhood to build a community garden on the Reynolds property rekindled interest in the issue. The neighborhood’s alderperson, Barbara Vedder, sponsored a resolution to create a community garden on the Homestead site and an advisory committee. The initial proposal failed on a tie vote in the Common Council, but a compromise resolution from Mayor Sue Bauman won unanimous approval. On November 11, 1997, the Common Council approved the Mayor’s appointments. The committee began its work on March 30, 1998, and met bi-weekly until the completion of the report.

The following is the mission statement adopted by the Community Garden Advisory Committee.

*Recognizing that Community Gardening improves the quality of life for residents of Madison, we seek to create a permanent system of long-lasting, well-managed community gardens throughout the City of Madison, with strong government/public support.*

To fulfill this mission statement, the Community Garden Advisory Committee proposes the following objectives:

1. Preservation of existing community gardens and the creation of new gardens at appropriate locations around the city.
2. Resources and management to make community gardening accessible and successful for persons of any/all ages, racial/ethnic groups and income levels.



Aubrey Banks at Sheboygan garden





Corrine Fladger at Baird garden



The children's plot at Troy East is tended by children from north side neighborhoods such as Kennedy Heights, Vera Court and Packer Townhouses.

3. Programming to inform and educate citizens about the benefits of community gardens and gardening.
4. Strong governmental support to community gardens, which also strengthen and empower neighborhoods, provide meeting places for a diverse group of people, create economic benefit from the harvested food and enhance neighborhood aesthetics.



III

## **Community Gardens**

## What is a community garden?

A community garden is first and foremost a garden where people share basic resources – land, water, and sunlight. Community gardens are the sites of a unique combination of activities such as food production, recreation, social and cultural exchange and the development of open space, community spirit, skills and competence.

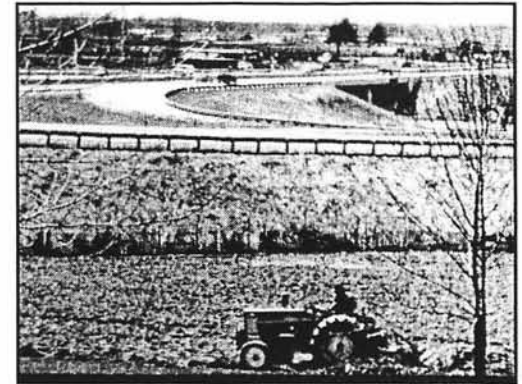
Community gardens not only nurture green spaces but foster the development of a community identity and spirit. Community gardens that have adequate resources and support often set aside space for plazas, open air theatres, flower gardens, walkways, sculptures, children's enclaves, areas for community get-togethers, barbecues, harvest festivals, etc. Such gardens therefore serve as the modern-day equivalent of the ancient plazas in urban areas where people would gather to meet and spend time together, but community garden spaces simultaneously allow for interaction with nature and the productive use of land. Community gardens are a transformation of the notion of "civic space" into a sustainable, healthy, and productive civic space.

Community gardening in urban areas does not exclude the general public from using the land. It allows the larger public to share and enjoy a natural space that is maintained by their own community members.

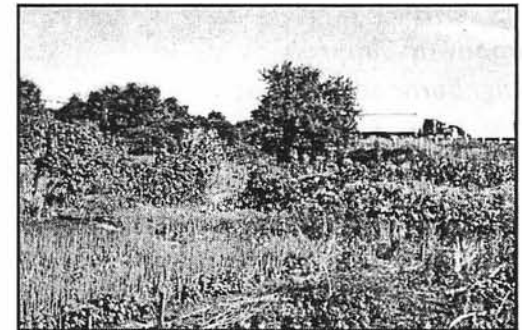
## Why have community gardens?

Community gardens are essential to people and places in urban environments. Rather than visualizing Madison solely as a built-up environment, we need to pursue strategies that will make our natural spaces a primary aspect of neighborhood planning, economic development, education, culture, and history. This section describes a range of economic and non-economic benefits from community gardening. Although harder to measure, the non-economic benefits are the essential reasons why community gardening makes for better, more livable cities. The non-economic benefits are especially strong in neighborhood-based gardens that are woven into the fabric of the community, as opposed to allocation gardens where gardeners rent plots and come from anywhere in the region to use them (Herbach 1998).

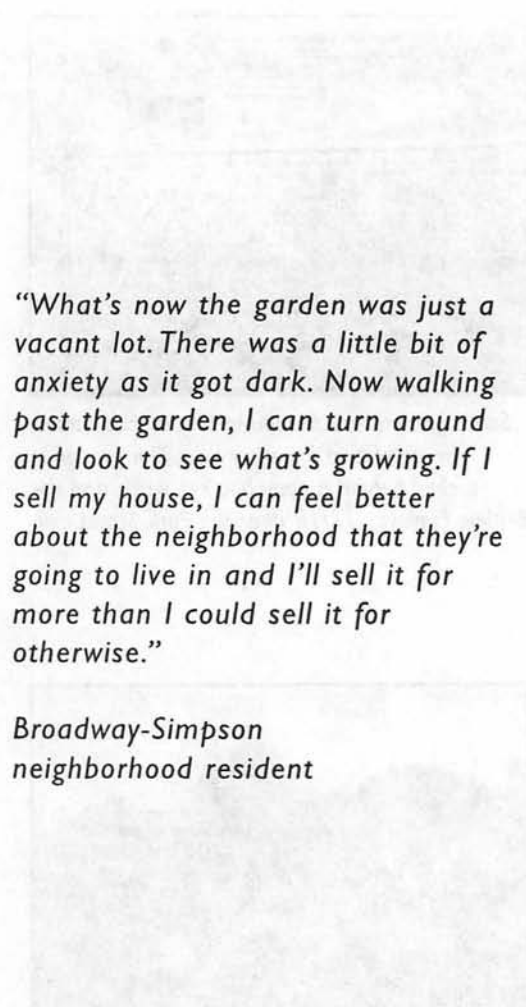
**Economic benefits.** The economic returns of community gardening are partly dependent on climate. Certainly, community gardeners in California are able to grow more during their long growing season than are gardeners in Madison. However, the amount of vegetables that can be grown in Madison's climate is still significant (Herbach 1998).



*Some gardens are nestled in places that cannot be developed for other uses. This garden is tucked behind a church, a car wash, and the Beltline Highway 12/18 near the Park Street exit.*



*When you are down in the garden (Badger) in the middle of summer, you hardly notice the hum of traffic on the road above.*



*“What’s now the garden was just a vacant lot. There was a little bit of anxiety as it got dark. Now walking past the garden, I can turn around and look to see what’s growing. If I sell my house, I can feel better about the neighborhood that they’re going to live in and I’ll sell it for more than I could sell it for otherwise.”*

*Broadway-Simpson  
neighborhood resident*

Evidence from other cities regarding economic returns of community gardening is impressive. A Rutgers University study showed that the average New Jersey community garden plot (about 700 square feet) produced about \$500 in vegetables in an average growing season. Deducting the cost of inputs, these gardeners netted \$475 tax-free dollars each season (Patel 1991).

Larry Sommers, a Vermont community gardener and writer, claims that a 600-square-foot plot produces about 540 pounds of high-quality produce. In 1984, that translated into approximately \$450 in savings (Sommers 1984), an amount that would be greater when adjusted for inflation. In addition, training gardeners in high-intensity techniques greatly increases the amount produced.

Community gardening can benefit government as well. In a 23-city program encouraging community gardening that was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and managed by university extension programs, a dollar of government investment led to the production of six dollars in vegetables (Hynes 1996).

Development and maintenance of garden space are less expensive than the same costs for parkland. A study in Sacramento, California, compared the start-up and maintenance costs of a park containing 140,000 square feet with the same costs in a community garden that contained 121,300 square feet. The researcher found that the park cost \$46,000 to develop and \$15,000 per year to maintain, while the garden cost \$2,200 to develop and \$550 per year to maintain (Francis 1985). It has been suggested that the costs of garden construction and maintenance have increased relative to the costs of parks since this study was completed. Climate-related differences undoubtedly affect these costs, but clearly, community gardens are less expensive to build and maintain than parks (Herbach 1998).

**Food security and nutritional benefits.** Community gardens allow people of all incomes access to low-cost food. In addition, there is evidence that community gardeners and their children eat healthier diets than do non-gardening families.

A study of Philadelphia community gardeners showed that gardeners were more likely to eat raw vegetables in salads. The gardeners’ frequency of vegetable consumption was slightly higher than the non-gardeners’ consumption in all categories of vegetables other than iceberg lettuce, celery and fresh salad greens (Blair, Giesecke and Sherman 1991).

In a Rutgers University extension survey of New Jersey community gardeners, 35 per cent cited improved diet as one of the prime benefits of gardening. Forty-four percent of those gardeners believed they ate more fresh foods and vegetables than their non-gardening counterparts (Patel 1991).

There are lessons to be learned from other nations as well. In developing countries, research into the benefits of urban gardening has focused on dietary improvement. A study of urban agriculture in Africa identified the nutrition produced by farming on city plots as the prime benefit (Maxwell 1994). A 1987 study by Save the Children Fund in Kampala, Uganda showed that growth rates among the children of urban gardeners was much better than those for the children of non-gardeners. In fact, the gardeners' children averaged a half standard deviation taller than the mean for the nation when compared with the average height for age (Maxwell 1995 in Herbach 1998).

According to Save the Children Fund, gardening in Kampala has eliminated the need for supplementary feeding programs in low-income areas of the city. Children of urban farmers were found to be healthier than the children of wealthy families (United Nations Development Programme 1996). Because of cuts to entitlement programs in the U.S., the importance of community gardens as a source of nutrition is sure to rise.

**Youth development.** Community gardens are especially beneficial to urban youth, who have fewer opportunities to experience the natural environment. Community gardening is a healthy, inexpensive activity that can draw young people closer to nature. Gardening enables youth to interact in ways that are socially meaningful and physically productive.

In cities across the country, community gardens are used to teach subjects such as biology, mathematics and the environment. Elsewhere, gardens are part of teaching both job and life skills to at-risk youth.

Hundreds of volunteer Master Gardeners in the San Antonio area are teaching fourth-grade and fifth-grade students to grow plants in community gardens. As of 1995, the district had 133 schools taking part in the program with an average of 15 new schools added each semester. Although the program started out as a means for the Master Gardeners to share their love of gardening with young people, the benefits of the program have far exceeded this modest objective.

A study indicates that students participating in the San Antonio program have better school attendance and have gotten their parents more involved in their schooling than non-gardening



*The Truax garden is supported by the East Madison Community Center for residents of the neighborhood. Children have their own plot here.*



students. Teachers say their gardening students' feelings of accomplishment and belief in the importance of being responsible are the primary benefits of the program (Finch 1995).

A children's community gardening program in Berkeley, California, called Strong Roots stresses two goals. First, gardening is seen as a way of restoring the lost agricultural heritage of African-American youth. Second, the program serves to teach job skills. Participants earn minimum wage through the federal Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Again, coordinators and participants in the program highlight benefits that perhaps exceed the program's expectations. These benefits include developing dispute resolution skills and learning how to create rule schemes for participants (Chavis 1997). Similar youth gardening programs exist in Boston (Naimark 1982); San Francisco (Nuru 1996); New York City (Sullivan 1996); and Dayton, Ohio (GWYN undated), among many others.



*Shorewood Hills Community Gardens has 30 plots just across the parking lot from the swimming pool.*

Madison also has a number of children's gardens, a topic that will be detailed in a later section. Low-income youth in Madison have benefited in many ways from the presence of community gardens. In programs such as the Youth Market Garden, children learn gardening, cash-handling and accounting skills. At the end of the summer, children are able to take home a portion of the total receipts based on the work they have done.

Growing Power, a non-profit community gardening/community empowerment land trust in Madison, has facilitated a Children's Gardening Network that allows children from various community gardens to meet and share experiences and ideas on a regular basis. Along with cultivating social skills and encouraging sharing of ideas, the program allows children to feel part of a gardening community.

**Service to diverse groups.** Cities sometimes argue that community gardens should not be developed on parklands because they limit park uses and engage fewer people (City Farmer, 1997). Research done on the West Coast shows that community gardens actually attract people onto public space that would not otherwise use such amenities.

In Sacramento, for instance, three-quarters of city park users were under the age of 30. Three-quarters of the users of city-owned community gardens were over the age of 30. Community gardeners were more likely to use the land alone, while park users were more often in pairs or groups. Another finding in the study demonstrated the democratizing effects of community gardening. A total of five people made decisions concerning the development and maintenance of

the city's parkland. Ninety-nine people had a voice in making the same decisions concerning city-owned community garden space (Francis 1985).

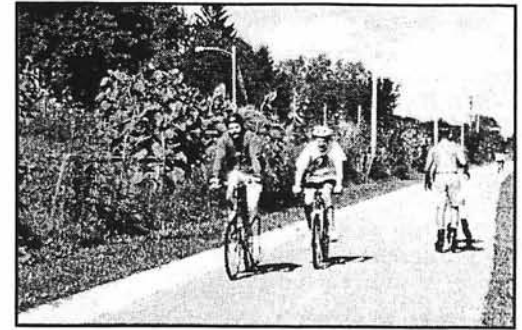
Community gardens spread the benefits of common open space to groups of people that may not be well served by traditional parks. In addition, because they are places where people interact, community gardens can serve as spaces where social integration takes place.

**Community organizing and empowerment.** Community gardening brings together people and encourages interaction. Interest in urban gardening has often led to community-based efforts to deal with other social concerns. In Dayton, Ohio, for instance, a successful African-American community gardening group started the Edgmont solar gardens and eventually established a community center on the site of the gardens. This center provides a focal point for community gathering and trains local youth in computer skills. The neighborhood is now involved in programs for youth and the unemployed, neighborhood revitalization and cultural and recreational events. Cities such as Philadelphia and San Francisco have used gardens extensively to foster local activity that has evolved into larger community efforts.

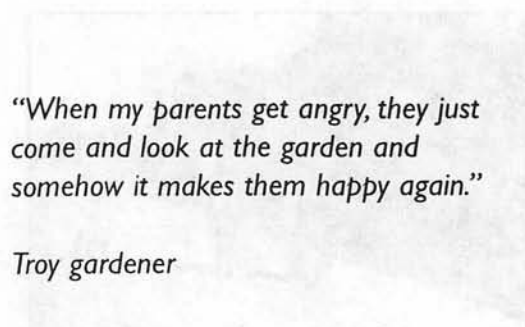
In Madison, neighbors' efforts to secure community control of the Troy gardens and adjoining green space led to the creation of the Lehrdal Park Neighborhood Association. The Broadway-Simpson community garden has sparked interest in improving that neighborhood.

**Increased Sense of place.** Gardening promotes a community atmosphere and gives people an opportunity to meet others, share concerns, and solve a few problems together (Patel 1991).

Gardeners say that community gardening enhances a person's psychological, spiritual and physical sense of well-being (Sommers 1984). Gardening adds beauty to the community and heightens peoples' awareness and appreciation for living things. Gardens are places for natural retreat in the midst of our built-up, urban environment. Community gardening helps to create a sense of place and a spirit of community in neighborhoods. A 1991 poll of New Jersey community gardeners by a Rutgers University extension agent showed that a third of the participants developed new friendships through the gardens. In addition, a third of the participants spent time helping other gardeners and nearly a fifth shared produce with other gardeners (Herbach 1998). Clearly, gardens help to create a tighter and richer social fabric among urban residents.



*Atwood Community Garden is tucked alongside the bike path and the railway corridor.*



*“When my parents get angry, they just come and look at the garden and somehow it makes them happy again.”*

*Troy gardener*

**Environmental stewardship.** Too often urban neighborhoods lack open green spaces. High population and housing density tend to increase traffic flow; the resulting noise and air pollution degrade environmental quality. High-density development reduces the available unpaved area that would allow surface water to percolate and refresh supplies of groundwater. It also creates inhospitable environs for plants and animal species. The presence of community gardens in urban areas – especially those that are densely developed – help to create cities that are environmentally sustainable.

## **Who is involved in community gardening?**

Community gardens bring together a diverse groups of people and organizations ranging from local government bodies to non-profit groups. Above all, community gardening involves communities and people.

Community gardens may exist on land that is unauthorized for gardens, on city- or county-leased land or on land that is owned by a gardening group or land trust. The type of tenure arrangement influences the organizations involved in community gardens. Demographic features of the people involved in community gardening vary with the character of their neighborhoods. Community gardeners may be children, elderly, persons with disabilities and youth alike. In addition, it is important to remember that community gardens are not the exclusive domain of those who garden there. The level of involvement of a neighborhood in a community garden can vary from some people who are gardeners, other residents who use garden paths for walks, and others who relax in the verdant surroundings of the gardens.



IV

## **Current State of Community Gardens in Madison**

*“I was all for the garden. If I get some greens, corns and beans, I would save some money and my family will have another dollar to buy some clothes with if I don’t have to buy food.”*

*Broadway-Simpson gardener*

Community gardens involve communities. It would be unfair then, to describe the state of community gardens in Madison in terms of plain numbers, acreage, lot sizes, etc. Attached to these pieces of productive land are stories of people who toil together literally and figuratively in building healthy families and communities. A description of the state of community gardens necessitates a description of the people who use and benefit from them. Accordingly, this section provides not only an inventory of community gardens in Madison, but also offers a profile of community garden users and the important role that community gardens play in various communities in Madison.

## **Number, size, value and ownership of community gardens in Madison**

There are 24 community gardens in operation in the greater Madison area. These garden sites contain approximately 1,600 individual plots. The total acreage (crop area) of land under community gardens in Madison is 13.39 acres. The crop area of individual gardens sites ranges from 4 acres (at Troy) to 0.1 acre (at the Reynolds site). The sites are subdivided into plots for renters. After providing for adequate setbacks, pathways and community areas (in addition to crop area), the assessed value of community gardens sites on property owned by the city (including CDA-owned property) in Madison was near 2 million dollars (see Table in Appendix A).

*“Let’s do all we can to keep the gardens.”*

*C.W., Sheboygan gardener*

All but two of the sites are available to residents of the City of Madison; the Shorewood Hills site is open only to the residents of the Village of Shorewood, and the Rohlich site is reserved for residents of Rohlich Court in Middleton. Just over half the garden sites are on publicly owned land; about a quarter of the gardens are on church property and a quarter on privately held land.

The publicly owned sites for community gardens in Madison are owned by the City Parks Division, the CDA, and the City Transportation Department. The State of Wisconsin owns the community gardening sites on Troy Gardens and Sheboygan Avenue. Garden sites on private land are owned by churches, businesses and individuals. In addition, the University of Wisconsin - Madison owns the Eagle Heights garden, which is more than 6 acres in crop area.

While the gardens may be owned by the aforementioned entities, their management often lies with non-profit gardening or neighborhood groups. During the past growing season, the Community Action Coalition had responsibility for 13 area gardens at 12 sites and gave start-up assistance to another garden. CAC’s support for gardens ran from a minimal role of insuring the property, holding the lease, making referrals and providing access to compost, supplies, and water up to responsibility for all aspects of the garden, including publicity, plot assignments, policy, rules,



layout, mowing, maintenance and tools. All CAC-operated gardens served primarily Madison residents, although only nine and one half locations were inside city limits (Mathers 1998).

## Spatial distribution of existing gardens

Of the 22 gardens available to all Madison residents, only 16.5 are actually located in the City of Madison; the St. Paul garden is partly located in the Town of Blooming Grove. The gardens located within the City of Madison are distributed unevenly and somewhat to the periphery in areas to the south, west, and north with significant gaps on the far east, far west and far southwest sides of the city.

The Isthmus, Madison's densest, most renter-oriented area, is especially lacking in community gardens. The Isthmus is expected to open its first authorized community garden this spring in the Old Market Neighborhood.



*Gardeners at Sheboygan mobilized to save their land...*

## Type of gardens

Community gardens may be of various types – rental gardens, youth gardens, pantry gardens, etc. At present the principal type of community garden in Madison is family-use plot rental garden.

Community gardens in Madison also serve special purposes such as youth development, as places of therapy and for the special needs of seniors, the disabled and other special groups. The Children's Gardening Network (CGN) currently has nine children's gardens in the city. A program that teaches gardening has been in operation at Mendota Elementary School for several years, and in the summer of 1997, a Youth Market Garden was established by the CGN and the Early Childhood Learning Center in South Madison. In October, 1998, a garden was started at Lapham School that will serve as a "living laboratory" for the study of a wide range of subjects.

Special purpose gardens, while generally smaller in terms of acreage and food production than rental gardens, provide other significant benefits to the users.

## Demand for community gardens

Community gardens continue to be in demand in the city of Madison. It is important to note that even with the existing gardens, Madison residents are gardening on land outside the city limits. Many people who would like to garden are deterred by a lack of personal transportation or the time required to travel between their homes and outlying sites.

The committee is not aware of any studies in Madison or elsewhere in the country that address the demand for community gardens in a community. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that the residents of Madison view community gardening as important.

Community Action Coalition, one of the leading groups facilitating community gardening in Madison, reports a number of people on its waiting lists for plots in gardens throughout the city. For instance, the Atwood garden averages a turnover of only three gardeners per year and a waiting list that is nearly 150% of the 48 available plots.

Moreover, this demand is persistent, despite the fact that CAC has stopped advertising any of its gardens because nearly all of the plots are filled by gardeners from the previous growing season. The coalition often must refuse applicants for the lack of available space, although at some gardens, CAC has tried to cover the shortage by subdividing plots into smaller sizes.

The lack of community gardens is especially evident in the Isthmus, with a high number of renter units on small lot sizes and limited green spaces; such traits suggest a high need for community gardens. Lack of community gardens in the Isthmus forces numerous residents of the area to garden in other parts of the city. For instance, a large percentage of garden plot holders in the Troy Gardens at the north side of the city commute from the Isthmus area. In addition, the Eagle Heights garden, which is primarily for the residents of university housing, also caters to the residents of the City of Madison who lack access to garden plots elsewhere. The Isthmus therefore is a priority area in terms of establishing new community gardens.

## Success of community gardens

Despite the loss of gardens and increasing development pressures, a movement to maintain existing community gardens and to create new ones is alive in Madison. The effort has had notable successes, especially on the city's Northside, where a large community garden on Troy Drive has been preserved.

In October 1995, the State Department of Administration declared surplus a 15-acre parcel abutting Mendota Mental Health Center and announced its intention to sell the land to a private housing developer. For nearly 15 years, the land had provided more than 220 gardening plots and open space for neighboring residents.

Alarmed at the prospect of losing this resource, a coalition of garden, neighborhood, housing and green-space advocates, university representatives and non-profit groups fought to protect the land



*...and set up an information table at the Capitol Square farmers market.*



*Kathy Kamphoey, community gardener and advocate, speaks at a summer event.*

for gardens and open space. In the fall of 1996, the state listed as surplus another 20 acres of a land-locked parcel north of the original site. After nearly a year and half of concerted effort by the coalition, the state removed the entire 35 acres from the surplus list, and a 16-year lease was signed with the Northside Planning Council, Madison Area Land Trust, Urban Open Space Foundation, and the Community Action Coalition, to use the land according to the desires of the community.

By the summer of 1998, further negotiations with the state led to an agreement that keeps a portion of the site in community gardens for at least 50 years. Eventually the coalition will acquire full title to the land. Meanwhile, gardeners and other members of the community continue to design and plan the site with renewed vigor. The Troy Gardens Project has become a model for community-driven land use decision-making, and the consortium of public owners offers a blueprint for garden acquisitions elsewhere in Madison and throughout the U.S.

Other gardens in Madison have also drawn considerable success and community support.

### **Loss of community gardens in the past 10 years**

Despite success stories, community demand and consistent community support for them, community gardens in Madison continue to compete with other forms of development as a land use. According to Madison's Parks and Open Space Plan, 60 percent of community gardens in the city are in imminent danger of being converted into other uses (City of Madison 1997 in Herbach 1998).

The lands on which community gardens in Madison are located are owned by a variety of interests. The Dryden II community garden, for instance, is on land owned by a shopping center. Other Madison garden sites are held by the university, state, city, churches, and railroad companies. In only a few cases is community gardening a permanent use of these lands. Because of the gardens' short-term tenure arrangements and increasing development pressures, the city has lost 12 garden sites since 1991 – nearly 400 plots comprising 40 percent of Madison's community gardening plots (Herbach 1998).

It is imperative that the city stop this loss. To create a community that is sustainable, environment friendly, socially healthy, hunger-free and livable, community gardens must be recognized as a high-priority use of land in Madison.

## User profile of community gardeners

In this city, a profile of users by race is very different for community gardens than it would be for city parks. Many of Madison's recent immigrants, including Southeast Asians, Eastern Europeans, and Central and South Americans, describe gardening as their connection to home (CAC staff person 1997). It is interesting to note that some of them are not from rural settings, but garden to get access to food that they are unable to purchase here. Community gardens appear to be successful and in demand in places where there are concentrations of Southeast Asian immigrants (Herbach 1998).

Seniors are another group that exhibits a strong interest in community gardening. Of all the CAC gardeners, 19 percent of the users were households with seniors. In some instances, the senior member of the household is the primary gardener, although he/she may not be the primary registrant.

Although low-income populations are often cited as predominant users of community gardens, middle- and upper-income persons are major users of community gardens as well.<sup>1</sup> The gardens at Eagle Heights and University Houses serve a primarily low-income, student population. Gardens at Shorewood Hills Village, Tamarack Trails, and All Saints Lutheran Church in Fitchburg are used primarily by middle and upper-income groups. In fact, some users are homeowners who prefer community gardening because it provides a social and community experience that is not available by gardening in their own yards.

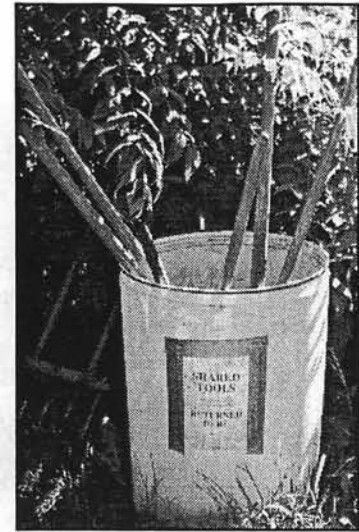
In addition, there are single-family homeowners whose yards are not suitable for gardening because of shade, soil conditions, surrounding vegetation, lot size, traffic, etc.

## Community gardening organizations

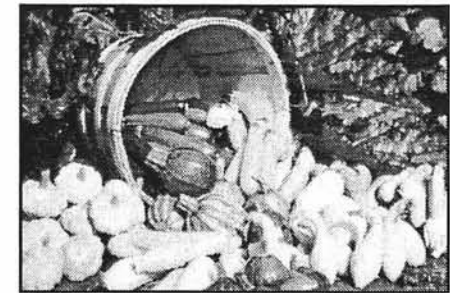
The Madison Community Gardeners Coalition (MCGC) is a voluntary organization that works to secure garden tenure and advocates for more garden space. The organization represents the interests of community gardeners and gives assistance with garden organization and leadership. It is a

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<sup>1</sup> This perception in Madison may be because the Community Action Coalition, which has been the principal garden developer in Madison for the last 18 years, targets populations at or below the federal poverty level. This has apparently resulted in a skewed demographic composition of CAC garden users, since until recently CAC was required by its funding agency to exclude upper-income users.



*It's all about using  
our common resources*



*and sharing the bounty of our harvest*



citywide umbrella organization with representation from many gardens in the city. The coalition has had great success in raising awareness about community gardens.

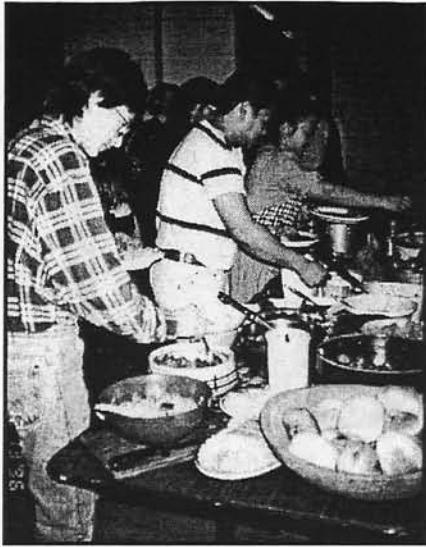
Although MCGC's members are dedicated, the organization lacks the resource endowment necessary for a bigger impact on community gardening in the city. The group depends entirely on volunteer labor. Core members of the organization are employed full-time in other positions. Moreover, its mission does not include management of gardens. MCGC would need to change its identity if it were to become the kind of organization capable of shaping the community garden movement in the city.

For the past 18 years, the non-profit Community Action Coalition (CAC), has been managing community gardens for low-income residents. CAC sites contain about 600 plots. In developing these garden sites, CAC places emphasis on sustainable, self-managed, mixed-income gardens that will meet the needs of low-income households. In this context, CAC currently manages five self-reliant gardens. Self-management and self-reliance is encouraged in the development of all new gardens. CAC also collaborates with most of the other gardens in the city to place people of all incomes, wherever the opportunity to garden exists. With some gardens, these collaborative placement arrangements are constrained by their location and priorities of the landholder.

Other than the CAC gardens, all community gardens in Madison are managed by neighborhood or garden-based organizations. In allocating the plots of their gardens, many of these organizations give priority to residents of the immediate neighborhood. Some gardens are associated with community centers; one is part of a homeowners' association. Those that are tied to the university give priority to students, faculty and staff. The actual supply of community garden space thus varies with where gardeners live.

In Madison, gardens have been successful where a strong organization exists to manage and maintain them. Examples of such success stories are the Atwood community gardens (run by the Atwood Community Center), Eagle Heights (run by the Eagle Heights Community Center) and the CAC gardens. An organization that oversees the physical appearance of garden sites and provides education and assistance to gardeners can facilitate the continuance of community gardens (Herbach 1998, Mathers 1998).

Land trusts operating in Dane County can assist public agencies and community groups in acquiring garden sites, providing liability insurance and making them available for public gardening in perpetuity.



*Community gardeners and friends enjoy the harvest at a fall potluck.*



The Madison Area Community Land Trust is constituted to acquire land and hold it in perpetuity for housing and other uses that benefit the community. A primary purpose of the Urban Open Space Foundation is to secure conservation easements that will insure the permanent protection of open spaces. The partnership of these land trusts has been an essential aspect of the plan to preserve Troy Gardens and adjoining green space.

Another garden support organization and land trust, Growing Power, Inc., was formed in 1998 to develop and preserve multigenerational and multicultural community garden initiatives for people of all income levels in both educational and entrepreneurial settings.

## Existing city policies regarding gardens

Two resolutions of the city's Common Council – one in 1990 written by then Alderperson Sue Bauman and another in 1997 that came with the growing support for a community garden on the Isthmus – have called for greater municipal support of community gardening. Community gardening is also endorsed by the Isthmus 2020 Plan and the City's Parks and Open Space Plans of 1991 and 1997. The language in the earlier Parks and Open Space Plan is particularly strong (Herbach 1998).

In June of 1990, the Common Council adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of permanent community gardens on city-owned land including city parks. The resolution also called for changes in the zoning ordinance designed to encourage the inclusion of community gardens in newly platted areas of the city. The resolution cites the multiple benefits of community gardening, and the language used to justify city action is particularly strong: *whereas, community gardens assist City residents in improving the quality of City life by revitalizing neighborhoods, stimulating social interaction, conserving and recycling resources, reducing family food budgets and creating opportunities for recreation, therapy, and exercise...* (City of Madison, Resolution 7256, 1990)

A new community garden resolution was adopted by the Common Council on October 6, 1997. The language in the new resolution is not as strong as the language in the 1990 resolution. *Whereas, the City of Madison has recognized the value which community gardens and voluntary efforts can add to the health of a neighborhood...* (City of Madison 1997) The resolution calls for the establishment of a Community Gardens Advisory Committee to research appropriate and effective ways that the city of Madison can support and help to create community gardens.

*"I didn't have any problems (in my garden). In fact, I made a new friend."*

*- anonymous gardener -*

Language in the Parks and Community Places section of the Isthmus 2020 Plan supports the introduction of community garden space in the city's central area. *Common places, where neighbors can meet, help define the character of a neighborhood* (City of Madison 1997). Community gardens are one of the recommended common places.

The 1991 Parks and Open Space Plan contains stronger language. *This Plan further recommends that the Parks Division be capital funded to acquire suitable sites for as many as 2,000 City-owned, permanent garden plots of approximately 200-800 square feet in size each...* (City of Madison 1991)

The current plan drops the strong language, although justification for acquisition – a shortfall of about 2,000 sites – remains in the description of the problem (Parks and Open Space Plan 1997). In fact, since the 1991 plan, the city has lost 400 plots. Thus far, the recommendations in the plans and resolutions have not been followed.



Churches provide support and land for community gardening.

## Existing governmental support

The city supports community gardening in several significant ways. First, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Commission has supported the CAC Garden Program with funds for a number of years. This funding is provided in recognition of the fact that community gardens serve as a focal point for neighborhood activities, and as a source of low-cost food for some families. CDBG support of CAC gardens was initiated as part of the city's effort to strengthen the community's alternative food systems, including food pantries and food banks. CDBG funding for CAC gardens has increased annually over the last 10 years. Funding in 1983 was \$6,500, and by 1998 the allocation had increased to \$44,910. CDBG continues to be an important and much needed source of support for community gardens in Madison.

The Community Development Authority (CDA) helps facilitate community gardening by allowing community gardens on some of the grounds of subsidized housing complexes. There are community gardens at the Truax housing site, on Baird Street and in Broadway-Simpson. The most recent arrangement with the city is that of the Homestead site on CDA land in the Old Market Neighborhood, where Mayor Sue Bauman designated a portion of the site for a permanent community garden.

Finally, the city also has permitted community gardens on land at Reindahl and Marlborough parks.



## Location of Community Gardens

*“Miss Maggie told me a lot of stuff...Here’s my cabbage...collard greens... cucumbers right here. So what I like about gardening is you get to watch beautiful things grow and you can like just think here in the garden as well as you can at home.”*

*R.P., youth gardener*

Two areas of concern need to be addressed when choosing a site for community gardens. The first is neighborhood characteristics that support the successful introduction of a community garden or create demand for a community garden. The second is the attributes of a site. These site and neighborhood characteristics are important not only to assess where gardens should be located but also to anticipate where these characteristics will occur in the future and plan for gardens in new neighborhoods.

## Neighborhood characteristics

Community gardens can be successful in any neighborhood, whether wealthy, low- or mixed-income, but certain characteristics of the neighborhood may take priority in setting up community gardens. For instance, *[T]he City of Seattle encourages that expansion of the P-Patch [community gardening] program and outreach, should give special emphasis to low-income families and individuals, youth, the elderly, physically challenged, and other special populations.* (City of Seattle Resolution 28610, 1992)

*“It was great having fresh produce for my use and to share with several senior friends.”*

**Average age of household.** Community gardens should be a priority in areas where there are higher concentrations of senior citizens – near retirement homes, for instance, or in apartment complexes where many elderly residents live. Community gardens not only enable senior members of the community to engage in a healthy activity, they provide other neighborhood residents a place to get to know a segment of the community they might not otherwise have the chance to meet.

*P.W., Troy gardener*

**Percentage renters or condo-owners.** Many renters and condominium owners do not have access to land. Community gardens are more likely to work in neighborhoods where a critical mass of people are looking for a place to garden. Neighborhoods with high percentages of renters and/or condominium owners provide that critical mass.

It is important to note that high densities provide the same conditions. Homeowners in several neighborhoods on Madison’s Isthmus have access to land, but because of small yards and building heights that limit periods of direct sunlight, they are unable to garden in their yards. Some residents are kept from gardening in their yards by the presence of black walnut trees, whose drip zones are a toxic environment for most vegetable crops.

**Percentage of census tract that is low-income.** The benefits of community gardening draw people from every socio-economic category. However, priority in siting a community garden should be given to neighborhoods with higher percentages of low-income residents. With the introduction of welfare reform and the paring down of food subsidies, community gardens could play a more

important role in feeding low-income residents. Community gardens can have significant value for people who are stretching their food budgets. Money freed up from food budgets could also be used in meeting other needs of those families.

**Percentage of recent immigrants from agrarian backgrounds.** More than half of the plots in CAC-managed gardens are tended by immigrants from Southeast Asia. According to a CAC staff person, many of the recent immigrants describe gardening as their connection to home (Finkelstein 1997). For many Southeast Asians, gardening is a multigenerational activity of extended families and serves to maintain a sense of cultural continuity. Some of these residents were not farmers in Asia but garden here so that they can eat a traditional diet of foods either unavailable to them locally or which they can grow more cheaply than they can buy. Community gardens are likely to be successful in places where there are higher concentrations of Southeast Asian immigrants.

*“Can’t wait for next summer. We’d love a full plot!”*

*R.S., gardener*

**Does another garden serve the neighborhood?** Community gardens should be sited in neighborhoods that are not served by other gardens. Madison’s Northside contains several community gardens, including Troy, which is among the city’s largest. It is important that all parts of the city that need gardens get gardens, not just the places that have a tradition of community gardening. Currently, the Isthmus and parts of Madison’s west, south and far east neighborhoods are underserved by the number of community garden plots available to them.

**Neighborhoods with inadequate open space.** Neighborhoods that are park or open-space deficient can benefit from the use of smaller lots and mid-block or interior locations as community gardens, even when those lots might not meet current Parks Division threshold standards. The presence of an organized activity with defined users would address the need for compatible and responsible use of that land. Standards of conduct, noise level, hours of use and related concerns would be set to match the needs of adjoining users.

By sharing parts of adjoining lots, residents and building owners can build gardens in neighborhoods that lack other options for parks and open space. The Mifflin Street Community Co-op has sponsored a plan to build a small park with a garden and benches behind the store and along the middle of the block that the Co-op shares with nine other property owners. The City banned commuter parking in the neighborhood’s back yards in 1998, and the Co-op’s Mifflin 2000 Committee wants landowners on the block to meet the City’s landscaping requirements by replacing some of the parking lots with grass and vegetation.

Pooled together, the grassy areas would provide space to garden and help reconnect urban residents to nature and each other. The open space would also increase the neighborhood’s aesthetics and allow residents to take a stronger stake in their community. Two surveys of affected residents show strong support for the plan, which has been endorsed by the Capitol Center District neighborhood group.



The use of community gardens as a type of specialized open space would bridge a deficit that present strategies have failed to address. The mid-block plan of Mifflin 2000 offers a relatively inexpensive method to secure open space in the City's Isthmus, where user demand is high and available space severely limited.

**Families with young children or new families.** Families with young children and new families often go through a period of intense domesticity with emphasis on developing the skills and routines related to food and cooking. Several of Madison's successful community gardens are located near the housing of these families.

Other areas with a high proportion of younger couples (the Trillium neighborhood near University Avenue, for example) are also likely to support a nearby garden. Access to a garden could help sustain the families both physically and emotionally at a time when their budgets and outside activities are restricted and their needs are shared with many of their neighbors.

**Large parks.** Since land availability is a major constraint in urban areas, community gardens should take advantage of opportunities to exist with open spaces such as parks. For instance, the Benjamin Wagerson Horticultural Center (BWHC), a municipal park in Dayton, Ohio, owes its popularity in part to the multiple functions that it serves. The BWHC park provides and manages community garden plots, children's gardens, wedding reception gardens and flower gardens as part of this large park complex.

## Site attributes

Gardens cannot happen just anywhere. Even with adequate neighborhood activism and support, they sometimes fail. Along with enthusiastic people, community gardens need helping hands from both nature and municipal infrastructure. The following is a list of technical factors that influence the selection of a site for a garden.

**Good soil quality and availability of compost.** At least eight to nine inches of topsoil are necessary to raise vegetables. Topsoil and/or compost can be brought in from other places, but such measures add to the development cost of the garden. Gardeners need to be concerned with the chemical content of the soil, which should be tested for its pH and nutrient content (Sommers 1984). It is especially important that the soil be tested for lead and other contaminants if the garden is located on the site of a demolished building, a railroad corridor or any other site with a history of industrial use.

**Slope.** No established degree of slope is considered prohibitive for gardening, but gardening on a slope is likely to cause erosion. The Eagle Heights Community Garden on the UW campus has



*Sheboygan Avenue gardens provide a green oasis in the midst of a heavily developed commercial and residential area of the city.*

gotten around the slope problem by terracing. Major landscaping, like bringing in soil, adds to the development costs.

**Adequate sunlight.** In northern climates, it is especially important that gardens have an open south face to maximize the access of plants to sunlight. Vegetables need at least eight hours of sunlight a day. When choosing a garden site, the more sunlight, the better.

The only essential need of food crops that growers cannot bring to their gardens is sunlight. Development proposals for buildings adjacent to gardens should allow for adequate exposure of the plots. Some of the recent proposals for housing on the Reynolds site would have left the garden area in shade.


**Accessibility to water.** Reliable water sources are essential for the success of community gardens. Because we cannot rely on adequate rainfall, it is necessary to have access to water. In some gardens, people put out barrels to collect rain, which have a tendency to collect mosquito larvae. Other gardeners take water from nearby buildings or get hooked up to the municipal water supply or to the nearest fire hydrant.

**Distance from major streets.** Boston Urban Gardeners (BUG) recommend that gardens be at least 100 feet from major streets in order to prevent airborne pollutants from getting into the soil and settling on the vegetables. There are other safety concerns, as well. Gardens tend to attract children. It is important to make sure the garden is situated in such a way that children will not be playing next to busy streets. There is some concern about the safety of children at Madison's St. Paul community garden, which is situated on an active rail corridor.

**Site configuration.** Sites that require long, narrow corridors of gardens, such as those adjacent to rail corridors, can hinder community development goals. Gardeners tend to have less contact with each other at these gardens. Thus, the social infrastructure that might otherwise develop from community gardening is less likely. The water costs are higher at these sites, as well, because less land is served per running foot of water pipe.

**Visibility from neighboring residences.** Community gardens are best protected from crime and vandalism by easy visual access from the surrounding neighborhood. Gardeners will feel safer and criminals will be dissuaded if they know that neighbors will hear calls for help or will see if something is going wrong.

**Accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly.** It is preferable to place gardens in locations that can easily be accessed by elderly gardeners and those with disabilities. Steep slopes and long walks from access points are poor choices for these groups.



*"I get all the fresh vegetables I can use, and I also shared with all my neighbors. I get all the exercise I need with the two miles I walk. I backpacked 44 pounds of cucumbers last year, and I am 74 years old."*

*S.L., Troy gardener*

Despite their many contributions to the quality of life in Madison, the city has seen a significant loss of 12 community garden sites in the past 10 years, and the existing gardens are vulnerable to development pressures. This section discusses strategies that could help to preserve and create community gardens in Madison.

## Strategies and tools for preserving and developing community gardens

The following strategies can be used both to preserve gardens and to create new gardens in Madison.

**Inclusion in plans.** Community gardens are often lost because gardening is seen as an interim use of land that is ultimately earmarked for other purposes. Starting new and secure gardens is a challenge unless gardens are established as a priority land use. One of the ways of ensuring this is to have community gardens be included in neighborhood (and other) plans.

For instance, the city of Seattle approved a resolution that clearly identifies community gardens as part of the comprehensive plan of the city. The resolution recommends that: *P-Patch gardens be a part of the Comprehensive Plan and that any appropriate ordinance be strengthened to encourage, preserve and protect community gardening, particularly in medium and high density residential areas. The City of Seattle will include the P-Patch program in the evaluation of priority use of city surplus property.* (City of Seattle Resolution 28610, 1992) The incorporation of this resolution is evident in the neighborhood planning process started in Seattle for 38 of its neighborhoods. These plans will include community gardening as a neighborhood use of open space. The plan is likely to be adopted early next year (Macdonald 1998). Berkeley, California is also in the process of adopting a resolution to include community gardens in its planning efforts (Linn 1998).

In Madison, a community garden can become eligible for certain grants if the site for that garden is identified in a master plan. For instance, the clause on urban gardens in the Parks and Open Space Plan for 1997 states:

*To be eligible for site acquisition grants under the Urban Green Space portion of the State Stewardship Program, public or nonprofit conservation groups must have the site identified in the City Master Plan for Land Use. Including a site in the Master Plan means that one or more official purposes of the Master Plan will be achieved.*

*“Permanent garden space lets us add compost and sand each year. It was hard-packed pasture. Now it’s a fertile garden.”*

C.T., Tamarack gardener

It is evident that to incorporate urban gardens in our neighborhoods, we must recognize them in city comprehensive plans and other development plan documents.

In addition to starting new community gardens in urban areas, it is also necessary to ensure their success after their establishment. In situations where adjoining land is developed after the establishment of community gardens, it is important to recognize the needs of the established garden. For instance, high-rise developments around the community garden that block its sunlight will undoubtedly ruin the prospects of a well-functioning community garden. Inclusion of community gardens in master plans and land use plans will allow such matters to be addressed beforehand.

**Zoning.** Austin, Minneapolis and Boston have zoning provisions for community gardens. In Austin, the city has specific guidelines regarding what are qualified community gardens in their zoning ordinance. A qualified garden is then allowed some provisions from the city.

Minneapolis is in the process of rewriting its zoning ordinances. The current draft includes a section that recognizes community gardens as a temporary permitted use under all zoning districts.

In Boston, the zoning code denotes community gardens as an open subdistrict within special zoning districts. The clause reads: *Community Gardens open space subdistricts shall consist of land appropriate for and limited to the cultivation of herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables, including the cultivation and tillage of soil and the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural, floricultural or horticultural commodity; such lands may include vacant public lands.* (Boston Zoning Code)

A zoning enactment that recognizes community gardening as a permitted use would allow local governments to earmark land for community gardens in comprehensive or other general plans. Zoning may also reduce development pressures on existing gardens since the gardens would be protected by the zoning ordinance.

**Budget allocation.** Budgetary support is a crucial ingredient for start-up of new gardens and for the success of existing gardens. Budgetary support may be provided for acquiring new garden sites or for establishing ownership of existing garden sites.

For instance, Seattle raised \$650,000 through real estate foreclosures. The citizens of Seattle also agreed to a \$1 dollar increase in their property tax for youth development and recreation. The

*“This year I will have a much better understanding of how things operate. And weeds.”*

C.B., St. Paul Avenue gardener



## **Preserving Existing and Creating New Community Gardens in Madison**

*"I felt terrible about losing the plots to the garage, but what can you do?"*

*D.C., gardener*



revenue was placed in a fund and disbursed as grants to community garden groups and other applicants. Seattle's budgetary support for community gardens is also evident in the following resolution: *The City of Seattle recognizes the economic, environmental and societal value of gardens and will attempt to provide budgetary support for the management of the P-Patch program.* (City of Seattle Resolution 28610, 1992)

More recently, the Los Angeles City Council has approved \$150,000 for new farmers' markets, community gardens, and market basket programs as part of an anti-hunger and food security initiative. The market basket program links consumers with boxes of farm-fresh produce purchased from farmers' markets through schools, day care centers and workplaces. Lower-income customers receive a box with more than \$10 worth of produce for \$7. The newly-created Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership (the city's food policy council) brokered this legislation. The funds will go to Southland Farmers Market Association to organize three new markets in low-income parts of the city; to LA Grows to create three new community gardens; and to Occidental College for the development of two new market basket sites.

In Madison, CDBG funding support for CAC has been essential to the coalition's ability to provide community gardening programs.

**Staff support by local government.** The presence of a staff person within local government not only provides institutional support for community gardening programs but delegates responsibility for seeking out new ways of funding and opportunities for community gardens in the city. The staff's position within the city structure allows access to information about available resources within different agencies. The staff can also work with various city agencies in collaborative ventures with community gardening programs. Such a role cannot be consistently fulfilled by non profit and community gardening groups outside the structure of city government.

A number of cities have hired staff persons to coordinate community garden activity. Seattle, for instance, has two full-time staff people who manage its P-Patch program. Newark, Portland, and Dayton and Lima, Ohio, are other cities that have hired staff to coordinate community garden activities and serve as liaison between garden groups and land-leasing agencies.

**Public/private/non-profit partnerships.** Community gardens cater to numerous interests. It follows that community gardens are more successful when different groups form a partnership in the interest of a community garden.



*Sheboygan Avenue gardeners stake their plots.*



Early Childhood Learning Center gardeners stand their ground.

Gardening partnerships are generally formed for two basic purposes: to deal with the issues of land tenure; and to facilitate garden management. Partnerships for management of community gardens are more common, but partnerships for securing land tenure are essential to the permanence of community gardens.

Boston boasts what is likely the nation's largest number of community gardens with permanent land tenure. Much of its success is due to a strong coalition among the city's various community garden interest groups. Partnership through the local land trust, which owns and holds 50 community gardens in perpetuity, has ensured secure land tenure for the gardens.

Seattle provides a fine example of public/non-profit partnership for management of community gardens. The city's P-Patch program and the non-profit Friends of P-Patch have formed an effective collaboration to manage community gardens on leased land.

**Coalition building and collaboration.** Often times, community gardens are pitted against other development uses such as affordable housing and parks. This conflict can arise from a lack of interagency cooperation. Further, greater coordination and collaboration among agencies can increase the resources available for community gardens.

Attention to this issue is raised in a Seattle resolution that states: *The City of Seattle will promote inter-agency and intergovernmental cooperation among agencies such as the Parks Department, the Engineering Department, the Housing Department, the School District, Metro, the Port Authority, the Water Department, City Light and the Department of Transportation to expand opportunities for community gardening.* (City of Seattle Resolution 28610, 1992)

**Education of elected officials, city staff and the community.** A major disadvantage for community gardeners is a lack of visibility in the public arena. Elected officials and city staff are often unaware of the benefits and demand for community gardening in their communities. An outreach or awareness program can provide a clearer understanding of the value of community gardens in urban areas.

In Madison, a well-publicized rally by community gardeners and their supporters at the Capitol Square farmers' market in the fall of 1995 helped preserve the Sheboygan garden from conversion to a parking lot.

## Tools for preserving existing community gardens

The following strategies can be used to preserve existing gardens in Madison.

**Extension of leases for existing gardens.** The most common tenure arrangement for community gardens, unfortunately, is a lease of one year. Consequently, gardens often struggle under the threat of imminent cancellation of their yearly leases. Short-term leases tend to keep gardeners from planting perennial crops such as asparagus and berries; gardeners may also be reluctant to improve their plots with compost and other amendments if they have no assurance that they will be able to use that soil the following year. Lacking a sense of permanency, gardeners are less willing to commit themselves to their garden's long-term future.

One way of ensuring permanence is to convert the short-term leases of gardens to long-term leases of 5 years or longer. One need not look far for an example of such an arrangement: the Troy Drive gardens are currently operating under a lease of 50 years.

## Tools for getting new gardens in Madison

The following strategies may be used to start new community gardens in Madison.

**Planned Unit Developments.** Policies that encourage developers to include community gardens as part of planned unit developments (PUDs) can help to bring community gardens into urban areas with scarce land resources. A PUD allows some flexibility with density requirements, thus enabling the developers to include community gardening in their development proposals (Cullingworth 1993).

**Development agreements.** Like incentives and bonuses, development agreements are generally seen as a convenient mechanism that facilitates the private provision of infrastructure finance. In addition, development agreements have been used to protect natural resources or provide for community civic facilities such as day care centers (Cullingworth 1993). Under this model, a developer would be allowed to deviate from certain planning standards such as a zoning requirement by providing a portion of the developable land for community gardens.

The following example demonstrates a type of development agreement. In New York City, as an effort to clean up and reclaim an 89,000-square-foot blighted urban renewal site, the local community established the West Side Community Gardens in 1976. Because of enormous community support for the garden, the garden group and the Trust for Public Land were able to negotiate a garden-saving agreement in 1984. The developer was selected by the City of New York

*“Community gardening builds link between people more than any other outdoor recreational activity.”*

*— anonymous —*

to construct apartments and townhouses on a portion of the site. The agreement provided area for a permanent replacement garden on a portion of the land. In addition, the developer was required to build the garden, financed jointly by the garden group and the developer. The title was then conveyed to the garden group upon completion of construction.

**Use of impact fees to fund new community gardens.** As population increases, so does the potential demand for community gardens, especially among residents of rental apartments. In Madison, residential development and population continue to grow while the available acreage of community gardens has dwindled. New developments require comparable levels of city services and should allow residents of those neighborhoods the land necessary for community gardens.

One method of ensuring consistent levels of services is the use of impact fees, which municipalities may charge to developers for the costs of infrastructure, park space, or any other designated services. An impact fee for community gardening would be based on the appropriate standards of community gardens available to residents of the city's established neighborhoods. By adding community gardens to the list of services that are funded by impact fees, Madison will be better able to provide adequate community gardening plots for its growing population.

**Development of community gardens on city parkland.** The Parks Division of the City of Madison has played a significant role in local community gardening in Madison. Currently the Parks Division allows community gardens as interim uses on parkland and provides occasional maintenance support in collaboration with CAC. However, there is even greater potential in the relation between community gardens and parks in Madison. On larger size parks, the city can encourage the development of parts of parkland as community gardens, thereby increasing the diversity of parkland uses and users. A greater diversity of users in the open space use will raise the popularity of the park space; community gardening on parkland will also increase community ownership and responsibility towards parkland.

The strategies outlined above are a starting point for preserving existing and starting new community gardens in Madison. In the course of developing this document, the committee found cities across the country engaged in activities that are making community gardens a permanent part of the urban landscape. In most cities, including Madison, the efforts are more at a programmatic and grass roots level than at a policy level. Community gardens not only make cities sustainable by increasing local food production and protecting the local environment, they also make the communities sustainable by encouraging healthy social interactions.

To realize the city's goal of sustainable development, the committee endorses long-term policy support for community gardens. Consequently, based on the previous discussion on community gardens, the committee has developed the following set of specific action recommendations.



*Community gardeners, young and old, reap their harvest.*



## **Action Plan Recommendations**

*"We don't have anything. We're just surviving, you know, right here. Just struggling to survive, and it's hard work out there. But I can do it as long as I've got a little help."*

*M.T., gardener*



Mission statement of the Community Gardens Advisory Committee, 1998: *In recognition that community gardening improves the quality of life for residents of Madison, we seek to create a permanent system of long lasting, well managed community gardens throughout the City of Madison, with strong government/public support.*

The committee was specifically charged by the Common Council to recommend actions to facilitate the role of community gardens in stabilizing and improving neighborhoods. In this section of its report, the committee proposes a plan of action that City government, its staff and policy boards can take to foster such efforts.

We believe that the City government, in collaboration with neighborhood organizations, land trusts and other public and private agencies, will be instrumental in fulfilling this vision.

### **Policy I: Land security is critical to the sustainability of community gardens.**

Most community gardens in Madison operate on an annual lease. A significant number of the City's community gardens have been lost in the past ten years because of their tenuous lease status. Longer-term leases will allow existing gardens to become permanent features of our urban environment. Tenure security will protect the investment of time and energy and the economic and emotional contributions of neighborhood residents in community gardens. At least five years are needed to enhance soils, establish perennial plants, and for individual gardeners to connect with the land and each other.

#### **Actions:**

- The City of Madison Community Development Authority and the Community Economic Development Unit will adopt a policy in support of existing community gardens on leased land having their leases extended five years or longer.
- Assessor's Office should consider rewriting the assessments of private landholders who lease their land for community gardens on the basis of new use, length of the lease, and possible restrictions on use of the land.
- City departments and agencies that lease land for community gardens will extend those leases to a minimum of five years. Leases should provide for evaluation in the fourth year for renewal after the following year.
- Private and nonprofit landholders that extend garden leases to a minimum of five years should be given public recognition with a City of Madison Community Gardens Award.

- Leases for community gardens will be given flexibility for amenities that enhance their use as civic spaces. Lease provisions should allow beautification areas, perennial plantings and other amenities.

## **Policy 2: Community gardens are to be developed as permanent public assets.**

Community gardening is a way for people who lack access to land to grow flowers, fruits, vegetables and herbs. Gardens help “grow” neighborhoods by creating conditions for people to gather, work and play in a local setting. To sustain this sense of community, neighbors must be able to count on their garden as a permanent fixture. The actions in this report are designed to show support and help facilitate neighborhoods that want gardens in their neighborhood. Community garden success is based on grassroots support.

### **Actions:**

- City government will institute a gardens acquisition program that will create at least one new site every year for the next ten years or until a balance has been reached between the demand for and supply of community garden plots. City government will establish an annual set-aside fund of \$60,000 for the purchase of land or acquiring land by park dedication for community gardens that have been identified as needing them. The City will also pursue funds for the purchase of land for community gardens from other sources, such as State Stewardship funds, Federal funds, Dane County Open Space Initiative and private foundations.
- Parks Division will consider crediting land or easements dedicated to the public or to a community land trust toward the developer’s public parkland dedication requirement. This would allow land designated for community gardens to be privately owned by a land trust with a reversion or easement to the city, and would be subject to conditions and approvals by the Parks Commission, Plan Commission, and Common Council, to ensure the compatibility of the gardens with their neighborhoods.
- Recognizing that the development and management of a community garden is a private and public initiative, the City will establish support/operational funds that will be made available to community garden groups as a grant program to assist the improvements of their gardens. Grants would be awarded on the assessment of needs of each neighborhood garden group that requests funds.
- Assist in acquiring land for a community garden in the Isthmus within the next two years. The Isthmus was identified as an area with high need and little accessible land.

- The City will fund nonprofit organizations to acquire and hold lands for community gardens and arrange for the management of gardens and otherwise steward the land. A model for this type of program is the Troy Garden Coalition, in which the Madison Area Community Land Trust owns the land and the Urban Open Space Foundation restricts its use through a conservation easement on a permanent basis. This model, or similar models, should be strongly considered for use in other parts of the City.
- City government will continue to review policies to ensure support to organizations like Community Action Coalition (CAC) that are responsible for managing gardens. In addition, the City should provide support for similar nonprofit groups to help develop and sustain community gardens.
- The Mayor of the City of Madison should advocate for an amendment to the Dane County Park and Open Space Plan so that the plan sets community gardens as a county priority. Once the plan is amended, money from the county's \$30 million conservation fund could be used for garden acquisition.
- Will support community gardens as a valuable asset at city-owned housing sites.

### **Policy 3: City government can support community gardens through planning and zoning actions.**

Too often, community gardens are lost because gardening is seen as an interim use of land that is ultimately marked for other purposes. Starting new community gardens and securing existing ones are difficult, and sometimes impossible in this circumstance. Supportive City planning policies and zoning ordinances can help to secure permanent community garden spaces by establishing them as a high priority use of land and as an important element of neighborhood plans.

#### **Actions:**

The City's Common Council, departments of government and their staff, boards and commissions should support and implement the following actions:

- will establish, in the city-wide land use plan, an appropriate service standard for community gardens;
- include community gardens in the city-wide land use plan as recommended civic space;
- include community gardens in the city-wide land use plan in areas that are underserved by community gardens;

- support community gardens as a valuable asset in all neighborhood plans, with priority being given to community gardening associated with neighborhood centers;
- Parks Division should amend the 1997 Parks and Open Space Plan to include the provision of the 1991 Parks and Open Space Plan, which recommends that the Parks Division be capital funded to acquire suitable sites for as many as 2,000 City-owned, permanent garden plots of 200-800 square feet in size each. The City should encourage community gardens in City parks, especially in community and area parks, to aid in accomplishing the goal stated above.
- Parks Division will amend the 1997 Parks and Open Space Plan to include the existing Parks Division practices with neighborhood initiatives and adequate support of assisting development of community garden sites in city area, community, and regional parks (parks of 10 acres or larger) as a cost-effective method of providing additional garden space throughout the City.
- Parks Division will consider using impact fees to secure land for community gardening.

The City should also:

- Give priority to Planned Urban Developments (PUDs) that incorporate gardens as an accepted use of open/civic space.
- Amend relevant zoning ordinances to include community gardens as a permitted use in all zoning districts.
- Ensure that the use of adjacent land parcels will be compatible with community gardens and their needs; e.g., protecting the gardens' solar access and managing stormwater so that it does not damage the plots.
- Support the efforts of neighborhood groups to develop community gardens within City-owned subsidized and unsubsidized housing projects.
- Support existing policy to use terraces to cultivate plants as long as safety standards are met.
- The Community Gardens Advisory Committee also requests that the Parks Division, in cooperation with Olbrich Botanical Society, consider developing a demonstration community garden in the planned expansion of Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

**Policy 4: Community gardens require a strong organizational structure and public support to ensure their continuity.**

Community gardens remain an essential part of the urban landscape when there is strong public and private advocacy for their existence. Municipal support in the form of staff, budget allocations and

grant opportunities reflects the important role that gardens perform in maintaining a healthy community.

**Actions:**

- Mayor's Office should create an ongoing position of Coordinator for community gardening issues. The Coordinator, who could be a City staff member, should serve as a liaison between existing community gardens organizations and City departments working on behalf of new or existing community gardens.
- The Mayor's Office will take the lead in creating the position of Community Gardens Coordinator, which will be essential to the successful implementation of the Committee's report.

The garden coordinator should:

- organize a Community Gardens Council comprising members of all local groups involved in community gardening, including land trusts and City staff. The Gardens Council will be given primary responsibility for organizing, detailing and advising the acquisition for community gardening sites and obtaining necessary resources; and
- Work with the Council and the City's neighborhood coordinator to find opportunities for neighborhood gardening sites.

City government should:

- provide office space and equipment support for the Gardens Coordinator to find opportunities for neighborhood gardening sites.
- give standing to the community gardening initiatives of neighborhood groups. Grants for this purpose could be applied for through the new City of Madison Community Enhancement Program. This would encourage local garden groups to provide in-kind services and supplies as a match.
- provide grant opportunities as needed to develop new methods for garden organizations to use public monies to leverage private, nonprofit and foundation grants in support of local community gardening initiatives.
- The City, through the Parks Division, will also support land acquisition and revenue development for gardens at the State and County levels with the DNR Stewardship Fund and Open Space Initiative, respectively.



**Policy 5: To achieve maximum environmental and social benefits, a partnership is required of the City, community gardening organizations and individual gardeners.**

Community gardens work best when they are neighborhood-based and managed by leaders arising from each garden who are supported by community gardening groups and the City.

Gardeners are responsible for:

- physical maintenance of garden sites, including such tasks as plot layout, site design and maintenance of above-ground watering systems; and
- care of their garden sites in such a manner that gives consideration to neighboring homes and businesses and creates an aesthetically pleasing landscape.

Community gardening organizations are responsible for:

- regular communication with the City to provide such information as numbers of registered gardeners, physical condition of the gardening sites and projected demand for plots.

City departments and staff should:

- Parks Division should consider budgeting for the construction and maintenance of permanent watering systems at each community gardening site in City parks.
- deliver compost and other commonly available soil amendments (e.g, mulch, topsoil, lake weeds) to the garden sites, when trucks and material are available.
- pick up refuse from the garden sites on the same schedule as adjacent residential properties.
- support local garden groups' efforts to write letters of support or proclamations to help with fundraising, provide educational programs for community gardening, and related needs.
- The City also will consider the request for the use of city equipment and operators for site clearing and other garden needs.

**Conclusion**

As charged by the City of Madison in Resolution No. 23429, and after considerable research and deliberation, the Advisory Committee on Community Gardens has completed the following:

- reviewed the opportunities presented by the growing interest in community gardening;
- catalogued previous and current City activity to support garden development;

- created a definition of community gardens and developed appropriate City roles and standards for the development and management of community gardens; and
- recommended cost-effective ways that City boards, community agencies and City line agencies can achieve the recommended goals for community gardens.

Members of the committee are enthusiastic in presenting this report and its recommendations with a fiscal note to the Common Council for action by the City of Madison and its neighborhoods.



## **Appendices**

**Appendix A**  
**Community Gardens Available in Greater Madison Area**

**Fitchburg (Town of)**

Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Rimrock Road	2975 Rimrock Road	0.75 acre	Private	Year-long lease	CAC site/long plot site	10/10 hh	1,200-3,600	2,760
All Saints Lutheran Church	2951 Chapel Valley Rd.	0.16 acre	All Saints Lutheran Church	Self-owned and operated		8/	200-800	

**Madison (City of)**

Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Atwood Gardens	Rail Corridor - 2300, 2400, 2500, 2600 blocks of St. Paul Avenue	1.0 acre	Parks and Transportation share jurisdiction, City of Madison	Lease arrangement		48/48 hh	200-1,200	675 sq. ft.
Baird Street	2200 block of Baird Street	0.25 acre	CDA	Long-standing use as garden by residents in adjacent city housing	CAC site	14/9 hh	400-800	640 sq. ft.
Eagle Heights	Lake Mendota Drive to NE of intersection of Eagle Heights Drive	6.0 acres	UW-Arboretum Land, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Owned by the University and operated by the Eagle Heights Garden Comm.		450/370 hh	640-1,920	1.2 (768)
East Main Street	Rail corridor - 2000, 2100 blocks of Main St.	0.5 acre	Information not available			no data	no data	no data
Gammon Road	110 N. Gammon Road, adjacent to Lutheran Church of the Living Christ	0.4 acre	Church of the Living Christ	Year-long renewable lease	CAC site	40/20 hh	200-800	800 sq. ft.

(Graphic created by Joe Mathers of Community Action Coalition)

Madison (City of) - continued

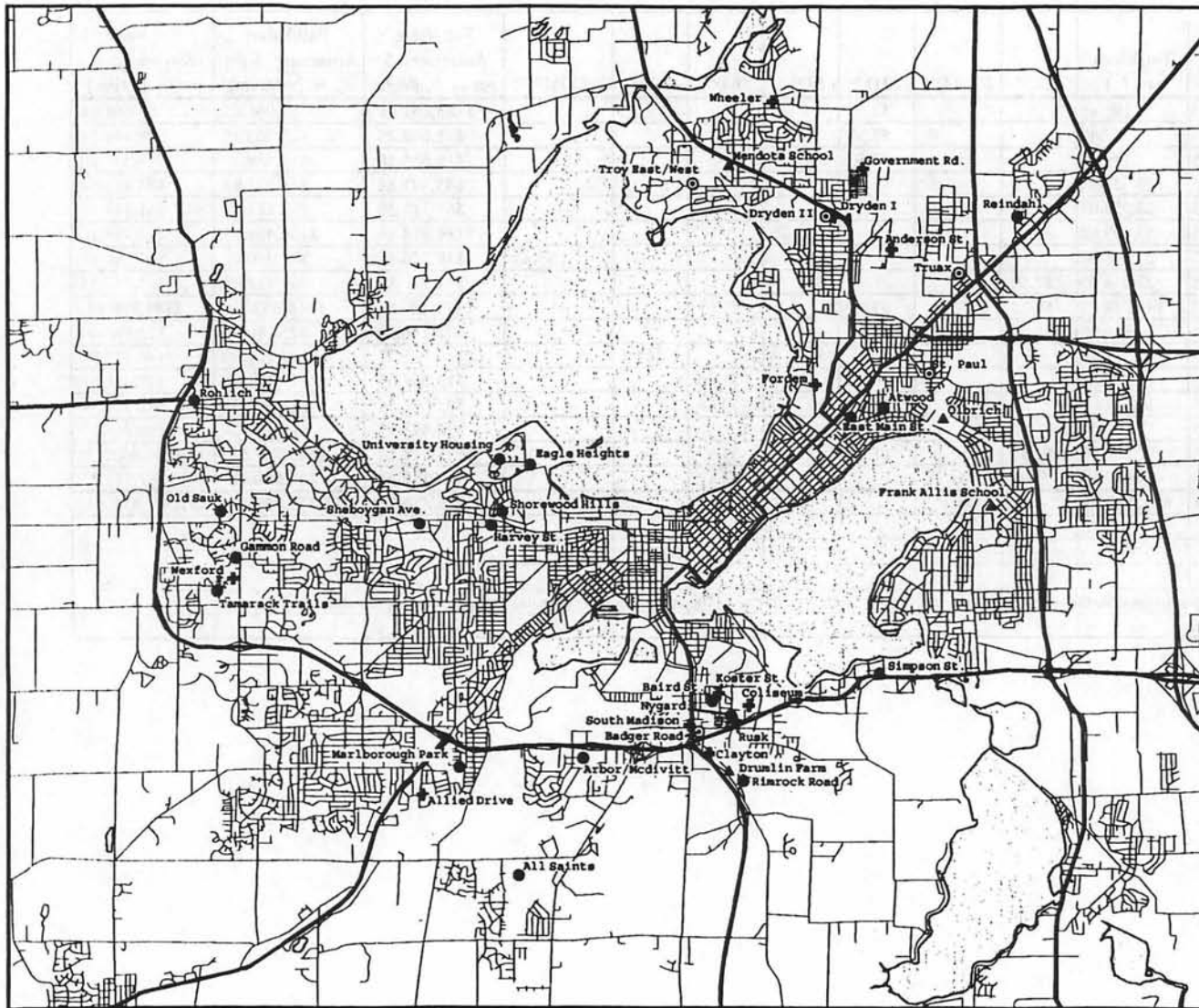
Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Marlborough Park	North edge of park. East end of Thurston Lane and along line midway between west ends of Milford and Windflower	1.25 acres	Parks Division, City of Madison	Long standing arrangement of Dunn's Marsh Ngbd. Assoc. with Parks Division [Slated to be replaced by a soccer field.]		40/	300-2,500	
Old Sauk Road	Garden is east of 700 block of N. Westfield Road	0.33 acre	Madison Christian Community Church	Year-long renewable lease	CAC site	38/34 hh	200-800	440 sq. ft.
Packers Apts. (Dryden II)	2700 block of Dryden Drive - uses half of lot	0.33 acre	Packer's Community Center/Shopping Mall	Annual arrangement				
Reindahl Park	Inside Reindahl Park off 1818 Portage Road	3.0 acres	Real Estate Department and Parks Division, City of Madison	Year-long renewable lease	CAC site	48/45 hh	1,250-5,000	2,857 sq. ft.
Sheboygan Avenue	2800 block of Sheboygan Avenue between Hill Farms State Office Building and Red Cross	0.5 acre	State Department of Administration and Protective Services	Year-long renewable permit	CAC site	48/37 hh	200-800	520 sq. ft.
Simpson Street	5329 Hoboken Road; lot between Simpson and Broadway	0.33 acre	CDA	Year-long renewable lease	CAC site	19/	320-640	
St. Martin House	Next to 1862 Beld Street	0.1 acre	St. Martin's?	Self-owned and operated?		10/8 hh	150-600	375 sq. ft.
St. Paul Avenue (partially in Town of Burke)	Rail corridor - 3000, 3100, 3200 blocks of St. Paul Avenue NE along railroad tracks off Milwaukee Street	0.8/0.25 acre	Soo Line Rail Company, Canadian Pacific Railway	3-year lease	CAC site	68/51 hh	200-800	533 sq. ft.



## Appendix B Valuation of City of Madison Community Gardens

No.	Gardens	Crop Area (acres)	Addnl. area multiplier	Additional areas-paths, etc. (acres)	Total Area (sq. ft.)	(C2) *	(C3R4) *	(R1) *	(R2) *	(R4) *	(R6) *	(PCDSIP) *	Full Value Assessment: \$ per sq. ft. (high)	Full Value Assessment: \$ per sq. ft. (medium)	Full Value Assessment: \$ per sq. ft. (low)
1	ATWOOD	1.15	x 1.10	1.265	55,103.40			\$2.90					\$163,061.08	\$163,061.08	\$163,061.08
2	BAIRD	0.15	x 1.15	0.165	7,187.40			\$3.50					\$25,669.29	\$25,669.29	\$25,669.29
3	BELD (ST. MARTINS)	0.15	x 1.10	0.165	7,187.40			\$2.50					\$18,335.20	\$18,335.20	\$18,335.20
4	GAMMON	0.4	x 1.15	0.46	20,037.60			\$4.08					\$83,421.84	\$83,421.84	\$83,421.84
5	E.MAIN	0.5	x 1.10	0.55	23,958.00					\$2.50			\$61,117.35	\$61,117.35	\$61,117.35
6	MARLBOROUGH	1.25	x 1.10	1.375	59,895.00				\$2.20				\$134,458.16	\$134,458.16	\$134,458.16
7	OLD SAUK	0.38	x 1.25	0.475	20,691.00							\$3.80	\$80,230.41	\$80,230.41	\$80,230.41
8	PACKERS C.C.	0.5	x 1.10	0.55	23,958.00	\$2.50							\$61,117.35	\$61,117.35	\$61,117.35
9	REINDAHL	3	x 1.10	3.3	143,748.00	\$6.23		\$2.16		\$1.99			\$913,826.57	\$316,832.33	\$291,896.45
10	REYNOLDS**	0.1	**	0.1	4,356.00	\$4.99							\$22,180.04	\$22,180.04	\$22,180.04
11	SHEBOYGAN	0.5	x 1.25	0.625	27,225.00						\$4.90		\$136,125.00	\$136,125.00	\$136,125.00
12	SIMPSON**	0.33	**	0.33	14,374.80					\$1.30			\$19,068.61	\$19,068.61	\$19,068.61
13	ST. PAUL	0.3	x 1.20	0.36	15,681.60					\$2.66			\$42,564.34	\$42,564.34	\$42,564.34
15	TAMARACK TRAILS	0.33	x 1.25	0.4125	17,968.50	\$5.26							\$96,443.17	\$96,443.17	\$96,443.17
16	TROY	4	x 1.25	5	217,800.00	\$2.50		\$1.32		\$1.99			\$555,612.24	\$442,267.35	\$293,363.27
17	TRUAX	0.35	x 1.25	0.4375	19,057.50		\$3.22			\$2.89			\$62,520.27	\$56,200.18	\$62,520.27
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.39</b>		<b>15.57</b>	<b>678,229.20</b>								<b>\$2,475,750.94</b>	<b>\$1,759,091.70</b>	<b>\$1,591,571.83</b>
	* Assessment per square foot for designated zoning classification														
	** These gardens cannot have any added setback														
	Highlighted results in last three columns are actual results for that particular cell; the rest are copied from adjacent cells to arrive at a range of values. We can also average out the full value.														
	Used values of 100 -125% to account for edges, paths, storage, setbacks, etc.														

## Appendix C Community Garden Map



# Madison Food System Project

Community Gardens located  
in the Madison area

This map shows the location of past and present Community Gardens in the City of Madison. Information for this map was provided by the Community Action Coalition, the Children's Gardening Network, and the Madison Community Gardeners Coalition (1998).

- Existing Gardens
- △ Kid's Gardens
- ⊙ Multi-user Gardens
- + Former Gardens

- Water
- Streets
- Major Roads



March 1998  
Produced by Majid Allan and Todd L. Sutphin  
at the UW-Madison Land Information  
and Computer Graphics Facility

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AGENDA # \_\_\_\_\_

Copy Mailed to Alderperson \_\_\_\_\_

City of Madison, Wisconsin

A RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_

Adopting the "Growing a Stronger Community with Community Gardens: An Action Plan for Madison" and the Committee's recommendations contained in Plan.

Drafted By: Archie Nicolette

Date: May 17, 1999

Fiscal Note: Implementation of the recommendations contained in the proposed community gardens plan report would have Operating and Capital Budget costs in excess of \$100,000 per year, including the commitment of City staff resources, as well as land acquisition and improvements. Implementation of these recommendations would require separate Common Council approval as part of future Operating and Capital Budgets

- Sponsors: Ald. Barbara Vedder
- Ald. Michael Verveer
- Ald. Kent Palmer
- Ald. Matt Sloan
- Ald. Jean MacCubbin
- Ald. Jose Manuel Sentmanat
- Ald. Judy Olson

WHEREAS the Common Council formed the City of Madison Advisory Committee on Community Gardens (Resolution #23429) to research, advise and make recommendations to the Common Council; and

WHEREAS community gardens are a public good and community gardening converts public and private lands into neighborhood civic spaces where people grow vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs that they otherwise could not grow; and

WHEREAS the City of Madison has lost one-third of its community gardens in the last fifteen years, while some other communities in the country have been proactive in creating and improving community garden spaces; and

WHEREAS some of the existing community gardens in Madison have waiting lists up to four years of potential gardeners who cannot be accommodated in the existing gardens; and

Presented July 6, 1999

Referred Plan Commission, Park Commission, CDBG Commission, CDA, Board of Estimates

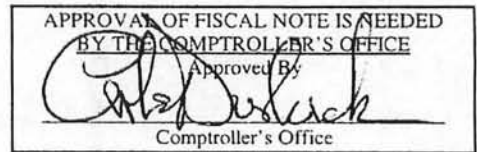
Rereferred \_\_\_\_\_

Reported Back \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ POF \_\_\_\_\_

Rules Suspended \_\_\_\_\_

Public Hearing \_\_\_\_\_



RESOLUTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

ID NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS the City of Madison and other cities throughout the nation have recognized the value which community gardens can add to the health, vitality, and civic pride of a neighborhood; and

WHEREAS the Committee's recommendations were prepared through the cooperative effort of neighborhood organizations, land trusts, City agencies, and other public and private and non-profit agencies; and

WHEREAS the Committee's recommendations have been reviewed by the staff to appropriate City boards and commissions and have received acceptance by the public at a city-wide open meeting/public forum; and

WHEREAS City departments/agencies are expected to work with neighborhoods, land trusts, and other public/private organizations to assist in the implementation of the Committee's recommendations over a ten-year time frame.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council does hereby adopt the "Growing a Stronger Community with Community Gardens: An Action Plan for Madison" report as a supplement to the City Land Use Plan and a part of the Master Plan for the City of Madison to guide the development, preservation and creation of a permanent system of long-lasting, well managed community gardens throughout the City of Madison and serve as a model for other communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following specific recommendations are organized in priority order according to the agency responsible to take the lead for implementation and that appropriate City agencies should assign priority beginning with the 2000 work plans and budgets to implement Projects, Policies and Activities in the Committee's report.

Mayor's Office:

Will create an ongoing position of Coordinator for community gardening issues. The Coordinator, who could be a City staff member, should serve as liaison between existing community gardening organizations and City departments working on behalf of new or existing community gardens.

The Garden Coordinator will:

Organize a Community Gardens Council comprising members of all local groups involved in community gardening, including land trusts and City staff. The Gardens Council will be given primary responsibility for organizing, detailing and advising the acquisition for community gardening sites and obtaining necessary resources; and

Work with the Council and the City's neighborhood coordinator to find opportunities for neighborhood gardening sites.

Will take the lead in creating the position of Community Gardens Coordinator, which will be essential to the successful implementation of the Committee's report.

Will advocate for an amendment to the Dane County Park and Open Space Plan so that the Plan sets community gardens as a county priority. Once the plan is amended, money from the county's \$30 million conservation fund could be used for garden acquisition.

Will support local garden groups' efforts to write letters of support or proclamations to help with fundraising, provide educational programs for community gardening, and related needs.

The Mayor's Office will provide grant opportunities as needed to develop new methods for garden organizations to use public monies to leverage private, nonprofit and foundation grants in support of local community gardening initiatives.

Will provide office space and equipment support for the Garden Coordinator to find opportunities for neighborhood gardening sites.

Parks Division & Street Division:

Will deliver compost and other commonly available soil amendments (e.g. mulch, topsoil, lake weeds) to the garden sites, when trucks and material are available.

Will pick up refuse from the garden sites on the same schedule as adjacent residential properties.

Will consider the request for the use of city equipment and operators for site clearing and other garden needs.

Parks Division:

Will amend the 1997 Parks and Open Space Plan to include the existing Parks Division practices with neighborhood initiatives and adequate support of assisting development of community garden sites in city area, community, and regional parks (parks of 10 acres or larger) as a cost-effective method of providing additional garden space throughout the City.

The City, through the Parks Division, will also support land acquisition and revenue development for gardens at the State and County levels with the DNR Stewardship Fund and Open Space Initiative, respectively.

Will consider crediting land or easements dedicated to the public or to a community land trust toward the developer's public parkland dedication requirement. This would allow land designated for community gardens to be privately owned by a land trust with a reversion or easement to the city, and would be subject to conditions and approvals by the Parks Commission, Plan Commission, and Common Council, to ensure the compatibility of the gardens with their neighborhoods.

Will consider budgeting for the construction and maintenance of permanent watering systems at each community gardening site in City parks.

Will amend the 1997 Parks and Open Space Plan to include the provision of the 1991 Parks and Open Space Plan, which recommends that the Parks Division be capital funded to acquire suitable sites for as many as 2,000 City-owned, permanent garden plots of 200-800 square feet in size each. The City should encourage community gardens in City parks, especially in community and area parks, to aid in accomplishing the goal stated above.

Will consider using impact fees to secure land for community gardening.

The Community Gardens Advisory Committee also requests that the Parks Division, in cooperation with Olbrich Botanical Society, consider developing a demonstration community garden in the planned expansion of Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit:

Will include community gardens in a city-wide land use plan as recommended civic space.

Will establish, in the city-wide land use plan, an appropriate service standard for community gardens.

Will amend relevant zoning ordinances to include community gardens as a permitted use in all zoning districts.

Will insure that the use of adjacent land parcels will be compatible with community gardens and their needs; e.g., protecting the gardens' solar access and managing stormwater so that it does not damage the plots.

Will give priority to Planned Unit Developments that incorporate gardens as an accepted use of open/civic space.

Will give standing to the community gardening initiatives of neighborhood groups. Grants for this purpose could be applied for through the new City of Madison Community Enhancement Program. This would encourage local garden groups to provide in-kind services and supplies as a match.

Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Authority, Community Economic Development Unit, and Housing Operations:

City government will assist in acquiring land and/or park dedication for a community garden in the Isthmus within the next two years. The Isthmus was identified as an area with high need and little accessible land.

The City of Madison Community Development Authority and the Community Economic Development Unit will adopt a policy in support of existing community gardens on leased land having their leases extended five years or longer.

City departments and agencies that lease land for community gardens will extend those leases to a minimum of five years. Leases should provide for evaluation in the fourth year for renewal after the following year.

Leases for community gardens will be given flexibility for amenities that enhance their use as civic spaces. Lease provisions should allow beautification areas, perennial plantings and other amenities.

Will support community gardens as a valuable asset at city-owned housing sites.

Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Block Grant:

The City will fund nonprofit organizations to acquire and hold lands for community gardens and arrange for the management of gardens and otherwise steward the land. A model for this type of program is the Troy Garden Coalition, in which the Madison Area Community Land Trust owns the land and the Urban Open Space Foundation restricts its use through a conservation easement on a permanent basis. This model, or similar models, should be strongly considered for use in other parts of the City.

City government will continue to review policies to ensure support to organizations like Community Action Coalition (CAC) that are responsible for managing gardens. In addition, the City should provide support for similar nonprofit groups to help develop and sustain community gardens.

Recognizing that the development and management of a community garden is a private and public initiative, the City will establish support/operation funds that will be made available to community garden groups as a grant program to assist the improvements of their gardens. Grants would be awarded on the assessment of needs of each neighborhood garden group that requests funds.

Mayor's Office/Parks/Community Development Block Grant:

City government will institute a gardens acquisition program that will create at least one new site every year for the next ten years or until a balance has been reached between the demand for and supply of community garden plots. City government will establish an annual set-aside fund of \$60,000 for the purchase of land or acquiring land by park dedication for community gardens that have been identified as needing them. The City will also pursue funds for the purchase of land for community gardens from other sources, such as State Stewardship funds, Federal funds, Dane County Open Space Initiative and private foundations.

Neighborhood centers will support the efforts of neighborhood groups to develop community gardens within City-owned subsidized and unsubsidized housing projects.

Assessor's Office:

Will consider reviewing the assessments of private landholders who lease their land for community gardens on the basis of new use, length of the lease, and possible restrictions on use of the land.



Madison, City of (continued)

Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Tamarack Trails	SW corner lot of intersection of Tree Lane and Westfield Road	0.33 acre	Tamarack Trails Association	Written into condo agreement				
Troy East/Troy West	Two gardens on the north side of 500-600 blocks of Troy Drive	4.0 acres	Division of Facilities Dept. - State of Wisconsin	50-year lease	CAC site	212/87 hh	200-2,400	976 sq. ft.
Truax Apartments	150 feet NW of intersection of Straubel Street and Rowland Avenue	0.35 acre	CDA and East Madison Community Center	Agreement	CAC site	30/23 hh	200-800	524 sq. ft.
University Housing	NE of Shady Lane and NW of west edge of Bowdoin Road	1.2 acres	UW	Self-owned and operated		90/	750-1,500	1,227 sq. ft.

Madison (Town of)

Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Arbor/Mcdivitt	2509 Mcdivitt Road	0.1 acre	Arbor Covenant Church	Self-owned and operated				
Badger Road	633 W. Badger Road	1.0 acre	Fountain of Life Family Worship Center	Year-long renewable lease	CAC site	80/44 hh	200-800	720 sq. ft.
Nygaard Avenue	Lot east of 21 Nygaard Street	0.5 acre	Private	Year lease with landowners	CAC site	40/17 hh	400-1,600	960 sq. ft.

Middleton (Town of)

Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Rohlich Court Apartments	South of Rohlich Court Apartments	0.1 acre	State Highway Department	Year-long lease		no data	no data	no data

Shorewood (Village of)

Name	Location	Area (approx.)	Owner	Tenure	Notes	# of Plots/ # of hh	Range of Plot Sizes	Average Usage
Shorewood Hills Community Gardens	Shorewood Drive	Not available	Village of Shorewood Hills	Self-owned and operated				

