

NPCR 1222

# NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION



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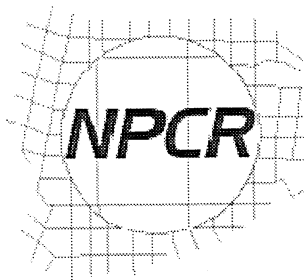
**St Paul Community Gardens:  
A Study of Public Land Use Policies  
and Relationships with District Councils**

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May, 2005**

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[www.cura.umn.edu/search/index.php](http://www.cura.umn.edu/search/index.php)*

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Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization**



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## Executive Summary

The Twin Cities is home to an impressive number of community gardens. As the pressure for development increases and vacant spaces disappear, it is necessary for communities to begin to look towards public lands. It is also vital that they understand how public agencies and community organizations interact with each other and how they can cooperate to create and protect lasting gardening spaces.

This research project created an inventory of public land use policies in St Paul and Ramsey County to assist garden organizers in locating and acquiring space for community gardens. It also provides the city's water utility policy specific to community gardens. The research found that gardening is possible on most types of public lands and that gardens have had successful relationships with most of these landowning agencies. The lack of this policy information has been found to be a crucial barrier to the implementation of gardens and have in some cases prevented their development.

The project also looks at how district councils interact with local gardens and gardeners. District councils both collaborate with city planners and act as community organizers making them extremely valuable to St Paul gardens. On planning issues, they can work to protect endangered gardens and as organizers they can connect residents with gardens and publicize on their behalf. Councils exist as non-profit organizations while having a direct relationship with the city government allowing them to have access to a many different sources of funding and public lands not available to other organizations. The report outlines how councils interact with gardens and suggests where improvements can be made.

During the last couple decades, Minneapolis and St Paul enjoyed a dramatic increase of community gardens. During the last few years, however, the development boom has placed existing gardens increasingly under threat and has greatly reduced the land available for the creation of new gardens. Some of the issues that St Paul gardens face include:

- Increased land value makes it difficult for gardeners to purchase private land and makes development that much more attractive on publicly owned land
- City governments and departments perceive community gardens as an interim land-use, and manage lands for “higher uses” (i.e. housing)
- There is no zoning specification for greenspace. Most gardens exist on undeveloped commercial and residentially zoned land, making it likely for these lands to be returned to these uses
- Decrease in funding and resources of non-profit organizations and agencies that once supported gardens. Recently, the Sustainable Resource Center’s Urban Land Program, a program that served community gardens for three decades, was cancelled due to lack of funding
- Cities do not have any comprehensive policy nor program for community gardens, thus city services to community gardens are handled solely at the discretion of city staff, with inconsistent service from garden to garden and from year to year

Despite these challenges, gardens continue to persist and become established. With the amount of vacant land quickly decreasing, it is essential to look at publicly held land for potential sites for the creation of community gardens. In order to know what lands may be available, garden organizers must know the specific land use policies of the different public entities. The purpose of this research project is to identify the public entities which own land, learn their land use policies, and examine their previous relationships with gardens. In addition to land use policy, the city’s water utility policy was examined since access to water is equally as vital as access to land. This information is for gardeners and community organizers attempting to locate and acquire space and resources.

To be able to protect the gardens which remain and to aide in the development of new ones, it is valuable to know how gardens connect with district councils and city planners. Many of the Twin Cities gardens have been lost to development because they were not recognized by planning agencies. This research project looks at the role that district councils play in both the protection and creation of community gardens. This will help both active and potential gardeners know the importance of working with district councils and will assist councils in attaining the resources and information needed to create successful gardening projects.

The outline of the report is as follows:

## **I. Land Use Policy**

1. State
  - a. Tax Forfeited lands
  - b. Department of Transportation
2. County
  - a. General land
  - b. Parks and Recreation
3. City
  - a. Housing and Redevelopment Authority
  - b. Parks and Recreation
  - c. Public Works
4. School district

## **II. Water Utility Policy**

## **III. District Councils**

1. Overview
2. Results
3. Council summaries

# **I. Land Use Policy**

Although vacant land is rapidly being developed, there is plenty of public land available for community gardens. In the past, many gardens grew on small, vacant plots. With these disappearing to development, more gardens are emerging on public lands such as parks and school yards. Although this land is available, access to land was cited by district councils as one of the greatest barriers in the process of developing community gardens. Many discussions about their creation had stopped when readily accessible land could not be easily located.

This barrier was often not overcome because of the lack of information on land use policies and little awareness of gardens that have successfully established on various public lands. This section of the research project provides an inventory of the land use policies of the various land owning public entities, includes the possible concerns that the agency may have, the process of applying for space, contact information, and links to additional information and application forms when available. This information was gathered through web exploration and interviews in person and by phone.

The following information is most useful once space is found and the landowner is identified. Identifying the owner of open and vacant spaces is often one of the most difficult steps when searching for land. Ramsey County has property information accessible on both the internet and by phone. Ramsey County Online Maps and Data is a GIS (Global Information Service) online program and can be

found at <http://maps.metro-inet.us/RamseyCoGIS/Viewer.htm>. The program has the ability to display aerial photos (from 1940 through 2003), road maps, utility information, data on every property in the county (landowner, value, etc.), and much more. This service is extremely valuable since the aerial photos can help locate vacant and open spaces and the property information feature allows organizers to know who to speak with in regards to possible garden sites. Property information can also be provided by Ramsey County's Department of Property Records & Revenue which can be reached (651) 266-2000.

Most public agencies require that the garden provide its own insurance. Insurance is often provided by the district council and has been covered by various non profit organizations in the past.

## **1. State**

### **A. Tax Forfeited Lands**

Tax Forfeited Properties are those seized by the state after years of unpaid taxes. These properties are owned by the state and managed by the county. The tax forfeiture office is part of the County Department of Property Records and Revenue and its goal is to auction these properties to return them to the tax roll. Citizens can purchase properties at public auctions and purchase unsold properties at market value (set by the county) any time afterwards. Many of the properties which have yet to be sold are oddly shaped or too small for development. Because of this, they are relatively inexpensive since they have little economic potential making them feasible for gardens. The office currently avoids leasing although they have done so in the past. To locate available properties, the office can be contacted at (651) 266-2080 or [TFL@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:TFL@co.ramsey.mn.us).

Before being placed on auction, public agencies (state, county, or city departments, schools) have first right to either purchase the property at market value or request a use deed that grants them the land for a public use (examples: school, library, park). Once properties are seized, agencies are notified and have up to 60 days to ask for the property to be withheld from auction and have 6 months afterwards to apply for a use deed or come up with funding. If it is not possible to purchase, the agency can apply for a use deed (similar to a long term lease). Agencies who feel that they could use forfeited properties to provide for the public good can apply for use deeds. The office has approved deeds for uses such as roads, schools, parks, and sewers. Community gardens have never been approved and are not considered as a public use in the opinion of the current administration. It is up to public agencies to present the tax forfeiture office with the argument that gardens provide valuable services for the entire neighborhood and not just to gardeners. If approved by the tax forfeiture office and later by the county board, the agency takes responsibility over the

maintenance and management of the property as long as it adheres to the specifications of the use deed.

This section was only a brief summary of how community gardens could benefit from tax forfeited land. For those seriously interested in applying for a use deed, more information is provided in Appendix A.

**Resources:**

Minnesota Statute Chapter 282. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/282/>

Ramsey County Tax Forfeited Land General Information.  
<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/prr/tfl/index.asp>

Kris Kujala. Department of Property Records and Revenue. Supervisor Tax Forfeited Land. Personal interview March 11, 2005.

## **B. Department of Transportation**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) owns scattered properties across the state that were often bought for canceled projects. In the metro region, many of these vacant lots have been sold off but the department still owns a few unbuildable plots. Many available lots of land are available behind freeway sound walls. There is one garden that has a lease with DOT which is managed by a non-profit organization and they report that the department has been easy to work with.

To be eligible, the garden must be sponsored by the city or NPO. The site must be accessible from the street (not right along an interstate) and must be insured by the lessee. To inquire about a site, contact Keith McMurray at (651) 582-1635 or [keith.mcmurray@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:keith.mcmurray@dot.state.mn.us). For leasing, contact Keith VanWagner, Roadway Regulation Supervisor, at (651) 582-1443 or [keith.vanwagner@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:keith.vanwagner@dot.state.mn.us). The lease application is linked below.

**Resources:**

MNDOT Application for Installation of Utilities or Miscellaneous Work on Trunk Highway Right of Way. TP-1723 (Short Permit Form) 4-01.  
[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/tecsup/utility/files/auto/1723\\_auto.pdf](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/tecsup/utility/files/auto/1723_auto.pdf)

McMurray, Keith. Phone interview. March, 2005.

VanWagner, Keith. Phone interview. March, 2005.

## **2. County**

### **A. General land**

Ramsey County holds land through a few departments and uses the land for libraries, parks, and Public Works. Most of these lands do not have policy regulating what can exist on the lands. Most management decisions are made by the county board. Decisions are site specific and would require the support of the respective commissioner. These decisions would be passed down to the department directors to carry through.

Some of the specific property manager's concerns are aesthetics, safety, and security. Much of the county's property, 35 acres, is held by Public Works. Open spaces are often fenced in for security reasons and to allow a garden and residents in would be very unlikely.

If a community was interested in a specific county property, it would need to approach the appropriate county commissioner and request their support. With their support, a proposal is then voted on by the county board before a lease could be attained.

#### **Resources:**

Thompson, Bruce. County Property. Phone Interview. April 8, 2005.

Victoria Reinhardt. District 7 County Commissioner. Personal interview March 14, 2005.

### **B. Ramsey County Parks and Recreation**

Parks and Recreation land used to be home to a few community gardens but they have all since disappeared. The former gardens were managed through a Ramsey County Extension Service program. The program was established so that residents could provide themselves with quality produce but interest declined with improved access through farmers markets and coop grocery stores. Most County Park land exists on the periphery of the county and is not embedded within inner-city communities. These sites are removed from bus routes and are difficult to access.

The department has no interest in reviving any of the gardens and there is no longer the space. Most gardens have been converted to native habitat.

#### **Resources:**

John Moriarty. Ramsey County Department of Parks and Recreation. Phone interview. April 20, 2005.

## **3. City**

## A. Housing and Redevelopment Authority

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is the land owning entity for the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED). HRA land is owned by the city for redevelopment. PED decides who to sell HRA land to and what other strategic lands it wants to purchase through it. Once a decision is made by the PED, the proposal is approved by the HRA board. The HRA board consists solely of the city council members.

PED manages land in the public interest and, under the direction of the current mayor, this is housing development. There is little consideration for the gardens that currently exist. At the moment, there are at two gardens on HRA land. Although there are no current plans for their development, it is expected that there will be in time.

Most vacant HRA land has been already been developed or is slated for it. There are a few remaining locations that would be available for leasing and these can be found through the contact information below. Only non-profit organizations (this includes district councils) can apply for a lease and in order to qualify, they must have the support of their respective district council and city councilmember. These provisions are to make sure that some established organization is responsible for ensuring the success of the project.

Terms of the lease as of 2005 (condensed):

- The garden must solely be used for the cultivation of annual vegetables and flowers. There may be no permanent surface improvements and no motorized vehicles.
- Basic rent at \$1 per month will be charged per site during the growing season (April 1 through October 31) and this must be paid in advance at the time the lease is executed.
- A certificate of insurance must be provided with the following coverage:
  - Worker's Compensation Insurance at statutory limits and Employer's Liability Insurance of not less than \$200,000 per accident
  - Comprehensive General Liability Insurance including blanket contractual liability coverage and personal liability coverage with combined single limit of not less than \$600,000 per occurrence.
- Lessee, at their expense, must test for the presence of lead and other contaminants and submit the test report to the HRA.
- The Eligible Participant or the HRA may terminate the lease for any reason at any time, provided that thirty days written notice is given.

There also exists a resolution which allows for unbuildable parcels suitable for a permanent community garden to be transferred to non-profit organizations for this use. This requires the approval support of the district council and the city council. To locate available properties and apply for a lease, contact Laurie Kaplan, Project Management Technician, at (651) 266-6688 or [laurie.kaplan@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:laurie.kaplan@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

**Resources:**

Kaplan, Laurie. Project Management Technician. PED. Personal interview. March 28, 2005.

Donna Drummond. City Planner. PED. Personal interview. March 28, 2005.

"Garden Lease Guidelines." PED. 1994.

"Resolution No 01 – Resolution Authorizing a Standard Policy for the Conveyance of HRA owned property for Permanent Community Gardens, City-Wide." PED.

**B. Parks and Recreation**

Parks and Recreation (PR) have allowed community groups to garden on park land. Most of these gardens are flower gardens and now the department would like to increase the number of vegetable plots available to residents. There has been a policy and extensive application process in place but they are in the process of creating a new policy. See Appendix B for the 2004 application. The application also outlines an effective procedure for organizing a garden on any land type and identifies some important considerations.

Currently, vegetable gardens which are open to the general public (and not just to youth or certain ethnic groups) are mainly on the west or east sides of the city. The department is in the process of creating a larger plan to define how they expand the number of these gardens on park land. In the past, gardening groups and organizations have approached the department requesting space and PR has agreed as long as the group takes full responsibility for its maintenance. The department provides no additional resources or assistance.

Groups interested in finding space can contact Mark Granlund, Arts and Gardening Program Coordinator, at 651-632-2454 or [mark.granlund@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mark.granlund@ci.stpaul.mn.us). Mark may also be contacted to locate local gardens or visit the following link for gardening information, resources, and maps; <http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/parks/environment/gardens/index.html>

To support the purchase of additional park land, Chapter 13.01.1 states that all revenue generated from the sale of former park land must be placed into a fund to be used to purchase additional land. This is rarely done but there is approximately \$100,000 in this fund. It is tentatively planned to go towards a proposed park, currently named Henry Park, along the Mississippi River in the southeast end of the city.

**Resources:**

Bierscheid, Bob. Department Director. Phone Interview. March 3, 2005.

Granlund, Mark. Arts and Gardening Program Coordinator. Personal Interview. 28 March 2005.

**C. Public Works**

Public Works manages the public right-of-ways and there have been three gardens on these properties. These spaces are the vacant portions of parcels that were bought for public works projects. The city defines them as:

“the area in, on, below, or above a public roadway, highway, street, cartway, bicycle lane and public sidewalk in which the city has an interest, including other dedicated rights-of-way for travel purposes and utility easements of the city.”

The department only leases to district councils and requires that there is insurance to be provided by the lessee. To date, the department has been satisfied with their relationships with the gardens. The sites are desirable to gardeners since they are usually not able to be developed. To inquire about a Public Works property, contact Dave Nelson from the real estate division of Public Works at (651) 292-8860 or [dave.h.nelson@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:dave.h.nelson@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

**Resources:**

Nelson, Dave. Real Estate, Public Works. Phone Interview. May 23, 2005.

## 4. St Paul Schools

Schools have hosted gardens in the past and currently, there are at least three gardens. One garden is part of a non-profit youth gardening program and there are no plotted vegetable gardens. These gardens have been created by outside organizations and have not been directly part of school programs and do not require school participation. There are no applications or policies which govern them and they are reviewed case by case. Gardens must be supported by the school principal and approved by facility management.

Some of the things that facility management would consider are:

- Is the location too visible? Will it be noticed if it is unkempt?
- Is it close to any buildings where it may cause rodent problems?
- Is there some sort of a long term management plan?
- Is the soil conducive to gardening? Many schools are built on fill and are not favorable to gardening

If one was to go about creating a garden on school ground, it is best to find a teacher to be a project partner. Once there is the support of the principal, it can be presented to facility management. Contact Jackie Kearns, Grounds and Labor Supervisor, St. Paul Public Schools, at (651) 603-5014 or [jackie.kearns@spps.org](mailto:jackie.kearns@spps.org).

**Resources:**

Kearns, Jackie. Grounds and Labor Supervisor. St Paul Public Schools. Phone Interview. April 15, 2005.

## II. Water

St Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) provides water through hydrants and charges at a rate of 25 billing units per season for smaller, ornamental gardens and larger vegetable gardens will be metered and charged accordingly. The following is the official policy:

St Paul Regional Water Service will provide a hydrant assembly fitted with a garden hose adaptor for the purpose of watering a community garden if the following requirements are followed:

- The community garden is on the same side of the street as the hydrant, or the Meter Operations Supervisor approves special considerations.
- A \$50 refundable deposit is furnished to SPRWS for the hydrant adaptor, backflow preventer, and valve.
- Water consumption shall be paid at a flat rate of 25 billing units, plus tax for the growing season.
- The fire hydrant must be a newer style (with a break-away flange) and have a valve on the hydrant branch.
- The community garden representative must contact SPRWS at the start of the season to coordinate the turning on of the hydrant.
- The community garden must supply a padlock for the lockable valve, and provide a key for SPRWS.
- SPRWS will shut off a hydrant, when they deem it necessary, and at the end of the growing season.
- SPRWS shall not be held responsible if a hydrant is found off. Other agencies may also use hydrants, and may not turn the hydrant back on. If this happens call SPRWS and the hydrant will be turned back on.
- Any vandalism or damage to the hydrant adaptor will be cause for SPRWS to revoke the permit and forfeit the deposit.
- The community garden must be used primarily for ornamental flower use.
- If a garden is more than 2,000 sq. ft., a full hydrant meter assembly will be required. There will be a \$50 refundable deposit and a letter of understanding will be required. This letter must state the benefits this garden have for the community and the acknowledgement that the permit holder will be responsible for any damages to the hydrant meter assembly. Water consumption will be metered and the permit holder will be charged for all the water used.

The provision about ornamental flower use does not apply to larger gardens that pay for the actual amount of water used. There is no fee to set up the system. The policy states that the garden must be on the same side of the street as the water hydrant, however, the city of Minneapolis will put a hose under the street

through storm sewers and this can be explored with St Paul. To apply for a permit, contact the SPRWS Engineering department at (651) 266-6270.

Many gardens often receive their water through deals with neighbors. This may be preferable to working through the city departments. To provide some idea of the costs, a local garden has been found to use approximately \$100 worth of water per season per acre.

**Resources:**

"Garden Permit Policy." SPRWS. February 7, 2005.

Mitrione, Steve. Midway Community Garden. Phone interview. April 12, 2005.

Wetzel, Dick. SPRWS. Phone interview. April 15, 2005.

### III. District Councils

The district council system was established by the city of St Paul in 1975 in order to facilitate citizen participation. They exist as private, nonprofit organizations and act as liaison between citizens, businesses, city planners, and policy makers. Working with planners, they review and make recommendations on local housing, economic development, public improvement, and other related programs and projects. In addition to communicating with the local government, they act as community organizers in their neighborhoods. With the support of volunteer committees they guide a variety of projects such as neighborhood beautification, environmental improvement, and crime prevention.

The city is divided into 17 planning districts. Each district has a respective district council with the exception of District 13, which has three councils. Many of these district councils began as grass-roots, community organizations in the 1960's and early 1970's. In 1975, they formed an official relationship with the city with the establishment of the formal councils. After the 17 planning districts were designated, District 13 split into three which resulted in a total of 19 district councils.

Being both a planning organization and a community organization, district councils hold great potential for the protection and creation of community gardens. As a planning partner with the city, they have substantial influence on policy and development decisions and can work to preserve garden spaces, tap into city funds not available to most community organizations, and apply for leases not available to other community organizations.

As a community organization, they have the ability to connect local citizens to gardening projects within the neighborhood, can advertise on behalf of gardens and other projects through newsletters, and have access to a network of volunteers and resources not readily available to individual community members.

This section of the research focused on the relationship between district councils and community gardens. The following questions were addressed primarily through phone interviews with each council's community organizer or executive director (unless noted otherwise):

- Are there any gardens within the district and what is the council's connection to them?
- Is there an expressed demand for gardening spaces?
- How much does the council value community gardens and would they want to support the creation of more?
- What barriers have existed or would be expected to exist in the process of creating a garden?
- What resources would be beneficial?

- Where does funding come from and what role does that play in the creation of gardens?

Conversations were also had with gardening activists and organizers and these supported what was discovered with the district councils.

## Results

Most district councils have some form of community gardening occurring in their neighborhoods. Most have community flower beds, a few have youth gardening programs managed by non-profit organizations, and about half have vegetable plots accessible to the general public. The majority of these gardens supported by the council through outreach in newsletters and representation in city planning and policy issues. In a few cases, gardens were created or are even owned by the district council. Most of these are managed by volunteers and not the council.

Most councils said that they would 1) work to protect their gardens if necessary, 2) expressed interest in the establishment of new gardens, 3) were willing to assist in their development, 4) and felt that there would be significant demand for additional spaces. In many cases, this demand is not apparent because residents who are sure that there are no gardens are not contacting the council looking for space. Organizers feel that the demand would be apparent if residents would be presented with the opportunity. This is the case where gardens were started without much expressed interest into them and they were quickly filled, particularly with gardens in areas with a high population of immigrants who have limited interaction with organizers but have a strong desire to garden. Gardens have been successfully used as organizing tools with Hmong and Latino communities.

While not every district currently has active community gardening, most have either had a garden or the council has discussed creating one in the last decade. Some were lost to development and many failed to develop because of both a lack of information and access to resources. Many stated that they would consider or were even excited to look further into garden projects if they were presented with information and had some additional assistance.

While the idea of gardens has been discussed in many councils, these projects require a significant amount of initial planning and fail to develop because of barriers such as acquiring land, funding, and volunteers. Most often, councils have a very limited staff and do not have the staff time or resources available for the implementation of gardens. With few vacant areas remaining and many different policies governing different public lands, land availability was cited as the major barrier. Not only is there not much land available, information is limited and most councils are not aware of all the types of public land which are available. Since these potential garden projects often are only discussed in the office or in committee meetings and are not publicized, outside leaders and volunteers do not emerge. Financial resources are also extremely limited. The city provides funding for specific functions such as crime prevention and

planning. These functions leave little extra funding for projects such as garden creation.

This research project revealed that there is more public land available than what organizers often perceive. Many councils have not considered parks or schoolyards, where these have been found to be home to gardens. Nearly all the councils were quite interested in learning more about what is available and felt that they currently do not have enough information to begin the process.

District councils have access to money not available to other community organizations and foundations have been found to be very supportive of gardens. The St Anthony Park district council has long operated a community garden located on land owned by the railroad. When the garden was threatened by development, the council was able to acquire \$90,000 from the city to purchase their garden land from the railroad. A large portion of that came through STAR (Sales Tax Revitalization) grants, which are available to any non-profit organization. The other portion was funded through CIB (Capital Improvement Budget) grants. These grants are only available to city agencies and departments.

St Anthony Park was able to acquire all this funding through the city because it was able to demonstrate the support of the community by raising a significant amount through grassroots fundraising efforts across the neighborhood. Grassroots fundraising was possible here since the garden was well established and valued by the community. It is still quite possible for a proposed, undeveloped garden to receiving the necessary funding. There was recently a case where a few individual gardeners in St Paul were able to obtain a significant grant to create a garden even without being part an established organization. Being established community organizations, councils may have an even easier time receiving these grants because of their status and proficiency in fundraising.

When considering a new project, councils should express their interest in supporting gardens to the greater community before any planning really occurs and volunteers may begin to emerge to invest the necessary energy. Opening the process up to the larger community will also generate valuable input and will allow for concerns from neighbors to be addressed before they become problems later in the process. Refer to the end of the St Paul Parks and Recreation Community Garden Application (in appendix B) for an outline of the process of organizing a garden.

The following section outlines the relationship each specific council has with their local gardens.

## **Council Summaries**

### **District 1: Battle Creek/Highwood**

There is a community garden located on Parks land and is managed by John McDermon. There have been no problems filling spots and is used mainly by Somali, Hmong, and senior populations. The council advertises the community garden through the community newsletter every spring. There may be enough demand for an additional garden and fortunately there is still some land available within the district, especially along the river.

Anne Mueller (651) 501-6345 [district1council@aol.com](mailto:district1council@aol.com)

## **District 2: Greater East Side**

The council created a community garden recently as part of a Hmong outreach program. The garden is currently located on land owned by the Armory and is threatened by possible development. Currently, the garden is entirely managed by Hmong farmers but increased demand for gardening space has led to the creation of a new garden on underappreciated city park land that will be available to all residents. This garden is planned to begin within the next year. The district council was responsible for both these gardens and has the leases with the land owners and provides the insurance.

Chuck Repke (651) 774-2220 [district2@gofast.net](mailto:district2@gofast.net)

## **District 3: West Side**

There are citizens who do community flower gardening in a couple locations around the neighborhood. Youth Farm also operates a youth garden program on church property. Based on the many new Americans with agricultural ties and the response to other gardening programs, the council feels that there would be interest in community gardening but there hasn't been much discussion about this or people contacting the office looking for space. There is little land available and not much park or green space that is connected to the community.

Carlos Garcia-Velasco (651) 293-1708 [carlos@wsco.org](mailto:carlos@wsco.org)

## **District 4: Dayton's Bluff**

The Community Design Center operates a few youth gardens located on both public and private land throughout the neighborhood. There was interest a decade ago to start a vegetable garden on city land but it failed to happen because of difficulty with insurance and utilities. No one has contacted the office looking for garden space but they do feel that there would be some interest. Their green space committee would be very willing to support a garden if some volunteers initiated it and if they had the necessary resources and information.

Karin DuPaul (651) 772-2075 [karin@daytonsbluff.org](mailto:karin@daytonsbluff.org)

## **District 5: Payne-Phalen**

There are a couple spaces which the community plants flower gardens, including a police memorial. The council leases land from the HRA for a vegetable garden that was once the centerpiece of a youth gardening program until funding was lost. This year, the garden is transitioning to a plotted vegetable garden managed by volunteers. The council is not worried about development because the value of the garden is recognized by city planners who have no plans of selling the property for redevelopment. The council covers insurance. There is another small vegetable garden in the community but there is no communication between it and the council. The council is very interested in creating more spaces and is investigating vacant spaces in the district. There hasn't been much expressed demand for a garden, but in the case of the other garden, they found that once it was established and advertised, people quickly become interested.

Leslie McMurray (651) 774-5234 [d5-director@visi.com](mailto:d5-director@visi.com)

## **District 6: North End/South Como**

There is some flower gardening done by the block clubs and they have been getting donations from Linder's greenhouse. There currently are no known community vegetable gardens and have not been any in the past. There may be interest within individual block clubs, especially in the southern community. There haven't been any conversations about starting a garden but this district has the benefit of having significant land available and a community that is likely to be interested in having garden space.

Patty Lammers (651) 488-7684 [dist6nsc@hotmail.com](mailto:dist6nsc@hotmail.com)

## **District 7: Thomas-Dale/Frogtown**

In the past, the district council has provided support for gardens but has refrained from any management. They have negotiated water deals with the city and helped start a youth garden along with a couple other community groups a few years ago. The garden is located on a city-owned lot and the youth program recently disappeared. The garden is now managed as a plotted veggie garden by Fran Tessier (651-291-7616). The garden is located on Dale St and the area will experience some reinvestment in the near future. Currently, the lot is too small to develop but the city is interested in purchasing Fran's adjacent house so that both lots could be developed. The council rarely gets requests for garden plots.

Kristen Kidder (651) 298-5068 [district7@integraonline.com](mailto:district7@integraonline.com)

## **District 8: Summit/University**

Farm in the City operates a community garden in the district. The environmental and development committees would be interested to look into creating another

community garden. There is little available land in the neighborhood and their two parks are quite small. Webster elementary may be a viable option for land.

Steve Bohland (651) 228-1855 [supc@district8stpaul.org](mailto:supc@district8stpaul.org)

### **District 9: West Seventh/Fort Road**

There are no community gardens and no one has been asking for them. Gardens have been considered but the topsoil is thin and quite poor and there is little land available anymore. Most of the area is slated for intensive redevelopment.

Betty Moran (651) 298-5599 [betty@fortroadfederation.org](mailto:betty@fortroadfederation.org)

### **District 10: Como Park**

There has been some flower gardening and native planting that happens on park land. No one has called looking for garden plots but there has been some guerilla vegetable gardening occurring on DOT (Minnesota Department of Transportation) land. The gardener will no longer be able to cultivate the land and it will be vacant this season. If the council were to help start a garden, they would want at least 10 plots to make it worth their time and there may be enough space on this specific DOT plot and elsewhere in the district. The council would love to see the creation of a garden but the office is only staffed by one part time organizer. They would support a garden but would avoid taking any responsibility.

Sue McCall (651) 644-3889 [district10@comopark.org](mailto:district10@comopark.org)

### **District 11: Hamline-Midway**

The Midway Green Spirits operates a vegetable garden on a small and oddly shaped HRA property that is not likely to be developed. The council is not interested in creating additional community garden space and has been involved with the existing garden. They advertise the garden in the community newspaper and would work to protect it although it is highly unlikely that it would be developed. Occasional questions are directed towards the volunteer garden manager.

Jun-Li Wang (651) 646-1984 [district11@gofast.net](mailto:district11@gofast.net)

### **District 12: St Anthony Park**

The neighborhood has a well established vegetable garden that was created on railroad land. The district council was able to recently purchase the land mainly through city grants. The purchase price of \$110,000 for the garden was made possible by this neighborhood's significant political power and financial

resources. The council owns the property and provides the insurance but it is managed by another community member. The garden is always full with a waiting list. This suggests that there would be interest in an additional garden.

Nina Axelson (651) 649-5992 [nina@sapcc.org](mailto:nina@sapcc.org)

### **District 13: Lexington-Hamline**

Farm in the City operates a youth and Hmong community garden at the Dunning Recreational Center and is looking at a possible expansion to compensate for the loss of other land. This council has a unique relationship with the recreational center. Typically, recreational centers are controlled by the Parks department, but in the past, the council sued for control and it is now managed by a board composed of representatives from community organizations. There was a plotted community garden before the district council existed but now interested citizens are referred to the Snelling-Hamline garden. The council board discussed creating a community garden but it failed to develop due to a lack of available land.

Jessica Treat (651) 645-3207 [lexham@lexham.org](mailto:lexham@lexham.org)

### **District 13: Merriam Park**

The neighborhood does not have any gardens and the council has not been contacted by anyone interested in creating or joining a garden. The Snelling-Hamline council operates a vegetable garden nearby that residents join if interested.

Theresa Heiland. (651) 645-6887. [mpcc@merriam-park.org](mailto:mpcc@merriam-park.org)

### **District 13: Snelling-Hamline**

There is a medium sized community (30, 15' by 20' plots) garden located on undevelopable former railroad currently owned by public works. The garden is one of this small council's largest projects and is always filled, half by the district and half from outside the district. On this land, there is the potential to increase the garden size (possibly ten additional plots) and changes to Ayd Mill Road may increase the land available. There is plenty of demand to support this expansion. The limited staff and volunteer energy has restricted growth of the garden.

Renee Obrecht-Como. (651) 644-1085. [shcc@snellham.org](mailto:shcc@snellham.org).

### **District 14: Macalester-Groveland**

MULCH, a Macalester College student organization, manages a community vegetable plot on campus and Friends of Mattocks Park does flower gardening in

the park through Parks and Recreation. The council does not have a direct relationship with both. There has been interest from the board in creating a vegetable garden and recently there was a search for possible sites but nothing has developed since. They were not aware of any interest in the greater community and no one has called asking for plots.

Caitlin Reid (651) 695-4000 [mqcc@macgrove.org](mailto:mqcc@macgrove.org)

### **District 15: Highland Park**

There used to be a garden in the district but it has since been developed. It was used mostly by the new Americans who lived in nearby apartment buildings. It has been a while since there were conversations about creating a new garden and no one has been contacting about plots recently. There doesn't appear to much vacant land available for gardening and the one possible private property for sale is too expensive for an organization to purchase. The district is planning on doing a land inventory in the near future and may discover new possibilities. Another resource for land may be the College of St Catherines.

Gayle Summers (651) 695-4005 [hdc@visi.com](mailto:hdc@visi.com)

### **District 16: Summit Hill**

There are gardening projects managed by volunteers throughout the community but currently, no vegetable gardens currently. The idea of gardens has not been brought up in committee meetings and no one has asked but judging by the interest in related gardening activities, there is likely enough interest for additional garden spaces. There are the limitations with available land. The neighborhood does have an active community.

Steve Sanders. Chair of the Environmental Committee (651) 340-2411  
[stevesanders222@yahoo.com](mailto:stevesanders222@yahoo.com)

### **District 17: Capitol River**

This district encompasses the downtown area and there is little room left for traditional gardens, forcing gardeners to work creatively. The council has joined Minnesota Green to provide plants to gardeners and have implemented workshops on container gardening. They are now looking into creating award programs to encourage increased gardening. There is the artist's cooperative community garden on private property that is run through collaboration between residential associations. Friends of Mears Park does flower gardening in the city park. The council is always interested in increasing gardening but is limited by available space and a consistent community.

Sheila Lynch (651) 221-0488 [sheilalynch@capitolriver.com](mailto:sheilalynch@capitolriver.com)

## Appendix A

### Extended Summary of Tax Forfeited Lands

Properties that are tax forfeited are seized by the state after 3-5 years (depending on property classification) of unpaid taxes. These state owned lands are managed by the county. The Tax Forfeiture office is part of the County Department of Property Records and Revenue and its goal is to auction these properties to return them to the tax roll. However, some of these properties would best serve the public so different government agencies (state, county, city departments, or schools) have the opportunity to claim or purchase these properties prior to auction. After the properties become forfeited in August, the county classifies the newly forfeited property as either conservation (conservation land is in its natural state, usually as a wetland, and is controlled by the DNR) or non conservation, public agencies are notified, and they have 60 days to request to have the property withheld from auction. They can request that the county hold them for 6 months until they come up with a management plan or funding.

The agencies have these 6 months either to purchase the property at the appraised value (set by the County Department of Property Records and Revenue) or to apply for a use deed. A use deed allows a public agency to provide a specified and approved public use indefinitely until it decides to no longer manage the property. At that time, the responsibility of management returns to the county and is continued to be owned by the state. A use deed has no cost or a time limitation as long as the land use does not differ from what is specified in the original deed.

What qualifies as a public use is up to the discretion of the tax forfeiture office and their decision is based on what the State Department of Revenue has approved in the past. They have approved use deeds for schools, open park spaces, fire stations, roads, storm water management, etc. When the office is considering a use deed, the following questions are asked:

- Is the proposed purpose authorized by statute, law, or local charter?
- Does the proposed purpose qualify as an authorized public use?
- Will the proposed purpose serve the public interest as much or more than having the parcel back on the tax rolls?

If approved by the office, it then needs the approval of the county board. Once that happens, the agency claims responsibility indefinitely as long as it maintains in accordance to the use deed. If the proposal is denied by the tax forfeiture either because of disagreement or the time frame to acquire has passed the statutory deadline, governmental entities can seek special legislation for support at the state level by introducing a bill. Once that is approved, it can be presented to the County with the support of the state legislature.

If no agency claims the property, or the use deed does not receive approval, it then goes to auction. If it isn't sold at auction, the County Department of Property Records and Revenue continues to maintain the property and it can only be used if bought at the market price. It is too late to apply for a use deed and they usually avoid leasing (but leasing has occurred in the past).

Currently in Ramsey County, there are over 700 properties held on use deeds. Some uses include libraries, public parks, and schools. For each of the last few years, almost 20 properties have been forfeited. Conservation land is managed by the DNR and there are currently 89 properties being managed for wildlife habitat.

Minnesota Statute Chapter 282. <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/282/>

Ramsey County Tax Forfeited Land General Information.  
<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/prr/tfl/index.asp>

Kris Kujala. Department of Property Records and Revenue. Supervisor Tax Forfeited Land.  
Personal interview March 11, 2005.

## Appendix B

# St. Paul Parks and Recreation Community Garden Application Guidelines

The following guidelines are for filling out the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Community Garden Application Form. Before filling out the form, please read these guidelines and the accompanying cover letter. If you have questions about your proposal, the form or the guidelines, please contact Mark Granlund (651)558-2317 or [mark.granlund@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mark.granlund@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

### **Group Submitting Community Garden Proposal**

Please give us a brief background about yourself or your group, and any partners you may have.

Attach letters of support from any groups, individuals, institutions or businesses that have committed to help create and maintain this community garden. Provide information about

funding or fund raising efforts you or your group have in place for the creation and maintenance of the proposed garden.

### **Reason for Proposing Garden**

Please provide a short 2 or 3 sentence description of purpose or need for creating this community garden.

### **Garden Contact Person**

Provide information about the main contact person for the community garden. This person will be the main conduit through which all communication happens between Parks and the Gardening Group. This person should be organized and have a good understanding of the entire garden development process.

### **District Council**

Provide the district number and contact information of the district council for your garden location. Participants may be from other districts but you will need to work with the district council where your garden is located.

### **Proposed Location**

*Name of park and bordering streets:*

Provide name of the park and its bordering streets. If it is on a corner please indicate which corner (i.e. northwest, southeast, etc.) If the garden is to be located on a property that is not an official park but is park property, please provide a very detailed description of streets and or bordering landmarks.

*Location within the park - list landmarks:*

Provide a written description of where in the park or property the garden will be

located. Many parks or properties are much larger than the garden area. Please be specific and provide helpful landmarks in describing the location (i.e. the garden is located along north side the retaining wall running from the intersection of Avenues B & C to the fire hydrant 150' to the west.)

*Attach a map with photo of site.*

The map should be to scale and should include measurements of beds and distances to landmarks, i.e. curbs, sidewalks, trees, manholes, etc. Also included should be a list of plants and location of plants within the garden beds. Each map should be titled with the name of the garden and the park in which it is located. The map can be hand-drawn or call [651]588-2317 for a copy of a city map for your park.

### **Site Qualifications**

Is there water access for a hose within the park? This may be a fire hydrant, a water fountain with a spigot, or a water spigot from a building. Check the appropriate box.

If no water access is available, what measures will be taken to assure proper watering of the garden?

Parking: Check the appropriate box.

Special Features: Please indicate features that make this site unique or difficult for a garden. These may include an existing garden nearby, tool box, meeting areas, across the street from support organizations, etc.

### **Nature of Garden**

Type or Theme: Please provide information about the nature of the garden. Is the garden for growing perennials, annuals, vegetables, herbs, cultural plants, education, etc. Are there any themes such as heirloom or native plants?

Plot Size/Garden Size: Please provide information about the overall size (square foot) of the garden as well as individual plots within the garden, if applicable.

### **Programming Focus**

If there are any programs that will be held in the garden (e.g. arts, inter-generational, gardening classes, wildlife, etc.) Please list.

### **Technical Support**

What kind of materials, technical advice, and supplies do you anticipate needing from Parks and Recreation in order for the garden to be a success?

## **Community Support and Information Gathering**

This is a *community* garden program. The establishment of new gardens within the St. Paul park system will require broad community support and a number of individuals committing to maintain the garden. It is Park and Recreation's hope that by going through the community process necessary to fill out this form you will be able to determine a real interest and support within your community for a garden. If you are an individual interested in gardening in an existing public garden call Mark Granlund (651)558-2317 to find the community garden nearest you in which you could participate.

### **STEP 1: District Council Meeting**

Meet with the district council to begin discussing the location of your garden. If you are not sure about which district the garden is located in, consult the city pages of your local phone directory. It is important to meet with your district council representative in order to have them help advertise meetings to all the residents in the gardening area through their neighborhood newsletter. District councils might also be of some assistance if neighbors are divided on a gardening issue, or might help in maintaining a gardener database if needed. Again, meeting with the district council is one step in ascertaining and obtaining community support. In this section you should list the date you met with your district council representative and what comments or concerns were brought forth from this meeting. Please list how you addressed these concerns.

### **STEP 2: Community Meetings**

This may take more than one meeting. The general public should be invited to these meetings to determine amount of support and any concerns. Concerns from individuals should be dealt with in a positive manner (i.e. concerns about aesthetics, concerns about location and traffic patterns, security, maintenance, etc.) and ideas for community support should be solidified (i.e. schools may want to help with the planting as part of their curriculum, gardening groups may want to help, donations might be solicited from local greenhouses or residents, etc. ) Please provide the dates of these meetings and all of the community concerns and how they were addressed.

\*Invite the whole community near the park to attend these meetings. Be sure to go door-to-door for people who live on the park or whose homes are within view of the garden and invite them to the meeting. Other ways to advertise your meeting includes through your local district council newsletter, district council meetings and through a local newspaper.

### **STEP 3: Final Meeting**

Meet with all the people who will be working in/with the garden and determine final garden design, maintenance schedules, calendar for beginning garden, and completing the Community Garden Application. Participants should include interested gardeners, district council representative, Parks and Recreation representative and other interested or partnering organizations. List the date of this meeting and any concerns brought forward and how they were dealt with.

## Attachments

Please provide the following attachments with your proposal.

- T Letters of support from partnering organizations: district council, schools, businesses, organized housing communities, etc.)
- T List of local organizations who have committed to help create and maintain this community garden, and how are they going to help (be specific, please). Include name, address and phone if possible.
- T List of individuals committed to maintain a garden with specific information on how they're willing to help. Include name, address and phone if possible.

## Application Checklist

Please use this checklist to help you gather together your proposal information. Please check these items off as you gather them.

- Read Cover Letter
- Read Application Guidelines
- Fill out complete application form
- Attach a scale map of garden with photo of site
- Meet with district council
- Meet with the larger community to determine support
- Meet with people involved in the garden to finalize proposal, design and plant lists
- Attach letters of support from district council, schools, partnering businesses
- Attach list of local organizations involved and relevant information
- Attach list of individuals involved and relevant information

Thank you for taking the time to submit a proposal. Please call if you have any questions regarding this process. Mark Granlund (651)558-2317