

**Working with  
Local Government  
to create  
Community  
Gardens**



Zero Waste



Renewable Energy



Local Food



# Sustainable Communities



Energy /Water Efficiency

Land Use



Transit, Bike & Pedestrian Mobility

# FOOD SECURITY

Local Food



ENVIRONMENTAL  
EDUCATION

Sustainable  
Communities

REDUCE  
GREENHOUSE  
GASES

COMMUNITY HEALTH

# Encouraging Community Gardens through Policies and Ordinances

## Climate Action Plans:

“Encourage the creation of home and community gardens, including possible use of surplus City properties for community gardens.”

- City of San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan

# Encouraging Community Gardens through Policies and Ordinances

## General Plans:

### Policy OS-8 Community Gardens

“Encourage and support community gardens as important open space resources that build communities and provide a local food source.

#### Actions:

- Provide sites for local farmers’ markets and community gardens.
- Encourage neighborhood groups to organize, design, and manage community gardens particularly where space is available that is not suitable for housing, parks, pathways, or recreation facilities.
- Continue to make the City’s composted waste available to community and school gardens.
- Encourage buildings that incorporate rooftop gardens that may be used for gardening.
- Encourage neighborhood initiatives to grow fruit-bearing trees.”

- City of Berkeley General Plan

# Encouraging Community Gardens through Policies and Ordinances

## General Plans:

**Policy 1.6 Support urban agriculture through the creation and maintenance of community, rooftops, schoolyard and kitchen gardens.**

“The growing movement to increase urban agriculture should be supported on both public land and on private spaces where possible. Urban gardens should not only be permitted in public open spaces, but promoted. And activities that allow distribution of locally grown food, such as farmers markets or even sales of local and large-scale urban agriculture, should be considered a valuable part of activating public open spaces.

To promote this goal, the Mayor’s 2009 Executive Directive on Healthy and Sustainable Food *requires departments to identify public land for food production.*”

- City of San Francisco General Plan (Draft)

# Encouraging Community Gardens through Policies and Ordinances

## Zoning:

### Best Practices

- Differentiate between home gardens, community gardens and urban farms
- Make home and community gardens a permitted use
- Allow home gardens in front yard setbacks
- Incentivize gardens in new development by granting floor area or density bonuses and by counting acreage towards Quimby Act requirements
- Create development standards for community gardens including:
  - Preparation of a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment
  - Operating rules: hours, maintenance, security, management rules and contact, allowance for retail sales
  - Perimeter fencing

# Tips for Successfully Working with Local Governments

## Working Relationships:

- Act like a Developer, not a Non-Profit or Community Organization
- Expect to submit a detailed business plan, site plan, utility connections, lease proposals
- Don't expect to get funding from the city (waiver of application/permit fees at best)



# Tips for Successfully Working with Local Governments

## Working Relationships:

- Develop a close working relationship with city staff (Park & Rec. Director?)
- Provide a single point of contact, responsible for keeping volunteer team informed
- Seek volunteer expertise: engineering, landscape architecture, construction, fundraising, legal
- BE PATIENT!



# Tips for Successfully Working with Local Governments

## Business Plan:

- Costs: Utilities, insurance, maintenance, management, parking
- Short and long-term funding sources
- Governance and enforcement
- Insurance and indemnification if on city land
- What's being requested from the city



# Tips for Successfully Working with Local Governments

## Don't Forget:

- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Gardens in city parks must comply with park rules (park hours, no beer!)
- Gardens constructed on city land may be required to pay prevailing wages to contractors
- Meet early and often with neighbors to understand and respond to concerns (appearance, odors, security, hours, parking, retail sales)



# Working with Local Government to create Community Gardens

