



## **Community Gardens Oregon Solutions Demand Workgroup**

Meeting Notes - November 10, 2009

Attendees: Jason King, Chair; Nancy Bond; Leslie Pohl-Kosbau; Maren Murphy; Jennifer Bildersee; Caitlen Blethan; Rodney Bender; Mary Bedard; Condy Dietz; Cassie Cohen; Alex Bejarano, Amber Baker, Jenny Holmes

The meeting began with a review of the previous meeting's discussion about defining what is meant by "demand" and a check-in on homework assignments. Guidelines for starting a community garden were received from Growing Gardens, Portland Public Schools, and Ecumenical Ministeries and have been posted on the Oregon Solutions website. Leslie handed out copies of the "Portland Community Gardens handbook" and copies of the waiting list numbers by neighborhood.

Jason handed out a potential model for expressing the components of "demand" visually. The group discussed whether the drawing reflected "demand" or "resources" or a little of both. They agreed it was a better representation of the ways of meeting demand than a specific definition of what demand is. It was also recommended to incorporate the larger picture of how community gardening fits into the overall picture of urban agriculture to show the distinction.

Jason also shared a map that he has started of the community garden locations and the group discussed where to go from here with mapping and what kinds of data/information to capture. The group discussed geographical scope and agreed to focus on City of Portland, with an eye toward applicability to the larger context of Metro and the Tri-County area.

Cassie handed out maps from the Institute on Race and Poverty that

provide demographic information about changes in population in the Metro area and percentage of non-Asian minority elementary students by school. The group agreed that it is important to address the "awareness gap" in low income and specific ethnic populations about growing food and community gardens and that all kinds of demographic data can be overlaid but that the group should start by mapping garden locations and build from there. Jason will take the lead in working with Maren and others to begin mapping. Stephanie is to check with Lisa Turpel and Steve Cohen re what mapping of community gardens may already exist at the city (she will also check with Kat West of Multnomah County).

Stephanie asked whether the group wants to try and develop a specific recommendation for how to reduce the city's current waiting list for a community garden plot. The group said that an easy way would be to provide the city's program with more resources; that said, the group agreed they don't want to just focus on reducing the waiting list but on developing a more broad approach to addressing demand that could also help address the backlog.

Stephanie shared that P-Patch, the Seattle community garden program, that has quite a bit more funding and staff than the city of Portland program also has a waiting list, so more funding is only part of the solution.

The group discussed other ways to address demand: non-profits may have some approaches that would help inform the city's program; NGOs could provide more outreach re ways to grow food to take pressure off the city's program; OSU's Master Gardner program could be brought back to previous more robust funding levels

The group talked more about what "demand" means: make it easy for people to grow food, provide a sense of community, etc. and a suggestion was made to survey people on the waiting list about why they want a garden. Leslie said the city does survey people with gardens and does have information about why people want gardens - quality food, sense of community, recreation are some of the reasons. The survey does not include a question about whether people have space at home for a garden and the group thought it would be useful to know the answer to that to help find ways to meet the demand to grow your own food other than waiting for a community garden plot.

Amber suggested that the group focus on developing a set of objectives for a community gardens program:

- increase the opportunity to grow your own food in the city of Portland;
- provide a place to garden for every Portlander who wants to garden;
- provide opportunities for children and families to connect with the earth;
- ensure availability of gardens that reflects the demographics and populations of the city's neighborhoods (equity);

- provide education and information about opportunities to grow food that is easily and readily available to all populations in the city - increase outreach to specific populations;
- remove or reduce administrative/bureaucratic/regulatory barriers to establishing gardens - high level city support is provided;
- create incentives in the public and private sectors for gardens (fees, taxes, zoning, etc.)
- expand the notion of what is plausible in terms of available types of space to look at as resources for community gardening activities;
- define the relationship between Urban Agriculture, Market Gardens, and Community Gardens in the ultimate "demand" model;
- get people of different backgrounds together;
- start in Portland and create a model that is transferable to other Metro communities.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, December 1, 2:30 to 4:30, Portland Bldg., 1120 SW 5th Ave., Water Bureau, 5th Floor, Mt. Tabor Conference room (thanks to Cindy Dietz!)

**Followup Assignments:** Entire Group: email site specific information and other mapping data we would have or would like to have to Jason;

Jason and Maren to begin mapping; Jason will revise the diagram for community gardening demand and send to working group for review;

Stephanie to check with Lisa Turpel and Steve Cohen re maps and data city may already have for gardens.