



Urban Agriculture Activity Plan

Adopted 2014



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board





Our Mission

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

Acknowledgments

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Urban Agriculture activity plan is the result of focus and collaboration of Minneapolis residents and park visitors, individuals serving on plan advisory committees, staff, and elected officials. The organization's Planning division would like to thank all individuals who contributed their time, effort, and expertise in shaping the content of this plan.

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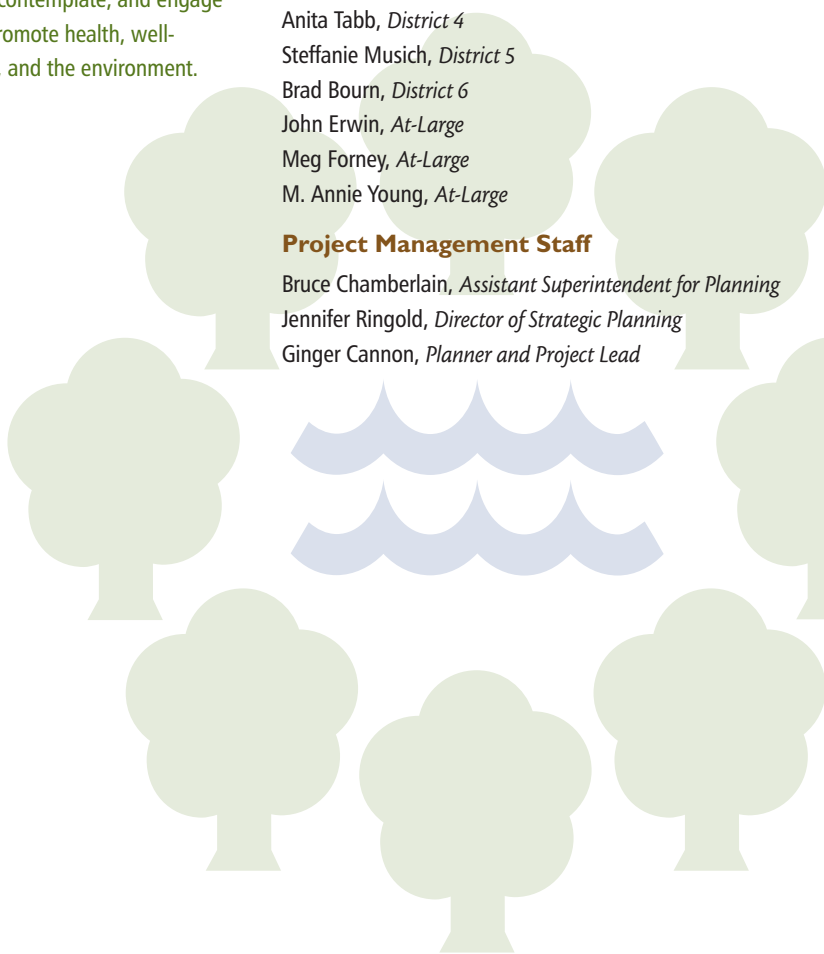
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INTRODUCTION

Until recently, food was not considered a priority for many local governments in the United States, and food policy was rarely found on local agendas. Over the past decade, residents have begun to recognize the importance that food plays in their communities and realize how much government planning, policy, and regulation affects our food system. City of Minneapolis led efforts including Homegrown Minneapolis and the adoption of the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan have expanded the ability to grow, process, distribute, consume, and compost more healthy, local food. As City policy is implemented, trends evolve and new leadership emerges, Minneapolis can become a more sustainable city through increased integration of urban agriculture and its related activities.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) supports urban agriculture activities as a way to achieve greater sustainability, and has aligned plan content with City of Minneapolis sustainability indicators and local policy initiatives. The success of this plan is directly tied to continued collaboration with the MPRB’s jurisdictional partners: the Minneapolis Public Schools, City of Minneapolis, and Hennepin County. Plan success will also rely on active participation of existing and new community partners and continued public support for urban agriculture activities within the park system.

The three delivery goals and related strategies of the plan are the result of extensive community engagement and reflect community needs on a citywide scale. This high level framework gives the MPRB and its partners the ability to best implement policy, facility, program, or service improvements in response to a complex and connected system of urban food conditions. These conditions include trends in urban agriculture, changes in regional or city demographics, public health and environmental pollution, or shifts in community needs over time.

Plan implementation and evaluation is the shared responsibility of the MPRB Environmental Stewardship, Planning and Recreation service divisions. Working in partnership with others, divisions are to provide the resources needed to implement, evaluate and report on plan goals. Within this activity plan there is particular emphasis on racial equity as a lens by which the activities of urban agriculture are implemented and evaluated. This lens will help the MPRB provide residents with the opportunity to improve their quality of life and well-being through activities that are best suited to their respective needs. MPRB staff and Commissioners understand that additional feedback from affected residents may be necessary during implementation, especially for physical changes to a park. Therefore, improvements to a park facility, program, or service as guided by this activity plan are subject to MPRB community engagement policy and procedure.

The commitment to budget allocation and resource distribution, strong community relationships, and removing barriers through public policy is critical to continued plan relevance and true integration of urban agriculture activities in the park system. With the adoption of the Urban Agriculture activity plan, the MPRB will continue to support urban agriculture within Minneapolis and expand the parks role in providing these activities to residents and park visitors.

WHAT IS Urban Agriculture?

Urban agriculture can be defined as growing food and raising animals in urban environments, and is accompanied by other complementary activities such as processing and distributing food, collecting and reusing food waste, and educating, organizing, and employing local residents.

Urban agriculture is integrated in individual communities and neighborhoods, and has become an important factor for the growth, function, and management of urban spaces.

The City of Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Policy Plan notes there is not one accepted definition of urban agriculture and states the term “generally describes the effort of supporting local food production, processing, distribution, and consumption in the urban environment.”

Related Planning Documents

2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan: system-wide plan that articulates the vision, goals, and strategies for the MPRB.

Regional Parks Policy Plan: the Metropolitan Council policy plan for managing and coordinating the regional parks and trails system. The plan guides park agencies in their management of regional parks; proposed changes to existing parks and trails must follow the policies laid out in this document.

Urban Agriculture Policy Plan: City of Minneapolis policy plan guiding efforts to improve our local food system.

REGIONAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN MINNEAPOLIS

- Regional Parks
- Neighborhood Parks





CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Regional and Neighborhood Parks in Minneapolis	2
Existing Park Conditions	4
Existing Trends and Projected Demand	5
Community Engagement Summary	6
GOAL ONE	8
<i>Park programs and services provide public education, access to healthy foods, and economic support for the local food system</i>	
GOAL TWO	10
<i>Park facility renewal and development fosters urban agriculture activities</i>	
GOAL THREE	12
<i>Food available on parkland benefits residents, park visitors and the environment</i>	

Note: A digital addendum for the plan is available on the MPRB website. The plan's addendum will be revised and updated as new policy, procedures, or toolkits are adopted by the MPRB.

Plan Glossary

Community Garden: designated park area focused on education, food production or training that serves a neighborhood population.

Edible Landscape: designated park area where food-producing plants grow within the landscape. Fruit and nut trees, shrubs, perennials, or annual plants may be used.

Food System: the chain of activities connecting the ability to grow, process, distribute, eat and compost food, as well as the associated regulatory agencies and policies.

Gardening Matters: local independent organization dedicated to serve community gardeners and their communities.

Homegrown Minneapolis: citywide initiative led by the Minneapolis Health Department and the Minneapolis Sustainability Office dedicated to expanding Minneapolis' ability to grow, process, distribute, eat and compost more healthy, sustainable locally grown foods.

Local Food: food grown within 100 miles of the city boundary.

Metropolitan Council: the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan region. The Metropolitan Council works with local park agencies to develop the regional parks and trails system.

Racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs): census tracts where 50% or more of the residents are people of color and 40% or more of the residents have incomes less than 185% of the federal poverty level.

Racial Equity: the proactive reinforcement of policies, procedures and actions that produce equitable power, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.



EXISTING PARK CONDITIONS

The MPRB currently supports urban agriculture through a variety of existing park programs, facilities, and services.

Current activities include summer camps, classes, and volunteer opportunities.



Youth building compost bins at J.D. Rivers Children's Garden.

Annual Community Kitchen Utilization (Top 10 Facilities)

1045 hours	Armatage
763	Windom South
529	Powderhorn
525	Creekview
430	Lake Hiawatha
195	Nokomis
152	Hiawatha School
140	East Phillips
110	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
106	Longfellow

The park system currently provides programs, facilities, and services that directly support urban agriculture activities in Minneapolis. These opportunities are available and accessible to the high percentage of the city's population that lives within walking distance of a regional or neighborhood park (see map, page 2).

The MPRB provides programs focused on urban agriculture at several neighborhood parks in partnership with youth-led development organizations. The range of youth programming, including summer camps related to urban agriculture and gardening, varies by site, season, and interests of the community and recreation center staff. The Neighborhood Naturalist Program provides seasonally relevant programs for youth at all MPRB recreation centers, and Theodore Wirth Regional Park is home to the JD Rivers' Children's Garden. Open to the public for decades, the Children's Garden provides training and environmental education for youth and also facilitates intergenerational on-site programs.

Food grown within parks is consumed by children enrolled in after-school programs, and beehives located on parkland produce honey and offer urban beekeeping classes. Each year, the park system hosts multiple community events, many of which celebrate a specific food culture or tradition where organic waste is collected for composting.

Assisted by training from MPRB staff, adult volunteers grow their gardening skills in parks located in all areas of the city. Many adults choose to be active land stewards and adopt a park landscape as an individual or group volunteer activity. Volunteers contribute a substantial amount of time and labor assisting staff with the maintenance and beautification of many different types of park landscapes each year.

Park facilities, specifically neighborhood recreation centers, are community hubs where individuals share knowledge, resources, and build strong personal connections. Community kitchens in recreation centers host classes about nutrition, food preservation, gardening and nature-based education. Minneapolis park concessions serve healthy, local food using compostable serving ware and promote a commitment to green business practices.

Property within the park system is designated as either a regional or neighborhood park. As an implementing agency of the Regional Parks System supported by the Metropolitan Council, the regional parks and trails within Minneapolis are recreational open space and serve the region's population.

The Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks Policy Plan guides local agencies in development of regional parks and trails and encourages the integration of natural-resource conservation into land planning decisions. This Policy Plan framework provides a guide to appropriate land use and allows funding for regional park development and operations. With the population of the region expected to grow nearly a third by 2030, this growth makes preserving land for outdoor recreation and natural spaces within developed cities more difficult, and challenges existing policy when considering large-scale agricultural use like urban farms on regional park property. Conversely, neighborhood parks are highly programmed areas containing multiple park amenities and lack the acreage necessary for large-scale food production.

EXISTING TRENDS AND PROJECTED DEMAND

The Minneapolis urban agriculture community is a diverse group of stakeholders that collectively work to expand and increase the security of our local food system. As no single entity coordinates all information about urban agriculture activity citywide, it is difficult to assess the number of people who participate, the total amount of food grown in the city's farms and gardens, or develop a Minneapolis specific metric that can demonstrate comprehensive benefits on a neighborhood or citywide scale. Despite this, studies have demonstrated that urban agriculture activities provide health, social, economic, and environmental benefits to urban populations. The combination of many different types of food-producing spaces, food policy, food leaders, and community-based resources promote these benefits and have accumulated over time to strengthen interest and demand for these activities.

The increase in Minneapolis farmers markets and expansion of mini-markets, including changes to zoning code to support commercial growing on property zoned for industrial use, are examples of changes that increase access and economic growth through direct purchasing from area farmers. In Minneapolis, residents buy local food supplied by the highest concentration of food cooperatives in the country and support businesses that source local ingredients. Participation in community supported agriculture (CSAs), local food resource hubs, food foraging, composting, and raising bees and chickens on public and private lands are commonplace activities. Collectively, these activities demonstrate a steady level of support for our local food system and translate to the high value of our local food economy.

For many people, growing food within a community garden is a direct link to the activities of urban agriculture. According to data from Gardening Matters, the demand for community garden space exceeds supply of available community garden land in the metropolitan area. Development of community garden space by residents or community-based organizations has proven to be a successful way to connect diverse communities, especially new immigrant populations. Of more than 200 community gardens in Minneapolis, 73% percent are food-producing. Gardeners are planting surplus food to donate to community food shelves and other gleaning programs. Other trends include community advocacy for long-term access to land as many community gardens or urban farms are located on borrowed land.

Local governments across the nation are landscaping public spaces with edible plants as a method to address social and environmental sustainability goals. This contribution is an excellent way to reduce carbon emissions, improve biodiversity, increase food security, and add educational or volunteer programs for residents.

Individuals and groups surveyed for this plan stated their primary limitations in practicing urban agriculture are lack of land available, lack of time and resources, and lack of knowledge. Community members commonly cited local government regulations as prohibitive to the expansion of urban agriculture. The following plan outlines the parks commitment to address these barriers, respond to projected trends and demand, and sustainably support the expansion of these activities within the park system.



Minneapolis supports an increasing number of farmers markets and mini-markets, including indoor winter markets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



Individual and group participants involved in the community engagement process generally support this plan as a method to promote the community benefits of urban agriculture and contribute to a more sustainable city.

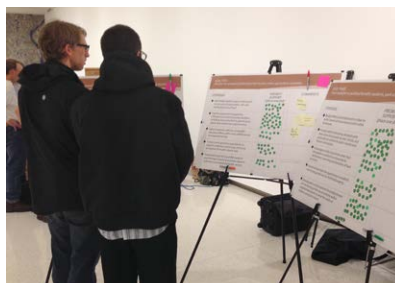
Overall, an estimated 3,000 individuals contributed to the development of this plan, and more than 40 staff members, volunteers, committee members, and elected officials participated in the community engagement process.

Urban Agriculture Activity Plan
Share your thoughts!

Public comment and review period:
November 6, 2013 - December 31, 2013

View the plan and provide feedback at
www.minneapolisparcs.org

Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board
2117 West River Road North
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Community Engagement Process

Prior to beginning the public process, staff researched national and local trends for urban agriculture, interviewed community leaders, compiled academic papers, and identified connection points where parks could support adopted local food policy, sustainability plans, and community initiatives.

Staff developed a community engagement plan outlining project goals and outcomes and the level of public engagement required for the project. For this project, the MPRB's promise to the public was to keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge feedback, and work to ensure that this feedback was reflected in the plan alternatives developed. A communications plan and work plan were written, and the project established an online presence to share information and allow direct communication through email subscription.

Staff and technical advisory committees were formed and met monthly to direct plan development. These advisory committees volunteered their time and expertise, and played key roles within plan development phases. Individual members represented various community interests and helped to define the broad scope of this topic area to manageable goals and strategies for the park system.

Beginning in November 2012, opportunities for public participation in plan development were divided by city geographic sector, with an emphasis on small group discussions in areas of low food security. Community members were notified of opportunities to be involved using a variety of communication methods. Methods of public involvement included:

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Staffed information displays
- Public meetings
- Community resource fairs
- Listening sessions
- Comment forms
- Open houses
- Neighborhood meetings

After analysis of this feedback, a draft plan was written and approved on November 6, 2013 for a public review and comment period. A task force of advisory committee members and volunteers developed an outreach strategy to reach current and potential park users and solicit diverse perspectives on the draft content during this period. Draft copies were distributed in all recreation centers, and the opportunity to comment was promoted through print media, radio presence, and social media.

Members of the task force attended more than 30 events soliciting feedback from more than 1,500 individuals through December 31st, 2013. Two listening sessions were sponsored and hosted by partner organizations, contributing valuable feedback on the draft plan content. Survey responses and comment letters were received from residents, government agencies, non-profits, businesses, and neighborhood associations. The public review and comment period was highly valuable in revising plan content and continuing to catalog the community need and priorities for urban agriculture activities in the parks.

Overall, this extensive engagement process was not only critical to the development of the plan, but highly beneficial in developing relationships with the community, with the MPRB's partner agencies, and expanding awareness of the MPRB's current programs and services.



Top Community Themes

During the community engagement process, information gathered helped to identify top community themes regarding urban agriculture activities in the parks. These key themes were presented to advisory committees, the Board, and management teams in advance of drafting a written plan.

The plan's content reflects the top community themes heard throughout the process:

Public Awareness and Education – Increase program offerings to increase knowledge and understanding of local foods, promote healthy eating habits and increase food security; focus on youth as participants

Facility Improvements – Design and build facilities and outdoor spaces that support food distribution, production, and organics collection; centers are urban agriculture hubs with improved community kitchens

Public Policy – Modify policies and ordinances to remove barriers to local food production and distribution in the parks

Environmental Stewardship – Grow or make available more food on public land; diversify landscapes to include food producing plants; connect park operations procedure to these activities

The top community limitations in pursuing urban agriculture activities were cited as:

- lack of land or space available
- lack of time
- lack of knowledge and resources

Local government regulations were discussed as prohibitive to the expansion of urban agriculture activities in the city and park system.

Plan Framework

Advisory committee members worked to develop a plan framework that reflected these top community themes and addressed community limitations. After discussion and analysis, three primary goals and resulting strategies emerged. The plan's goals are ordered by degree of difficulty according to feedback from the advisory committees and reflect an increased commitment of support from the MPRB.

Strategies accompany each plan goal and contain evaluation measures to mark achievements and track plan progress. Each strategy is connected to a funding source and estimated figure within every implementation year. Some strategies are to be funded consistently year to year, while others are slated for funding after other key strategies have been implemented.

The plan does not call for funding to increase staffing levels, but does recommend that staff shift current operating funds to programs, services and facilities to achieve plan goals and related strategies. A plan implementation team is necessary to identify targets for the evaluation measures, conduct the assessment required, and act as plan liaisons to engage current and new community partners in achieving plan goals and reporting on progress.

As the plan is implemented, residents and park visitors can look forward to increased visibility and support for urban agriculture in the parks, and over time, experience the many benefits these activities provide to personal health and well-being, the local economy, and our environment.

GOAL ONE:

Park programs and services provide public education, access to healthy foods, and economic support for the local food system.

STRATEGIES

- **Increase program offerings related to growing, preparing, and preserving healthy foods.**
- **Implement the MPRB Healthy Foods policy and seek opportunities to increase the amount of local food served in park environments.**
- **Award contracts to local food vendors and adopt an organization standard for these requirements.**

Food has a direct effect on individual health and the overall well-being of our community. Limited access to healthy food options contributes to increasing rates of food-related chronic disease and health care costs nationwide. In some areas of Minneapolis, residents are faced with the difficult choice between food cost and quality, as much of the affordable food that is readily available is high in calories and low in nutrients. Communities have responded to these conditions by advocating for government planning, policy, and regulations to strengthen and expand our local food system.

Residents and park visitors ranked health of highest importance when asked about the benefits of urban agriculture. Individuals strongly agreed that the parks mission is to support programs that benefit health and well-being, and encouraged increased coordination with community organizations to meet resident needs. A majority of people surveyed had experienced cooking, nutrition, or gardening classes hosted within a park, and attended park events serving local food and composting food waste.

The connection to healthy eating habits and access to healthy food, especially in service to youth, is a natural intersection as parks currently serve 100,000 meals a year to this age group. Opportunities to learn about nutrition, where food comes from, and how to grow and preserve food can be expanded within child-care, teen, and summer camp programs. Collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools on food programs and procurement, and full implementation of the MPRB Healthy Foods policy will also continue to increase healthy foods available to residents and park visitors.

Parks can leverage purchasing power by adding local food to park events and programs through standards of requirement for food purchased with public funds. Working with urban farmers or farmers markets to devise an efficient method to directly source locally grown food can positively impact the local economy and contribute to increased sustainability. Local food vendors at park events increase resident and park visitor awareness and access to sustainable food choices. New purchasing methods or initiatives proposed by staff are to align with current Finance and Healthy Foods policy.

Identified risk factors in achieving Goal One include:

- Lack of resident time to participate in programs or events
- Lack of awareness of food related programs currently offered by parks
- Suitability of community kitchens for requested program types
- Efficient financial procedure to procure local food
- Staff adherence to Healthy Foods policy



Implementation and Estimated Investment

The urban agriculture activity plan was developed to work across the organization and has the support of division staff and the Board to achieve each identified goal. Strategies to achieve each goal include a set of evaluation measures. The plan implementation team will identify targets for these measures and identify community partners to assist in plan progress. The team will conduct a racial equity impact assessment to examine how different racial and ethnic groups may be affected by this plan goal. This assessment is a vital tool to reduce, eliminate, and prevent racial discrimination and inequities. Estimated investment and funding sources are identified in the table below.

STRATEGY	EVALUATION MEASURE	ESTIMATED INVESTMENT					FUNDING SOURCE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Increase program offerings related to growing, preparing, and preserving healthy foods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual number of food related programs and events Annual program enrollment and community kitchen utilization by geographic area, including RCAPs Equitable spatial distribution of programs and events 	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Operating
Implement the MPRB Healthy Foods policy and seek opportunities to increase the amount of local food served in park environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of healthy food procured from farmers markets Local food procurement standard added to MPRB Recreation Standards and Measurements Manual 	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000			Operating
Award contracts to local food vendors and adopt an organization standard for these requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of local food served at MPRB events Annual number of permits or contracts with local food vendors 		\$ 5,000				Operating

The cost of increased program offerings may be shared or reduced in seeking partnerships with existing public or private organizations that provide urban agriculture education, services, or resources. By shifting some existing program hours to this topic area, the cost of program development and implementation remains within the general operating budget. Opportunities for revenue include increased fee-based program registration, event sponsorship, and permit fees for use of community kitchens.

Outcomes

- Increased awareness and participation in urban ag-related park programs
- Existing and new partners offer innovative programs for all ages
- Residents and park visitors experience a healthy food environment
- Purchasing decisions support the growth of our local food system

GOAL TWO:

Park facility renewal and development fosters urban agriculture activities.

STRATEGIES

- **Add flexible outdoor spaces within park master plans for promotion, sale and distribution of local food.**
- **Explore options for agriculture related improvements when renovating or constructing new public buildings.**
- **Expand organic waste collection and education efforts within all public buildings.**
- **Connect park operations to organic waste recycling to improve the health of park soils.**

The geographic distribution of park facilities throughout the city provides a unique opportunity to connect people to urban agriculture. Within this plan, facilities are primarily defined as community and recreation centers, but may include enclosed pavilions, sports arenas, and shelters open during the warmer months. Public buildings on parkland are public domain meant to serve all residents and visitors; therefore, it is important that park master plans include flexible spaces, both indoor and outdoor, where a variety of community needs are supported.

Residents and park visitors are primarily engaged in growing their own food, buying food or value-added products at farmers markets, going to restaurants serving local food, and composting at home. Individuals surveyed said they plan on pursuing future activities like joining a CSA, raising chickens or bees, or simply growing more of their own food and composting the food waste.

As the popularity of direct purchasing of local food increases, there is growth in demand for outdoor venues to support farmers markets. Outdoor farmers markets need utility access, adequate vendor space, parking, management oversight, and support from nearby residents. When considering this type of use within park master plans, concept designs must address how a flexible outdoor space used to promote sale and distribution of food would also benefit programs and services offered seasonally within the park.

An analysis of community kitchens within recreation centers indicates there is additional capacity for hours of use. Community partners or non-profits are potential groups in need of kitchens to host food related programs. The upgrading of kitchens will expand park program use and community rental, and provide capacity for event food service. Individuals have interest in year round ag-related activities in our climate and propose the addition of greenhouses and indoor farmers markets.

Expansion of organics collection will provide public education and promote environmentally sustainable methods of managing food waste. Working with Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, shared public messaging will provide seamless service and encourage residents to try composting at home.

There are few organic waste processing facilities in the region and an increase in parks collection may assist in future development of a local processing facility. In working with the City of Minneapolis, collection and processing of organic waste into compost can be connected to operations procedures to build soil health. The environmental benefits provided by healthy soils, primarily to aid in storm water management, underscore the park system's contribution to water quality and our urban ecosystem.

Identified risk factors in achieving Goal Two include:

- Priority for capital improvement funds to replace aging park infrastructure
- Consideration of urban agriculture uses and balance of resident priorities when planning new or redeveloping public buildings
- Capacity of local organic waste processing facilities
- Long-term staff investment and training necessary to implement procedures to improve park soil health



Implementation and Estimated Investment

The urban agriculture activity plan was developed to work across the organization and has the support of division staff and the Board for each identified goal. Strategies to achieve each goal include a set of evaluation measures. The plan implementation team will identify targets for these measures and identify community partners to assist in plan progress. The team will conduct a racial equity impact assessment to examine how different racial and ethnic groups may be affected by this plan goal. This assessment is a vital tool to reduce, eliminate, and prevent racial discrimination and inequities. Estimated investment and funding sources are identified in the table below.

STRATEGY	EVALUATION MEASURE	ESTIMATED INVESTMENT					FUNDING SOURCE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Add flexible outdoor spaces within park master plans for promotion, sale and distribution of local food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory current outdoor spaces suitable for this purpose Documented consideration of strategy within master planning process 			\$10,000	\$10,000		Capital
Explore options for agriculture related improvements when renovating or constructing new public buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of project budget spent on design fees by geographic area, including RCAPs 	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	Capital
Expand organic waste collection and education efforts within all public buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual volume of organic waste collection Percent of public buildings providing this service 	\$10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	Operating
Connect park operations to organic waste recycling to improve the health of park soils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual yardage of compost used Annual yardage of wood waste used 		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Operating

For this goal, the design of capital improvements can be sustainably provided over multiple years when considering facility improvements within park master plans or within development of the MPRB Recreation Facilities plan started in 2013. To build park soil health, park operations must have the ability to suspend outdoor programs within high use areas such as athletic fields and event venues. Procedural changes may signal a need for specialized tools or additional staff resources as land management practices are implemented and new ideas are explored by staff in consultation with community members or environmental experts.

Opportunities for revenue include market vendor relationships in which a percentage of sales are allocated to parks, parking fees for event venues, or program or permit fees from increased use.

Outcomes

- Indoor and outdoor improvements to park facilities connect people to urban agriculture activities year round
- Collection of organic waste for composting diverts solid waste from landfills and incinerators, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Park facility improvements that support the growth of a local food economy in racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs)
- Healthy soils prevent stormwater runoff and reduces the use of fertilizers and pesticides

GOAL THREE:

Food available on parkland benefits residents, park visitors and the environment.

STRATEGIES

- **Modify park ordinance to allow for public harvest of food produced within designated edible landscapes.**
- **Designate park spaces for edible landscapes; grow food producing trees, shrubs, and perennials suitable for human consumption.**
- **Develop policy and procedures for establishment of community gardens within neighborhood parks and tax-forfeited property.**

Food grown on parkland can expand access to healthy foods, increase food security, and help develop local resilience to the impacts of climate change. In addition, food grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides is safer for human consumption and promotes sustainable land management practices. In growing food on parkland, human needs must be carefully balanced so our food-centric activities are not at the expense of the insects and birds whose role in pollination and seed distribution keep our urban ecosystem functioning.

Many individuals and groups currently forage or glean food from plants growing on parkland. The MPRB can legitimize this activity by modifying current ordinance to allow foraging within designated edible landscapes. Staff should consider areas of low food security, non-motorized transportation routes, park aesthetics, current programs, and maintenance requirements when proposing edible landscapes. MPRB integrated pest management (IPM) policy and procedure must also be considered so food produced is safe for human consumption.

The MPRB is to seek assistance from community organizations that promote the planting and harvesting of fruit trees. Relationships of this type would teach urban residents about the benefits fruit trees provide and arrange for donation of harvested fruit grown on parkland. This strategy aligns with the MPRB sustainability effort to broaden the strategic application of the urban forest and the City of Minneapolis goal to increase the number of fruit trees planted annually.

Establishing community gardens within neighborhood parks will build community ties, provide education, diversify program opportunities, and make more locally grown food available. Board approval of a policy for establishment of community gardens in neighborhood parks will provide consistent direction in response to public inquiries. This policy must identify the following: park areas eligible, type of community garden permitted, steps for approval, insurance and maintenance requirements, community engagement, public access, funding sources, and design standards.

A community garden must be available to all residents and park visitors and not attempt to privatize community owned property for personal gain. For this reason, plot type gardens for rent will not be considered as a type of community garden permitted within neighborhood parks.

Parks will continue to hold title to tax-forfeited land for community garden use as supported by the MPRB since 2001. Staff will include procedures for the expansion of this program within the new policy for establishment of community gardens.

Potential risk factors for this goal include:

- Lack of desirable tax-forfeited land available for community garden use
- Staff resources and/or volunteer hours necessary to maintain edible landscapes
- Staff resources available to implement policy direction
- Conflicting public opinion regarding community gardens as a neighborhood park amenity
- Community desire for exclusive use of parkland for food production



Implementation and Estimated Investment

The urban agriculture activity plan was developed to work across the organization and has the support of division staff and the Board for each identified goal. Strategies to achieve each goal include a set of evaluation measures. The plan implementation team will identify targets for these measures and identify community partners to assist in plan progress. The team will conduct a racial equity impact assessment to examine how different racial and ethnic groups may be affected by this plan goal. This assessment is a vital tool to reduce, eliminate, and prevent racial discrimination and inequities. Estimated investment and funding sources are identified in the table below.

STRATEGY	EVALUATION MEASURE	ESTIMATED INVESTMENT					FUNDING SOURCE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Modify park ordinance to allow for public harvest of food produced within designated edible landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Commissioner approval 	\$10,000					Operating
Designate park spaces for edible landscapes; grow food producing trees, shrubs, and perennials suitable for human consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer hours maintaining edible landscapes 		\$10,000	\$ 5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Capital
Develop policy and procedures for establishment of community gardens within neighborhood parks and tax-forfeited property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Commissioner approval Acreage of food producing gardens; analyzed by geographic area, including RCAPs 		\$ 5,000				Operating

For this goal, park staff is to develop policy and procedures and support new program or service opportunities related to policy changes. To implement this goal and related strategy, dedicated staff resources and assignment of responsibility in each division of the MPRB is needed to coordinate efforts organization wide. Community members that are actively participating in new initiatives and sharing their volunteer time and expertise with others are also critical to achieving this goal. Opportunities for revenue include administrative fees related to title transfer or grants associated with programs supporting food education or healthy eating initiatives.

Outcomes

- Policy changes allow for increased food producing acreage, contributing to food access and food security for city residents
- Food producing spaces balance human and ecological needs
- Community gardens provide multiple benefits to individuals and community groups



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