Gardening has been part of the fabric of our society since the beginning

Lawrence    Massachusetts
Neighborhood Community Garden Initiative

House Urban Caucus and House Soils Caucus Briefing

July 31, 2013

Community Development Department
Lawrence, Massachusetts 01840
Art McCabe, Manager
One of the poorest cities in New England
78% of population is Latino
Highest number of environmental justice neighborhoods in MA.
Population approximately 76,400
Unemployment rate 18% (*twice the state average*)
Per capita income just $14,753
Abandoned vacant lots with varying levels of contamination
Ideal for Smart Growth- Back to the Future- A planned city

Social Services Dilemma or
Urban Planner’s Dream?
Opportunities

- Density and access to amenities creates opportunities to develop communities that support live/work/play
- These projects have become a vehicle for community organizing
- These efforts are building blocks and part of a much larger plan
- Missing component is high quality of life which will evolve with an engaged constituency of residents
Short Term & Long Term Goals

- Clean up and utilize abandoned space
- Provide space for growing own food
- Provide opportunity for microenterprise (farm stands)
- Increase sense of safety and well-being
- Create opportunities for civic engagement
- Stabilize neighborhoods - Reduce Youth Violence
Site Selection

- < 3000 square feet (too small for redevelopment)
- Located within a floodplain (prohibitive for development)
- Accessible by foot for much of the neighborhood
- A minimum of part-sun exposure / solar orientation
- Conduct an environmental site assessment for contamination – urban fill likely
- Source for water for irrigation
Alleyways

- Vestige of planned community
- No clear owner or incentive to take ownership (by City)
Alleyway and Vacant Lot Cleanups
Construction of Alleyway Garden-Union Mechanic Community Garden
Union Mechanic Alleyway Community Garden
Union Mechanic Alleyway Community Garden
Alleyway Reclaimed-Orchard and Garden Alleyway
Keys to Success

- **KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY - INVOLVE YOUTH**
- **BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND CREATE SHARED OWNERSHIP**
- **ALWAYS: PATIENCE & PERSERVERANCE**
- **HAVE A VISION**

Set long-term goals and break them into manageable parts

Seek opportunity to use the garden for stabilizing neighborhood and bringing neighbors together

Leverage Resources and Cluster Projects
Keys to Success

- **Build partnerships and facilitate stewardship**

  A. EPA, HUD, FDA, DOJ and State funding
  
  B. Private sector funding
  
  A. Not for profit and faith-based partners

Patience and Perseverance
Thank You
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