

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

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Community Development Department

Lawrence, Massachusetts 01840

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Lawrence in Context

- 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



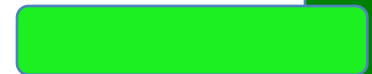
Short Term & Long Term Goals

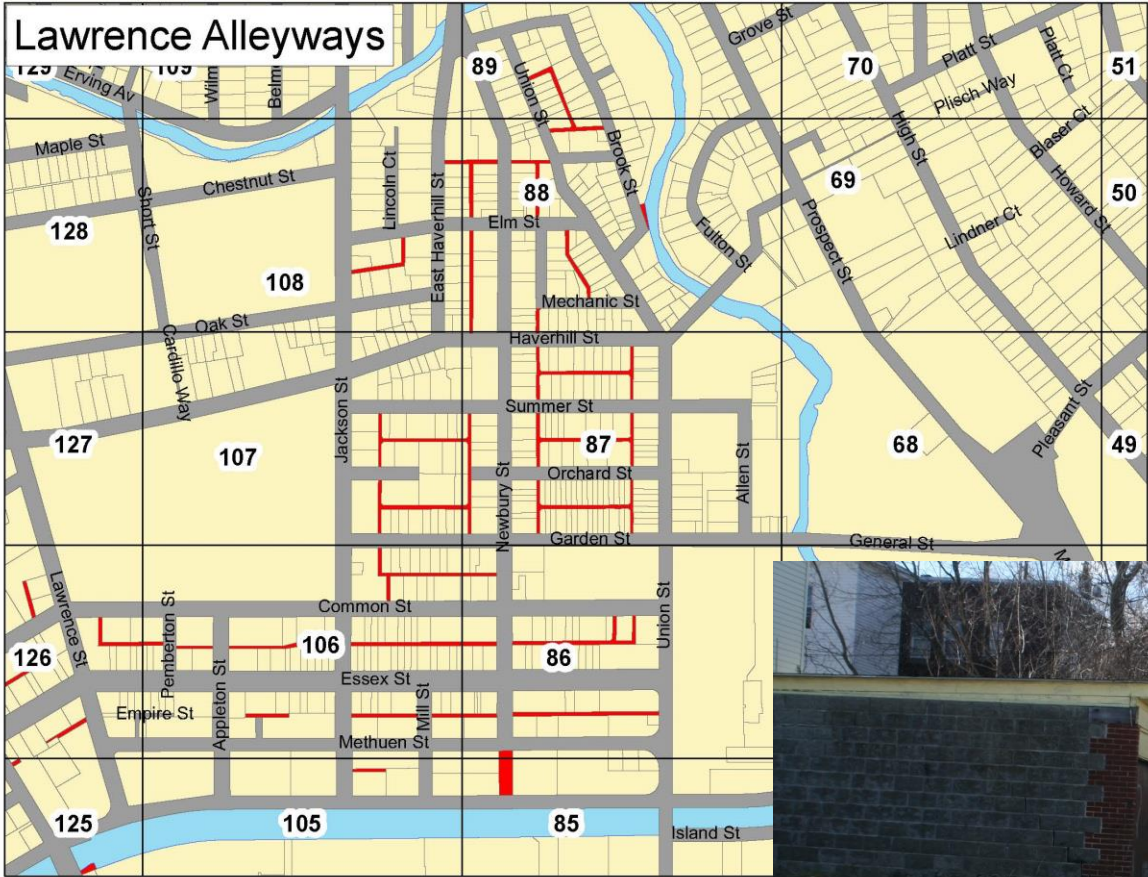
- Clean up and utilize abandoned space
- Provide space for growing own food
- Provide opportunity for microenterprise (farm stands)
- Increase sense of safety and well-being
- Create opportunities for civic engagement
- Stabilize neighborhoods - Reduce Youth Violence



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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