Cultivate NSP
Community Garden Policy Participation Proposal
Prepared for the City of North Saint Paul
December 2013

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Photo Credit UMN Extension http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/yglnews/yglnewsoct12008.html
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Dear community development staff members:

EcoPlan MN is excited at the opportunity to work with the city of North Saint Paul on the engagement process for planning community gardens. The project will be titled “Cultivate NSP” to reflect the cultivation of community gardens and community capacity. Our organization specializes in public outreach and planning efforts specifically tailored to environmental and ecological objectives. The four staff members working on this project each bring a unique perspective from various disciplines within the environmental planning field. We support efforts focusing on bringing local food to the community, active living, and building community capacity. We are confident in our abilities to deliver a successful engagement plan to achieve the City of North Saint Paul's goals.

North Saint Paul already has an impressive number of programs and opportunities within the community for sustainability, improving active living, and accessing healthy foods. The Cowern Elementary Community Garden, Urban Ecology and Environmental Learning Centers, and rain garden ordinance are just some of the highlights of local projects already under way. Community organizations including Green North Saint Paul, Ramsey County Master Gardeners, and the North Saint Paul Food Shelf are a small part of a list of potential project partners we have identified. We hope to harness these community assets and others during the engagement process to help create a successful community garden plan.

Enclosed you will find a description of the general approach for the Cultivate NSP project, followed by overarching themes of the participation process. These broader concepts will culminate in a four-phase work plan that we feel fits the unique character of the North Saint Paul community. Some of the highlights of this exciting process include a garden-to-table meal, question-answer online videos, a Farmer's Market open house, and local fresh food. Using innovative ideas along with proven strategies, we feel that the engagement process will provide a successful base for the garden plan “from the ground up!”

Sincerely,

William Risse
Caroline Miller
Phyllis (Carol) Hejl
Jenna Campbell
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INTRODUCTION

Overarching Planning and Participation Process Goals

The City of North Saint Paul has taken action on several fronts to promote environmental sustainability and active living. The specific goal for this project is to develop an engagement process that informs North Saint Paul’s approach to community gardening (North Saint Paul Dept. of Community Development, Engagement in Planning for Community Gardens RFP). Community gardens are a multi-beneficial endeavor that supports these comprehensive plan goals: (1) to create a more active living community, which includes access to healthy foods and, (2) to become more environmentally sustainable by reducing stormwater runoff and enhancing water quality. The City of North Saint Paul has sprung into action by participating in the GreenStep Cities program, using best practices to meet sustainability goals. In 2012, the City developed a Rainwater Garden Policy Guide with incentives for homeowners in order to reduce runoff and enhance water quality. Additionally, the 2013 Parks Improvement Plan recommended several projects to improve parks quality.

Planning Process Outcomes
The Cultivate NSP community garden projects are an exciting next step for the City of North Saint Paul to meet its sustainability goals and promote active living. The community gardens also provide an opportunity to build more cohesive community. The goals of the community garden planning process are to:

- Create a community gardening policy that promotes active living and community involvement
- Identify potential garden sites throughout the city

Participation Program Goals
EcoPlan has designed the following participation program to engage stakeholders in meeting these planning goals and to maintain stakeholder involvement during long-term implementation. The participation program integrates the City’s overall comprehensive planning goals and the planning process goals as a foundation. From this foundation EcoPlan has developed the following overarching goals for the participation program:

- Generate public support and understanding
- Engage a broad range of stakeholders
- Provide meaningful opportunities for public participation
- Address the public’s concerns
- Continue long-term engagement after implementation
Ecoplan believes in inclusive and innovative methods for designing public participation processes. Our engagement process is derived from an understanding of the community that enables us to provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to learn new information, provide input and feedback, and ultimately play a major role in decision-making. Ecoplan strives to include all members of a community, especially those who are underrepresented. Forming a steering committee comprised of key project stakeholders will serve as the backbone for this process, and will promote further community engagement. The Steering Committee will lead the facilitation of meetings and provide local knowledge to tailor the process to community needs and preferences.

Ecoplan will provide multiple forms of communication and participation opportunities as the project evolves. A variety of participation techniques will ensure meaningful involvement of community members. Ecoplan can meet the needs of a diverse and vibrant community. Ecoplan encourages all participants’ voices to be heard; it is essential that stakeholders see their input has influenced the planning process from beginning to end. All of these elements are essential to building consensus on planning outcomes and in retaining long-term support for adoption and implementation of the City’s community garden policy.

We will use these principles to guide the participation process for Cultivate NSP and build consensus for a community gardening policy and in identifying potential community garden sites in North Saint Paul. Our goal is to generate public support to enable the community to create initiatives, policies, and projects to improve the quality of life in North Saint Paul. This public support will facilitate the development of community gardens, as well as ensure they are accessible, well-maintained, and contribute to the vitality of the City.

Ecoplan’s general approach to the participation process focuses on these principles:
- Community empowerment by drawing on expertise, knowledge, and interest
- Context driven solutions consistent with North Saint Paul’s characteristics
- Long-term focus to maintain a high level of community involvement
- Open communication and continuous opportunities for feedback
EcoPlan has gained a valuable perspective of North Saint Paul through community visits as well as demographic and geographic information available online.

Residents readily point to the North Saint Paul snowman as the welcoming face for the community. The City’s appeal to those looking for a “small town” can be seen in recent housing trends. As Figure 1 depicts, the city is predominantly comprised of single family homes with higher density apartments and townhomes clustered around Highway 36 and County Road 29. North Saint Paul has a population of 11,694 as of 2012. The median household income in the city as of 2011 is $51,862, which increased by just over $1,000 since the year 2000 (Table 2).

Table 1 shows that the majority, just over 90%, of the population is white, with a minority, approximately 2% respectively, of black, Hispanic, and Asian residents in the city. Educational attainment shows that approximately 25% of the population has a bachelor’s degree or higher, with about 5% of the population holding a graduate degree or higher (Table 3).

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8,843</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Saint Paul</td>
<td>$51,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>$56,954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North Saint Paul Snowman. Credit: http://celebratenorthstpaul.blogspot.com/
Figure 1. Housing Type

Housing Type-
North Saint Paul

Data shown was obtained from Metro GIS. The most recent parcel data obtained was from 2009.
We have identified meeting sites that are well known and easily accessible to residents. Meeting locations were chosen based on their size, location, and function. Figure 2 shows public venues including schools, religious institutions, and municipally owned buildings with the potential to hold public forums and events. In addition, we have created a map depicting public lots with the potential for community garden installations (Figure 3). This is a preliminary figure that can be used to educate residents about possible sites. This figure includes municipal properties, school properties, state properties, and religious institutions. Vacant lots are not depicted, but may provide additional garden options for the community. We will rely on local knowledge for identification of vacant lots and other areas not considered on this preliminary figure. The Urban Ecology Center, Environmental Learning Center, and Cowern Community Garden will play important roles in hosting events and fostering a relationship with the public and are marked accordingly in both maps.

![Redeemer Lutheran Church. Credit: Carol Hejl](image)
NORTH ST PAUL BACKGROUND

Figure 3. Public Properties

Public Properties-
North Saint Paul

North High School. Credit Carol Hejl

North High School. Credit Carol Hejl
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Goals and Objectives

This participation process has been designed to build upon previous community initiatives such as the City’s rain garden policy. We will use resident knowledge, expertise, and input to initiate a participation process enable residents to create a community garden policy for North Saint Paul. The participation process will follow four phases to build upon information shared and gathered in each previous phase. The beginning of the process will be broad and then become more focused as the planning process advances.

Participation Process Goals and Objectives
- Generate public support and understanding
- Engage a broad range of stakeholders
- Provide meaningful opportunities for public participation
- Provide information regarding the importance of a healthy diet from locally grown foods
- Address the concerns of the public
- Identify and prioritize community garden project areas
- Formulate strategies for implementation of community gardens
- Continue long-term engagement during implementation

Potential Issues/Challenges
- Limited knowledge of community gardens
- Low Turnout/Participation Fatigue
- Funding Constraints
- Diversity of Participants

How We Will Overcome Challenges
- Education through community events and public meetings
- Steering committee and creative participation techniques
- Available grants and project partnering opportunities
- Provide multiple ways for residents’ voices to be heard through various participation techniques and meetings held at convenient times
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Stakeholder Identification

The City of North Saint Paul has indicated the importance of drawing on the community’s expertise and interest, as well as maintaining a high level of public involvement. EcoPlan will accomplish these goals by identifying key project stakeholders. Upon completion of a detailed preliminary stakeholder analysis, we will reach out to identified stakeholders to ensure potential project contributors are not missed. Reaching out to all potential stakeholders will accomplish the goal of generating public support, and ultimately creating innovative community garden policies.

Cultivate NSP Participants and Partners

North Saint Paul City Staff
City staff including, but not limited to, the Planning Department, Parks & Recreation, and Public Works. City staff will be in charge of managing the community garden initiative. EcoPlan will engage City staff regularly to keep them well informed about meeting topics, the overall work plan and timeline, and any issues that may arise.

Independent School District 622 Faculty
ISD 622 faculty including, but not limited to, the superintendent, teachers from k-12, and lunchroom staff. School faculty have already been involved in the existing community garden implementation in North Minneapolis, and will be instrumental in providing information and garnering support for additional projects. School faculty have the opportunity to reach a large number of people through information passed to students and their parents. Key schools to engage include, but are not limited to: Mounds Park Academy, North Senior High, Transitions Program, Phoenix Academy, North St Paul ESY, 622 Alternative Middle/High, Hill-Murray, Sobriety High North Summit Academy, Fairview Adolescent Program, John Glenn Middle School, Christ Lutheran, Webster, Weaver, Cowern, and Richardson Elementary.

Church representatives
Church representatives serving the City of North Saint Paul will be critical participants for initial engagement and throughout the planning process as they are in contact with a large percentage of the community. Key Churches to engage include, but are not limited to: River of God, Saint Peter’s Catholic, Calvary Worship Center, North Presbyterian Church, Christ Lutheran Church, Community of Christ, and House of Prayer Lutheran Church.

Apartment landlords and tenants
The apartment building owners would be potentially interested in community gardening initiatives to gauge interest in gardening amongst renters, and as a potential way to differentiate and market themselves from other apartment buildings. Apartment renters typically do not have the opportunity to grow their own food, and therefore will be potentially interested about participating in a community gardening initiative.

Students and their parents
Students have the opportunity to learn about not only issues related to community garden, but also about their community and its civic processes. Engaging students in the planning process will gauge the level of student interest in community gardening and will help build support for later project implementation.
**PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

**Stakeholder Identification Continued**

**Assisted Living Facility staff and residents**
Assisted living facility staff would be potentially interested in community gardening initiatives to gauge interest in gardening amongst residents, and as a potential way to gain additional programming and market themselves from other assisted living facilities. Assisted living residents typically do not have the opportunity to grow their own food, and therefore will be potentially interested about participating in a community gardening initiative.

**Athletic Association**
The athletic association is involved in many of the parks within North Saint Paul. They can provide important contacts, and also help advertise for events and initiatives for the gardening program.

**North St Paul Food Shelf staff**
The North Saint Paul Food Shelf received nearly 600 lbs of donated excess produce in 2013 according to the ISD 622 website. The opportunity to give back to their neighbors is one way to engage potential community gardeners in North Saint Paul.

**Permaculture Research Institute Cold Climate**
The Permaculture Research Institute Cold Climate is a local non-profit that strives to help people grow healthy food in their communities in a sustainable way. According to the PRI Cold Climate website, permaculture is “the conscious design and maintenance of productive ecosystems that have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people providing their food...in a sustainable way.” This organization offers many opportunities for education and outreach.

**Ramsey County Master Gardeners**
Ramsey County Master Gardeners use University of MN Extension Research to educate people about gardening to be able to grow their own local, healthy food. Some of their key concepts include: a) Protect public environmental resources by making better choices such as reducing pesticide use, planting rain gardens, and planting community food gardens; b) Increase the quality of life in communities, especially including traditionally underserved audiences.

**Eat Right Minnesota**
The Minnesota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics can provide valuable information regarding the importance of a healthy diet, and the health benefits of specific fruits and vegetables. They have also provided implementation grants for funding community gardens and edible schoolyards.

**University of Minnesota Extension Service**
The University of Minnesota Extension service can provide valuable information regarding the implementation of edible schoolyards. The information not only includes how to plant and maintain a garden, but also educational toolkits geared towards teachers and information for school food service workers. The extension service has also provided implementation grants to fund community gardens and edible schoolyards throughout the state.
**Bachman’s of North Saint Paul**
Bachman’s in North Saint Paul is a garden center that has been around in the Twin Cities Metro for over 100 years. They are a source of gardening information and potentially supply materials for project implementation.

**North Saint Paul Business Association**
The North Saint Paul Business Association meets each month. EcoPlan can take advantage of these meetings and collaborate with the business association to provide local food within the community.

**North Saint Paul Green**
North Saint Paul Green is a group that beautifies the city by planting and maintaining flowers in the downtown gardens and by the Community Center. They provide an opportunity to provide community knowledge and a base of contact to many members in the community.

**Rotary Club of North Saint Paul**
The Rotary Club provides additional contacts to the larger community of North Saint Paul. Using their contacts, EcoPlan can reach a larger portion of the community.

**Potential Cultivate NSP Steering Committee Members:**
- City of North Saint Paul Planning Staff (1)
- City of North Saint Paul Public Works Staff (1)
- City of North Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Staff (1)
- Independent School District 622 Faculty (3-5)
- Independent School District 622 Students (3-5)
- North Saint Paul Church Representatives (3-5)
- Ramsey County Master Gardeners (1)
- North Saint Paul Food Shelf (1)
- North Saint Paul Green (1)
- North Saint Paul Business Association (1)
- North Saint Paul Neighborhood Residents (4)
Participation Techniques

Translators
In order to engage as many residents of North Saint Paul as possible, it is important that everyone is able to communicate. Spanish, Hmong, and American Sign Language translators will be available at each public meeting to ensure everyone’s voice is heard. EcoPlan also hopes to identify respected community members to serve as translators. This provides a more welcoming environment to attendees who struggle with the English language.

Small Group Discussion
Will be implemented to allow participants to all have a chance to voice their opinions, feedback and concerns. This will encourage participants to identify challenges and opportunities of an area and apply strategies for implementation. Small group discussions will involve varying techniques depending on the group and monitoring how the group is interacting. Some of the small group discussion techniques include answering discussion questions, writing goals and strategies on a large sheet of paper on each table, and sharing comments anonymously through iPads or through handwritten comments.

Formal Presentation by Experts
Experts from PRI Cold Climate and Ramsey County Master Gardeners to help with facilitation either as steering committee members or as outsiders. The steering committee and these facilitators will be able to offer immediate feedback on technical questions of feasibility, etc.

Mapping Exercises and Use of Visuals
The Mapping exercise will allow for participants to visually inspect areas of the community for potential community garden locations. They will use a sticker to place their priority locations on the map. Other use of visuals include flow charts of the phases, and goals and strategies on large poster boards. The poster boards will remain on display at the community center throughout the duration of the process. Online tools will also have maps and a survey that incorporates photo responses.

Dual Events
A few events will combine participation with other events such as a farm-to-table dinner, a tour of a community garden, and a farmers market open house. The farm-to-table dinner will allow steering committee members to build relationships in an informal setting and the tour will allow all participants to learn about a community garden in their community while also building on the community garden policy. The farmers market open house will provide an opportunity for community members to not only shop for local produce, but also learn about the draft plan at the same time during Phase IV. This technique hopes to raise attendance, since people will also be able to complete essential errands in one trip. Specific sections of the draft plan will be posted on bulletin boards, and the attendees will be able to discuss the plan and provide written comments.

Photo: Small group discussion.
Credit: http://pacific-edge.info/2012/08/council_structure/
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Participation Techniques Continued

Technology
Ipads will be provided during Phase II and Phase III for community members to provide anonymous comments. These comments will be posted periodically on projector screens surrounding the discussion area to promote further conversation. If no comments are being submitted, steering committee members will post periodic topics of discussion on the screens. Powerpoint presentations will also be used during formal presentations.

Child Care/Youth Engagement
Children will be given the opportunity to participate and learn about the gardening process. Those in charge of child care will help to lead fun garden related activities so parents can be involved without having to worry about childcare.

One-on-One Question/Answer
Residents will be given the opportunity to speak with city staff and steering committee members. Key questions will be recorded, and staff members will later be videotaped answering the questions and posted online.

Door to Door Engagement
Once key stakeholders are identified, we will encourage steering committee members to go door-to-door on their block to speak with their neighbors in person about the project. This is a grassroots personal approach that will give residents ownership of the project from the beginning of the process.

Project Website
A website for the North Saint Paul community gardening initiative will be created to inform, engage, and promote the process and gardening before during and after the project. The website will be created and maintained by EcoPlan during the planning process, and ultimately maintained by the City upon project completion. The website will include:

- map of North Saint Paul for people to rate project locations
- map for participants to show their involvement
- pictures of existing community gardens
- gardening how-to information
- public meeting summaries with pictures
- email contact info for steering committee members
- information how people can get involved
- a recipe section for continued engagement

Ipads will be used during later phases of the participation process.
Credit: AP/Diane Bondareff http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2010/04/03/ipad
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Information Sharing and Promotion

Cultivate NSP Social Media
Information regarding dates, times, and locations of meetings will be posted by EcoPlan a minimum of five business days prior to the meeting. Reminder notifications will be sent out the day of the meeting a minimum of four hours before the start of the meeting. In order to create buzz around community gardens, we will create a hashtag that can be used in twitter and facebook post (see example).

In addition, several key organizations will be asked to write blogs about community gardens. For example, a leader for Cowern Community Garden can write a blog about the success of their garden in the past along with pictures. Any blogs relating to the project will be updated at the discretion of the blog author, but monitored for content by EcoPlan during the planning process, and ultimately by the City of North Saint Paul upon project completion. These blogs will be linked to the webpage and promoted on social media as well.

EcoPlan is also happy to use a service such as google analytics to track page views, site visits, and other vital information to understand who is visiting the site when. Social media will include:

- blog(s) linked to project website created by community garden participants
- Twitter- Regular automated posts through third party website such as hootsuite to promote events and create hype around rain gardens. Link twitter page to regular updates on primary website;
- Facebook- Link facebook and twitter pages to reach a wider audience.
- Make use of a tool such as google analytics to track page visits, clicks, and other useful information to better understand who is visiting the project site.
- City of North Saint Paul website
- Campaign of “What would you grow in your community garden?” This would be posted online and through social media. Participants could take a picture with a sign during meetings or on their own. See Phase I of workplan for photo example.

Example tweet for social media campaign with hashtags
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Information Sharing and Promotion Continued

Newspaper
Press releases and advertisements with information regarding dates, times, and locations of meetings will be printed the weekend prior to public meetings. EcoPlan will prepare graphics and content for the approval of the City. Newspapers will include:
- Pioneer Press
- Star Tribune
- VitaMN

School classrooms
Information regarding dates, times, and locations of meetings be discussed in classrooms k-12 throughout North Saint Paul. EcoPlan will provide relevant information, handouts, and talking points to school faculty. A project booth with project information and staffed by project steering committee members will be set up at school sporting events. Posters with project information and graphics will be provided to schools by EcoPlan with the approval of the City and each school's PTA. Information will include:
- flyers
- announcements in class & at sporting events
- posters in hallways

Project Website
See Participation techniques section for description.

Posters and flyers at local businesses, restaurants, schools, and multi unit housing
Popular local businesses, restaurants and apartment landlords will be asked to hang posters with project information as well as place flyers in a visible location for customers/tenants. Posters and flyers will be provided by EcoPlan. A variety of local businesses will be contacted including but not limited to:
- a. Specialty Floral
- b. 7th Avenue Antique Mall
- c. Lola’s Latte
- d. Neuman’s Bar
- e. Albert’s Salon
- f. Karen’s Salon and Beauty
- g. Ben’s Barber Shop
- h. Bakkenwood Hair Studio
- i. Hometown Creamery
- j. VFW and American Legion

Mailer included in monthly utility bill
Information regarding dates, times, and locations of meetings will be included in all residents’ utility statements. All mailing inserts will be created by EcoPlan and approved by the City. The inserts will include advertisements for public meetings and background information about the project.
PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Documentation and Ongoing Engagement

Documentation of Participation Efforts
Each public meeting will begin with a review of items discussed at any previous meetings. Meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the project website and via social media. All feedback from surveys, questionnaires, and dot-mapping exercises will also be posted online in a summarized format. This information will be used in creating the Community Gardening plan for North Saint Paul. Listening to and considering all input is vital to ensuring the project and program will be a success and viable in the long run.

Ongoing Cultivate NSP Engagement
The community gardening planning process to be implemented by EcoPlan is designed to tap into the existing social capital of North Saint Paul. We will provide the base (soil) for creating a productive process, residents will provide input and participation (seeds), and the ultimate plan and implementation will literally become a flourishing community garden. Relationships will be formed across the community by forming a steering committee and engaging a large and diverse spectrum of people.

Ongoing participation will be encouraged by adding to existing programs such as the community garden tour and the donation program with the North Saint Paul food shelf. We will create blogs and social media regarding the community gardens, create and distribute a North Saint Paul Produce Cookbook, and add educational programming to the City’s schools and school lunch programs.

The steering committee will remain involved on an individual or organizational level to assist with implementation efforts. They will help with the actual planning of gardens and engaging the public throughout the more site specific process.

Kids in Portland, Oregon get a lesson in gardening through a 4-H program. Credit: Clare Redhead
http://www.childrensaidssociety.org/blog/2012/03/15/education-week-article-covers-childrens-aid-community-schools
WORK PLAN

Pre Phase I

Summary
Meeting 1: Contract kickoff Meeting, North Saint Paul City Offices
Meeting 2: Steering Committee Kickoff meeting, Cowern Community Garden
Meeting 3: Steering Committee Meeting, Phase I planning, North Saint Paul Community Center

Contract Kickoff Meeting and Workplan Approval
Prior to beginning the full scale participation program, EcoPlan will first meet with City staff to refine the proposed work plan and integrate any new information or changes from the City about conducting the participation process since the RFP was drafted. Once the City and the consultant are in agreement about the approach to the program, EcoPlan will set up the participation process website, and begin the process of identifying stakeholders and forming a steering committee. They will also decide on the size of the steering committee.

Steering Committee Kickoff Event
EcoPlan will first target the list of identified stakeholders as a starting point for forming a steering committee. This list was gathered from information from City staff as well as through research by EcoPlan. Over a month-long period, EcoPlan will contact potential stakeholders through phone calls, emails, website promotion, and door knocking. EcoPlan will also ask contacts for information about other organizations or groups who have not yet been contacted.

EcoPlan will host a Cultivate NSP Steering Committee kickoff meeting, which will include a tour of the Cowern Community Garden and a farm/garden to table meal to discuss the expectations and goals for the steering committee and their role in the participation process as facilitators. Steering Committee members will be expected to have a long-term commitment to the program either as individuals or organizations. The long-term focus of the Steering Committee is essential for success in implementation. EcoPlan and City staff will develop the agenda for this first meeting.

Kickoff Event Goals
- Providing project information (city goals, past plans, timeline, meeting expectations, roles)
- Providing technical information on community gardens (case studies, rain garden policy, environmental and social benefits)
- Receive input on representation within steering committee
- Goals development
- Long term engagement strategy
- How to respond to challenges in public participation processes
- Facilitation techniques
- Strategies to engage the public in Phase I
Planning Phase I Meeting
After the kickoff event, the steering committee will meet a second time to discuss the Phase I public participation goals and agenda development. The second meeting will focus on:

- Phase I agenda development
- What information to share with public
- How to promote Phase I activities and get people to attend
- School specific and general public
- Specific participation techniques to be used
- Confirm locations of meetings
WORK PLAN

Phase I: Goal Setting and Strategies

Summary
Meeting 1: Webster Elementary School, 2170 East Seventh Ave, North St. Paul
Meeting 2: North High School, 2416 11th Ave E, North St Paul
Meeting 3: designated Church willing to participate
Meeting 4: Garden Tour at Cowern Elementary School, 2131 North Margaret Street

The goals of the Phase I efforts are to share information with stakeholders as well as receive input for how to proceed with the planning process. This initial stage is to understand what the public is interested in relating to community gardens and what tools they need to make decisions to formulate a community gardening policy. EcoPlan wants to provide a significant amount of relevant information from experts and community leaders about the benefits and challenges of community gardens in the City and how it fits into the goals of the City. This stage is the most broad of all Phases and focuses on both informing and gathering input.

Steering Committee Tasks
The steering committee tasks for Phase I are listed in pre-Phase I preparation. However, steering committee members will be present at the first community meeting to provide information, feedback, and guidance during the various meetings and events.

Public Participation Tasks
- Inform public about community gardens and City’s goals to promote active living and increase water infiltration
- Inform public about existing conditions and incentive programs – i.e. Cowern Community Garden
- Provide information about the current rain garden incentive program to further promote stormwater infiltration.
- Gather input from public on what goals they have for community gardens
- Gather input on what strategies should be used to implement projects
- Gather input on if interests are represented in steering committee
- Present example case studies and policies for community gardens in other communities.
- Information to be provided:
  - Previous planning efforts, background on community gardens, benefits of community gardens, challenges of implementation case studies, demographic information about North Saint Paul.
  - General information will be included in a 2-3 page handout that includes the website address where the bulk of information can be found; other information will be provided as part of presentations.

Example of a small group discussion
Credit: http://www.powercube.net/plan-a-workshop/background-planning/
WORK PLAN

Phase I Continued

Participation Format
Prior to Meeting 1, the Steering Committee will engage faculty at the school and determine their interest level for giving a presentation to children about community gardens. Teachers will help with the promotion of this event through class activities. Teachers will be encourage students ask their parents to bring them to a public meeting on community gardens at the school during the same week. Meeting 4 will include a walking tour of the Cowern Community Garden and all meetings will include child oriented activities during Phase I. EcoPlan will present feedback on the goals and strategies that have been provided at the previous meetings. We propose four meetings to be held on various days and times to accommodate for varying schedules. Online GoToMeeting videoconference meeting will be available for those unable to attend public meetings.

Participation Techniques

Presentation
Presentation by experts on background of community gardens by Ramsey County Master Gardeners, PRI Cold Climate representative, North Saint Paul Food Shelf and Cowern Elementary School.

Small Group Discussions
Small group reflection discussions including down goals anonymously and then share them with others so they can be read aloud anonymously. Other techniques include a brainstorm session on the benefits of community gardens, all written on one piece of large paper at each table.

Social Media
Start a “what would you grow?” campaign where people take pictures with a sign that says “I would grow X in my community garden.” This could also be a written exercise without the photo component. Photos will be compiled and shared at subsequent meetings as an ongoing campaign and online.

Children’s Activity
Have child participants draw maps of what their gardens would have in them and why it would be good for the community. Meeting 4 will include a special children’s tour of the garden.

Tour of Cowern Community Garden
Meeting 4 will include a tour of the community garden as part of the engagement process. Tour participants will get their hands dirty and do some work in the garden for a small part of the tour.

Food/Refreshments
Food and refreshments will be provided from locally grown sources and/or local businesses.

Online Survey
The online survey will ask participants for comments on specific goals and objectives drafted by the steering committee. These goals and objectives will be listed, and residents will be asked to rate them on a scale from 10- agree strongly, to 0- disagree strongly. Participants may also formulate their own goals at the end of the section. In addition, pictures of various community garden design appearances will be provided for survey respondents to rate.

Credit Caroline Miller
WORK PLAN

Phase I Continued

Information to be Provided
Previous planning efforts, background on community gardens, benefits of community gardens, challenges of implementation case studies, and demographic information about North Saint Paul will be provided. This general information will be included in a 2-3 page handout that includes the website address where the bulk of information can be found; other information will be provided as part of presentations.

Ongoing Participation

Online Survey
Survey will be for meeting participants and those who cannot attend. See Participation Techniques.

Website and Social Media
People can participate in social media campaign, access previous planning documents, and information about upcoming meetings. Specifically during this phase, participants can take an online survey and provide comments on strategies and goals for community gardening.

Phase I Deliverables
Upon completion of Phase I project stakeholders will have been identified and the steering committee will have all committed members on board. EcoPlan will have critical information regarding current interest in community gardening initiatives in North Saint Paul through meeting notes, small group discussion summaries, online survey feedback, and Steering Committee notes. From this we can further develop our engagement strategies and the types of information to include in future public meetings. The broad based goals and objectives for the project will be identified, and incorporated into the planning document.

“What would you grow?” Social media campaign. Credit Caroline Miller
Phase II: Identifying Project Areas and Refining Strategies

Summary
Meeting 1: North Saint Paul Community Center, 2290 1st St N, St Paul, MN 55109
Meeting 2: Cowern Elementary School, 2131, North Margaret Street, MN 55109
Meeting 3: North High School, 2416 11th Ave E, North St Paul, MN 55109
Meeting 4: Richardson Elementary School, 2615 1st St, North St Paul, MN 55109

The goals of Phase II are to identify specific areas that the community would like to locate gardens, further refine project goals, and begin to identify specific requirements of the community gardens so that they become a cohesive part of the existing communities in North Saint Paul. Various tools and events will be used to achieve these outcomes. This Phase builds upon Phase I participation by responding to findings and tailoring the approach to meet the needs of the public.

Steering Committee Tasks
Following Phase I, the steering committee will meet to develop the conversation for the Phase II participation process. The steering committee will use input from previous meetings to refine goals and strategies for use in Phase II. Using the public input from Phase I, including written feedback from small groups, online comments, and information collected by committee members, the steering committee will be responsible for synthesizing the input into specific project goals. These goals will be presented to the public at the beginning of Phase II and listed on the project website for those who cannot attend or who want to reference the information. Additionally Phase I information will be documented in a 3 to 4 page summary including graphs, tables, and written descriptions so the information is digestible by the public and a meaningful synthesis. These will be incorporated into the techniques listed below. During Phase II meetings, the steering committee will help participants understand maps, select key project areas, and facilitate small group discussions.

Public Participation Tasks
- Refine goals and objectives for the NSP community gardening policy
- Identify priority project areas using map information
- Identify project partners for policy and project implementation
- Refine strategies for implementing garden projects
- Identify policies related to implementing and managing gardens

North St Paul Community Center
Credit: Carol Hejl
WORK PLAN

Phase II Continued

Participation Format
We propose four meetings held throughout North Saint Paul. These will be held on various days and times to accommodate for diverse schedules. We will also set up an online GoToMeeting video-conference meeting for those unable to attend public meetings.

Participation Techniques

Refreshments to be provided - 'Stone Soup' and herb infused water
Stone Soup is a popular folk tale that is popular with children and families. Food brings people together in a way no amount of facilitating can. The inclusion of food in public meetings also provides an incentive for attendance and enables people to attend meetings closer to mealtime. The decision to have stone soup and herb infused water is to highlight produce from community gardens and tie into childrens activities. Promoting both individual and family involvement is essential for the project.

Map/dot exercise to identify potential project areas
Residents will be encouraged to provide feedback spatially through the use of comments on several maps through sticker dots or post-it notes. Participants will rank choices and have the opportunity to note barriers to implementation on the map. Maps will include information regarding: City Owned Vacant Lots, City Parks, Schools, Churches, Assisted Living Facilities, Apartment Building Locations, etc. Maps will be available online on the project website, as well as permanently on display at the North Saint Paul Community Center with post-its for people to provide comments and feedback between meetings. The results of the dot exercise will be posted online on the project website and the project Facebook page.
**WORK PLAN**

**Phase II Continued**

**Participation Techniques Continued**

*Identification of key leaders for garden implementation*

Steering Committee members will be responsible for identifying project leaders during meetings and between meetings. Key leaders may also be steering committee members, but have a long term commitment level. Key leaders will be responsible for garnering site specific project support, project implementation, maintaining site aesthetics, and reaching out to the surrounding community to address any concerns as the garden program progresses.

**Small group discussion**

Will be implemented to allow participants to all have a chance to voice their opinions, feedback, and concerns. This will encourage participants to identify challenges and opportunities of an area and apply strategies for implementation.

**Gardening Experts**

Experts from PRI Cold Climate and Ramsey County Master Gardeners to help with facilitation either as steering committee members or as outsiders. The steering committee and these facilitators will be able to offer immediate feedback on technical questions of feasibility, etc.

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**Story Time and Garden Marker craft project for kids**

The stone soup story is an old folktale promoting cooperation and sharing, and happens to result in delicious soup! The city will provide the ingredients and people to manage the cooking of the soup, but the kids will get to participate in adding ingredients. Children will also be given the opportunity to create a “garden marker,” the small paper inserts that will be used to mark various vegetables within the eventual community gardens. Art supplies will be provided so that kids can be creative. The garden markers will be a way to get kids excited about gardening, create a memorable project keepsake, and provide a markers for their community garden plot. The storytime and craft project will allow people with kids to attend and participate in the meeting without needing to figure out childcare.

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“Stone Soup is an old folk story in which a town of people shares food with hungry strangers to make a big pot of soup. It is usually told as a lesson in cooperation, especially amid scarcity.”

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PRI website
Credit: http://www.pricoldclimate.org/permaculture-principles
WORK PLAN

Phase II Continued

Information to be Provided
- Public input and comments from Phase I meetings (3-4 page synthesis on goals and strategies)
- Maps of North Saint Paul, zoning and land use information, and public properties.
- Future public meetings dates, times, locations, and agendas
- Additional resources available such as grants, educational materials, etc.

Ongoing Participation
- Social Media outreach efforts and announcements. Continue the “What would you grow in your community garden?” campaign.
- The project website will have a map to get feedback on potential community garden locations and allow remote access for those unable to attend meetings. Participants can add to the map with potential project areas and comment on goals and strategies.
- Maps will be permanently displayed at the North Saint Paul Community Center with post-its for people to provide comments and feedback outside of meetings.

Phase II Deliverables
Upon completion of Phase II, specific areas to locate community gardens will be located on maps to include in the planning document and incorporated upon project completion and garden installations. The broad goals from Phase I will be reviewed and refined define the final goals and objectives for the North Saint Paul community gardening initiative. We will identify potential project partners to ensure successful project implementation as well as refine the strategies for implementing the garden projects. We will identify policies related to implementing and managing gardens.
WORK PLAN

Phase III: Presenting the Draft Plan

Summary
Farmers Market Open House 1, North Saint Paul Community Center Parking Lot, 2290 1st St N, St Paul
Meeting 2 at Webster Elementary School, 2170 East Seventh Ave, North St. Paul
Meeting 3 at North High School, 2416 11th Ave E, North St Paul

The primary objective of Phase III is to synthesize information from Phases I and II into a draft plan to be presented to the public for comment. The project goals, selected garden areas, specific garden policy guidelines, as well as implementation requirements will be among the information presented to the public. The Steering Committee and City Staff preparing the plan will create a synthesis flow chart showing the evolution of the process and how the public has influenced the project in a large flow chart. It is essential to make it clear to the public that the plan is still in draft form, and feedback and comments can still create changes to the proposed plan. Various strategies will be used to gain feedback on the plan as described below.

Steering Committee Tasks
The Steering Committee will synthesize all information collected to create a draft plan for the City’s garden policy as well as priority project areas. This will include the goals and strategies, project leaders, garden location, and specific policies for community gardens. The draft plan will outline the feasibility of proposed community garden locations and rank priorities that were heard in Phases I and II. The Steering committee will also facilitate the open houses.

Public Participation Tasks
- Identify key organizations and participants.
- Inform public of information within the plan as well as information on specific project sites.
- Present feasibility analysis including budgetary information, land use, and additional policy information
- Gain feedback on draft plan and make changes where necessary.

Cowern Community Garden
Credit: Carol Hejl
WORK PLAN

Phase III Continued

**Participation Format**
We will organize a farmer’s market open house where information will be provided on the draft plan and community members will be encouraged to attend future meetings. Additionally, Ecoplan proposes two meetings in North Saint Paul, to be held on different days and times to accommodate for varying schedules. We will also set up an online GoToMeeting videoconference meeting for those unable to attend public meetings.

**Meeting 2**
The first formal meeting will be an open house held at Webster Elementary School. North Saint Paul residents are encouraged to ask questions and give feedback on map boards that show the proposed locations of the community gardens, as well as other aspects of the draft plan. iPads will be available for submitting questions and comments anonymously. Healthy fruits and vegetables will be provided by the Steering Committee, and child care will be available. The draft plan will be available online for review and comment prior to the open house meeting.

**Meeting 3**
The third meeting will be held at North High School and will provide a more in-depth means for NSP residents to learn about the draft plan and ask questions. A panel of experts in stormwater management and community gardens will be available for technical questions. Residents are encouraged to direct questions to the panel and interact one-on-one with members of the Steering Committee who can answer additional questions about the draft plan. Local fruits and vegetables will be provided by the Steering Committee, and child care with a fun seed starting activity will be available. The draft plan will be available online for review and comment prior to the open house meeting.

**Farmers Market Open House**
Ecoplan and the Steering Committee will organize a farmers market at the Community Center where the public can shop for local produce while also learning about the draft plan. This is an exciting opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the process and build momentum for the adoption of the plan and implementation.

Farmers Market in Massachusetts with temporary tents set-up. Credit: http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/farmers_markets.htm
Participation Techniques

Farmers Market Open House
The farmers market open house will provide an opportunity for community members to not only go shop for local produce, but also learn about the draft plan at the same time. This technique hopes to increase attendance, since attendees will also be able to complete essential errands in one trip. Specific sections of the draft plan will be posted on bulletin boards, and the public will be able to discuss the plan and also provide written comments.

Technology
iPads will be provided during the second and third meetings for community members to provide anonymous comments. These comments will be posted periodically on projector screens surrounding the discussion area to promote further conversation. If no comments are being submitted, steering committee members will periodically post topics of discussion on the screens.

Gardening Experts
Experts from PRI Cold Climate and Ramsey County Master Gardeners to help with facilitation either as steering committee members or as outsiders. The steering committee and these facilitators will be able to offer immediate feedback on technical questions of feasibility, etc.

Seed Starting Activity/child care
Children will be given the opportunity to plant seeds and learn about gardening. Those in charge of child care will help to lead the activity so that a garden related activity will be provided to both children and adults.

One on One Question-Answer
Residents will be given the opportunity to speak with city staff and steering committee members. Key questions will be recorded, and staff members will later be videotaped answering the questions and posted online.
**WORK PLAN**

**Phase III Continued**

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**Information to be provided**
- Brochures with draft plan summary
- Minutes from Phases I and II meetings available online
- Overview map on large poster board with proposed community garden locations identified
- Individual profiles of proposed community garden locations
- Key goals and policies on large poster boards
- Real-time iPad comments
- Flow chart of each phase with summaries of how the public has influenced the process.

**Ongoing Participation**
- Social Media outreach efforts and announcements. Continue the “What would you grow in your community garden?” campaign.
- Website remains an actively updated place to find a copy of the draft plan and participation to date

**Phase III Deliverables**
Upon completion of Phase III, we will have a draft plan to be presented to the public for comment. The project goals, selected garden areas, specific garden requirements, as well as implementation requirements will be among the information presented to the public.

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[Image: Edgerton Community Garden, Minnesota]
[Credit: http://www.ci.maplewood.mn.us/index.aspx?NID=743]
WORK PLAN

Phase IV: Plan Adoption and Implementation

Summary
The final plan will be presented to the city council for adoption following Phases I, II, and III. However, this does not end the stakeholder engagement process. EcoPlan finds that it is essential to promote the initial implementation of the plan so that it is a success. Furthermore, we recommend steps that should be taken to monitor the continued success of the plan below.

Steering Committee Tasks
As a final step, the steering committee must use the stakeholder input collected in Phase III to select a leading organization for each garden. These organizations will be responsible for maintaining acceptable aesthetics at community garden sites, and reaching out to the surrounding community to address any concerns they may have as the garden program progresses.

The steering committee will work with the designated garden leaders to create a kickoff event at each community garden following plan adoption. Barbecue-style food, which includes a variety of locally grown foods will be provided to promote community turnout. EcoPlan will work with the steering committee and community members to obtain tools that can be used at each kickoff event. EcoPlan will also work with the stakeholders to obtain speakers to play music at the events.

The steering committee will continue to meet at least once every year to assess the success of the garden program. If issues arise, additional meetings may be scheduled accordingly. Garden leaders will be invited to the meetings to gain further perspective on the health of the program. The steering committee will identify community events where the garden leaders can promote community gardens moving forward. Steering committee members are expected to maintain a long term personal or organizational commitment to the projects to retain institutional knowledge and to be the cheerleaders that get new projects implemented.

Public Participation Tasks
This is the community’s time to shine following a successful participation process. One kickoff event will be held at each community garden at the beginning of the growing season. Nearby residents will be notified of the event so as to limit disturbance to their regular schedules. The event will begin in the morning, allowing residents to begin cultivation. Following the tough cultivation job, food, drinks and music will be provided during lunch. Those still learning about the local gardens will be given an opportunity to mingle with others at the events and learn about the garden that will help bring the community closer together. Following lunch, participants will engage in planting the garden for the season. Following this event it will be the garden leader’s responsibility to organize the garden for the remainder of the season. The exact organization process will be determined in Phases II and III.
WORK PLAN

Phase IV Continued

Participation Techniques

- Food, drink, and music to complete the participation process, and begin project implementation.
- Tools and gloves provided for those who cannot bring any - this will promote turnout for all people within the community.
- Promotion through local news, newspaper, monthly mailing, churches, schools, and at other community events.
- Promotion on Garden Website and on City Website.
- Local door knocking to inform residents of the upcoming event and to invite them to come for food on the day of the event.
- Participants can submit fruit/vegetable related recipes to be included in a North Saint Paul Community Garden cookbook.

Information to be provided

- Introduction of community to garden leaders.
- Education on how to garden by such organizations as Metro Blooms, local gardeners, and group leaders.
- Promotional materials to further promote the rain garden and community garden program.

Phase IV Deliverables

Upon completion of Phase IV, we will have a final plan to be presented to the city council for adoption. Upon adoption of the plan, EcoPlan will coordinate a project kickoff event and celebration of the planning process. We will also present strategies for continued community engagement that will keep people involved and excited about the project.

Cowern Community Garden. Credit: Carol Hejl
### Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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| June         | - Payment for the first year of tuition
|               | - Orientation and registration
|               | - Introduction to the academic program
|               | - Academic orientation and introduction
|               | - Classes begin
|               | - Payment of second year of tuition
|               | - Midterm examinations
|               | - Academic orientation and introduction
|               | - Classes begin
|               | - Payment of third year of tuition
|               | - Midterm examinations
|               | - Academic orientation and introduction
|               | - Classes begin
|               | - Payment of fourth year of tuition
|               | - Midterm examinations
|               | - Academic orientation and introduction
|               | - Classes begin
|               | - Payment of final year of tuition
|               | - Final examinations
|               | - Graduation ceremonies
|               | - Graduation ceremonies
|               | - Graduation ceremonies
|               | - Graduation ceremonies