



Providence Garden Plan

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1. Introduction



Year after year, Richmond, Virginia is cited as one of the largest food deserts in the United States.

It is from this critical need for food access and the availability of this land parcel that the Garden of Providence was born.

Northside, Southside and the East End are known for their lack of grocery stores. Financial stresses and the lack of the resources or knowledge to efficiently prepare healthy food further aggravate this issue.

Community gardening is one method of combatting this issue: residents create their own produce, while increasing knowledge and social capital.

In Northside's Providence Park, residents live three miles away from the nearest grocery store, posing significant challenges for those without access to a personal vehicle. But here also lies a city-owned property that is available to become a community garden through the Richmond Grows Gardens program.

2. Existing Conditions

2.1 The Site

Site Location

The address of the site is:
207 E. Ladies Mile Road
Richmond, Virginia 23222
It is located in the Providence Park neighborhood in the Northside Area of Richmond. It is a part of Census Tract 107.

Site Size

The site is 10400 square feet, about 1/5 of the size of a football field.

Site Maintenance

Despite being city property, the site does not appear to have been maintained for at least a few months; there are large branches and trash dispersed along the property. Bemusingly, a for sale sign was lying on the site; a neighbor said that the property had previously been attempted to be sold, though more details were unable to be found.



A dirt road has begun to form due to foot traffic through the site; a resident mentioned heavy foot traffic through the site as a shortcut to get from the neighborhood to the major

road and vice versa. As the site lies adjacent to a resident's home and is in front of a cul de sac and alongside a major road, the City of Richmond is contributing an eyesore to the community.



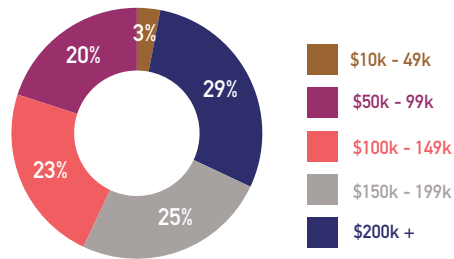
Strangely enough, there is a city-owned parcel across the street from the site that is well-maintained. One resident believed the parcel to be owned by a church, so it is possible that others are voluntarily helping. This is a fenced parcel with a sign saying "Providence Park," but as many individuals in the neighborhood did not know that they lived in Providence Park, it appears that this parcel is largely ignored by those living here.



2.2 Residential Land Use

The majority of the plots near the site are zoned as single family detached homes with the rest zoned for commercial or communal purposes. The neighborhood is made up of homes with great diversity in estimated value.

Estimated Home Values in Neighborhood



In addition to single-family homes, there are a few multi-family apartment buildings in the vicinity. Directly across the street from the site are the Ladies Mile Apartments. Within a five minutes walking distance are both the Delmont Village Apartments and the Fieldcrest Townhouse Complex. This density allows for great potential in community outreach.

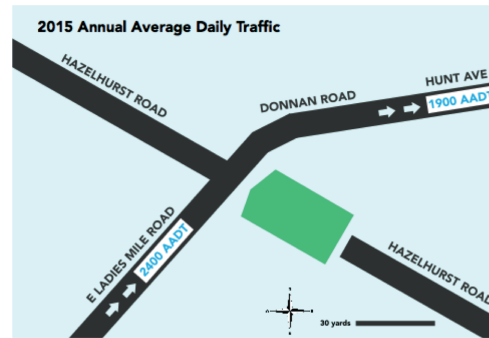
Although most of the single-family-homes have backyards and front yards, no home gardens were observed.

Many of the single-family homes and the Ladies Mile Apartments Building appear rundown and poorly maintained, and there are several abandoned homes. However, both the Delmont Village Apartments and the Fieldcrest Townhouse Complex appear well maintained. A failure to perform physical upkeep of homes suggests that the community may struggle in committing to regular garden maintenance.

Alternatively, the rundown nature of the Providence Park area provides a planning opportunity to enhance the existing sense of place for the community. Green spaces add life to dilapidated neighborhoods while enhancing property values. From a social standpoint, a garden might help to bond residents and foster a sense of pride in the community.

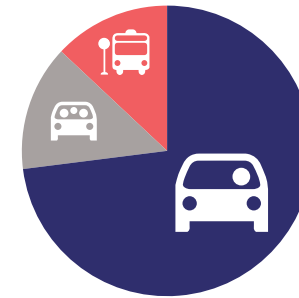


2.3 Traffic Patterns and Transportation



It is important to note that 21.9% of workers in Census Tract 107 have no vehicle available. More than 25% of the workers depend on others or public transportation to get to work. These findings highlight the current need for local jobs that are accessible by non-vehicle owners.

Transportation to Work



Despite being mostly residential, there is a constant stream of vehicle and pedestrian activity immediately by the site, as well as some bicycle activity. The existing transportation infrastructure is entirely vehicle minded- there are very few crosswalks, no bike lanes, and the sidewalks are thin and taper abruptly. While there are many crosswalks by J.E.B Stuart Elementary School, there are no crosswalks by the Boys and Girls Club of Metro Richmond; both of these buildings are in close vicinity of the site.

When asked, a resident said that the reason for high activity was shopping. This may refer to shopping at the local general store, Town Market, or illicit drug purchasing.




There are two bus stops within visual range of the site for Route 32, which carries from Forest Lawn Cemetery to the Transfer Plaza, Downtown Richmond. Due to the popularity of Route 32, these buses come every 20 minutes and every half hour on weekends.

There is little planned transportation infrastructure growth directly pertaining to Providence Park. The 2013 Richmond Strategic Multimodal Transportation Plan has two Northside to Downtown Bike Routes in high priority, however it is unknown how accessible they will be from our site and when the projects will be carried out.

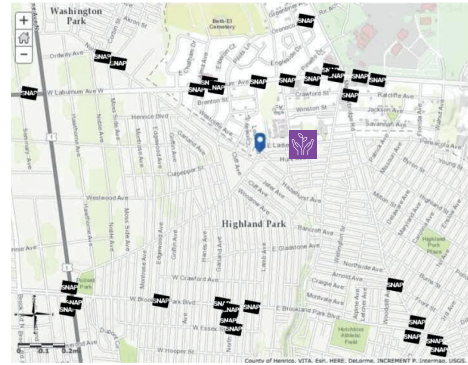
2.4 Food Access



There is a lack of nutritional food access in the Providence Park area. While there is a corner store that stocks grocery provisions such as canned vegetables, butter, eggs, and ramen noodles at decent prices, it does not provide fresh produce and also does not accept SNAP. Additionally, the items cost almost double that of the nearest grocery store, Kroger, 3.4 miles away (45min via two buses).

			
Kroger	\$1.00	\$1.99	\$1.00
Town Market	\$1.89	\$1.99	\$1.79

There are numerous other corner stores that provide similar items and do accept SNAP, however, they do not provide fresh produce.



Family Dollar and Rite Aid are about a fifteen minute walk away, as are the fast food chains McDonald's and Church's Chicken. It is important for communities to have access to fresh foods because it is one of several factors that contribute to better eating habits and positive health outcomes, including decreased risk for obesity and diet-related diseases.

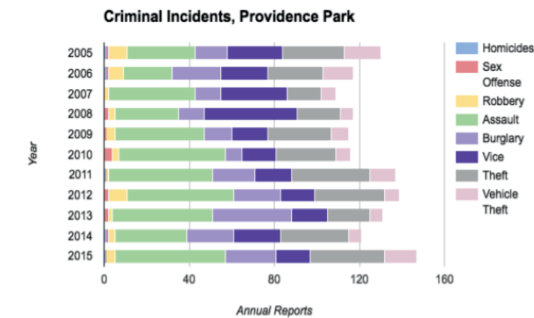
The implication of the food desert are two-fold: first, a community garden would be very beneficial to the health of the community, and second, these community residents may not be accustomed to preparing fresh produce. Providing nutritional food access is a process that takes time and incremental adjustment and familiarity, as cooking with and eating fresh produce should not feel unnatural or burdensome.

“Convenience stores in the neighborhoods of Barton Heights, Highland Park and Providence Park raise concerns due to relatively high incidence of illegal activities carried out in close proximity to them. However, because of a lack of convenient commercial centers in North Richmond, these stores serve a legitimate purpose.”

-The Master Plan of Richmond

2.5 Crime

Five homicides have occurred in the Providence Park neighborhood between 2005-2015, and 2015 brought a spike in assaults. Research has historically shown links between crime and unemployment, which might suggest that an influx of jobs could have a positive effect on reducing the number of violent incidents.



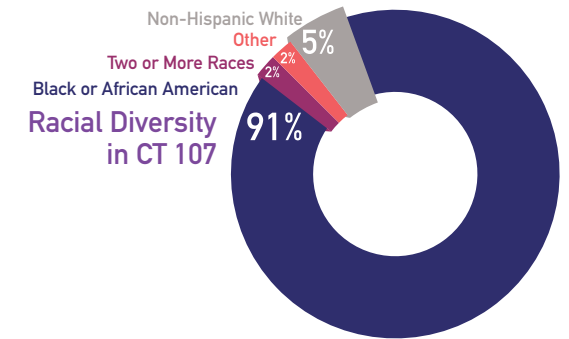
CASE STUDY

The City of Ontario developed a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design program, in which the local government placed urban gardens in otherwise neglected or unsafe neighborhoods. Since 1994, these programs have demonstrated success in reducing the number of reported police incidents.

3. Demographic Conditions

3.1 Population

In 2010, Census Tract 107 had a total of 2,338 residents: slightly over 1% of Richmond's total population. While the City of Richmond anticipates a 5.25% population increase between 2015-2020, the Northside area has seen a population decline of 264% between 2000-2010, so altogether it is estimated that Census Tract 107 currently has around 2,000 residents.



AGE

The current median age for the population in this area is 42 years, significantly older than the city-wide figure of 32 years. However, the percentages of 19 years and under are equal.

SEX

Females account for 54% of the population.

RACE

The population primarily identifies as Black or African American.

3.2 Education

38% of residents in Census Tract 107 list a high school education as their highest form of educational attainment. While only 5% of residents have earned a university degree, 22% of residents cite some college experience.

21% of Richmond residents wield university degrees, quadruple the ratio in Northside.

3.3 Employment

951 residents of Census Tract 107 identify as members of the workforce. The area's unemployment rate of 5% is comparable with the city-wide estimate. Of the residents who are currently employed, half are in white collar professions, and the remainder is largely split between blue collar professions and local government.

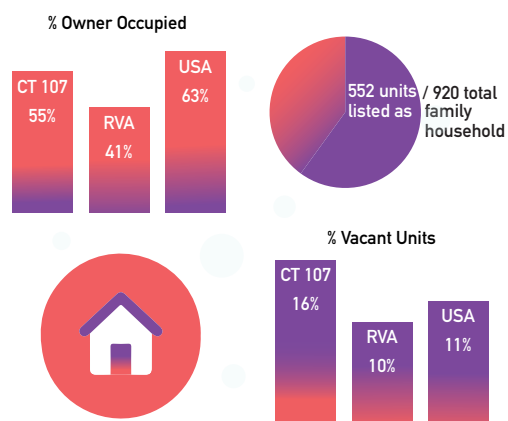
The median household income for the area is \$43,323; this is 10% less than the city-wide median and 33% less than the national.

13% of females and 11% of males in the area live in poverty, which is comparable to city-wide rates. National rates lie under 10%.

Residents on average spend 44% of their total income on housing and transportation costs.

18% of residents in Tract 107 rely on SNAP assistance.

3.4 Housing



The housing situation in Census Tract 107 is quite unique, as there is a high proportion of owner-occupied homes, in addition to a high proportion of vacant units.

25% of the area's residents pay between \$250-\$499 a month for their housing; this is a high volume of affordable housing considering that only 8% of residents pay in the same range city-wide.

Another distinctive trait of the area's housing stock is the volume of "no-cash" units (housing that is renter-occupied without payment of cash rent), which is 11% here compared to the 2% city-wide.

4.

Planning Framework

4.1 Zoning Designation

The existing zoning in this area is R-5, a single-family residential district designated to maintain residentially-oriented uses. Other permitted uses include religious and educational facilities, or recreational facilities operated by the government.

The high residential density of this zone demonstrates a need for fresh produce, considering that the corner store does not offer any.

Establishing a retail zoning ordinance might encourage the development of small businesses, and subsequently enable commercial sale of locally grown produce.

4.2 City Objectives

The lack of food security within the city of Richmond is what motivated Mayor Jones to respond to the needs of impoverished local neighborhoods and establish The Food Policy Task Force, which is comprised of community food advocates representing local government, non-profits, community advocates, and others with interests and expertise in the local food system to reach a shared goal of ensuring all residents understand and have access to healthy foods.

In Moving Richmond Forward: Policy Recommendation for the City of Richmond, the Alliance for Progressive Values (APV) writes:

“Treating urban agriculture as an economic and community development tool will lead to greater diversity in Richmond’s economy, ensure the safety of Richmond’s food sources, and it will also contribute to public health and public safety, among other benefits.”

Recommendations by APV for Mayor Jones include:

- Altering the monthly portable water meter fees, specifically for community gardens and utilizing public facilities to develop orchards and edible landscaping.
- Create support and sustainability for this project by partnering with the U.S. Forestry and merchants like Home Depot and Lowes. Utilize Corporate Social Responsibility resources for donations.
- Incorporate education and family participation in executing Food Policy Task Force plans.

As a whole, the City of Richmond is already well-served by established government assistance programs. In August 2016, 22807 households and 44274 individuals were provided food assistance through SNAP within the City of Richmond. In total, \$5,680,677 in benefits were distributed across the county. The relatively inexpensive nature of urban gardens should be considered when/if planners ultimately seek government funding. Additionally, reduced reliance on these programs should exist as a goal for the City of Richmond. This might be achieved through increased availability of public resources, such as job training, education, or referrals.

5. Additional Considerations

5.1 Social Concerns

There are two critically vulnerable populations in the City of Richmond:

1. Those who lack access to permanent housing

2. Recently incarcerated individuals

Further investigation has shown that those who lack housing in the City of Richmond are predominantly male (88%). 57% identified as African-American, and 34% as white. The average age was reported to be 45 years old. The vast majority of these individuals were currently unemployed (81%), and 71% of the total homeless population reported having been previously incarcerated.

These demographics suggest a strong overlap between three conditions affecting Richmond's most vulnerable residents: unemployment, homelessness, and previous incarceration.

Costs associated with both homelessness and incarceration present a strong need to address issues of unemployment among these individuals. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development cites annual costs of a single homeless individual to be approximately \$40,000 after consideration of emergency room visits, housing shelters, and jail. Meanwhile, recidivism rates show that 57.3% of individuals who are released from state incarceration in Virginia are rearrested within 36 months after release. The annual cost of incarceration for a single individual at Richmond City Jail was last estimated to be \$24,308 based on 2014 data.

5.2 Existing Services

There are no community gardens within walkable distance from Northside. This is in stark contrast to neighborhoods such as the Museum District and Churchill and represents a severe inequality.

At the same time, there are certainly several established community gardens within Richmond that the Providence Garden can harness guidance and support from.

6. Findings

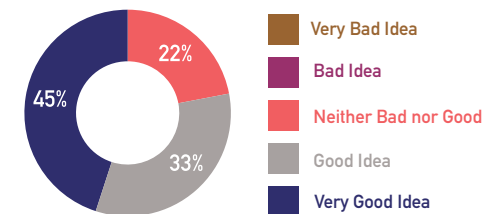
6.1 Resident Outreach

Door-to-door canvassing was utilized to evaluate public support for a local community garden among individuals in the neighborhood.

The vast majority of those polled thought that a community garden in Providence Park was a good idea. However, only half indicated interested in participation.

Respondents supported a community garden design that was either a shared plot system where many people work together and share the harvest, or a food pantry plot where people donate the harvest to those in need.

“How do you feel about the idea of starting a community garden in Providence Park?”



During interviews, all residents demonstrated an interest in improved conditions. Some expressed distrust of others in the community, and the conversation often returned to the topic of safety.

A retired police officer offered his perspective:

Resident: I think it's a terrible idea. [People] just don't care!

Interviewer: Do you think they would vandalize it?

Resident: Yeah.

The resident mentioned the theft of produce from a friend's nearby garden (which is no longer maintained).

Outside of the corner store, an interview was conducted with a middle-aged father:

Resident: [A community garden] would be a great idea. We need something around here, maybe some fountains... I'd let my [ten-year-old] daughter volunteer at the garden.

Interviewer: How would you describe the community here?

Resident: Up and coming!

6.2 Program Outreach

Outreach was conducted towards local community organizations with relevant experience. Contact was primarily made via email and phone.

Organizations contacted:

Non-profit and civic organizations:

First United Presbyterian Church, Providence Park Baptist Church, Boys and Girls Club, Youth Life Foundation of Richmond, Northside Outreach Center, and Northside Family YMCA

Job development programs:

Offender Aid and Restoration, United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia Job Corps, Resource Workforce Center

Existing community gardens:

Roots, Uptown Community Garden, Access in Food, McDonough Community Gardens, Owl Orchard, Stockton Community Garden, Shalom Gardens

There are two churches in close vicinity to the project site: First United Presbyterian Church and Providence Park Baptist Church. While First United Presbyterian Church's members are mostly not local residents, we heard positive feedback from residents about these churches, and this could be a potential site for hosting outreach and engagement events.

The majority of community organizations in Providence Park support children and families. These organizations work within the community, are highly supported by the community, and offer volunteer opportunities for youth.

The column to the right showcases the programs in vicinity that are specifically tailored to workforce development. Of the existing workforce development programs serving the city of Richmond, few offer agriculture or entrepreneurial training.

Virginia Job Corps

3404 Hermitage Rd
Richmond, VA 23227

2.2 mi

Federal program run by the Department of Labor; provides technical training and education to young adults over the age of 16 who qualify as low-income.

Resource Workforce Center

203 East Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23219

3.1 mi

Center offering for-free services related to job-training and referrals.

Opportunity Alliance Reentry

3111 West Clay Street
Richmond, VA 23230

4.0 mi

Federally funded program which provides various reentry services for recently incarcerated individuals, including housing assistance and classes related to job readiness and computer skills.

United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg

2001 Maywill St #201
Richmond, VA 23230

4.2 mi

National organization that addresses a broad range of socioeconomic issues facing the City of Richmond; offers temporary shelter, job training and counseling.

“We would love for our kids to be a part of it, even if in a small way ...our high schoolers could help on up to a weekly basis.”

-Youth Life Foundation

“Many are struggling to pay for everything they need, food included, so participation in community gardening and the ability to access produce could certainly be an asset.”

-Opportunity Alliance Reentry

7. Recommendations

7.1 Vision and Goals



Empower residents through social and economic resources

The Providence Garden should provide community empowerment resources through a long-term relationship with the Providence Park community.

Social and economic resources will be provided through access to fresh produce, gardening experience, and networking opportunities.



Engage the voices of marginalized residents

Access to healthy food and a utilized public space provide further benefits.

Ultimately, the success of Providence Gardens will be measured by its residents. By enhancing the area's livability, the hope is that residents will increase their own stakes in the community and gain a greater sense of place within their neighborhood.



Foster the long-term neighborhood change desired by residents

7.2 Phase 1: Outreach

The outreach phase will center around gathering input and encouraging both community interest and desire so that future engagement can be sensitive to resident sentiments.

A Community Building Committee, comprised of interested residents, should first be established to coordinate outreach events and efforts, as recommended by the Denver Urban Gardens' best practices handbook. An example of one such event is a feedback forum, during which stakeholders and community members gather together and discuss plans so the committee can best serve the desire of residents in Providence Park.

The Community Building Committee would also be in charge of coordinating with public and private stakeholders involved in the garden. Public stakeholders at the local level would include organizations such as the City of Richmond Public Works' Grounds Management division as well as their RVA Green initiative, while the USDA's "The People's Garden" initiative, which partners with local initiatives to start and sustain community combination of grants and technical assistance, would be a potential partner at the federal level.

In terms of private stakeholders, it is recommended that partnerships are broached with local organizations including the Richmond Community Foundation, the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens' Beautiful RVA initiative, the Youth Life Foundation of Richmond, and the Boys and Girls Club of Northside; all of whom list community development as a primary goal of their organization. In addition, it is recommended that the local corner store, which is frequented by neighborhood residents, be approached as a private stakeholder for partnership and involvement in produce distribution.

The figure below shows these stakeholders on a cartesian plane and showcases interest in the garden project and capacity for assistance, or power. Those in the upper left quadrant might provide opportunities for consultation or resources. Those in the upper right quadrant represent key players with both vested interest and influence within the project scope. The bottom right quadrant includes residents, and especially those who might exist within marginalized groups. These stakeholders should be consulted and involved in all project development stages. The quadrant within the bottom left represents low priority stakeholders with reduced interest and influence in the program. Communication should still exist between these groups, and planners should ultimately aim to build interest among them.



7.3 Phase 2: Engagement

During community engagement, program organizers should build upon the relationships formed during outreach.

Phase 2 hopes to:

- Encourage relationships between divisive neighbors by bringing individuals together in a friendly and public environment.
- Promote visibility and use of the space by residents who are not yet involved. Use the space for the gathering of project leaders.
- Provide an accessible forum for other community members to voice concerns or provide feedback related to project development.
- Offer additional opportunities for productive engagement, such as fundraising or clean-up.

Short-term engagement

might include events such as neighborhood barbeques held with the purpose of bringing people together on the project site. Short-term engagement should accomplish a number of goals related to achieving the project's social vision, and build a foundation from which later phases of the project will be built.

Long-term engagement will be centered on education and training programs for adults, youth, and families. These classes can be achieved with minimal resources (beyond local volunteers) and should be offered prior to the development of Providence Garden.

Recommended programming includes:

Food Preparation and Nutrition

These classes will promote healthy eating habits among younger children, and offer cooking classes on how to create easy and nutritious meals using seasonal produce from the garden. Classes might be held at a local church with kitchen facilities, such as Providence Park Baptist, more informally, in a neighborhood home, or outdoors, for simple foods like salad.

Agriculture

Whether for recreation or job skills, all can enjoy agricultural education. Prior to the construction of a local community garden site, these classes might be held at a proxy community garden or alternatively, in a private backyard within the neighborhood.

Entrepreneurship and Business

These courses can support those pursuing traditional employment paths, as well as provide training for those interested in alternative paths and entrepreneurship. These courses ideally will stimulate ideas for making money through the garden. Public libraries and facilities at the local Boys and Girls Club provide a free space with computer access.

In the Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law, Dorcas Gilmore cites entrepreneurship services as:

"a primary path towards racial and economic justice for low-income youth of color."

Providing opportunities which enhance self-reliance is key. Vulnerable populations often lack access to traditional forms of employment, and programming can empower residents to overcome recognized barriers by providing essential public services.

Observed prevalence of illicit drugs in the community indicates the existence of a local underground economy. Black communities are particularly vulnerable to undue effects of mass incarceration, especially as it relates to nonviolent crime. The ACLU has documented racial disparities in which black individuals are 3.7 more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession (though use of marijuana is relatively uniform across race). While these activities are criminalized, it is important to acknowledge the entrepreneurship skills utilized by those who may have previously been involved with the sale of drugs. Formal entrepreneurship courses help to break cycles of disenfranchisement and also build upon existing knowledge of those who may have previously been involved with these alternative business activities.

7.4 Phase 3: Operation and Expansion

The third phase of the project plan will be developed with the key stakeholders gathered in the two prior phases. Operation & Expansion of Providence Garden could include, but is not limited to, any of the following areas:

Pop-Up Style Farm Stand

To meet Providence Park's immediate need for accessible fresh produce, a pop-up style farm stand, which may later be developed into a long-term market, is recommended, though with contingency upon public interest and support.

This flexible strategy would help measure community demand for produce and also serve the community with an opportunity to network with one another. Development of this stand would not be reliant upon the construction of a formal community garden. Alternatively, it is recommended that produce be provided through a partnership with proxy community garden sites.

Based upon other successful case studies within the US, the recommended placement of this stand is within close proximity to neighborhood bus stops. This decision ensures high pedestrian traffic and advertises to those who are reliant on public transportation (and might be disproportionately affected by the area's food desert status). Starting off, the pop-up would stand alone, occurring monthly and increasing in frequency according to residential demand. In the future, this pop-up farm stand could develop into a larger farmers market where neighbors and local businesses get involved in selling produce and handmade goods.

At these markets, the City of Richmond might collaborate with local public health organizations to advertise public cooking demonstration classes that residents could attend free of charge. These demonstrations would provide an additional opportunity for residents to learn how to cook with fresh, local produce. The pop-up market plan is designed to not only address food desert needs, but also to boost the neighborhood economy and create a sense of place for residents through continual community engagement.

F&V Incentives and Assistance

Using fruit and vegetable (F&V) incentives, the City of Richmond should establish a formal city-wide program to encourage access to healthy foods among low-income households.

It is recommended that the City emulate existing programs such as Health Bucks, which was developed by the NYC Health Department in partnership with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). For every \$5 spent at a farmer's market, citizens get 1 Health Buck (two dollars).

Research conducted by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future has shown that these pricing incentives "can increase fruit and vegetable purchasing, benefitting consumers' health and farmers' incomes."

Healthy Corner Store Initiative

Tricycle Gardens is a local nonprofit organization whose mission is to build a healthy local food system by growing and distributing produce to Richmond communities lacking fresh food. The organization is funded by a grant from the state and works with corner stores by providing them with refrigerators to store the fresh produce they supply while also covering the cost of refrigeration. This initiative focuses on community needs, outreach and education, opportunities for healthy food access, and designing of beautiful spaces. Providence Garden could call upon this initiative, or emulate its work.

Local Garden Development

Construction of a local garden site would exist as a secondary expansion component in the final project phase. While previous sections have highlighted the benefits provided by community gardens, premature site development carries a number of risks if absent of strong community support. The creation of a community-driven site vision is central to measuring project success, and as such, the site decision making process should be organized by local leaders within the community. An early project failure of this nature led by outside organizers would likely discourage the community's involvement.

Program Referrals

Project success is based firmly upon the establishment of formal partnerships between local organizations and the City of Richmond. Urban communities present a diverse group of needs, many of which likely fall outside the scope of this project's scale. It is recommended that Providence Garden utilize program referrals for needs which cannot be adequately met by the City of Richmond alone.

The City should consider partnerships with local employers to establish a successful job referral program for those who demonstrate desirable hard skills, or those who possess soft skills evidenced by strong leadership and management in their community.

Additional referrals should be based upon other community needs later identified. These resources might include counseling services for victims of violent crime, ride-sharing services, or food pantry access.

7.5 Other Recommendations

Incremental Planning

Incremental planning relies on a series of smaller changes to achieve long term objectives. This strategy is recommended as it provides the flexibility to adjust project implementation based on changes in community desire or conditions.

Let's consider how an incremental site clean-up would work. This would be a small scale effort occurring prior to the construction and operation of a full scale public garden. As noted in the existing conditions, the site is inadequately maintained by the City of Richmond. Litter is strewn across the site, and the grounds require some landscaping. This form of investment is low-stakes in that it requires only existing resources from the city's grounds management and public works, however, it is still a highly visible change for those who frequent the footpath. Most importantly, successful site clean-up demonstrates that the City is invested in its community. Cumulative effects of these smaller efforts could have a dramatic impact in eventually achieving project vision and goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring project success encourages public accountability and demonstrates commitment to the community served. Biannual reports should be available to the public in order to inform city residents of program progress. It is recommended that these reports be written by employees within the City of Richmond's Green Richmond Initiative, and allow for any additional inclusions desired by the project's Community Building Committee. These reports may include the mean attendance at different programming, public satisfaction with project process, numbers of households served by F&V assistance and incentives, and changes in employment and crime rates.

Data will be gathered from outside organizations, as available. Canvassing can be done to answer metrics which are not actively measured on a biannual basis.

Preliminary Budget and Project Funding

According to the University of California Cooperative Extension's Community Garden Startup Guide, the startup costs for a garden $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ acres will usually fall between \$2,500-\$5,000. This ensures the initial purchase of garden necessities such as soil analysis, 15-20 plots, simple irrigation, fencing, tools and a small tool shed, signage, a picnic table, and composting area. Additional features such as perimeter landscaping, a meeting area, or amenities such as a water fountain would decide the ultimate extent of these initial costs.

Research related to sustainable food projects at California State University San Marcos cites an annual operating budget equivalent to \$45 per plot for a successful community garden in Fresno, a site which is comparable to the Providence Garden site. 15-20 plots would lend to an annual budget of approximately \$675-\$900. The final iteration of the garden's operating budget would be dependent on the feedback gathered from community outreach and engagement efforts.

Close collaboration with the City of Richmond's Office of Budget and Strategic Planning is recommended in order to allocate appropriate funds based upon these initial figures. Additionally, community organizers might pursue funding via grantmaking from foundations, corporate interests, federal agencies such as the USDA's People's Garden program and the Richmond Community Foundation, or crowdsourcing.

8.

Project Alternatives

- **Aesthetic landscaping**
is one potential alternative to project development. Many residents expressed how simply cleaning up the plot of land and creating an appealing area for community leisure would be satisfactory.
- **A recreational site**
such as a basketball court or playground might accomplish a similar vision in enhancing livability within Providence Park. Outreach and engagement should focus upon an improved understanding of alternative community desires.
- **Commercial development**
of the site might also exist as a potential alternative. The operation of a local grocery store could provide considerable benefits- especially given its location in walkable proximity to neighborhood homes. Residents, however, did mention previous community opposition to proposed developments that once included the construction of housing and a paved street within the site.



