

As a Plan Commissioner (and member of the Community Gardens Committee), I want to thank you for including both community gardens and edible landscaping in the current draft of the Park & Open Space Plan for 2012-2017. It's particularly gratifying to see these local food efforts listed as Accomplishments as well as a commitment in the final Recommendations to pursuing further development of these wonderful community assets in our parks. What follows are comments and suggestions that might strengthen the document and educate its readers further on the role of these activities that are growing in importance in our community.

Page 5 Consider including a phrase in the last paragraph of the Mission Statement that expands the realm of cultural interaction to include "supporting community gardens" which are, in most cases, truly wonderful (and daily) opportunities for such interaction among people from many backgrounds. See also the reference on page 39 to the "complex social resources, benefits and behaviors that occur in public spaces as a category to be considered in the Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment in Chapter 5.

The Goals, Objectives and Policies section (pages 5-8) includes a number of elements that are relevant to the growing interest and potential for community gardens and edible landscapes in our city. Goal 1, the second bullet point; Goal 5, the second bullet point; and Goal 6, the third bullet point. These goals shed light on some of those needs in the community that can be difficult to measure (see page 9).

Page 12 Add community gardens and edible landscaping as potential facilities in the appropriate category of Table 3-2. Community gardens are included in the list of possible facilities on the previous page along with dog parks and trails; perhaps an asterisk could be used to note "depending on the size and classification of the park."

Page 24 It's interesting to note that while the Eagle Heights housing community is technically park deficient, the list of amenities available on university land mentions a number of elements that make up for this, including community gardens (and there's edible landscaping, too).

Pages 38-41 It's clear that there was significant public input on both community gardens and edible landscaping as you developed this plan, and it would be helpful to reflect this throughout this section; the Parks Division considers them similar and is currently developing procedures to handle both. Figure 5-1 refers only to edible landscaping; neither term is mentioned in the listing of categories generated by the comments on pages 40-41; Figure 5-2 lists them together. Since "gardening" ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Most Popular Outdoor Recreation Activities shown in Figure 5-2, it would be helpful to track it consistently throughout the plan.

Chapter Six: Community Profile (pages 57-63) highlights changing demographics and more dense infill development as elements that will need to be addressed. We know from our work with gardens that particularly Hispanic and Asian immigrants bring with them a cultural commitment to growing their own food that generates a need for additional space and an opportunity for cultural interaction.

Volunteer Programs and Partnerships (pages 74-75) have great potential for harnessing the energy in our community for gardens and edible landscaping in parks. As we enable volunteers to help with maintenance, we should be enabling them to plant flowers, edible landscapes and community gardens. This essentially volunteer labor should be supported wherever possible – the financial saving to the City is clear, and the human value to the community is immeasurable.

Page 89 The recommendation to build on existing positive relationships should be expanded to actively engage new sources of volunteer energy, e.g. Madison Fruits & Nuts, Community Action Coalition's community gardens programs.

Page 91 The recommendation to pursue development of community gardens and edible landscapes is much appreciated, but the terms and structure/process could be clarified somewhat to educate the general reader. Consider the following revision:

Edible landscaping and community gardens have been noted through the public input process as important assets to the community. Edible landscapes designed for education and food production, available to the community at large and located within City parks, have been managed typically through agreements with local 501(C)3 organizations. Community gardens that have individual plots have been developed in collaboration with, and administered by, the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin. This plan recommends that City staff continue to work with partnering organizations to find additional locations for edible landscapes and community gardens as appropriate in existing parks and in new parks.

Thanks for your efforts in drafting the Park & Open Space Plan for 2012-2017. Having spent a number of years on the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code, I fully appreciate the level of effort that goes into these planning documents. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Nan Fey