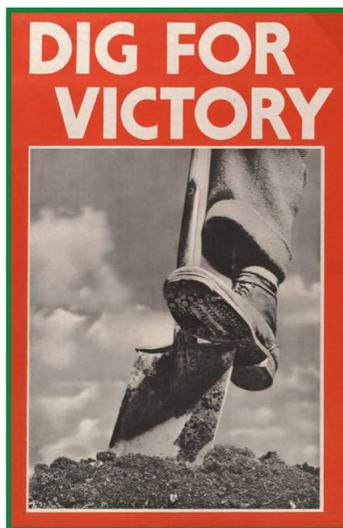


OCTOBER 2011

CITY OF RICHMOND
URBAN AGRICULTURE ASSESSMENT



*Prepared for the City of Richmond by MIG, Inc.
in collaboration with the City of Richmond and PolicyLink,
with contributions from members of the Richmond community,
Contra Costa Health Services, and the University of California, Berkeley*



RICHMOND URBAN AGRICULTURE ASSESSMENT

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The City of Richmond would like to thank all who contributed to the development of this assessment. This collaborative effort represents the contributions of local organizations, members of the Richmond community, City staff, elected officials and many others.

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Local Organizations

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Living Labs

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Richmond Grows
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The Watershed Nursery
Urban Tilth
Wildcat Farmers
West County Healthy Eating Active Living
Collaborative (West County HEAL)
West Contra Costa Unified School District
(WCCUSD)

Elected Officials

Gayle McLaughlin, City of Richmond Mayor
Tom Butt, Richmond City Council Vice Mayor
Nathaniel Bates, Richmond City Council
Jovanka Beckles, Richmond City Council
Courtland "Corky" Booze, Richmond City Council
Jeff Ritterman, M.D., Richmond City Council
Jim Rogers, Richmond City Council
John Gioia, Contra Costa County Supervisor

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RICHMOND URBAN AGRICULTURE ASSESSMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Agricultural History of Richmond	9
3. Existing Initiatives	13
4. Opportunities and Constraints.....	23
5. Illustrations of Urban Agriculture in Richmond	27
6. Promising Practices and Tools	37
7. Next Steps and Conclusion	45

Tables

Table 3-1: Current Activity Types
Table 3-2: City of Richmond Department/Division with Connection to Urban Agriculture
Table 3-3: Current Richmond Zoning with Agriculture Allowed
Table 3-4: Current Richmond Ordinances Related to Animals
Table 7-1: Potential County Partners
Table 7-2: Potential Local/Regional Agency Partners
Table 7-3: Potential National Organization Partners
Table 7-4: Potential Federal Agency Partners
Table 7-5: Potential Local Organization Partners
Table 7-6: Potential City Department Roles

Appendices

A. Needs and Benefits of Urban Agriculture
B. Additional Resources
C. Questionnaire
D. Profiles of Existing Richmond Urban Agriculture Initiatives
E. Assessment Participants
F. Maps

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN THIS SUMMARY...

- History of Richmond Agriculture
- Richmond Urban Agriculture Today
- Assessment Process
- Next Steps
- Conclusion
- Appendices Overview

The Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment is a tool to understand the role of urban agriculture in the City of Richmond: what types of urban agriculture activities exist in the city today; what types of activities might be developed in the future to meet identified needs; and how the food produced through urban agriculture activities fits into the broader system of food production and distribution that shapes how Richmond residents eat.

This assessment is intended to support decision-makers, local organizations and businesses, and community residents as they develop strategies to build new connections between the people who grow fruits and vegetables in Richmond and the people who could consume them. The Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment was identified as an implementing action in the Community Health and Wellness Element of the Richmond General Plan 2030, which aims to improve the social, economic, physical, and environmental determinants of health inequities.

Urban agriculture plays an important role in Richmond's vision for achieving an equitable food system. In this vision, all Richmond residents have access to affordable healthy foods. This vision requires that the relationships between food producers, processors, distributors, and consumers are constantly and positively reinforced through ongoing interaction. Though the products of urban agriculture

constitute only a fraction of Richmond's overall fresh food supply, urban agriculture is nonetheless a vital piece of the overall food system, helping to build the health and resilience of the city and contributing to the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of Richmond's communities.

This assessment begins by presenting a framework of urban agriculture activities already underway in Richmond, and highlights opportunities to expand these activities to support a stronger overall food system. Best efforts were made to identify all ongoing activities; however, given that initiatives may begin or end without notice, the list of active organizations and activities may not be comprehensive. The assessment also identifies many of the challenges facing urban agriculture activities in Richmond and potential strategies for addressing these challenges. Considerations for individual sites such as soil conditions, property ownership, access to water, and other site limitations are not addressed in this analysis and would need to be considered in evaluating potential sites for new urban agriculture activities.

The Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment was developed through a collaboration between the Richmond Urban Agriculture Community Advisory Group (Richmond CAG); PolicyLink; Contra Costa Health Services; University of California, Berkeley; MIG, Inc.; City of Richmond staff; and members of the Richmond community. The Richmond CAG, whose members included local residents and representatives from the local non-profits, private businesses and governmental

agencies, met three times over the course of developing the assessment. The members of this group are identified in Appendix E: Assessment Participants. Funding for the assessment was provided in part by The California Endowment (TCE), a private, statewide health foundation whose mission is to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.

HISTORY OF RICHMOND AGRICULTURE

Urban agriculture is beginning to flourish in Richmond today, thanks in large part to its long and diverse history of urban agriculture.

Agriculture in the city has its earliest roots in the Spanish-Mexican ranchos that were established after the Ohlone settlement of the area. Farms growing fruits, vegetables, hay and grain were established. By the end of the nineteenth century, industry took hold and ferry, port, and railroad networks connected Richmond to markets across the Bay Area.

Beginning in the early 1900s, Richmond hosted a prosperous cut flower industry pioneered by Americans of Japanese descent. This represented a departure from the grain, grape and greens agriculture that typified what was grown in much of Contra Costa and Alameda Counties in the early twentieth century. The cut flower nurseries survived even as many of the Japanese-American families who ran them were forced into internment camps during World War II. A few families were able

to rebuild their businesses after the war, while other nurseries were passed on to other Richmond residents. The cut flower industry reflected the intersection of Richmond's unique climatic conditions and the cultural values and innovation of residents.

During the same period, Richmond was also home to the "world's largest winery," Winehaven at Point Molate, a 35-building complex with a shipment capacity of 500,000 gallons a month. Winehaven was shut down by Prohibition in 1919 and never returned to its previous production levels. The surviving structures remain a reminder of Richmond's production capacity and heritage.

In later years, as Richmond boomed with shipyards and wartime manufacturing, residents organized at home to meet wartime demands for food, establishing "victory gardens" across the city. Household gardens provided land to acquire fruits and vegetables and also reduced transportation costs. Richmond's victory gardens served as recycling areas, work information centers, and festival sites. They also served as a reminder to Americans on the home front of their abilities to support the war effort by eliminating waste.

The legacy of the victory gardens and the industries that preceded them provides context for understanding and appreciating the urban activities underway in Richmond today.

RICHMOND URBAN AGRICULTURE TODAY

In twenty-first century Richmond, urban agriculture can help restore the productive use of brownfields and vacant blighted properties while improving public health, neighborhood environments and social aspects of the community which contribute to overall health. Gardens and the process of growing food in an urban setting can help to link Richmond residents of all ages and cultural backgrounds with one another and to the city's agricultural heritage. The promise for the future of urban agriculture in Richmond is very strong.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In 2011, the City of Richmond undertook a process to build on its long history of agriculture by developing the Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment process to explore current urban agriculture initiatives within the city and examine what types of opportunities and constraints exist today. In addition, the assessment evaluated projects that illustrate urban agriculture practices in place in Richmond today and promising practices from other cities to determine which approaches might have potential for future urban agriculture efforts in Richmond. Finally, based on this work, the assessment outlined suggested next steps to guide the City's work in urban agriculture moving forward. Each step in the assessment process is described below.

The assessment presents a broad range of potential actions and next steps, but does not make recommendations regarding specific priorities, as these may be affected by funding

availability or community need in different areas of the city. Funding to implement suggested actions is also not discussed at length in this assessment. The intent is primarily to provide options for the City to consider when determining how best to support urban agriculture initiatives.

Existing Initiatives

The existing initiatives section of the assessment surveyed individuals and organizations active in urban agriculture across Richmond and in neighboring communities to build a comprehensive list of existing urban agriculture activities. Through a questionnaire, organizations provided information on their locations, activities, funding, and populations served to paint a broad picture of the existing landscape of urban agriculture. The questionnaire also collected information on key barriers facing the organizations to better understand some of the challenges and constraints in Richmond today. Interested individuals were also invited to remain active in the assessment process as it moved forward.

Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

The opportunities and constraints analysis considered the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in Richmond today using stakeholder input, results of a questionnaire for organizations active in urban agriculture in Richmond, and conversations with organizations and individuals active in urban agriculture. Through the analysis, the City learned that issues related to several key topic areas need to be addressed on a regular basis to expand the capacity of urban agriculture

programs and operations in Richmond today.

Key issues include:

- **Communications and coordination:** The ways in which existing and new organizations do and could exchange information, work together, and collaborate;
- **Policy:** The policies and regulations that would create a more supportive environment for urban agriculture activities;
- **Resources and access:** The available funding, support, and other resources for urban agriculture activities in Richmond, and the degree to which these are accessible to organizations and programs; and
- **Education and training:** Opportunities for building awareness and offering educational and training opportunities related to urban agriculture for both residents and organizations.

Illustrations of Urban Agriculture in Richmond

Urban agriculture is an evolving activity, best informed and improved upon by studying current promising efforts. This assessment includes a series of project illustrations to describe the essential elements and considerations for community gardens, school gardens, and home gardens. Given that gardens are the predominant form of urban agriculture in Richmond today, these illustrations considered three distinct garden models with similar planning, implementation and maintenance considerations. The profiles examined Richmond examples that have yielded harvests and other community benefits and have been embraced by community members, including the Richmond

Greenway, Peres Elementary school garden and the Newburn home garden.

Promising Practices

Cities and counties across the country are developing strategies to support urban agriculture through programming and policy. The Promising Practices section includes lessons learned from other U.S. cities including Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Kansas City and Buffalo.

The section also identifies a series of potential tools for supporting expanded urban agriculture activities on public or private lands, including:

- Site and Program Prioritization Criteria;
- Evaluation of Program Proposals;
- Program Selection and Evaluation; Considerations; and,
- Usage Arrangements.

NEXT STEPS

Next steps for expanding urban agriculture in Richmond include a series of actions, including some that can be implemented citywide and others designed to expand urban agriculture activities in Richmond's low-income, higher-need areas. The majority of the actions proposed in this assessment are achievable in the short-term to effect change as soon as possible. However, many will be ongoing initiatives, and still others reflect the need for long-term initiatives that will result in large-scale change to the Richmond food system. Ultimately, it will be critical for the City to enact both short-term actions with small-scale but immediate impact on access to urban agriculture activities and products today and

long-term actions that will lead to large-scale change well into the future.

These actions fall into the following categories:

- **Communications and Coordination:** Providing regular communication and coordination between City of Richmond Departments and Richmond-based organizations will be a strategic asset to the development of successful and vibrant urban agriculture programs in Richmond. Meetings could be held on a quarterly basis to share information on program activities and plans.
- **Policy:** Developing a supportive policy environment for urban agriculture will not only support existing groups and organizations, but may serve to attract and encourage new groups and partnerships to take root in Richmond. Policies should explicitly identify urban agriculture as an activity that the City of Richmond supports and provide supportive language for where and how these types of activities can occur. Policies should also identify urban agriculture as an effective tool for improving overall community health.
- **Resources and Access:** The City of Richmond is an integral partner in the development and expansion of urban agriculture across the city. These actions are potential steps the City can take to strategically direct resources such as land or grant application partnerships to community groups.
- **Education and Training:** Education and training are two of the positive benefits of urban agriculture. As the collective practices and experiences accumulate in the City of Richmond, the opportunities for meaningful

and ongoing information sharing will increase and become more directed.

The identified next steps are outlined below.

Details on each action can be found in Chapter 7: Next Steps and Conclusion.

Communications and Coordination

1. Identify existing and potential partnerships.
2. Designate a lead contact and assisting staff from each relevant department.
3. Support both edible and non-edible urban agriculture.
4. Coordinate with Contra Costa County, Contra Costa Health Services, and other countywide partners.

Policy

1. Develop supportive zoning/ordinance language.
2. Develop specific policies to regulate animal husbandry.
3. Distinguish between commercial and non-commercial urban agriculture in zoning and other regulatory tools.
4. Institute a City lease program.
5. Pursue new locations for farmers' markets that maximize foot traffic, and coordinate with sponsors to market these activities.
6. Create an incentive program to encourage new retail sales locations for fresh fruits and vegetables in areas of Richmond not within a half mile of existing sales locations.
7. Consider a City-sponsored pilot project to explore the potential for cooperative urban farms in Richmond.

Resources and Access

1. Develop an application process for using City-owned land.
2. Make equity a consideration for city resources.
3. Provide discounted water/land lease rates and explore alternative water sources.
4. Expand programs to provide compost to residents at low or no cost.
5. Consider and study additional factors affecting water access in Richmond.
6. Develop a list of books and websites that can support urban agriculture activities in Richmond, and coordinate with the Richmond Public Library to ensure that these books are available to residents.
7. Create a list of local sources of seeds, seedlings, plants, soil amendments, gardening tools, irrigation supplies, and other urban agriculture supplies.

Education and Training

1. Coordinate and support existing food and agriculture-related businesses and new and emergent enterprises.
2. Increase demand for healthy food to meet potential supply through education, communication and outreach.
3. Coordinate with workforce training programs.
4. Promote home gardening through resident education and incentives.
5. Create an annual urban agriculture fair to promote programs and home gardening.

CONCLUSION

This assessment is intended to foster discussion and strategic thinking between the City of Richmond and the variety of energetic and enthusiastic groups working on urban agriculture activities in Richmond today. Through strong coordination and collaboration, these groups can maximize the enthusiasm and energy around this activity to meet shared and individual goals.

The June 2011 West Contra Costa County Urban Agriculture Summit laid a strong groundwork for future work in the city, prompting conversations about how to overcome the challenges facing urban agriculture. As a key next step, the City should work with the Urban Agriculture Community Advisory Group and others to refine strategies to address each of the major constraints identified in this assessment. These strategies should leverage the opportunities identified by assessment participants, and should also explore alternate strategies based on ideas generated at the summit or in place in other cities and communities. Finally, the City should craft a brief action plan identifying the individual, organization, or department responsible for implementing each identified strategy.

The future is bright for urban agriculture in Richmond, with a huge cast of players at the local, regional, state, and national arenas enthusiastic about growing more food in Richmond's neighborhoods. As implementation of the City's new General Plan moves forward, the City has a key opportunity to ensure that the needs of urban agriculture are addressed in every aspect of City

policy and practice, and that the rich resources of the community are leveraged to build on existing successes. Richmond residents envision a future in which the urban food system is local, equitable, and sustainable, and urban agriculture will play a critical role in realizing that vision.

APPENDICES OVERVIEW

The assessment includes a series of substantive appendices that are identified and described below.

A. Needs and Benefits of Urban Agriculture

Appendix A describes the needs and benefits of Urban Agriculture using local and national examples related to:

- Equity benefits: Ways of improving conditions for low-income and high-need communities in Richmond
- Health benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Social benefits
- Economic benefits; and
- Benefits to Richmond's food system

B. Additional Resources

Appendix B identifies a number of additional resources including model leases, urban agriculture ordinance, community garden checklists and community gardens best practices that may be useful to City Staff and community members alike. Resources include home gardening resources, national resources, City- and County-specific resources, and model lease and program applications.

C. Questionnaire

Appendix C includes the questionnaire form that was distributed electronically to participating groups and the questionnaire responses submitted. It also includes profiles of each of the organizations identified through the questionnaire as actively involved in urban agriculture in Richmond.

D. Profiles of Existing Richmond Urban Agriculture Initiatives

Appendix D provides profiles of each of the organizations and initiatives currently active in urban agriculture in Richmond based on results of the questionnaire and additional information provided by City staff, community members, and members of the Richmond CAG.

E. Participants

Appendix E lists the names and affiliations of the nearly 30 people that contributed to this assessment.

F. Maps

Appendix F includes the maps developed for the Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS CHAPTER...

- Urban Agriculture in Richmond
- A Vision for Food Security and Equity in the Richmond General Plan
- About This Assessment
- Methods
- Assessment Organization

Urban agriculture plays an important role in Richmond’s vision for achieving an equitable food system. In this vision, all Richmond residents have access to affordable healthy foods. This vision requires that the relationships between food producers, processors, distributors, and consumers are constantly and positively reinforced through ongoing interaction. Though the products of urban agriculture constitute only a fraction of Richmond’s overall fresh food supply, urban agriculture is nonetheless a vital piece of the overall food system, helping to build the health and resilience of the city, contributing to the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of Richmond communities.

This assessment is intended to describe the landscape of agriculture in Richmond today and to address key issues facing agriculture activities in the future. A key goal is to develop a factual basis for developing an agricultural policy and crafting regulations to support expansion of urban agriculture in the City of Richmond. To achieve this, it is important to understand what urban agriculture is, how agriculture fits into the broader framework of health and wellness in the city, and how agriculture can potentially play a role in the implementation of the City of Richmond’s General Plan 2030. Other factors, including funding availability and specific community needs, may influence

how, when and where the City supports future urban agriculture initiatives, but this assessment is intended to begin this conversation.

Richmond has a rich agricultural history, and today, many Richmond residents are and have been avid gardeners. Private vegetable, herb and flower gardens support a network of nurseries, hardware stores and retailers that sell seeds, tools, agricultural chemicals, fertilizers and gardening publications. Given the growing popularity of urban farming as a community activity and sustainability strategy, new municipal policies should be crafted to support expansion of farming to a community scale and to identify and mitigate any impacts that such an expansion might generate.

This assessment is narrowly focused on urban agriculture and is not intended to serve as a complete community food system assessment, provide extensive primary data on all of the components of the Richmond food system, guarantee funding, or prioritize specific planning efforts. It does, however, lay the groundwork for future work in these areas.

URBAN AGRICULTURE IN RICHMOND

“Urban agriculture” can represent a broad spectrum of activities, including backyard gardens, neighborhood farms, and commercial agricultural operations. For the purposes of this assessment, urban agriculture is defined as the cultivating and processing of food and other related products within an urban setting.¹ As such, urban agriculture includes school gardens,

community gardens, home gardens, community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, farm stands, edible landscaping, nurseries, native plant production and other farming activities such as aquaponics, limited animal husbandry and beekeeping.

Numerous health, environmental, and economic benefits have been associated with urban agriculture activities, including:

1. Increased access to healthy, nutritious foods;
2. Mitigation of the effects of brownfields and vacant lots;
3. Community building and education;
4. Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;
5. Job creation; and,
6. Neighborhood beautification.

A VISION FOR FOOD SECURITY AND EQUITY IN THE RICHMOND GENERAL PLAN 2030

Creating a more equitable food system with a strong role for locally-produced foods and urban agriculture is a key component of the community vision in the Richmond General Plan 2030. The General Plan’s Community Health and Wellness Element (HWE) addresses the relationship between health and the city’s social, economic, and physical environment. A community’s overall health depends on many factors including the environment in which residents live and work. A healthy living environment reduces risks and facilitates healthy lifestyles.

¹As defined by the Richmond Urban Agriculture Community Advisory Group



Above: Diagram of the ten major goal areas in the Community Health and Wellness Element of the Richmond General Plan 2030. Image courtesy of MIG.

The HWE is based on an extensive assessment of spatial, social and economic factors that influence health in the community including:

- Access to Recreation and Open Space
- Access to Healthy Food
- Access to Medical Services
- Access to Public Transit and Active Transportation
- Access to Quality Affordable Housing
- Access to Economic Opportunity
- Completeness of Neighborhoods
- Safe Neighborhoods and Public Spaces
- Environmental Quality
- Green and Sustainable Development and Practices

Development of the Community Health and Wellness Element

The Richmond HWE sets a critical path for improving the physical health and emotional well-being of Richmond residents. The Element identifies healthy living determinants, reviews current conditions in Richmond relative to these healthy determinants, and outlines the policies and implementing actions necessary to improve community health.



Above: Diagram of key activities associated with the initial implementation of the Community Health and Wellness Element of the Richmond General Plan 2030. Image courtesy of PolicyLink.

The Health and Wellness Element:

1. Describes the status of health and wellness in Richmond today, including a review of current conditions relative to healthy living determinants;
2. Highlights key findings and recommendations based on an existing conditions analysis;
3. Defines goals for promoting healthy living for all; and,
4. Reviews the existing regulatory framework of governing bodies and other mechanisms that currently guide planning efforts.

Implementation of the Community Health and Wellness Element

In 2008, the City of Richmond initiated efforts to begin the implementation of the HWE. The central goals of the initial implementation effort included building effective and sustainable systems, relationships, and practices within the City of Richmond and continue moving toward the comprehensive development of healthy communities well into the future. Implementation activities are

focused in four key areas:

1. Community Engagement: Integrated in and across all aspects of the work;
2. Data Collection, Indicators Development and Measurement of Success: Tracking community indicators and monitoring health outcomes;
3. Neighborhood Improvement Strategies: Improving neighborhood environments for health; and,
4. Citywide Policy and Systems Implementation: Operationalizing health policies in city processes.

As part of an effort to effectively launch the implementation of the HWE, the City identified policies and systems, neighborhood improvement, data, and community engagement as strategic priorities. The Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment was among the first policy strategies chosen for development in this initial phase of implementation.

As an implementing action of HWE Goal HW2: Expanded Access to Healthy Food and Nutrition Choices, the Richmond Urban Agricultural Assessment was intended to explore the feasibility of implementing various strategies to expand and sustain local urban agriculture. Some of the strategies suggested in the Element and examined in this assessment include the identification of potential sites that might support urban agriculture, an analysis of the unique needs of urban farm enterprises, the potential of school-based programs to integrate nutrition and gardening, and the promotion of urban agriculture as a civic activity that can improve the quality of urban life. Other strategies, such as the updating of building codes to support rooftop gardening and the creation of job training programs to link Richmond residents to urban food-related businesses, are not addressed in this assessment but remain as opportunities for the City to explore in the future.

ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

This assessment summarizes the state of urban agricultural activities in Richmond in 2011 and provides recommendations for activities and policies that will support its expansion.

Many of the recommended actions and potential activities identified will require the ongoing collaboration and coordination of the identified organizations and the continued fiscal support of foundations and granting agencies at the Federal, State and local levels. Potential partners and funding agencies are identified in

the later chapters of this assessment.

This assessment was developed by MIG, Inc. with guidance and input from PolicyLink and the City of Richmond, in partnership with Contra Costa Health Services, members of the Richmond community, and the University of California, Berkeley. Funding for this assessment was provided in part by The California Endowment (TCE), a private, statewide health foundation whose mission is to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. TCE is also currently funding Healthy Richmond, a ten-year project targeting 14 California communities to improve health systems and address physical, social, and economic issues in order to support healthy living and healthy behavior. Healthy Richmond focuses on the North Richmond, Iron Triangle, Santa Fe, Coronado, and Pullman neighborhoods, where community leaders and others in the city will work to accomplish ten outcomes that address health care, prevention, violence, youth development, the community environment, health gaps for men and boys of color and more.

METHODS

Development of this assessment employed a number of tools including a questionnaire distributed to local organizations to inventory existing urban agriculture activities and future needs and a community outreach process to identify key strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and constraints. An analysis of the opportunities and constraints and a study of successful projects within Richmond and in cities across the country contributed to the proposed strategies and solutions that appear in the final chapter of this assessment. The suggested solutions, tools and next steps are designed to ensure that the City will be able to move forward with developing policies and programs to support urban agriculture activities.

Specific methods were selected to provide both a broad picture of the knowledge and practices already working in Richmond through the experiences of community members and organizations involved in this work and a snapshot of successful projects, practices and policies in other cities facing similar challenges that Richmond might be able to draw upon.

Identifying and Engaging Community Partners

The first step in the assessment process entailed identifying existing stakeholders: organizations and individuals already working in urban agriculture in Richmond. An Urban Agriculture Community Advisory Group (CAG) comprised of organization representatives and individuals involved in or knowledgeable about urban agriculture activities in Richmond was created to advise the Project Team over the course of the assessment process. The CAG played a critical role in the development of this assessment, meeting with the Project Team several times to discuss the goals and progress of the assessment. The City launched the CAG by convening a focus group to review project

materials and the direction of the effort. Most participants represented a group or organization that is currently active in urban agriculture in Richmond today. This community input was critical to the development of this assessment.

Defining the Scope

After convening the initial group of stakeholders, the Project Team worked with the CAG to flesh out the scope of the assessment and clearly identify what each component of the process would involve. On December 15, 2010, a focus group was held to discuss issues related to urban agriculture that should be analyzed in the assessment. The group brainstormed to develop a working definition of urban agriculture and described what urban agriculture looks like in Richmond today. The session also focused on how to strengthen this effort moving forward, including best practices and the successful elements of current programs. Many of the issues discussed during this session informed the development of the online urban agriculture questionnaire, described below.

Gathering Information

Based on input received early in the assessment process, a questionnaire was identified as a valuable method for collecting information from existing groups and organizations about the type of urban agriculture activities they are working on and issues they may face moving forward.

The questionnaire was available online for groups to fill out during the month of February 2011. Individuals or groups that are actively

working on urban agriculture projects in Richmond were contacted by phone and email and encouraged to fill out the questionnaire. In addition, those who received the questionnaire were encouraged to pass the questionnaire on to colleagues working in the field to ensure that as many organizations and individuals involved in urban agriculture in Richmond could participate.

Over 25 organizations responded to the questionnaire, which touched on a variety of topics related to organizational activities, history, needs, funding and target audiences. The results of this questionnaire and the identified themes and opportunities are discussed in Chapter 3: Existing Initiatives section. The completed responses to date comprise a user-friendly database of urban agriculture groups active in Richmond that can be updated on an ongoing basis. The results are included as Appendix C: Questionnaire.

Analyzing Results

Once the Project Team received the questionnaire results and completed preliminary mapping of the community, a comprehensive summary and analysis was conducted to identify which findings warranted further research and exploration. On March 3, 2011, a subgroup of the CAG, a smaller group of individuals who volunteered at the December focus group to work more closely on the assessment, was convened to discuss preliminary questionnaire findings and review an early mapping effort, including identifying the locations of existing and potential community garden locations.

On April 13, 2011 an additional CAG meeting was held to review draft elements of the Urban Agriculture Assessment and provide input and direction on needed changes and additions. The results of this conversation have been integrated into the assessment.

Preparing the Assessment

Based on the findings of each of the steps of the assessment process, a draft document was prepared by MIG for review by the Project Team. The draft Richmond Urban Agriculture Assessment built off of the identified opportunities and constraints to frame goals and potential strategies to support urban agriculture activities in the city. The draft assessment also presented a series of example projects and promising practices that could inform urban agriculture work in Richmond. Based on the input of the team, the assessment was updated and revised for use at the West Contra Costa County Urban Agricultural Summit in June 2011.

Implementing Actions

The assessment identifies a series of recommendations and potential strategies the City and community can pursue. As a first step in launching implementation, many of these strategies and recommendations were discussed at the June 2011 West Contra Costa County Urban Agriculture Summit, hosted by the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County at Sunnyside Organic Seedlings in North Richmond. The summit, held on Saturday, June 4, 2011, was intended to foster the growth of urban agriculture in Richmond

and in West Contra Costa County. The summit brought together government and business leaders, urban farmers, nonprofit organizations, commercial growers, and others. Together, they explored the role of urban agriculture in environmental sustainability, community health, and economic development, and reviewed portions of the assessment findings to highlight opportunities and constraints facing urban agriculture today in Richmond and parts of West County.

Further implementation of this assessment will follow later in 2011 and in the years to come as partnerships are formalized and specific strategies are developed and enacted by the City of Richmond and its partners.

ASSESSMENT ORGANIZATION

This assessment is organized in the following manner. Chapter One introduces the assessment and provides background on its inception, while Chapter Two provides an overview of the history of agriculture in Richmond. Chapter

Three outlines existing urban agriculture activities and organizations in the city. Chapter Four documents identified opportunities and constraints facing the organizations conducting urban agriculture activities today. Illustrations of existing projects in Richmond are presented in Chapter Five, while Chapter Six offers a summary of promising practices in Richmond and other cities and tools identified as part of the assessment process. Finally, Chapter Seven summarizes next steps for the City and presents a range of resources and potential policies that can help guide Richmond urban agriculture moving forward.

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY OF RICHMOND

IN THIS CHAPTER...

- Native American Period (4000 BCE to 1821)
- Spanish Mexican Period (1776 to 1846)
- Early Industry/Early Agriculture (1846 to 1901)
- Industrial Growth (1900 to 1940)
- World War II and the Shipyards (1940 to 1945)
- Post-World War II (1946 to Today)
- The Sustainable, Organic, Local Food Movement Today

Richmond has a long and rich agricultural history that spans centuries. With 32 miles of shoreline and fertile, dark topsoil, the land occupied by Richmond is mostly flat and sits on a relatively shallow water table that is less than 10 feet below the surface in many areas. As a result, agricultural activities are a natural use of the city's expansive plains and coastal areas.

Over time, agricultural activities in Richmond have evolved, reflecting changing needs of the people and demands of the times. While early Richmond agricultural history involved low-impact sea and land use, photographs from the early 1900s document the numerous wells and wind pumps located throughout the city for farming. Today, these farmlands are currently occupied by the city's urban central districts, which are sprinkled with some burgeoning and some long-standing residential and commercial urban agriculture efforts. The more detailed history below outlines key agricultural developments in Richmond by period.

NATIVE AMERICAN PERIOD (4000 BCE TO 1821)

The earliest inhabitants of Richmond were the Ohlone Indians, who settled the area approximately 5,000 years ago. These inhabitants lived a stable and peaceful existence, with a culture based on strong community ties and spiritualism.

The Ohlone subsisted mainly as hunter-gatherers-fisher people that left extensive shell mounds that served as both refuse pits and high ground campsites along the Bay.

SPANISH MEXICAN PERIOD (1776 TO 1846)

The earliest European presence in the area included the Spanish explorers Pedro Fages and Reverend Juan Crespi, who passed through the East Bay in 1772. After Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, large tracts of land in California were granted to military heroes and loyalists. In 1823, Don Francisco Castro was given 17,000 acres of land in present day Contra Costa County, which became known as Rancho San Pablo. The City of Richmond was established on a portion of Castro's land grant about seventy years after his death. Ranches of the time were full service facilities that included orchards and croplands that produced hay, grain, poultry, and cattle products that supported the lifestyle of early Spanish California.

EARLY INDUSTRY/EARLY AGRICULTURE (1846 TO 1901)

During this period, many settlers arrived and appropriated land in the area currently known as Richmond. The population influx generated significant legal conflicts concerning land use that lasted nearly 50 years. In 1895, Augustin S. Macdonald visited Point Richmond and conceived the idea of a transcontinental rail terminal and ferry service to provide a direct route from Richmond to San Francisco. Macdonald presented his idea to the

Santa Fe Railroad and in 1899 the railroad established its western terminus in Point Richmond. In 1901, Santa Fe moved its shops to Richmond and the Standard Oil Company built a refinery. During this period, the area was settled by Italian, Irish and Portuguese immigrants. The Barrett and Stege families operated ranches and farms, part of which remain open space today and are a part of present day Nicholl and Booker T. Anderson Jr. Parks. These groups expanded the city's agricultural base by planting the rich and extensive coastal plains with a variety of fruits, vegetables, hay and grain that were consumed in San Francisco and Oakland. Produce was transported to urban markets by the extensive steam ferry system that operated on the Bay until the mid-1930s.

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH (1900 TO 1940)

When Richmond incorporated as a city in 1905, it had a population of 2,150 and was already an established industrial town. The city charter was adopted in 1909, and by 1910, the town's residents numbered 7,500.

Within a few years, numerous major businesses representing several industries located in Richmond. These included the Winehaven Cooperative Winery, Pullman Palace Car Shops, American Radiator, Standard Sanitary Company, and Stauffer Chemical Company. Town sites began to emerge around these industries, and Rancho San Pablo's vast grain fields were subdivided into uniform city lots.

During this period Japanese immigrants arrived in the area and established an extensive flower growing industry that required the construction of greenhouses. This represented a departure from the grain, grape and greens agriculture that typified what was grown in much of Contra Costa and Alameda Counties in the early twentieth century. The cut flower nurseries survived even as many of the Japanese-American families who ran them were forced into internment camps during World War II. A few families were able to rebuild their businesses after the war, while other nurseries were passed on to other Richmond residents. Many of these facilities continued to operate through the early 1960s. The last of the cut flower nurseries closed in the early 2000s as flowers imported from Latin America increasingly dominated the market.

Construction of shipping port terminals began around this time, as well. By 1907, harbor construction was a priority for the city, and major dredging and terminal construction were authorized by bond issues in 1912 and 1920. Harbor dredging in the 1920s involved the filling of tidelands, which made it possible for the Ford Motor Assembly Plant and the Felice and Perelli Cannery to open their doors in Richmond in 1931.

Though the Prohibition Era forced the closing of Winehaven, Richmond continued to expand. In the 1920s and 1930s, a business and retail center evolved into Richmond's Downtown. By 1940, the city's population had grown to 23,600, up from 2,150 just 35 years earlier.

WORLD WAR II AND THE SHIPYARDS (1940 TO 1945)

During World War II, one of the biggest wartime shipbuilding operations on the West Coast sprang up on Richmond's South Shoreline. The creation of the Kaiser Richmond Shipyards in January 1941 resulted in explosive population growth, bringing a large scale in-migration of workers, a "boomtown" atmosphere, and profound long-term physical, social and economic effects on the city. The shipyards covered much of the vacant industrial and marsh land in the South Shoreline harbor area, requiring extensive additional tideland filling. Richmond's population increased dramatically from 23,600 in 1940 to over 93,700 in 1943, as tens of thousands of new residents, white and black, migrated from the economically depressed rural South and Southwest to work in the shipyards. They brought with them farming skills that further reinforced local agriculture in Richmond, as back yards and vacant lots became "victory gardens" that provided vegetables and fruits for local consumption.

POST-WORLD WAR II (1946 TO TODAY)

The gardening tradition continued in post-war Richmond, as fruit trees and backyard crops supported small nurseries. Today, citrus, apple, plum and peach trees can be found in the side yards and backyards of homes in Richmond's older neighborhoods. Many of these trees were originally planted as edible enhancements during the Arts and Crafts architectural movement that began in the early 1900s. This

movement emphasized local sustainability by introducing “kitchen gardens” to landscape plans for cottages and bungalows located on small lots.

THE SUSTAINABLE, ORGANIC, LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT TODAY

Organic gardening and urban agriculture are again gaining attention today, thanks to a national convergence of popular interests in environmentalism, sustainability, and food justice.

Given Richmond’s outstanding soil, moderate climate, and readily accessible water, it is practical and desirable to leverage these interests to continue and build upon the city’s agricultural tradition. While it is no longer practical to expect urban agriculture in Richmond to deliver surpluses that would compete with the high yield agriculture of the Central Valley, it is possible to take advantage of local conditions to supplement the food supply and support efforts to educate the local population about the potential for creating food sources in urban spaces. Further studies could determine potential farmable area, yield, water demand and environmental impact through mapping, and could highlight opportunities for yard gardens in existing neighborhoods.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

IN THIS CHAPTER...

- Urban Agriculture in Richmond Today
- Community Groups Active in Richmond Urban Agriculture
- Visualizing Urban Agriculture in Richmond
- Zoning and Land Use Review
- Ordinances Pertaining to Urban Agriculture

The following chapter summarizes the urban agriculture activities of community organizations and institutions operating in Richmond today. This chapter includes:

- An overview of urban agriculture in Richmond, including a description of urban agriculture activities currently underway;
- Information on the active community groups working on a variety of urban agriculture programs in Richmond and a summary of which institutions and organizations may be potential City partners;
- Information on City of Richmond departments and how these departments interact with urban agriculture activities, today and possibly in the future;
- Maps depicting where existing activities are located and where potential site current zoning allows these activities to occur; and
- A review of existing land use and zoning controls in place in Richmond and Contra Costa County as they relate to urban agriculture activities.

URBAN AGRICULTURE IN RICHMOND TODAY

There are a variety of groups working on urban agriculture projects in Richmond today that mirror local and national trends towards localizing food production. This assessment is designed to provide a common platform

for understanding current initiatives and how groups can coordinate themselves strategically, with possible assistance from the City of Richmond, to achieve common goals and accomplish their respective missions.

The list that follows describes the urban agriculture work of over 20 organizations that are involved in a variety of programs and projects throughout Richmond. The organizations described are active in many different types of activities, including:

- Promoting and maintaining community gardens at senior centers, parks and underutilized properties that minimize blight and create productive areas for learning and community-building;
- Planting gardens at schools and coordinating curriculum with teachers to promote learning and interaction;
- Collecting food scraps for conversion to compost as part of broader recycling, waste reduction and education programs citywide;
- Growing food for distribution to local food banks;
- Developing edible landscaping in medians and other underutilized properties;
- Providing technical assistance, outreach and education about the “how to’s” of farming and gardening;
- Facilitating and encouraging small local stores to purchase produce for sale from local producers;
- Training future generations of farmers;

- Participating in community development, ecological restoration, healthy living, climate action, and renewable energy initiatives;
- Facilitating and promoting seed-saving; and
- Promoting intercultural and intergenerational sharing through food and agriculture.

Richmond is also home to a number of organizations that are currently active on public land, including Richmond Grows, the Watershed Nursery, and Groundwork Richmond.

Finally, there are a variety of organizations that are not directly involved with gardening projects but have expressed a willingness to provide resources and expertise to coordinate and support these efforts. These groups are uniquely positioned to provide personnel or financial support that may be very useful for leveraging potential resources in the future. Urban agriculture activity types are identified in Table 3-1: Current Activity Types on the following page.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ACTIVE IN RICHMOND URBAN AGRICULTURE

The questionnaire distributed as part of the assessment process reached over 20 organizations active in urban agriculture in and near Richmond. The majority of the organizations are based in Richmond. However, some groups based elsewhere have also expressed interest in assisting Richmond’s urban agriculture projects and participated in the questionnaire. A list of organizations who participated in the questionnaire follows. Findings from the questionnaire appear later in

Table 3-1: Current Activity Types

Activity Type	Activity Description
Community Gardens	Public gardens with individual plots or shared gardening spaces. Community gardens can be located on public or private land.
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	A usually private farming operation that is funded in part by the advance purchase of shares by community members in exchange for the regular delivery of produce.
Farmers Markets	Market where locally produced food is sold for profit. Farmers Markets are often civic events where community members gather to purchase food and socialize.
School Gardens	Gardens located on school property that are often coordinated with curriculum and focused on the educational aspects of gardening rather than strictly food production.
Youth Gardening Programs	Similar to school gardens, youth programs often focus on the educational and developmental aspects of gardening. In addition, youth programs can focus on developing valuable job skills.
Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture	Farming operations dedicated to revenue generation. This includes CSAs.
Hybrid	A combination of one of the above types of programs. Some groups may direct revenues from food sales to fund educational/outreach programming and operational costs.

this chapter in the sections entitled “Challenges Facing Urban Agriculture” and “Constraints and Opportunities.”

The diversity of groups responding to the questionnaire reflects the many resources already available to support urban agriculture activities in the city, and provides insight into where partnerships and alliances can be fostered and what types of activities are successfully operating within the city today. Profiles of each of these organizations appear in Appendix D: Profiles of Existing Richmond Urban Agriculture Initiatives.

Richmond-Based Organizations

Organizations based in Richmond whose activities include urban agriculture work include the following groups:

- Building Blocks for Kids (BBK)
- Living Laboratories Project
- Communities United Restoring Mother Earth (CURME)
- Richmond Grows
- West County Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Collaborative
- Groundwork Richmond
- Richmond Community Foundation
- Urban Tilth
- National Park Service
- WCCUSD Schools
- EcoVillage Farm Learning Center
- The Watershed Nursery
- Annie’s Annuals and Perennials
- Richmond Rivets Transition Town

- Sunnyside Organic Seedlings
- Top Hat Orchids
- Further the Work
- Wildcat Farmers

Urban Agriculture Activities Sponsored by Other Organizations

There are a number of other organizations sponsoring community gardens and other urban agriculture activities in Richmond. A list of these projects also appears in Appendix D: Profiles of Existing Richmond Urban Agriculture Initiatives.

Non-Richmond-Based Organizations

In addition to groups located within the city, several organizations based outside of Richmond have expressed interest in supporting urban agriculture activities in Richmond, and can be a critical resource for existing organizations within the city and for Richmond residents and City staff launching new efforts.

These groups include:

- Biofuel Oasis
- Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust (BALT)
- California Center for Cooperative Development
- Ecology Center
- Alhambra Valley Ranch, Winery and Olive Oil
- Rising Sun Energy Center

City of Richmond Departments Involved in Urban Agriculture Activities

The City of Richmond Planning Division, Parks and Landscaping Division, and City Manager’s Office have ongoing efforts to support urban agriculture. A list of the activities various City of Richmond Departments and Divisions that currently intersect with some aspect of urban agriculture appears on Table 3-2, below. Continuing to foster these programs and

Table 3-2: City of Richmond Department/Division with Connection to Urban Agriculture

Department/Division	Connection to Urban Agriculture
Planning Division	Responsible for long-range planning, zoning and ordinance review. Issues permits. Oversees implementation of the Health and Wellness Element.
Mayor’s Office	Engaged in a variety of special projects and programs. Directly connected to community and community groups through regular communications and activities.
Parks and Landscaping Division	Recently completed Parks Master Plan identifies policies and programs to support urban agriculture, including sections on Local Food and Community Stewardship. Urban Agriculture is also identified in the Five-Year Strategic Business Plan as an action to support Key Objective 4.9: Promote Community Health and Wellness.
Recreation Department	Manages garden programs at various community centers.
Public Works	Provides the Adopt-a-Tree program to the community. Provides mulch to community gardens.
City Manager’s Office Environmental Initiatives/ Health Initiatives Team	Assists with the implementation of the Health and Wellness Element. Organizes community compost giveaways. Collaborating to host Urban Agriculture Summit.

ensuring that City staff remain involved in urban agriculture activities wherever possible is a key to providing continued support for this work.

Potential Partner Institutions

In addition to the organizations already described, a number of other organizations and institutions should be included in future urban agriculture planning and coordination discussions. These organizations include:

- County and area-wide agencies such as the West Contra Costa County Unified School District, Contra Costa Health Services, and the Contra Costa County Farm Bureau;
- Regional agencies such as Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD);
- National organizations such as the Community Food Security Coalition;
- Federal agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and
- Local organizations such as the Watershed Project in Richmond and City Slicker Farms in Oakland.

A full list of suggested partner organizations is included in Chapter 7: Next Steps and Conclusion.

VISUALIZING URBAN AGRICULTURE IN RICHMOND

Two maps were developed to depict where urban agricultural activities are happening now and where they could happen in the future.

These maps were also designed to help City of Richmond staff and community partners better



Above: Richmond residents digging in. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

understand where any gaps may exist in terms of access to urban agriculture. The maps can be found in Appendix F: Maps.

Map 1: Existing Urban Agricultural Activities in Richmond

The “Existing Urban Agricultural Activities in Richmond” map includes the following:

- Existing farmers markets;
- Community gardens;
- School gardens, which exist at each WCCUSD public school in the city; and
- Commercial urban farms and nurseries in Richmond.

Understanding where each of these assets are located and which neighborhoods are served by markets or gardens can help illustrate where gaps in food and garden access may exist so the City can consider directing resources to foster new activities in these areas.



Above: Farmers' markets patrons posing in front of fresh produce for sale in the community. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

Map 2: Potential Urban Agriculture Sites

The "Potential Urban Agriculture Sites" map depicts lands in Richmond that may have the potential to support expanded or new urban agriculture activities at multiple scales. Parcels were considered to have the potential for urban agriculture if they met the following criteria:

- Parcel is zoned to allow gardening uses or more intensive agricultural uses,
- Parcel is not designated as contaminated or toxic site by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or California

Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC); and,

- Parcel is not zoned for heavy industrial use where past or present uses could conflict with gardening activities.

Identified lands include most residentially-zoned parcels in the city, larger parcels of land, park lands owned by the City, and others. Urban agriculture may also be possible on select commercial sites throughout Richmond and these sites are included on the map, but this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis

to determine where urban agriculture uses can coexist with these land uses. Additionally, churches and schools are included on this map because these institutions are recognized as potential urban agriculture partners. This map can help the City or other partners identify which neighborhoods can most benefit from targeted education and outreach efforts around urban agriculture and home gardens.

Limitations of the Maps

While the maps provide a broad overview of the existing and potential future sites for urban agriculture in Richmond, they also have a number of limitations. Specifically, these maps do not include healthy food outlets other than gardens and farmers' markets, and consequently do not provide a comprehensive geospatial analysis of access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, the maps do not include information about the locations of social services, WIC vendors, food pantries, or other sources of healthy food for residents. To fully examine equity issues as they relate to food access, it is critical to consider these factors in conjunction with access to community gardens and other urban agriculture activities; access to transportation; neighborhood income; and the racial and ethnic makeup of neighborhoods.

Maps developed for the Health and Wellness Element of the Richmond General Plan 2030 do document access to grocery stores and other healthy food vendors, as well as the prominence of unhealthy food outlets in various

parts of Richmond. These maps complement the urban agriculture maps to help provide an understanding of the larger Richmond food system.

Future Mapping Opportunities

A number of future mapping initiatives could build on the maps developed for this assessment and for the Richmond General Plan 2030. These maps might include an analysis of brownfields within the City and their potential for urban agriculture use or impact on nearby urban agriculture activities; a full food systems assessment using geospatial data; an examination of equity issues related to urban agriculture access; or other assessments.

ZONING AND LAND USE REVIEW

Historically, many cities, including Richmond, restricted agricultural uses near residential uses through zoning². This was done to minimize potential nuisances related to noise, dirt, odors and animal waste smells. These restrictions remain an obstacle for groups looking to begin farming in cities. As the urban agriculture movement progresses, modern methods must be employed to mitigate these traditional impacts. High density neighborhoods pose significant challenges to the re-introduction of farm animals. Insect, pest, rodent and waste management will continue to require regulation aimed at protecting public health while promoting sustainable urban farming practices.

²Zoning is the classification system used by cities to manage land uses and activities; it endeavors to separate incompatible uses and minimize conflicts between neighbors.

Richmond’s existing city ordinances and land use descriptions are not generally reflective of current urban agriculture activities. The ordinances have not been reviewed for some time and do not reflect modern restrictions on water use, sewer impacts, or insect and plant borne diseases.

The 1997 Zoning Ordinance defines agricultural production and services as an establishment engaged in any of the following activities:

- Keeping, grazing, feeding of livestock;

- Sale of livestock or livestock products;
- Production of crops, plants, vines, and trees (excluding forestry operations); and,
- Performance of crop, veterinary, landscape, and horticultural services.

Table 3-3 below summarizes the specific agriculture activities that are currently either permitted or conditionally permitted in Richmond’s various residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and open space zoning districts. These areas are also shown on Map 2, Potential Urban Agriculture Sites. Based on

Table 3-3: Current Richmond Zoning Districts where Agriculture Uses Are Allowed

Zoning District	Permitted Use	Conditionally Permitted
SFR-1: Single-Family Rural Residential District	Landscape and horticultural services	General farms (primarily crops)
SFR-2: Single-Family Very Low Density Residential District	None	Landscape and horticultural services; General farms (primarily crops)
SFR-3: Single-Family Low Density Residential District	None	Landscape and horticultural services (including existing nurseries)
MFR-1: Multi-Family Residential District	None	Landscape and horticultural services
C-2: General Commercial District	Landscape and horticultural services	None
C-3: Regional Commercial District	Landscape and horticultural services	None
C-C: Coastline Commercial District	Commercial fishing; Fish hatcheries and preserves	None
M-2: Light Industrial District	Commercial nurseries	None
M-3: Heavy Industrial District	Commercial nurseries	None
EA: Exclusive Agricultural District	General farming (primarily crops); Landscaping and horticultural services; Veterinary services; Livestock	Animal services; Animal specialties; Commercial agriculture; Commercial fishing; Fish hatcheries and preserves
CRR: Community and Regional Recreational District	None	Fish hatcheries and preserves; General farming (primarily crops), Landscape and horticultural services; Veterinary services; Animal services; Animal specialties

Table 3-4: Current Richmond Ordinances Addressing Urban Agriculture-related Activities

Ordinance	Issue Addressed
9.24.010	Premises confining animals and fowl to be maintained in neat and sanitary condition.
9.24.020	Barns and stables—Bins for manure; distance from dwellings.
9.24.090	Permit required for keeping of bees
9.50.090	Nuisances: Weeds and vegetation
9.52.090	Prohibited noises: Animals

zoning alone, Richmond appears to have a significant amount of land that can be cultivated. However, most undeveloped land located in the city is privately held and its ultimate use is determined by individual property owners, subject to zoning classification.

Activities that are not designated explicitly as permitted in the City of Richmond Municipal Code may be prohibited or otherwise regulated. This includes a number of activities related to the processing, distribution and sale of agricultural products, as there is no specific reference to them. Many of these activities include small business and food-handling health related components that should be addressed during policy updates. Models for potential language that would describe urban agriculture activities and related conditions are included in Chapter 7: Next Steps and Conclusion.

ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO URBAN AGRICULTURE

In addition to zoning, the Richmond Municipal Code addresses urban agriculture-related activities through various ordinances. These ordinances are identified in Table 3-4 above. Understanding how these codes affect the success of urban agriculture activities

in Richmond can help City staff propose revisions to remove constraints or develop new regulations to address concerns specific to urban agriculture activities.

Animal Husbandry

The Richmond Municipal Code indicates that there is no prohibition for keeping any animals as long as they do not cause a nuisance (RMC 9.24.010 and 9.24.020). Therefore, it is possible to raise goats, sheep and chickens as long as they do not create a nuisance. Given current and future population growth and the prevalence of home owners' associations in newer neighborhoods, clarifying language should be crafted related to animal husbandry for commercial or home purposes.

Bee Keeping

According to the Richmond Municipal Code, a permit is required to keep bees and they cannot become a "nuisance." This means that, although residents must seek a permit before beginning to keep bees, they are largely protected against neighbor concerns about bees, provided hives are properly maintained.

Management of Landscaped Areas

The weed abatement ordinance (RMC 9.50.090(b)) covers the appearance of



Above: An Urban Tilth garden. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

landscaped property throughout Richmond, and defines a nuisance as existing on “property on which weeds exist outside of a managed landscape or garden area where such plants are purposefully cultivated, propagated, and controlled; or where weeds or other vegetation pose a risk of harm to the public, or constitute visual blight, or reduce the aesthetic appearance of the neighborhood, or are offensive to the sense, or are detrimental to the use and enjoyment of nearby properties, or which reduce nearby property values.” This relates to the visual appearance of a property and indicates that the vegetation of any urban farm or garden needs to be managed and maintained so that it does not pose a risk of harm to the public.

Contra Costa County Ordinances

Contra Costa County has a variety of ongoing, established agricultural activities with a number of pertinent ordinances. In 2007, Ordinance 2007-23 was approved unanimously by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. The ordinance established size and location standards, sales restrictions, and other regulations governing grower stands, farm stands and farm markets in agricultural zoning districts. Since most of the unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County are rural rather than urban, traditional farming standards may be more easily applied.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

IN THIS CHAPTER...

- Challenges Facing Urban Agriculture
- Key Opportunities

The following chapter provides a summary of the opportunities, challenges, and other concerns identified during the assessment process that affect current and future urban agriculture activities within Richmond. Many of these concerns surfaced during the analysis of existing initiatives, particularly through the questionnaire completed by organizations and individuals active in urban agriculture in Richmond today. Others arose through the policy and zoning analysis, which highlighted some gaps in current City policies and codes. These opportunities and constraints helped guide the selection of successful Richmond projects to profile in Chapter 5: Illustrations of Urban Agriculture in Richmond and promising practices to explore in Chapter 6: Promising Practices and Tools. In addition, the identified opportunities and constraints helped to inform the suggested strategies, programs, and policy changes found in Chapter 7: Next Steps and Conclusion.

CHALLENGES FACING URBAN AGRICULTURE

A variety of challenges facing urban agriculture projects in Richmond came to light through the questionnaire and during the CAG meetings. Participants also affirmed that access to funds and land were major barriers to program expansion. While the City of Richmond may not be able to support organizations financially, there is a significant value that the City can provide by serving in an advisory/



Above: Richmond crops in a school garden. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

coordinating role to bring urban agriculture groups together and to facilitate permit approvals, and other key steps in initiating and maintaining urban agriculture activities. As discussed earlier, there are many related benefits and objectives that these activities can help to achieve.

Other opportunities and constraints that were identified can be categorized into the following broad categories:

- Communications and Coordination
- Policy
- Resources and Access; and
- Education and Training

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Collaboration between programs serving the unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County and the City of Richmond can be improved with increased coordination and communication. Other challenges such as a lack of resources, land, water supply, and community concerns about urban agriculture activities will require more complex solutions. Key opportunities were also identified by participants in the questionnaire. Implementation of some would require city and county participation, while other opportunities can be explored by interested groups working with the school district, EBMUD and private funding sources.

Communications and Coordination

Many of the identified opportunities and constraints involved communication and coordination between different organizations working in urban agriculture and between these groups and City staff. Suggested strategies to foster new and improved partnerships and information sharing. These include:

- Leveraging the potential of existing partnerships to attract funding and establish a coordinated strategy for supporting urban agriculture in Richmond.
- Developing working groups dedicated to specific urban agriculture topic areas (e.g., Community Gardens, Farmers Markets, School Gardens, CSAs, etc.) to explore these areas in greater depth as needed to make policy recommendations or develop programs.
- Coordinating with organizations working in

urban agriculture activities around key topics and projects such as organizing to receive lower agricultural utility rates for Richmond farmers and gardeners.

- Developing branding and framing concepts for Richmond urban agriculture. Community gardens could be united under a common brand. Similarly, the wide array of activities can be framed and discussed as a modest economic development strategy for the City of Richmond.
- Increasing coordination with Contra Costa County, especially the unincorporated areas near Richmond.
- Coordinating with faith-based groups that can provide management and oversight assistance to gardening projects. The Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO) has been identified as a potential partner in this effort.
- Providing local organizations with information on food donation regulations and restrictions. Some organizations shared that potential food donations are turned away. This effort could be coordinated with the Bay Area Rescue Mission and GRIP Souper Kitchen. Personnel from City Slicker Farms in Oakland may be able to provide information in this arena.
- Improving communication and coordination about recycling and other resource sharing activities. Urban Tilth and other groups shared that they make use of a significant amount of cardboard and could use access to cardboard that companies in Richmond are recycling/disposing of in large amounts. The City of Richmond may be able to

provide communications and outreach assistance to local groups to strategize about waste stream reduction, recycling and reuse strategies/partnerships with urban agriculture groups.

- Developing a farmers' market strategy to address potential farmers' market locations and how to attract and retain vendors. Markets need to be located where people are already present and ready to spend money. Suggestions included the Target parking lot and the Civic Center Plaza. The strategy can also identify potential USDA grants and other funding opportunities for developing farmers markets.

Policy

Suggested policy improvements dealt primarily with the clarification of existing policies that can be confusing or inconsistent and the development of new policies to fill gaps and overcome identified barriers to expanding urban agriculture activities. These include:

- Clarifying policy language that is unclear or hard to find, especially related to sales of produce and value-added products and raising animals.
- Distinguishing urban agriculture activity types in policy language. Specific language may be developed to distinguish between neighborhood and industrial-scale agriculture and discuss characteristics such as operation size, noise impacts, smells, traffic impacts, and site maintenance requirements.
- Developing a lease program and related language to provide clarity for potential

groups about expectations for using City of Richmond land for urban agriculture.

- Describing a permit process or requirements for land use types, such as a farm stand, community garden, urban farm, etc.

Resources and Access

Improving resources for urban agriculture activities will be key to the long-term success of organizations and programs conducting these activities in Richmond today. A series of practices and partnerships can help ensure that needed resources, be they financial or physical, reach the groups in need. These strategies include:

- Providing a clear process for groups about how to develop urban agriculture projects in the City of Richmond.
- Ensuring adequate access to resources and information.
- Providing short-term leases for land dedicated to urban agriculture uses on City-owned vacant or underutilized properties.
- Supporting the development of commercial kitchens or use of existing facilities at schools or churches. Commercial kitchens are vital spaces for the development of value added food products that can be created using locally produced food.
- Coordinating with the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to explore options for reduced water rates for community garden/urban agriculture projects and the

and potential to install water sub-meters to monitor water usage for gardening/farming projects.

- Identifying and securing sustainable sources of organizational and programmatic funding in a competitive funding environment.

Education and Training

Finally, education and training of residents, City staff and local organizations are essential to overcome many of the barriers identified in this assessment and to leverage key opportunities. Strategies to improve education and training related to urban agriculture include:

- Coordinating between existing and emerging organizations.
- Encouraging Richmond residents to eat more locally grown produce through outreach and education.
- Coordinating workforce training programs with urban agriculture programs.
- Developing home garden kits that provide basic plans, information and considerations for residential lots that are typically 50' x 100' or 25' x 100' in size.
- Developing best practices for soil quality testing and soil remediation.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF URBAN AGRICULTURE IN RICHMOND

In This Chapter...

- General Urban Agriculture Site Issues
- Community Gardens
- School Gardens
- Home Gardens

The following chapter describes three types of urban gardens currently underway in Richmond, highlighting the key elements to be considered when developing specific types of urban agriculture activities. Because gardens of all varieties are the predominant form of urban agriculture in Richmond today, this chapter focuses on three garden types: community gardens, school gardens, and home gardens. Other forms of urban agriculture such as farms and nurseries are described in Appendix D: Profiles of Existing Richmond Urban Agriculture Initiatives.

The following illustrations of urban gardens showcase the ways in which these gardens are currently being implemented in Richmond. This chapter is intended to provide the City of Richmond and existing local organizations with a working set of planning and design considerations to address during the development of any garden project, and includes:

- An overview of general issues to be considered in choosing urban agriculture sites and activities;
- Detailed information on the success factors for community gardens, including a case study of the Richmond Greenway community gardens;
- Detailed information on the success factors for school gardens, including a case study of the Peres Elementary

School Garden;

- Detailed information on the success factors for home gardens, including a case study of a Richmond resident's home garden.

GENERAL URBAN AGRICULTURE SITE ISSUES

Urban farmers and gardeners in Richmond must consider a variety of factors when planning and implementing any project. General considerations include:

- Developing a crop plan that is appropriate to the site location (including existing soil and solar exposure) and identifies desired plants and planting timing;
- Ensuring adequate plant spacing;
- Improving soil health and nutrition using mulch, compost and other organic gardening techniques;
- Considering companion planting to attract beneficial insects and pollinators for overall plant and soil health;
- Protecting plants from rodents; and
- Testing soil for contamination.

However, many concerns are specific to the type of site and the specific use. The following case studies illustrate different approaches to urban agriculture in three contexts: community gardens, school gardens, and home gardens.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community gardens are a beloved asset in cities across the United States and the world. These

garden spaces are often located on public land and feature multiple private plots that are used by local residents who may not have space to garden where they live. The community garden provides an opportunity for multi-generational and cultural sharing.

Gardens often have a designated garden manager, either City staff or volunteers that provide oversight and guidance for the garden and administer the distribution of garden plots. Some gardens may have a waiting list that the garden manager maintains.

The example illustration of a community garden provided below illustrates many of the potential design features to consider when developing a community garden, including:

- Clearly marked, individual garden beds (raised, or marked with edging)
- Perimeter fencing
- Lighting
- Access to water and a distribution system for the individual garden beds
- Shared tool shed
- Accessible paths
- Informational signage boards
- Nearby parking access and potential truck access for tools, wheelbarrow and dirt deliveries

Additional considerations include developing official hours of use for the garden that can be shared publically and posted. Use hours provide reliability about when community members

can access the gardens and when gardens are closed.

Key features of community gardens include:

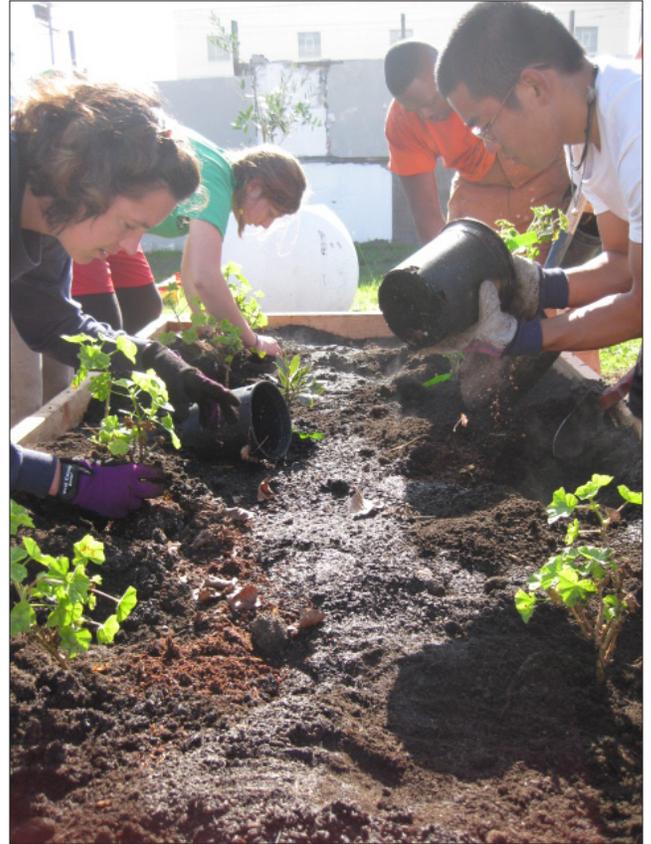
- Often on publicly-owned land
- Often a partnership between a local organization and the City, School District, or other public agencies
- May include jobs training and a youth development component which can provide critical support for new gardens
- Requires strong organizational leadership

Strategies for the City to support community gardens in the future include:

- Continue to encourage garden spaces on City-owned land by facilitating use agreements.
- Help secure additional funding for staff and programming of urban agriculture technical assistance groups serving Richmond to expand organizational capacity.
- Facilitate partnerships with other local, regional, state, and federal government agencies to secure funding for new garden projects on the Greenway and in other City parks; where necessary and appropriate, provide matching funds.
- Work with local organizations to identify potential locations in City parks for new gardens and expansion of the urban forest, including those that will be developed as part of Urban Tilth's existing USDA grant.

Richmond Greenway Community Gardens

The Richmond Greenway, built along an



Above: Volunteers planting the Greenway gardens at a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day cleanup. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

abandoned freight rail corridor that once served the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, is a three-mile community bicycle and pedestrian rail-trail that will ultimately add 32 acres of open space to Richmond's park system. The first section of the trail, between 2nd and 23rd Street, opened in 2007. The section between 23rd Street and San Pablo Avenue, which runs along the BART tracks, was paved in 2010 and will connect the Richmond Greenway and the Ohlone Greenway in El Cerrito once the Gap Closure Project is completed.

In addition to bringing much-needed pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to Richmond, the Greenway also brings open



Above: Simulated vision for a future garden along the Richmond Greenway. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

space and recreational opportunities to the neighborhoods it spans. Community garden spaces feature prominently in the sections of the Greenway that have been completed thus far. The Watershed Project is developing a native plant garden, while Urban Tilth has supported the development of five gardens along the Greenway. As the Greenway expands, there is potential to expand these sites and add additional community garden space for local residents to grow food.

The current Greenway community gardens include:

Greenway Community Garden (SW side of the Greenway between 6th Street and 4th Street)

The Greenway Community Garden is an open, gleaning garden in the heart of the Iron Triangle neighborhood. The 42 raised beds are used to grow a variety of vegetables and herbs year round; community members can harvest the produce for free.

Berryland (NE side of Greenway between 6th Street and 7th Street)

The Berryland garden includes 20 raised planter beds filled with more than 18 kinds of berry bushes, including raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, boysenberries, gooseberries, wolfberries, goumi berries and

California native berries such as thimbleberries, elderberries, alpine strawberries, and huckleberries. The garden is also home to a fig tree and five feijoa (pineapple guava) trees. Past cover crops in the garden included snow peas, which are available for Greenway users to harvest; in the future, Berryland will also be home to plants such as garlic, thyme, and yarrow to increase the garden's biodiversity and provide habitat for beneficial insects.

Richmond Edible Forest (16th Street)

The Edible Forest, which is currently under development, is a joint venture between the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest (PSW) Research Station and Urban Tilth. The project, which is funded through a \$40,000 Forest Service grant and the \$91,000 matching partner contribution, will involve 700 underserved Richmond youth in educational training programs as it is developed, helping them to learn about careers they might pursue in natural resources. The youth will learn how to install edible forests in Richmond parks and schools. Once completed, the Richmond Edible Forest will serve as an educational space for local schools and community members to visit and the project will continue to train and employ youth to replicate the Edible Forest model on other sites throughout Richmond.

Other Greenway Gardens

In addition to the Greenway gardens that they maintain, Urban Tilth also supported the development of the Lincoln Elementary School Farm, which is adjacent to the Greenway, and the Butterfly Garden on the northwest side of 6th Street. Although the gardens are tended by

the local communities, each receives technical support from Urban Tilth's technical assistance program, which currently has a lengthy waiting list.

SCHOOL GARDENS

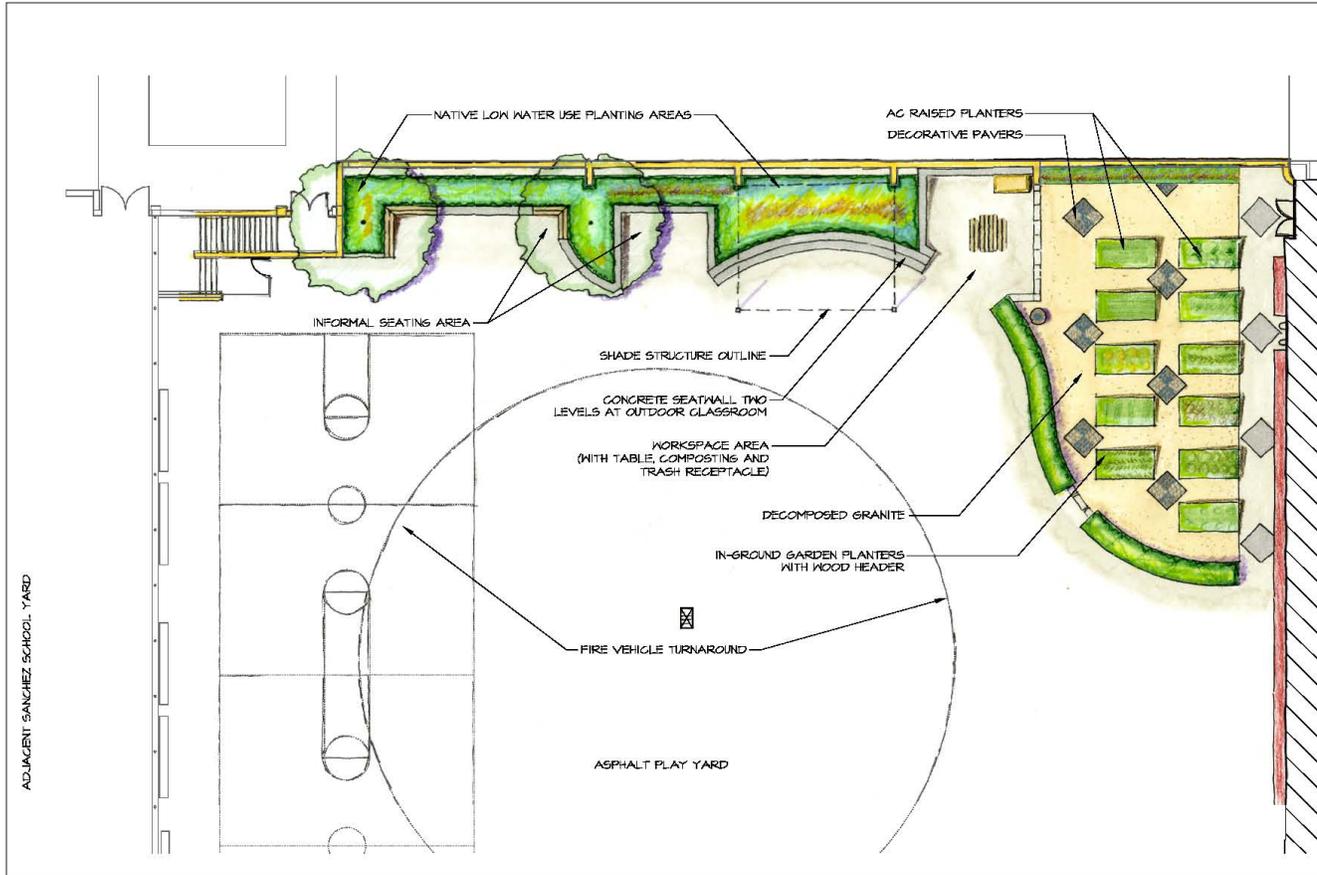
School gardens are often located on school-property, integrated into school curriculum and the result of a school/community partnership. The main purpose of these gardens is to serve educational, therapeutic or community service purposes.

Everett Middle School Garden

One example of a school garden design is the yard at Everett Middle School in San Francisco, designed by MIG as part of the Green Schoolyard Grant Program. MIG worked with four schools in the San Francisco Unified School District to replace pavement-dominated schoolyards with greening elements. Each school garden was developed with input and guidance from a green schoolyard design committee made up of students, faculty, community volunteers and the San Francisco Unified School District.

The Everett Middle School committee reviewed preliminary alternatives and selected the design below based on their desire to develop a flexible space that could accommodate multiple activities. Overall, the design calls for the removal of 4,000 square feet of asphalt.

During the design process, the School District was explicit that site and garden maintenance would not be the responsibility of school staff and that community members would need to perform maintenance.



Above: Everett Middle School garden plan, an example of a school garden design. Image courtesy of MIG.

The Everett site design includes many elements that can be integrated into a design for any schoolyard. Key elements include:

- Space for edible and non-edible plants
- Places to sit and relax, including shaded areas
- Seating potential for an outdoor classroom
- Storage for tools and supplies
- A place for composting; compost bins or containers can be designed to minimize odors and be regularly maintained
- and any school buildings
- Ensuring that there is access to adequate water for the garden
- Developing a joint-use agreement with the school district for any garden that will be accessible during non-school hours. Such an agreement may need to address access and security issues. Generally, school gardens are inaccessible during non-school hours. Coordination with a project partner may be beneficial to ensuring garden access through the summer when school may not be in session.

Other considerations include:

- Providing adequate space between garden

Peres Elementary School Garden

Peres Elementary School, located in the Iron Triangle neighborhood of Richmond, initially received technical assistance from Urban Tilth to launch its school garden. The Peres garden was created through Urban Tilth’s Garden Technical Assistance program, which provides support and training to schools, churches, and organizations across West County upon their request. Urban Tilth staff members were available to help with organizing garden raising parties, designing and visioning, new feature installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, and curriculum design. They also provides individual or group in-service training in these areas.

The Peres garden is one of dozens of school gardens in Richmond. All WCCUSD public schools currently have gardens, as do some private and charter schools such as Richmond Children’s Academy Preschool and Richmond College Prep Charter School, among others. These spaces provide on-site opportunities for children and youth to engage directly in food production and in the science of growing plants and supporting ecosystems.

At Peres, teachers coordinate gardening and curriculum to provide an integrated gardening and curriculum program for students.

Parents and other community members also help to support the school garden. Most recently, the Parent Coffee Club partnered with school staff to clear out the garden and plant new seedlings for the spring growing season.

Key features of the Peres School garden project



Above: Peres Elementary parents and teachers help maintain the garden (top) while Peres students work on a class project related to the garden (below). Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

include:

- On WCCUSD-owned land
- Partnership between the school and school parents
- Tapped into Urban Tilth’s technical assistance program, which is open to other groups in Richmond

Future opportunities for the City to support school-based gardens include:

- Partner with WCCUSD to identify schools with interested leadership or staff and

feasible garden locations to expand gardens on school sites.

- In underserved communities with interested community groups and neighbors, facilitate conversations with specific school sites to promote the expansion of school gardens and, if appropriate, provide community access for these gardens.
- Help secure additional funding for Urban Tilth’s technical assistance program and/or encourage other organizations to develop similar garden support programs to provide assistance to interested local communities.

HOME GARDENS

Home gardens are developed and maintained by residents. Typically, the main purpose of these gardens is to provide recreational or therapeutic opportunities, visual beauty, and supplement food production. Home gardens are often located in the back, front, or side yards.

Basic elements to incorporate into any home garden include:

- Space for edible plants such as herbs and vegetables and non-edible plants like flowers that create habitat for birds and



Above: Richmond resident Rebecca Newburn’s home garden uses all available area on her urban lot. Image courtesy of Rebecca Newburn.



Above: Newburn's garden also features fruit trees and other "edible landscaping." Image courtesy of Rebecca Newburn.

- pollinators;
 - Places to sit and relax, including shade;
 - Seating potential for an outdoor classroom;
 - Place for composting; and
 - Paths.
- Other considerations include:
- Providing adequate space between the garden and the house to allow for water drainage.
 - Siting the garden to provide for maximum solar exposure and convenient access. Plants need different amount of solar exposure, but all need some amount of sun.
 - Ensuring that there is access to adequate water for the site. Water drainage should also be considered when siting and developing a garden.
 - Developing an efficient irrigation system using a combination of drip irrigation overhead watering. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) has a variety of

water efficient garden training, education and incentive programs. The Bay Friendly Gardening program offers a variety of resources and programs for interested home gardeners.

- Conducting a soil test to determine soil type and soil quality. There are a variety of techniques for amending soil based on existing soil characteristics.
- Identifying a source for garden tools, soil amendments and places to exchange information with other Richmond-based gardeners to ask questions and share gardening tips.
- Identifying an area for collecting and composting greenwaste. The location should be easily accessible, but out of the main garden area. If no space for composting, consider a worm bin or other container.
- Purchasing, borrowing, or renting a basic set of tools, including:
 - Shovel
 - Rake
 - Hoe
 - Double-digging fork
- Sharing the harvest with your neighbors!

Many of the organizations identified in this assessment offer an abundance of useful resources for home gardening.

Newburn Residence Home Garden

Rebecca Newburn is the co-founder of the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library and an avid home gardener in Northwest Richmond that has transformed her residential back and front yard into a lush, productive growing area with over a dozen food producing trees including fruits, nuts and olives with multiple grafts on most trees. Her Medicine Wheel Gardens were on the 2010 Richmond Homestead Tour.

On her urban lot, Newburn has done the following:

- Planted an edible garden along the front, side and back yard
- Planted both sides of the sidewalk area in California natives as buffer to food and to foster habitat
- Planted trees in the front and back that are watered by two greywater systems fed by the shower and laundry
- Installed over 4000 gallons of rainwater catchment

During the next year, Newburn has plans to build and install a chicken coop and set up a bee hive.

PROMISING PRACTICES AND TOOLS

IN THIS CHAPTER...

- Lessons Learned from Other Cities
- Potential Tools for Future Development

This chapter identifies a series of promising practices and tools in use in cities across the country that have the potential to address some of the needs, issues, and opportunities identified in this assessment. The opportunities and constraints identified in Chapter 3 helped guide the selection of programs and practices to include in this assessment by identifying key challenges to overcome or opportunities to leverage in Richmond. In addition, promising programs and tools were included when the cities, neighborhoods, or organizations involved shared Richmond's attributes. In some cases, these programs and strategies targeted neighborhoods with many low- and very low-income residents with poor access to healthy foods. In others, tools were in use in mid-sized cities facing high unemployment or other challenges also faced by Richmond. Some programs were implemented by nonprofit organizations or community groups similar to those working in Richmond today. These commonalities suggest that many of these programs and policies could be replicated or adapted for use in Richmond, while others may offer relevant lessons that can be applied to new efforts.

This chapter includes:

- Lessons learned from other cities, including programs and policies in place in Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Buffalo; and

- Potential tools for future development, including site and program prioritization criteria, evaluation of potential program proposals, program selection and evaluation considerations, and program leases.

As the City of Richmond seeks to engage with community groups on a regular basis to expand opportunities for urban agriculture there are a number of considerations and promising practices to consider moving forward. The considerations are identified in the following section and references are included to a series of helpful resources.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER CITIES

Minneapolis: Supporting Urban Agriculture through Community Health and Wellness Policy Development³

Minneapolis is an example of a city that is leveraging an existing community gardening and farming community and the support of elected officials to develop supportive policy for urban agriculture under the broad umbrella of community health and wellness. The Twin Cities is home to over 200 community gardens and a strong presence of co-ops that assist with local food distribution. Through coordinated stakeholder involvement, the Twin Cities Community Garden Sustainability plan was developed in 2005. The plan called for the development of a community gardening association and the resulting organization, Gardening Matters, was formed shortly thereafter to support and coordinate the needs of community gardens.

³City of Minneapolis, "Homegrown Minneapolis," <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>.

Beginning in 2008, Mayor R.T. Rybak championed an initiative known as Homegrown Minneapolis, designed to ensure that the city could support citizen efforts to grow, sell, distribute and consume more fresh and locally produced food. The Mayor designated the Department of Health and Family Support to provide staff support to this effort which was supported by a five-year federal grant.

A related action was the development of the Mini Farmers Market project by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) in 2008. These mini-markets have five or fewer producer-only vendors and are eligible for relaxed permitting and reduced licensing fees. By 2010, there were 21 mini markets.

As part of Homegrown Minneapolis, an implementation task force that includes topical working groups has been established. The working groups are:

- Urban Ag Policy Plan
- Food Access
- Community Garden Pilot
- Local Food Policy Entity
- Municipal Farmers Market
- Local Food Sustainability Targets
- Small Enterprise Urban Ag
- Local Food Purchasing Policy
- Regulatory Review

Milwaukee: Reusing Brownfields for Urban Agriculture⁴

The City of Milwaukee is working with the local urban agriculture community and the U.S. EPA to reuse brownfield sites for urban agricultural uses. The City was designated by the EPA as an Environmental Showcase Community and is receiving \$100,000 over two years for related urban agriculture demonstration projects. Milwaukee has also received significant EPA grants to fund its Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund, which provides low-interest loans and grants for environmental remediation and clean-up of brownfield sites, and to continue City-sponsored assessment and cleanup of contaminated sites. Where appropriate, sites undergo soil and groundwater cleanup; when cleanup is complete, the sites are ready for reuse. While Milwaukee's brownfield programs encourage a wide range of reuse options, urban agriculture is a focus in many areas of the city.

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM) and the Department of City Development (DCD) are also working in coordination with local groups to determine potential interest in site usage and other agencies to develop best practices for site remediation techniques. This research may eventually translate into related policies.

Milwaukee is also home to two community-based entrepreneurial urban agriculture operations, Sweet Water Organics and Growing Power, which are both heralded examples of



Above: Raised beds, like these at the CYCLE community garden, present a safe way to grow food in vacant lots. Image courtesy of the City of Richmond.

successful educational farms that utilize organic and aquaponic growing systems. Sweet Water Organics was also one of the organizations that benefited from Milwaukee's recent \$400,000 IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grant, awarded to make urban agriculture projects more sustainable and replicable.

Pittsburgh: Bringing Together Community Organizations to Drive Policy and Land Use⁵

Pittsburgh is home to a diverse array of community-based urban agriculture activities that benefit from a supportive city-policies and collaboration with local universities. Growth through Energy + Community Health (GTECH) is one organization that supports a variety of applied innovation vacant land reuse programs designed to revitalize communities, using urban agriculture as a key strategy.

GTECH pursues projects in a range of areas, from shifting urban land use to promoting

⁴City of Milwaukee, "Urban Agriculture in Milwaukee," <http://city.milwaukee.gov/Urban-Agriculture.htm>.

⁵GTECH Strategies, "Seeding Prosperity and Revitalizing Corridors," <http://gtechstrategies.org/52/sparc>.

alternative energy to building a new green economy for Pittsburgh. One GTECH initiative, Project SPARC: Seeding Prosperity and Revitalizing Corridors, is a collaborative vacant land management program designed to be replicated in high-need areas through collaboration with existing community groups.

SPARC, a partnership between GTECH, Grow Pittsburgh, The Kingsley Association, Penn State Extension of Allegheny County, the Student Conservation Association, and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, employs a corridor-based land use strategy to bring together the technical expertise of Pittsburgh's environmental and community organizations to address the issue of land vacancy on a larger scale.

According to GTECH, the project is designed to "spark" greening efforts and reinvestment within three years in communities that have shown the interest and capacity for large-scale greening. The SPARC pilot project along Larimer Avenue in the high-need neighborhoods of Larimer and East Liberty is intended to showcase the SPARC goals: act as a service provider and technical assistance partner to community leaders; implement green strategies through green job education and entrepreneurial support; optimize outcomes and efficiency through collaboration; and impact environmental and social equity of communities.

The Larimer corridor was chosen because it met SPARC's criteria for a community ready

for change: a Community Development Corporation (CDC) or community organization with a demonstrated capacity of investing in the community's development and growth; a prior history of local activities and interest in green strategies; existing or developing community plans with elements of a green strategy plan; the presence of active community groups; and potential for economic development impact through enhancing community assets and transferring skills to residents.

Through the Larimer Corridor project, SPARC hopes to develop a replicable process that will leverage vacant land along Larimer Avenue to build new green jobs and redevelopment opportunities. Additional outcomes SPARC hopes to achieve include increased capacity within the neighborhood for implementation of future efforts, a collaborative neighborhood-led evaluation effort, and a financial mechanism to facilitate investments over time.

Other Pittsburgh Urban Agriculture Organizations

In addition to GTECH, groups including the Grow Pittsburgh, Burgh Bees, East End Food Co-op, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Pittsburgh Food Policy Council are also active in supporting a variety of urban agriculture programs.⁶

In early 2011, the Pittsburgh City Council passed the city's first Urban Agriculture Zoning Code with support and guidance from these groups.

The code now permits the following:

- The keeping of up to three chickens with 2,000 sq. ft or more of land (including the footprint of the home);
- Housing of two beehives with 2,000 sq. ft or more of land and a minimum 10 feet from a neighboring property line; and
- On-site sale of produce grown on vacant land with permission from the owner.

A \$30,000 Urban Agriculture Education Fund was established to assist individuals with payment of a related \$300 permit fee.⁷

Kansas City: Fostering Local Partnerships to Reuse Vacant Land for Urban Agriculture⁸

The City of Kansas City, Missouri has a range of urban agriculture projects operating within the city. Since 1998, the City has been providing assistance and information to neighborhood groups to strategize about crop production on brownfield sites through the Kansas City Brownfield Initiative (KCBI). The KCBI is supported in part through a partnership with Kansas State University and funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA also recently selected Kansas City as a Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program recipient. As part of this program, the City is

currently developing a reuse strategy for a 327-acre property that will include some areas for farming and gardening.

Other Kansas City Urban Agriculture Organizations

Local organizations are active in urban agriculture, as well. The Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture (KCCUA) is a successful non-profit group that promotes urban agriculture through a variety of programs and operations. One KCCUA project, the Gibbs Road Community Farm, is located on 2.25 acres of land and is financially self-sustaining with annual sales of over \$100,000. The KCCUA also provides training programs and promotes urban agriculture projects through tours and by distributing educational information.⁹

In 2010, Kansas City amended existing zoning to support urban agriculture. A local CSA, Bad Seed Farm, came under scrutiny from a neighbor concerned about the animals on the property. In response, the City Council worked to amend Chapter 88-312 to define Crop Agriculture, and three categories of Urban Agriculture: Home Garden, Community Garden and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Crop agriculture and home and community gardens are now permitted in all districts, although CSA farms

⁶Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, <http://pittsburghfpc.blogspot.com/>.

⁷Grow Pittsburgh, "Urban Agriculture Zoning Code," <http://www.growpittsburgh.org/growpittsburgh/UrbanAgZoningCode>.

⁸United States Environmental Protection Agency, "Policy Barriers and Incentives to Reusing Brownfields for Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture: Brownfields and Urban Agriculture in Kansas City, Missouri," *Brownfields and Urban Agriculture Reuse Webinar Series*, 7 October 2010, <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/urbanag/webinar2.htm>.

⁹Kansas Health Institute, "Urban Agriculture Taking Root in KC," 28 June 2011, <http://www.khi.org/news/2011/jun/28/urban-agriculture-movement-taking-root-kc/>

require a special use permit in residential districts. Animal agriculture is permitted in all districts.¹⁰

Buffalo: Building Collaborations to Encourage Community Food Programs¹¹

Buffalo, New York is home to a number of grassroots community food and urban agriculture programs. The programs are concentrated in Buffalo's West Side and include CurbSide Croft, Queen City farm, the Urban Roots Community Garden Center and the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP). MAP features a number of programs designed to increase access to locally produced, high quality food, including a youth development programs, aquaponics, and a mobile market. MAP partners with other organizations to host tours and educational trainings.

Another Buffalo organization, Grassroots Gardens, started in 1992 and now supports over 70 community gardens on over 100 previously vacant lots. Both community-based organizations also benefit from coordination with faculty at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at University of Buffalo.

POTENTIAL TOOLS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Site and Program Prioritization Criteria

When considering a potential site for an urban agriculture activity, the following factors should be reviewed and evaluated to ensure that the activity will be successful. Each factor

can influence how feasible urban agriculture activities are financially, how appropriate these uses are to a specific plot of land, and how these activities will fit into the broader urban food system in Richmond. As projects are developed and implemented, these prioritization criteria will evolve, based on experience. Potential site evaluation criteria include:

- Site suitability: soil quality, terrain and solar exposure;
- Water access on site or, with permission, from adjacent properties;
- Accessibility to transit;
- Proximity to target audiences;
- Locations within neighborhoods with poor access to healthy foods or with high rates of poverty;
- Resident priorities;
- Land access cost; and
- Ownership status and potential future uses.

Once Richmond has chosen a set of prioritization criteria, these criteria should be applied to each potential site to weigh the advantages and constraints facing a specific site. For instance, a site that is available for use at no cost but that must have new water lines run may be comparable in overall priority to a site that is leased for a small fee but has existing water lines. Similarly, a site where development is imminent

¹⁰Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition and Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture, "Local Groups Pleased with New Kansas City Urban Agriculture Codes," Press release, 10 June 2010, http://www.kchealthkids.org/Resource_/NewsItem/8/Download/UrbanAgProposalPasses_KCMO.pdf.

¹¹Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP), <http://www.mass-ave.org/>.

may not be a strong candidate for interim garden use, while a site where no specific plans are in place that may be vacant indefinitely may be especially appealing. Sites must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to fully understand the potential assets and limitations of each proposed location, but the City may opt to use a point system to provide a general metric for comparing one site to another.

Evaluation of Program Proposals

To evaluate potential programs that seek to gain access to public land for urban agriculture programming in Richmond, the City may want to consider developing a competitive proposal process for available public land or resources. This standardized process may require interested organizations to complete an application or narrative proposal that includes the following elements:

- Problem statement including program need and constituency;
- Benefits to constituency and/or community;
- Program partners;
- Expected results and outcomes;
- Demonstration of meeting unaddressed needs or underrepresented populations;
- Program timeline;
- Methods of growing;
- Indicators of successful program implementation;
- Resources leveraged; and

- Program/project experience.

Program Selection and Evaluation Considerations

The following guidelines have been identified for either program proposal selection or program evaluation. Moving forward, the City should prioritize developing a transparent process for program selection and evaluation. As resources become available, this process can help identify those applicants with the most potential and those who are best equipped to succeed in neighborhoods of need.

Criteria for evaluating proposals could include, but should not be limited to, the following:

- Diversity of partnerships/stakeholders;
- Needs addressed;
- Community engagement;
- Public goods offered;
- Clear goals/work plan;
- Organizational capacity and experience;
- Level of community partnering;
- Neighborhood support;
- Qualified advisors to project (necessary technical assistance);
- Program participation numbers/demographics; and
- Levels of program innovation (to be based on criteria that must first be developed).

Usage Arrangements

Leases

During the focus group meetings held to develop this assessment, several participants identified a lease or use template as a tool that would be particularly valuable to new and existing organizations attempting to create community gardens and pursue other urban agriculture activities.

Although the City would not be party to leases on private land created using the sample template, focus group participants felt strongly that a lease template approved by the City would help property owners feel more comfortable allowing urban agriculture uses on their lands. To develop an effective lease template, the City should identify as many potential issues as possible upfront in the lease language in order to avoid problems such as misunderstandings about the planned work or conflicts with neighboring property owners. Some of these issue areas might include:

- Soil condition, including potential contamination, and which parties are responsible for any required clean-up or mitigation;
- Use of pesticides, fertilizer, fungicides, etc.;
- Expected traffic impacts (number of potential daily vehicle trips generated by visitors or deliveries);
- Hours of operation;
- Maximum number of people expected on property at any given time;

- Presence of children on the property;
- Expected decibels of noise pollution created;
- Use of animals and restrictions thereof;
- Tractor use, or appropriate times for using;
- Runoff and water pollution; and
- Tenure of project on land and timeline for extending lease, if appropriate.

The lease language developed should then be provided by the City to interested organizations for adaptation and use. The City Attorney should review all materials developed before they are made available to the public, and the introduction to the materials should make clear that the lease template is intended to be adapted to the specific needs of the site, the organization, and the property owner.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

As an alternative, many of the elements of a lease may also be summarized in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the landowner and urban agriculture program representative or organization.

Adopt-a-Park/Trail Program

The Adopt-a-Park/Trail Program is an existing city program that structures the relationship between the City of Richmond Public Works Department Parks & Landscaping Division and local organizations or stewardships groups that want to adopt a specific park area. This model is used along the Richmond Greenway with assistance provided by the Friends of the Richmond Greenway.

NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

IN THIS CHAPTER...

- Communications and Coordination
- Policy
- Resources and Access
- Education and Training
- Conclusion

This final chapter presents strategies to address the key issues facing the development of urban agriculture in Richmond today and into the future. This chapter draws from the findings of the questionnaire and feedback received at the focus group meetings and evaluation of the local and national promising practices locally and elsewhere to recommend strategies relevant to Richmond. Many of these actions can be implemented citywide, while others are designed to expand urban agriculture activities in Richmond's low-income, high-need areas. The majority of the actions proposed in this assessment are achievable in the short-term to effect change as soon as possible. However, many will be ongoing initiatives, and still others reflect the need for long-term initiatives that will result in large-scale change to the Richmond food system.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Communications and Coordination
- Policy
- Resources and Access
- Education and Training

The chapter closes by outlining next steps for the City to consider pursuing to overcome identified in this assessment.

To evaluate and prioritize these recommendations, the City and its partners should consider factors including:

- Availability of potential partners;
- Ability of recommendation to address a high need area of Richmond;
- Potential implementation timeframe;
- Potential funding sources;
- Opportunities for community involvement; and
- Community support

COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION

Providing regular communication and coordination between City of Richmond Departments and Richmond-based organizations will be a strategic asset to the development of successful and vibrant urban agriculture programs in Richmond. Meetings could be held on a quarterly basis to share information on program activities and plans.

1. Identify existing and potential partnerships.

Because of the multi-disciplinary nature of urban agriculture project and programs, partnerships are a vital method for increasing its reach and

Table 7-1: Potential County Partners

County Agency	Potential Contribution or Collaboration
West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD)	Coordinate urban agriculture programming with existing school lunch program, school gardens and nutrition education.
Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS)	Coordinate urban agriculture programming with nutrition education and environmental health programming.
Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development	Develop shared standards and language for urban agriculture zoning and policy. (Reference the Contra Costa County 2007 Farm Stand Ordinance.)
Contra Costa County Community Development Department	Share information and explore potential project collaborations with Transportation, Watershed Planning, Waste, Recycling and Climate Change divisions.
Contra Costa County Redevelopment Agency	Share information and best practices, coordinate any lease programs.
Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Organization (CCISCO)	Provide access to land and potentially to commercial kitchens.
Contra Costa Resource Conservation District	Provide access to resources and expertise on agricultural best practices in Contra Costa County.
Contra Costa Farm Bureau	Provide access to resources and expertise on agricultural best practices in Contra Costa County.
Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture	Provide access to resources and expertise on agricultural best practices in Contra Costa County. The Department is dedicated to the promotion and protection of the county agricultural industry, the environment, and the citizens.
Food Bank of Solano/ Contra Costa County	Provide opportunities for food donation and related programming related to food and nutrition.
Contra Costa Fire Protection District	Provide access to resources and expertise proactive fire prevention, including fuel/vegetation management and abatement.

impact. There are a variety of successful and nascent partnerships underway, including the Richmond Farm 2 Table program administered by the Richmond Community Foundation. City support for these efforts will ensure that existing funding and staff resources are leveraged for the greatest impact. Potential partnerships are identified in the Tables 7-1: Potential County Partners, 7-2: Potential Local/Regional Agency Partners, 7-3: Potential National Organization Partner, 7-4: Potential Federal Agency Partners and 7-5: Potential Local Organization Partners.

2. Designate a lead contact and assisting staff from each relevant department.

Designate a single staff member responsible for

coordinating urban agriculture programs, staff meetings, and other initiatives from the various City of Richmond departments engaged in some aspect of urban agriculture to coordinate these efforts and create a related knowledge base moving forward. In addition to serving as a departmental liaison, each department representative should commit to meeting quarterly for information sharing and activity updates to ensure that City activities and policies are coordinated and consistent. Potential future roles for departments are identified in Table 7-6: Potential City Department Roles. Current City Department roles can be found in Chapter 3 in Table 3-2: City of Richmond Department/Division with Connection to Urban Agriculture.

Table 7-2: Potential Local/Regional Agency Partners

Local/Regional Agency	Potential Contribution or Collaboration
Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)	Provide access to land for urban agriculture programs along transit right-of-ways. BART is currently conducting a pilot gardening program in Richmond.
Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)	Provide access to resources and a variety of environmental quality programming.
East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)	Coordinate agricultural heritage programming (similar to Ardenwood Park) and provide access to parklands for demonstration garden programs.
East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)	Provide water at reduced rates to demonstrated urban agricultural users.
Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)	Provide access to land for urban agriculture programs along rights-of-way.
West Contra Costa County Landfill	Share knowledge of grants from mitigation fund for urban agriculture projects.
Richmond Sanitary District	Provide access to compost generated from Richmond food scraps.

Table 7-3: Potential National Organization Partners

National Organization	Potential Contribution or Collaboration
Community Food Security Coalition	Share lessons learned from cities and communities across the nation. The Community Food Security Coalition is a national organization dedicated to community food security issues and programs. Hosting their 15th annual conference in Oakland in November 2011.

Table 7-4: Potential Federal Agency Partners

Federal Agency	Potential Contribution or Collaboration
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Provide access to resources through a variety of programs, including community food security and school lunches.
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Provide resources and best practices related to urban agriculture. The EPA manages a variety of programs related to urban agriculture including watershed and brownfield restoration programs.
National Park Service (NPS)	Partner to promote the connection between urban agriculture and Richmond history, and provide land for gardens. The National Park Service (NPS) has a strong presence in Richmond through the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Homefront program. The Richmond office currently hosts and supports one community garden and is interested to link Richmond’s agricultural heritage with today’s many active groups.

Table 7-5: Potential Local Organization Partners

Local Organization	Potential Contribution or Collaboration
Watershed Project, Richmond	Collaborate to coordinate urban agriculture efforts with watershed protection and preservation.
Bay Area Rescue Mission, Richmond	Serve as a potential recipient of urban agriculture food donations.
City Slicker Farm, Oakland	Share expertise, lessons learned, and best practices in urban agriculture. City Slicker Farm is an established, active urban agriculture organization based in Oakland.
East Bay Urban Agriculture Coalition	Provide coordination and connect Richmond organizations to groups across the region. The East Bay Urban Agriculture Coalition is a coalition of groups and organizations in the East Bay dedicated to expanding opportunities for urban agriculture through information sharing and outreach.
Insight Garden Program, San Quentin State Prison	Share information and programming approaches.
Rubicon Bakery, Richmond	Provide access to local produce for baked goods
Comcast Corporate	Provide resources to support the expansion of urban agriculture in Richmond.
Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), Berkeley	Share lessons learned and best practice from other cities and communities. Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE) is Berkeley-based organization dedicated to linking food, farms and cities.

3. Support both edible and non-edible urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture is not only about food production; there are also a variety of current and potential non-edible agricultural activities in Richmond that should be supported and encouraged. The Watershed Nursery is an

excellent example of an existing organization that is flourishing in part due to support from the City of Richmond. The non-profit operates its nursery on City-owned property and grows a variety of native and riparian plants that are used for restoration projects. This type of project offers many of the same training and

job skill-related benefits for youth as an edible-production focused program.

4. Coordinate with Contra Costa County, Contra Costa Health Services, and other Countywide partners.

Contra Costa County is already a strong partner of the City of Richmond. The County and many of the agencies that serve it have expertise in health-related programming and agriculture. Coordination with the County may provide

access to increased resources and strategic partnerships, and may help to clarify policies that differ between the two entities for businesses and organizations who must comply with both City and County regulations. Departments and potential areas of collaboration are identified in Table 7-1: Potential County Partners.

POLICY

Developing a supportive policy environment for urban agriculture will not only support

Table 7-6: Potential City Department Roles

Department/Committee	Connection to Urban Agriculture
Planning and Building Services	<i>Already engaged in urban agriculture; see Table 3-2.</i>
Mayor’s Office	<i>Already engaged in urban agriculture; see Table 3-2.</i>
Parks and Landscaping	<i>Already engaged in urban agriculture; see Table 3-2.</i>
Recreation	<i>Already engaged in urban agriculture; see Table 3-2.</i>
Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency	Owns or manages vacant property that may be suitable for temporary/short-term urban agricultural uses. Resources may be directed toward supporting urban agriculture part of the overall greening of Richmond.
Code Enforcement	Monitors use of pesticides and other nuisance issues that could arise from potential urban agricultural uses.
Transportation/Engineering	Oversees the design and engineering of Richmond’s streets and roads. Needs to be consulted on urban agriculture projects in medians or rights-of-ways.
City Arts Commission	Could provide assistance identifying grants related to urban agriculture.
Public Works	Could provide mulch to community gardens. Manages other resources that may be valuable to urban agriculture projects such as tool-sharing.
Richmond Public Library	Home of the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library. Current seed lending library could be expanded to include a tool lending library or curriculum for community gardens.
City Attorney’s Office	Could assist in developing lease agreements hold harmless agreements.
City Manager’s Office	Environmental and health initiatives currently include compost giveaways and planning for the West Contra Costa County Urban Agriculture Summit. Future roles could include conducting long-term tracking of urban agricultural activities and serving as the lead liaison to urban agriculture groups.
Housing Authority	Could provide space at housing developments for residents to develop urban gardens.

existing groups and organizations, but may serve to attract and encourage new groups and partnerships to take root in Richmond. Policies should explicitly identify urban agriculture as an activity that the City of Richmond supports and provide supportive language for where and how these types of activities can occur. Policies should also identify urban agriculture as an effective tool for improving overall community health.

1. Develop supportive zoning/ordinance language.

The potential for expanded urban agriculture in Richmond is aided in part by the lack of restrictive zoning language in the Richmond Municipal Code. However, the development of explicitly supportive and illustrative zoning and ordinance language can help to foster additional urban agriculture activities and ensure that activities such as animal husbandry are conducted on lots of appropriate sizes. Such language may distinguish a variety of agricultural activity types and focus on describing what can happen and where depending on the following activity characteristics:

- Purpose;
- Location;
- Size and scale;
- Production techniques;
- Processing and distribution methods (including on-site sale and related regulations); and
- Animals and livestock.

The City should also consider distinguishing

between home gardens, orchards, vineyards, community gardens, school gardens, park gardens, rooftop gardens or vertical gardening, and indoor growing, as each type of agriculture has distinct issues and needs.

There are a variety of current models designed to address these needs. For instance, the Oakland Food Policy Council is working with the City of Oakland to explore modifications to its existing codes to allow some sales of raw agricultural products in residential zones where it is currently prohibited. Other cities, including San Francisco, Seattle, Cleveland, and Kansas City, have developed policy language to permit on-site sales that conform to certain standards. An additional consideration when developing a permit cost structure for these activities would be the scale of the operation (e.g., gross sales). Small urban farms and gardens that are selling produce are unlikely to be selling at the same scale as larger agricultural enterprises.

2. Develop specific policies to regulate animal husbandry.

Effective policy to guide the raising of animals in the urban environment should consider a range of factors, including:

- Lot size;
- Odor;
- Noise;
- Water requirements;
- Insect and rodent infestations and other public health risks;

- Management and disposal of waste;
- Animal slaughter; and
- Penalties for non compliance.

In addition, the City should consider that different animals have different needs, so a one-size-fits-all policy approach is not appropriate.

For instance, the City may opt to develop separate policies for hens, roosters, ducks, geese, pigs, goats and sheep, cows, steers, horses, donkeys and mules.

3. Distinguish between commercial and non-commercial urban agriculture in zoning and other regulatory tools.

Urban agriculture programs that operate primarily for educational purposes are distinct from commercial enterprises. When coordinating with these groups, the City of Richmond should

distinguish between them, as their needs and issues may differ. For example, non-profit organizations may not have access to the same start-up capital or loans that commercial operations may have. Some groups are actually hybrids; for example, a non-profit may sell produce for profit that goes back to support the organization.

New zoning language should also distinguish between commercial and non-commercial urban agriculture uses. As an example, potential zoning language currently being promoted by the Oakland Food Policy Council (OFPC) for use in that city defines three distinct types of urban agriculture (UA), which appear in the box below.

The City of San Francisco recently adopted

Urban Agriculture Zoning Language Proposed by Oakland Food Policy Council

Residential Urban Agriculture is any form of plant and animal raising activity on a private residential property by an individual or family with the primary purpose of household consumption (regarding sales of Residential UA surplus, see the next point below). The OFPC proposes that residential gardens be allowed as-of-right (with no additional permits or fees required) in all residential zones.

Civic Urban Agriculture must be organized and operated by a Community Group, which may include local civic associations, public agencies, non-profit agencies, gardening clubs, homeowners associations, or even a group formed for the purpose of establishing a garden. The OFPC proposes that civic gardens be allowed in all residential zones, and in most commercial zones (it may be appropriate for some commercial areas, such as our downtown, to require a CUP).

Commercial Urban Agriculture is distinguished from Civic UA by the intensity of site cultivation, the size of the site cultivated, and the primary purpose of the site’s use, which is growing vegetables, plants, flowers or for sale (including for-profit and non-profit enterprises). The OFPC proposes that commercial UA be permitted in Commercial and Industrial Zones, and in residential zones with a CUP.

San Francisco Adopted Urban Agriculture Use Category

Neighborhood Agriculture is defined as:

A use that occupies less than 1 acre for the production of food or horticultural crops to be harvested, sold, or donated and complies with the controls and standards herein. The use includes, but is not limited to, home, kitchen, and roof gardens. Farms that qualify as Neighborhood Agricultural use may include, but are not limited to, community gardens, community-supported agriculture, market gardens, and private farms. Neighborhood Agricultural use may be principal or accessory use. Limited sales and donation of fresh food and/or horticultural products grown on-site may occur on otherwise vacant property, but may not occur within a dwelling unit. Food and/or horticultural products grown that are used for personal consumption are not regulated. The following physical and operational standards shall apply to Neighborhood Agriculture:

- Compost areas must be setback at least 3 feet from property lines;
- If the farmed area is enclosed by fencing, the fencing must be wood fencing or ornamental fencing as defined by Planning Code Section 102.32;
- Use of mechanized farm equipment is generally prohibited in residential districts;

provided, however, that during the initial preparation of the land heavy equipment may be used to prepare the land for agriculture use. Landscaping equipment designed for household use shall be permitted;

- Farm equipment shall be enclosed or otherwise screened from sight;
- Sale of food and/or horticultural products from the use may occur between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.;
- The sales of processed or value added goods is prohibited.

Urban Industrial Agriculture is defined as:

The use of land for the production of food or horticultural crops to be harvested, sold, or donated that occur: (a) on a plot of land 1 acre or larger or (b) on smaller parcels that cannot meet the physical and operational standards for Neighborhood Agriculture.

The use description provides further direction that "limited sales and donations of fresh food and/or horticultural products grown on site may occur on site, whether vacant or improved, but not within a dwelling unit." Other Bay Area cities are also in the process of examining urban agriculture provisions in their existing zoning to remove barriers.

an Urban Agriculture use category that can be applied across all land use zones. The use category includes two sub-categories, described in the box above.

Other cities have also helped to facilitate urban agriculture activities by adapting zoning and regulatory controls. In 2010, the City of Seattle developed explicit language supportive of urban agriculture that:

- Allows urban farms as an accessory use without a permit up to 4,000 square feet of planting area. Urban Farms with more than 4,000 square feet of planting area are subject to an administrative conditional use permit process.
- Allows rooftop greenhouses a 15 foot exception to height limits as a rooftop feature, if the greenhouse is dedicated to food production in a multifamily, commercial, industrial, mixed-use, or downtown zone.
- Increases the number of chickens allowed on residential property from three to eight and allows other animals, including potbelly pigs. Seattle bans roosters from all zones.

4. Institute a City lease program.

Based on the mapping of potential properties and the review of City zoning, it is clear that the availability of land is not a limiting factor to increasing urban agriculture in Richmond. However, access to that land (private or public) and the related logistical and legal considerations can be barriers. The City of Richmond already coordinates with existing groups to provide access to land, including the Watershed Nursery and the Seed Lending Library. Developing standard lease language for the use of City-owned land will provide the City with a consistent response to interested groups and allow these groups to prepare their efforts accordingly to comply with City requirements (e.g., insurance, site setup, etc.).

The City can also work with urban agriculture groups to develop a template for a hold harmless agreement and a series of property use guidelines using the Lots of Crops materials as models. These documents would help facilitate land access for groups looking to develop urban agriculture operations on privately-owned property.

5. Pursue new locations for farmers' markets that maximize foot traffic, and coordinate with sponsors to market these activities.

Many organizations, especially the commercial farms and nurseries already located in the city, expressed interest in selling at Richmond farmers' markets, but questioned the locations of the current markets. For vendors to succeed at markets, they need to be selling significant volumes of goods, and many of the current Richmond markets do not attract enough shoppers to draw larger vendors. This, in turn, creates an incentive for Richmond residents who have the option of shopping at other cities' markets to do so, since they will find a greater selection of vendors and products there. The City should work with residents, vendors, and sponsors to identify potential locations for a farmers' market that would draw greater foot traffic and potentially draw shoppers from other nearby businesses who are already at the location "ready to buy." Suggestions included the Civic Center Plaza or the Target parking lot. Once a location is chosen, the City should help market the new site to ensure that a critical mass of vendors and shoppers will make the market a success.

6. Create an incentive program to encourage new retail sales locations for fresh fruits and vegetables in areas of Richmond not within a half mile of existing sales locations.

Identify existing locations for retail food sales, including grocery stores and corner markets, in Richmond and rate them on availability of fresh and nutritious food using the criteria developed by HEAL. Monitor and map these locations over time, and encourage new or expanded retail sales locations for fresh fruits and vegetables in areas that are not currently within a half mile of a store selling fresh produce.

7. Consider a City-sponsored pilot project to explore the potential for cooperative urban farms in Richmond.

If feasible, develop a pilot cooperative urban farm to examine the potential for this model in Richmond. The pilot project could potentially use City-owned land.

RESOURCES AND ACCESS

The City of Richmond is an integral partner in the development and expansion of urban agriculture across the city. These actions are potential steps the City can take to strategically direct resources such as land or grant application partnerships to community groups.

1. Develop an application process for using City-owned land.

The City of Richmond can develop a standard application process for groups or organizations seeking to gain access to public lands for the development of urban agriculture. This

application would provide the City with an effective evaluation method to ensure that applicants have the resources and knowledge necessary to be an effective partner. In addition, the City could develop and maintain a set of resources to make available to the public that would support and guide individuals and organizations interested in using City-owned land for urban agriculture activities.

2. Make equity a consideration for city resources.

The City of Richmond should develop a set of prioritization criteria for resources to ensure that support is available for community groups working in the areas of greatest need in Richmond. The maps included as an appendix to this document are one resource for understanding which areas are most in need of access to healthy foods. Using these maps and other socioeconomic and health data, the City should clearly identify criteria for defining need and should determine which neighborhoods should be targeted for resources to support new urban agriculture activities.

3. Provide discounted water/land lease rates and explore alternative water sources.

Land lease costs and water rates are often cited by organizations as a barrier to expanded activities. The City may be able to provide access to land at below-market rates or advocate for discounted agricultural water rates for urban agricultural uses. Groups that make an effort to showcase water conservation/reuse and low-water use techniques should be given

preference for this type of discounted rate by EBMUD. The City could also consider a pilot project to explore the costs and feasibility of building wells to tap into the aquifer that runs beneath much of Richmond.

4. Expand programs to provide compost to residents at low or no cost.

For home gardeners, soil and soil amendments remain a significant cost. The City should expand its existing compost programs and work to develop an agreement with Republic Services, the City's waste collector, to make compost more available to local gardeners at a low cost with home delivery.

5. Consider and study additional factors affecting water access in Richmond.

Many additional factors affect access to water in Richmond, and it will be critical for the City to explore and fully understand these issues and any concerns they may raise. Potential issues to study further include:

- *Well water:* Richmond's water table is less than eight feet deep in some locations, and the city has many wells, most of them inactive. How is well water regulated?
- *Greywater:* There is increasing interest in greywater, or water generated by domestic activities that render it non-potable but usable for irrigation and other secondary uses. Should this water be used for edibles?
- *Water rights:* Richmond has many streams and other bodies of water. Can residents tap these as sources of irrigation? If so, who should regulate this?

- *Water demand:* What impact would a large-scale expansion of home gardening or other forms of urban agriculture have on overall water demand?

6. Develop a list of books and websites that can support urban agriculture activities in Richmond, and coordinate with the Richmond Public Library to ensure that these books are available to residents.

Build a bibliography of books and websites that have information on gardening and urban agriculture that may be relevant to Richmond. Coordinate with the Library to ensure that these resources are available in the collection.

7. Create a list of local sources of seeds, seedlings, plants, soil amendments, gardening tools, irrigation supplies, and other urban agriculture supplies.

Develop a guide to local resources that can support home gardeners, community members, and others interested in pursuing urban agriculture projects. Make this list available on the City website and distribute it to urban agriculture organizations, schools, churches, neighborhood groups, and others.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training are two of the positive benefits of urban agriculture. As the collective practices and experiences accumulate in the City of Richmond, the opportunities for meaningful and ongoing information sharing will increase and become more directed. The City of Richmond is in a unique position to assist with this effort.

1. Coordinate and support existing food and agriculture-related businesses and new and emergent enterprises.

There are a number of successful for-profit agriculture-based businesses in Richmond today, including Annie's Annuals and Sunnyside Organics. The City of Richmond can look to these successful models to provide information and lessons learned to new and emergent businesses. Facilitating this coordination, communication and education is a service that the City can provide. The City can also provide guides to navigating the permitting process that might include distinctions between City and County policies, required sales permits and business licenses, and resources, such as information about the agricultural water rate available from EBMUD for commercial farms. In addition, there may be opportunities to facilitate partnerships between non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses with significant acreage available in Richmond.

2. Increase demand for healthy food to meet potential supply through education, communication and outreach.

A comment that was repeated in the questionnaire responses was the need to increase demand amongst City of Richmond residents for healthy food options. While there are numerous efforts being made to increase the amount of healthy food produced within the City, the related demand needs to keep pace. Richmond residents may need continued access to information and education about nutrition and cooking to encourage them to purchase

shares in a local CSA or visit the local farmers market.

3. Coordinate with workforce training programs.

A number of organizations, including Groundwork Richmond, EcoVillage Farm, Urban Tilth, and Rising Sun Energy Center, integrate urban agriculture programming with workforce training. The City of Richmond may have access to other information or programming related to worker training and skill development. Where possible, urban agriculture programs and existing workforce training programs should be coordinated.

4. Promote home gardening through resident education and incentives.

Much of the potential for expanding urban agriculture in Richmond lies in home gardens on residential lots. The City can foster these gardens by educating residents about the following:

- Benefits of home gardening;
- The potential for converting rear and side yards to gardening uses;
- Which edibles thrive in Richmond;
- Growing season in Richmond, including how many plantings are possible; and
- What the potential yield is for lots of varying sizes.

To provide this information, the City should consider creating informational materials to aid in the design and planting of typical residential

lots, the construction of raised beds, and the care of gardens and fruit trees, among other resources. Other resources may be available through local organizations, including 4-H clubs, County fairs, gardening stores, California Department of Agriculture, Contra Costa County, and the Farm Bureau.

5. Create an annual urban agriculture fair to promote programs and home gardening.

The City can develop an annual event, similar to a county fair, to create opportunities for residents and organizations to exhibit produce, share local foods, and learn about urban agriculture.

CONCLUSION

This assessment is intended to foster discussion and strategic thinking between the City of Richmond and the variety of energetic and enthusiastic groups working on urban agriculture related in Richmond today. Through strong coordination and collaboration, these groups can maximize the enthusiasm and energy around this activity to meet shared and individual goals.

Strategy Refinement and Action Plan

Using this assessment as a starting point, the City should work with the Urban Agriculture Community Advisory Group and others to refine strategies to address each of the major barriers identified in this assessment. These strategies should leverage the opportunities identified by assessment participants, and should also explore new solutions based on ideas generated at the Summit or in place in other cities and communities. Finally, the City should craft a

brief action plan identifying the individual, organization, or department responsible for implementing each identified solution.

From the early *ranchos* to the first wineries to the cut flower nurseries to the World War II victory gardens, Richmond's long and illustrious agricultural history sets the stage for agriculture to continue to play an active role in the community well into the twenty-first century and beyond. The future is bright for urban agriculture in Richmond, with a huge cast of players at the local, regional, state, and national enthusiastic about growing more food in Richmond's neighborhoods.

As implementation of the new City General Plan moves forward, the City has a key opportunity to ensure that the needs of urban agriculture are addressed in every aspect of City policy and practice, and that the rich resources of the community are leveraged to build on existing successes. Richmond residents envision a future in which the urban food system is local, equitable, and sustainable, and urban agriculture will play a critical role in realizing that vision.



City of Richmond | Health Initiatives
450 Civic Center Plaza
Richmond, California 94804-1630
(510) 620-6606
www.richmondhealth.org