



# PROPOSED DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTION ON COMMUNITY GARDENS

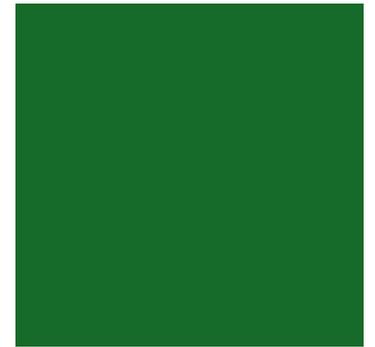
Cultivating a New Community  
Garden Program

Scott Reese  
Assistant Park and Recreation Director  
City of San Diego



# Overview

- Quick community garden history
- Brief look at what's different about today's community garden
- Where we were, are now and want to go
- Department Instruction overview
- Implementation timetable



# History Community Gardening

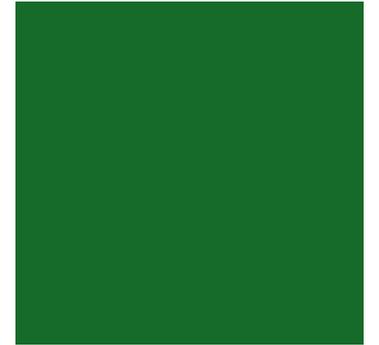
- European Beginnings
- Early American Community Gardens
- Pingree's Potato Patches- 1890's
- School Children's Gardens- Pre WWI
- Victorian Era "Garden City" movement- Pre WWI
- WWI- War Garden Commission
- Great Depression
- WWII - Victory Gardens



# More Recent History

## ● Grass Roots Evolution

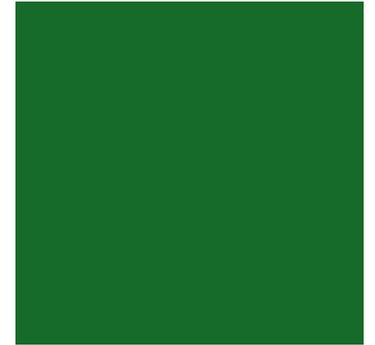
- Resurgence in 60's / 70's
- Urban movement in New York and Philadelphia
- Neighborhood organizations and development corporations
- Tool for blight removal, crime prevention, neighborhood organization and socialization
- Infill focus
- Spread from east coast to west coast



# Current History

## ● Park and Recreation Organization Involvement

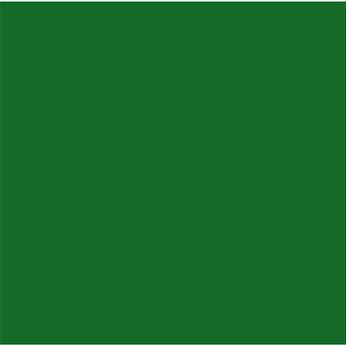
- Park and recreation agencies in 70's and 80's
- Large, planned, highly organized and developed gardens
- Significant and continuous growth since
- New wave of interest since 2000 related to health, nutrition, subsistence
- Department starts to see increase interest since 2000
- Community becomes actively involved since 2008



# Today's Community Gardens

- **Differ in motivation and organization**
  - Economic benefit secondary to social benefit
  - Seen as connection to nature
  - Connected to crime prevention
    - Provide unique social benefits not supplied by publicly created and maintained green space
    - Break down isolationist tendencies
    - Create sense of neighborliness
    - Provide symbolic sense of ownership
    - Augment activities by other neighborhood organizations





# Today's Community Gardens



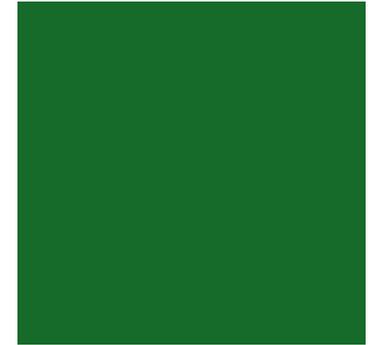
## Roles of today's community gardens

- Builds a sense of community
- Health Benefits
- Nature connection
- Satisfying work and exercise
- Starting point for community involvements
- Provides a symbolic sense of ownership
- Economic Benefits



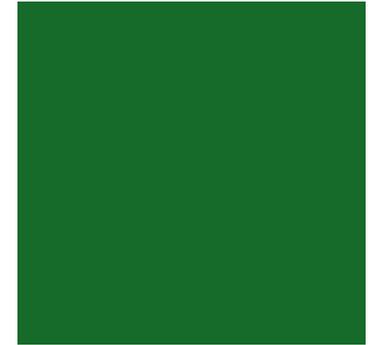
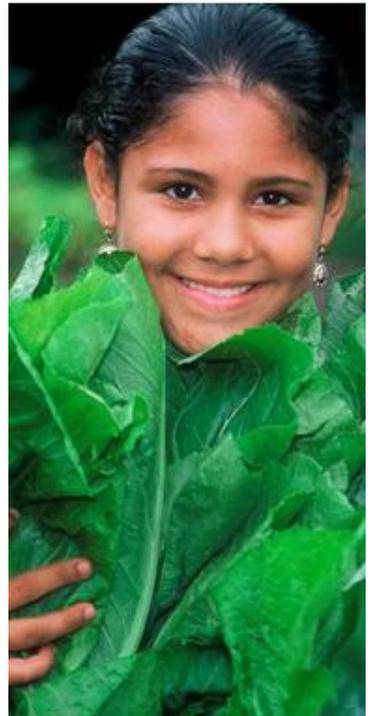
# Where We Were

- **No strongly expressed community interest**
  - We're a suburban community with yards for gardens
- **No economic or societal motivation**
  - Food and nutrition not recognized issues
- **No interest by individuals or local organizations**
  - Demands seem to be being met
- **No general policy roadmaps to facilitate the journey**
  - Even if you wanted to, you probably couldn't
- **No explicit policies for park planning and development**
  - Not a recognized park use and no requests
- **No practical experience within the agency**
  - Internal advocates absent



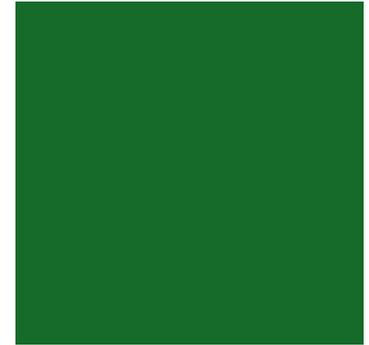
# Where We Are Now

- **Virtually no organized community garden program in Park System**
  - Two sites?
  - Non-prime land
  - Unofficial status
  - Small stealth gardens, small plots and little support infrastructure
  - Located in denser neighborhoods
  - No community garden guidelines standards, plans or procedures



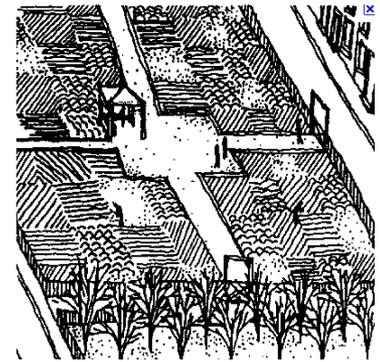
# Where Do We Want To Go

- **Citywide Park Master Plan**
- **Sites identification for community gardens**
  - Permanent larger sites
  - Smaller sites on community and neighborhood parks
  - Interim sites / interim uses on City / Park land
- **Partnerships**
  - Recreation Councils
  - Umbrella garden advocacy groups
  - Smaller site specific gardening groups
  - Private partnerships / sponsors
- **Gardening network**
  - Individuals
  - Organizations
  - Governments



# Why a Department Instruction

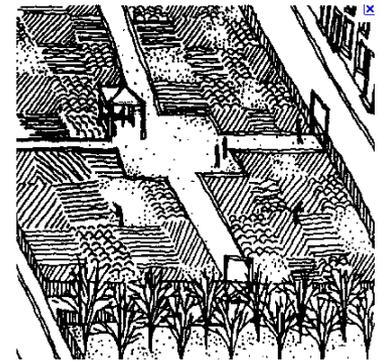
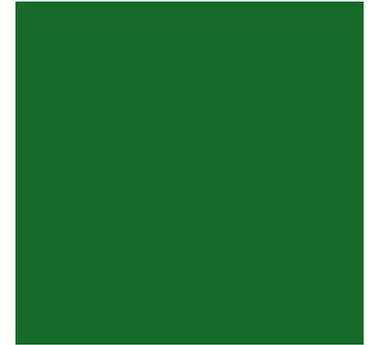
- Provides roadmap for consistent management of community garden development requests
  - Consistent approval processes and standardized forms
  - Planning and design tools
  - Stipulated outreach techniques
  - Helpful checklists
  - Operational guidelines and standards
  - Documented decisions
  - Alignment with other City and Department processes
  - Evaluation process
  - Exit strategy for unsuccessful projects
- Woven into existing City and Department planning, design and asset management processes



# What We Envision

## ● Site selection

- Community and neighborhood parks
- Cannot displace established active or passive uses
  - Non programmed; under used; in between; on the edge space
- Not on
  - Joint park and school sites
  - Open space, protected habitats, valley rims
  - Golf courses
  - Beaches
  - Campgrounds
  - Cemeteries
  - Designated heritage and historic sites



# What We Envision

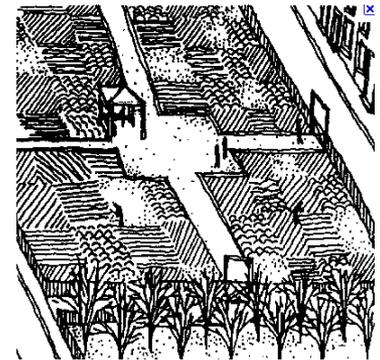
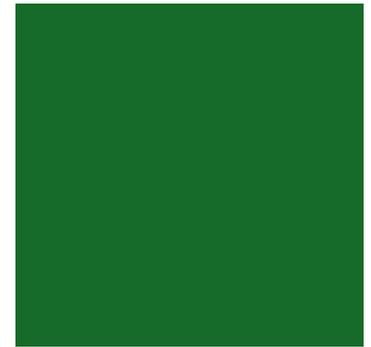


- **Department DI follows Development Services Department sponsored changes in City land development regulations**
  - **Driven by increasing number of requests from the growing number of community gardening organizations locally and across the country**
  - **Provides for vegetable, ornamental and demonstration gardens**
  - **For new facilities on existing sites**
    - Does not cover existing community gardens
    - Does not cover facilities added during creation of new park GDP (those will be incorporated in standard GDP process)
  - **Gardens will not displace existing uses**
-

# What Types of Community Gardens

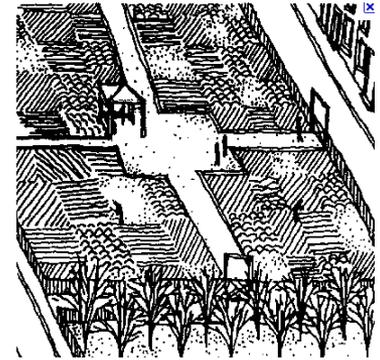
## ● Provides for different types of gardens

- Demonstration
- Ornamental display and arboreta
- Small vegetable / hobbyist
- Healing and Therapy
- Ecological Restoration
- School?



# Draft Community Garden Process

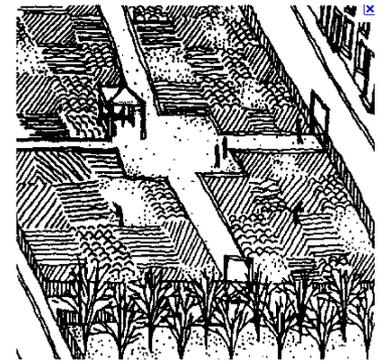
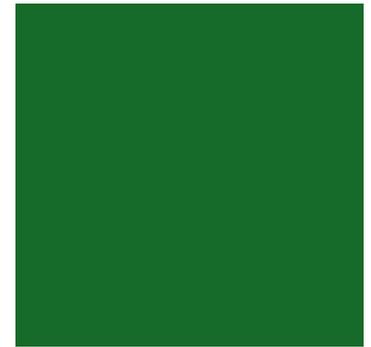
- Requires bona fide legally recognized partner or organization
- Partner works through Recreation Council or Area Committee
- Special Use Permit to operate for three years
- No cost / low cost for maintenance impact
  - Capital costs by partner organization
  - Operating costs by partner organization
  - Monitoring by City staff



# Draft Community Garden Process

## ● Garden design characteristics

- Optimally be one quarter (.25) acre in size
- Minimum number of individual plots twenty-five (25)
- Optimum size of each individual plot shall be 100 square feet (100 SF)
- Buildings and facilities shall comply with ADA requirements
  - Must provide a minimum of one raised accessible individual plot for every twenty-five (25)
- Not be located in prominent areas of a park where they may detract from the aesthetics of the park



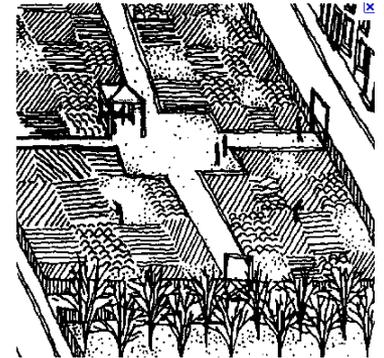
# Draft Community Garden Process

- **Employs existing processes and policies**

- City Council policy on community involvement
- Park General Plan Amendment Process

- **Five Stages**

- Application
  - Site Request
  - Site Reservation
  - Community Outreach / Petition
- Design
  - GDP Amendment Process
  - Park Board Approval



# Draft Community Garden Process

## ● Construction

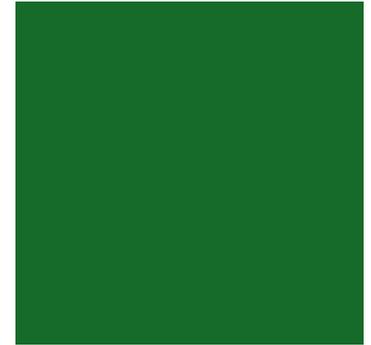
- Right of Entry Permit

## ● Operation

- Special Use Permit
- Facility Management Plan

## ● Evaluation

- Six month survey
- Annual survey
- Three year survey
- Issue oriented survey



# What's Included

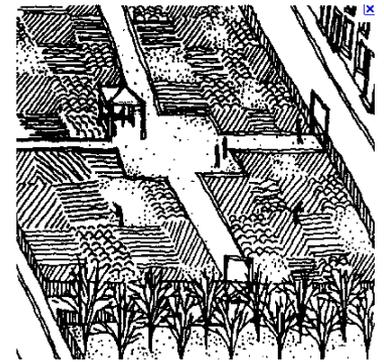
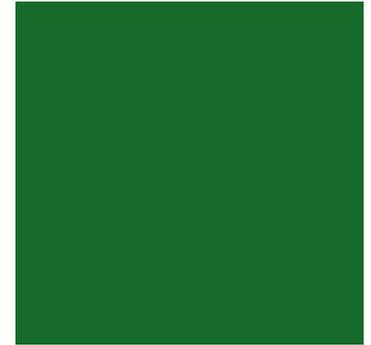
Community garden cookbook

## ● Site application and approval process

- Application process and forms
- Petition process and forms

## ● Site planning and design guidelines

- Consultant guidelines
- Garden Design guidelines



# What's Included

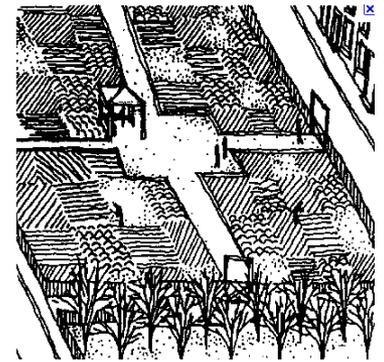
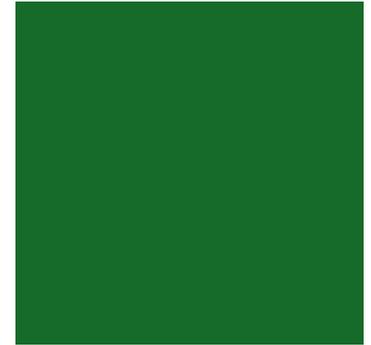
## Community garden cookbook

### ● Site operating instructions

- Maintenance standards and checklist
- Annual evaluation process and forms

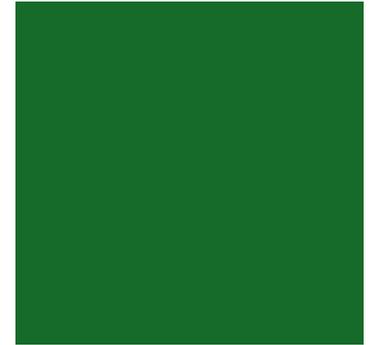
### ● Other tools and forms

- Sample Gardener contract
- Sample Garden rules and regulations
- Sample Roles and responsibilities
- Sample Right of Entry (to allow construction)
- Sample Special Use Permit (3 year term)



# What Are Organizational Challenges

- **Energetic Advocates Needed**
- **Energetic Opposition Expected**
- **Organizational competency**
  - 501 (3)(c)
  - Expertise to establish
  - Longevity to manage and sustain
- **Financial resources**
  - Funding to organize and outreach
  - Funding for general development plan amendment
  - Funding for construction and maintenance



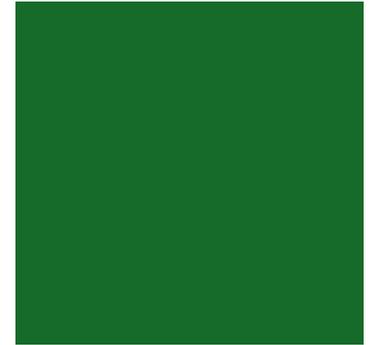
# What's Next

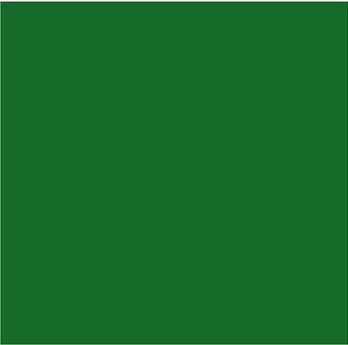
## ● Working schedule

- Information and outreach complete -June
- Staff training – July / August
- Requests open - August / September
- Applications reviewed - September/ October
- SUP's / ROE – October / November
- Garden construction begins – November / December

## ● Complex project schedules will take more time

- Funding requirements
- Environmental issues
- Community Concerns
- Applicant competency and resources





# Questions

- **Scott Reese**

Assistant Park and Recreation Director

[sreese@sandiego.gov](mailto:sreese@sandiego.gov)

