



GARDEN FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Recommended Action Plan

Prepared for the City of Fort Bragg

Created by Victory Gardens for Peace, An Initiative of Ecology Action 501c(3)

Recommended Action Plan Purpose

This document provides initial, general guidance for the establishment of Fort Bragg as a Garden Friendly Community (GFC), and was developed by Fort Bragg community members at a public community forum hosted on May 1st, 2019. This Recommended Action Plan is not meant to be limiting, or all encompassing, but simply suggests a general framework to guide initial GFC efforts.

GFC is a resolution with the purpose to galvanize communities through sustainable backyard and community gardening, to increase the health of residents, economies and ecologies in an equitable and just manner.

GFC will promote opportunities for engagement to all residents regardless of race, income level, color, gender, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or genetics.

Garden Friendly Community Objectives

- Increase the number and quality of low input, high yielding, sustainable community and backyard gardens in the City of Fort Bragg.
- Support the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee in their mission *to reduce GHG emissions; that will increase carbon storage; throughout the County, and that will prepare Mendocino County residents to reduce; or prevent, and to recover from or to better cope with climate-caused disasters, and; to serve as a model, partner, and source of inspiration to other jurisdictions to take on the challenge of resolving to confront the demands of climate change* (Mendocino County's Commitment and Mission to Fight Climate Change, 2019)
- Commit to a transparent and collaborative approach in establishing community and backyard gardens.
- Provide a sharable model for future communities, villages, towns, cities and states to adopt.

Recommended Action Plan

Community Involvement

- Host community forums to provide opportunity for public participation in GFC planning.
- Ensure an in-depth understanding of community needs and allow for continued community involvement through acquiring public feedback.
- Appoint core GFC committee members, with attention to specific focus areas, and develop a system for appointing committee members.
- Establish responsibilities and protocols for the committee members.
- Coordinate with existing groups and individuals that have similar focuses, such as: Bee City USA, Tree City USA, and Master Gardeners.
- Garner community involvement and excitement through initiating events and activities centered around gardening.
- Incorporate community service into the GFC framework, such as through donating produce to food banks, connecting with gleaners, initiating food swaps etc.
- Host regular meetings to ensure project focus and goals are maintained.

Garden Infrastructure

- Identify and designate land for a training and demonstration site that is highly visible and widely accessible to community members.
- Establish a seed bank/library and coordinate with existing seed banks/libraries to allow for public access to vital, open-pollinated, locally adapted seeds.
- Establish a tool lending library to stock sufficient garden tools and seed saving equipment for community use.
- Identify facilities to store organic soil amendments and compost for community access and work with local businesses to procure them.
- Pool materials for composting and connect with local businesses to recover additional resources.
- Provide opportunities for home growers to participate in existing farmers markets.

Land Access

- Identify and quantify available, appropriate land in the City of Fort Bragg.
- Explore incentives and opportunities for private land owners and businesses to make land available for gardens.
- Develop sample land lease agreements to serve landowners and garden managers in partnership.
- Streamline process for the applications and permits required for each garden.
- Identify any opportunities for gardens to be incorporated into development plans.

Education and Outreach

- Establish a network of gardening teachers with knowledge on best practices for sustainable gardens.
- Establish a database of garden resources and infrastructure available in Fort Bragg.
- Coordinate with existing garden organizations in Fort Bragg to host workshops, classes and to provide educational resources.
- Create a local GFC website and establish a presence on various social media platforms.
- Build relationships with organizations, churches, schools and businesses in Fort Bragg and involve them in the garden projects.
- Post at least one durable sign recognizing Fort Bragg as a Garden Friendly Community that is visible to traffic coming into the city.
- Create opportunities for tourists visiting Fort Bragg to visit the gardens and to learn about the GFC initiative, such as through garden tours.
- Spread the word about the GFC initiative through writing articles and engaging with local media.
- Utilize GFC as a job skills training opportunity through developing a local workforce to support new garden projects.
- Create merchandise with the GFC logo to spread awareness about the initiative.
- Highlight the health, economic, and environmental benefits to gardening when conducting outreach and providing educational opportunities.
- Assist outside jurisdictions with becoming Garden Friendly Communities.

Funding

- Work to secure potential grants and sponsors to help cover the costs of promotional materials and gardening infrastructure.
- Identify businesses that may be able to provide in-kind donations for the recommended infrastructure, and for the establishment of the new backyard and community gardens.
- Utilize gardens as a vehicle for tourism to generate income for the GFC initiative.
- Identify opportunities to create financial incentives for home gardens, such as tax incentives, discounts on water bills etc.
- Host plant sales and garden tours.
- Sell GFC merchandise.

Local Government Coordination

- Research current gardening restrictions and zoning laws.
- Explore opportunities for gardening to be further supported and less restricted within local policies and regulations.
- Engage and coordinate with local government officials.

Research and Data Collection

- Establish an impact measurement framework to aid assessment of the success of GFC ie. gardens created, soil built, carbon sequestered, number of community garden managers trained, water saved, calories grown, money saved, pollinator habitat created etc.
- Administer periodic community surveys to track the GFC efforts and goals.
- Identify case studies of other garden projects.
- Create a map of gardens in Fort Bragg open for public visitation.
- Collect data on the environmental, health and economic impacts of gardening on the city of Fort Bragg over time.
- Identify where community gardens and home gardens already exist and map them.
- Identify gaps in food security and research crops that are suitable for local soils, climate and culture.
- Determine how much money is spent on plants, seeds, soil amendments, and gardening tools and the economic benefits of those purchases to local businesses in Fort Bragg.
- Map the different soil types, climate zones, and water sources in Fort Bragg.

Accessibility

- Implement and maintain gardens in a manner that is accessible to the whole community, where benefits from the projects are shared equitably, and where opportunities for involvement are made available to all.
- Make information accessible to all community members, including those with no former gardening experience.
- Ensure some gardens and garden beds are wheelchair accessible.
- Offer resources in other languages including Spanish.
- Involve young people through local school programs and school gardens.
- Ensure gardens are established in a wide range of locations throughout Fort Bragg and that they are easily accessible to residents.
- Explore other ways to increase accessibility to local, organic food.

Commitment to Environmental Sustainability

- Identify techniques that demonstrate best practices for sustainable gardens and create a best practice framework to guide garden projects.
- Ensure a commitment to organic gardening, resource and soil conservation, composting, and mindful pest control.
- Include a focus on seed saving and seed sovereignty.
- Ensure methods employed are meeting the initiative's goals of sequestering carbon and helping to combat climate change.