

Needs Analysis and Assessment of Opportunities and Best Practices for Winter Communal Gardening Programming and Spaces in Dane County, WI

FALL 2024 PHASE I REPORT: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Photo courtesy of Rooted

Overview:

- Executive summary
- Project objectives
- Methodology
- Existing organizations
- Current programming
- Existing data
- Recent initiatives
- Barriers
- Next steps



Executive Summary:

- COMPILES EXISTING DATA ON THIS TOPIC;
- IDENTIFIES CURRENT DANE COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE COMMUNITY GARDENING OPPORTUNITIES TO RESIDENTS;
- EXPLORES POTENTIAL INITIATIVES TO FURTHER EXPAND COMMUNITY GARDENING ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING IN THE WINTER MONTHS;
- PROVIDES EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO EXPANDING COMMUNITY GARDENING PROGRAMMING AND INFRASTRUCTURE; AND
- OUTLINES NEXT STEPS THIS PROJECT WILL TAKE PLACE IN PHASE 2 STARTING IN EARLY 2025.



Project Objectives:

1. EXAMINE NEEDS, EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PROGRAMMING FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS
2. EVALUATE DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY GARDENS
3. INCREASED COMMUNITY GARDEN ENGAGEMENT DURING THE WINTER



Methodology:

- MET WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND AGENCIES ACROSS THE COUNTY
- COMPILED EXISTING DATA
- EVALUATED GAPS IN EXISTING DATA AND PROGRAMMING

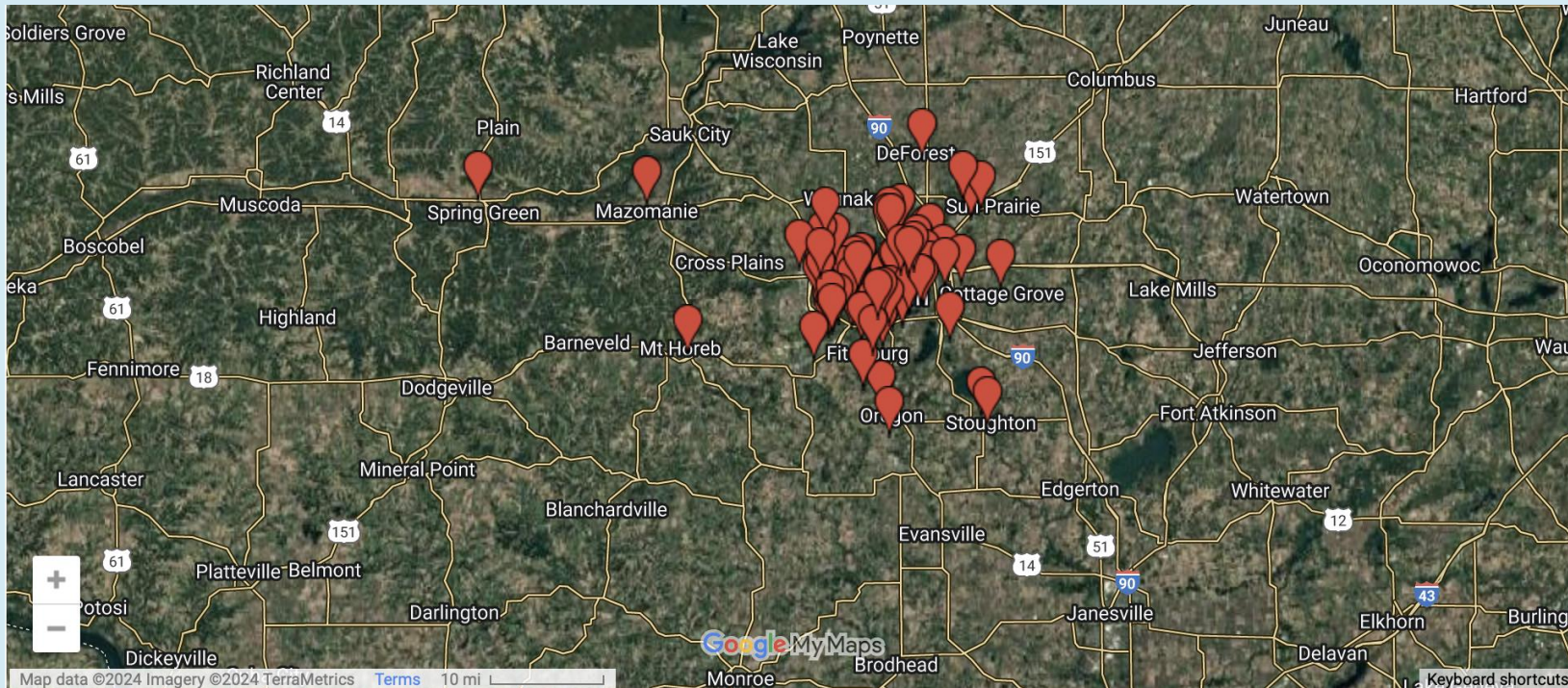


Photo courtesy of Dane County

12/19/24



Existing Organizations:

“DANE COUNTY ALREADY HAS
MANY ORGANIZATIONS THAT
ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH
COMMUNITY GARDENING.”



Rooted:

- Based in Madison, WI
- Committed to promoting healthier, sustainable neighborhoods through learning about and cultivating land and food
- Manages three community centers in Madison
 - Troy Farms, Badger Rock Neighborhood Center, Madison School Farm

Dane County Extension:

- Operates as a function of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and works with the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Supports educational programming for those experiencing food insecurity.
 - Manages the Dane County Extension Teaching Garden



Current Programming:

“SINCE COMMUNITY GARDENS
TEND TO OPERATE
DIFFERENTLY FROM GARDEN
TO GARDEN, THERE AREN'T
ANY STANDARDIZED
MEASURES THAT COMMUNITY
GARDENS ACROSS THE
COUNTY MUST TAKE TO
PROMOTE CAMARADERIE AND
ENGAGEMENT.”



Badger Rock Neighborhood Center:

- Educational farm and community garden
- Programming is targeted at youth
- Middle school students learn about gardening
- A regular workshop on connecting with the community during the holidays
- CommUNITY dinners
- A weekly community market
- Cultural cooking workshops
- Gardening workshops

Existing Data (Income):

OUT OF 2,619 RESPONDENTS:

- 1,106 GARDENERS REPORTED MAKING 30% OR BELOW THE AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)
- 382 GARDENERS REPORTED MAKING BETWEEN 30-50% OF THE AMI
- 274 GARDENERS REPORTED MAKING BETWEEN 50-80% OF THE AMI
- 516 GARDENERS REPORTED MAKING ABOVE 80% OF THE AMI
- 341 GARDENERS DID NOT REPORT INCOME DATA



Existing Data (Race):

- 25% OF GARDENERS WERE HISPANIC/LATINO;
- 22% WERE ASIAN/SOUTHEAST ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER;
- 6% WERE BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN;
- 3% WERE MULTI-RACIAL;
- 1% WERE NATIVE AMERICAN;
- 33% WERE WHITE/CAUCASIAN;
- 1% IDENTIFIED AS OTHER; AND
- 33% DID NOT SPECIFY THEIR RACE.



Recent Initiatives:

“WITH THE EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY GARDENS IN MADISON, OTHER TOWNS IN DANE COUNTY ALSO HAVE BEEN LOOKING TO GROW THEIR NUMBER OF COMMUNITY GARDENS. “

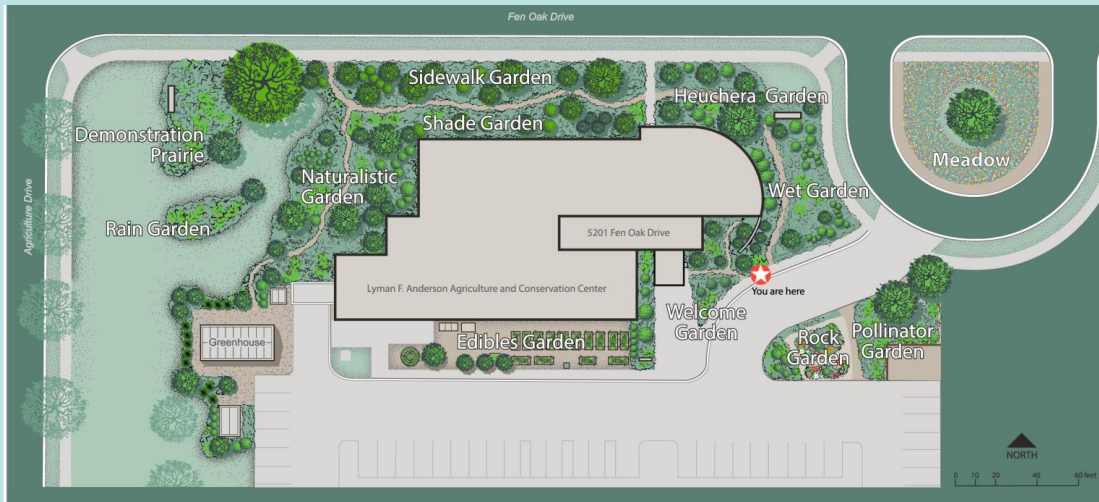


Photo courtesy of Anderson Farms



Anderson Farm Center:

- Located in Oregon, WI
- The center is a recent addition to a 310-acre farm
- Is a partnership with Rooted, Dane County Parks, Dane County Extension, and the Oregon Food Pantry
- In 2023, the farm grew over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce for three food pantries
- Center works with 17 Hmong families to ensure their access to community gardens and food.
- Working to create access to transportation and community-building events

Barriers:

- MANY PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE OF THE FACT THAT COMMUNITY GARDENS ARE AN OPTION AVAILABLE TO THEM;
- SOME PEOPLE DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH A COMMUNITY GARDEN;
- THERE IS A LACK OF LEADERSHIP TO CREATE AND/OR RUN THESE GARDENS SUSTAINABLY; AND
- THERE ARE LANGUAGE BARRIERS THAT EXIST THAT PREVENT PEOPLE FROM BEING INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY GARDENS.



Next Steps:



Photo courtesy of Rooted

- Categorize gaps and barriers identified in Phase 1
- Distribute a survey to residents, including community gardeners, non-gardeners, and those experiencing food insecurity
 - Survey will ask about demographics, current involvement in community gardening, needs, what programming community members would be interested in, additional perceived barriers to accessing community gardens, and respondents' additional ideas for community gardening and engagement.
- Issue a report with our findings and final recommendations



Questions?

