

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## WEST FRESNO URBAN GARDEN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The West Fresno Urban Garden Implementation Plan identifies near-term goals to construct a community garden, and long-term goals of increasing capacity, outreach, partnerships and coordination to create a network of community gardens and food distribution in West Fresno, California. West Fresno is a neighborhood in the City of Fresno with a population of 35,000. Its land use pattern is a mix of industrial and commercial sites interspersed with residential properties. Compared to other neighborhoods, West Fresno lacks some public services and amenities. It is divided from the rest of City of Fresno by freeways and there are many brownfield sites that contribute to blighting influences.

Despite these challenges, the community has a strong sense of pride and resilience, and a desire to improve its physical and environmental health.

In October 2011, the Fresno Youth Council for Sustainable Communities (FYC), guided by the Center for Multicultural Cooperation (CMC), sought to address two concerns through one project: addressing blight and food security issues through the construction of one community garden on a brownfield in West Fresno. With support from EPA, FYC and CMC identified a site upon which to construct a community garden. After gathering information, interviewing stakeholders, and conducting research there was a realization that in order to address the blight and food security concerns effectively, the construction of a community garden would just be the beginning.

The initial goal of the project was for the project team (see text box) to support FYC and CMC to identify, assess and begin the initial steps in planning and constructing a community garden on a brownfield in West Fresno. To plan for the community garden, the project team:

- Assisted FYC and CMC in identifying potential brownfield sites for the first community garden in West Fresno
- Assisted FYC in conducting an environmental history on the potential garden sites
- Identified potential partners for urban garden support
- Hosted a workshop to inform and obtain ideas from the community
- Created an Implementation Plan with short- and long-term sustainability elements  
(available at: [www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields))

### PROJECT HISTORY

The project builds upon a previous EPA supported project entitled, "Transforming the Golden Westside" ([www.wpa.gov/region9/brownfields/fresno/W/index.html](http://www.wpa.gov/region9/brownfields/fresno/W/index.html)). This community engagement project was successful in large part because of the participation of CMC and FYC at community meetings. Project accomplishments include:

- Presentations by national and local experts to the community
- Gathering community input on brownfields and reuse ideas
- Engaging Fresno Youth Council
- Educating the community on brownfields redevelopment
- Understanding brownfields tools
- Creating a Community Action Plan

### PROJECT TEAM

- EPA Region 9 staff
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Fresno Metro Ministry
- Fresno County Economic Opportunities Council
- Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR)
- SRA International, Inc.

### CONTACT

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## PHASE I

The overall project goal was to identify a site for a pilot community garden. The selected site is on the corner of Belgravia and Fairview Streets, adjacent to Edison High School and Computech Middle School. It is composed of portions of parcels owned by the Fresno Unified School District and the City of Fresno. The site area is approximately 1.50 acres, 600 feet wide and 100 feet deep. The initial phase includes the following:

- Planting areas for about 75-100 people – several factors determine the type of planting area, such as nature and condition of the soil, user requirements, and disabled access
- Gathering areas for gardeners to congregate, such as plazas, sitting areas, playground
- Teaching area for instruction, such as a small amphitheater with semi-circular seating
- Support areas, such as tool and supply storage, and composting
- Pedestrian/bicycle path, access areas and landscaping
- Expansion area to be reserved for future expansion, and which may require clearing and landscaping
- Additional elements and features to potentially be located in one of the areas above, include: bulletin board; farm stand to sell produce; decorative fence and public art – donated or community-provided art; decorative shading covering portions of the teaching and gathering areas
- Utilities for the first phase include water and irrigation

Additional planning activities and meetings are necessary to refine the building program, construction budget, possible project phasing, fundraising, and stakeholder organizing. Planning will also address the construction program in the expansion areas.

## PHASE II AND NEXT STEPS

Over the course of the project, FYC and CMC determined that building this initial garden will be the first step. To ensure the continued operation of this first garden and the vision of FYC and CMC for redevelopment and food security in West Fresno, an expanded network of community gardens, food distribution, and community education, the following activities are necessary:

- Obtain program management assistance, primarily through technical assistance, partnerships, funding and capacity building
- Conduct brownfields assessment work on the property
- Strengthen ties with partners and participants to help carry out planning and implementation of development; design, site identification, analysis and acquisition; community gardens construction; type of operations at each garden; food distribution; education programs
- Conduct additional planning and outreach activities
- Obtain funding and in-kind contributions for program management and operations
- Work with the City of Fresno to modify policy and permit requirements for community gardens
- Obtain agreements for the planning, design and construction of a community garden network to: plan and build; operate and manage; distribute food; obtain funding and in-kind contributions; coordinate school garden activities with the community garden network; and coordinate ancillary programs, such as art, beautification and education, and volunteer participation programs
- Obtain assistance for coordination, operation, construction and maintenance activities in the effort to create a thriving urban community garden network

### THE FRESNO YOUTH COUNCIL

The Fresno Youth Council for Sustainable Communities is a partnership between the California Center for Civic Participation, the Center for Multicultural Cooperation, and the Wangari Maathai Center. Its goals are to develop and deploy well-prepared youth advocates in fast-moving regional and statewide decision-making processes in the sustainability realm.



CMC guided a youth-led brownfields urban garden and food project in southwest Fresno. CMC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides quality youth leadership. CMC coordinates the Fresno Youth Council. ([www.cmcweb.org](http://www.cmcweb.org)).

