

**Obtaining and the Working to Create  
a Sustainable Community Landscape  
on Vacant Lots (in Chicago)**

2/15/2014

Bill Morrisett

[www.growwoodlawn.org](http://www.growwoodlawn.org)

# West Woodlawn – 63<sup>rd</sup> to 65<sup>th</sup>, Eberhart to Cottage Grove



# Vacant Lots

## Possibilities

- Landscaping - Small, low-maintenance patches of landscaping in a lot, or a larger-scale project.
- Food growing - community garden or urban agriculture.
- Extras - Paths, benches, outdoor art, dog area
- Mix and match – combine landscaping, food growing, art, etc.

# Vacant Lot Project Steps

## Steps

1. Select and secure a lot
2. Organize, set goals, design space
3. Make a plan (costs, resources, timeline)
4. Implement the plan

# Who Owns the Lot?

## 1. Chicago City Owned Land Inventory (spreadsheet) (Menu > Download > select file type)

14-Digit PIN #	Stre Dir.	Street Name	Type	Sq. Ft.	Ward	Community
20-22-212-029-0000	6416 S	CHAMPLAIN AVE	AVE	3059	20	WOODLAWN
20-22-213-006-0000	6419 S	CHAMPLAIN AVE	AVE	3055	20	WOODLAWN
20-22-213-007-0000	6421 S	CHAMPLAIN AVE	AVE	3106	20	WOODLAWN

## 2. CookViewer



**Attributes**

6416 S CHAMPLAIN AVE  
CHICAGO,

PIN:  
20222120290000

## 3. Cook County Recorder of Deeds

Recorded Date	PIN	Type Desc.	Doc. #	1st Grantor	1st Grantee	1st Prior Doc#
3/21/2006	20-22-212-029-0000	DEED	0608035078	COOK COUNTY CLERK	CHICAGO	

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grantee: Chicago. This lot is city-owned.
- If not a city-owned lot, for \$2.50 you can download a deed document that has owner's name and address.

# Water



Tamper-proof  
Cap



Hose Protection  
Ramp

Ellis View, rain barrels



Irrigation – drip  
lines, sprinkler  
system



275 gallon ICB Tote



Water from a building



Rainwater Catchment System



Can you use rainwater  
from a roof to grow  
food? Careful testing  
recommended!

Draught Tolerant Plants



# Secure The Lot

- City-owned
- Privately owned
- NeighborSpace – land trust

# COMMUNITY Gardening

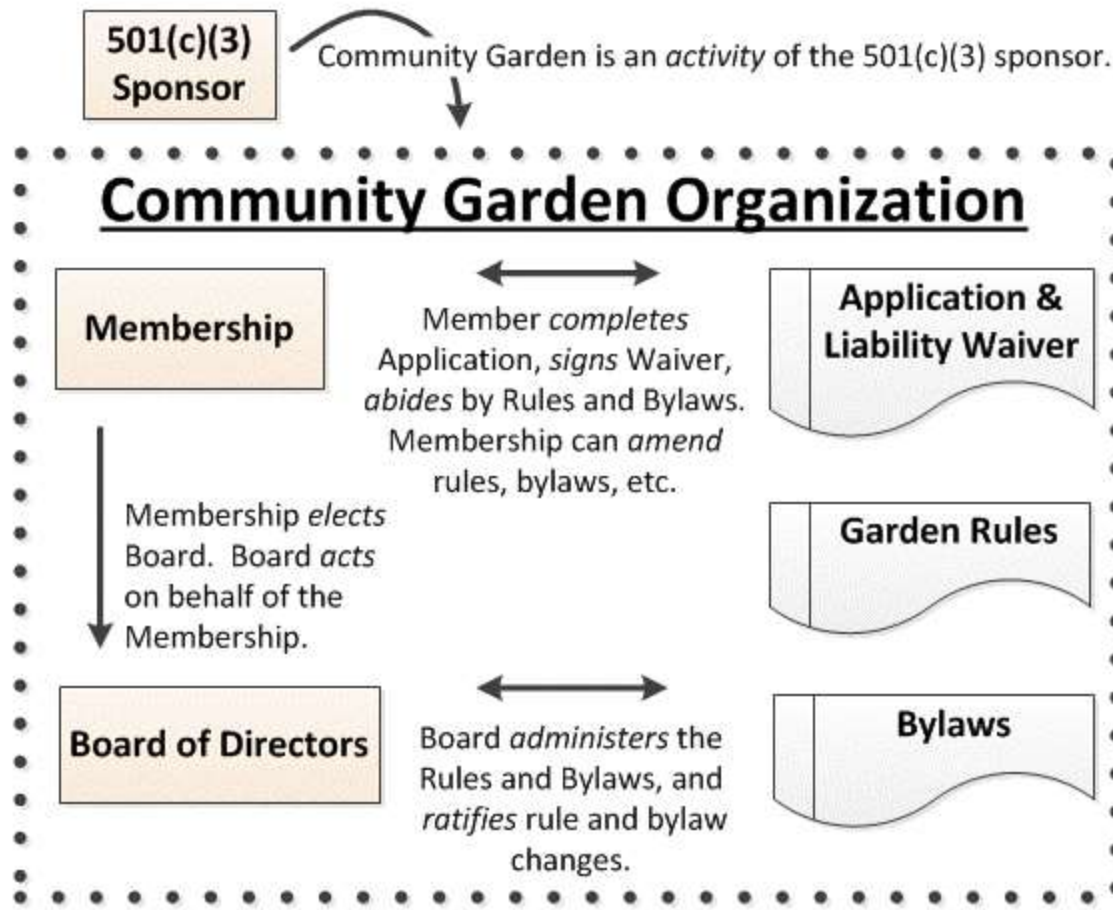
- Start
- Keep it going
- Make it fun
  - weekly social hour
  - monthly
  - end of season harvest celebration
  - kids events

# Planning Process

- *The 'No-Plan' Plan*
- *Bottom Up*
- *Top Down*

# Community Garden Organization

*One model for a community garden organization (on a city-owned lot)*



## -Growing Food-

# Plot Assignments and Garden Rules

Allotment. Plots are individually 'owned' for a season



Shared Effort and Shared Harvest. Much or all of the garden space is worked together, and those contributing to the effort harvest what they need for their family.



Shared Effort and Food Pantry Harvest. The gardening effort is shared and the produce goes mostly to food pantries, etc.

# Chicago Urban Agricultural Ordinance



Growing Home Wood Street Urban Farm  
growinghomeinc.org

- **Urban Farm.** For-profit or non-profit. Grows food to be sold.
- **Community Garden.** Maintained by volunteers. Plants grown are intended for personal use, for charity, or community beautification. Selling surplus harvest is allowed “if the sales are accessory or subordinate” in purpose.



62<sup>nd</sup> & Dorchester Community garden

Community garden max size: 25,000 sq. ft. (100' x 250' for example)

# Soil and Compost



MICRONUTRIENT	PPM	SOIL RANGE	MICRONUTRIENT	PPM	SOIL RANGE
Boron (B)	0.6	0.1-2.0	Copper (Cu)	0.7	0.3-8.0
Manganese (Mn)	4.7	3 - 20	Iron (Fe)	1.6	1.0- 40
Zinc (Zn)	40.1	0.1- 70	Sulfur (S)	34.3	1.0- 40

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SOIL pH	6.8	NITROGEN: NO3-N =	17 ppm
BUFFER pH	6.9		

NUTRIENT LEVELS: PPM	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Phosphorus (P)	44	XX		
Potassium (K)	277	XX		
Calcium (Ca)	2117	XX		
Magnesium (Mg)	240	XX		

CATION EXCH CAP	PERCENT BASE SATURATION	MICRONUTRIENT LEVELS
14.1 Meq/100g	K= 4.7 Mg=13.1 Ca=70.2	ALL NORMAL
EXTRACTABLE ALUMINUM:	6 ppm (Soil range: 10-250 ppm)	
EXTRACTED LEAD (PB)	21 PPM.	ESTIMATED TOTAL LEAD IS 290 PPM.



Compost delivery

- Check for rubble
- Soil test: plant nutrients, lead, other heavy metals. Univ. Mass. Amherst, StatAnalysis (local)
- Avoid trucking in soil
- Fruits & Vegetables – 12” to 24” of compost. Dwarf apple, raspberry, blackberry possible.
- Ornamentals – raised beds (planters), berms, ‘rubble holes’.

# Raised Beds

Rebuilding Exchange – used lumber. Hard wood and ‘Old wood’ last longer. 2”x 12” boards work well. Avoid treated wood and plywood!

Reduce rotting of wood sides: Brick footings, plastic on inside wall.

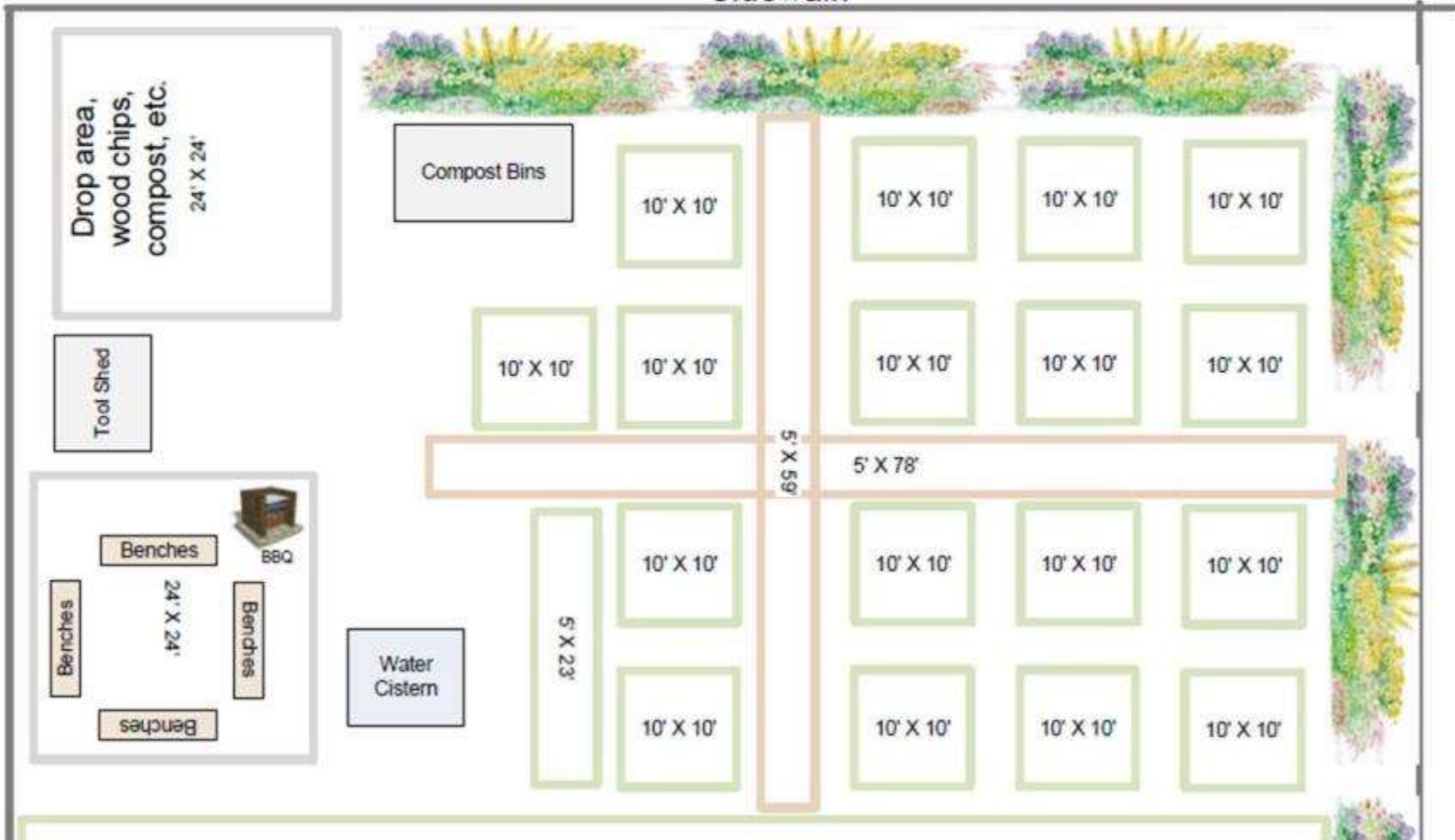


Mozart's Garden, 800 N Mozart

64<sup>th</sup> & Cottage Grove, SW Corner  
Community Garden



Sidewalk





source: Schreiber Park Ruby Garden, Rogers Park, [www.therubygarden.com](http://www.therubygarden.com)

# Community Garden - Implementation



source: Schreiber Park Ruby Garden, Rogers Park, [www.therubygarden.com](http://www.therubygarden.com)

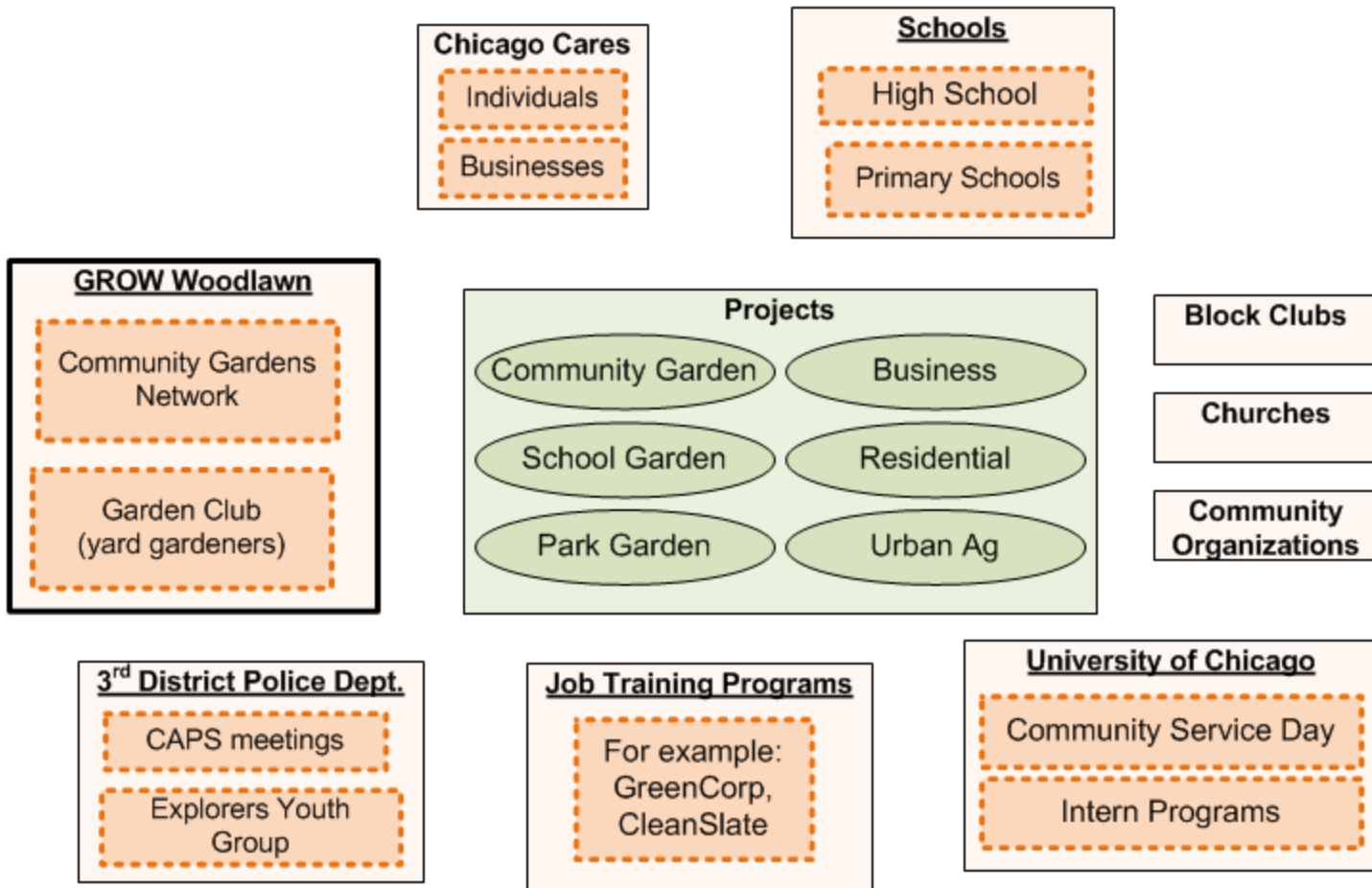
# Resources for a Vacant Lot Project

- **Connecting Chicago Community Gardens (CCCG)**
- **Neighborhood gardening organization**
- **Openlands**
- **NeighborSpace**
- **Chicago Cares**
- **University community service programs**

# Community Greening/Art Projects

<b>Where</b>	Vacant lot (city or private), school, park, residential block, business block.
<b>What</b>	Grow food, landscaping, paths, benches, pergola, topiary, pots, planters, raised beds, tool shed, water cistern, irrigation system, compost bins, barbecue/fire pit, outdoor art (DIY wood, concrete, mosaics, murals, blacktop painting – map/art/line games)
<b>Who</b>	Block club, church group, school, social services organization (ex-offender program, juveniles-at-risk, etc.), FOTP, business sponsor

## Woodlawn Greening and Beautification Projects



**Brickyard Garden**



**Mosaic Stepping Stone Project**



**65th & Woodlawn**



**Till Learning Garden**



**62nd & Dorchester**



**62nd & St. Lawrence**



**65th Place & Blackstone**



**William Hill Sculpture Garden**



**60th & St. Lawrence**



# Woodlawn Community Gardens - 2013





# Parkway Planters

**5600 – 5900 N Ridge**



**1300 W. Devon in Winter**



Planters are maintained by Edgewater Triangle Neighbors Assoc. (ETNA)  
Contact Susan Darnall to volunteer.



Contact Info:

Bill Morrisett [morrisett@midwestcyber.com](mailto:morrisett@midwestcyber.com)