
Appendix B

Consultation at Sustainable Food Leaders Forum - Food Garden Mapping

The Food Garden Mapping group exercise was held at the Sustainable Food Leaders Forum held on March 20th 2013 to obtain community input into the establishment of a formal process for assessing community garden / urban agriculture proposals. The Forum included representation from: community gardens; Permaculture Inner North; Transition Darebin; Cultivating Communities; Fruit Squad; Northcote Uniting Church; Darebin Sustainability Institute; East Preston Sustainability Street and interested community members.

Existing Community Gardens as well as the potential sites identified by Council were presented on a map and tabled as part of a group exercise. Four groups of 7-8 participants were asked to:

- I. Review the map and add any key potential sites they felt were missing and,
- II. Discuss and document the most important considerations for identifying potential food / community garden sites.

Results

- I. Additional sites / reasons put forward by the groups:
 - Train stations, such as Croxton and Thornbury because train stations can capture or are a source of water, and offer passive surveillance to discourage vandalism.
 - VicTrack land such as South Crescent in Fairfield which takes in Dennis and Fairfield train stations.
 - Adjacent to bike paths – infrastructure such as bike sheds, toilet blocks etc. can provide opportunities for water capture / storage.
 - All vacant land associated with public transport routes because it is highly accessible.
 - Melbourne Water pipeline from Reservoir to West Preston (i.e. extending the Cheddar Road Median water pipe site).
 - School gardens because they often have spare land and can connect with people in the school community who lack space. An example is Newlands Primary school.
 - Every Department of Housing Services (DHS) public housing estate should have a community garden.
 - Pitcher Park / sports field and clubhouse / children's playground, Alphington has the space and potential community support for a community garden.
 - The site of the now closed East Preston Primary School, Corner Sylvester Grove and Highview Road, Preston has lots of open space for a community garden
 - Golf courses could convert part of their grounds to a community garden.
- II. Most important considerations for identifying food / community garden sites
 - Any open space could be a potential site even if the local community is not ready to commit immediately to managing it.
 - Identifying local community groups who are committed to starting and managing the garden ongoing
 - Use the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas (SEIFA) to identify and prioritise areas of disadvantage for food / community garden development
 - The co-location of community facilities such as community centres, sports grounds etc. may create a community 'hub' which could support a community garden.

Particularly where these are located in highly trafficked areas / near public transport. For example, Sprout is close to the Thornbury train station which increases visibility and opportunities to tend the garden before and after work.

- High visibility / highly trafficked sites are preferable to enable community gardens which are not fenced off or locked to increase the perception of social inclusiveness.

III. Other suggestions

- Build community capacity to advocate on behalf of community / food gardens and urban agriculture. For example Sustainability Street leaders could canvas potential community garden sites
- Mail drop in the area of an identified potential community garden site to gauge level of interest before committing to site development
- Develop a pilot program for community gardens and support it with training on how to start a community garden