

Boston's Community Gardens

Strategic Plan

2003– 2008

Boston Natural Areas Network
September 2003

Case Associates

Boston's Community Gardens

Strategic Plan: 2003– 2005



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As with community gardens, the development of this plan is the result of individual commitment and collective actions.

We are grateful to over one hundred gardeners who attended Community Garden Council meetings in this pilot year.

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A special thank-you to Betsy Johnson who began this project as the BNAN staff member managing the development of the strategic plan and continued as a Task Force member representing the South End Lower Roxbury Land Trust when she left to pursue new challenges.

We are grateful for the support of an anonymous foundation and The Boston Foundation which made this project possible.

We appreciate the fine work of Case Associates led by Electa Sevier throughout the development of the plan.

Finally, at Boston Natural Areas Network, Kim Kudrna, Joanne Whitehead and Jeremy Dick, our community garden staff, work hard to support community gardens in every way possible.

Valerie Burns
President
Boston Natural Areas Network

Executive Summary

This document lays out for the first time in their 30 year history a Vision and Strategic Plan for the community gardens of Boston over the next five years (2003 through 2008), in order to secure a sustainable future for the city's 178 gardens. This is the product of many gardeners working through the city-wide Community Garden Council with support from the Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN). The process was facilitated by Electa Sevier, a Director with Case Associates.

An Overview of the Process

This strategic planning process was born out of the idea of a city-wide Community Garden Council. BNAN initiated a city-wide Community Garden Council in 2002, and has staffed the effort to bring together gardeners from across the city to address issues facing community gardens in Boston. At this time, the Council is an ad hoc, volunteer organization with participation open to all gardeners.

In the fall of 2002, BNAN with the Community Garden Council launched a strategic planning initiative funded by a grant from an anonymous foundation and The Boston Foundation through BNAN. BNAN with the Council worked to develop the RFP (request for proposals), reviewed the responses, and interviewed the finalists.

A Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) was established to develop the vision and plan for community gardens. The task force was made up of gardeners from around the city. Working with Case Associates, they researched the current state of community gardens in Boston and identified the strategic issues facing the gardens. An important part of this process was a full day Visioning Session open to all gardeners (see Appendix 5). At this session gardeners learned about the current state of community gardens throughout the city and the issues they all faced. Through a series of exercises and breakout group, the gardeners determined the components for their vision of the future of Boston's community gardens and set priorities for achieving this vision.

The Vision Statement and Strategic Plan that follow are a culmination of the work of the Strategic Planning Task Force, the Community Garden Council and the participants of the Visioning Session.

The Vision Statement

This document is a vision for the future of Boston's community gardens. It was developed by gardeners involved in community gardens today, informed by data on the current state and interviews with key garden partners. We have developed an ambitious vision for our sustainable garden system over the next five years. Some of what is envisioned is already embodied in the gardens today, and these components need to be nurtured and strengthened. Others are what we hope for in the future.

In the year 2008, community gardens **are recognized for the range of benefits** they bring to the communities in which they flourish.

- ⊗ Community gardens are a source of fresh and healthy food for the gardeners, often food that is a critical supplement to a family's resources.
- ⊗ Gardens are integral to the active living of Boston's citizens, providing a source of recreation and bringing people outdoors.
- ⊗ Having a community garden improves that community's environment by creating places of healthy, lead-free soil, and creating green landscapes of natural beauty to benefit all of the senses.
- ⊗ Boston's gardens are available and accessible to all of their neighbors. The gardens' impact on their communities extends beyond the beauty of the garden, to the sense of neighborhood they foster: gardens bring neighbors together.
- ⊗ A well-tended community garden indicates a well-tended neighborhood. Community gardens are at the cornerstone of neighborhood revitalization, deterring crime and beautifying areas. Community gardens enhance the property values of the homes, businesses, and lots surrounding them.

Community gardens are **integral to the larger environmental system** within Boston, and are a part of city planning. There are almost as many gardens as there are playgrounds and basketball courts in Boston, and they are just as essential to the public health and quality of life of the Boston resident.

- ⊗ In our community garden vision, we see a city where every resident has the opportunity to garden in an urban environment. The city is known for having the most community gardens per person of any city in the US, and every neighborhood has access to a garden.
- ⊗ We see a city that has committed to community gardening and helps support the gardens as it does the parks by providing critical services to the gardens. In Boston, community gardens are a critical public resource, essential to public health, and supported by the city.
- ⊗ While Boston's population continues to grow and the city continues to build housing for people of all incomes, gardens are built into the greater development plan for the city. In this way, long-term gardeners are able to stay in the city, and new residents of the city are able to reap the benefits of the community gardens.

The community garden system of Boston's future includes **a network of supports** built on strong public stewardship.

- ⊗ All of the gardens have a strong organizational structure, with both good leadership and the involvement of the gardeners. These garden groups are supported by organizations and informal networks that provide resources when needed.
- ⊗ The horticultural education and organizational needs of gardens are met through a centralized source that helps ensure that each garden and gardener can flourish.
- ⊗ With support from the city for infrastructure, community gardens are self-managing and productive.

Community gardeners and their organizations are a **political force** in the city. They are one of the largest volunteer constituencies in Boston, and a large percentage of these people vote. Community gardens and their gardeners impact political decisions within the city.

- ⊗ Boston's elected officials support community gardeners and in 2008 these officials all proudly wear the title of "Openly Green."
- ⊗ Candidates for elected office actively seek the endorsement of Boston's community gardeners.
- ⊗ The communities with gardens have active citizens and strong neighborhoods. In our vision, the gardens are at the center of communal efforts, some political, many social and educational.

As Boston continues to grow as a vibrant multi-cultural city, gardens play a key role in **bringing together people from all walks of life**. At a community garden in Boston you see people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds, speaking a wide variety of languages, gardening side by side.

- ⊗ Community gardens are used by groups throughout the city to bring people together to experience different cultures and backgrounds.
- ⊗ The city's youth are active participants in community gardens. This participation often begins at school, because all of Boston's public schools have gardens. In addition, gardening is a component of the city's efforts to build healthy families.
- ⊗ Gardens create healthy citizens of all ages, allowing people to connect with the land and the environment through gardening. Gardening allows people to work on the spiritual, mental and physical well-being.
- ⊗ Gardens promote courtesy and civility by giving people the opportunity to work together.

Our vision is of community gardens that are world-class, and of a community garden system that is a model for other cities.

Objectives and Strategies to Achieve Our Vision

Objective 1: Increase the level of stewardship of community gardens

Strategies

- a) Formalize the role, structure and leadership of the citywide Community Garden Council
- b) Raise funds to support staff for the Council, and other community garden needs as appropriate
- c) Educate gardeners on their shared responsibility to care for their community gardens
- d) Build stewardship education and awareness into the educational component of the support system

Objective 2: Forge a common identity for the community gardens of Boston

Strategies

- a) Adopt a common logo and/or signage for all the community gardens
- b) Adopt common standards around basic upkeep and organization

- c) Determine a base level of resources that every community garden should have (i.e., all are accessible to all people) and develop a plan for achieving this base line
- d) Hold special events around the gardens on a city-wide basis

Objective 3: Create a unified voice for gardens and gardeners

Strategies

- a) Build the Community Garden Council into a city-wide “organization” by expanding membership to individual gardeners, creating a database with contact information and educating the members how to act as a group
- b) Develop a garden advocacy agenda and mobilize the council membership to take action
 - i. Land preservation
 - ii. Resource procurement
 - iii. Other key issues

Objective 4: Develop a resource relationship with the City and other public providers to address the top three resource issues: water, compost/soil amendments, and trash removal, while continuing and strengthening the current government support of capital efforts

Strategies

- a) Bring the relevant parties to the table to consider options for addressing each
 - i. Create partnership or shared solutions for these issues
 - ii. Pilot or test the ideas
- b) Develop a political strategy and build this into the garden advocacy agenda

Objective 5: Build a support system for community gardens

Strategies

- a) Develop partnerships with organizations and institutions to provide support to the community garden system (e.g., BNAN, Trustees of the Reservation, universities, etc.)
 - i. Develop additional sources of funding to sustain these partnerships
 - ii. Approach the educational and healthcare institutions in Boston for support
- b) Build the amount of expertise and resources that exist for gardens and gardeners
 - i. Support the existing programs (MUG, etc.)
 - ii. Work with partners to develop any new programs
- c) Increase the ease with which gardens and gardeners can access the support system

- i. Identify and implement technical solutions (i.e., website, centralized database, etc.)
- d) Reach out to gardens without an organizational structure and help them put one in place

Objective 6: Preserve existing community garden land and expand community gardening to more sites focusing on neighborhoods underserved by gardens

Strategies

- a) Develop a political strategy on a local, city and state level, and build this into the garden advocacy agenda
- b) Build alliances with affinity groups (park advocates, clean-air groups, etc.)
- c) Build alliances with non-traditional allies (housing organizations, community development groups, etc.)

Objective 7: Connect community gardens to city-wide issues to increase the inclusiveness of gardening and the support for community gardens

Strategies

- a) Determine those issues that have clear connections to gardening including:
 - i. Public health issues of active living and nutrition
 - ii. Seniors
 - iii. Environmental education for youth
 - iv. Community building within a city of great diversity
- b) Work with non-gardening organizations to help them realize that community gardening can be used as vehicle to help them achieve their mission

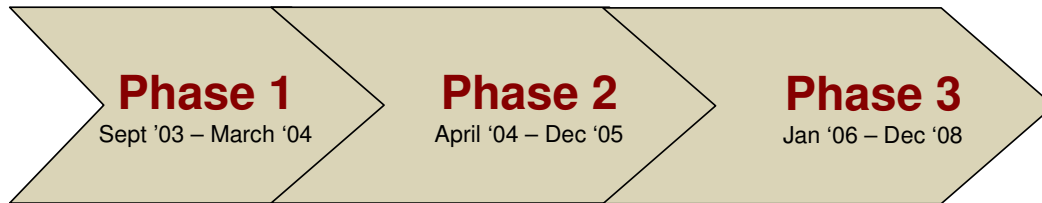
Implementation Timeline and Plan

The Vision and Objectives laid out in the plan are only the beginning of the effort to make Boston's community gardens world class. The Strategic Planning Task Force worked through the high-level steps required to implement each of the strategies within the plan. These are laid out in the Action Plans found in Section IV.

The timing of this plan is based on the assumption that a staff person will be hired to support the work of the Community Garden Council. BNAN will hire and house a Council staff-person once the funds have been raised. They will provide office space and basic office support to the Council.

The implementation has been split into three phases. The first phase is a "set-up" phase in which the Council will take on a few discrete strategies, while they formalize their structure and raise funds to support the implementation.

Implementation Timetable



- ◆ Obj. 1a) Formalize role and structure of Council
- ◆ Obj. 1b) Raise funds to support staff for the council
- ◆ Obj. 2d) Hold special events around the gardens (participate in Plant Yourself in the Park)
- ◆ Obj. 3a) Build the Council into a city-wide organization (establish a Bulk Purchasing program)
- ◆ Obj. 2a) Adopt a common logo
- ◆ Obj. 1c) Educate gardeners on their shared responsibility
- ◆ Obj. 2b) Adopt common standards
- ◆ Obj. 2c) Determine base level of resources
- ◆ Obj. 3b) Develop a garden advocacy agenda
- ◆ Obj. 4) Develop a resource relationship with the City and other public providers
- ◆ Obj. 5d) Reach out to gardens without org structure
- ◆ Obj. 5a) Develop partnerships with organizations to provide support
- ◆ Obj. 5b) Build amount of expertise and resources that are available
- ◆ Obj. 5c) Increase ease of access to support system
- ◆ Obj. 6) Preserve community garden land and expand to more sites
- ◆ Obj. 7) Connect community gardens to city-wide issues

Note: This timetable is based on having staffing for the Council and an active group of volunteers. Annual costs for staff and office support would be \$100k. Before hiring a staff person, the Council must raise \$15-\$20k.

While the specifics of the budget required to successfully implement the strategic plan will evolve with the implementation, an estimated budget follows the Action Plans.

Section I Introduction

Context

As context for understanding this plan, it is important to understand the current state of community gardening in Boston today. Garden Futures, a collaboration of four community garden non-profits working to support gardens in the 1990's, defined a community garden as “community spaces that are communally cultivated and cared for; these spaces may consist of individually-worked plots, multiple person caretaker areas, sitting areas, and small-scale children play-areas.”

There are currently 178 active community gardens in Boston, and an estimated 10,000 gardeners. While most of the gardens are divided into separately gardened plots, some are communally-maintained “pocket parks,” some school gardens, and others are associated with social service agency programs. An indicator of the importance of the gardens in Boston is the fact that there are almost as many gardens as there are parks and playgrounds: Boston Parks and Recreation Department manages 185 parks and playgrounds in Boston.¹

Community gardens are integral to Boston's environmental inventory. The Boston Foundation's Boston Indicators project claims: “The Emerald Necklace park system, beaches, sitting parks, playing fields, tot lots, **community gardens**, the Boston Common, the Public Garden and the newly emerging harborfront all add to the quality of our lives.”²

Community gardening is an effective community-building strategy that contributes to neighborhood renewal, preservation, and stabilization. Gardening together, strangers become friends, neighborhoods become more cohesive, and pride grows in place of littered vacant lots. Community gardens provide a source of inexpensive, nutritious food, and a rewarding personal experience, but also are the result of shared collective effort of people working together.

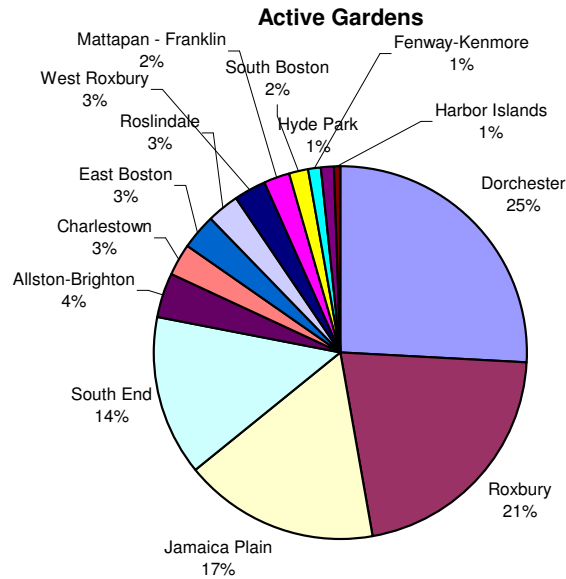
The neighborhoods with the most gardens are Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and the South End. Those with the least are those closest to the city's center: North End, Back Bay, Beacon Hill and South Boston. The gardening population ranges in age from pre-school children to the elderly, and the racial/ethnic composition includes Black American, Hispanic, Cape Verdean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Caucasian, West Indian, Russian, and others. The majority of community gardeners are lower income.³

¹ Source: *The Greening of Boston*

² Source: The Boston Indicators Project website

³ Source: BNAN

Chart 1: Active Gardens by Neighborhood⁴



While Boston's gardeners are passionate about their gardening and individual plots, they are less involved in the stewardship of the gardens as a whole. 64 of the 178 gardens currently have good leadership, as defined by Boston Natural Areas Network. (BNAN).

A garden with strong stewardship meets the following three criteria:

- An organization with a leadership team or multiple people sharing tasks
- Periodic meetings
- Written rules that are distributed to all participants

Getting more gardeners involved in the betterment of community gardens as a whole is one of the challenges facing the gardens.

In addition to gardeners and leadership, there are two other important players in community gardening: the garden support organizations and the garden owner. Garden support organizations provide gardens with a wide array of important resources. These include technical assistance, horticulture education, the provision of soil supplements, seeds and seedlings, referrals for new gardens, and support with a garden's organizational structure. In the last 10 years, these organizations have dwindled, leaving BNAN as the only organization supporting gardens.

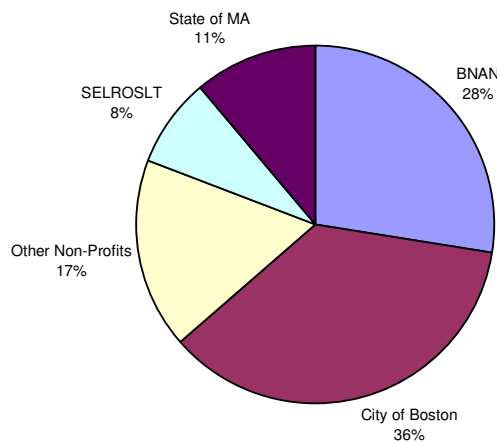
The garden owner is the organization that owns the land on which the garden sits. Boston is exceptional in the number of its permanently protected community gardens, particularly with over half owned by non-profit organizations.

⁴ Source: BNAN database

The City of Boston owns the most gardens (64) and includes gardens on land owned by: the Parks Department (6), Boston Housing Authority (12), Boston Public Schools (24), DND (10), BRA (5), and other Boston organizations (7).

BNAN owns 49 gardens, making them the second largest owner of gardens and the largest non-profit owner. The State of Massachusetts owns 20, with 15 of those on MDC land. The non profit South End Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust (SELROSLT) owns 14. The balance is owned by a variety of other non-profit organizations: CDC's, churches, etc.

Chart 2: Garden Ownership⁵



This variability in ownership has resulted in fragmentation among community gardens. Communication among gardens is very limited, and finding a plan that works for all gardens has been difficult. The Community Garden Council (CGC) was organized by BNAN as a first step in bringing gardeners together. The Council was formed in 2002 and the creation of this plan was its first effort. Before the Community Garden Council, no city-wide organization for gardeners existed.

The Process

BNAN initiated the city-wide Community Garden Council in 2002, and has staffed the effort to bring together gardeners from across the city to address issues facing community

⁵ BNAN database

gardens in Boston. At this time, the Council is an ad hoc, volunteer organization with participation open to all gardeners. Monthly meetings have rotated among five different neighborhoods: Jamaica Plain, the South End, Roxbury, Dorchester and Charlestown. This rotation was an attempt to reach a broad spectrum of gardeners. To date, agendas have focused on feedback about the idea of a council, the need for a plan for the future of gardens, and general garden news and updates. The CGC is still in the early stages of development, and solidifying its structure and role is key to achieving the vision for community gardens that follows.

In the fall of 2002, BNAN with the Community Garden Council launched a strategic planning initiative funded by a grant from an anonymous foundation and The Boston Foundation through BNAN. BNAN with the Council worked to develop the RFP (request for proposals), reviewed the responses, and interviewed the finalists. Case Associates was selected to facilitate the process. A list of all Council participants can be found in Appendix 4.

A Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) was established to develop the vision and plan for community gardens.

Members included:

Barbara Bean	Gardener, Msgr. Lydon Way Community Garden
David Carlson	Gardener, Charles River Community Garden
Pat Grady	Gardener, Mission Hill Community Garden
Alan Ihrer	Gardener, Minton Stable Community Garden
Paul Clausen	Gardener, Gardens for Charlestown
Betsy Johnson	Board Member, South End Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust (BNAN staff member through February 2003)

Staffed By:

Valerie Burns	President, BNAN
Electa Sevier	Consultant, Case Associates

Working with Case Associates, the first job for the SPTF was to research the current state of community gardens in Boston and to identify the strategic issues facing the gardens. Case Associates conducted interviews with a variety of people involved with gardens in Boston (see Appendix 1) and the members of the SPTF contacted garden organizations in others cities (see Appendix 3). Case Associates conducted an Organizational Analysis with the SPTF to understand the current strengths and weaknesses of community gardening, and the opportunities and threats that exist (see Appendix 2).

The SPTF worked with Case Associates to synthesize the data and identified the following four issues as being the key ones facing Boston's Community Gardens at this time:

Strategic Issues

1. Creating a common identity and voice for the community gardens of Boston

- One of the strengths of the community gardens right now is that the image is a positive one and there is a strong relationship with the Mayor
- There is also a national trend of growth in community gardening, and unmet demands for gardens in Boston
- On the other side, because gardening is seasonal, there is no year-round presence of gardens and gardeners

2. Creating strong connections among community gardens and other parts of the city/community

- A strength of community gardens to date has been their positive relations with their neighborhoods
- It is clear that maintaining and enhancing connections will be key to the success of community gardens in the future
- There is an opportunity to link community gardening with other issues of interest within a community (i.e., community building, public health, crime, etc.)

3. Providing community gardens with the resources they need to survive and prosper

- A weakness of Boston's community gardens is the lack of consistent, coordinated services and the limited availability of funds

4. Land preservation, both present and future

- While many more gardens are protected than ever before, a number are still in danger
- With Boston's recent growth, there is increased pressure on land for alternate uses
- There is unmet demand for gardens in Boston

Using the research and the strategic issues as the foundation, BNAN with the SPTF held a full day Visioning Session open to all gardeners (see Appendix 5). At this session gardeners learned about the current state of community gardens throughout the city and the issues they all faced. Through a series of exercises and breakout group, the gardeners determined the components for their vision of the future of Boston's community gardens and set priorities for achieving this vision.

The Vision Statement and Strategic Plan that follow are a culmination of the work of the Strategic Planning Task Force, the Community Garden Council and the participants of the Visioning Session.

Section II

Vision Statement

This document is a vision for the future of Boston's community gardens. It was developed by gardeners involved in community gardens today, informed by data on the current state and interviews with key garden partners. We have developed an ambitious vision for our sustainable garden system over the next five years. Some of what is envisioned is already embodied in the gardens today, and these components need to be nurtured and strengthened. Others are what we hope for in the future.

In the year 2008, community gardens **are recognized for the range of benefits** they bring to the communities in which they flourish.

- ⊗ Community gardens are a source of fresh and healthy food for the gardeners, often food that is a critical supplement to a family's resources.
- ⊗ Gardens are integral to the active living of Boston's citizens, providing a source of recreation and bringing people outdoors.
- ⊗ Having a community garden improves that community's environment by creating places of healthy, lead-free soil, and creating green landscapes of natural beauty to benefit all of the senses.
- ⊗ Boston's gardens are available and accessible to all of their neighbors. The gardens' impact on their communities extends beyond the beauty of the garden, to the sense of neighborhood they foster: gardens bring neighbors together.
- ⊗ A well-tended community garden indicates a well-tended neighborhood. Community gardens are at the cornerstone of neighborhood revitalization, deterring crime and beautifying areas. Community gardens enhance the property values of the homes, businesses, and lots surrounding them.

Community gardens are **integral to the larger environmental system** within Boston, and are a part of city planning. There are almost as many gardens as there are playgrounds and basketball courts in Boston, and they are just as essential to the public health and quality of life of the Boston resident.

- ⊗ In our community garden vision, we see a city where every resident has the opportunity to garden in an urban environment. The city is known for having the most community gardens per person of any city in the US, and every neighborhood has access to a garden.
- ⊗ We see a city that has committed to community gardening and helps support the gardens as it does the parks by providing critical services to the gardens. In Boston, community gardens are a critical public resource, essential to public health, and supported by the city.
- ⊗ While Boston's population continues to grow and the city continues to build housing for people of all incomes, gardens are built into the greater development plan for the city. In this way, long-term gardeners are able to stay in the city, and new residents of the city are able to reap the benefits of the community gardens.

The community garden system of Boston's future includes a **network of supports** built on strong public stewardship.

- ⊗ All of the gardens have a strong organizational structure, with both good leadership and the involvement of the gardeners. These garden groups are supported by organizations and informal networks that provide resources when needed.
- ⊗ The horticultural education and organizational needs of gardens are met through a centralized source that helps ensure that each garden and gardener can flourish.
- ⊗ With support from the city for infrastructure, community gardens are self-managing and productive.

Community gardeners and their organizations are a **political force** in the city. They are one of the largest volunteer constituencies in Boston, and a large percentage of these people vote. Community gardens and their gardeners impact political decisions within the city.

- ⊗ Boston's elected officials support community gardeners and in 2008 these officials all proudly wear the title of "Openly Green."
- ⊗ Candidates for elected office actively seek the endorsement of Boston's community gardeners.
- ⊗ The communities with gardens have active citizens and strong neighborhoods. In our vision, the gardens are at the center of communal efforts, some political, many social and educational.

As Boston continues to grow as a vibrant multi-cultural city, gardens play a key role in **bringing together people from all walks of life**. At a community garden in Boston you see people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds, speaking a wide variety of languages, gardening side by side.

- ⊗ Community gardens are used by groups throughout the city to bring people together to experience different cultures and backgrounds.
- ⊗ The city's youth are active participants in community gardens. This participation often begins at school, because all of Boston's public schools have gardens. In addition, gardening is a component of the city's efforts to build healthy families.
- ⊗ Gardens create healthy citizens of all ages, allowing people to connect with the land and the environment through gardening. Gardening allows people to work on the spiritual, mental and physical well-being.
- ⊗ Gardens promote courtesy and civility by giving people the opportunity to work together.

Our vision is of community gardens that are world-class, and of a community garden system that is a model for other cities.

Section III

The Strategic Plan

The following objectives and strategies were developed to achieve the vision set for the Community Gardens of Boston.

Objective 1: Increase the level of stewardship of community gardens

Strategies

- a) Formalize the role, structure and leadership of the citywide Community Garden Council
 - b) Raise funds to support staff for the Council, and other community garden needs as appropriate
 - c) Educate gardeners on their shared responsibility to care for their community gardens
 - d) Build stewardship education and awareness into the educational component of the support system
-

Rationale

In order to bring gardeners together to achieve our strategic plan, there needs to be organization and structure. Stewardship begins with individual gardeners and their garden, and then expands to the city as a whole.

The Community Garden Council is seen as the critical foundation of the implementation effort. While it is a volunteer organization, its scope and complexity requires staff support.

Objective 2: Forge a common identity for the community gardens of Boston

Strategies

- a) Adopt a common logo and/or signage for all the community gardens
- b) Adopt common standards around basic upkeep and organization

- c) Determine a base level of resources that every community garden should have (i.e., all are accessible to all people) and develop a plan for achieving this base line
 - d) Hold special events around the gardens on a city-wide basis
-

Rationale

While there are hundreds of gardens in the city, most city residents know little about them and how they operate. In addition, there is wide disparity among gardens. It is our belief that by bringing all the gardens together in the minds of the public and each other, we will be able to harness the power of our numbers. By establishing common standards, all gardens will benefit from positive public image.

Objective 3: Create a unified voice for gardens and gardeners

Strategies

- a) Build the Community Garden Council into a city-wide “organization” by expanding membership to individual gardeners, creating a database with contact information and educating the members how to act as a group
 - b) Develop a garden advocacy agenda and mobilize the council membership to take action
 - i. Land preservation
 - ii. Resource procurement
 - iii. Other key issues
-

Rationale

There are currently an estimated 10,000 people participating in community gardening. As an organized voice this group could have influence on key issues. We know the potential is there and we want to create the structure to realize that potential. Once we have created the powerful voice, we want to be thoughtful in setting our agenda for mobilizing this voice.

Objective 4: Develop a resource relationship with the City and other public providers to address the top three resource issues: water, compost/soil amendments, and trash removal, while continuing and strengthening the current government support of capital efforts

Strategies

- a) Bring the relevant parties to the table to consider options for addressing each
 - i. Create partnership or shared solutions for these issues
 - ii. Pilot or test the ideas
- b) Develop a political strategy and build this into the garden advocacy agenda

Rationale

It is our belief that community gardens create a better life for all residents of the city of Boston. Because of the benefits gardens bring to the city, we believe the city has some obligation to support the efforts of the gardens. Our hope is that the city and the gardens can work together on issues that are overwhelming to small gardens, and a part of the established work of the city.

Objective 5: Build a support system for community gardens

Strategies

- a) Develop partnerships with organizations and institutions to provide support to the community garden system (e.g., BNAN, Trustees of the Reservation, universities, etc.)
 - i. Develop additional sources of funding to sustain these partnerships
 - ii. Approach the educational and healthcare institutions in Boston for support
- b) Build the amount of expertise and resources that exist for gardens and gardeners
 - i. Support the existing programs (MUG, etc.)
 - ii. Work with partners to develop any new programs
- c) Increase the ease with which gardens and gardeners can access the support system
 - i. Identify and implement technical solutions (i.e., website, centralized database, etc.)
- d) Reach out to gardens without an organizational structure and help them put one in place

Rationale

There are many experts and resources available to gardens and gardeners, and we plan to build a network that ties these resources together with those in need of them. In addition, there are gaps in resources, and we plan to build those organizations who work with gardens and gardeners.

Objective 6: Preserve existing community garden land and expand community gardening to more sites focusing on neighborhoods underserved by gardens

Strategies

- a) Develop a political strategy on a local, city and state level, and build this into the garden advocacy agenda
 - b) Build alliances with affinity groups (park advocates, clean-air groups, etc.)
 - c) Build alliances with non-traditional allies (housing organizations, community development groups, etc.)
-

Rationale

The majority of Boston's gardens are permanently protected, however there are still a significant number that are not. Our first priority is to secure those still unprotected. Our second is to increase the number of gardens that exist for the benefit of all.

Objective 7: Connect community gardens to city-wide issues to increase the inclusiveness of gardening and the support for community gardens

Strategies

- a) Determine those issues that have clear connections to gardening including:
 - i. Public health issues of active living and nutrition
 - ii. Seniors
 - iii. Environmental education for youth
 - iv. Community building within a city of great diversity
- b) Work with non-gardening organizations to help them realize that community gardening can be used as vehicle to help them achieve their mission

Rationale

It is our belief that gardening connects to many issues that are important to the public at large. By expanding the interest of gardening to these other issues, we hope to increase the interest in community gardens and gain advocates in our efforts.
