

Vision Team Ideas Template

1. Who are the members of this Vision Team?

Rev. Jason Terhune

2. What was the focus of your Vision Team at the beginning of the process?

Community Gardens

3. Describe the project/key ideas in detail. If there are several being suggested, please describe each separately below.

This team is proposing the development of a large, collaborative community garden in the city. The goal of the garden would be to provide education on gardening and to provide fresh, free produce to those without the financial means to buy fresh produce for their families.

The community garden would be organized as an incorporated non-profit in order to seek grants and donations to keep the project going and to grow it to a meaningful size to address the needs of many families in the community. A formal organization could provide financial support for a garden coordinator/volunteer coordinator, though the idea is that most of the labor for the garden will be volunteer, provided by youth, churches, and families who benefit from the garden's produce.

4. What are cities/examples, if any, that you are drawing ideas/inspiration from for this project?

There are many examples of community gardens in cities across the US. Huntsville has the CASA community garden on Bob Wallace Avenue: <http://casamadisoncty.org/casa-garden/>. Nashville has multiple community gardens, including the Food Project which has several garden sites across the city: <https://www.thenashvillefoodproject.org/the-gardens/>. These examples provide organizational models as well as models for the gardens themselves.

There is also a well-known example in Smyrna, Tennessee, in which Burmese refugees started a massive community garden which saved the All Saints Episcopal church from financial collapse and provided livelihoods to dozens of refugees: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/08/18/how-a-group-of-refugees-saved-a-church-on-the-brink-of-collapsing/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9de8681c2e0c This story was turned into a film call 'All Saints' in 2017.

5. Are any of these cities/examples nearby that could be visited in a day trip? If so, which ones?

Yes, Huntsville, Nashville, Atlanta, Chattanooga, all have community gardens which could be easily toured on day trip.

6. What community needs are being addressed through this project?

There are multiple needs which can be addressed. The primary issue is food insecurity in the Fayetteville-LC. With some 2200 Fayetteville residents living below the poverty line, many families are low income and depend on government assistance programs such as SNAP to purchase their groceries. Fresh produce is expensive and so cash-poor families often skip buying fresh food in favor of low-cost prepacked meals and products. These alternatives are far less healthy and impact the health of families significantly when this pattern is followed for years. Even with the food pantries in the community, fresh produce is limited. A community garden would increase the availability of fresh, clean produce at little or no cost to families in need. The garden can also be a place of education about how to grow fresh, clean food. Emphyrean Research's LOVE garden has also begun such programs and has found much interest in the community, especially from young families, but also from experienced gardeners looking for new knowledge and techniques. A community garden can be a site for youth to congregate, volunteer, be physically active, and make a meaningful contribution to the community. As well, a community garden is a way to utilize land that is otherwise sitting idle in the community. While the initial idea is for a single large garden, in the future it is possible to envision several gardens in neighborhoods across the city where people can easily walk to the garden from their homes to tend and pick the garden.

7. What is the expected cost to implement the project? Please include a *rough* estimate of core costs.

While land in the community is available, there are material costs involved in creating beds and improving soil, as well as the need for tools and a storage building to keep tools and materials dry. Many of these costs can be reduced by donations from businesses, volunteer labor, and the reuse of materials, and the donation of used tools. \$2000-3000 would cover most of these start up expenses for a medium sized garden, and could be reduced through donations of various kinds. As well, starting from seed and volunteers growing seedlings for the garden could reduce the cost of buying plants.

8. What activities, if any, are already underway in the community that can be built upon to support this project?

St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church has been active in developing a community garden organization. Rev. Jason Terhune has written an initial proposal (attached) for creating an organization called 'G4' which would oversee the community garden. Terhune has already been in conversation with several other churches in the community with larger parcels of land about building the community garden on their properties. As well, Emphyrean Research's LOVE garden on Elk Ave N began operating in 2017 and has been offering hands on education about organic gardening. There has been much interest in the garden for a learning perspective and appreciation for how it has revitalized and beautified an otherwise neglected parcel of land in the downtown.

9. Who are the target groups that would participate in and/or benefit from this project/activity?

- Low income families needing access to fresh, clean produce.
- School groups needing an outdoor classroom to learn about agriculture, environment and nutrition.
- Youth in need of volunteer and social opportunities after school and during summer vacation.
- Families who could learn productive gardening techniques that they can replicate at home.
- The community at-large by better utilizing unused areas within downtown Fayetteville.

10. What support and resources (if any) are needed from the city?

Potentially, some of the abandoned properties which the city owns could be ideal locations for the garden. Perhaps such a parcel could be sold or rented to the community garden organization at a minimal price in order to have that parcel become active and thriving.

11. Given that city resources are limited, what resources that are not related to city/county funding can be gathered to implement the project? These could include volunteer labor, public-private partnerships, unused facilities in the community, etc.

The city could offer small beautification grants, donate used tools, unused/recycled building materials, and mulch from the grinding facility which could be used for making pathways and set aside for composting to make soil for future years of the garden.

12. Please provide an estimated timeline for how long it would take to implement the project.

While the organizational side of forming a non-profit to oversee the garden would take some time, a modestly sized garden could be set up several sessions of volunteer labor and expanded as the project becomes more established.

Additional Materials:

Please see attached 'G4' community garden proposal from Rev. Jason Terhune.