May 26, 2015

2015 HOME GR/OWN Introduction

Tim McCollow
HOME GR/OWN Background

- Mayor Barrett created HG as a response to 2012 Bloomberg Mayor’s Challenge – national competition among big cities for most innovative idea
- Milwaukee finished 6th – Top 5 shared $9MM
- HOME GR/OWN operational Q3 2013
- Run out of City Office of Env. Sustainability
- Staffing: 1-2 FTEs
- Coordinates with DCD, Health, DPW, DNS, Mayor’s Office
The City of Milwaukee owns 2,454 vacant lots.
Mission

- Many of Milwaukee’s neighborhoods has been severely impacted by the foreclosure crisis, lack of sufficient economic opportunity, private disinvestment, leaving many in poor health living in area with too many vacant lots and foreclosed homes.

- Milwaukee’s HOME GR/OWN initiative will increase access to healthy, local foods and create new, green spaces in currently challenged neighborhoods. New farms, orchards, parks, gardens, community spaces. Focus on lots, not homes.

- HOME GR/OWN re-imagines how urban liabilities like vacant lots can be turned into neighborhood assets that:
  - increase the availability of local, healthy foods,
  - improve health,
  - supplementing incomes through new opportunities in the growing & distribution of local food & urban horticulture,
  - place-making that promotes neighborhood cohesion
HOME GR/OWN HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 vacant lot repurposings: Gillespie Park, new gardens
- Gillespie Park is 2015 MANDI Winner for “Best Public Space”
- New cistern & rain garden at All Peoples Orchard
- New urban farm (1/2 block) in June, 2015
- Above results: 3 new parks, 2 urban farms, 1 orchard
- Passage of May, 2014 urban ag code changes
- Passage of Nov, 2014 revised food peddler changes
- Began green infrastructure workforce development
- Raised $48,000 in external donations
- Raised $188,000 in grants
- 17 positive stories in local, national press
- Development of City Food Policy Task Force
2015 Partners For Places Grant

- **Goal:** Build up to 20 orchards & 6 mini-parks in MKE on 26-40 City-owned vacant lots

- **Timing:** Build orchards in June – October; build pocket parks in summer 2015

- **Grant:** $150,000+

- **Funding Partners:**
  - Bloomberg Philanthropies & other national funders
  - Community Development Funders Alliance (CDFA), inc.:
    - Greater Milwaukee Foundation
    - Fund for Lake Michigan
    - NML Foundation
    - Zilber Family Foundation

- **Operational Partners:**
  - Growing Power (trees donated by Stark Nursery)
  - David J. Frank Landscaping (tree installation, lot preparation)
  - Neighborhood groups/CBOs based on site locations
  - UWM Community Design Solutions
2015 Partners For Places Grant

- **Project Goals:**
  - Build 20 orchards & 6 mini-parks in MKE on 26-40 City-owned vacant lots
  - Beautify neighborhoods
  - Create new, green neighborhood gathering spaces
  - Increase access to healthy food
  - Build neighborhood capacity & cohesion
  - Increase urban agriculture infrastructure
  - Food/green workforce development
The Impact of 1 Vacant Lot put to a New Use

- **Place-making**: Create neighborhood places of interest & gathering -> greater cohesion
- “Get Grandma out of the house and onto her porch”
- In “greener” neighborhoods, crime stabilizes/drops
- Healthy food grown in the orchard/park available to neighborhood
- Families eat healthier food
- Sites with RainSheds or rain gardens improve flood protection via *rainwater harvesting & retention*
- Sales of foreclosed properties increase
- Property values increase – the street looks better
- City expenses decrease – City not paying $ for maintenance anymore
Partners For Places – Next Steps

- Collaboration with neighborhood group partners
  - Participation in neighborhood meetings
- Collaborative site selection & design – parks with UWM Community Design Solutions
- Most orchards designed by OES and City DPW
- Final site design and budget
- Coordination with partners Growing Power, Frank Landscaping
- Coordinate Planting Day
- Sites to be maintained by combination of City, Growing Power and neighborhood groups
Walnut Way orchard (18th & Fond du Lac)
Walnut Way orchard
(18th & Fond du Lac)
Gillespie Park – Before/After
Gillespie Park – After
Gillespie Park – After
All Peoples Orchard (2nd & Locust)
Sunshine Park

(14th & North)  Spring 2015
Center Mini-park
(37th & Center)
Spring 2015
HOME GR/OWN Future Projects?

- Sidewalk produce cart pilot?
- Revisions to compost ordinances?
- Promotion of urban farmer & healthy food distribution co-ops?
- More programming at new HG sites
- Coordinated local urban farmer training among various NGOs
- Promote RainSheds, water access at gardens
HOME GR/OWN

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Thoughts?
- Interested?
Contact Information

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