Implementing Urban Agriculture in Chicago

City of Chicago
Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning – Sustainable Development Division

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Image from Chicago Rarities Orchard proposal for Logan Square plaza
Cook County Sheriff’s Garden

Owner: Cook County Jail
Uses: 4000-6000 pounds of produce for senior centers and food pantries
Farmer: 10-15 detainees
Size: 10,000 square feet
GreenCorps provides training, technical assistance and materials

Over 600 sites developed, most for beautification, but some for food growing

Policy for growing food has been to import about 18 inches of new soil for growing beds
NeighborSpace - 1996

Artist’s Garden
Uses: fruits, vegetables, herbs
Farmer: neighborhood youth and adults
Size: 5 residential lots
Model for barrier

Owner: City leased in 2003
Uses: produce for direct sale
Farmer: Ken Dunn
Size: 1 acre commercial lot
The Peninsula Hotels

“A great meal starts with the right ingredients”

The New Yorker
March 2009
Chicago Park District - 2005

Grant Park, City’s front yard
Uses: kitchen garden demonstration with 150 varieties of heritage and heirloom plants
Farmer: Growing Power, non-profit organization
Gary Comer Youth Center Youth Farm - 2007
Rick Bayless’ Urban Edible Garden - 2008
Rick Bayless’ Urban Edible Garden

Owner: private
Uses: $20,000 worth of crops used in Mr. Bayless’ restaurants
Farmer: Rick Bayless’ full-time gardener
Size: residential lot
Chicago Honey Co-op - 2004
Chicago Honey Co-op

Owner: abandoned Sears & Roebuck parking lot, TBD
Uses: 80 beehives for honey products
Farmer: Michael Thompson
Community garden

Primary use is open space for community to grow plants for beautification, education, recreation, community distribution or personal use. Processing, storage and sale of plants or plant products are prohibited on site.
Community Gardens in the Zoning Code

- Permitted uses in:
  - Parks and Open Space (POS) 1&2
  - Residential (R)
  - Business (B)
  - Commercial (C)
  - Downtown (D)

- Use standards:
  - Site area – max. 18,750 square feet
  - Accessory structures – max. 10% of site area or 100 square feet (whichever is greater)
Commercial gardens/greenhouses

Propagation, processing and storage of plants and plant products for wholesale or retail sales. Typical uses include growing beds, hoop houses, greenhouses and hydroponics systems.
Commercial gardens/greenhouses in the Zoning Code

- Permitted uses in:
  - Business (B3)
  - Commercial (C1, C2 & C3)
  - Manufacturing (M2 & M3)
  - Planned Manufacturing District (PMD 9, 10 & 13)

- Use standards:
  - Accessory retail sales of goods produced on site – max. 3000 square feet (In M and PMD)
  - Parking requirement of 1 space per 3 employees or more by parking determination
  - Existing screening and corresponding district standards and landscape ordinance requirements apply
Composting

- Composting of materials generated on site must comply with 7-28-715
  - Health and Safety Code
- Applies to community and commercial gardens
Protocols for City Owned land

• Applies to projects involving the lease, sale or temporary use of city owned property
• Know the environmental condition
  – Phase I & II
• Remediate and/or install an agricultural growing barrier
Agriculture Growing Barrier

Best growing practice avoids direct contact with urban soil

Install geo-textile fabric on surface (visual demarcation of old and new material) and 6” clay to isolate growing medium from any potential contamination in the ground.
Site Design Issues

Example enclosure types.

**Fencing Types**
6’ High to 8’ High black power-coated post with black vinyl wire mesh fence having max 4”x4” openings. Horizontal and Vertical mesh only. No Diagonal grid pattern. No standard chain link fence allowed.

Recommendations for locating loading areas, parking, outdoor storage, sales and fencing requirements.
Greater Englewood

2010 - Planning for Food
A Green, Healthy Neighborhood
Greater Englewood Land Resources

City-owned vacant
2009 Demos
2008 Foreclosures
Providing job training through a non-profit organic agriculture business.

Su Casa Catholic Worker House
51st & Laflin-New City
Englewood Line
Growing Home
Community Supported Urban Agriculture

"Big Idea" Site Plan
Existing land use along the Englewood Line
Trends impacting urban agriculture

- Overweight & obesity epidemic
- Local and organic food preferences
- Lack of fresh produce in some communities
- Job training opportunities, esp. for the hard-to-employ
- Large and expanding inventories of vacant land

“New” look for local grocer