

Project Description

The Mitchell Park West Neighborhood Association proposes to create a community garden in the northwest corner of Mitchell Park for members of the Tempe community and the greater Phoenix area. The design of the garden includes individual plots, group plots, a children's plot, a communal gathering center, and a raised bed for accessibility for individuals with handicaps. The perimeter will be planted with colorful native plants and shrubs to enhance the beauty of the park. The purpose of the garden is to build community by creating a space for people to come together to learn about and experience first-hand the benefits of growing their own food, sharing information, and strengthening social networks in the community. It is our intention to provide education on gardening techniques, sustainability issues, and the value of growing nutritious produce. The garden will also offer a central location for community events and activities.

1. How do you expect this project to enhance the quality of life in your neighborhood?
 - Participants will experience health benefits from growing nutritious foods, exercising, reducing stress, and spending time in nature
 - Adults and children with different backgrounds will have the opportunity to come together to learn from each other
 - The garden will beautify the neighborhood
 - The garden can increase safety in the Mitchell Park area; it is well documented that community gardens serve as an effective crime prevention strategy as gardeners become more familiar with what is happening in their community.
 - Community members working together in the garden creates opportunities for leadership development and can lead to community-based efforts to deal with other social concerns
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2. Describe how members of the community have been involved in the development of the project.
 - An initial e-mail was sent to members of the MPWNA and MPENA (were there others?) informing them of an organizational meeting for anyone interested in a community garden.
 - This information was also posted on the MPWNA web site
 - A volunteer committee was formed to develop a survey (see attached) which was distributed by hand to all households in the MPWNA, by e-mail to all members of the MPENA as well as door-to door in some areas of MPENA.
 - The results of the surveys are attached; because of such a positive response, the MPWNA board approved that a grant be written to create a community garden.
3. How will the project serve a community need in your neighborhood?

- It will build a stronger, more cohesive community through the development of support networks and increased levels of community pride.
- It will increase a sense of ownership and environmental stewardship in the community.
- It will provide a community space for learning organic gardening practices, composting techniques, and other sustainable practices.
- It will provide healthful food for families and food banks.
- It will provide a gathering place for community events such as harvest festivals, community dinners, educational workshops, children's activities, and art exhibits.
- Community gardens have been shown to actually increase property values in the immediate vicinity where they are located.

4. How will this project provide a benefit to our larger community?

- The garden will serve as a role model for others who wish to support the city of Tempe's and the greater Phoenix area's initiatives for sustainability and increased green spaces.
- The garden will aid in reduction in cost and pollution related to packaging, cooling, transportation, and preservation of food.
- The plants in the garden will aid in the removal of carbon from the atmosphere (carbon sequestering).
- Public schools in the area can use the garden to teach students about where food comes from, math and science skills, basic business principles, the importance of community stewardship, and issues of environmental sustainability.
- Community gardening is a healthy, inexpensive activity for youth that can bring them closer to nature, and allow them to interact with each other in a socially meaningful and physically productive way.
- People from surrounding neighborhoods will be encouraged to visit the Mitchell Park garden, thereby increasing cooperation and networking with the larger community.