



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

Office of the Mayor

300 Sixth Street

605-394-4110

Fax: 605-394-6793

E-mail: mayor@rcgov.org

February 9, 2016

Rapid City Common Council
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Re: East Madison Street Community Garden

Dear Council Members:

Recently I met with Devaney Crafton, representing Black Hills Special Services Cooperative. He and his group, along with several volunteers including a young woman from AmeriCorps, have been designing a community garden to be placed on East Madison Street. The effort to create a community garden is in partnership with the Rapid City Police Department and will utilize a vacant site between East Watertown and East Madison Street.

The attached development plan speaks for itself so I will not repeat the contents of the plan; I do however, want to add my endorsement of this project and ask you to consider approving the request at the end of this letter.

Several years ago the police department working with several individuals and organizations helped to create a community garden on Lemmon Avenue in North Rapid City. In a nutshell, the results were astounding. Neighbors who had never spoken to one another soon became friends, there was excitement and a common cause within the neighborhood, and it helped to create what many other programs could not: a true neighborhood.

The East Madison Street Community Garden will likely reproduce these positive results and perhaps more. This East Madison Street area is a high crime neighborhood that suffers from poverty. I believe supporting this garden project will be good for the neighborhood which is good for Rapid City.

The organizers of this community garden project have asked if the City would provide water service at no cost. The same request was granted to the community garden on Lemmon



EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Avenue. A few hundred dollars' worth of water for a community garden is the least the City of Rapid City can do.

I'm going to place an item on the March 7th City Council agenda and ask that you vote to approve waiving water fees for this important community project.

If you have questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Allender", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Allender
Mayor of Rapid City



East Madison Street Community Garden

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2014-15

SUMMARY

Introduction

This plan details the proposed development of the East Madison Street Community Garden. The purpose of the East Madison Street Community Garden is to provide opportunities for neighborhood residents to grow their own food, improve their health, get to know their neighbors, and bring beauty and production to a vacant piece of land in north Rapid City.

The East Madison Street Community Garden will be located on a 20,000 square foot site between East Madison and East Watertown Street. The garden will be managed by Black Hills Special Services Cooperative. Plans for the garden include raised-bed plots, fruit trees, a gathering area, kids' discovery area, compost area, and storage sheds. Future phases call for the construction of a teaching kitchen and a small greenhouse on the site.

Market Analysis

The East Madison Street Community Garden will serve users across all ages and levels of experience. Community gardening has become popular in recent years, and a number of successful gardens have been developed in Rapid City. The East Madison Street Community Garden will serve residents of the surrounding neighborhood; a neighborhood that is characterized by high-poverty, residential motels, and a lack of access to healthy food.

Action Plan

A phased approach will be used to develop the Community Garden.

Phase I: Establishment of Steering Committee

Phase II: Public Outreach

Phase III: Refining Site Design and Cost Estimates

Phase IV: Fundraising

Phase V: Construction of Garden

Phase VI: Ongoing Garden Maintenance & Program Development

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The garden will be developed and managed by the BHSSC. It is anticipated that a VISTA volunteer will be hired as the program manager and will be responsible for the development of the garden, day-to-day operations of the garden, coordinating public outreach and volunteers, and exploring and securing funding opportunities. The day-to-day operations of the garden will also be handled by volunteers. The program manager will be responsible for recruiting these volunteers and delegating work among the volunteers.

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative was organized in 1980 as a legal entity educational cooperative pursuant to South Dakota Codified Law 13:37. In the years since it was established, BHSSC has grown from a small educational/vocational program with eight employees to a comprehensive, multi-service agency employing over 500 individuals. The mission of BHSSC has been: ***“Black Hills Special Services Cooperative is a multi-service agency whose mission is to provide specialized services desired by the agencies it serves.”*** BHSSC’s mission statement supports activity across a broad array of programs that address unmet needs of individuals, schools, agencies and communities within the service area.

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, as a public entity, operates under an elected board comprised of one board member from each of the 12 member school districts. The Executive Director and Business Manager work closely with the board to provide leadership and administration for the organization as a whole.

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative has six Divisions, which include:

- **Family and Community Services:** This Division encompasses programs and services that extend the school day and promote partnerships between families, community members and educators. Programs provide training and education for parents/families, educationally rich after-school and summer programs, early childhood intervention and opportunities for community volunteers.
- **Developmental Disabilities:** The Developmental Disabilities operational unit includes all day, residential, vocational and support services that support children and adults with disabilities. Programs are located in Sturgis, Belle Fourche, Hot Springs, Lead/Deadwood, Spearfish and Whitewood.
- **Human Services:** The Human Services Division represents an array of programs that primarily encompass Health, Social Service, Human Services and Education initiatives. Working closely with state agencies through BHSSC offices in Pierre, the Human Services Division provides program management, technical assistance and consulting services for a varied audience.
- **Technology and Innovations in Education:** The TIE Division is inclusive of technical assistance, professional development, evaluation and research and development that are available on a statewide basis. Programs and services may be contracted by individual districts or support through State and Federal contracts and grants.
- **Education and Workforce Development:** The Education and Workforce Development Division encompasses programs that support employment training and educational opportunities that increase options and opportunities for adults and youth.
- **Economic Development:** The Economic Development Division includes a variety of programs that support community economic development efforts and the growth of small businesses in the Black Hills area.

SITE PLAN

Please see attached concept plan developed by 42nd Street Design Studio.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Community gardening has become a popular activity in Rapid City, and a number of new gardens have been developed within the last few years. The longest-running community garden in Rapid City is located on City-owned land near the Pennington County Fairgrounds. This community garden occupies two city blocks and has 101 garden plots, which are fully leased.

The Lemmon Avenue Community Garden was developed in 2010 in a joint effort by the Rapid City Police Department and NeighborWorks. The garden has 20 raised-bed garden plots. The garden has not only provided a spot for residents to grow their own food, but has helped turn around a crime-ridden neighborhood.

The General Beadle Community Garden was developed in 2012. The garden is located a local elementary school and has 20 raised-garden plots. The garden provides food for the local community, but also serves as a teaching garden for the school.

There are also a number of community gardens scattered throughout Rapid City that serve individual housing areas or specific programs.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS

Over a quarter of the population in the neighborhood surrounding the garden site lives in poverty. Furthermore, 46 percent of children within the neighborhood live in households with incomes below the poverty level; this is double the rate for children in Rapid City as a whole. The site is one block away from East North Street, which is home to numerous residential motels. The proposed community garden will provide opportunities for those residents in the surrounding neighborhood to learn about, grow, and access healthy food.

According to Rapid City Police Department data, the .35 mile area directly surrounding the proposed garden site accounts for 8 percent of all alcohol-related crimes in Pennington County in 2014. The table to the right, provided by the Police Department, details the crime statistics for a three-year period in the neighborhood.

E MADISON STREET CRIME AREA				
CRIME TYPE	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
ALCOHOL	288	255	253	796
AUTO THEFT	5	5	7	17
BURGLARY	28	13	15	56
BURGLARY FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	34	12	14	60
PANHANDLING	25	20	19	64
THEFT	112	92	70	274
TOTAL	204	142	125	471
PENNINGTON COUNTY WIDE				
CRIME TYPE	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
ALCOHOL	2,820	2,791	3,141	8,752
AUTO THEFT	269	174	221	664
BURGLARY	687	628	461	1,776
BURGLARY FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	987	440	310	1,737
PANHANDLING	211	274	218	703
THEFT	2,300	1,875	2,020	6,195
TOTAL	7,274	6,182	6,371	19,827
EAST MADISON STREET CRIME AREA % OF PENNINGTON COUNTY WIDE				
CRIME TYPE	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
ALCOHOL	10.2%	9.1%	8.1%	9.1%
AUTO THEFT	1.9%	2.9%	3.2%	2.6%
BURGLARY	4.1%	2.1%	3.3%	3.2%
BURGLARY FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	3.4%	2.7%	4.5%	3.5%
PANHANDLING	11.8%	7.3%	8.7%	9.1%
THEFT	4.9%	4.9%	3.5%	4.4%
TOTAL	2.8%	2.3%	2.0%	2.4%

PARTNERS

Black Hills Special Services will reach out to local community partners in order to develop the East Madison Street Community Garden. Potential partners include local business owners, the Rapid City Police Department, North Rapid City Civic Association, Meadow Lark Trailer Park Homeowners Association, Pennington County Master Gardeners, South Dakota State University Extension Service, the City of Rapid City, and 42nd Street Design Studio.

STRENGTHS

Black Hills Special Services will bring a number of strengths to the proposed project. BHSSC has already partnered with the RCPD to develop a development plan for the garden and with 42nd Street Design Studio, a local landscape architecture firm, to develop the physical layout and cost estimates for the garden. BHSSC also has a long history of successful program development and management, as evidenced in its numerous divisions listed above. Finally, the Career Learning Center, a program of BHSSC, has been located on the site for 20 years, and through its program offerings, like GED and parenting classes, has earned respect from the neighborhood and is considered a comfortable, friendly environment for local residents.

CHALLENGES

Black Hills Special Services has identified a number of challenges in development of the proposed garden, with the primary challenge being funding. BHSSC plans to pursue a number of grant opportunities as well as raise money from the community to develop the vacant site into a community garden. However, ongoing costs will always be a challenge.

START-UP ACTION PLAN

Phase I, Establishment of Steering Committee: This phase will consist of the establishment of a steering committee made up of neighbors, business owners, and agency partners.

Phase II, Public Outreach: This phase will consist of public outreach to those that live and do business in the neighborhood surrounding the East Madison Street Community Garden site.

Phase III, Refining Site Design and Program Goals: During this phase, the steering committee will work with our landscape architect to refine the site design and with program staff to establish program goals.

Phase IV, Fundraising: This phase will consist of fundraising seed money to construct the garden as well as hire a part-time program manager.

Phase V, Construction of Garden: Construction of the garden will occur in phases established by the steering committee.

Phase VI, Ongoing Garden Maintenance & Program Development: The garden will be maintained by BHSSC staff and volunteers. The program manager will be responsible for day-to-day maintenance, volunteer training, and program development.