Community Center and Garden Collaborations

Abstract

The City of Greenville has dozens of community centers and gardens that are effectively serving their local communities. Greenville Forward, Gardening for Good, and Greenville Organic Foods Organization are non-profit organizations in Greenville dedicated to providing fresh, local produce. Community gardens are often associated with organizations like churches, schools, and community centers. The purpose of this research is to determine which community centers within the city limits would be ideal locations for new gardens. Ideal locations for new gardens in low-income areas that do not currently have access to a garden. Benefits of introducing a community garden into a low-income neighborhood include increased community involvement in politics, decreased crime rates, health benefits, food security, and further neighborhood beautification projects.

Introduction

Within the City of Greenville, there is a dense infrastructure of community programs in lower-income neighborhoods. There are many established community gardens, along with established community centers owned by the City of Greenville and private non-governmental organizations. Research has shown that when individuals are associated with community centers that provide services such as youth programs, food pantries, and emergency services, the goal of this project is to identify potential locations for community gardens in relation to currently operating community centers. Community centers include Greenville Park and Recreation Centers, and community outreach centers run by NGOs.

Literature Review

Community gardens influence almost every aspect of a community's well-being and promote healthy behavior that can encourage positive growth and development in the community. Leigh Holland (2004) carried out an analysis of the community garden movement in the UK (p. 285). She discovered that community gardens are founded for a number of reasons, but the most important are social, environmental, and health-related. A large number of people are “in the habit of consuming, experimental units which are ‘based on a sense of community’ (p. 285). Holland points out that the multiplicity of purposes community gardens and their function in the development of the surrounding community should be better researched (p. 285). Leona Krige (2003) discusses how community gardens can become places of care and support, providing services for the local community that the welfare state generally provides (p. 4). Krige shows how private organizations can work to alleviate areas that have declined economically by taking on the responsibilities of social welfare for members of their community. Many garden provides services far beyond what the garden provides (p. 2). After school and youth programs, tutoring, food and clothing "giveaways", emergency/relief services, soup kitchens, and family meals are the services garden residents often receive. In addition to gardens that provide and services that have been cut from government programs recently (p. 2 & 5). Krige addresses leaders of non-profit organizations and local policy makers, hoping to encourage them to revalue low-income, minority neighborhoods. C재나 Draper and Darryl Freedman (2010) reviewed 55 articles about community gardens in the US (p. 462). They concluded that community gardens strengthen the community by bringing together people of different races and backgrounds who would otherwise not communicate with each other. Relationships made in the garden moved outside the garden to build a stronger sense of community in the neighborhood (p. 460). The authors discovered that the common themes appearing in community garden research were health benefits, food source/food security, economic development, youth education, development, and employment, use and preservation of open space, crime prevention, neighborhood beautification, leisure and outdoor recreation, cultural preservation and expression, social interactions/cultivation of relationships, and community organizing, employment, and mobilization (p. 485-486). Gardens can behave as a catalyst to solving issues in the community (Armstrong 2000, p. 325). Particularly in low-income areas, people who participate in community gardens become more active in local politics. Their relationships and knowledge on whom to call to improve this community. Many other community programs are developed in association with the community gardens and beautification projects are often associated with community gardens (p. 124).

Methodology

Steps Taken: Import the 2010 Greenville County Block Group shapefile into ArcGIS Map. Collect addresses for all of the community gardens in Greenville. Obtain potential community garden addresses from Gardening for Good. Collect addresses of Greenville City sponsored community centers and other Greenville community centers found through Gardner’s Heller Service Corp website: http://www.hellerservicecorp.org/nonprofit-agencies.php. Import each set of addresses into batchgeo.com. Make a map and download as a kml. Convert the kml file to a layer file using the kml to layer tool. Import these shapefiles into ArcMap on top of the Greenville City Block Group shapefile that contains the population density from the 2010 Census. Join these data to create the target group for analysis. Make choropleth maps of population and median income in Greenville County and use as a basemap to show spatial distribution of gardens and community centers in relation to population and income. Identify census tracts that have low income levels and determine what kind of community centers are within the area of the census tracts and gardens. Also determine areas with higher populations and determine whether they are being served. Identify block groups that need more attention based on population data and then based on median income data and suggest block groups and specific community centers that would benefit from community gardens.

Future Research

Most people spend the majority of their time in office buildings at work. Potential locations for community gardens could thus be located next to office buildings. Other major offices and businesses could thus be located near gardens. Community gardens once the suspension of garden and office buildings. Particularly during the summer when most types of produce are growing, the gardens could provide a major produce needed for a kitchen. Businesses could partner together to provide a community garden for their employees. Employees could buy shares of the produce and thus support a staff member to run the garden. We are an office building that is located next to low-income neighborhood offices and is maintained by staff. Studies show that people who exercise and eat right are more productive workers, so this could revolutionize America’s productivity at the workplace.

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Heller Service Corps databases.