Lots of Hope

An Urban Agriculture Assessment with the City of Providence

March 2014

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LOTS OF HOPE

AN URBAN AGRICULTURE ASSESSMENT WITH THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Prepared for:

City of Providence
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI

Southside Community Land Trust
109 Somerset Street
Providence, RI

Prepared by:

Peter Asen, Healthy Communities Office
Ellen Cynar, Healthy Communities Office
Kim Downes, Intern
Gretchen Gerlach, Intern
Amber Ma, Intern

March 2014

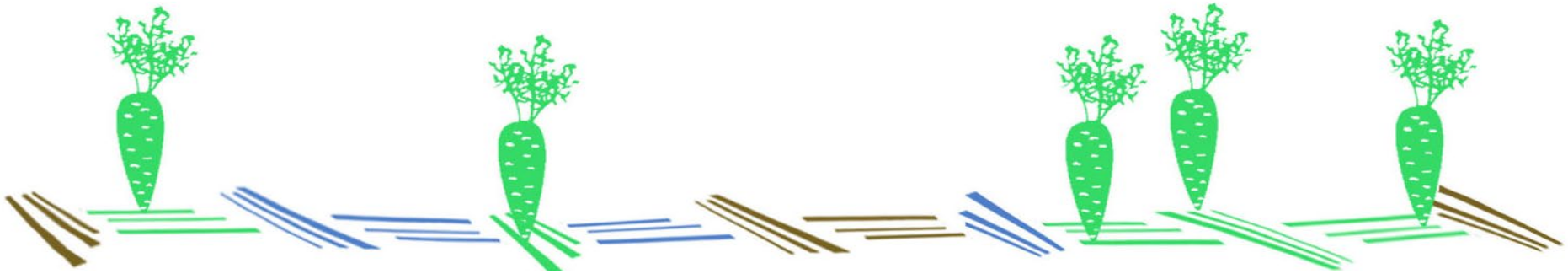


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 5
- Mission, Objectives & Vision 5
- Background of Lots of Hope 6
  - -Manton Bend Community Farm 6
- A Providence Snapshot 7
  - -Side Stories 7
  - -Challenges & limiting factors 9

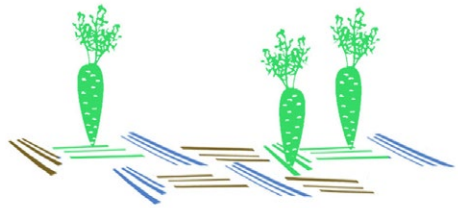
METHODOLOGY 11
- Assessment 11
  - -Round 1 11
  - -Round 2 13
  - -Round 3 13
  - -Last Steps & then some 14

NEIGHBORHOODS 15
- At a Glance 15
  - -Charles 17
  - -Hartford 17
  - -Elmwood 18
  - -Lower South Providence 19
  - -Upper South Providence 20
  - -Wanskuck 21
  - -West End 22

NEXT STEPS 23

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & SOURCES 24

Introduction



With a rich history of food-gardening and a current push towards local food systems, urban agriculture is cycling through Rhode Island communities again. Dating as far back as WWII, victory gardens were designed to empower households and fight rising food costs. In the decades spanning the 1970s to 1990s, Rhode Island struggled with the growing pains of deindustrialization. Plummeting real estate values, loss of manufacturing jobs and unemployment burdened the state capital of Providence. The South Side of Providence especially suffered from escalating foreclosures, abandoned properties, trash-filled lots, and lead-laden soil. The low cost of land and abundant vacant lots provided Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT), an organization founded in 1981, to take the opportunity to buy its first piece of property on Somerset Street, known today as Somerset Community Garden.

SCLT envisioned revitalizing neighborhoods by providing residents with clean open space to grow healthy food. For the next three decades, urban agriculture would take its place as a mainstay of Providence's landscape as a result of collective, mission-driven work by organizations such as SCLT, The Providence Parks Department, African Alliance of Rhode Island, Olneyville Housing Corporation, West Broadway Neighborhood Association, Brown University, Groundwork Providence, and many others. Today, SCLT is a nationally recognized leader in urban agriculture, owns over 16 community gardens, and collaborates with several more owned and maintained by other community organizations scattered throughout the city.

With a strong footing in community gardens, SCLT has expanded their focus to urban farmers. The City of Providence, in partnership with SCLT, has sparked an urban agriculture initiative called 'Lots of Hope.' This exciting project transforms unused city property into productive urban farms. Lots of Hope seeks to improve access to locally grown produce, expand the City's portfolio of green space, and contribute to improvements in air quality, public health, and local property values.

Mission

The mission of this document is to identify, assess and systemize vacant city-owned property that may be used for future urban agriculture development in the City of Providence.

Objectives

1. Clarify the rigorous process of identifying criteria for assessing city-owned property;
2. Promote a transparent and equitable process and outcome that can be publicly consumed;
3. Create a snapshot of Providence's capacity for urban food production; and
4. Provide recommendations for the City of Providence from findings to support a robust urban agriculture system.

Vision

We hope to support a more informed process for identifying city-owned land parcels fit for urban food production in Providence. We envision that city-officials and decision-makers can be guided by the use of this document to promote urban agriculture with transparency and equitability.

Background of Lots of Hope

Since SCLT's founding over 30 years ago, the interest for urban agriculture has only grown. With the recent nationwide trend in urban areas to create a more robust local food system, space to grow food in the city is very much coveted. In Providence, urban farm start-ups and co-op-based farming groups, like the Little City Growers Cooperative, are leading the way by connecting city-grown food to the hands of Providence consumers. The demand, according to several farmers we have spoken to, far outstrips supply.

The experiences of these farmers, many who are of the younger generation and optimistic about shifting the local food system to more urban-centric sustainable practices, has significantly informed the City of Providence on steps moving forward with urban agriculture. The challenges of land tenure and remediating lead-toxic soil, let alone establishing a viable business, are plenty. Their experiences helped the City of Providence realign its vision for urban agriculture and inspired a new program called Lots of Hope (LOH).

Lots of Hope
was established
in 2012

This program, established in early 2012, serves to institutionalize urban agriculture and position the City as an urban agriculture advocate to help farmers navigate various bureaucratic challenges associated with acquiring land. The City of Providence owns over 400 abandoned properties.

Through a survey and assessment process, plots identified as viable for farming will be considered as future urban farms. Plots may be available to farmers and Southside Community and Trust through long-term leases with the approval of the City Council and city administration.

This document seeks to show the systematic criteria used to identify suitable city-owned property for urban farming purposes. The steps in reaching the final recommendations should provide a transparent, equitable, and meaningful illustration fit for public consumption and support for policymakers to move forward.

LOH aims to integrate economic, social, and environmental value into its decision-making processes. By revitalizing these neighborhoods, many of which may be in food deserts or blighted areas, the City and SCLT envision improving the health and wellness of its communities and food system, while attracting residents and businesses to invest.

Manton Bend Community Farm – LOH's first farm

In October 2013, The City of Providence celebrated the completion of the first LOH farm, Manton Bend Community Farm, a partnership between the City and Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT).

Nestled in the Manton neighborhood, Manton Bend Community Farm is just over a ½ acre and covers six vacant city-owned lots. Months of planning and construction between the City of

Providence, SCLT, dedicated volunteers, and African Alliance of Rhode Island yielded 12 raised beds for community gardeners and 40-mounded beds for African Alliance growers, who will grow food and sell their produce to local farmers markets. Manton Bend's unique accommodation for both farming and community gardening space will foster engagement between refugee food growers and neighbors in the community. The urban farm also includes a handicapped accessible path and two handicap accessible raised beds.

Manton Bend Community Farm is made possible with the support of the Rhode Island Department of Health, The Rhode Island Foundation, The Local Sustainability Matching Fund, Providence City Councilman Michael Correia, Providence City Council, Southside Community Land Trust, African Alliance of RI, City of Providence Office of Sustainability and the Healthy Communities Office.

Mayor Taveras, Councilman Correia, Julius Kolawole and growers of AARI at Manton Bend (Source: City of Providence)

A Providence Snapshot

Lots of Hope is a community-driven effort that is supported by urban farmers and community-based organizations who seek to make Providence more urban farming friendly. With a mission to increase access to land, Lots of Hope is expected to face several challenges too. Front Step Farm, Sidewalk Ends Farm, and African Alliance have been an integral part in giving input and guidance towards Lots of Hope. Their stories are below:

Side Stories

Front Step Farm

Front Step Farm founder Than Wood began farming on a small space on Westminster Street on Providence's West End in 2010. Than invested countless hours of time and energy to improve his plot's soil quality. After vigorously testing, remediating lead and applying compost to his 7/8ths of an acre lot, his work paid off. Than's biointensive-farming practices allowed him to participate in the Little City Growers Cooperative as well as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Alongside the satisfaction of revitalizing his piece of property into a viable urban farm was the constant uncertainty of his land tenure. Because he was renting, there was always the possibility of getting kicked off the property if

it was ever sold. This day finally came in spring of 2012 when Than was forced to relinquish his urban farm to a new owner.

Than eventually relocated to a new City-owned property and started over. However, his fight was not lost. His struggle to acquire land and secure tenure inspired stakeholders inside and outside of City Hall to strengthen how the City of Providence focuses on urban agriculture. Than's story thus laid the foundation for Lots of Hope.

Sidewalk Ends

Founded in spring of 2011, Sidewalk Ends Farm is a 5,000 square foot urban farm, located on a formerly vacant lot on Harrison Street in Providence's Armory Park neighborhood. As part of the new wave of young urban farmers, Fay Strongin, Laura Brown-Lavoie and Tess Brown-Lavoie rehabbed the long-neglected space at Harrison St. and have turned it into a hub of food production, beauty, and community education. Like Than, the three Sidewalk Ends farmers are always facing the uncertainty of land tenure. Being three farmers working together on one space, Fay, Laura and Tess share all farm duties and profits. They balance making a modest income with full-time farming with other part-time jobs, which begs the question – can urban farming be a viable career?

Part of the answer came in early 2013, during Sidewalk Ends' third season when they expanded their operation by adding a third of an acre in Johnston, RI. This increase in production enables them to better serve the demand for healthy local

Farmers from the Little City Growers Cooperative (Source: SCLT)

Produce at market from Little City Growers Cooperative (Source: SCLT)

produce. In their experiences, Fay, Tess and Laura found that demand has exceedingly surpassed their supply of locally grown fresh food. Nonetheless, Sidewalk Ends is one of many urban farms in Providence that proves it is possible to make the most out of a small plot of land. In 2012, on about a tenth of an acre, they harvested close to 1400 pounds of food; on a third of an acre in 2013, they harvested roughly 4000 pounds.

The Sidewalk Ends farmers view LOH as a great program to encourage young urban farmers to make their stake in the soils of Providence. A program that offers to navigate the bureaucracies and best practices of starting and maintaining a farm could add tremendous value to this unique and growing niche of our food economy.

African Alliance of RI

African Alliance of RI (AARI) was formally established in 2004 as a non-profit dedicated to improving the lives of Africans living in Rhode Island. Among several initiatives and resources, AARI and Director Julius Kolawole promote community gardening as a way to encourage healthy eating, environmental awareness, and education about African foods. Many Africans in Rhode Island are refugees, people who have been forced to flee their home countries because of ethnic, political, social, or religious persecution. African refugees come from areas that are predominately agricultural economies. Thus, growing food is a major hub of family life and supporting self-sufficiency.

Refugees resettling in Rhode Island come with a rich set of food-growing skills and are eager to apply and share that knowledge in their new homes. Community gardening has been instrumental in supporting refugees' transitions in Rhode Island. By providing a space to grow food and build community, refugees such as those in AARI can experience a much smoother transition in the City of Providence.

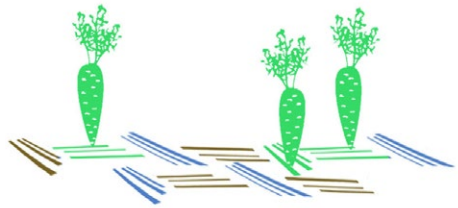
AARI, SCLT, and the City of Providence have been partners for many years, informing one another with regards to food-growing education, community development, and more. Manton Bend is an inspiring testament to the City's rapport with its African food growers, as well as a great opportunity for AARI farmers to contribute their gifts to Rhode Island's economic and social fabric. Manton Bend and its AARI farmers will truly be a model for future LOH farms and farmers to come.

Challenges and limiting factors

For the City of Providence, Lots of Hope is ripe with opportunities regarding the economic, social and environmental welfare of its communities. However, many challenges and obstacles are expected as well. Understanding both the challenges and opportunities is important for Lots of Hope to be able to effectively advocate for urban farming.

Capacity

LOH's capacity to transform only a few plots a year due to infrastructure costs is easily outpaced by urgency and growing demand of many existing and aspiring urban farmers. Thus, the program has a clear limiting factor in how well it can



respond to their land use needs. Additionally, the City of Providence itself is limited in how much vacant land is suitable for agriculture and available for Lots of Hope.

Competition

The decision to choose which city-owned plots get used for urban farming is complex. Plots that are conducive for growing food – good sunlight, even slope, decent size – tend to also make good candidates for other kinds of development. For instance, farming on parks generally suited for community gardening. The process in selecting sites for urban agriculture will face a tension of balancing community preferences between food-growing and commercial or residential development.

Community Dynamics

As with many community food growing programs, LOH must carefully navigate the neighborhood dynamics between urban farmers and residents. It will be important to establish an inclusive environment and process in which neighbors can engage with the City's urban farming projects in their area. For instance, Manton Bend Community Farm was created with that dynamic in mind – the planners included community garden spaces within the farm for neighbors to engage with the in-coming African refugee urban farmers, held a community meeting, and worked closely with the ward's Councilmember, Michael Correia.

Program Policy

LOH program infrastructure still leaves the issue of how leasing farmers can transition to more permanent land or if five-year leases are the best way to support longevity. This is an especially salient problem, as incubator farms like Urban Edge have run into the issue of farmers being unable to leave their farms after investing in the land for so many years and not being able to secure a permanent space.

Lack of Long-term Strategy

LOH is driven by available grant funding and is still working to prove that urban farming on City property can be a long-term venture. Without a sustainability plan, LOH will not be able to continue supporting urban agriculture goals of the City.

Methodology

Assessment

In September 2013, the LOH team began assessing property lists provided by the Providence Department of Planning and Development. There were 476 listed parcels owned by the City, 69 of which are under the authority of the Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA). Both lists included information such as addresses, land value, square footage, and the tax map ID.

While these property lists had been similarly assessed during previous projects, this was the most up-to-date database of vacant lots with consistent City of Providence oversight. The format for our assessment was inspired and modeled off of existing successful urban agriculture programs, personal knowledge, and the results of experimental trial and error. We assessed properties in three rounds.

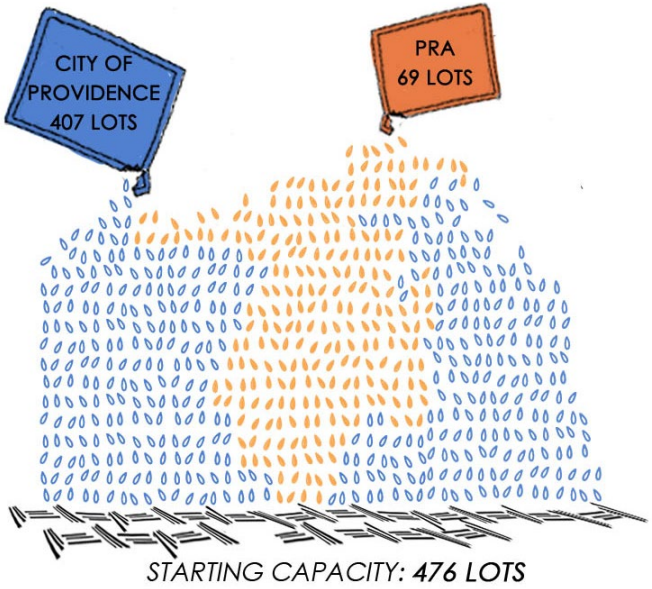


Figure 1: Providence's starting available land capacity prior to assessment

Round One

Beginning with a large collection of all city-owned lots, the list was divided among three interns and individual assessment notes were recorded. Our team applied increasingly specific qualifications that narrowed the list until only the top recommendations remained for the next round. The intention of our first round assessment was to eliminate properties that were unsuitable for agricultural or even green space development. Aerial imaging, through Providence Plan Property Mapper, was used to visualize the lots' space and characteristics.

Round 1:
-Determined by aerial photos if lots were "Vacant", "Occupied", or a "Park"

-Determined if lot received a "Yes", "No", or "Maybe" for moving on to the next round of assessment

Round 2:
-Lots receiving a "Yes" or "Maybe" from Round 1 were assessed with refined criteria

-Suitable lots were added to a Site Visit List

Round 3:
-In-person site visits were conducted

-Lots were separated into tiers

First, we determined whether the lot was vacant, occupied or a park. Specific observations, such as size, trees, sun exposure, pavement, debris, cars, and known public use or industrial use, were noted. The observations also provided further guidance to identify a spectrum of suitable to unsuitable lots for urban farming (See Figure 2). Those observations were placed in categories for further consideration as follows:

- Yes
  - Overall, good possibility for future farm developments and have no characteristics that would inhibit them from being assessed for farming opportunities
  - Good size, over 2,500 square feet
  - Unpaved
  - Empty and slightly overgrown or with gravel
  - Empty but may be used as residential parking
- Maybe
  - Possible use for urban farming but requires further investigation via internet, site visit, or inquiry of someone with knowledge of the site
  - Fair to good size, 2,500 square feet and above
  - Empty plots that may be paved and/or are overgrown
  - May contain medium amounts of trash
  - Are apparently used as residential parking
  - Parks with large open and apparently unused space
- No
  - Small size, under 2,500 square feet
  - May be portions of front yards, road mediums, roundabouts
  - Are not empty or empty covered with trees and plants
  - Other characteristics unsuitable for food growing: poor slope, poor light, awkward shape

Vacant: No permanent buildings and there is no apparent productive use.

Occupied: Lots with permanent structures or buildings and an apparent productive use. Examples include lots with used or abandoned buildings, swimming pools, sport fields & facilities.

Park: Public green space used for recreation and public enjoyment

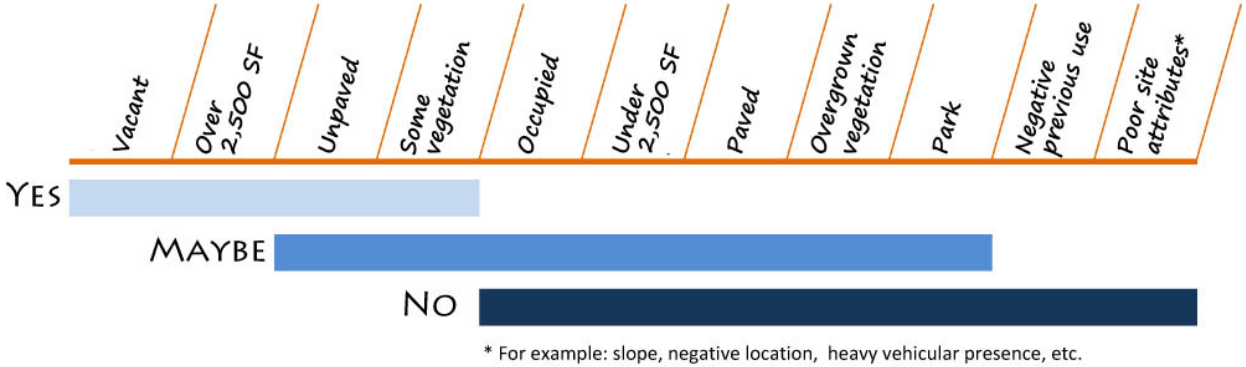


Figure 2: Round 1 Assessment Spectrum. The constraints of lot quanity, unknown site history and pending soil test, make for a subjective assessment of properties.

First round assessment of city-owned and PRA properties resulted in 162 vacant lots, 198 occupied lots, 104 parks, and 12 inaccurate addresses (will be excluded from calculations in next rounds). We determined that 41 lots classified as "Yes" and 88 as "Maybe" would move on to the next round – a total of 129 lots. The remaining 347 were deemed unsuitable for urban food growing based on the above criteria.

Round Two

In this secondary round we removed parks, 34 properties in total, from our assessment. We agreed that parks were suitable for active and public green spaces, including community gardens, but not for the specific development of commercial urban farms. This round of assessment again used aerial mapping software to evaluate the extent of tree cover and the amount of negative characteristics -- yielding a total of 95 promising lots. Our refined definitions are as follows:

- Size: priority given to sites with at least 4000 square feet
- Tree canopy
    - None (no tree cover)
    - Some (a few trees, minor shade covering)
    - More than 50%, enough to impede food growing productivity
- Negative characteristics such as trash, cars, slope, rubble, pavement ranged from
    - None (no visible negative characteristics)
    - Some (removable amount of trash, etc)
    - Unsuitable (amount of negative aspects do not warrant the effort required to remove them or they appear to be permanent).

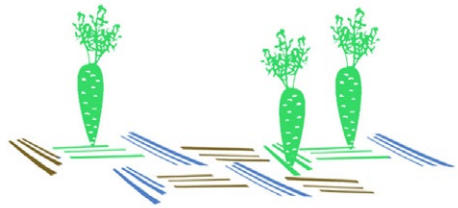
We determined that 66 lots with few negative characteristics and/or limited tree canopy warranted site visits. GIS maps were created in order to visualize the distribution of these lots throughout the city and inform our search.

Figure 3: From a starting point of 476, the number of lots considered for a site visit only amounts to 66.

Round Three

Site visits allowed for a close-up evaluation of the quality of these PRA and city-owned lots, providing contextual perspective to its size, location, proximity to other lots and other characteristics. We also acknowledged other considerations such as the history of neighborhood, previous developments, current use of areas, and proximity to any schools for possible partnerships.

At each visit, photographs and notes were taken to document the surrounding area and its specific characteristics. Lots were organized according to their neighborhood and further



grouped with other lots in close proximity. After investigation we developed three classification categories identifying lots as suitable for urban farming or perhaps some other sort of green use. These three tiers are strictly based on a lot's physical

Tier 1: Ideal for urban farming

Tier 2: May be suitable; slight limiting factors

Tier 3: Other green uses

characteristics and considerations.

- Tier 1: Ideal for urban farming
  - 4000 square feet are larger
  - Good shape, slope, and light exposure
  - Unpaved
  - No other apparent productive use
- Tier 2: May be ideal for urban farming or other green space improvement
  - Under 4000 square feet
  - Less ideal shape, slope and light exposure
  - May be paved or have some sort of apparent productive use (parking, neighborhood use)
- Tier 3: Other
  - Poor characteristics but could utilize it for some sort of green/productive use could add value to its respective neighborhood

Based on our site visits, we determined that 26 lots were Tier 1, 15 lots were Tier 2, 14 lots were Tier 3, and all else received a "No." As part of our team's due diligence, we referenced Department of Environmental Management (DEM) records for information about the history and contamination of our first tier sites. Documents included everything from test results, maps, construction plans, newspaper clippings, photos, testimonials, executive reports, etc. DEM checks reveal the safety of a site, such as previous dumping or uses that would render a plot unsuitable for growing food. At a first pass, 13 Tier 1 lots remain after the initial DEM check. The process is ongoing and necessary to ensure proper selection of future LOH sites.

Last steps and then some…

All urban lots should be considered for rigorous testing and DEM investigation to prove their suitability and potential for food-growing. This LOH project is one of many that have been completed by students, urban farmers, city staff, and residents. What sets this document apart is the high degree of city involvement, given these recommendations will guide the City of Providence's decision making. Likewise, the developed criteria and attention to process uniquely provide the fullest level of transparency for decision-makers and city residents.

We acknowledge that the process of land assessment is subjective. However, we believe having four LOH authors (rather than just one or two assessors) who each possess urban agriculture expertise, provides a higher level of accuracy regarding the assessment of vacant city-owned land and the potential for urban agriculture.

Neighborhoods

At a Glance

The City of Providence is home to 25 official neighborhoods. These neighborhoods represent diverse cultures, socioeconomics and availability of vacant lots for urban farming. Our initial list of city-owned and PRA properties began with plots in all 25 neighborhoods. This list revealed that most vacant lots are located in lower-income areas of Providence, such as the West End and Upper South Providence. Nonetheless, despite finding higher volumes of vacant, city-owned lots in lower-income areas, many high potential sites are unsuitable for agriculture due to contamination and development conflicts.

After 66 lots warranting site visits, the promising lots were ranked among Tiers and further researched. After a DEM check for environmental background, the following properties remain:

Tier 1: 13 Total

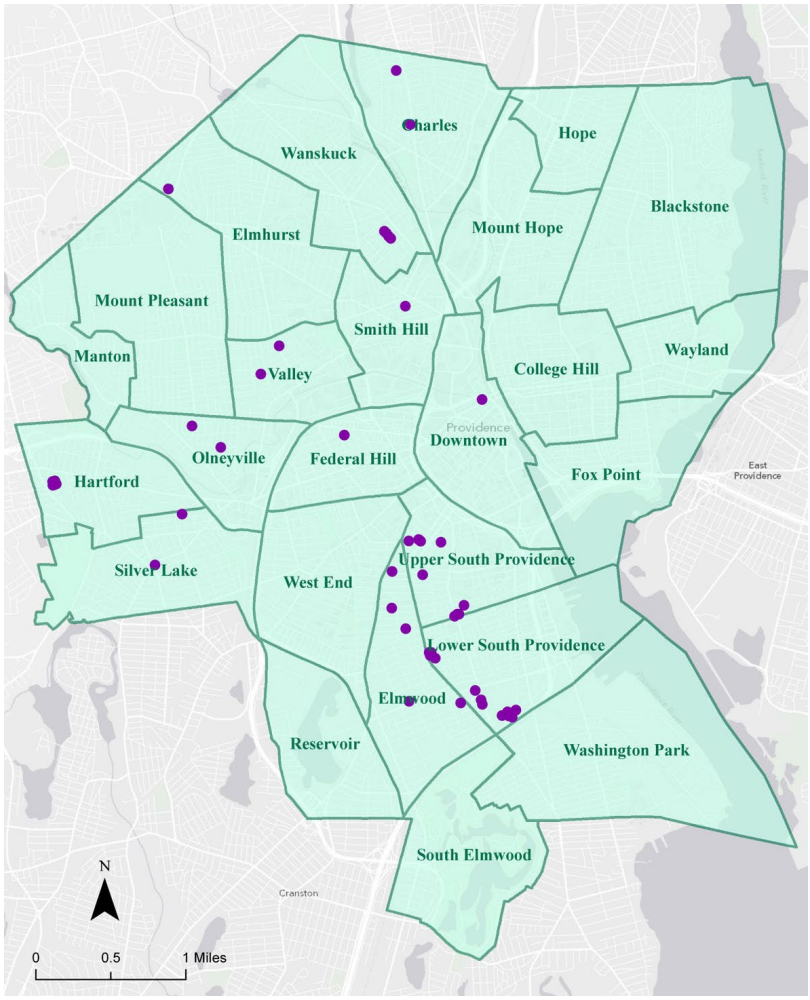
- 143 Adelaide Avenue
- 1 Milo Street (includes 2 lots)
- 1R Milo Street
- 804 Broad Street
- 814 Broad Street
- 44 Lillian Avenue
- 125 Byfield Street
- 621 Prairie Avenue
- 201 Pavilion Avenue
- 15 Somerset Street
- 107 Suffolk Street
- 98 Pumgansett Street

Tier 2: 5 Total

- 616 Charles Street
- 43 Daboll Street
- 48 Norwich Avenue
- 372 Blackstone Street
- 399 Public Street

Tier 3: 1 Total

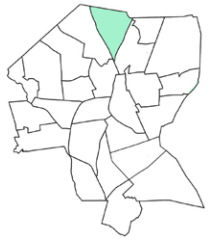
- 327 Elmwood Avenue



Map 1: Neighborhoods in the City of Providence showing locations of sites visited in the Round 3 assessment.-66 total. Not to scale.

Neighborhood	# of Initial Plots	# of Final 1st Tier Lots (# after DEM check)
Blackstone	7	0
Charles	32	0
College Hill	17	0
Downtown	19	0
Elmhurst	9	0
Elmwood	24	1(1)
Federal Hill	29	0
Fox Point	19	0
Hartford	16	7 (3)
Hope	7	0
Lower South Providence	26	10 (6)
Manton	8	0
Mount Hope	18	0
Mount Pleasant	13	0
Olneyville	12	0
Reservoir	20	0
Silver Lake	28	0
Smith Hill	9	0
South Elmwood	11	0
Upper South Providence	36	5 (1)
Valley	9	0
Wanskuck	21	2(2)
Washington Park	21	0
Wayland	10	0
West End	43	1 (0)
TOTAL	**464**	**26 (13)**

Figure 4: This chart organizes each of Providence's 25 neighborhoods in descending order from most to least number of initial city-owned plots. Only five neighborhoods contained first tier lot recommendations after our DEM check.



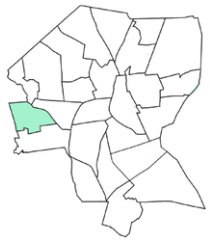
CHARLES

Charles

Tier 2

- 616 Charles Street: Unpaved, seems to be used for parking on a relatively busy street, next to a daycare

Streetview picture of 616 Charles St.



HARTFORD

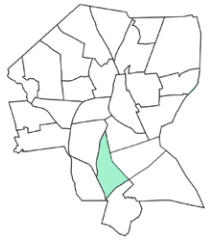
Legend

- Lots Visited
- Neighborhoods

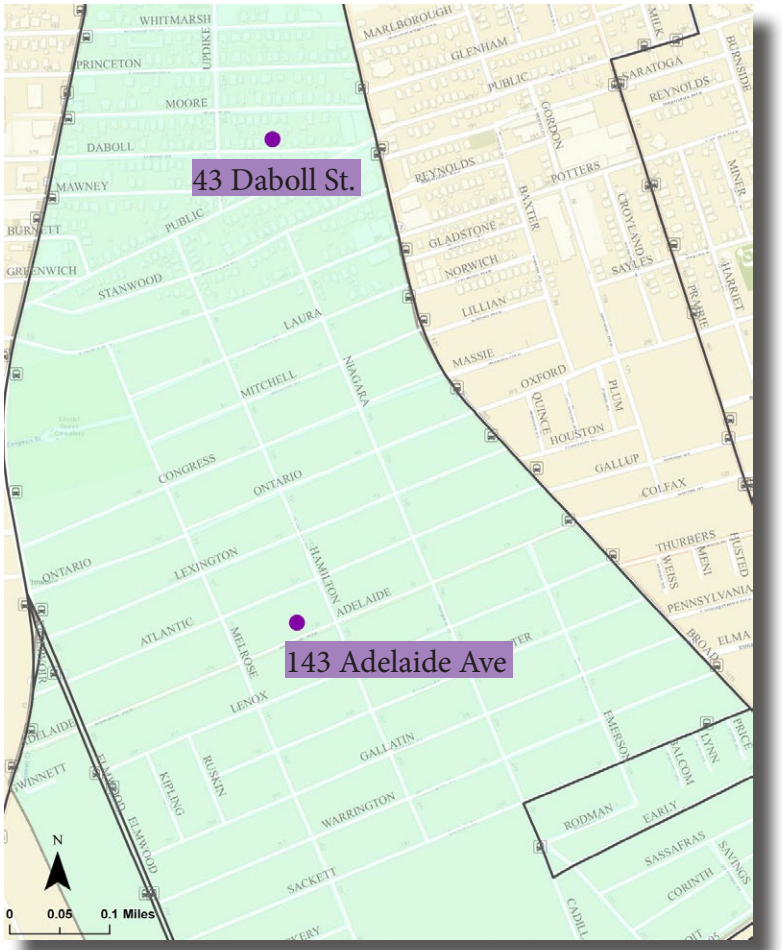
Hartford

Tier 1:

- 1 Milo Street (2 lots): Both are 4000 square feet, grass fields, adjacent to schools, will require further environmental checks due to proximity to old landfill
- 1R Milo Street: 4000 square feet, grass field, adjacent to schools, will require further environmental checks due to proximity to old landfill



ELMWOOD



Legend

- Lots Visited
- Neighborhoods

Elmwood

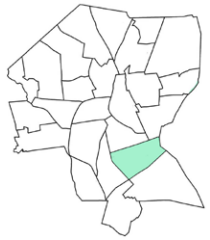
Tier 1:

- 143 Adelaide Avenue: 5000 square feet, residential area, grassy and moderate light exposure

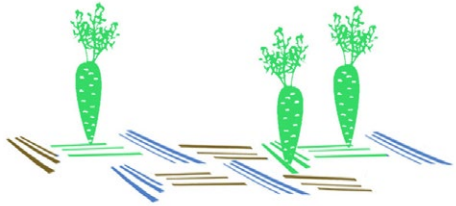
Tier 2:

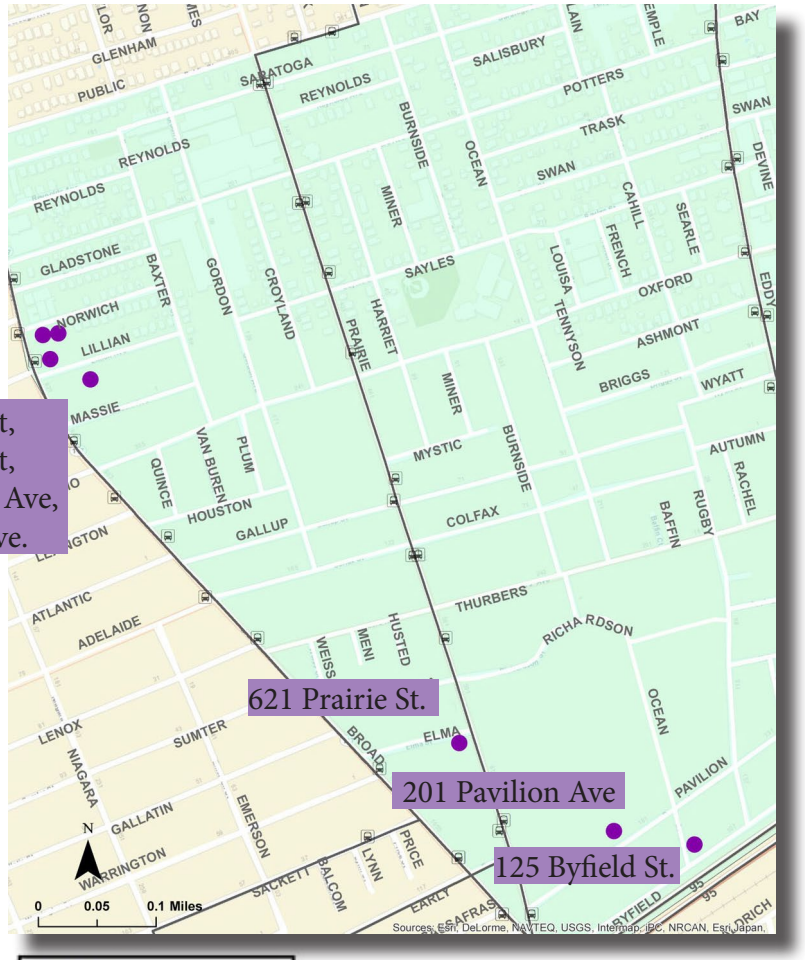
- 43 Daboll Street: Smaller than desired at 2600 square feet, potentially used by neighbors for parking

Streetview picture of 143 Adelaide Avenue



LOWER SOUTH PROVIDENCE





Lower South Providence

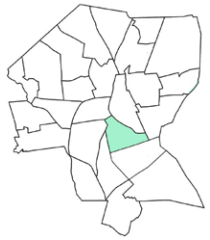
Tier 1:

- 804 Broad Street: Over 4000 square feet, grass lot, potentially a past site of a house
- 814 Broad Street : Over 6000 square feet, corner lot, trees/shade cover undesirable, ground slopes towards middle
- 44 Lillian Avenue: Over 5000 square feet, grass with some tree cover, potentially a past site of a house
- 125 Byfield Street: Over 5000 square feet, grass, tree and slope need to be addressed
- 621 Prairie Avenue: 4000 square feet, grass, near school and playground
- 201 Pavilion: 4000 square feet, grass, high elevation from sidewalk, potentially a past site of a house

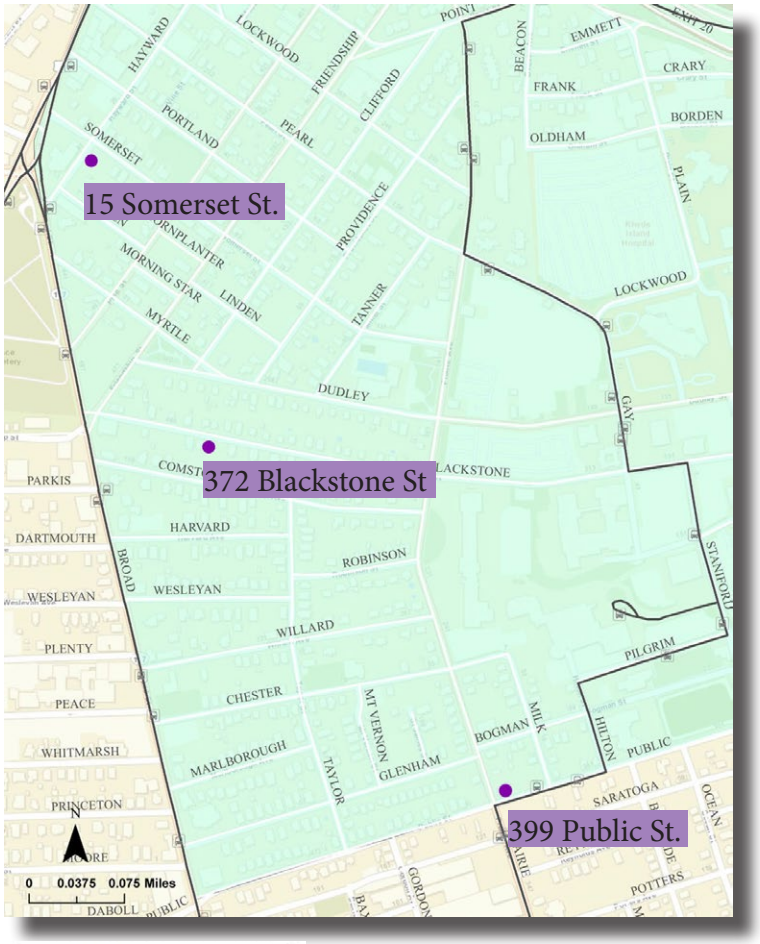
Tier 2:

- 48 Norwich Avenue: Smaller square footage, grass and some vegetation

Streetview of 804 Broad Street



UPPER SOUTH PROVIDENCE



Upper South Providence

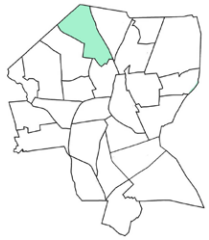
Tier 1:

- 15 Somerset Street: 5000 square feet, grass, overgrown vegetation

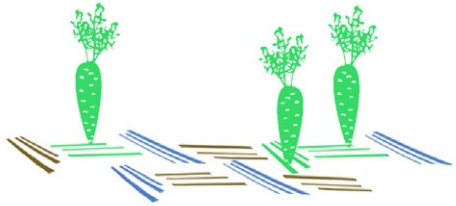
Tier 2:

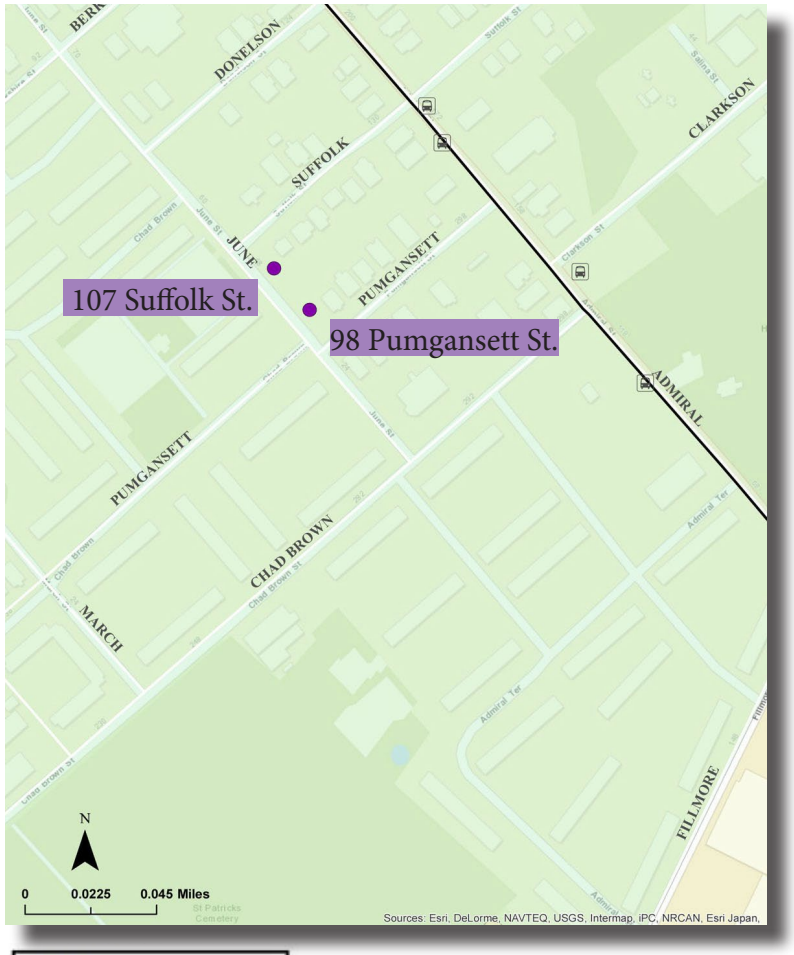
- 372 Blackstone Street: Smaller square footage, dirt, may be used as parking
- 399 Public Street: Under 4000 square feet, located near Roger Williams Middle School

Streetview of 15 Somerset Street



WANSKUCK



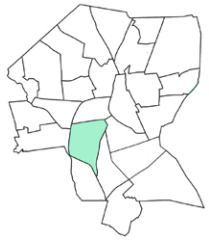


Wanskuck

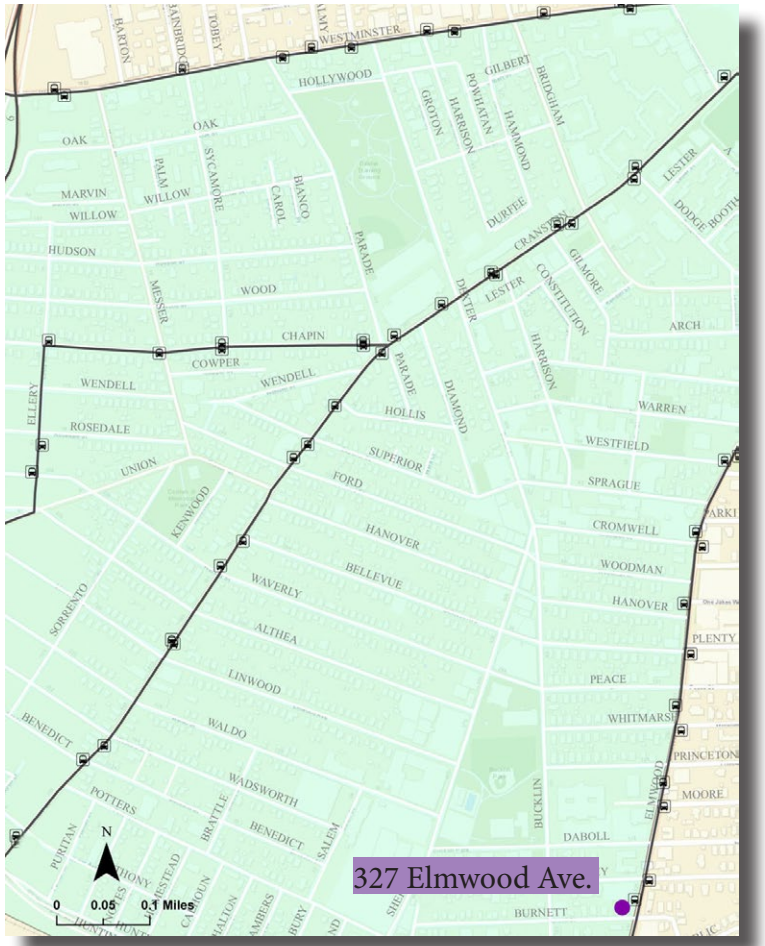
Tier 1:

- 107 Suffolk Street: 4000 square feet, green areas, in a residential neighborhood, near Chad Brown Housing.
- 98 Pumgansett Street: 4000 square feet, green areas, in a residential neighborhood, near Chad Brown Housing

Streetview of 98 Pumgansett Street



WEST END



West End

Tier 3:

- 327 Elmwood Avenue: Paved lot that may be used as parking

Aerial and streetview of 327 Elmwood Ave

Next Steps

Future Considerations

The Lots of Hope initiative is in line with the missions of both the Mayor Angel Taveras' Office of Sustainability and the Healthy Communities Office to provide access to land so people in Providence can grow food in environmentally sustainable ways. Ultimately, it supports the vision of creating a community food system where locally produced, healthy and affordable food is accessible to everyone.

While our LOH project provides an analysis of city-owned vacant lots in Providence, this work is but a launching pad for further exploration of urban agriculture opportunities. We have outlined several pathways in which to continue growing the depth and breadth of City of Providence Lots of Hope potential, including:

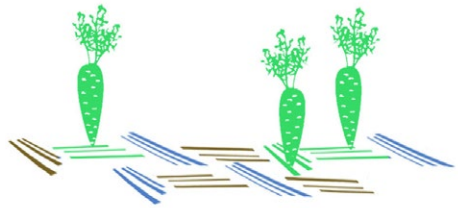
- Identifying the challenges and opportunities for partners in urban food growing: schools, hospitals, businesses, and other institutions;
- Exploring the value of 2nd and 3rd tier plots, and contaminated vacant parcels that could serve an innovative green space use (flower growing, small neighborhood park, etc.);
- Finding diverse sources of funding in order to balance the risk in relying of grant monies drying out; and
- Investigating the barriers and legal processes to reclaim tax-reverted properties (TRA) and its intersection with urban agriculture.

All final parcel recommendations should be considered with thorough review of soil quality and contamination status. Because growing food in the city encompasses many variables of safety and health, the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM)suggests treating any prospective plots with rigorous testing – just because properties' environmental histories are not in their records could just mean they have not been assessed. All food should be grown on fresh, clean material that adheres to DEM Residential Direct Exposure Criteria.

"**Lots of Hope** is an innovative new program that will help to build a more sustainable and healthy City for years to come. Providence has a vital environmental community committed to helping make the city more sustainable. Together, we are moving forward to transform Providence into one of the greenest cities in the nation."

-Mayor Angel Taveras

Acknowledgements & Sources



A special thanks to...

City of Providence
Angel Taveras, Mayor
Peter Asen, Healthy Communities Office
Sheila Dormody, Director of Sustainability
Robert McMahon, Superintendent of Public Parks
David Everett, Principal Planner
David DosReis, GIS Manager
Emily Koo, Policy Associate

Southside Community Land Trust
Margaret DeVos, Executive Director
Liza Sutton, Community Growers Director

Local Community Members
Leo Pollock, Compost Plant (formerly of Southside Community Land Trust)
Than Wood, Front Step Farm
Tess Brown-Lavoie, Sidewalk Ends Farm
Laura Brown-Lavoie, Sidewalk Ends Farm
Fay Strongin, Sidewalk Ends Farm
Adam Graffunder, Florence and Manton Farm
Sarah Zurier, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

Brown University
Dawn King, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies
Sophie Purdom, Student
Bruce Boucek, GIS Resource

Other sources

RI Department of Environmental Management
Providence Property Mapper
The Prov Plan
ArcGIS

Please note that lots identified in this document have not gone through any formal City approval process and may or may not be eligible for the Lots of Hope program.