Community Gardens on Public Land

AUSTIN PARKS & RECREATION
Cultural Places, Natural Spaces

AUSTIN SUSTAINABLE URBAN AGRICULTURE
& COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

Meredith Gray
Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens Coordinator
City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
meredith.gray@austintexas.gov

Why Community Gardens?

- The City of Austin recognizes the importance of local food and access to fresh, healthy food.
- It's estimated that Austin's Community Gardens are currently producing over 100,000 pounds of fresh local, organic produce for Austin residents every year!
- The Parks and Recreation Department views community gardens as another amenity we can provide for residents, just like tennis courts, dog parks, or splashpads.
- Our goal is to have urban agriculture opportunities available for all residents of the City of Austin.
- Gardening should be another form of recreation!

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Community Gardens and Good Food

- Grow Your Own!
  - You'll know it's organic if you yourself have grown it
  - Children who grow vegetables are more familiar with them and more likely to want to eat them (…and the same goes for adults!)
- "Food miles" matter for nutrition!
  - Food traveling long distances undergoes more chemical processing to preserve it for market
  - Food traveling long distances is often older and less nutritious
- Save Money!
  - A packet of organic tomato seeds can cost less than one organic tomato
  - Community gardens let you share tools, thus reducing individual buy-in

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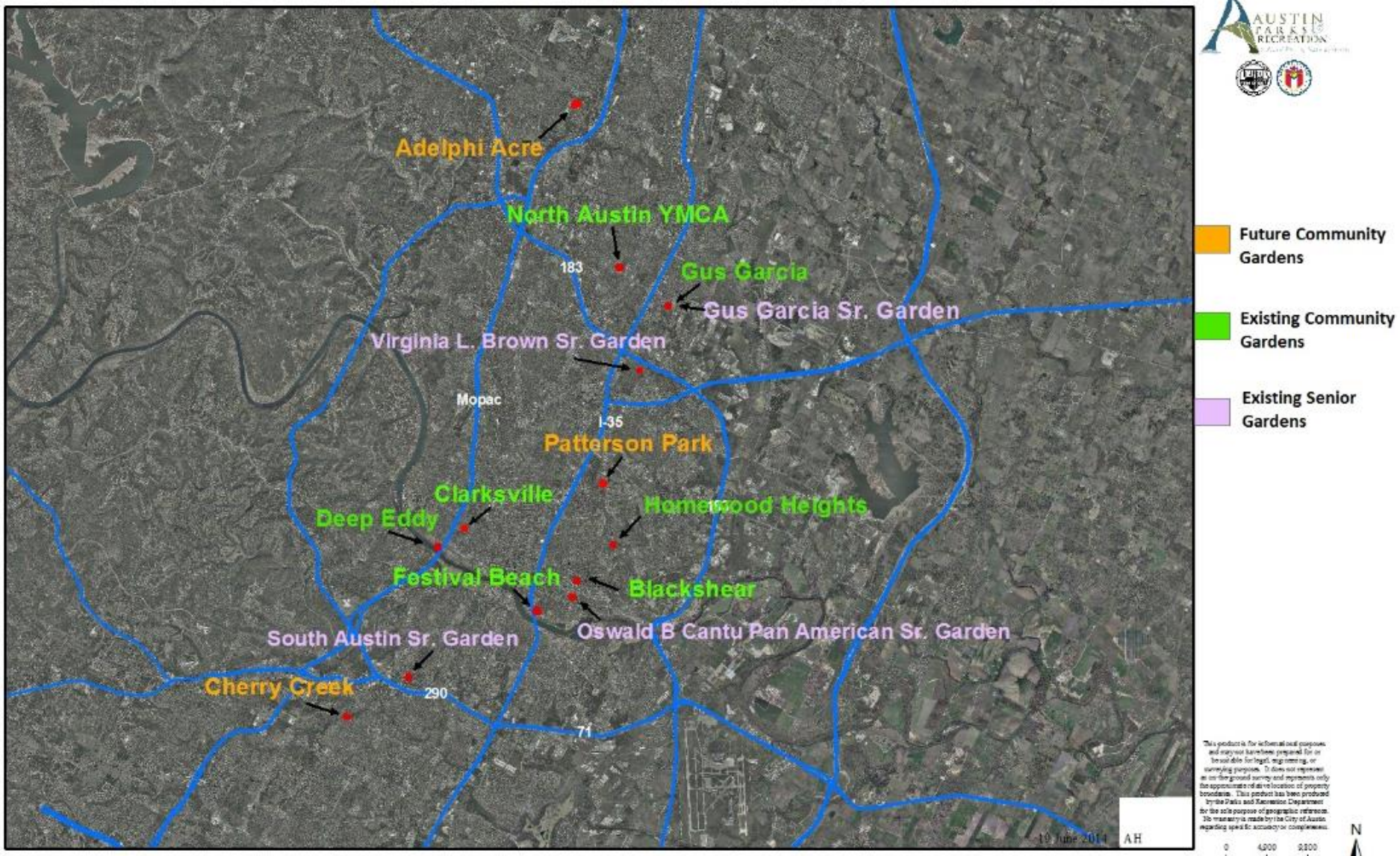
Existing Gardens on Public Land

COMMUNITY GARDENS:

- Deep Eddy Community Garden
- Festival Beach Community Garden
- Blackshear Community Garden
- Gus Garcia Community Garden
- North Austin YMCA Community Garden
- Patterson Park Community Garden
- Clarksville Community Garden
- Homewood Heights Community Garden
- Cherry Creek Community Garden
- Adelphi Acre Community Garden

SENIOR GARDENS:

- South Austin Senior Center
- Virginia L. Brown Recreation Center
- Gus Garcia Recreation Center
- Pan American "Cantu" Recreation Center
- Dottie Jordan Recreation Center (grand opening Sept. 2014!)



City of Austin: Public Community Garden Sites

Deep Eddy Community Garden

Parks Land | Operating for 30 years |
Location: Lady Bird Lake (Mopac and Deep Eddy)

The Garden has been an active organic community garden for more than 30 years.
There are more than 30 garden plots of various sizes with the largest being 20 x 20.

Festival Beach Community Garden

Parks Land | Created with SFC

Location: Lady Bird Lake

The garden offers approximately 80 member plots (10’ x 20’), 2 cooperative plots (40’ x 40’) and raised beds, as well as native plant and herb beds, wildlife habitat areas, fruit trees and nopalitos.

This garden is the size of an urban city lot. The garden offers shared neighborhood rows and 8 individual plots. Blackshear is on City land that the Watershed Department owns because of a storm water pipe installed to prevent flooding.

19 total plots. Founded in 2004 in partnership with City of Austin, American YouthWorks, and Clarksville NA

7 total plots. Founded in 2009 in partnership with City of Austin

Gus Garcia Community Garden

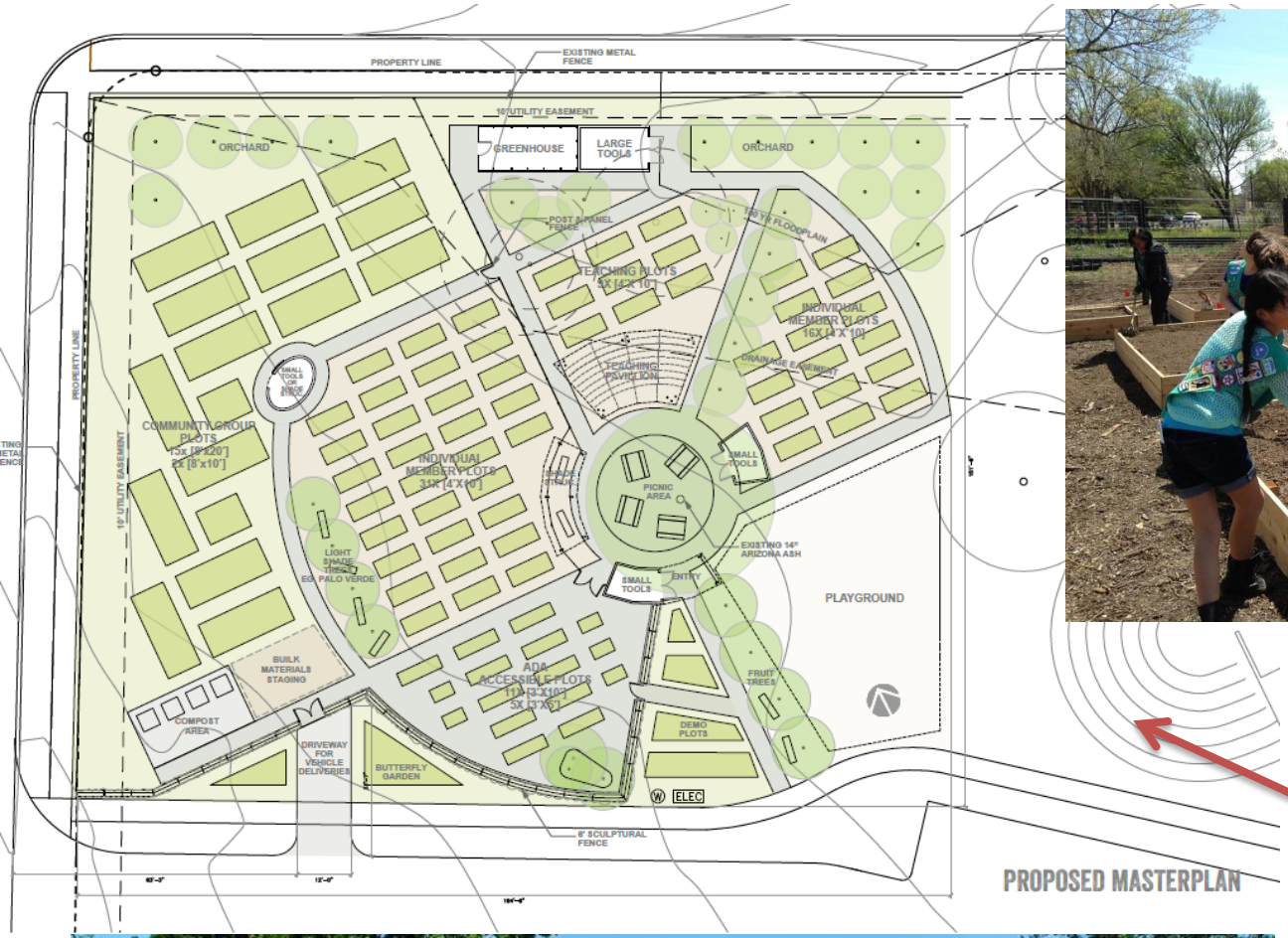
PARD land | Garden Permit Issued | building phase | February 2014 expected completion

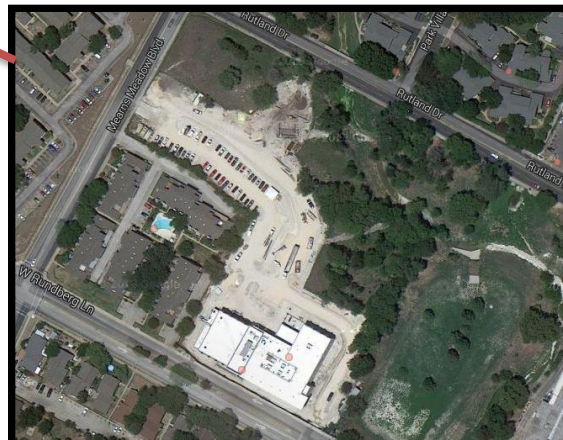
Location: North Austin - 1201 E Rundberg Ln

North Austin YMCA – AIPP Project

PARD land | Garden Permit Issued

Location: North Austin – 1000 W. Rundberg Ln

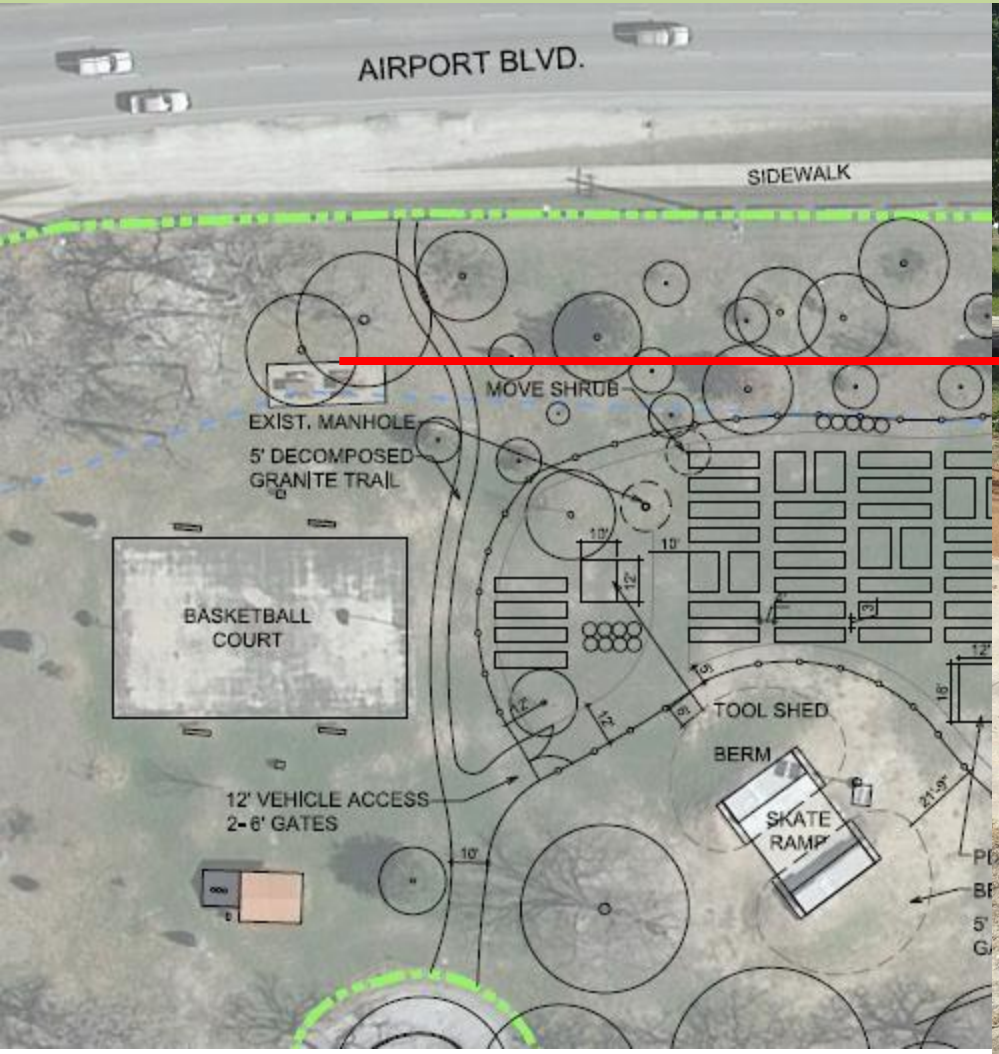




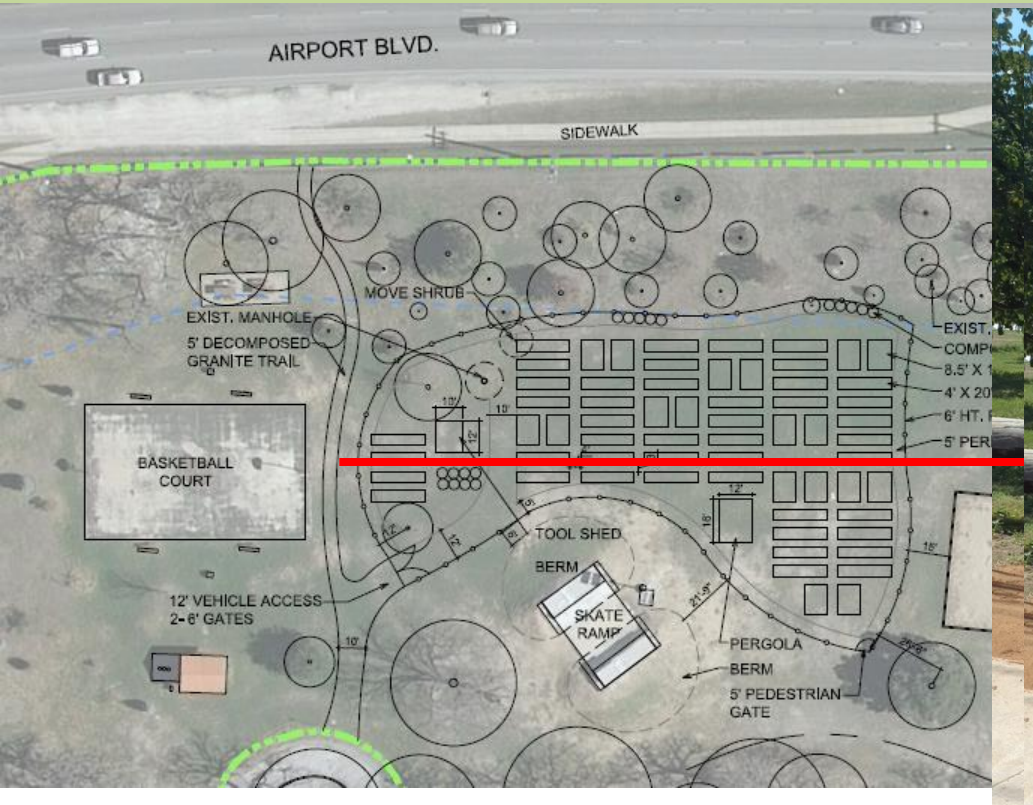
Patterson Park Community Garden

PARD land | Garden Permit Issued| solarizing Summer 2014, construction to begin late Fall 2014

Location: East Austin – Airport Blvd. and Brookview Rd.



Find funding to build a trail at a garden through grant funding



This trail will connect the community garden to the rest of the park

Pending Gardens on Public Land
(Active Applications)

- Adelphi Acre Community Garden
- Cherry Creek Community Garden
- East Lola Drive Community Garden
- Oakview Park Community Garden
- George Washington Carver Freedom Garden (Kealing Park)
- Holly Shores Food Forest

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Adelphi Acre Community Garden

PW land | Garden Permit application expected in August

Location: Northwest Austin - corner of Adelphi Ln & Amherst Dr.

Highly motivated and organized community group working steadily on CG design and garden permit. May apply for future grants for garden and general improvements of the parcel.

Adelphi Acre
COMMUNITY GARDEN
Sponsored by sfc

This is a joint project with SUACG and NPP (Public Works). Funding has been provided by NPP and we are sharing the design, community engagement, and implementation responsibilities. The garden will have 24 beds and serve the Cherry Creek Neighborhood. LadyeAnne Wofford of KAB is one of the garden organizers.

Festival Beach/Holly Shores Food Forest

PARD land | Permit application expected fall 2014

This is a community initiative that received a SUACG CTG-Minigrant this summer. They are in the planning phases and SUACG staff attended a design workshop on August 11th, which received a lot of press.
http://www.myfoxaustin.com/story/23106947/food-forest-planned-for-east-austin

Oakview Park Community Garden

PARD land | Garden Permit issued summer 2013 | design phase | fall 2014 expected completion

Garden leadership team working hard at revising garden design and applying for water tap and city permits; gathering community support and fundraising. They are going to incorporate the native persimmon (small tree, center) into the garden itself and plan to incorporate other fruit trees into the garden.

Potential Gardens on Public Land

(No active application yet)

- Dove Springs Recreation Center Community Garden
- UT Elementary School Community Garden
- Mueller Orchard
- Seaholm EcoDistrict Garden

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How Do We Get a License Agreement and Get Permitted?

1. Locate a suitable piece of public land (generally PARD property)
2. Get support from neighborhood (i.e. letters of support)
3. Put together a written description, design sketch, membership contract, and project timeline
4. Find a sponsoring nonprofit (like SFC)
5. Fill out SUACG application including site plan and AWU meter application (TAPS form)
6. Get endorsed by the SUACG (with the City)

This process will take some time. The SUACG office will sign off on your application or request that you make changes if need be. What official endorsement means:

- -Water fee waivers
- -You've been through our process
- -You have constant SUACG support

7. File for permits and sign "license agreement" with owner of property (i.e. PARD, Public Works, Watershed) which says you can use site
8. Begin gardening!

Beehive Donation Opportunity

- Offer made in June 2014 from Central Texas Bee Rescue (aka American Honey Bee Protection Agency):
  - Up to 1000 Langstroth-style bee boxes
  - Fencing around bee boxes
  - Adhering bee colonies
  - Protective equipment housed in job-site box
  - Beekeeping classes
- AHBPA specializes in no-kill beehive extraction and relocation (www.honeybeekind.com)

Background Regarding Opportunity

Proposed by AHBPA	Result
5-10 beehives at community gardens citywide	Approved
Beehives along Lady Bird Lake, Zilker Park, and other public locations	Under Review
Use of Austin Nature & Science Center as an educational facility where observation beehives and beekeeping classes will be held	Not Approved
Placing micro-apiaries throughout the city	Under Review
Buying a 3.5-acre lot on S. 1st from PARD to use as AHBPA headquarters	Not Approved
Named first responder for honeybee rescue and relocation	Not Approved

Current City Guidelines Regarding Beehives on Parkland

- City Code – Chapter 3-6-1
  - No actual bee permit required for public or private land, but there are restrictions and requirements
- Ordinance for bee removal mandates attempt to save bees
  - "*Wherever reasonably possible, the City shall prioritize the removal and relocation of wild or abandoned bees over destruction.*" (*Ord. 20120322-019)*
- Guidelines for community gardens
  - Limits on hive density (2 per quarter acre)
  - Required to have fence around hive
  - Flyway barrier 6 feet high, extending 10 feet from hives required if within 25 feet of property line
  - Aggressive colony/nucleus colony procedures
- 4 community gardens already interested, working with AHBPA

Challenges for Community Gardens/Urban Agriculture in Austin

- Lack of staff dedicated to garden assistance -> SUACG Coordinator also coordinates Wildlife Austin program
- Lack of staff dedicated to “new” food projects such as a food forest or edible trail
- Permitting maze with site development exemption permits
- Rainwater harvesting challenges
- Not many contractors willing to do small scale jobs who meet City insurance requirements

Opportunities for Community Gardens/Urban Agriculture in Austin

- Food portal website will provide information on permits and resources for community gardens
- City Council approved food forest pilot at Holly Shores
- National Recreation and Park Association $10K grant for engineering services for community gardens (i.e. water tap plan sealed engineered drawing)

Questions??

Thank You!

Meredith Gray
Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens Coordinator, City of Austin PARD
meredith.gray@austintexas.gov
512-974-9450