



# Resilient Cities & Communities

Visionary People. Vibrant Places. Regenerative Futures.

## Urban Ag & Community Garden Leaders Fall Harvest Meet Up 11-10-2025 Notes and Next Steps

Thank you for being a part of the Harvest Celebration and Action Planning Pot-Luck! On Monday, November 10, 2025, over 40 leaders in urban agriculture, community gardening, and community growing came together at the Pillsbury United, Oak Park Center.

The evening was facilitated by Resilient Cities and Communities (RCC) and funded thanks to Hennepin County Climate and REsiliency Department, to celebrate our collective successes, share delicious potluck dishes, and plant seeds for future collaboration. The warm, electric, and forward-leaning energy demonstrated the commitment and resilience of our community. Hennepin County- Growing Communities is committed to keep building networking events and planning future steps such as implementing the Agroecology Network.

Thank you for being a part of this moment and community.

**“Where once was wide urban blight, now sits luscious garden sights; gardens without borders, classrooms without walls; architects of our destinies, access to food, justice for all. And now, like sweet potato vines, our missions and goals all intertwine,”**

**Elder Michael Chaney**

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During our tabletop discussions, we were able to identify important organizations and critical challenges and lead our discussions through a solutions-oriented lens.

**Originations and Activities:** These organizations are actively shaping the urban ag landscape.

- **Hennepin County Growing Communities:** Supports 7 urban agriculture gardens, plus 5 FORTIFY projects implementing Urban Agriculture also. Location examples for support: East Phillips, Little Earth Urban Farm, Tomales x Bicicletas, and Agroforestry.
- **UMN Extension:** Provides training via MN Shade Tree Short Course (UMN) and TAG tree climbing.
- **Project Sweetie Pie:** Aims for intentional growing and serving the community. Used \$10,000 from Northside Green Zone for a summer of work. Hosts Foster Green, an initiative with Kimbal Musk Big Green bus project.
- **BF50 / Minneapolis Park & Rec:** Has steward 17 Food Shelf Plots (given to food shelves) and 37 Community Plots for community growers. Hosts annual events surrounding vegan cooking and food sovereignty.
- **Minneapolis Edible Boulevards:** Offers food sharing, free cooking classes, gardening programs, and Sound Board Therapy/Meditation

- **Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council:** Advises Mayor and City Council. Active Action Teams: Urban Agriculture, Wasted Food, and Food Skills
- **Missing Peace Collective:** Provides free transportation to jails for families of the incarcerated; stewards community garden in the prisons.

Challenges Identified:

Challenge Areas	Details and shared statements	Continued.
<b>Funding Mechanisms</b>	Reimbursable grants system currently serves as a discriminatory practice. The community overwhelmingly stated that this process must be eliminated, being a system that holds structures of inequity.	Organizations find that they lack the resources needed to build a solid foundation and find themselves ‘chasing small mini grants’.
<b>Land Access and Ownership</b>	We realize this is a systemic problem, rooting from discriminatory practices intentionally pushing BIPOC individuals outside the margins-creating disparities in wealth creation.	Lack of permanent land ownership is a core problem in our City, especially surrounding community farms/ gardens. This directly impacts people’s abilities to heal, connect to earth, have access to power
<b>Environmental Impacts</b>	Significant crop delays in the season due to smoke blocking out the sun, the second summer in a row. Tomatoes didn’t ripen until late September.	Other environmental challenges are droughts, managing mold in the plants
<b>Coordination and Transparency</b>	There seems to be a lack of resources sharing due to animosity or jealousy, challenges of getting information out to urban gardens.	Government offices do not answer phones when it comes to accessing lots.

## Solution Areas and Opportunities

Solution Areas	Details and shared statements	Continued.	Partners/ Opportunities
<p><b>Funding Mechanisms</b></p> <p>Requesting changes in funding process from Hennepin Co, Minneapolis Health, MDA, etc.</p>	<p>Economic models that will allows all urban gardeners/ farmers to join a Farmers Collaboratives Coop (Worker Owned) or a Urban Farm Federation, citing Wisconsin's Inter Tribal/ Ag Food Coalition as a possible blueprint.</p> <p>MN Health Dept and Hen Co climate and resiliency could follow the example of the Hennepin Co Green Partners grants to provide 25% of a grant up front, upon the contract signing, Groups will then document the expenses incurred to include the how the initial funds were spent.</p>	<p>Require collaborative partnerships in funding (apply to Homegrown Minneapolis RFP; purpose <a href="#">MDA/RTC</a>, MPCA Food-waste grants.</p>	<p>End reimbursable-only grant models; expand policy advocacy at state/federal levels.</p>
	<p>Youth and volunteers should be paid stipends.</p>	<p>Funding that is not restricted to materials.</p>	<p><a href="#">Fruit Foundation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Hennepin County's FORTIFY and Ignite grants</a>; open January 2026</p>
<p><b>Technology Coordination</b></p>	<p>Sankofa Power: Is creating a decentralized virtual space to connect farmers through a Urban Farm and Food Registry and Digest.</p>	<p>Is looking for Tech support for websites to coordinate farms.</p>	<p>Elevate Hennepin: County sponsored program providing 25 hours of no-cost IT support for tech related projects (agritech, volunteer streamlining, supply prediction, etc)</p>

	Add heated buildings/shelters around water spigots to extend the growing season on farms that rely on fire hydrants for water supply. This will help to extend the growing season.	Shared tool program between urban farms such as: tillers, water pumps, wheelbarrows, large dehydrators.	
<b>Land Access and Food Resources</b>	Support East Phillips Urban Farm purchase agreement and plan campus uses.	Build cross-farm volunteer calendar, tool sharing, and a central “resource hub” via Homegrown Urban Ag Action Team.  <b>Lead:</b>	Create a food rescue network and scale composting.  <b>Lead:</b>
	Develop mapping/ Coordination for SNAP-related food distribution and resources directories  <b>Lead:</b>	Transportation to gardens.	Agroecology Innovation Network Incubator project coming in 2026.
<b>Environmental Impacts</b>	Explore climate-resilient production: solar-powered systems, hydroponics/indoor growing  <b>Lead:</b>	Access to free or reduced soil testing (especially arsenic).	Access to quality compost

<b>Coordination and Transparency</b>	<p>Build a shared calendar/newsletter channels (Homegrown Mpls, SFA Metro Growers lists) to recruit and share opportunities</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Home Grown</p> <p>Connecting resources and urban farm community building through organized collaboration.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Forest Hunt</p>	<p>Youth engagement opportunities</p> <p><b>Nicole Naudagikaden</b> - Native Youth Language Immersion Program in Phillips. Lead Youth Farming Program</p>	<p><b>Lead: North Hennepin :</b> bringing ~25 youth to visit gardens, focus on hands-on, fun green career exposure.</p> <p><b>Project Sweetie Pie:</b> runs youth programs.</p> <p><b>MPRB:</b> Teen Team Works</p>
	<p>Building more spaces like this fall gathering to allow for more structure discussion and meet each other.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Lia Spaniolo; UMN Extension</p>		

Attendees:

First Name	Last Name	Organization/ Neighborhood	Email
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**Urban Agriculture & Community Garden Leader's Action Planning**

Nov 10 (5pm to 7pm) Oak Park Center, <https://rccmn.co/gardens-food-pollinators>

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