



BENEFITS OF THE NOVATO COMMUNITY GARDEN

“Community gardens have a multiplier effect in relation to improved social, environmental, cultural, nutritional, and financial components of neighborhoods and their residents.”

– Marin County Community Garden Needs Assessment UC Cooperative Extension, December 2010

IMMEDIATE IMPACT – Community Health Benefits

Health Benefits: Research has shown that eating fresh organic food has tremendous health benefits. Gardening improves mental health and emotional wellbeing that people of all ages and abilities benefit from. In addition, a Community Garden will provide Novato residents with lots of opportunities for being active and this supports the vision of “Let’s Move Novato.”

Garden Plots – Increased Access to Fresh Organic Food: This pilot garden will serve as a model for other neighborhood gardens. With seventy family plots, serving four people average per family, about 280 people each year will have access to fresh, local organic produce.

Demonstration Farm – Educational Benefits: The pilot garden will feature a demonstration mini-farm growing fruits and vegetables. It will be tended communally and be used for educational workshops. An average of 20 people a week, for about 40 weeks per year, will learn gardening techniques and have access to fresh, local organic produce.

Sharing Produce – Community Support: Excess produce will be shared with the community by collaborating with organizations that distribute produce to low income, homebound patients, disabled, and elderly residents.

Working Collaboratively – Social Engagement: Our dedicated group of volunteer experts will collaborate with local businesses, adult service organizations, and youth groups to build the garden and provide ongoing hands-on learning opportunities for the community.

LONG TERM IMPACT – Environmental Benefits

Once the garden is built, there will be many opportunities to collaborate with other organizations, expand and add garden features, and provide educational opportunities on land stewardship, nutrition, and health education.

Food Systems: Community Gardens are part of our local food system and support the philosophies of the Slow Food and Locavore movements: consuming locally grown organic food offers increased nutritional value, reduces our carbon footprint, and supports local agricultural businesses and the local economy. We will work with other Community Gardens, local farms, and food systems stakeholders to promote collaborative education and outreach efforts.

Support Native Habitats: The Novato Community Garden will collaborate with the *California Native Plant Society* Marin Chapter to create a California native plant demonstration garden and nursery at the community garden site. We will also work with other organizations to enhance habitat value.

Ecology Outreach: Our local environment benefits when more people learn about sustainable, eco-friendly gardening practices. We will develop programs to educate the community about invasive plants, restoration approaches, Bay Friendly Gardening, composting, and ways to protect the Novato Creek watershed and support native habitats.

Sustainability: Our garden will be “off the grid” for both water and electricity. We will develop a closed-loop system to recycle, compost, and manage our waste stream. We will work with local agencies to develop outreach and education programs to learn about sustainable living practices.

THE MISSION of the Novato Live Well Network is to build and support a network of local community gardens that enable people from diverse backgrounds to grow food and foster community in a sustainable manner; work with and educate families, schools, and our community about the positive benefits of choosing sustainable ways of eating, gardening and living by providing programs that support nutrition education, our local food-shed, school and community gardens, and sustainable living practices.

