



**Novato
Community
Garden**

Growing A Healthy Community from the Ground Up!

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Community Garden Project Takes Root in Novato

NOVATO, CA-- The Novato Community Garden Committee is preparing project plans to submit to the City of Novato for preparation to lease the city's property at O'Hair Park off of Novato Boulevard. The 1.5 acre site is next to the Dogbone Meadow Park, on the west side. The community garden will have more than 50 plots and a demonstration mini-farm where participants of the garden and members of the community can come and learn how to plant, grow, water and care for vegetables using organic and sustainable principles.

The Committee is currently working on a City of Novato Preliminary Checklist that must be completed before a lease can be signed. In the meantime, the Novato Community Garden Committee is currently designing the site incorporating permaculture principles. The plan will have a water harvesting system and will include soil and water conservation practices, and various composting systems.

"Our hope is to have the lease agreement signed sometime in August 2009 and to begin construction on the site shortly after," said Veronica Valero, the Chair of the Community Garden Committee. The launch of the Community Garden requires community support and private funding. The start-up cost is estimated to be \$80,000 to pay for fencing, driveway entry, parking, water access and site preparation.

In April the Presbyterian Church of Novato's Mission Committee granted the Novato Community Garden Project \$4,000. "The emergence of a viable community garden helps Novato remain in contact with its roots, both figuratively and literally, as it grows from the small rural community so many people cherish, into an increasingly urban area," said Carolyn Gerrans, co-chair on the Presbyterian Church of Novato Mission Committee. "As fewer people have the land necessary to grow healthy fruits and vegetables, a community garden can foster the spread of knowledge and skills which would otherwise be lost," Gerrans added. This critical seed money has enabled the Community Garden Committee to pay for City permits and other expenses required to sign the lease. The committee has received \$13,000 in donations for the project.

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In response to the current drought, and the North Marin Water District Ordinance 22 issued on May 18 which suspends new water connections for landscaping and other uses, the Community Garden Committee is researching the drilling of a well as an alternative water source. "There is a possibility of some groundwater in this area, since shallow groundwater wells are known to exist near this location," said Diet Stroeh, a Novato Community Garden Committee Advisory Board member and a founding partner of CSW/Stuber-Stroeh Engineering Group, Inc. "This community garden will become a wonderful and much needed asset for Novato. Everyone should have a place to garden. To experience the joys and benefits of growing your own food is priceless," added Stroeh, an avid gardener since his youth.

About the Novato Community Garden Project

The mission of the Novato Community Garden Project is to build and support a network of community gardens that enable people from diverse backgrounds to grow food and foster community in a sustainable manner. **The Community Garden Project** is a project of Novato Live Well Network. Their fiscal sponsor is MarinLink, a California nonprofit corporation, exempt from federal tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

To learn more and to offer support you can Google, "Novato Community Garden", go to www.NovatoLiveWell.org <http://www.novatolivewell.org/> , or call 415-897-2302.

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