Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Preface 4

Introduction 6

Background
- The Historic Roles of Community Gardens 8
- Community Greening 11
- Benefits and Barriers of Community Gardens 13

Community Garden Movements in Other Major U.S. Cities
- Case Study- Seattle's P-Patch 21
- Case Study- Boston's Boston Natural Areas Network 25
- Case Study- New York City's Green Thumb 27

Los Angeles' Attitude Towards Green Space 29

Past and Current Park and Green Space Initiatives
- The Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership 32
- Funding 34

Community Gardens in Los Angeles County
- Organization 40
- Leadership 41
- Fragmentation 42
- Funding 43
- Land and Site Acquisition 44

Community Garden Advocacy Groups in Los Angeles County
- Los Angeles Community Garden Council 46
- Los Angeles Conservation Corps 48
- Common Ground Community Garden Program 50
- The Learning Garden 53
- The Verde Coalition 55
- Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust 57

Methodology
- Mapping 60
- Interviews 62

Mapping
- Context 63
- Analysis 64

Policy Recommendations
Strengthening the Network 76
Increasing Government and Public Support 79

Conclusion 81

Bibliography 82

Appendices 85

Executive Summary

My senior comprehensive project seeks to address the current barriers to the community garden movement in Los Angeles County and how these barriers can be overcome. Research was conducted in three phases: analysis of community garden organizations in Seattle, Boston, and New York City as a means of comparison, analysis of community gardens in Los Angeles County, and mapping and spatial analysis of community gardens in Los Angeles County. Comparing the movement in Los Angeles to community garden movements in other major American cities showed how certain strategies used by other groups can be implemented in Los Angeles. Analysis of community gardens in Los Angeles County illustrated how past efforts have influenced the movement and how effective recent work has been at strengthening the movement. Mapping the locations of community gardens in Los Angeles County allowed work of advocacy groups and government agencies to be assessed from a spatial viewpoint. With this information, I created a set of policy recommendations that incorporate several aspects from the work of other cities and the work currently being done in Los Angeles which will all contribute to advances in the establishment of a sustainable community garden movement.

Preface

Growing up in a suburb outside of Los Angeles, I was accustomed to a world of private backyard lots and gardens. The plants my family and I tended to were a part of my life that I did not second guess; I assumed everyone had access to garden resources. Moving to the Eagle Rock community to attend Occidental College showed me the reality that the majority of residents in the greater Los Angeles area live in densely developed neighborhoods with a lack of open green space. During my second year at Occidental I became involved in the Eagle Rock Community Garden Program, which works to strengthen bonds between students at Occidental College and Eagle Rock High School through a common gardening space. My involvement in this program helped me to fully understand how a community garden can bring about positive change to a neighborhood in ways that other programs cannot.

My hope is that with this report I can help to remedy the lack of research and documentation of community gardens in Los Angeles County, and that this report can be used as a resource for community garden advocacy groups and government agencies. Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the current movement in Los Angeles and looking at community gardens in cities across the country gave me a better understanding of how the current organization and advocacy of community gardens can have a stronger presence within the county and work more effectively towards achieving their goals.

I also would like to make the reader aware that this is by no means a full report on community gardens in Los Angeles County. I researched and interviewed only a handful of the numerous groups directly and indirectly involved with community gardens. However, I believe that the research I have done does accurately portray the current

status of the movement in Los Angeles. As an outsider to the movement, I have been able to analyze past and current work more objectively, but my lack of involvement has also hindered me from fully understanding the community garden movement and its many nuances.

Introduction

With a climate perfect for planting year round and a history deeply rooted in agriculture, Los Angeles seems like the ideal place for a thriving community garden movement. Yet community gardens in Los Angeles are some of the least established of any major city in the United States. In order for community gardens to have a sustainable future, the community garden movement in Los Angeles County needs to be reassessed.

Cities across the country have well established community garden movements, including Seattle, Washington; Boston, Massachusetts; and New York City, New York. Los Angeles can learn from other cities' successes and failures, and implement certain organizational models and strategies that are suitable to the county.

To fully assess the current status of the community garden movement in Los Angeles County, I researched the work of advocacy groups and governmental agencies, and analyzed their strengths and weaknesses. These organizations include: the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, the University of California Cooperative Extension Common Ground Garden Program, The Learning Garden, The Verde Coalition and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust. The network of community garden groups and their efforts also needs to be put into context of the current political climate with Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the impacts of past efforts, specifically the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership and various funding sources including state-wide bond measures and the Quimby Act.

The location of community garden sites is an inherently spatial problem, and an integral part of their success. Mapping the gardens in Los Angeles County allowed me to analyze the gardens' locations in relation to population demographics, specifically race,

income, and percentage of youth. Spatial analysis illustrated how past and current initiatives have effected communities in the county. Some efforts have increased accessibility to community gardens in park poor neighborhoods, while other have only exacerbated existing park inequities. The community garden movement needs to adequately address its current problems and work towards a more sustainable future.

The Historic Roles of Community Gardens

In 1900, the majority of Americans lived in rural areas with easily accessible open land and parks. During the next one hundred years, over eighty-five percent of the population would come to reside in urban areas.[1] Cities offered little access to green space, with almost no places to experience nature and spend time outdoors. This shift in the country's population led to a change in the beliefs surrounding the importance of green space and public parks. Planners such as Frederick Law Olmsted who designed Central Park in New York City and Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, recognized how beneficial green spaces are to the urban population.[2] However with the overwhelming popularity of the suburban lifestyle and the private backyard in the post- World War II era, less emphasis was placed on implementing and maintaining green areas in the urban landscape.[3]

Gardens have long been a vital part of community life. Throughout history, three types of community gardens have emerged: vacant lot cultivation associations, children's school gardens, and civic garden campaigns. The community garden movement in the United States is often broken into three phases: the first phase lasting from 1890-1917, the second from 1917-1945, and the third from 1945 to the present. Interest in community gardens is often in direct response to current political and economic conditions.

Reformers at the turn of the century believed urban problems required both physical and social change. Environmental determinism, the belief that changes in the physical environment can produce changes in people's behavior was viewed as a strong

[1] Paul M. Sherer, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space" (San Francisco: The Trust for Public Land, 2006), 10.
[2] Sherer, 5.
[3] Sherer, 10.

solution to many of the ills plaguing densely populated urban areas. Community gardens were first utilized to address problems including "urban congestion, economic instability, and environmental degradation".[4] The first recorded urban community garden emerged in Detroit, Michigan in 1893 to combat high unemployment rates during the city's economic recession. The twentieth century experienced its first great rise in popularity of community gardens during World War I, when citizens were encouraged to plant "liberty gardens" to aid in the war effort. In 1918, an estimated $20 million worth of food was produced in community gardens.[5] Although community gardens gained much attention during this period, there was no systematic change to ensure that gardens would continue to be implemented in urban areas. Most reformers believed in individual voluntary action. Once reformers stopped advocating for community gardens, there was no infrastructure in place to keep the garden movement moving forward[6].

Popularity of community gardens waned after World War I, but gardens reemerged in the 1930's in response to the Great Depression. After U.S. involvement in World War II, "victory gardens" similar to the liberty gardens of World War I became very popular. Civilians were encouraged to grow their own produce to allow the majority of commercially grown food to feed American troops. Victory gardens became so popular that by 1943, over 20 million gardens produced over forty percent of the fresh vegetables consumed that year.[7] However, once World War II ended and soldiers returned home, the burgeoning real estate market and the popularity of suburban homes with private backyard lots discouraged community gardening efforts. During this phase,

---

[4] Lawson, 21.
[5] Lawson, 24.
[6] Lawson, 26.
[7] Robert Gottlieb. *Enivronmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001), 249.

the community garden movement became more organized and advocated creating a hierarchy within the garden community in order to dispense information in a systematic fashion. However, this hierarchical system was not sustainable since it solely relied on the leadership of government and agency officials and did not offer opportunities for local leadership development.[8]

The importance of community gardens was once again reaffirmed in the late twentieth century. During the 1960's the urban garden began to be viewed as a tool for community building and valued based expression. Community gardens also provided a safe place for interactions among different racial and ethnic groups, especially during times of deep racial tensions and the Civil Rights Movement.[9] The growing environmental ethic of the 1970's was symbolized through the growth of community gardens across the United States. In the midst of an energy crisis, gardens promoted self-sufficiency and offered an alternative to dependence on foreign imports. During this period, gardeners advocated for more user involvement in the planning and development of community gardens. This new emphasis on cultivating local leadership led to several abandoned "victory gardens" to be transformed into successful community gardens.[10] The focus of community gardens began to shift during the 1980's when gardening was ranked one of the top leisure activities among Americans.[11] Currently, community gardens are utilized for numerous reasons that are a direct reflection of roles they have historically taken. Despite their rise in popularity and growing literature identifying benefits, community gardens still tend to be limited.

---

[8] Lawson, 115.
[9] Lawson, 113.
[10] Lawson, 2005.
[11] Lawson, 217.

Community Greening

There are three main types of urban agriculture: commercial farms, community gardens, and backyard gardens.[12] Commercial farms grow for profit and often do food advocacy work in nearby communities, yet they do not give non-professional gardeners the opportunity to grow their own crops. Backyard gardens are situated on land around one's home or on a balcony or rooftop. Community gardens are located on larger pieces of land and are subdivided among several households. Both types of gardens grow food primarily for home consumption.

A 1996 survey of urban community gardens conducted by the American Community Garden Association (ACGA) identified six types of community gardens: neighborhood gardens, public housing gardens, school gardens, economic development gardens, senior type gardens, and mental health and rehabilitative gardens.[13] The majority of community gardens in the United States are neighborhood gardens, comprising over sixty-seven percent of gardens reported in 1996. These gardens are most recognized for their value within a community by gardeners and non-gardeners alike.[14] Public housing gardens and school gardens are also very common types of community gardens. The fastest growing type of community garden are gardens for economic development. These sites are used as training grounds for at-risk youth and often market their crops exclusively to local restaurants and farmers' markets. Although widely recognized for their benefits, senior type gardens and mental health and rehabilitative

[12] Anne Carter, et al. "Farming from the City Center to the Urban Fringe: Urban Planning and Food Security" (Venice: Community Food Security Coalition, 2003), 1.
[13] American Community Garden Association, "National Community Gardening Survey:1996" (New York: ACGA, 1998), 4.
[14] ACGA, 4.

gardens have relatively low numbers.[15] No matter what the type, gardens give people a connection to their environment which is essential for healthy living.

Urban agriculture and community gardens have inspired a broad field of people-plant research. This research falls into three categories: background theories, people-plant interactions, and the role plants play in the development of healthy human communities.[16] All of this research asserts that "nature is not just 'nice'. It is a vital ingredient in healthy human functioning."[17] Background theorists work to explain the underlying reasons why people respond so positively to plants and green spaces. The most common argument is that throughout evolution, distant ancestors of humans associated plants with food and people still hold these positive beliefs today.[18] Research on people-plant interactions focuses primarily on individual responses to plants. The most widely studied category is the role plants play in the development of healthy human communities. Diane Relf, a horticulture professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute has found that plants and greening activities play at least three distinct roles in community development. Gardens and green spaces:

> "-Provide a more livable environment by controlling physical factors such as temperature, noise and pollution.
>
> -Help create a community image that both residents and outsiders view as positive.
>
> -Create opportunities for people to work together to improve communities."[19]

---

[15] ACGA, 4.
[16] David Malakoff, "What good is community greening?" *Community Greening Review* (New York: ACGA, 2004), 17.
[17] Malakoff, 17-18.
[18] Malakoff, 18.
[19] Malakoff, 18.

Benefits and Barriers of Community Gardens

Community gardens help to empower a community. Through the simple connections of people, community gardens aid in the fostering of social capital and a sense of community in a neighborhood. The garden also allows residents the opportunity to reclaim their traditional and cultural connections to the land, helping to give the community a unique identity.[20] The benefits of community gardens fall into seven main categories: municipal costs, healthy living, food production, youth education, cultural opportunities, horticulture therapy, and crime prevention.

Not all community gardens are successful in empowering a group of people. Despite their widely acknowledged benefits, community gardens contain significant obstacles. These barriers fall into four broad categories: land use-related, government-related, organization-related, and perception-related[21].

Municipal Costs

Community gardens heighten people's awareness for the beauty of living things in their neighborhoods. The presence of community gardens has been shown to increase property values in the surrounding area.[22] Polls indicate that access to open green space is the number one factor in attracting new residents and businesses to a location. The implementation of community gardens in urban city centers has been successfully used to attract new residents and commercial growth to fight urban decay.[23] Gardens also produce positive results in a shorter period of time then some other redevelopment

[20] Franson, 19.
[21] Jerry Kaufman and Martin Bailkey, "Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture in the United States" (Washington DC: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2000), 53.
[22] Garden Works, "The Multiple Benefits of Community Gardening" (Minneapolis: The Green Institute, 2007), 1.
[23] Garden Works, 1.

strategies such as the construction of affordable housing or social services which can take several years to directly impact a community.[24]

Government-Related Barriers

Although community gardens can bring new residents and economic growth to an area, federal, state, and local governments have a general disinterest in community gardens. Federal and state governments lack financial support while obstacles at the local government level focus around policy and practicality, and attitude and ideology. Many government officials doubt if community gardens are the "highest and best" use of city land. There is a strong desire among government officials to generate revenue through the use of the land and to accommodate private real-estate interests. There is also a general lack of leadership within city government to create a sustainable infrastructure for community gardens. A common sentiment among gardeners is that government officials be less skeptical of their work. Traditional beliefs, based on the majority of agriculture being locating in rural areas, views gardening as an activity unfit for cities, rather than an urban activity. This leads governmental agencies to give urban block grants to other community development efforts[25].

Land Use-Related Barriers

Land use, including the if a site is useable and the dominance of private property ownership, is a serious problem for community gardens. Site contamination is a common concern in many inner-city garden sites. In densely populated neighborhoods, the majority of vacant land is located near freeways and heavily used traffic corridors, or the site was previously used for industrial activities. Testing toxin levels in the soil and the

[24] Malakoff,17.
[25] Kaufman, 58.

clean-up that some sites require if edible food is to be grown, is very expensive and almost no community gardens have the funds to pay for these costly procedures. Airborne particulates also pose a problem since they can come into contact with food once it is above ground[26].

Since the majority of community garden sites are visible from the street, vandalism is a common problem. Gardeners often find their plots trampled and garbage and graffiti strewn through out the site. However, most gardeners find vandalism more an irritant than a deterrent[27].

Many agencies view community gardens as a temporary land use[28]. The majority of community garden sites are owned by private and government entities that lease the land to the gardening group for a monthly fee. Often the leasing agreements are extremely advantageous to the gardeners, such as rent payments of $1 per month, yet when a more lucrative arrangement is made for the use of the site, the garden is forced to relocate. Gardening groups that wish to purchase their sites usually do not have the funds to do so.

Healthy Living

Gardens can be areas for recreation and exercise. Current health problems among Americans primarily stem from a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habits. Studies assert that when given access to open space, people are likely to increase their outdoor activity.[29] The inclusion of fresh fruits and vegetables grown in community gardens helps to improve the diets of many inner city residents who lack access to affordable

---

[26] Kaufman, 55.
[27] Kaufman, 56.
[28] Kaufman, 57.
[29] Anne C. Bellows, et al. "Health Benefits of Urban Agriculture" (Venice: Community Food Security Coalition, 2005), 6.

fresh produce. Children are also more likely to eat fruit and vegetables that they helped to grow than food bought from a store.[30] On average, a family's participation in a community garden increases their vegetable consumption by one serving per week. This increase in exercise and healthy eating habits has been attributed to decreased obesity rates in areas with community gardens.

Food Production

Community gardens give people who do not own land the ability to grow food. Many limited income families prefer to spend money on calorie dense and nutrient low food items and neglect fruits and vegetables which are nutrient dense but low calorie. Economic research asserts that store bought produce is more expensive and less available than junk food in many supermarkets and liquor stores. Growing fruit and vegetables can save a household hundreds of food dollars each year.[31] Food production also helps to contribute to the food security of the community. Gardeners tend to share their harvests with friends, family, and those in need. This lessens the community's dependence on stores and social services for food in times of need.[32]

Organization-Related Barriers

Although community gardens can considerably impact the health and daily lives of neighborhood residents, the organization of community garden groups, including leadership and allocation of funding, prove to be significant obstacles for most community gardens. Initiating and maintaining community gardens varies from city to

[30] Bellows, 7.
[31] Bellows, 5.
[32] Bellows, 5.

city. Specific procedural hurdles will differ among projects, and thus each garden must be treated as a unique case[33].

The lack of steady and consistent funding from outside sources may be the biggest obstacle to the continued success of community gardens. Gardening groups spend a great amount of time and effort applying for grants from governmental and non-profit sources. Donations and grants are often given in very small amounts, so numerous sources of outside support are necessary to fund the garden. Also, very few sources of government funding are allocated specifically for community gardens. Thus gardening groups are in competition for grants with larger scale projects including sport complexes. Based solely on size, community gardens are overlooked[34].

Finding and retaining qualified leadership is a very difficult task. Long hours, multiple responsibilities, and the stresses of fundraising often lead many community garden leaders to quit after a short period of time. It is also very difficult to find someone who can effectively communicate with community members and has the gardening experience to educate others. Often coming from rural backgrounds, community garden staff are often surprised and unable to deal with the different experiences of gardening in urban areas.

Gardening takes time and experience. Most newly started community gardens encounter rocky beginnings. Community members often become disillusioned with the benefits of gardening when they do not see immediate results. Gardening coordinators often express that they were not given adequate time to develop the project.

Youth Education

[33] Kaufman, 59.
[34] Kaufman, 60.

Traditional and native foods that cannot be accessed in a community can be grown in gardens. Families are able to educate younger generations about the native diets of their ancestors. Community gardens are often used as an outdoor classroom for school children. This gives them the opportunity to apply skills they have learned in the classroom to real world experiences.[35] Gardening also helps to foster an understanding of the importance of community and environmental stewardship for young people. Many community gardens have started work programs to combat high unemployment rates in their community. Students are trained in gardening, landscaping, habitat restoration, work skills, and leadership development.[36]

Cultural Opportunities

Physical and social barriers can be reduced with the presence of a community garden. Relationships within the community are fostered and residents have exposure to inter-generational cultural traditions and access to non-English speaking communities.[37] Through gardening practices, community members are able to learn about different cultural and agricultural traditions.

Horticulture Therapy

The field of horticultural therapy evolved as a form of mental health treatment based on the therapeutic effects of gardening.[38] Studies assert that exposure to green space can significantly decrease stress and increase one's sense of wellbeing.[39] Programs working with the mentally handicapped and prison inmates have proven extremely successful in rehabilitation.

---

[35] Garden Works, 2.
[36] ACGA, 4.
[37] Garden Works, 2.
[38] Sherer, 14
[39] Malakoff, 17.

Crime Prevention

Community gardens help to increase a sense of pride and ownership within a community, thus decreasing rates of vandalism and violence. Gardens often lead to the creation of block clubs and neighborhood watch programs which increase "eyes on the street."[40] The garden can also become a focal point for community organizing and offers a safe space for interactions.

Perception-Related Barriers

While the benefits of community gardens have been asserted in several publications and have been illustrated in cities across the country, many community members and government officials are skeptical of how a community garden can help to bring about change in their neighborhood. The basic idea of gardening in a city for-profit or non-profit is nontraditional. It is unclear if these beliefs come from a negative portrayal of gardens or if it is solely that the general public is uninformed of the benefits of community gardens[41].

Having community members fully understand and accept the importance of community gardening is essential to maintaining interest. Young people commonly view gardening as an activity only for the elderly, while families are often wary of the safety of food grown in the city[42]. The need for more jobs or affordable housing are often seen as more important issues. Community groups must be sensitive to the wishes of its constituents. Thus, unless officials hear a widespread desire for investment in a community garden, resources will be allocated to other areas.

---

[40] Garden Works, 2.
[41] Kaufman, 61.
[42] Kaufman, 62.

The lack of hard data about the benefits of community gardens is often thought to be evidence that there are few benefits of greening.[43] Proponents of community gardens have often relied on the real life testimony of community members to prove the true benefits of gardens. However, most politicians, developers, and taxpayers require facts and figures to show that greening is a good investment.[44] Current research is working to help fill the data gaps, although it will take time before a substantial amount of data has been collected and archived. Also, the benefits of community gardens are often considered to be "soft", or less quantifiable. Projects with "hard" benefits that can be easily quantified, such as a new housing development, are often more attractive to community members.

[43] Malakoff, 17.
[44] Malakoff, 17.

Community Garden Movements in Other Major U.S. Cities

Every major city in the United States is home to a network of community gardens. While the majority of community garden groups share similar goals of food security and community empowerment, the way in which they go about achieving these goals varies from city to city. Looking at the community garden movements in other cities and the way they are organized is an important element to strengthen the movement in Los Angeles. While Los Angeles has its own set of unique problems and circumstances, many of the lessons learned by other community garden groups can be applied to Los Angeles.

Case Study- Seattle

P-Patch

Seattle has an extensive network of community gardens through out the city. With approximately 69 gardens, totaling 23 acres in size and serving 6000 members, the presence of community gardens is widely felt through out the city. The organization and framework for community gardens comes from P-Patch, a community gardening program started in 1973. P-Patch is funded by the Seattle City government and the not-for-profit P-Patch Trust, allocating funds for a staff of six who work with communities to help them build community gardens.[45] Special funding is also available for specific gardens and projects. P-Patch's budget changes on a yearly basis. In 2007 P-Patch received $550,000 from the city government to pay for staff and an additional $60,000 for operating expenses, the biggest being water. The Seattle city government also gives P-Patch one

[45] P-Patch, "The History of the P-Patch Program" available online http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/history.htm.

time allocations to purchase property, which in 2007 totaled $160,000. Part of the organization's budget comes from plot fees that gardeners pay. $60,000 were collected in 2007.[46] While the needs of community gardens and their gardeners are constantly changing, P-Patch offers a very specific set of services for community gardens in the city including: educational opportunities, coordinating meetings and social events, supplying tools and planting materials, and printing a newsletter. Gardeners are required to pay an initial fee of $23 and then $11 for every square foot of their plot. In additional to monetary dues, every gardener must work eight hours every month to maintain the common areas in the garden.[47]

P-Patch continuously works to strengthen community ties to gardens. "Cultivating Communities", an initiative to link gardening with other community groups has brought together P-Patch and the Seattle Housing Authority in an effort to ensure that newly built affordable housing will include green space for gardening. Past initiatives have included a campaign in 1992 advocating for one community garden for every 2500 households.[48] Currently P-Patch is working also to advance community food security through three major avenues: youth programs, immigrant gardens, and garden food bank donations. "Share the Harvest" is a program in which community gardens donate a percentage of their crops to local food banks. Annually, Seattle community gardens donate between seven and ten tons of food.[49]

The "unified nature" of P-Patch is its greatest source of strength according to program director Rich MacDonald. All public community gardens in Seattle are

---

[46] Rich MacDonald, phone interview, Los Angeles, California, February, 2008.
[47] P-Patch, "P-Patch Community Gardening Program" available online http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/gardening.htm.
[48] P-Patch, "P-Patch Community Gardening Program".
[49] P-Patch, "P-Patch Community Gardening Program".

managed at some level by P-Patch staff and at least some aspect of community garden programs and advocacy work are affiliated with P-Patch.[50] With involvement in every garden, P-Patch has helped to standardize the creation and maintenance of gardens in the city. P-Patch's website and their literature clearly outline fees, requirements, and the steps necessary to start a garden. This is an important aspect of the organization since many potential gardeners are often put off by the confusion surrounding garden start up and maintenance. The "unified nature" of community gardens in Seattle is most evident in their advocacy work. By presenting strong and clear demands to the city government, P-Patch and its gardeners have been successful in gaining support and funding. Rather than several disparate gardening groups presenting different demands to the City Council, P-Patch works to include all community needs into one proposal.

Through government support, Seattle's community gardens are able to secure adequate funding. This is especially important since funding is a problem for community gardens in nearly all other cities and regions. In Seattle's case, P-Patch's success, through its securing funding via the Seattle City Council as well as through its P-Patch Trust, has meant that a stable source of funding is available. With these two sources of funding, P-Patch's work is not hindered by limited funding and they are able to put more of an emphasis on programming rather than fundraising and development. P-Patch is currently deciding how to use their funds to involve community gardens as part of the city's broader interest of food security. The Seattle City Council has a history of being extremely supportive of community gardens in the city. This is primarily in response to successful advocacy campaigns and linking community gardens with other government funded programs, such as affordable housing developments. It is not necessarily that

[50] MacDonald, 2008.

City Council members are garden lovers, but that they are aware of the strong and organized push within the Seattle community for more garden support. Along with funding, the city government has also been instrumental in the acquisition of several garden sites and offers specially priced lease agreements to several city owned plots. P-Patch has also worked to strengthen the image of community gardens within the city by linking community gardening programs with other government programs, including affordable housing developments. Linking gardening programs with other programs help to illustrate the versatile benefits of gardens to a community and help to increase funding and public attention.

Part of P-Patch's strength comes from its emphasis on the communities the gardens serve. In fact, P-Patch hopes that residents will "view the gardens as members of a community". The "Share the Harvest" program is designed to make the gardens attractive to local residents and show the benefits and responsibilities of gardeners for participating in community gardens. This program gives gardeners the opportunity to see how their work growing food directly improves the lives of community members in need.[51] P-Patch also recognizes that every garden has unique needs and they work to meet the differing challenges and needs of each community. Special funding is also available for communities whose garden is facing daunting challenges or if they wish to implement special programs. This aspect of P-Patch combats the negative effects of the standardization of the gardening process. Although the standardization that P-Patch has implemented has been an overall success, gardens and residents can feel overlooked if their sites and goals for the site do not fit exactly into the P-Patch protocol. Adding a

[51] P-Patch, “Community Food Security and the Seattle P-Patch Program” available online http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/foodpolicy.htm.

personal element allows residents to feel more connected to their community garden and P-Patch less like an outside organization. P-Patch has been successful in allocating funds to create community gardens for neighborhoods that have expressed interest in urban gardening and for gardens that need to expand to meet growing participation needs. Recently P-Patch received $20,000 in 2008 for the expansion of the Hazel Heights Community Garden.[52]

There are several drawbacks to an "umbrella" organization like P-Patch. Umbrella organizations generally have higher operating expenses than most advocacy groups. Also, with umbrella organizations, a higher level of standardization is established and a degree of flexibility can be lost.

Yet P-Patch demonstrates that unity within the community garden movement is essential for successful advocacy work. Presenting the City Council with a list of requests that incorporates the needs from various community gardens as one group rather than several disparate community garden organizations shows the city government the strength behind the movement and they are more likely to work towards meeting the needs of gardens in the city.

Case Study- Boston

The Boston Natural Areas Network

Boston has more than 150 gardens within its city limits. These gardens range in size from one-tenth of an acre to 32 acres and over 6000 families utilize these gardens. With a population of 3,406,829 according to Census 2000, there is one community

[52] MacDonald, 2008.

garden for every 22,712 residents.[53] Each year community gardens in Boston produce almost $1.5 million of food and non-edible crops. The Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) is comprised of eleven non-profit organizations and several local governmental agencies including: Boston Redevelopment Agency, Boston School Department, Department of Neighborhood Development and Parks and Recreation Department. The majority of BNAN's funding comes from state and federal grants. Currently the Department of Neighborhood Development is working to channel federal block grants to community gardens, and has helped with the allocation of over $2.5 million to BNAN and its subsidiaries. In previous years the Boston city government helped to secure community garden sites through a "$1 a garden" initiative in which private and public local gardening groups could purchase land from the city for $1 a parcel. To work towards the ultimate goal of community food security, BNAN's work focuses on vacant lot turnover, non-profit organization and government cooperation, and bringing fresh and healthy food to low-income communities.[54]

The community garden movement in Boston provides an excellent model of how the creation of a group like the Boston Natural Areas Network can link the work of non-profit advocacy groups and governmental agencies. BNAN is able to manage the interests of non-governmental and governmental organizations primarily through a regular and established line of communication. With BNAN's work, the non-profit and government sectors of the community garden movement are in constant communication and work together towards the same goals, rather than moving in opposite directions, which is commonly the case in Los Angeles. Also, BNAN works with several different

[53] Census 2000 available online http://census.factfinder.gov.
[54] Boston Parks and Recreation Department, "Part 4- Open Space Management Mission", *Open Space Plan 2002-2006* (Boston: Boston Parks and Recreation Department, 2002), p. 268.

government agencies which helps to increase possible funding sources, to bring more attention to gardens in the city and to show the versatility of community gardens and the benefits they bring to communities.

Case Study- New York City

Green Thumb

New York City is home to approximately 677 community gardens, totaling 125 acres and serving 20,000 gardeners. According to the Census 2000 New York City has a population of 8,008,278, meaning there is one community garden for every 11,829 residents.[55] The city has allocated 17% of its land for parks. This stands in stark contrast to Los Angeles which has only allocated 4% of its land for parks, while both cities experience a scarcity of vacant land and high real estate prices.[56] Organization among the city's gardens and gardeners comes from Green Thumb, the nation's largest urban gardening program. Formed in 1978, Green Thumb offers a number of services to its members, including warehouse distribution of tools, seeds, and planting materials, technical support, educational opportunities, and printing a newsletter. The community garden movement in New York City has been greatly strengthened with help from the Trust for Public Land (TPL). In 1998, TPL headed a campaign to buy community garden plots that were being auctioned off. Despite strong resistance from the Giuliani administration, TPL and Green Thumb were able to save over 114 gardens in the city and ensure their site permanence. Not only did TPL help to secure the future of community gardens in New York City, they also launched a restoration project to improve the

[55] Census 2000.
[56] Mathew Fleisher, "Why L.A. Is Park Poor", *LA Weekly* (March 26, 2008), p.1.

already existing gardens.[57] Because of the work done by the Trust for Public Land and Green Thumb, community gardens in New York City are now experiencing relative stability.

Green Thumb's collaboration with the Trust for Public Land highlights the importance of community garden advocacy groups linking their work with the work of other groups working towards similar goals. Partnering with a national non-profit allowed Green Thumb to utilize the skills and strengths of TPL that they themselves lacked. This was especially important since the main resource Green Thumb lacked was the funding to buy the garden sites that were going to be auctioned. This example further demonstrate how essential it is for community garden groups to partner with other programs to achieve goals that would could not be achieved on their own.

CITY	POPULATION	LAND AREA- SQUARE MILES	# COMMUNITY GARDENS	# GARDEN PARTICIPANTS	RATIO- GARDEN:RESIDENTS	RATIO- GARDEN: GARDEN PARTICIPANTS
Seattle	563,374	48	60	6,000	1:9,389	1:100
New York City	8,008,278	89	677	20,000	1:11,829	1:29
Boston	3,406,829	303	150	6,000	1:22,712	1:40
Los Angeles	9,519,338	4,061	58	4,157	1:164,126	1:71

[57] Diane Englander, "New York's Community Gardens- A Resource at Risk" (New York: The Trust for Public Land, 2001), p. 17.

Los Angeles' Attitude Towards Green Space

With a climate perfect for planting year round and the city's history rooted in farming and agriculture, it would appear that Los Angeles would be the perfect place for a strong system of community gardens. Yet this is not the case. Over the past one hundred years, Los Angeles has developed a unique perception of land and nature in the city. Historically the city has undergone an "uncontrolled physical transformation" with poor planning resulting in widespread pollution and contamination.[58] Most planning was based on real-estate speculation and several opportunities to set-up or preserve land for parks, public space, and green space were overlooked. One such opportunity was the Olmsted-Batholomew Report of 1930 that proposed a "wealth of parks, playgrounds, and parkways centering around the Los Angeles River".[59] The plan was never adopted, primarily because of competing land interests from powerful developers. Power and wealth have been huge factors in deciding land use and these uses often conflict with community visions of land use. Angelenos' perception of nature has also greatly impacted the creation and preservation of green spaces in the city. Many people view nature only as big majestic places, such as those seen in Sierra Club promotional photographs. The idea of small green pockets distributed through out the city seems insignificant in comparison.[60] The most visible green spaces in Los Angeles include lawns, gardens, trees, and parks.[61] Yet when most people think of gardens, they imagine

---

[58] Robert Gottlieb et al., *The Struggle for a Livable City: The Next Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 109.
[59] Greg Hise and William Deverell, *Eden by Design: The 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the Los Angeles Region* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p.1.
[60] Robert Gottlieb, *Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), p.21.
[61] Gottlieb, p. 35.

grandiose feats of horticulture mastery such as the Huntington Gardens, not a small plot of vegetables being grown by community members.

Political support, along with the public's perception of green space and community gardens has been extremely influential in the strength of the community garden movement in Los Angeles. Community gardens do not receive much political attention. This lack of support stems from instances in which politicians received negative feedback for their support of community gardens.

Elected in 2005, Antonio Villaraigosa, the current mayor of the City of Los Angeles, is a strong proponent of increasing park and green spaces in the city. The future of the South Central Farm, one of the largest gardens in the county, with over 350 participants, was a heated conflict long before Villaraigosa came into office. The struggle came to a climax in late 2005 when private land owner Ralph Horowitz informed residents that the community garden's lease would not be renewed and the gardeners would soon be evicted. Villaraigosa role in the battle for the farm was a turning point in his support for community gardens. Advocating for the community gardeners to find a funding source to buy the land, which cost approximately $5 million, many people criticized the mayor for not using city funds to purchase the site. Throughout the battle for the South Central Farm, Mayor Villaraigosa was caught between the interests of private real-estate developers and the Latino community, two very powerful constituencies. In the end, the farmers lost the 14 acre site that Horowitz now plans to develop into a warehouse complex.[62] Many supporters of the South Central Farm criticized Villaraigosa for his lack of support. This has only soured Villaraigosa's attitude towards community gardens since he believed he did what he could for the South

[62] Erika Hayasaki, "Seeds of Dissension Linger", *The Los Angeles Times* (October 31, 2005).

Central Farm and his efforts were not seen in a positive light. Since the farm was lost, Mayor Villaraigosa has had almost no involvement in the community garden movement and instead focuses his efforts on other park resources.

Past and Current Initiatives

Over the past decade the City of Los Angeles and the state of California have taken several steps to aid the development and maintenance of green space in park poor communities. Whether in the form of a food policy council or a state bond act, these efforts have done some good for the community garden movement. However these efforts have ultimately failed in their goal of adequate and equitable park and food resources in the city.

The Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership

In 1996 the Los Angeles City Council authorized the development of a food policy council, thus establishing the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership (LAFSHP). The primary role of LAFSHP was to "provide food-related policy and programmatic advice to the mayor and the City Council."[63] One proposal was for the establishment of a community garden policy for the city. In 1996 LAFSHP, chaired by Stephen Saltzman, explored the development of a Community Gardening Policy for the City of L.A. A draft plan was written by LAFSHP members, Rachel Surls and Bob Gottlieb, consisted of four major components: mission statement, community garden water policy, community garden sustainability policy, and community garden research.[64]

The draft policy document stated that it would be beneficial for the city to develop a broad mission statement about its support for community gardens to help create visibility, and incorporate community gardens into the city's general plans. A city wide community garden mission statement would also help to unify the work of various gardening groups throughout the city, including the Los Angeles Community Garden

[63] Gottlieb, p. 42.
[64] The Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership, "Community Gardening Policy for the City of Los Angeles Proposals for the LAFSHP", p. 1.

Council, Common Ground, and Los Angeles Conservation Corps. The development of a mission statement would further contribute to the implementation of more community garden programs in diverse areas, including converting alleyways and other "nuisance areas".[65]

The draft document also identified the need for a formal Department of Water and Power (DWP) policy on the fees and rates for water usage in community gardens. Such a policy would also include a water conservation component, such as creating water conservation demonstration plots at garden sites.[66]

A community garden sustainability policy would aid in the start-up and implementation processes and provide mentorship on the issues of site tenure and relocation. A final aspect of the Community Gardening Policy document was the need for community garden research that would help to compile more information on "the state of the city's gardens: location, history, some type of cost-benefit accounting, sustainability factors, participation, etc".[67]

However, the Community Gardening Policy was never adopted and in 1999 LAFSHP essentially stopped functioning after its chair and appointed executive director failed to continue operations. LAFSHP's greatest failure came in its inability to pursue opportunities to develop a more expansive and viable food policy council. Among the diverse community food security and anti-hunger groups through out the city, an overall decline in interest and participation occurred. This squandered any hopes of mobilizing

[65] LAFSHP, p. 1.
[66] LAFSHP, p. 1.
[67] LAFSHP, p. 1.

support for food initiative and policies at the city level.[68] Although LAFSHP failed to achieve many of its primary goals, it also has proved to have brought about some positive changes. One important contribution was helping to secure annual funding for farmers' markets and community gardens in low-income areas. Administered from community development block grants, the LAFSHP was able to receive $150,000 annually. This funding still continues and is now managed by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps. The creation of the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership illustrated the need and benefits of what a food policy council in Los Angeles could facilitate. For any future food policy council a stronger set of mechanisms for participation and monitoring by community organizations will be needed to ensure the success of the council. At the November 3, 2001 A Taste of Justice Conference, a discussion among attendees concluded that before a new food policy council was created, a network of organizations and individuals working on food policy issues should be established. Such a network would present a unified position on food and justice issues, but also allow for differences among groups.[69] And is would act as a mechanism to regulate and push the work done by a food policy council.

Funding

Community gardens in Los Angeles County receive their funding from a variety of sources. State and city grants and private foundation grants provide the majority of funding. Over the past decade, several state and city-wide bond initiative have been implemented to increase the funding for park and recreation areas. Propositions K, 12,

[68] The Center for Food and Justice, "A Taste of Justice: A Report on the November 3, 2001 A Taste of Justice Conference" (Los Angeles: Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, 2001), p. 2.
[69] The Center for Food and Justice, p. 2.

13, 40 and 84 and the Quimby Act all still have available funds. However the majority of state bonds are allocated for larger parks. Parks and recreation facilities that serve a larger number of people have historically been preferred over pocket parks and community gardens which serve a relatively smaller population.

Proposition K

The Citywide Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities Assessment Referendum Ordinance was put into place on November 5, 1996. More commonly known as Proposition K, the ordinance was designed to address and deal with the inadequacies of infrastructure of parks and community recreation facilities, especially those for children and youth. Proposition K allocated $25 million through real-tax property assessment every year for the next thirty years, totaling close to $300 million. An additional $143,650,000 would be allocated through a competitive grant process designed specifically for improvement, maintenance, and land acquisition of existing resources.[70]

Overall the funding patterns of Proposition K exacerbate existing inequalities in park and open space resource distribution, including community gardens. A 2002 statistical analysis of access to park space by residents based on their race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status was conducted the University of Southern California Sustainable Cities Program found that neighborhoods with the highest shares of young people received approximately half the amount of funding on a "per youth basis" than other areas.[71] Districts with the highest rates of park accessibility received as much or more funding than low-income, park poor, high youth concentrated districts. Thus areas with a

[70] Jennifer Wolch et al., Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity Mapping Analysis (Los Angeles: Sustainable Cities Program, University of Southern California, 2002), p. 3.
[71] Wolch, p. 15.

relatively low concentration of young people and an adequate accessibility to open spaces received more funding than areas with high concentrations of youth people that also suffer from a lack of green spaces and parks.[72]

Proposition 12

The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000, more commonly known as Proposition 12 was enacted in March 2000. This state bond allocates $2,100,000,000 for the acquisition and development of parks and recreational facilities and for the protection of land around lakes, rivers, streams, and coasts.[73]

Proposition 13

Proposition 13 or the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Bond Act was passed in March 2000. This state bond provides that $1,970,000,000 in general state bonds be sold to fund "safe drinking, water quality, flood protection, and water reliability projects". Of these funds, $763,900,000 will be allocated to the State Water Resources Control Board to fund local water projects throughout California.[74]

Proposition 40

The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002, more commonly referred to as Proposition 40 was implemented in March 2002. Proposition 40 allocates funds to finance the creation and development of parks and recreational areas in park poor communities, along with improving water conservation and historical and cultural sites in the state. There is also an emphasis on

[72] Wolch, p. 17.
[73] "Proposition 12" available online: http://www.parks.ca.gov.
[74] "Proposition 13" available online: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov.

community participation in the acquisition and development of sites to ensure that these resources will best suit the communities they serve. This state bond allocates $225 million for the development and acquisition of state parks, $832,500,000 for local assistance programs to be created for the acquisition and development of neighborhood parks and recreational areas, with over one billion dollars in additional funds for the protection of land around waterways and the conservation of cultural and historic sites.[75] Also, the Urban Park Act of 2001 Grant Program was placed under Proposition 40. The Urban Park Act "will finance the acquisition and development of parks, recreation areas, and facilities in neighborhoods currently least served by park and recreation providers". $130,690,000 is available for competitive grants and the minimum grant award is $100,000 while the maximum grant award is $3 million.[76]

Proposition 84

Proposition 84, or The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 was passed in March 2006 and is one of the most recent resource bond acts. The bond authorizes $5,388,000,000 in general bonds to fund "safe drinking water, water quality and supply, flood control, waterway and natural resource protection, water pollution and contamination control, state and local park improvement, public access to natural resources, and water conservation efforts.[77] Containing nine chapters within the bond, the "Sustainable Communities and Climate Change Reduction" and "Parks and Nature Education Facilities" are the most closely related to community gardens. These chapter received $580,000 and $500,000, respectively. Currently less than ten percent of each chapters'

[75] "Proposition 40" available online: http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/state/prop/40.html.
[76] "Proposition 40" available online: http://www.parks.ca.gov
[77] "Proposition 84" available online: http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/state/prop/84.html.

funds have been committed, meaning that there is still over $800,000 potential funding for community gardens in Los Angeles.[78]

To help ensure that community gardens, pocket parks and other green spaces that serve a relatively small number of people receive funding, Green LA has drafted the Statewide Park Development and Community Renewal Act of 2007 (AB 31). The first round of funding from Proposition 84 is primarily based on the population the facility will serve, the legislation would require that subsequent rounds of funding have different criteria for assessing grants. This will help to make community gardens more competitive for funding and no longer overlooked for larger parks and recreation facilities, such as sport complexes. AB 31 has yet to be passed, so it is too soon to know how the legislation will impact the amount of funding allocated to community gardens.

The Quimby Act

The 1975 Quimby Act was put in place to help mitigate the impacts of property improvements. It does so by requiring that developers set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. However, Quimby funds cannot be used for the maintenance and operation costs of park facilities.[79] In 1982 the act was amended substantially. Uses of and restrictions on the funds were defined further and provided standards and formulas for determining the use of funds. The 1982 amendment also holds local governments accountable for using park development fees, requiring that city agencies illustrate a clear relationship between the public need for the recreational facility and the type of proposed development. While the Quimby Act does not solve the funding crisis, it does provide a consistent means of funding for parks in California and helps to

[78] "Proposition 84" available online: http://www.parks.ca.gov.
[79] Laura Westrup, "Quimby Act 101: An Abbreviated Overview" *California Parks and Recreation* (Summer 2002) p. 8.

supplement strained agency budgets. This has been especially important since the passage of the local property tax relief initiative, Proposition 13 in 1978, which relatively froze property taxes and forced government agencies to look elsewhere for a consistent source of funding.[80]

A recent budget analysis found $130 million of Quimby funds that the Parks and Recreation Department has had for the past two years and failed to use. This is partly due to the new amendments that have restricted where Quimby funds can be used. Yet areas that are the most in need of parks and community gardens are not helped by the Quimby Act. Areas that really needs parks often suffer from a lack of development in the area, which is what generates the funding. This trend in funding, similar to the finding about Proposition K funding, illustrates how current funding initiatives actually exacerbate the problem of park-poor communities since the majority of funding goes to areas which already have a well established system of parks and open spaces. [81]

Community Gardens in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County is home to approximately 9,519,338 residents according to Census 2000 data. There are currently 58 community gardens in the county, which serve close to 3,900 families, meaning there is one garden for ever 164,126 residents. This is a relatively low number of gardens based on the county's large population, especially compared to Seattle's 60 community gardens and the city's population of 563,374, which translates into one garden for every 9,389 residents [82]

[80] Westrup, p. 8.
[81] Fleischer, p. 2.
[82] Census 2000 available online http://factfinder.census.gov

All community gardens, regardless of their location, are faced with challenges. Community gardens in Los Angeles are in a different situation since they share common barriers that are universal to the community garden movement but they must also work to solve problems that are unique to Los Angeles. All linked-able to divide into five categories: organization, leadership, fragmentation, funding, and land and site acquisition

Organization

There is no clear definition of what constitutes a community garden. This lack of a concrete definition has created an element of flexibility which is essential for altering gardens and their missions to fulfill the needs of residents. But this lack of a formal definition has also led to some confusion about what constitutes a community garden.

Little has been documented in regards to community gardens in Los Angeles County. The county has yet to make any formal maps of the locations of community gardens and vacant land. This lack of information keeps community gardens from being factored into the general planning process and budget allocation. What information has been recorded is often hard to access and in almost all instances available only in English. Since community gardens have no real presence in the city and county's planning processes, the means in which a community garden is created is done on an "ad hoc" basis. There is no direct way to start up a community garden or pocket park and the process has multiple entry points. This discourages residents from starting a community garden in their neighborhood since the process is complicated and they believe they cannot navigate through it on their own.

Leadership

Leadership within the community garden movement is composed primarily of the leadership of a specific garden site and the leadership of community garden advocacy groups. The leadership of community gardens has proven to be somewhat dependent on the demographics of the neighborhood in which a garden is located. Lower-income areas commonly experience higher participation rates but lack adequate leadership. Most community garden and garden club presidents and directors "burn out" after only a few years in their position. Once community members leave their positions of leadership many gardens suffer and in some instances are forced to shut down because the entire leadership infrastructure of the garden has dissolved. On the other hand, community gardens in more affluent neighborhoods often experience lower participation rates than lower-income neighborhoods, yet they have better leadership.[83]

Although there are varying degrees of leadership in community gardens, overall, Los Angeles' community gardens lack ambitious leadership. This is primarily due to the lack of resources in the community garden movement. With a scarcity of funding, land, and government support, community residents are often deterred from becoming involved in the creation and maintenance of community gardens because of the challenges involved in gardening in the county. Many leadership positions experience high rates of turn over since residents become overwhelmed by the barriers and they feeling that they must face them on their own.

Certain leadership within the movement overlap. Many of the members of the non-profit community garden and green space advocacy groups also serve on the boards or staff of other organizations. This is especially apparent in the staff and board members

[83] Glen Dake, phone interview, Los Angeles, California February 2008.

of the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, and the Verde Coalition. The overlap in leadership is extremely beneficial for networking among groups but has also led to a small group of individuals leading the movement. It is unclear if this has hindered new leadership from emerging.

Fragmentation

The organization of community garden advocacy groups, government agencies and their collaboration has caused fragmentation within the community garden movement. This fragmentation has been extremely detrimental in garden advocacy. The community garden movement currently lacks a unified voice in which the concerns of various groups are expressed by a cohesive network or larger organization. Groups like P-Patch have been more successful in gaining city government support for community gardens since they are able to take the needs of community gardens throughout the city and blend them into one cohesive demand. The network of community garden groups in Los Angeles County lacks a system to ensure constant communication. Most community garden groups are against the creation of one large garden advocacy group that would connect existing organizations. This argument is primarily based the fact that umbrella organization, such as P-Patch have higher operating costs, which seems unrealistic for Los Angeles since funding is already so limited. But more importantly, community garden groups fear that an umbrella group would standardize community gardens to a degree in which the diverse needs of different communities are overlooked. Recognizing and meeting the unique needs of each garden and the community it represents is essential for the success of a community garden. However, it appears that putting so much emphasis on diversity has only led to increased fragmentation.

City Council support greatly aides the creation and continuing operation of community gardens. But support varies for each council district and currently there are no overarching policies in place to provide support from the city or county as a whole. The creation and maintenance of community gardens takes a backseat to other anti-poverty and community development efforts. Studies show that participation in gardening increases household vegetable intake by one serving every week. This is a significant change, especially with the obesity rates continuing to rise in Los Angeles. Yet, the benefits of community gardens often pale in comparison to other projects such as the development of low-income housing.

Funding

Community gardens are on the fringe of the parks and green space movement. No grants are designed specifically for or cater directly to community gardens, thus gardens are forced to compete with other types of parks and recreation sites for the same funding. The lack of public and political attention greatly contributes to the lack of grants and funding for community gardens. The lack of direct funding for community gardens is directly linked to the lack of government support and the community garden movement's inability to launch a successful campaign to lobby for more support through increase funding and better policy. Without a community garden "spokesperson" or strong advocacy network, policy makers are not being pushed to incorporate more community garden friendly components into bond measures.

Community garden grant applications for state bonds are thought to not be competitive. Most state bonds are primarily based on the number of people the proposal

will serve. In comparison to large sports complexes and recreational facilities, community gardens serve a relatively small number of people.

Land and Site Acquisition

Vacant land is a precious commodity in Los Angeles County. Competition among developers has caused land prices in Los Angeles to be some of the highest in the country. Most community gardens lack the funds necessary to buy a site or pay monthly rental fees. While some private and public land owners are willing to give community gardens drastically reduced rental fees, the majority opt for other uses of the land that will bring in more money.

Community gardeners suffer from not only a lack of available land, but also a lack of usable vacant land. Site size, existing water sources, and contamination are some of the biggest issues community members must consider when finding a potential garden site. Community gardens of any size can bring about numerous positive changes, but many communities need large sized sites to fulfill the need of residents or to make there venture economically viable. Sites with previously established water sources eliminate the hassle and cost of community members installing it themselves. Contamination tends to be overlooked in most cases. Soil tests are expensive, with the most basic testing costing approximately $10,000. Most gardens base their analysis of site contamination solely on if anything is growing. If weeds can grow on the site, then the land is considered useable.

While finding vacant land is an issue, site permanence is an even bigger issue. Community gardens on private and public lands are forced to deal with the constant

threat of eviction. Most site leases last for five years. After five years many leases are not renewed since land owners find a different tenant of development that will pay more.

Community Garden Advocacy Groups in Los Angeles

Los Angels County is home to several community garden advocacy groups. Some are specifically for gardens; some are for the broader goals of increasing parks and green space in low-income and park poor communities. These non-profit organizations and government agencies are all working to find solutions to the problems associated with community gardens and to move the community garden movement forward. While all of the organizations described have the best intentions for improving community gardens in Los Angeles, in many cases they actually exacerbate problems.

The Los Angeles Community Garden Council

Following the 1992 civil unrest in Watts, a diverse group of organizations including homeless shelters and gardening groups, created a network centered on improving food security in Los Angeles. This network focused on getting food to people who needed it, eventually led to the creation of the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, a non-profit corporation working to "connect people with community garden space in their neighborhood".[84] The LACGC also collaborates with several other organizations on the national and local levels including: the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, University of California Cooperative Extension Common Ground Garden Program, Trust for Public Land, Verde Coalition, and National Park Service.

The Los Angeles Community Garden Council takes a "hands off" approach in all of its work, allowing gardens to develop organically through the community's needs. With an emphasis on leadership, the LACGC offers "group therapy" for garden

[84] Los Angeles Community Garden Council, "Mission Statement" available online http://www.lagardencouncil.org

leadership and works to link leadership in garden operations throughout the city, with the ultimate goal of creating a sustainable and completely self-reliant leadership system. Little emphasis is placed on garden development yet the LACGC does offer guidance for community members interested in starting a garden in their neighborhood. Although the Los Angeles Community Garden Council does not offer community garden supplies and planting materials, they do advise gardeners on how they can link with government and private groups to receive donations and discounts. Overall, the organization's role and the services it provides community gardens are very flexible and cater to the needs of each individual garden. However, throughout all of their efforts, they consistently adhere to their principle of a "hands off" approach since they believe it to be the most effective in creating sustainable leadership to create and maintain community gardens in Los Angeles.[85]

The Los Angeles Community Garden Council continually works on fundraising and gaining support from the city. The majority of LACGC's funding comes from government block grants. Using Proposition K funds, the LACGC was able to purchase the site of the Crenshaw, Echo Park, and Stanford Avalon Community Gardens. Recognizing the importance of City Council support for the creation and maintenance of community gardens in the council members' respective districts, the Los Angeles Community Garden Council also works to keep in constant communication with City Council members and their staff.

Currently the LACGC has been working with the Stanford Avalon Community Garden to offer advice and mediation as the garden evolves. As one of the largest community gardens in the county, numerous gardeners from the now closed South

[85] Dake, 2008.

Central Farm have relocated to the Stanford Avalon Garden and there has been some tension between the garden "locals" and the newly relocated gardeners.

The "hands off" approach of the LACGC has in many instances led to the establishment of more sustainable community gardens. However, it has also contributed to numerous lost opportunities. Encouraging community members to be self-reliant in the creation and maintenance of gardens in their neighborhoods is an ambitious goal. Yet with the complexities of government bureaucracy, residents often need guidance navigating through the numerous government agencies and non-profit organizations that they must deal with to establish and operate a garden. Petitioning a City Council member or negotiating a site lease agreement can be daunting. There is no doubt that over the years many residents have been deterred from becoming involved with a community garden in their neighborhood because of the seemingly insurmountable challenges that lie ahead of them and no person or agency to help them.

Los Angeles Conservation Corps

The mission of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) is "to provide at-risk young adults and school-aged youth with opportunities for success by providing them with job skills training, education and work experience with an emphasis on conservation and service projects that benefit the community". Programs are based on a model that will transform young people, local neighborhoods, and the environment, with an emphasis on low-income communities. Community gardens are part of the conservation component of the program.[86]

With a comprehensive and user friendly website and annual reports of the agency's work available to the public, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps is the most

[86] Los Angeles Conservation Corps, *2005 Annual Report* available online http://www.lacorps.org.

established of the groups described. The LACC also receives more funding than most park and green space advocacy groups. With an income of over $18,000,000 in 2004-2005, the LACC received 22.5% of their funding from the City of Los Angeles, 27.2% from the state of California, and 30.6% from the federal government. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps is also the pass through organization for the annual funding that the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership secured for farmers' markets and community gardens. Since the LACC's programs have so many components, including job and vocational training, education, conservation, and youth empowerment, the organization is applicable for numerous city, state, and federal grants from: the Board of Public Works, City Redevelopment Agency, Community Development Department, Department of Water and Power, Environmental Affairs Department, Workforce Investment Act, and Youth Opportunity Movement.

Although the Los Angeles Conservation Corps is a well established and securely funded organization, it is not the best vehicle for pushing the community garden movement forward in Los Angeles. Community gardens are only a small component of the organization's work. Instead, the LACC should be used as a model for other organizations whose work is focused on community gardens. Connecting programs that give at risk youth opportunities with conservation, education, and job training, the LACC is able to illustrate the importance and diverse nature of their work. They are also able to apply for more funding from a variety of different sources and can bring their work to more community members.

Common Ground Garden Program

The Master Gardener Program, run by the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Common Ground Garden Program was created in 1995 with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Since its inception the Master Gardener Program has experienced several shifts in its focus. The Master Gardener Program's first project was to develop a community garden in a low-income housing development in Los Angeles. Shortly after the garden was established, the Master Gardener Program lost its government funding and was forced to eliminate its paid staff and rely solely on volunteers. During this time the program also shifted its focus to training volunteer gardeners to help meet the needs of existing community gardens rather than create new gardens. This model was in place until 1999.

In 2000 the Master Gardener Program once again shifted its focus. Realizing that the program was not attracting the "right" type of volunteers, the program began to seek out community service oriented residents who are willing to learn how to garden rather than gardeners who are willing to volunteer. In other words, the Master Gardener Program looks for volunteers who garden instead of gardeners who volunteer. This shift was primarily in response to previous resistance by volunteers to work with low-income residents and to lessen the sense that a Master Gardener represented an outsider at a community garden. To further incorporate Master Gardener volunteers into the community in which they work, volunteers are given their own plots at the garden to use for demonstrations, emphasizing a "show" rather than "tell" approach to learning and to also help volunteers better connect with the residents they are serving.[87]

[87] Yvonne Savio, phone interview, Los Angeles, California, March, 2008.

Aside from the Master Gardener Program, the Common Ground Garden Program functions as an information and recording source for Los Angeles County's community gardens. Common Ground emphasizes that they are not a management organization and that their primary role is to keep Los Angeles County's community garden information up to date. Every year the program reconnects with community gardens to update logistical information and also to take an inventory of what services are needed at the gardens. The constantly evolving needs of community gardens are then incorporated into the Master Gardener Program curriculum.

The Common Ground Garden Program published the "Community Garden Start-Up Guide". Written by Rachel Surls, Chris Braswell, Laura Harris, and Yvonne Savio of the UCCE and Los Angeles Conservation Corps respectively, the guide was last updated in March 2001. The guide outlines the steps necessary to start-up a community garden, including site acquisition, creating organization and leadership, the basic elements of a community garden, possible sources for materials and money, trouble shooting, and a sample community gardener contract.

The guide's main purpose is to give community members the information necessary to create a garden that runs smoothly. This is especially important since community gardens face enough barriers without dealing with internal conflicts. While gardeners are urged to follow the suggested protocol and adopt the suggested rules, they are not forced to do so. Yet even if gardeners do not adopt the exact procedures and regulations outlined in the guide, Common Ground hopes that the guide will at least get gardeners to start thinking about what can go wrong in the garden in the future and what measures can be taken to help prevent them. The organization and rules of the garden

should then be based on these possible problems. Gardeners should also think about what should be done when rules are broken. Often residents are optimistic that garden rules are unnecessary. However every documented community garden has at some point needed rules and regulations to help the garden run smoothly. By itemizing the procedures of dealing with rule breakers and getting gardeners to agree to the rules and protocol on a yearly basis, the community garden will avoid possibly serious conflicts in the future.

The "Community Garden Start-Up Guide" is a good resource for the gardening community in Los Angeles. Providing the names of several contacts at different gardening groups and governmental agencies allows the gardeners to be more involved in the process. Outlining the necessary steps and the sample community garden contract give residents a model on which to base their garden.

However, the guide also fails to take into consideration numerous factors. The skills that the guide says are necessary, including grant writing and dealing with government officials is not realistic, especially if the residents working to start-up a community garden are not English speakers or documented residents. With so many of the county's residents primarily speaking languages other than English at home, it would be advantageous for the guide to be translated into other languages and made more accessible to recent immigrants and non-native English speakers. The document also fails to mention the numerous other community garden organizations in Los Angeles that offer guidance and support, including the Los Angeles Community Garden Council and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust. While the "Community Garden Start-Up Guide" mentions that "there is a lot of work involved in starting a community garden",

they lack any information regarding the somewhat unfriendly environment at both the governmental and private level toward community gardens in Los Angeles.[88] This may have been done to not discourage potential gardeners, yet it is essential for residents to be aware of the obstacles involved, and how they can effectively address these obstacles.

The Learning Garden

The Learning Garden grew from David Crow's idea of a "people's pharmacy" in which the public could get healing herbs without a pharmacy or other intermediary. Along with the support of Julie Mann, Julie Chambers the dean of Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Jan Davis, then principal of Venice High School, the Learning Garden began construction at Venice High School in 2002. Currently in its second five year lease agreement the Learning Garden is overseen by Master Gardener David King and is utilized by a diverse group of students and community groups including: the Horticulture Program at Venice High School taught by Diane Pollock, the Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the Emperor's College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Agape Spiritual Center and UCLA Horticulture Program Extension classes.[89]

The unique model of a school garden incorporating community groups has led to several benefits for the students at Venice High School and the surrounding community and the overall success of the Learning Garden. The garden's different groups "feed off" one another. While the gardeners come from extremely diverse backgrounds, they are all able to relate to one another based on their shared respect for the garden. The energy of the youth and the creativity and learning of all participants has created a fantastic

[88] Rachel Surls et al. "Community Garden Start-Up Guide" (Los Angeles: University of California Cooperative Extension, 2001), p.1.
[89] David King, interview, Los Angeles, California, April, 2008.

environment for the gardeners in which they can learn from one another and share their excitement and love of gardening, environmental stewardship, and traditional healing practices.. The interactions among the gardeners have caused no additional problems. Vandalism and gardener conflicts are the most common problems that the Learning Garden faces. Yet these are problems are universal to community gardens regardless of the groups involved.

Although the Learning Garden functions primarily as a school garden, the garden receives very little funding from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The majority of its funding comes from private foundation grants and grants from the City of Los Angeles. While LAUSD charges community groups and outside educational institutions to use the garden site, it does not put the collected fees back into the garden. In some instances this has caused animosity between outside groups and the garden since the groups believe they are being overcharged to use the site. Yet the staff at Venice High School and the Learning Garden has no control over the fees LAUSD imposes on site use.

The future of the Learning Garden is somewhat dubious. Previous Venice High School principal Jan Davis had been very supportive of the garden and an important advocate. Since her departure from Venice High School, the garden has lacked the support it once received from the school and gardeners are fearful that their lease agreement may not be renewed in 2011. Leadership sustainability is also an issue for the Learning Garden. The garden's current organization is modeled around Master Gardener David King. Since funding for community gardens is always uncertain, or, as he explained, "it's not if we are going to run out of funding, but when we are going to run

out of funding" the paid position of Master Gardener is not a stable position. When the Learning Garden suffers a cut in funding, King's position will be in jeopardy. Without a Master Gardener the garden would be forced to drastically change its leadership model or face serious problems.

The Learning Garden has illustrated how essential it is for gardens to bring in outside groups for funding and muscle power. Without the support of traditional Chinese medicine schools, UCLA, and other community groups, the garden would struggle with garden maintenance and the implementation of new features and programs in the garden. The Learning Garden also recognizes the unique skills that each group can bring to the garden. While some groups such as the Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine have ongoing projects and their own plots at the garden, other groups including the local Boy Scouts of America chapter visits the garden a few times each year to provide manual labor for special tasks. The inclusion of outside groups also helps to make the Learning Garden more competitive for grants since the number of people using the resource is often a deciding factor in the allocation of funds.

The Verde Coalition

The Verde Coalition, a non-profit organization dedicated to "turning fallow decaying sites into green oases" was created in 1999.[90] The group grew from the realization that Los Angeles had no infrastructure in place to create small "pocket" parks in the city, especially in low-income densely populated areas that commonly suffer from a lack of parks. The City of Los Angeles has historically been skeptical of pocket parks since they believed that maintenance costs were not justified since only a small number

[90] Environmental Defense "In Los Angeles, Looking for a Patch of Green" available online http://www.enivronmentaldefense.org

of community members utilize the parks, unlike larger recreation areas. One major accomplishment of the Verde Coalition was lobbying The Los Angeles City Council to create the Urban Land Task Force with Environmental Defense as the facilitator in the spring of 2002 and provided initial funding. The Urban Land Task Force's primary goal was to look at other big cities in the United States and see how they address park inequalities. From this research came the report "Walking to the Park".

During its first years the Verde Coalition focused primarily on allocating funding and creating a pocket park infrastructure within the city government. Propositions K, 12, 13, and 40 all allocated money for green and recreational spaces and the Verde Coalition worked to ensure that an adequate portion of the grants went towards the creation and maintenance of pocket parks. To implement an effective and sustainable infrastructure for creating pocket parks, the Verde Coalition looked at the infrastructures of other cities to see what aspects of the organizations and their strategies could be utilized in Los Angeles. Chicago's "Neighbor Space" proved to be especially informative and their use of a city urban land task force was used as a role model for the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT). The Verde Coalition was instrumental in the establishment of the LANLT and lobbied the Los Angeles City Council to pass legislation creating the organization.[91]

Currently the Verde Coalition is a volunteer organization with no funding or staff. They are focusing most of their efforts on the Community Living Room Program which creates small green spaces in dense "social" spaces. Utilizing sidewalks, traffic medians, and alley ways, the Community Living Room Program works to green these areas and make them more usable for residents. These areas are multi-use and often contain

[91] Stephanie Taylor, phone interview, Los Angeles, California, February, 2008.

gardening and recreation elements along with benches and picnic tables to create a user friendly environment. Also, the Verde Coalition is continually looking for funding through governmental grants including the City of Los Angeles' Board of Public Works' Community Beautification Grant.

The lack of documentation of open space and parks in Los Angeles is a serious problem. Perhaps the Verde Coalition's greatest contribution has been their effort to fill this information void and to improve the creation and maintenance of urban green space in Los Angeles by researching the bureaucratic process regarding how to create a pocket park in the city. The Verde Coalition created a matrix showing how a pocket park can be created in the City of Los Angeles. This is especially helpful since there are numerous entry points to the process and "no one way to create a park" (Taylor). The group then identified possible solutions needed to address the various barriers related to pocket park development. With this information, residents and policy advocates are better equipped to understand and analyze the barriers that are confronting them and how they can be most effectively approached. However access to this information is extremely limited. The Verde Coalition lacks a website and their research is somewhat useless if it cannot be given to the public and put into action.

The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust

The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT) is an independent non-profit organization working to "facilitate the creation of small, accessible community green and open space" in the city.[92] Started in 2003 with support from various other organizations including the Verde Coalition, the LANLT was created to address the great inequities of park resources in Los Angeles and the devastating effects that a lack of

[92] Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, "Mission Statement" available online http://www.lanlt.org.

public space has on community members, the LANLT hopes to empower residents through increased neighborhood participation in the planning, development, programming, and management of public open spaces within their communities. Along with creating and maintaining park space, the LANLT also works to promote public policy that supports the creation of parks and community gardens in low-income neighborhoods.

Over the past five years the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust has created and helped to maintain and stabilize numerous open spaces and gardens in park poor neighborhoods. During this time, funding from several state and city block grants was still available, yet research indicated that funding was not going to areas with a dearth of open spaces. Advocating for increased funding in low-income park poor neighborhoods, the LANLT was successful in allocating funds to buy several sites in South and East Los Angeles. With funding from Propositions K the LANLT was able to purchase the site of the Francis Avenue Community Garden, a major step in ensuring a stable future for the garden and its community members.

Currently the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust is drafting a proposal for the Watts Tower Area Park which will include several different aspects including a garden element with educational programs for children and adults. The proposed park will be constructed on land owned by the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. Putting their mission into action, the LANLT listened to the concerns and opinions of Watts residents to plan what elements the proposed park will contain.

Since its inception the LANLT has proven to be very effective in fundraising from private foundation grants and allocating money from Propositions K, 12, 13, and 40,

and other government grants. Their "diversified funding" plan allows them to receive funding from variety of sources. The majority of funding come from private grants and donations, while government funding accounts for only a small portion of the LANLT's budget. Support from the City of Los Angeles is resource oriented, rather than financial.. The city is especially helpful with park opening, including organizing street closures and providing tables and chairs for the opening day festivities. The city also plays a crucial role in linking the LANLT's work with other government agencies, including the Los Angeles Police Department and Graffiti Removal services to help ensure the safety of park areas.[93]

Other park and community garden organizations in Los Angeles recognize LANLT as the most financially supportive in the city and utilize their fundraising strength.. Collaborating with other groups, including the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, the LANLT is able to help purchase garden sites with the funds that other non-profit groups lack. With full time staff dedicated to grant writing and advocating for changes to increase the equity of funding, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust is able to accomplish more than most community groups based on their time and experience. Yet this model is not sustainable. If the LANLT's ultimate goal is to empower community member through increased participation in neighborhood planning, residents need to become more involved in the fundraising aspect of the non-profit planning world.

[93] Martha Segura, phone interview, Los Angeles, California, April, 2008.

Methodology

Primary research consisted of the mapping of community gardens in Los Angeles County, interviews with government and non-profit organizations affiliated with community gardens, and observations at community garden sites. Secondary research consisted of a literature review of the benefits and barriers of community gardens and the historical background of community gardens in the United States and specifically Los Angeles.

Mapping

The mapping analysis employed the development of a geospatial database using information on the distribution of existing community gardens in Los Angeles County. The locations of community gardens and census data on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the county's census tracts were geographically coded and analyzed using ArcMap, a geographic information system (GIS) and to produce maps and create statistical summaries. Data for the analysis were derived from the following sources:

1) The US Census Bureau's 2000 geographic data set for census tract boundaries, demographic statistics, and streets

http://arcdata.esri.com/data/tiger2000/tiger_download.cfm

http://census.factfinder.gov

2) The Los Angeles Community Garden Council's list of garden in the county-

http://www.lagardencouncil.org/index.php

3) The University of California Cooperative Extension Common Ground Garden Program's list of gardens in the county-

http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/pubs/index.html

To provide full census data, including from the Census STF1 and STF3 files, including population per tract for ethnic groups based on age, the Census 2000 dataset was manipulated and joined with other tables, and then projected using UTM 11N NAD 83.

The list of existing community gardens in Los Angeles County was compiled using the two lists from the Los Angeles Community Garden Council and the Common Ground Garden Program. The lists were then cross-referenced and variations were explored further. To resolve conflicting data, community gardens were contacted to verify their continued existence and exact location. However, since community gardens are often short-lived by nature, this list may exclude newly created gardens or contain gardens that are no longer in existence. Seven maps were made to analyze the distribution of community gardens and :

Population Density

Percentage of White Residents

Percentage of non-White Residents

Percentage of African-American Residents

Percentage of Hispanic Residents

Percentage of Asian Residents

Household Income Level

Residents living within a half-mile of a community garden are defined as having “access” to a community garden. This definition of access is based on previous food access mapping conducted by the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute. Residents are

defined as “low-income” if they make less than $45,048, the median household income for the entire county. Areas are defined as having a high percentage of a specific race if the percentages for said area are above the median percentage.

Interviews

Interviewees were first contacted via email. The majority of interviews were conducted over the phone, although some interviews were conducted via email or in person. Interviewees were given a brief description of the project and then asked to answer questions. The questions varied for each interview to focus on certain aspects of an organization or individual’s work.

Mapping

Mapping the location of community gardens in Los Angeles and assessing the relationships between garden locations and demographics, specifically race and income, is essential for the sustainability of gardens in Los Angeles County. Spatial analysis and maps will increase research and documentation concerning community gardens and help to institutionalize community gardens in the city planning process and budget allocation. The current community garden movement needs to be analyzed in a spatial context in order to fully understand the status of the movement. Spatial analysis of community gardens will help to better answer if there are community gardens in communities which would most benefit from their presence. These communities are most often low-income minority communities with inadequate park resources, limited access to healthy food and lifestyle choices, and a lack of community development and empowerment.

Context

Low-income areas are characteristically densely populated and have high percentages of youth, or residents under the age of 17. These areas commonly experience a deficit of parks and green spaces, including community gardens. Yet these are the areas that are most in need of parks and green spaces since the high percentage of children tend to utilize park resources more than children in newer, less dense suburban areas where housing units have private gardens and backyards for recreation. Also, these neighborhoods often contain a large percentage of recent immigrants, many of whom have strong cultural ties to agriculture.

These areas also commonly experience limited access to fresh and healthy food choices, as illustrated in the lack of full service supermarkets in South Central Los

Angeles. Many residents in low-income neighborhoods are transit dependent, meaning they do not own their own means of transportation and must rely on public transportation. This limits the distance and times that residents can travel.

Recently community garden groups and governmental agencies have implemented campaigns to address the lack of community gardens in low-income communities. Yet, it is uncertain how effective these new campaigns have been at remedying the inequity of park resources.

Analysis

My analysis finds that:

-The county's 58 community gardens are all located in the most urbanized part of the county, which is also the most densely populated portion of the county.

-The majority of community gardens are located in areas with moderate percentages of young children and thus does not adequately address the need for community gardens in neighborhoods with high percentages of youth.

-The majority of community gardens are located in areas with moderate percentages of racial minorities, although there is some variation among African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

-The majority of community gardens are located in low-income areas, and thus adequately addresses the need for community gardens in areas where there is limited access to healthy food and lifestyle resources.

All 58 of the current community gardens are located in the southern half of the county. The most northern garden is the Granada Hills Salad Bowl Garden Club, which is located 37 miles from the county's northern border. However, the southern half of the county is more densely populated than the northern half. These densely populated areas are also heavily developed, with few homes having private backyard lots. In the less developed northern region of the county, private backyard lots and open space are more common. Yet, even with population density, this does not fully account for the complete lack of community gardens in the area.

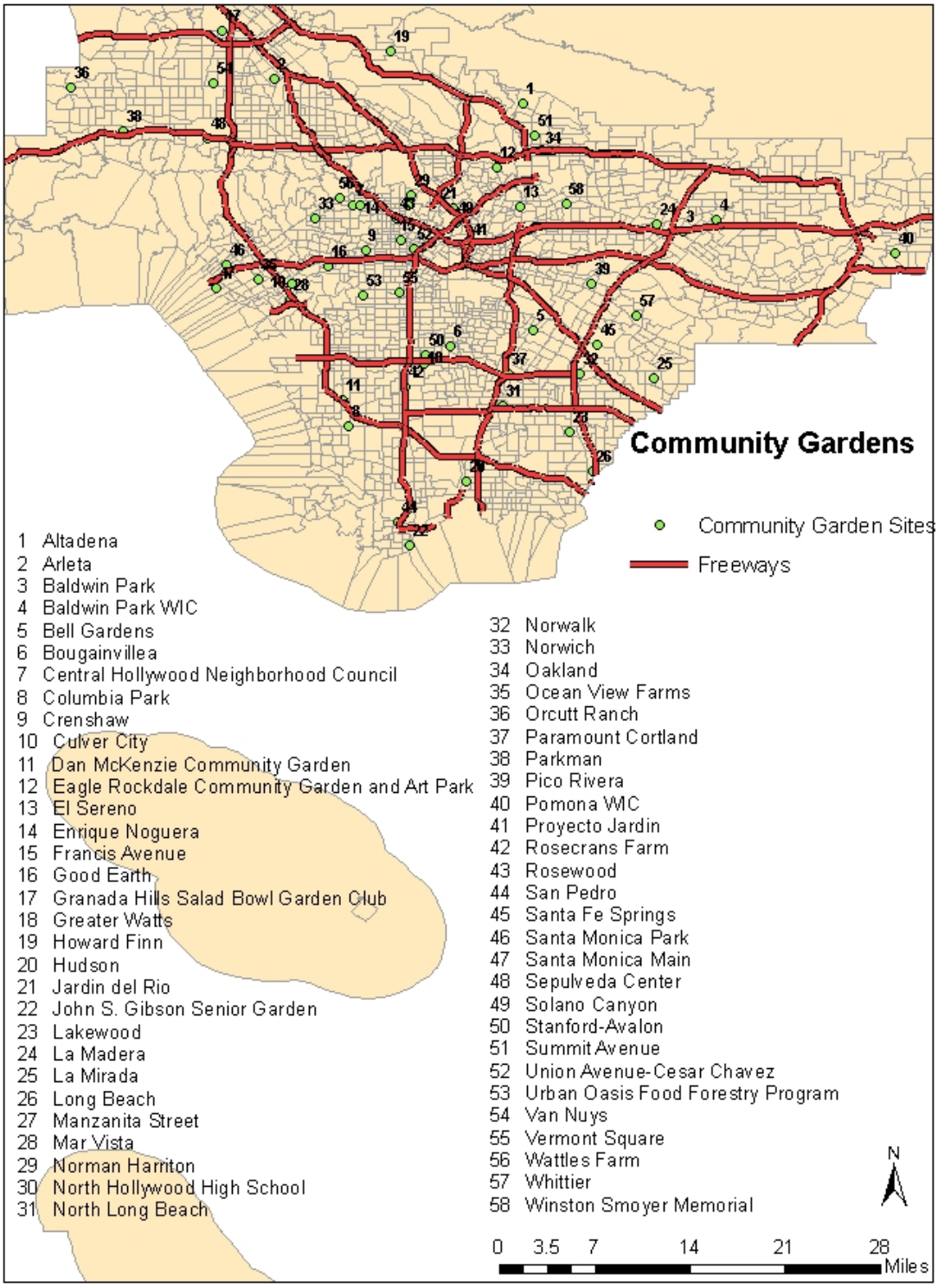
The majority of community gardens are located in tracts with moderate percentages of minorities and income levels close to median income levels. Tracts containing close to the median percentage of youth and median percentage of non-whites also contain the majority of community garden sites in Los Angeles County. Many of these tracts border or are within a few miles of community gardens, but do not contain community gardens or have access to community gardens in the defined 0.5 mile radius. This can prove to be a problem since transportation and accessibility are larger factors for many low-income residents and youth. For instance, a child may visit a community garden that is located only a few blocks from his or her home, yet it is unlikely that he will visit a garden located two miles away from his or her home. Not only will he or she be less inclined to travel the extra distance, but there are also the issues of safety and supervision during his travel to the garden and his activities once he or she arrives at the garden. This is not necessarily the case for adults, especially those who participate in community gardens to sell produce for profit. In these situations, gardeners are more willing to travel longer distances to community gardens. Many participants at the

Stanford-Avalon Community Garden, for example, drive several miles to garden because the site contains plots large enough for very small scale commercial agriculture.[94]

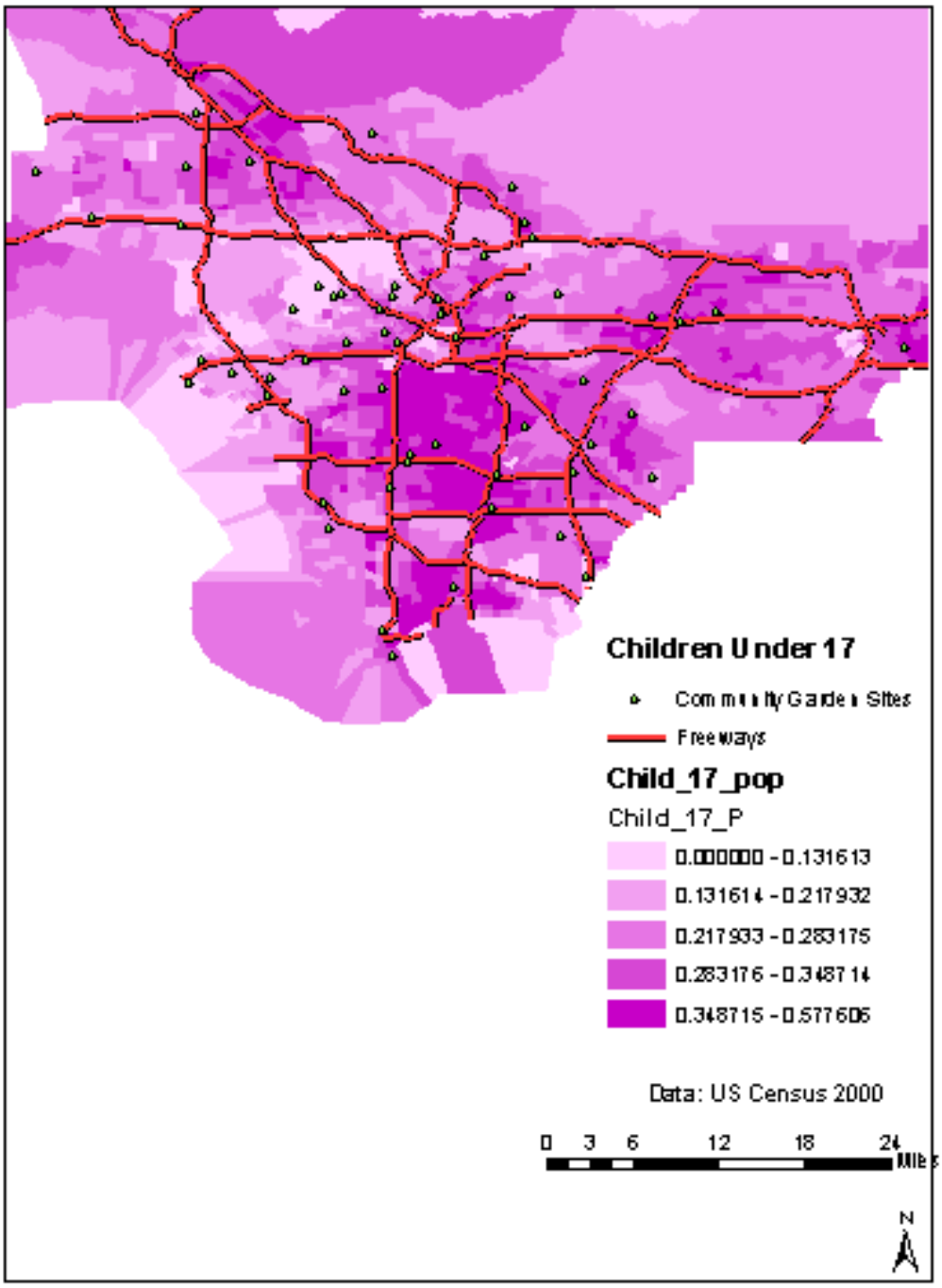
Other than the northern half of the county, South Central Los Angeles suffers from a lack of community gardens. South Central Los Angeles, also referred to as South Los Angeles is the area south of the Santa Monica Freeway, east of Culver City, and north of the Century Freeway. It includes several communities from the City of Los Angeles, along with unincorporated communities, and incorporated cities such as Compton and Inglewood. This area is especially important since it is a densely populated, low-income area with a high percentage of non-white residents. There are also no community gardens in the most western parts of the county, but this is less prevalent since the majority of this area consists of open space and natural preserves in the Santa Monica Mountains. Ten garden sites are located within 1,000 feet of a freeway. These gardens: Baldwin Park, Dan McKenzie Community Garden, Greater Watts, Mar Vista, Oakland, Proyecto Jardin, Rosecrans Farm, Rosewood, Sepulveda Center, and Solano Canyon are at a higher risk of site contamination because of their close proximity to freeways.

[94] Dake, 2008.

Community Gardens in Los Angeles County



Percentage of Children Under 17 in Los Angeles County

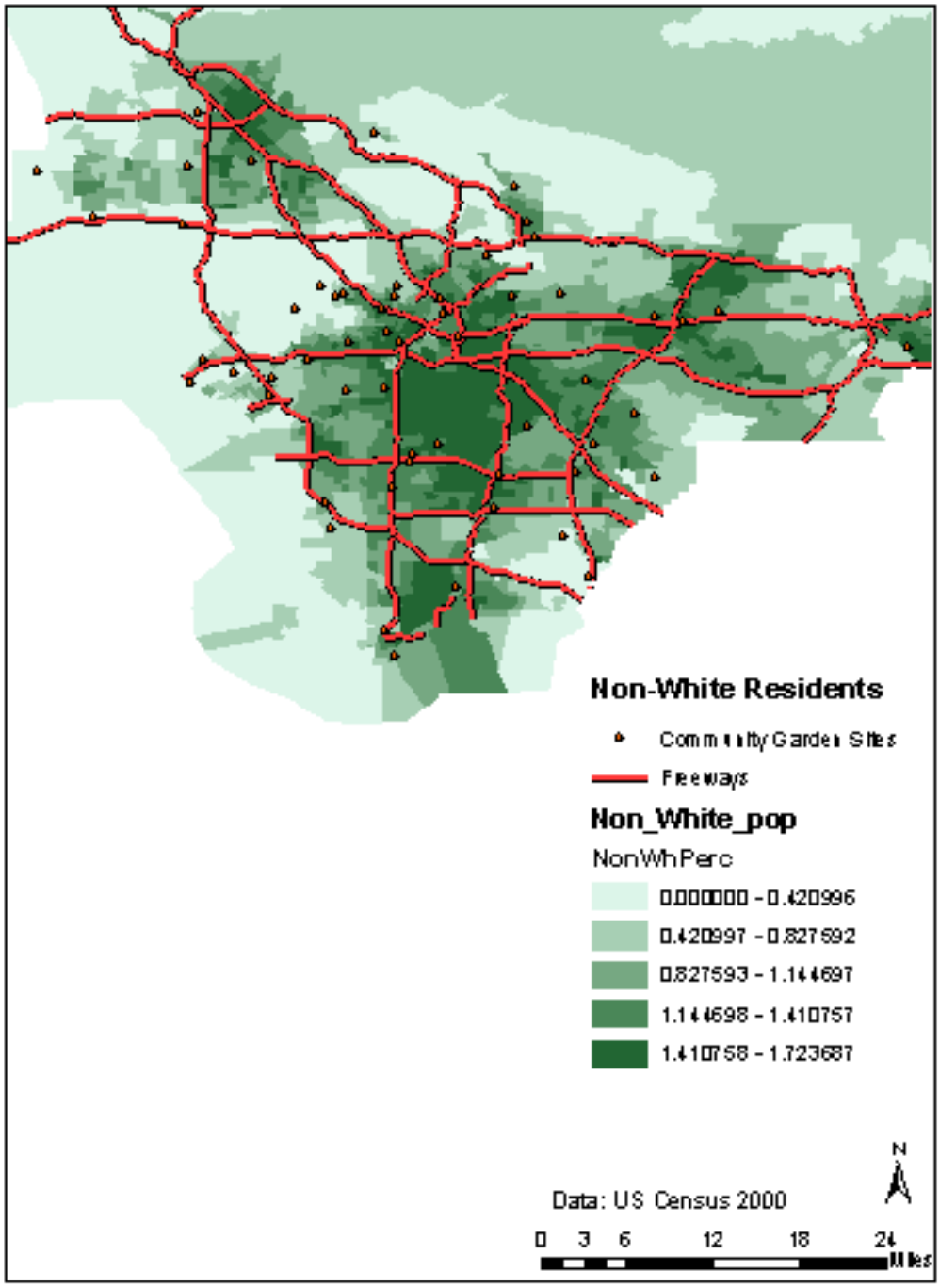


Percentage of Children Under 17

Garden locations in relation to areas with high percentages of youth are closely related to the overall findings. The majority of community gardens are located in areas with low to moderate percentages of children under the age of 17. However, while these tracts are in close proximity to areas with greater percentages of youth, they are not within the defined access of 0.5 miles. Access is an even more prevalent issue among youth since children are dependent on others for transportation often need supervision.

Several tracts in the northern half of Los Angeles County have high percentage of children, yet they contain no community gardens and no community gardens are located near by. However, this may be attributed to the lower population densities of northern tracts and to the fact that these less densely developed areas are home to more private gardens and green spaces, including backyard lots.

Percentage of Non-White Residents in Los Angeles County

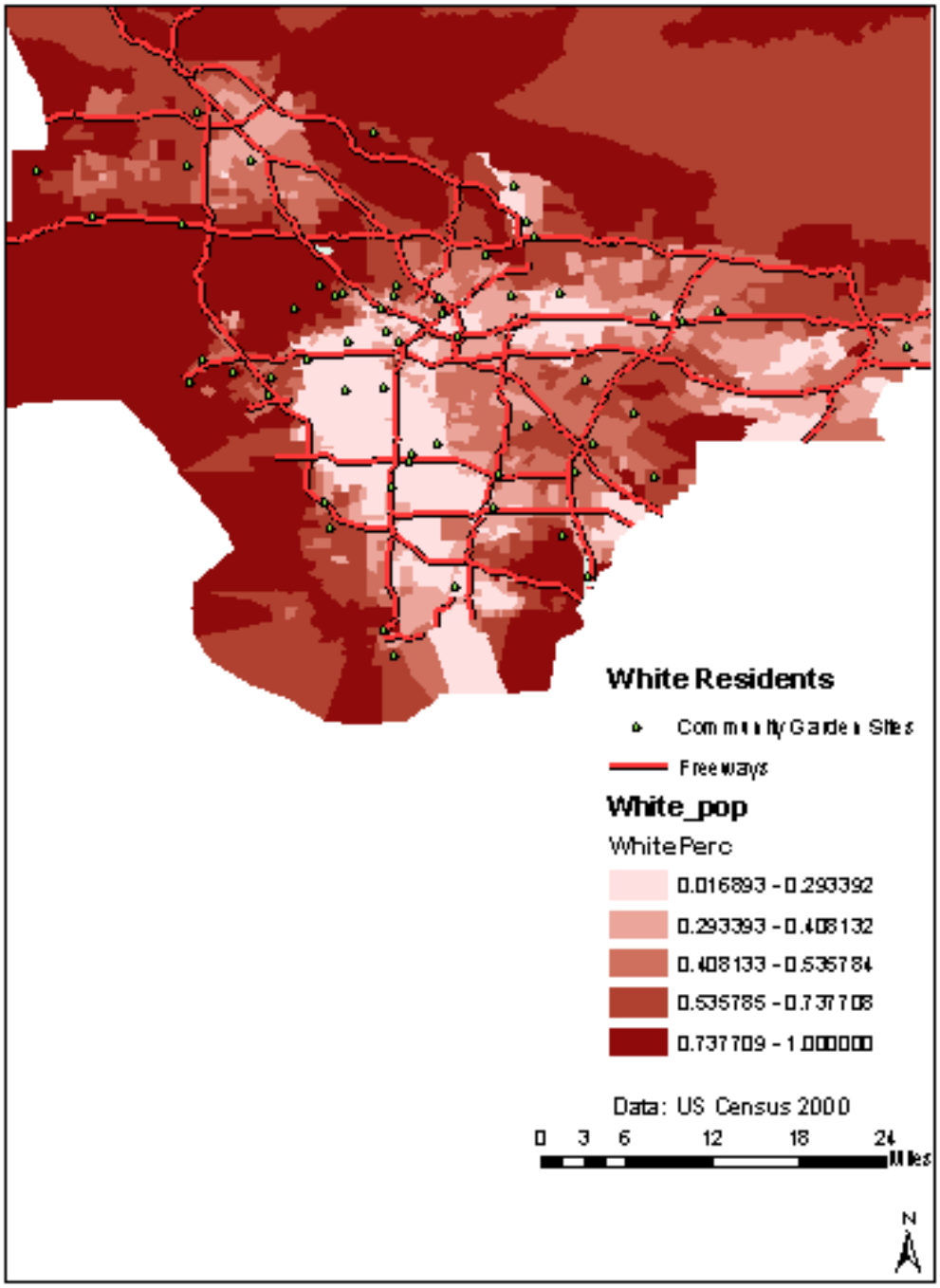


Percentage of Non-White Residents in Los Angeles County

The locations of community gardens in relation to areas with high percentage of non-White residents correspond with the overall map findings. Areas classified as having a moderate percentage of non-White residents contain the majority of community garden sites. Many of the areas containing community gardens are close to areas with higher percentages of non-White residents, yet not within the distance defined as access.

Of the minority groups analyzed in the mapping process, Hispanics have the most limited access to community gardens. The highest concentrations of Hispanics are primarily found in South Central and East Los Angeles, areas which contain very few community gardens. African-American residents have the most access to community gardens. Areas with high percentages of African-American residents contain or are within close proximity to multiple garden sites. While many of the areas that have high percentages of African-American residents also have high percentages of Hispanic residents, many of the heavily African-American populated tracts are slightly south and west of the primarily Hispanic populated areas. This shift in population puts areas with high numbers of African-Americans in closer proximity to numerous community garden sites. Areas with high percentages of Asian residents have access to several community gardens. However, areas with large percentages of Asian residents are located primarily in the western and central parts of the county, unlike the other races which had tracts with high percentages in some concentrated areas but also distributed through out the county.

Percentage ofWhite Residents in Los Angeles County

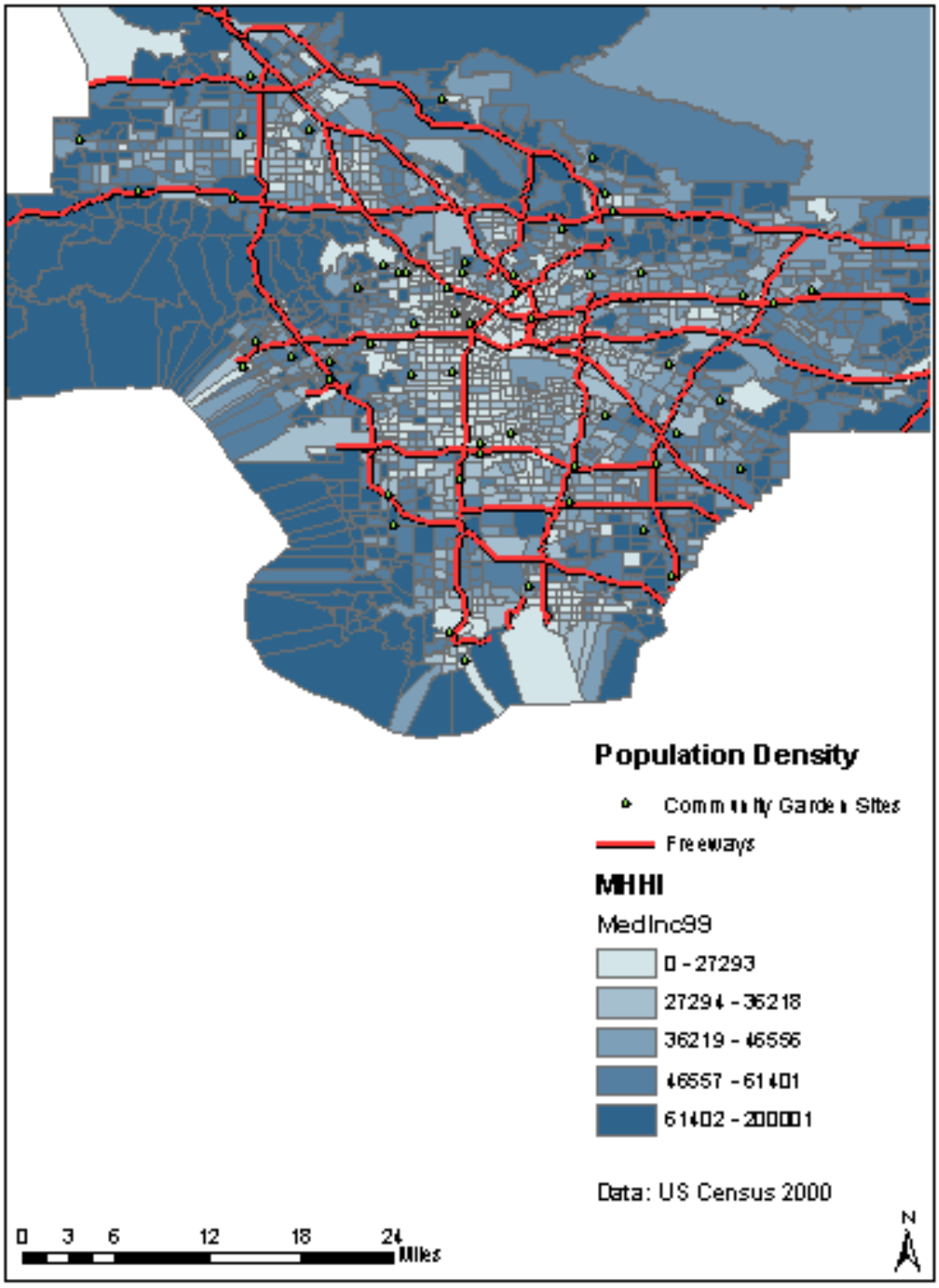


Percentage of White Residents in Los Angeles County

Again, the mapping of community garden locations in relation to the percentage of White residents in Census tracts follows the overall findings that community gardens are primarily located close to areas with higher percentages of minorities, but not contained within these areas.

White residents do not have significantly increased access to community gardens in comparison to the access of non-White residents. While some garden sites are located in tracts with high percentages of White residents, the majority of community gardens in Los Angeles County are located in areas with moderate to low percentages of White residents. This contradicts the belief that community gardens are biased to White residents.

Median Household Income in Los Angeles County



Median Household Income in Los Angeles County

The locations of existing community gardens best address the needs of low-income neighborhoods. It is especially important for low-income communities to have access to gardens, since the health, environmental, and developmental benefits of the garden will have a profound effect on residents. In fact, the majority of community gardens are located in low-income areas, while almost no gardens are found in areas with a median income of over $45,049. It is still important for higher income neighborhoods to have access to community gardens, although these areas often have more existing parks and gardening resources.

Policy Recommendations

The two biggest problems facing the community garden movement in Los Angeles County are the lack of unity within the movement and the lack of support from public agencies and officials and policymakers. Increased government support will only be achieved if a more cohesive network of garden advocacy groups is established. These policy recommendations are based on the information I have collected through literature review, interviews, analysis of the current framework of community gardens in Los Angeles County, and the mapping and spatial analysis of community gardens.

Strengthening the Network

Groups including Seattle's P-Patch demonstrate how effective an umbrella organization can be for strengthening the community garden movement and successfully lobbying for increased government support. However, umbrella organizations generally have higher operating costs and can be less flexible in accommodating the unique needs of each garden. With this in mind, it seems unrealistic for Los Angeles, which already experiences limited funding, to create an umbrella organization. Also, community gardens in Los Angeles pride themselves on meeting the diverse needs of their gardeners. Many fear that an umbrella organization would be too inflexible and overlook the needs of each individual community garden.[95]

A balance needs to be found between the current fragmentation within the Los Angeles community garden movement and the creation of an umbrella organization. This can best be achieved through strengthened and constant communication on two levels, within the existing network of community garden advocacy groups and between government agencies and advocacy groups. The national Farm to School network, which

[95] Dake, 2008.

link schools with local farms to improve student nutrition, is an excellent model in its efforts to join the efforts of over 30 organizations nationwide. These groups collaborate to strengthen and to expand activities in states with existing programs and assist others without programs.[96] While this national network is in place, each school retains a degree of independence, which allows each school to develop a program that fits its specific needs.

Community garden advocacy groups need to establish a means to ensure on-going communication through regularly scheduled county-wide meetings or another means of communication in which all garden participants are able to share their problems, concerns, and victories. The Los Angeles Community Garden Council currently holds monthly meetings to offer updates on the work being done with community gardens and to listen to the questions and concerns of residents. While this current model of monthly meetings does improve communication between the LACGC and neighborhood residents, more work needs to be done to include the efforts of the numerous garden advocacy groups and government agencies in Los Angeles. The meetings are open to all who wish to attend, but these meetings would be more effective if representatives from the various community garden advocacy groups and government representatives were to attend on a regular basis. They could then present a more complete picture of the current state of community gardens in Los Angeles to community members and collaborate on how the movement can continue to push forward. Since each non-profit group brings different strengths and skills to the movement, organizations need to meet with one another to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of each group and how they can help one another. An informal inventory of what each group brings to the movement needs to be

[96] Farm to School available online http://www.farmtoschool.org/aboutus.php.

recorded and updated on a regular basis. For instance, the Los Angeles Community Garden Council has utilized the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust's funding to help buy garden sites. Yet the current behavior of many non-profit organizations in Los Angeles gives the impression that they are relying solely on the resources within their own group. It is only through collaboration that the larger and more complicated problems plaguing community gardens can start to be resolved.

Constant communication with government agencies is crucial to increasing the support for community gardens. The creation of a new food policy council would act as a vehicle to ensure regular communication between community garden advocacy groups and government agencies. The council would present the needs of community gardens as one unified proposal, rather than the current system of disparate demands from various groups. P-Patch's interactions with the Seattle City Council have illustrated that presenting government officials with a clear and unified set of demands gets the most attention and support from council members. Showing government officials that there is strength and a solid base behind the movement is extremely important for the passage and implementation of legislation that will benefit community gardens. To avoid the mistakes made by the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership, the newly created food policy council needs to be in constant communication and monitored by the network of advocacy groups to provide accountability and push the council's work in the direction that most benefits the gardeners and other community members.

The LAFSHP's community garden policy proposal needs to be revisited. Establishing a mission statement for community gardens in the City of Los Angeles will increase community gardens' visibility within the city and incorporate community

gardens into the city's general planning processes. A mission statement will provide a clearer definition of community gardens and their role within the city. This is the first step in institutionalizing the community garden processes for garden start-up and maintenance. With the establishment of a mission statement, more effort can be put on research and documentation of community gardens and vacant land in the county.

Increasing Government and Public Support

It is essential to first establish a more cohesive network. Then lobbying for increased support and funding will be more likely to bring positive results. A direct line of government funding, similar to the direct funding that P-Patch receives from the Seattle city government, needs to be established. This would be similar to the funding that the LAFSHP was able to allocate for community gardens and farmers markets. Community gardens should not be completely reliant on grants to pay for their operating costs and routine expenses. Grant money can then be thought of as supplemental funding that can be used for bigger projects, such as purchasing garden sites or to aid gardens with deeply rooted problems.

The criteria for grant applications needs to be changed. Community gardens and other types of parks and recreation facilities provide different types of benefits to a community and they should not be compared to one another and forced to compete for the same funding resources. Green LA's work with Proposition 84 and the proposed legislation AB 31- Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Act of 2007, which would implement different evaluation criteria to be used for each subsequent round of funding, is an example of how funding resources can include provisions to

ensure that different types of parks and recreation facilities are given funding and make the process less competitive.

Community gardens need to be linked with other programs to help increase funding and overall support from the government and general public. Through their work with low-income housing development, P-Patch has been able to demonstrate the versatility of community gardens to the City of Seattle. Their work with housing developments has also created new funding opportunities and strengthened the presence of gardens within the city. This model is especially applicable to Los Angeles because of the current emphasis that the city government has put on affordable housing and the public support that affordable housing initiatives receive. Also, through their work with low-income housing developments, P-Patch has been able to use available land in innovative ways, including rooftop gardens and container gardens. With the lack of useable vacant land in Los Angeles, finding innovative land use is imperative to provide community gardening opportunities to all residents, especially in park-poor neighborhoods were little or no vacant land is readily available. This is also similar to the work being done by the Los Angeles Conservation Corp which is able to apply for funding from a variety of sources because of the varied components of their programs, including linking community gardening and conservation with job and vocational training.

Conclusion

The community garden movement in Los Angeles County is currently making progress to ensure that gardens have a sustainable future. However, recent efforts have not brought about sufficient change and thus the future of community gardens in Los Angeles County is still uncertain. Past efforts, especially state bonds and funding, have failed to adequately address the numerous problems that face community gardens and in many instances, such as Proposition 40, have only exacerbated the inequity of park resources and green space in the county. In some instances where progress was made, as with the Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership, the group lacked a network and organizational model to ensure its continued success.

After analyzing the work of groups involved in the community garden movement, it is apparent that these groups need to advocate for and help to create an infrastructure for community gardens in Los Angeles County. The lack of research and documentation of community gardens has led to an exclusion of community gardens from the city planning process and budget allocation. While these organizations have made great strides in strengthening the community garden movement, there needs to be more emphasis on collaboration among the groups to combine efforts and utilize the unique skills of each organization.

Bibliography

Bellows, Anne C., et al. "Health Benefits of Urban Agriculture". Community Food Security Coaltion, 2005.

Carter, Anne, et al. "Farming from the City Center to the Urban Fringe: Urban Planning and Food Security". Venice: Community Food Security Coalition, 2003.

Dake, Glen. Personal interview. February 2008.

De Lena, Ariana. *A Grassroots Movement: L.A.'s Community Gardens and the Struggle for Environmental Justice in Latino Communities*. Los Angeles: Occidental College, 2007.

Englander, Diane, et al. *New York's Community Gardens- A Resource at Risk*. The Trust for Public Land, 2001

Fleischer, Matthew. "Why L.A. Is Park Poor". *L.A. Weekly*. March 26, 2008.

Franson, Molly. *Proyecto Jardin: Growing Community and Making Linkages Through a Garden and Community Space*. Los Angeles: Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, 2005.

Gottlieb, Robert. *Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001.

Gottlieb, Robert. *Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.

Gottlieb, Robert, et al. *The Struggle for a Livable City: The Next Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Hayasaki, Erika. "Seeds of Dissension Linger". *The Los Angeles Times*. October 31, 2005.

Hise, Greg and William Deverell. *Eden by Design: The 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the Los Angeles Region*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Kaufman, Jerry and Martin Bailkey. "Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture in the United States". Washington DC: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2000.

King, David. Personal interview. April 2008.

Lawson, Laura. *City Bountiful: A century of community gardening in America.* London: University of California Press, 2005.

MacDonald, Richard. Personal interview. March 2008.

Malakoff, David. "What good is community greening?" *Community Greening Review*. New York: American Community Garden Association, 2004.

Segura, Martha. Personal interview. April 2008.

Sherer, Paul M. "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space". San Francisco: The Trust for Public Land, 2006.

Surls, Rachel, et al. "Community Garden Start-Up Guide". Los Angeles: University of California Cooperative Extension, 2001.

Taylor, Stephanie. Personal interview. February 2008.

Westrup, Laura. "Quimby Act 101: An Abbreviated Overview". *California Parks and Recreation*. Summer 2002.

Wolch, Jennifer, et al. *Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity Mapping Analysis*. Los Angeles: Sustainable Cities Program, University of Southern California, 2002.

American Community Garden Association. "National Community Gardening Survey: 1996". New York: America Community Garden Association, 1998.

Boston Parks and Recreation Department. "Part 4- Open Space Management Mission". *Open Space Plan 2002-2006*. Boston: Boston Parks and Recreation Department, 2002.

Census 2000. http://www.census.factfinder.gov.

Environmental Defense. "In Los Angeles, Looking for a Patch of Green". http://www.environmentaldefense.org.

Farm to School. http://www.farmtoschool.org/aboutus.php.

Garden Works. The Multiple Benefits of Community Gardening". Minneapolis: The Green Institute, 2007.

Los Angels Community Garden Council, 2007. http://www.lagardencouncil.org.

Los Angeles Conservation Corps. *2005 Annual Report.* http://www/lacorps.org.

Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, 2007. http://www.lanlt.org.

P-Patch. “Community Food Security and the Seattle P-Patch Program”. http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/foodpolicy.htm.

P-Patch. “P-Patch Community Gardening Program”. http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/gardening.htm.

P-Patch. “The History of P-Patch Program”. http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/history.htm.

Public Space LA! American Architects Association and Los Angeles Urban Open Space Summit. October 26, 2007.

The Center for Food and Justice. “A Taste of Justice: A Report on the November 3, 2001 A Taste of Justice Conference”. Los Angeles: Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, 2001.

The Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership. “Community Gardening Policy for the City of Los Angeles Proposals for the LAFSHP”. Los Angeles: The Los Angeles Food Security and Hunger Partnership, 1996.

“Proposition 12”. http://www.parks.ca.gov.

“Proposition 13”. http://www.swrb.ca.gov.

“Proposition 40”. http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/state/prop/40.htm.

“Proposition 40”. http://www.parks.ca.gov.

“Proposition 84”. http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/state/prop/84.htm.

“Proposition 84”. http://www.parks.ca.gov.

Mapping Data Classification

Population Density =
AREA/ POPULATION2000

Percentage of “Non-White” Residents in Los Angeles County =
[BLACK+ AMERI_ES + ASIAN + HAWN_PI + OTHER + MULT_RACE + HISPANIC]/ POPULATION2000

Percentage of “White” Residents in Los Angeles County =
WHITE/ POPULATION2000

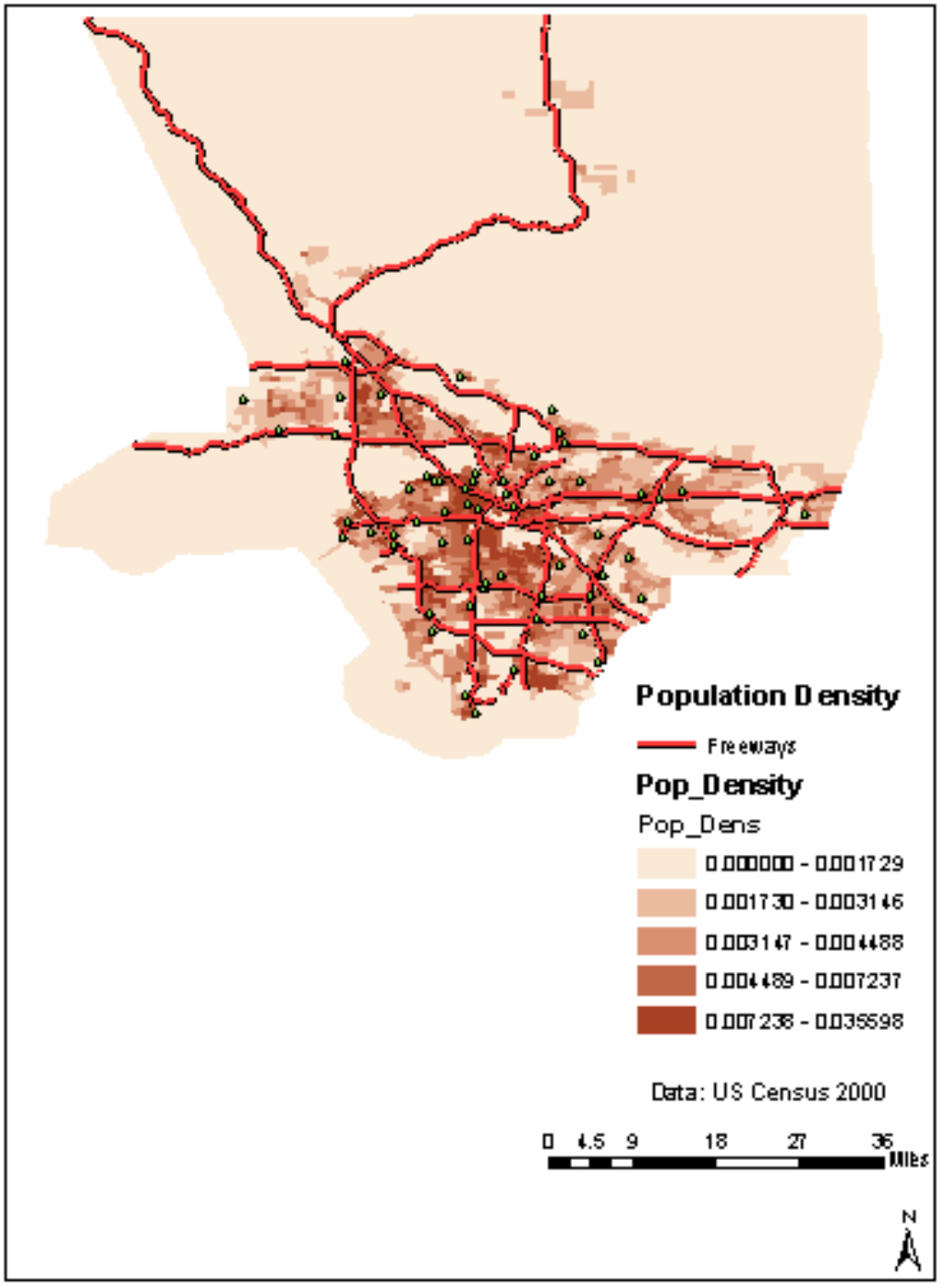
Percentage of “Black” Residents in Los Angeles County =
BLACK/ POPULATION2000

Percentage of “Hispanic” Residents in Los Angeles County =
HISPANIC/ POPULATION2000

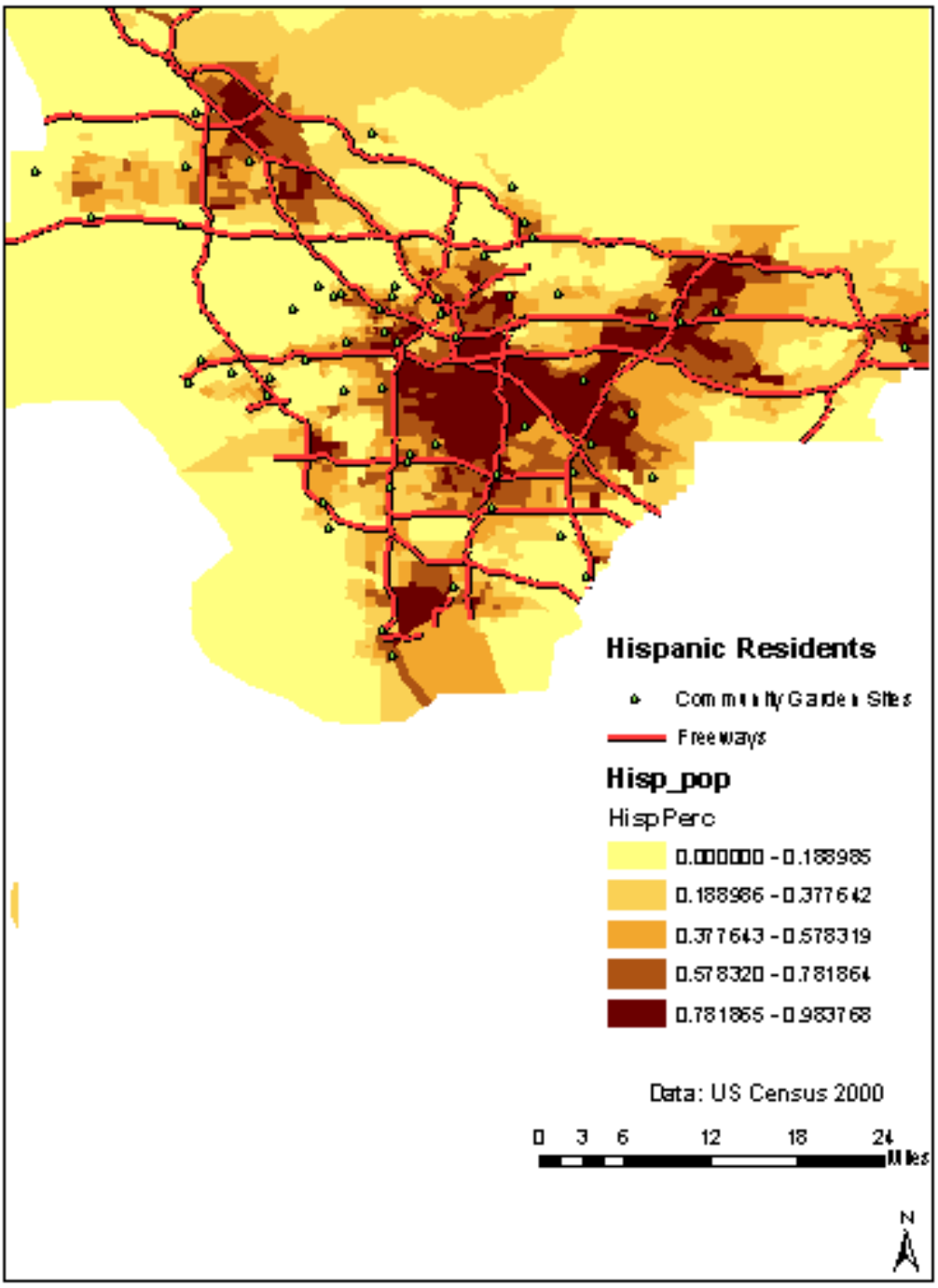
Percentage “Asian” Residents=
ASIAN / POPULATION2000

Percentage Children Under the Age of 17=
[AGE_UNDER5 + AGE_5_17] / POPULATION2000

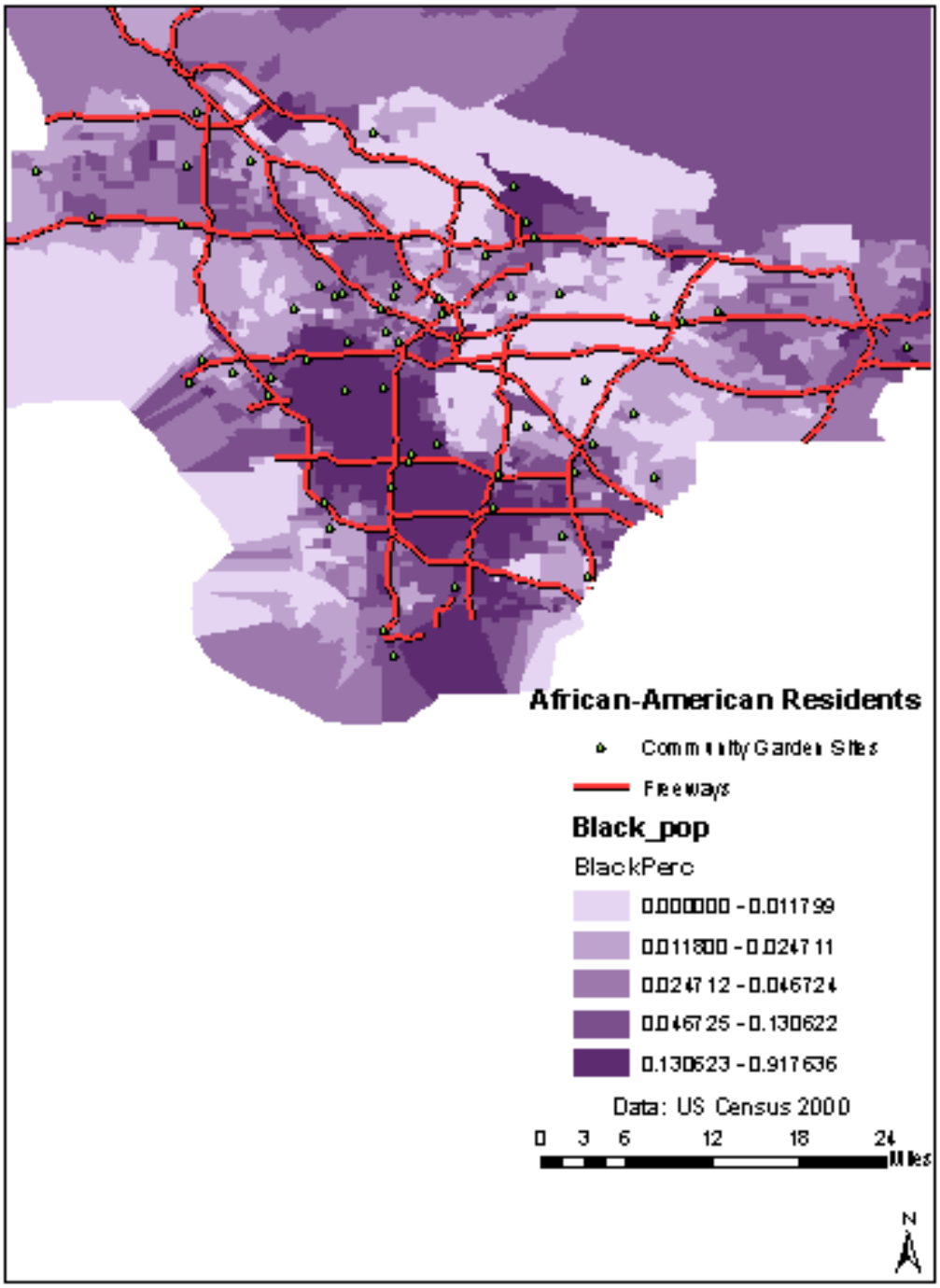
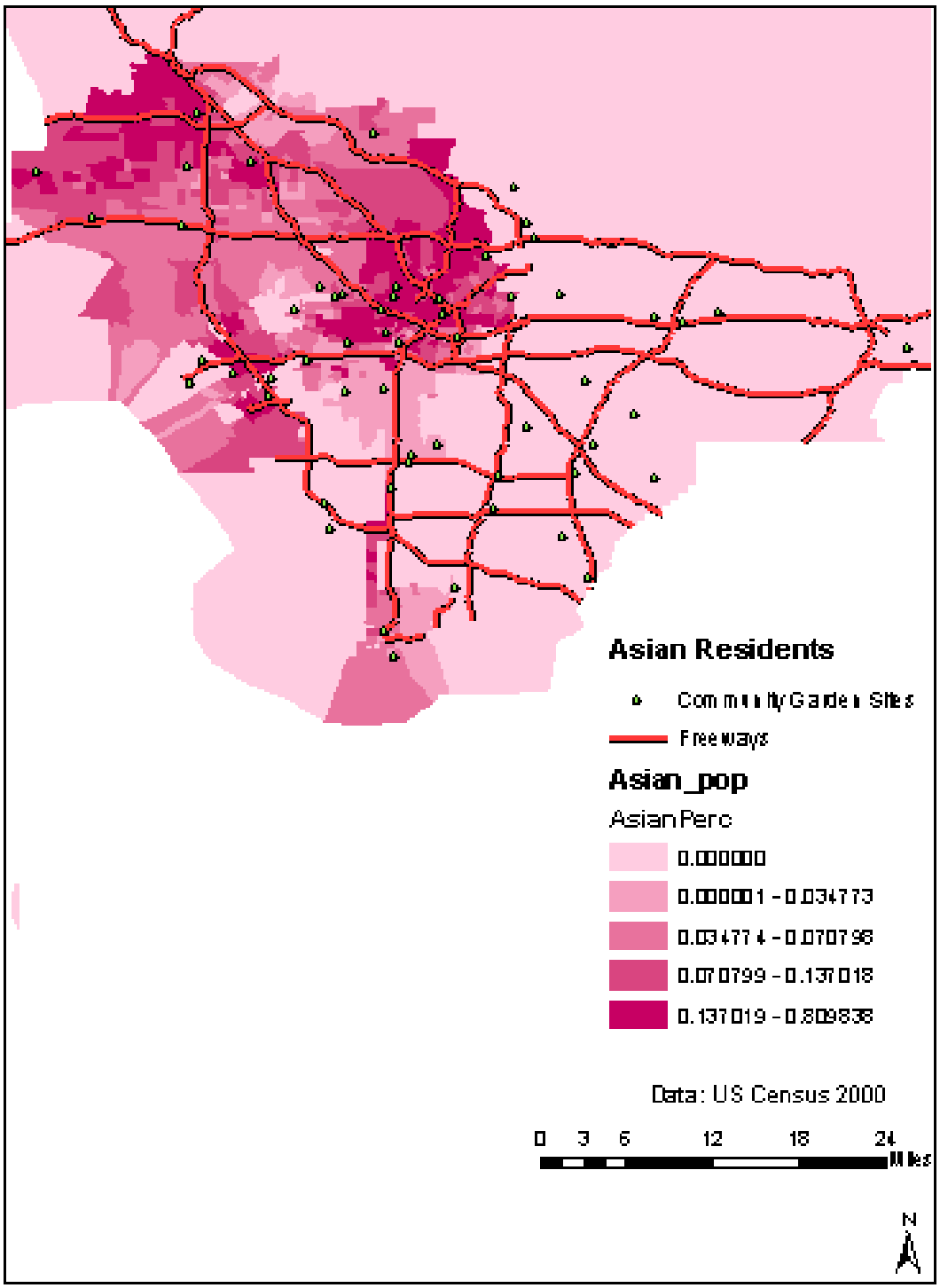
Population Density in Los Angeles County



Percentage of Hispanic Residents in Los Angeles County



Percentage of African-American Residents in Los Angeles County



Percentage of Asian Residents in Los Angeles County