

Waite House

Reflections on the achievements and impacts of Waite House's urban agriculture work and the Phillips Community Healthy Living Initiative

In 2013, Waite House received funding from the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota to implement efforts to advance health equity in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Building on the organization's long-standing work integrating civic engagement and human services, Waite House's efforts focused on policy and systems changes, as well as changes to the physical environment to support the health of community members. In the last two years of its work, Waite House has focused its efforts on healthy food access and urban agriculture.

Waite House currently has five garden spaces and hosts a variety of educational opportunities for community members focused on growing food and cooking. In addition, Waite House is a member of the 24th Street Urban Farm Coalition, a collaboration of local organizations and community members that led to the creation of the Mashkiikii Gitigan ("Medicine Garden" in Ojibwe) in 2013. The urban farm uses indigenous practices and provides a space for community members to gather, grow food, and learn.

Waite House has also been engaged in local efforts to advance policy changes that support healthy food access and urban agriculture, and is working with local partners to re-envision how food shelves can support greater food security among participants.

In November 2017, a group of 11 project stakeholders was invited to a Ripple Effects Mapping discussion about the project's impact in the community. The discussion group was made up of Waite House staff, project partners, and community members. The discussion was intended not only to provide the participants a chance to consider how successful the project has been in achieving its intended goals, but also to identify the indirect or unexpected project impacts. Follow-up interviews were conducted with nine partners who were not able to attend the discussion, but who had been involved in Phillips Community Healthy Living's (PCHL) or Waite House's urban agriculture work.

What is Ripple Effects Mapping?

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is an evaluation tool used to better understand the intended and unintended impacts of a project. It is particularly helpful when evaluating complex initiatives that both influence, and are impacted by, the community. REM is a facilitated discussion with project staff and local stakeholders that creates a visual "mind map" during the discussion that shows the linkages between program activities and resulting changes in the community.

This approach is intended to help demonstrate the project's impacts more holistically and to describe the degree to which different types of impacts are observed by project staff and community stakeholders.

PROJECT IMPACTS

During the discussion and follow-up interviews, all participants had opportunities to describe Waite House's achievements and to discuss the indirect impacts of their work. The observed impacts were grouped into six main types of changes that had taken place as a result of Waite House's work through these initiatives:

- Building relationships through growing and learning
- Engaging community members in new ways
- Taking a greater systems approach to food work
- Building community capacity through coalitions and partnerships
- Advancing food and urban agriculture policies

A summary of the discussion related to each area of change is included in this report, and the specific impacts identified by the participants during the mind mapping exercise are listed in the Appendix.

Ripple Effects Mapping: Waite House



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH GROWING AND LEARNING

Waite House fosters connections among community members through a variety of growing and learning experiences in its urban agriculture spaces.

All the community comes together to learn and ask questions. Learning from each other and when it comes to plants and dirt, it's the common language that we all have.

I was thinking how nice it is to have such physical projects that are seasonal and we all have similar goals at similar times of year. How there is actual physical work to be done and people can get together and feel satisfied in a way that is different from policy work.



BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY THROUGH COALITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Waite House leads and participates in collaborative efforts with other organizations, building their collective capacity to advance food justice and urban agriculture.

The community shows up and the community has the resources to do this. That had a big effect on me, seeing a community event like [Gardening Still Matters] be so successful.

I think the food justice timeline is great for people making those decisions [about public health policy], to challenge the narratives that have been given to them by the big food shelves.



Waite House's health equity work



ENGAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN NEW WAYS

Based on a model of reciprocity rather than direct service, Waite House provides opportunities for community members to take on leadership roles and influence issues that affect them directly.

The clients of the food shelf have felt a lot more engaged through the interviews and focus groups as part of the food shelf redesign work. Giving them an opportunity to say what they would like to see. This is a group that isn't often heard. And that is something they are saying, that they are being heard. And that is a good thing.



TAKING A GREATER SYSTEMS APPROACH TO FOOD WORK

Waite House provides basic needs support through the food shelf and community café, but also tackles food security at the systems level through changes to internal practices and involvement in local coalitions and policy-change efforts.

Waite House is one of the few organizations that wanted to figure out how not to just to be a food shelf.

There's more interest in growing food in the neighborhood now... In a way that's not just growing tomatoes, but about food justice and food sovereignty.



ADVANCING FOOD AND URBAN AGRICULTURE POLICIES

Waite House is actively engaged in local policy change efforts advancing food justice and urban agriculture and has been a strong advocate for bringing community voices into public processes.

The food policy work has affected me personally. I was trying to get a piece of land from the city to start gardening and it was difficult for me to get because of the high cost of insurance but now I am able to.

Waite House was instrumental in community engagement and getting voices that might otherwise be underrepresented [in the policy process.]

DISCUSSION THEMES



Building relationships through growing and learning

During the discussion, many project partners shared examples of community members building relationships through the gardening programs. These relationships were built through working together in the gardens and through classes, workshops, and events, such as a community seed swap and classes on composting. In partnership with the Minneapolis Department of Health and Minnesota Representative Karen Clark, Mashkiikii Gitigan developed a lead remediation program at a garden in Little Earth, teaching families exposed to lead how to rid their bodies of the toxin through diet. Discussion participants also talked about ways young people and families were engaged in the gardens.

Participants also discussed how Waite House had helped connect community members with new opportunities, either at Waite House or at other local organizations. For example, one of the chefs who worked at the Community Café now runs the café at the American Indian Center, and other volunteers have been connected to new opportunities with Appetite for Change.

A really great aspect of the garden hours is how people have embraced [the idea that] there are no garden mistakes, only experiments. We all have pieces of information, and people have really embraced that and enjoyed it. We really learned a lot together.

I've been around for 28 years. I didn't get into gardening until I moved closer, until the program came around about eating what you grow. People started getting involved into gardening and doing things for themselves instead of going to the store and I think that was so great about the program.



Engaging community members in new ways

Discussion participants also highlighted ways that Waite House is engaging community members in more intentional and meaningful ways. Some commented that Waite House has a stronger focus on leadership development and systems change compared to other food shelves or human service organizations. Several also noted that Waite House's work is built on a model of reciprocity rather than a more traditional social services model. Participants shared examples of ways that Waite House has actively sought input and engaged community members in its work. As part of its food shelf redesign work, Waite House implemented a series of interviews and focus groups with participants at three local food shelves to gather input and inform changes to the models. In partnership with Hope Community, Inc., Stones Throw Farms, Gardening Matters, and several community members, Waite House helped host two plant and seed swaps. These events built on previous plant and seed distribution events led by Gardening Matters, with a focus on reciprocity through swapping. Waite House also helped lead a community-based skills-sharing program called Ripple Ecology. Through the program, a cohort of community members attended workshops on soil and water, medicinal herbs, fermented teas, and foraging, and committed to sharing what they learned with other residents.

When I've come here for community events, people are coming up to [the staff] and engaging them. They're directing them. It flips the dynamic from a lot of service providers, from [service providers saying] 'this is what you need' to [community members] having an emotional investment [and being able to say] 'this is what you're doing wrong.' You don't have that kind of critique unless you're engaged.

Taking a greater systems approach to food work

Several discussion participants described how Waite House is taking a greater systems approach in ways that many food shelves and human service organizations do not. Participants shared that they have particularly seen this in the organization's commitment to offering healthy foods and produce from the garden at the food shelf and community café, and its engagement of residents in policy change efforts. Several discussion participants noted that they have seen greater awareness of and interest in food justice in the neighborhood as a result of these efforts. One participant shared that the 24th Street Urban Farm Coalition is having more discussions about how to create a more sustainable system of food sovereignty so that they do not have to be reliant on grant funding to maintain the Mashkiikii Gitigan.

Waite House is in a really unique position having so many programs in the same building and so many gardens within walking distance. You can walk and show people things at every level [of the food system]. It flips the script. People are growing [food], giving it to their neighbors. And we have food service where amazing meals are shared every day. It is nice to have things in one spot.

There's more interest in growing food in the neighborhood now. There's more awareness of nutrition...In a way that's not just growing tomatoes, but about food justice and food sovereignty.

Building community capacity through coalitions and partnerships

Waite House has led or participated in collaborative efforts with local organizations focused on building their collective capacity to advance food justice and urban agriculture. From the beginning of the initiative, Waite House has been a consistent member of the 24th Street Urban Farm Coalition that established the Mashkiikii Gitigan. Waite House provided funding and technical assistance and engaged in resource sharing with other members of the coalition.

Waite House was a member of Guardians of the Gardens, a team of stakeholders that was convened to advise programming for Gardening Matters. The team designed a community engagement process to gather input about current programs, which resulted in changes to make membership more inclusive and affordable and to the development of new skill-sharing programs. When Gardening Matters closed to regroup at the end of 2016, Waite House, in partnership with Hope Community, Inc. and Stones Throw Farms, took over hosting the organization's annual plant and seed distributions in an event called Gardening Still Matters. When Stones Throw Farms later closed, Waite House secured an agreement with the City of Minneapolis for Mashkiikii Gitigan to take over maintenance of two hoop houses on a lot the organization had been managing, ensuring that the land would continue to be used to grow food for the community.

As noted above, Waite House participated in the Ripple Ecology community-based skill-sharing program through Hope Community, Inc., which included representatives from Gardening Matters, the Permaculture Research Institute, and the Land Stewardship Project. The program helped strengthen partnerships among the organizations, and residents who participated were also asked to commit to sharing what they had learned with other community members.

Waite House was also a member of the Metro Food Access Network's (MFAN) Equity Action Team. The team engaged over 200 food security and public health organizations around issues of equity, and created a food justice timeline showing historical policies and trends that have impacted the food system.

I really appreciate the work that has come out of Ripple Ecology where in so many spaces people speak frankly and ask big questions and speak to funders and say, I'm going to check you on that. I feel more prepared to say these things professionally and in a way that is true.

I came into the job with a background in community engagement, not as much in gardening. [Through involvement on Gardening Matters' Core Team], I learned more about growing your own food and engaging people and community.

Advancing food and urban agriculture policies

Over the past five years, Waite House has been actively engaged in policy change efforts to advance food justice and urban agriculture. In many of these efforts, Waite House involvement has contributed to greater community voice being included in policy change processes.

Waite House was an active participant on the Land Access Working Group through the City of Minneapolis's Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. Over several years, the group's community engagement and advocacy efforts led to key changes in the City of Minneapolis garden leasing program, including new Public Works lots being made available to lease for gardening; reduction in the liability insurance needed to lease lots for gardening; longer-term 5-year leasing options to promote greater sustainability and investment by residents; and new provisions allowing individuals and for-profit organizations to lease the land. A discussion participant shared that this work has led to a stronger relationship between the working group and Public Works, and increased the capacity of the University of Minnesota-Extension, a member of the working group, to do policy, systems, and environmental change work. Waite House also participated in Homegrown Minneapolis's Food Policy Council, and a discussion participant shared that the organization's involvement led to a greater understanding of community needs in the city government.

Waite House has also worked with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) on the development and implementation of the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan (UAAP). A representative from Waite House regularly attended meetings and was later appointed to the UAAP implementation team, tasked with guiding its execution. The team worked together to develop priorities and create draft language for an ordinance allowing residents to pick fruit and nuts from park trees and a policy allowing community gardening on park land. Several discussion participants described the critical role that Waite House played in bringing community voice to the process, bringing community members to MPRB meetings, and holding an open house to gather community input about the plan.

Waite House has also played a role in convening people and organizations to advance policies. Waite House convened the Garden and Urban Farms Task Force, which included representatives from Homegrown Minneapolis, Hope Community, Inc., the Land Stewardship Project, the Native American Community Development Institute, Voices for Racial Justice, Gardening Matters, and several community members. The task force's efforts contributed to MPRB's vote to cease the use of glyphosate on park lands. The group also developed recommended revisions to the state Urban Agriculture Bill.

Recently, members of the task force have reconvened to develop the People's Food Agenda. The group reviewed information gathered from community engagement efforts over the years and led several additional community engagement efforts to begin to develop a set of priorities for the agenda. This work also led to a new collaboration with Northside Fresh, a food access coalition that was developing a similar platform in North Minneapolis. The two coalitions are now working together to build relationships with newly elected city council and park board members and to educate them on local food and urban agriculture issues.

[Waite House's Urban Agriculture Program Manager] would bring people to those meetings, not just [represent] their voices.

[Waite House's Urban Agriculture Program Manager] and I were the lone voice [saying] that it's great that we have draft policy, but we need community voice. We brought some community perspective but also emphasized that they need to check back in with the citizens.

Waite House has encouraged us to be [as] proactive as possible. [Waite House's Urban Agriculture Program Manager] was saying, don't pilot this, you have examples throughout the city, just do it... You don't need to do a pilot to write a policy.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Participants' reflections from this discussion reveal the collective capacity that has been built over the past five years, through Waite House's efforts in partnership with a network of organizations and individuals. These efforts have resulted in key policy changes and new ways residents are engaged in the work. At the same time, discussion participants also reflected on areas needing ongoing work. Several participants shared that organizations working on healthy food access need to expand their vision to take on economic justice, so that it is not just about helping people access food, but getting at the root causes of poverty. One participant suggested that advocating for the ability of residents to sell produce they grow on their land might be one area of influence that would support economic justice. Relatedly, participants also emphasized the importance of compensating community members who are involved in the work in real and meaningful ways. Often, their work is critical to the functioning of the project, and compensation is a key part of economic justice.

The following questions may be helpful for Waite House to consider as they plan their future work:

- What areas of this work intersect with broader issues of economic justice? What opportunities exist to collaborate with other organizations and initiatives tackling these issues?
- What role can Waite House play in advocating to funders and modeling appropriate compensation for community members involved in the work?
- What opportunities exist for Waite House to continue to do both direct service and systems level engagement?
- How can Waite House continue to advocate for community voice in public processes?

APPENDIX: Project impacts identified by discussion participants



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH GROWING AND LEARNING

Connecting community members with new opportunities

Many medium or long-term volunteers have made new connections and moved to other opportunities, such as working at Appetite for Change, Breaking Bread Cafe, or other paid positions.

In all the different programs, staff tell people about the other programs that are happening. I've seen people start in one program and realize they can volunteer for another one.

One of the chefs who worked at the community cafe now runs the cafe at the American Indian Center.

Several native chefs in the area, including him, are now purchasing produce from the Mashkiikii Gitigan.

Waite House provided coupons furnished by Hunger Solutions to community members shopping at the Four Sisters Farmer's Market to support greater access to fresh produce.

Building connections through gardening

Community members have been engaged through classes and other activities in the gardens where they are meeting people in the community they would not otherwise.

A really great aspect of the garden hours is how people have embraced there are no garden mistakes, only experiments. We all have pieces of information, and people have really embraced that and enjoyed it. We really learned a lot together. It is important to interact with each other and learn from each other. All your questions can be answered right there... We are all there for the same goal, learning what is good in the shade, in the sun.

I was thinking how nice it is to have such physical projects that are seasonal and we all have similar goals at similar times of year. How there is actual physical work to be done and people can get together and feel satisfied in a way that is different from like, policy work.

I personally love visiting the gardens. I mostly grow flowers, so I visit and ask questions. It is so different from where I grew up... All the community comes together to learn and ask questions. Learning from each other and when it comes to plants and dirt, it's the common language that we all have—that's beautiful.

I've been around for 28 years. I didn't get into gardening until I moved closer, until the program came around about eating what you grow. People started getting involved into gardening and doing things for themselves instead of going to the store and I think that was so great about the program.

Waite House held a series of community meetings at the Infinity Garden to build relationships and learn more about types of projects and activities they would be interested in.

Later activities included composting and building a shed.

Mashkiikii Gitigan [worked] with the Minneapolis Department of Health and Karen Clark to design a soil remediation program at a new garden in Little Earth, teaching families who have been exposed to lead how to rid their bodies of the toxin through their diet.

CSA boxes were created from produce from the garden and provided to families.

The 24th Street Urban Farm Coalition has also led workshops on food preservation, how to manage surpluses, and sold produce from the Mashkiikii Gitigan at the Midtown, Tiny Diner, and Four Sisters farmer's markets.

I'm not around enough to see changes in the community but personally it has been an enriching experience. You walk by and see a community garden and my interactions with Waite House have shown me how much intentionality it takes to sustain this program.

Engaging young people in growing

Waite House partnered with a teacher and parent coordinator at Anderson School to engage youth and families in cooking and growing classes through the school's community garden.

Youth have become more engaged in the gardening programs at Waite House.

Waite House is exploring starting a learning lab for young people related to gardening.

The garden provided a space for one mother to connect with her daughters. It was a space to be away from home, and a different environment for her daughters. It was a space to be together in a different way.



BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY THROUGH COALITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Waite House participated in Gardening Matters' Core Team, called Guardians of the Gardens, to inform the ongoing development of Gardening Matters' programs.

The Core Team, consisting of 16 members, designed a community engagement process to gather input about the Local Food Resource Hub initiative.

Seven convenings were held in neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities.

As a result of this process, Gardening Matters revised its membership for the hub to be more affordable and inclusive, and implemented new programs like skill-sharing workshops.

Participants met weekly in the evenings for 4-5 months, and many still keep in touch through a Facebook group.

I came into the job with a background in community engagement, not as much in gardening. I learned more about growing your own food and engaging people and community.

Waite House participated in the Ripple Ecology program involving representatives from Hope Community, Inc., Gardening Matters, the Permaculture Research Institute, and the Land Stewardship Project to develop community-based skill-sharing programs.

Residents who participated committed to sharing what they learned through the program with other community members.

Workshop topics included soil and water, medicinal herbs, fermented teas, and foraging.

I really appreciate the work that has come out of Ripple Ecology where in so many spaces people speak frankly and ask big questions and speak to funders and say, I'm going to check you on that. I feel more prepared to say these things professionally and in a way that is true.

Waite House participated in the Metro Food Access Network (MFAN)'s Equity Action Team

Through MFAN, the Equity Action Team engaged over 200 organizations in public health and food shelf networks around equity.

The Equity Action Team created the food justice timeline

I think the food justice timeline is great for people making those decisions [about public health policy], to challenge the narratives that have been given to them by the big food shelves. Things like, stop blaming individuals for dysfunctional systems.

The food justice timeline was presented at the Duluth Food Access Summit, and was well received. "People hadn't seen anything like it; they asked us to come to train their staff, etc."

Trained the MFAN members on the timeline.

Waite House established an agreement to take over management of a lot owned by the City of Minneapolis that was previously developed by Stone's Throw Farm and contained two hoop houses, which allow for growing foods that require hotter temperatures and extends the growing season.

Waite House's partnership with the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota ("Blue Cross") through the Health Equity in Prevention (HEiP) initiative has impacted both organizations.

The project's program manager at the Center for Prevention led a training at Waite House on 501(c)(3) status and lobbying.

Through work on the food shelf redesign, the program manager from the Blue Cross became connected to the Division of Indian Works, which helped build trust for later collaboration between DIW and the Blue Cross under the American Indian Healthy Eating Initiative.

Waite House's work has shown the transformative work that can happen when service providers are engaged in power-building, which the Blue Cross project manager has taken back to Blue Cross as a core learning from his partnership with the organization.

Waite House has been a core member of the 24th Street Urban Farm Coalition, providing funds and technical assistance and engaging in resource sharing.

Waite House, in partnership with Hope Community, Inc. and Stones Throw Garden, held two plant and seed swaps, which brought together community members to share plants and seeds they had.

In previous years, Gardening Matters hosted the seed distribution, but when Gardening Matters closed, several organizations, community members, and previous Gardening Matters staff hosted the event called Gardening Still Matters.

The community shows up and the community has the resources to do this. That had a big effect on me, seeing a community event like that be so successful. Connecting with people on how food work is so important.



TAKING A GREATER SYSTEMS APPROACH TO FOOD WORK

Waite House has made a stronger commitment to healthy food offerings and using produce from the gardens in the food shelf and cafe.

People are complimenting us on how much healthy food is in the food shelf, which is a direct result of the work we've been doing.

People come to the food shelf and ask for kale and [a staff member] would take them out to the garden to harvest kale, which has encouraged a stronger connection to food sources.

Waite House is in a really unique position having so many programs in the same building and so many gardens within walking distance. You can walk and show people things at every level [of the food system]. It flips the script. People are growing [food], giving it to their neighbors. And we have food service where amazing meals are shared every day. It is nice to have things in one spot.

Waite House is one of the few organizations that wanted to figure out how not to just to be a food shelf.

There are increased discussions of food sovereignty with the Mashkiikii Gitigan and the 24th Street Urban Farm Coalition to create more sustainable systems so that the gardens are not as reliant on grant funding.

There's more interest in growing food in the neighborhood now. There's more awareness of nutrition and growing food. In a way that's not just growing tomatoes, but about food justice and food sovereignty.



ADVANCING FOOD AND URBAN AGRICULTURE POLICIES

Waite House participated in the Land Access Working Group through Homegrown Minneapolis, leading to changes in the City of Minneapolis's garden lease program.

The group surveyed and held a focus group with current leasing program participants, talked with Homegrown Minneapolis staff about opportunities and challenges with the program, and evaluated current lots for factors such as availability of sunlight, water, electricity, and parking.

These efforts helped build trust in the program for current lessees, and awareness of the program among other community members.

During this process, members were also able to talk with residents and build awareness about the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board's Urban Agriculture Activity Plan and the state-level urban agriculture bill, which were being developed at the same time.

The following year, the group developed three recommendations for the City of Minneapolis based on the earlier information gathering process: 1. including Public Works lots in the garden lease program; 2. creating a position within the City to manage the program; 3. allowing the purchase of lots for gardeners who have leased the lots for longer periods of time.

Homegrown Minneapolis brought the recommendations to its Food Policy Council, which approved all three to move to the City Council. The City Council passed the first recommendation.

There are now eight Public Works lots available to lease, and Public Works is looking to add more.

This process has also contributed to a stronger relationship between the Land Access Working Group and Public Works.

Being involved in the working group also helped build the University of Minnesota-Extension's capacity to advance policy, systems, and environmental changes.

We do direct education and PSE change. That latter portion was newer to the program, so this was a good trial phase, a good space to show that as a model...we can do this sort of work, and we can see tangible changes for the populations we're interested in. These efforts made a stronger case for [doing PSE change work] from our department's perspective.

The Land Access Working Group's efforts also contributed to the Minneapolis City Council reducing liability insurance coverage requirements from \$2 million to \$1 million for leasing City lots for gardening.

Food policy work has affected me personally. I was trying to get a piece of land from the city to start gardening and it was difficult for me to get because of the high cost of insurance but now I am able to.

The group's efforts also led to provisions allowing for-profit farms and individuals to lease garden space. Previously, only non-profit organizations were allowed to lease the land.

The City also expanded the leasing program to include 5-year leasing options (in addition to the 1- and 3-year options already available) as a result of the group's efforts.

Waite House worked with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board on the development and implementation of the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan.

There are disparate points of view about how parks can best serve the community, and whether that includes urban agriculture.

Waite House's efforts have contributed to the park system starting to prioritize urban agriculture.

Waite House's Urban Agriculture Manager has been a connector between people, organizations, and resources during the development of the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan.

Waite House has also played a key role in the implementation of the plan through the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan Implementation team.

Waite House's involvement has encouraged a more action-oriented, community-based approach to the implementation.

Waite House regularly attended board meetings during the development of the plan to be an advocate for urban agriculture.

Waite House's urban agriculture program manager would bring people to those meetings, not just [represent] their voices. Where we were seeking a representative sample, he was too.

Waite House held an open house to gather community input into the plan.

Waite House was instrumental in community engagement and getting voices that might otherwise be underrepresented.

[Waite House's Urban Agriculture Program Manager] and I were the lone voice [saying] that it's great that we have draft policy, but we need community voice. We brought some community perspective but also emphasized that they need to check back in with the citizens.

Waite House has encouraged us to be as inclusive... and proactive as possible. [Waite House's Urban Agriculture Program Manager] was saying, don't pilot this, you have examples throughout the city, just do it....You don't need to do a pilot to write a policy.

From these efforts, Waite House helped the board develop priorities and create draft language for an ordinance allowing residents to pick fruit and nuts from park trees and a policy allowing community gardening on park land.

Waite House convened the Garden and Urban Farms Task Force helping to advance local urban agriculture efforts.

The group included representatives from Waite House, Homegrown Minneapolis, Hope Community, Inc., the Land Stewardship Project, the Native American Community Development Institute, Voices for Racial Justice, Gardening Matters, and several individual representatives.

The group contributed to the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board's vote to cease the use of the herbicide glyphosate in parks.

The group also provided recommended revisions for the Urban Agriculture Bill and participated in a community input process to define urban agriculture.

The group also helped support the Land Stewardship Project's stormwater work.

Waite House contributed to the development of the People's Food Agenda.

Representatives from the Garden and Urban Farms Task Force (with the exception of Gardening Matters) once again came together to discuss different areas of impact for a food policy platform.

The process also provided an opportunity for organizers to share ideas, develop common goals, and build greater solidarity and a base of support for when new council and school board members get seated.

Waite House did a presentation with the group on the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan.

The group reviewed information gathered from community engagement efforts over the years, and led several additional community engagement efforts to begin to develop a set of priorities for the agenda.

These efforts also led to new collaborations with Northside Fresh, who was developing a similar platform in North Minneapolis.

The two groups were able to compare notes on the process and platforms and are now working together to educate newly elected city council and park board members on the local food and urban agriculture systems to build support for later asks.

Waite House participated in Homegrown Minneapolis's Food Policy Council

Waite House led a presentation on the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan and served as an advocate on the council for the community's voice.

As a result of this work, there is a greater understanding of community needs at the City of Minneapolis.

Having Waite House and other advocates at the table helped convey that message that's hard for me to do on my own.



ENGAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN NEW WAYS

Waite House has a stronger focus on leadership and community development than other food shelves and organizations doing urban agriculture work.

The Mashkiikii Gitigan work has built a foundation for engaging community members in new ways based on reciprocity rather than a more traditional social services model.

Ripple ecology and the seed and plant swaps were projects that built on this model of reciprocity.

The clients of the food shelf have felt a lot more engaged through the interviews and focus groups as part of the food shelf redesign work. Giving them an opportunity to say what they would like to see. This is a group that isn't often heard. And that is something they are saying, that they are being heard. And that is a good thing.

When I've come here for community events, people are coming up to [the staff] and engaging them. They're directing them. It flips the dynamic from a lot of service providers, from "this is what you need" to [community members] having an emotional investment [and being able to say] "this is what you're doing wrong." You don't have that kind of critique unless you're engaged.

Waite House is seen as a hub and a movement builder in the community now.

Waite House has led trainings about food justice for participants in the kitchen training program.

Participants were able to engage with the content through discussions about the food quality in prisons and food traditions within their families.