



City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Community Farms Planning for Mautino Park

CEQA: Not a project.

Recommendation: That Council 1) receive and file the Final Community Food Campus report submitted by Interfaith Food Ministry and Sierra Harvest; 2) consider the proposal's findings and recommendations; and 3) provide direction to staff on next steps for the development at Mautino Park.

Prepared by: Tim Kiser, City Manager

Council Meeting Date: 08/12/2025

Date Prepared: 08/06/2025

Agenda: Administrative

Background Information: As part of the FY 2024/25 Adopted Budget, the Grass Valley City Council and the Measure E Citizens Oversight Committee allocated \$60,000 in Measure E funds to evaluate the feasibility of community-based agricultural uses at Devere Mautino Park. This funding aimed to explore opportunities to improve local food access, promote environmental education, and activate underutilized areas of the park.

In response, the City received a collaborative proposal from Interfaith Food Ministry (IFM) and Sierra Harvest—two well-established local nonprofit organizations. Through a thorough planning process, they developed a proposal for a Community Food Campus, which envisions the transformation of portions of Mautino Park into a center for food production, education, and community gathering.

The proposed project includes the development of a community farm and farmstand in Areas 1 and 2. These spaces would feature heirloom fruit orchards, raised vegetable and herb beds, native demonstration gardens, deer fencing, and a covered outdoor classroom. A produce stand operating on a pay-what-you-can model is also included to ensure food access for all residents. Area 3 would be transformed into a food forest designed with permaculture principles and native plants to promote biodiversity, soil health, and informal education opportunities. An earlier concept for a composting facility was ultimately removed from the proposal due to community concerns and compatibility with the surrounding land uses.

Over 100 community members participated in surveys and listening sessions, offering feedback that significantly shaped the final concept. Many residents voiced strong support for preserving natural features such as mature trees, wildlife corridors, and

existing trails, prompting revisions to the garden layout and the removal of some infrastructure components. Concerns about pedestrian safety and traffic near Alta Street led to recommendations for rerouting access points, adding sidewalks, and exploring a shared parking arrangement with the adjacent Salvation Army property. Overall, community sentiment was highly supportive of the proposal, particularly for its potential to provide fresh produce, youth education opportunities, workforce development, and health benefits for underserved residents.

As part of the research for the final report, the project team reviewed more than 20 successful community food projects across the country. Their findings emphasized the value of phased implementation, pilot programming, strong local governance structures, diversified revenue sources such as CSA programs and farmstands, and the integration of educational and workforce training components. The most successful models also aligned closely with local government priorities and planning goals.

Based on community input, land suitability, and overall feasibility, the final report recommends developing approximately one acre across Areas 1 and 2 for the farm, farmstand, native gardens, a small composting space, a gazebo-style outdoor classroom, and a gravel parking area. Area 3 would become a food forest with guild planting techniques to support pollinators, improve ecological function, and serve as an attractive public amenity. Infrastructure improvements along Alta Street, including sidewalk installation and shared parking, are also proposed to address access and safety. Existing forested park sections would be preserved, with native plantings used to enhance the visual and environmental value of new installations.

Council Goals/Objectives: This item executes portions of work tasks towards achieving/maintaining the Strategic Plan - High Performance Government & Quality Service and Productive and Efficient Workforce.

Fiscal Impact: There are no fiscal impacts associated with receiving and filing the final Community Food Campus report. Implementing the findings from the report would have to return to City Council for any funding.

Funds Available: N/A

Account #: N/A

Reviewed by: City Manager

Attachments: Final Community Food Campus report