

**NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING FUND
FINAL REPORT**

Project name: Magnuson Community Garden Development

Neighborhood organization: Magnuson Community Garden

Project #: B02020 **Amount awarded:** \$150,000

Reporting period: August 2002 **to** March 2004 **Date of report:** 14 April 2004

Report submitted by: Peter Boveng, President, Magnuson Community Garden

In an effort to learn more from the experience of neighborhood projects like yours and be able to share information with groups considering similar projects, we ask that you take some time to respond to the following questions. Your final report will be available to the public, so please be concise yet thorough, type your report if possible, and try not to exceed two pages in length.

1. Brief description of project: In your own words, tell us about this project and key accomplishments.
2. It has been at least a few months, maybe a year or more, since your group began this project. Please look back and tell us what you have learned, reflect on what you intended to accomplish and what you were realistically able to accomplish.
3. How did the project exceed your expectations, and in what ways were you disappointed?
4. Neighborhood people contributed many hours of volunteer labor to this project. Make your best estimate of the number of people involved in the project from beginning to end, e.g., steering committee members, work party participants, people who wrote thank you notes, provided snacks/refreshments, did fundraising, etc.
5. What advice would you give to someone just starting a project like the one you have just finished?
6. In what ways was the Department of Neighborhoods staff helpful and how could they have been more helpful in seeing the project to completion?
7. Feel free to add additional information about the project. A picture speaks a thousand words. **Please provide photos!** We would like a record of your finished product, if appropriate, and of any work parties, meetings, celebrations, etc.

**PLEASE ATTACH YOUR REPORT TO THIS COVER SHEET AND
SUBMIT WITH FINAL INVOICE. THANK YOU.**

1. Brief description of project: In your own words, tell us about this project and key accomplishments.

In the past two years, we turned a parking lot and empty field into a functional community garden and neighborhood gathering place. There presently are seven components to the garden that attract a variety of users — Orchard, Children's Garden, P-patch, Native Plant Borders, Native Plants Nursery, Tranquil Garden, and Amphitheater. The DoN Large Project award allowed us to do major excavation; import soil; install concrete walks, gravel paths, retaining walls, irrigation; and purchase plants. We recruited volunteers from northeast Seattle neighborhoods and several community and corporate groups, including Center for Spiritual Living, Children's Hospital, University of Washington, Eddie Bauer, United Way, University Lions, and Sand Point Transitional Housing.

Our biggest accomplishments

- The Amphitheater for outdoor performances and events
- Concrete walkways that meet ADA standards
- Native Plant Borders with educational signs
- The Orchard that will bear fruit for food banks
- A P-patch that has 9 food bank plots (1500 lbs to food banks in 1st year)
- A Tranquil Garden dedicated for people with disabilities
- 6 raised beds for gardeners with disabilities
- Crushed rock pathways that meet ADA standards
- Native Plant Nursery providing plants for restoration projects across the city

2. It has been at least a few months, maybe a year or more, since your group began this project. Please look back and tell us what you have learned, reflect on what you intended to accomplish and what you were realistically able to accomplish.

Our goal for the project was to complete the infrastructure of the garden and have it usable in one year. We accomplished all of our infrastructure goals (and in some areas much more), but it was difficult for us to keep on schedule. We extended our performance period a couple of times. Some of this was due to things beyond our control (the time it takes to hire a contractor, weather), but part of it was due to lack of realistic planning on how many volunteers it would take, how much time a project would require, or whether there would be a volunteer leader available to steer the task through to completion. In general, volunteers for manual labor seemed much more plentiful than planners and leaders.

3. How did the project exceed your expectations, and in what ways were you disappointed?

The amount of interest in and use of the new garden is exciting and gratifying. The Amphitheater is the most conspicuous and visually impressive part of the garden. When standing in the former concrete parking lot, it was difficult for many of us to picture the scale of the Amphitheater and how it would turn out. It is now a centerpiece of the garden and an important extension of the Community Activity Center at Sand Point Magnuson Park. The Tranquil Garden was perhaps the biggest challenge because it was more technical than originally anticipated. We had to scale back the scope and height of the Tranquil Garden landscaping to stay within our budget and technical resources.

This project was one phase in our overall objectives but we found that we had our hands completely full carrying out the work plan for this phase. In other words, we

were unable to continue fundraising and planning for future work while completing this phase. Thus, at the conclusion of our DoN Large Project Award, we have depleted nearly all our resources and need to start over again with our financial development work. Of course, it has all been very gratifying and worthwhile, but we advise other groups to keep our experiences in mind when planning a long-term, multi-phase project.

- 4. Neighborhood people contributed many hours of volunteer labor to this project. Make your best estimate of the number of people involved in the project from beginning to end, e.g., steering committee members, work party participants, people who wrote thank you notes, provided snacks/refreshments, did fundraising, etc.**

From August 2002 to March 2004, we had approximately 400 volunteers who put in over 5000 hours on the garden. The majority of these hours were put into constructing the garden, but there is also a core group that dedicated hours and hours to planning and meetings.

- 5. What advice would you give to someone just starting a project like the one you have just finished?**

Be extremely organized, have good realistic bids of how much everything will cost and expect it to overrun those estimates. We were very lucky and hired a great contractor that helped us immensely because he loved our project; not all projects will be so lucky. Above all, make sure you have a core group of leaders that is large enough and with enough time to devote to keep the project running. If the leadership burns out or gets short of time, everything else falters, no matter how many worker bees are standing by with shovels, rakes, and hammers.

If you're like us, you will be kicking yourself when it comes time to write your final report if you didn't make sure to take a series of photos from the same vantage point documenting the entire history of your project: before, during, and after. Just do it!

- 6. In what ways was the Department of Neighborhoods staff helpful and how could they have been more helpful in seeing the project to completion?**

The DoN staff had a flexible, "can do" attitude that was enormously helpful. They made it clear that their job was to enable us to get our project done, not to make us jump through hoops. The process required by the City for hiring contractors was a bit confusing and daunting, perhaps because some of the rules were new to the DoN staff, too. A clear and standard set of guidelines for putting out bids and hiring contractors would be helpful, along with a list of contractors that other projects have used.

- 7. Feel free to add additional information about the project. A picture speaks a thousand words. Please provide photos! We would like a record of your finished product, if appropriate, and of any work parties, meetings, celebrations, etc.**