

Partners for Places Project Lessons Report

Project Name: *Columbia’s Agriculture Park: A Public-Private Partnership Providing Fresh Produce and Better Nutrition to Columbia’s Food Pantries and Demonstrating Sound Environmental Practices*

- **Year Complete:** 2019
- **Local Government:** City of Columbia, MO
- **Local Foundation:** Boone County Community Trust

Project Purpose

To expand Columbia’s Urban Farm as a central feature of a health-focused, community agricultural, recreational, commercial, and educational facility in a low-income neighborhood.

Key Lessons Learned

Lessons about strategies, tools, and tactics that other sustainability directors could use to advance their work.

- It is important to factor in the realities of construction project delays, and more importantly, how to temper expectations of the stakeholders who are excited to use the space.
- The combination of a parks department and urban agriculture non-profit can create a win-win for all involved. Parks get a more advanced feature that would likely not be coordinated by a city, and the private partner gets access to higher-profile property to do outreach/education.
- A private fundraising effort can be aided by the option of multi-year pledge commitments. Because of the multi-year pledges in this project, the city was able to fast-track the first phase of construction by using in-house financing from a “dedicated loan fund” that borrowed against secured commitments. This provided the cash-flow to enable the city to hire contractors to begin work sooner.

Lessons for developing a collaborative relationship between a local government sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s)

The inclusion of an active non-profit partner with staff and a large volunteer team brought needed capacity to the table. The partnership between the city and local foundation helped to support the community wide effort around the Agriculture Park. The social network of all the organizations, people, and projects that were intertwined in this effort gave it a large amount of goodwill and exposure. These networks were helpful in the planning process, fundraising, construction process, and preparing for the programming phase in the coming season and years.

Additional Information and Resources

Learn more about the Clary-Shy Community Park initiatives [here](#) and watch a short video about the Agriculture Park [here](#).