

# MASTER PLAN JANUARY 2006

Pauline Bond Property

19950 Seventh Street East  
Sonoma, California 95476



THE  
SONOMA  
GARDEN  
PARK  
a gift from Pauline Bond

A project of the  
**Sonoma Ecology Center**



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## Mission Statement

The Sonoma Garden Park is a project of the Sonoma Ecology Center.

The Mission of the Sonoma Ecology Center is to...

*work toward a condition of sustainable ecological health in the Sonoma Valley through community-supported research, education, restoration, and preservation.*

As an educational facility for the Ecology Center, the Garden supports this mission. The Garden's mission emphasizes the commitment of the Ecology Center to honoring Pauline Bond's will that it be a park.

The Mission of the Sonoma Garden Park is to...

*demonstrate ecologically sound practices, create a beautiful park, and inspire the spirit of community.*

## **Introduction**

### **What is the Sonoma Garden Park?**

The Sonoma Garden Park (hereafter called “Garden”) is a non-profit, environmental education facility that operates under the direction and support of the Sonoma Ecology Center (“SEC”) and the City of Sonoma (“City”). The site was given to the City of Sonoma to be a park, by its previous owner—Pauline Bond. The City leases the site to SEC, and oversees the development and maintenance of the property. For SEC, the Garden is a place to collaborate with the community in investigating techniques and technologies that cultivate a healthy balance between human needs and a functional, healthy ecosystem. The SEC’s educational programs utilize the site to provide the community with opportunities to learn about local sustainable agriculture.

### **Deed Restrictions**

The entire 6.1 acre property was given to the City of Sonoma by Ms. Pauline Bond. The will states that the property should be a park. At the time of Bond’s death, the property included a home, peripheral structures, native oaks, an orchard, and a shallow well.

### **Why a Master Plan?**

The Master Plan is designed to aid in the development of a self-supporting project that serves the community as a key landmark and educational resource. The City is an important partner in refining and supporting the Master Plan, and in providing baseline support to bring the site to code. Community input from stakeholders and volunteers has driven the Master Plan and will continue to be solicited for an active, evolving document.

### **How is the Master Plan organized?**

This document is organized to introduce the reader to the Garden’s mission and objectives, to describe programmatic areas and corresponding activities, and to define how the site’s infrastructure and programs will support these programs and activities. This document provides the following sections:

- A review of the governance, objectives, and programs
- A discussion of infrastructure and facilities needs
- Opportunities
- Implementation
- Milestones and Timelines
- Budgets
- Appendices

## **Governance**

The Sonoma Garden Park property is owned by the City of Sonoma and leased to the Sonoma Ecology Center. Historically, the Garden has operated on a renewable, bi-annual lease. During the Master Plan process, the Garden has operated with semi-annual lease, in anticipation of a ten-year lease with a ten-year renewal.

The SEC Board of Directors sanctions the Sonoma Garden Park Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to provide leadership and conduct fundraising activities for the Garden. The Advisory Committee contains at least one member of the SEC Board of Directors in a manner similar to the Sonoma Overlook Trail Task Force. Over the last 3 years, and for the foreseeable future during the implementation of the Garden Master Plan, the Advisory Committee has had/will have at least 3 SEC Board members.

Garden Staff are employees of the SEC and report through the Garden Manager to the SEC Executive Director.

## **Objectives of the Sonoma Garden Park**

The objectives of for the Garden are listed below:

**Demonstrate ecologically sound practices in gardening, landscaping, construction, and resource use**

**Offer an experiential hands-on garden curriculum**

**Create opportunities for community-building and development**

**Provide a park and community facility**

**Provide products and services that serve the educational mission and provide financial resources to the Garden**

## **Educational Elements of the Garden's Curriculum**

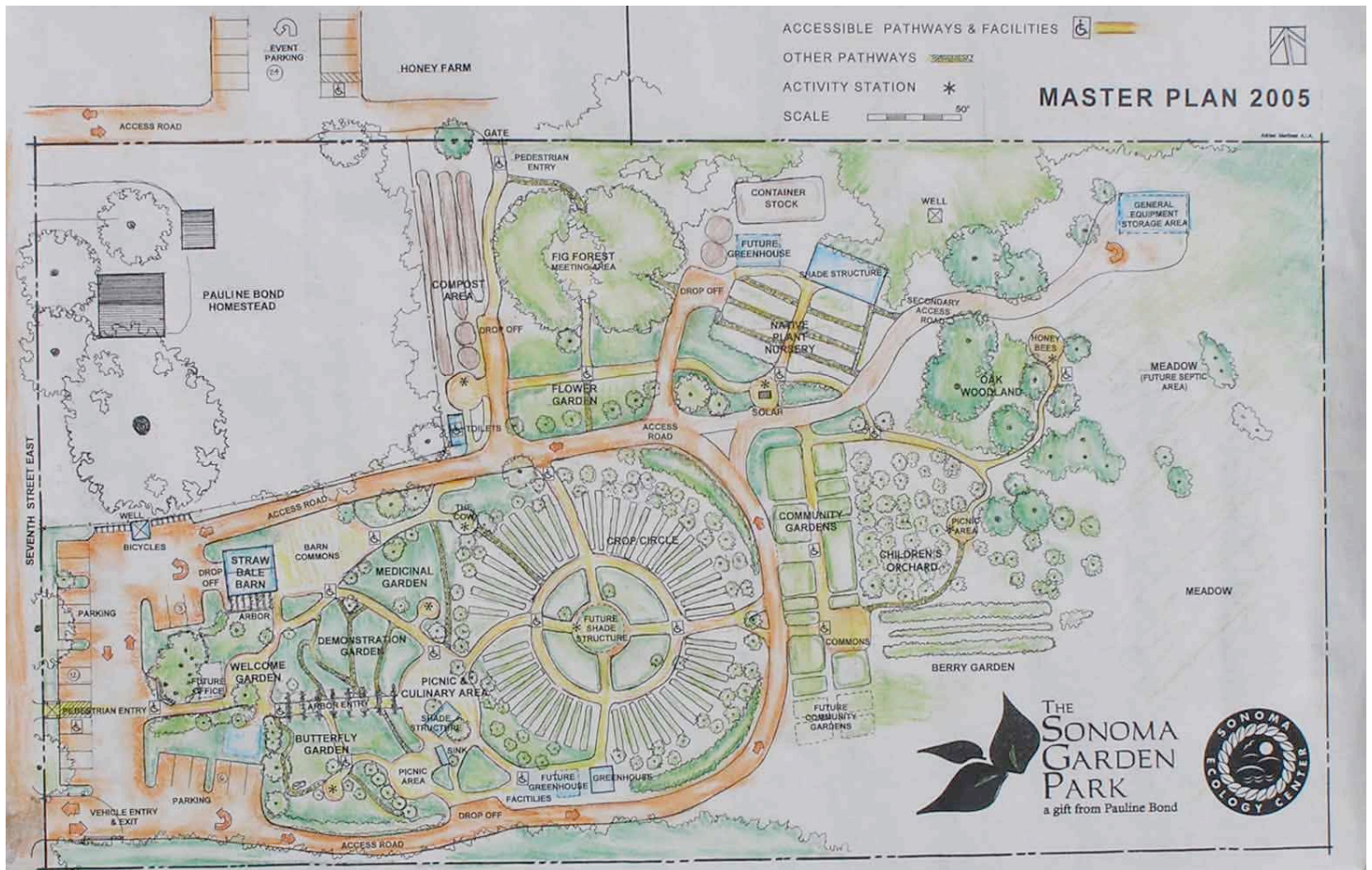
The Garden provides an opportunity to connect with, learn about and appreciate the local environment and the natural world that sustains us. At the core of all programs is learning about the reciprocity of relationships to the natural world and among other humans in a community. The projects and programs of the Garden create an interdisciplinary learning environment. The list of themes below covers the scope of educational activities at the Garden:

Cultivation techniques  
Ethnobotany  
Farm skills  
Decomposition  
Habitat Creation  
Harvest and Storage

Landscaping Techniques  
Nutrition and culinary arts  
Pest management  
Plant and animal identification  
Renewable resources  
Soil Fertility  
Water conservation

### Table of Programs and Projects

Category	Program Title	Program Description
<b>K – 12 Education</b>		Activities address California state curriculum and enhance learning with hands-on experiences in agriculture. These programs are linked to the larger Ecology Center Education Program.
	<b>Children’s Discovery Trail:</b>	A route that offers a number of activities and experiences at a series of stations.
	<b>Activities at special events:</b>	Learning activities will be incorporated at special events.
	<b>Tours and fieldtrips:</b>	Classes and community groups will be hosted by a docent-led program.
	<b>Summer camp:</b>	A day-camp situated at the Garden to focus on farm skills, garden games and art and civic service.
<b>Adult Education</b>		The demonstration gardens will set the stage for much of the adult learning.
	<b>Master Gardener workshops</b>	Master gardeners will use the garden as an outdoor classroom for workshops and clinics.
	<b>Garden Seminars</b>	Special events will be enhanced with classes and distribution of information and resources.
	<b>Volunteer Training</b>	Docents and volunteers educated to help maintain the site and programs.
	<b>Community Gardens</b>	Families and individuals demonstrate and improve their gardening skills within a community of gardeners.
	<b>Library Resources</b>	A collection of books will provide visitors and volunteers an opportunity to learn.
<b>Special Events</b>		Special Events are outlined in the implementation and evaluation section
<b>Garden Harvest</b>		The programs include a number of components related to the propagation, cultivation, harvest, and processing of edibles in the Garden.
	<b>Community Harvest</b>	Harvest for charitable organizations such as Meals on Wheels, Farmworkers, and the Community Center.
	<b>Harvest Market</b>	Produce is sold on site on Saturday mornings and to local buyers through special arrangements.
	<b>Community Compost</b>	Selected businesses compost wastes on site
<b>Native Plant Nursery:</b>		The nursery will be the hub of several programs which will provide native plants for sale and for restoration projects, and educate valley residents about native habitats.
<b>Volunteers</b>		The volunteer program is outlined below.



### Site Plan and Features

Infrastructural improvements, new facilities, and systematic maintenance of the site are all essential to support the Garden’s programs and objectives. The following section describes each site feature as it is relevant to Garden objectives and programs as well as any additional information about the plan for that feature, or the process by which the feature will be developed. General design concepts for the site plan include:

- Energy conservation and optimization in development and maintenance
- Volunteer labor and donated materials incorporated in design, construction and maintenance as much as possible
- Demonstrate the use of ecologically-safe materials whenever possible
- Spatial configuration and design of buildings will be approved by a committee of volunteers and staff, with oversight from the City
- All features will be linked by a pedestrian trail that is ADA approved
- One point of entry for guests
- Location and use of social spaces compatible with neighborhood needs
- Consistency of design with rural and farm atmosphere



The following section outlines each Garden feature or element as it exists in 2005, and the proposed improvements to meet long-term objectives. Each feature is categorized as a demonstration feature, a facility, a utility, an element of circulation, or a family garden plot.

## **Facilities and functional areas**

### **1 Restrooms**

The Garden has used a single portable toilet. Additional portables are used for large events. Usage in near-term will require installation of an ADA approved portable toilet along the access road for convenience of the users and managers . Long-term usage at the Garden requires two ADA-approved restrooms in a permanent structure located along an ADA approved trail.

Factors considered in restroom design will include the opportunity to demonstrate safe and efficient conversion of human waste, design consistency with other structures, cost of maintenance and construction, and convenience of location to truck service and users.

### **2. Office**

An office with phone, internet access, and electricity will increase the efficiency of staff and volunteers at the Garden. Staff and volunteers spend much of their time on the phone, working with databases and using the computer. A small office to house these functions, will offer more opportunities for staff to interact with drop-in visitors and to monitor activities in the Garden while accomplishing administrative tasks. The office will be placed near the entrance. Office space for the Garden's needs is at least 200 - 250 sq. ft. Space will be optimized to include a small library and/or meeting space for Garden organizers.

### **3. Pauline Bond Homestead and associated land**

The home is leased as a private residence. Should the current use ever change, integration of the house and surrounding structures and land into the SEC lease could provide many benefits. Integration of some of the area into the lease could potentially cut the cost of developing new facilities on the property and provide long-term aesthetic and functional improvements.

### **4. Small Events Picnic area**

The Garden will provide space for small events and picnics. The picnic area consists of an outdoor sink for cleaning hands, washing dishes, and accessing potable water. The area will be developed to extend the shade structure, install more tables, install a BBQ, and to maintain the existing campfire ring and outdoor oven. A 2 -inch water source is available for wetting the area before fires and as an emergency water supply. The space will be designed to be used by up to 100 people, seated and eating.

## **5. Straw-bale Barn**

The straw-bale barn is currently used to store a library, tables, seeds, and miscellaneous items that need to be protected from rain. The barn is intended for use as a facility that will largely serve the Harvest Market for storage of produce and drying of flowers, seeds, and herbs. The barn is cool in the summer and relatively warm in the winter, offering relief to staff and volunteers working on harvest-related activities. Improvements will include a new compact earth floor, windows, lighting and any other code upgrades necessary to make it fit for public use.

## **6. Storage Sheds & Shelters**

The Garden currently has two sheds for storage: one is 6 x 10 ft., the other is 8 x 10 ft., making 140 sq ft of storage. The projected need for storage is approximately 300 sq. ft. for storage of tools for cultivation and for small equipment. Such a shed will be placed in the back of the property away from public use. A smaller shed of approximately 6 x 12 ft. will be placed in the “facilities” area near the greenhouses to store tools used by volunteers. Further shelter (roof only) for up to 40 x 8 sq. ft. of space is demanded by source materials for the native plant nursery, compost and propagation in general.

## **7. Native Plant Nursery and Teaching Area**

A native plant nursery and teaching area is located in the area between the “3 Oaks” and the Fig Grove. The Nursery is operated and maintained by the SEC’s Restoration Program. The Nursery will be an important educational aspect of the Garden.

The Native Plant Nursery includes a 24’x 40’ shade structure equipped with worktables. Planned for construction is a greenhouse of approximately 30 x 16 ft., a small shelter to house propagation materials and seeds, a materials drop-off area, and a non-sheltered area for container stock.

## **8. Campfire**

The campfire area is used by classes, for story-telling nights, for garden dinners and cooking in the cob oven. The fire pit is surrounded by a ring of sand and gravel with a ten foot radius. Municipal water from a high pressure spigot is available on a post painted red, adjacent to the fire pit. Redwood benches are placed approximately 6 ft away from the outside of the ring. Approximately 30 people can fit into the area on a cold day near the fire. The Campfire will not be used during the fire season.

## **9. Greenhouse(s)**

The greenhouse facilities are essential for optimal production of plants to fulfill programmatic needs and for plant sales. Permanent structures will replace temporary structures made of PVC and 3 – yr, UV resistant greenhouse plastic. Currently, approximately 120 sq ft of space are available. For all site needs, and plant sales, approximately 800 sq ft are needed. This may be broken into several smaller greenhouses or a large structure (up to 20 x 40 sq ft) will be built.

## 10. Shade Structures

One shade structure exists in the culinary area, and will be eventually replaced with a larger trellis that supports grape vines. A second shade structure will be erected in the center of the “Crop Circle”, spanning 30 ft. to support perennial and annual climbing plants. A third shade structure will be erected in the “commons” area for the family gardens.

## 11. Water features

Water features are to be considered and investigated. A small pond with appropriate engineering will be incorporated into the children’s discovery trail. The pond will feature habitat creation and potentially other functions such as water catchment and reserves. Appropriate measures would be taken to design for a safe system free of vector pests.

## Utilities

### 1. Water:

#### Sources of water at the Garden

Garden has three sources for water: City, well, and rainfall.

- Rainfall: ~2 acre/ft/year
- City: Municipal water hookup: 4” main with double-flow check valve.
- Well: Information of usage not yet available, but determined to be limited to hardscapes and non-potable distribution systems in the Garden. Capacity of well could be increased if appropriate measures are taken to clean the well, install a storage tank, and determine the recharge rate.

To better steward water and provide a safe, user-friendly system, the Garden needs the following:

- Identification of the most efficient and proper use of the well and city water
- Reconfiguration of irrigation system
- Use of timing mechanisms
- Monitoring of water usage so that it can be evaluated and properly managed
- Clear designation of potable vs. non-potable

#### Usage of city water vs. well water:

Usage of City water at the Garden has reflected inconsistency from year to year: 1999: 45,000/mos; 2000: 12,600/mos; 2001: 12,500/mos; 2002: 21,800/mos; 2003: 41,000/mos. Higher rates in 1999 and 2003 represent serious leaks and dependence on City water because of inefficiencies of the current system. In 2004, the Garden has used city water for 100% of water demand, equaling approximately 250,000 gallons per month in the summer. Certain areas have not been watered in order to save money and water. As the site is developed the demand for City water will likely increase, but

the proportion of city water used to well water will decrease. It is our best estimate with available information that the Garden will require on average approximately 200,000 gallons of City water per month in the summer and fall, and 100,000 in the spring. It is necessary that the Garden's water needs and usage be assessed and monitored to collect all the information required for renovation and determination of appropriate water usage.

The local well can currently produce 12 gallons/minute and will provide water for approximately 5 hours during the peak of heat in the summer, providing approximately 70,000 gallons per month.

#### Renovation Measures:

The irrigation system will be reconfigured to be automated and adequate. Not only will this facilitate better management, but it will free up valuable staff time currently spent on watering, and will create a user-friendly system for volunteers.

Renovation of the system is also important for public health. Water sources are marked clearly and with universal signals as potable or non-potable. All hose spigots and spouts used in the Garden are connected to the main City Water supply and are not linked to the well.

The shallow well will only distribute water to non-edibles (with exception of some herbs) through drip, and to the orchard with micro-sprayers. Well water will be distributed with a low spray in the orchard for clover cover crop and better coverage. All manures and fertilizers will be stored at an appropriate distance from the well. Annual maintenance may include flash treatment, analysis for cholorform, and cleaning as needed. To increase capacity and use of the well, a storage tank will keep 2000 gallons of reserve for fire, and a reserve for recharging the well if needed.

#### Water Conservation and educational outreach:

Demonstration of appropriate water usage and management will be the ultimate objective of water infrastructural improvements at the Garden. As a Public Facility, the Garden presents a great opportunity to the City to demonstrate water conservation to City residents. Water conservation will be demonstrated through a variety of measures including xeriscape landscaping, native plant landscapes, production of crops with lower water demands, and agricultural techniques that conserve water. The garden may also serve as a demonstration site for recycled water. Overall awareness of the water cycle will also be integrated into this educational objective. Visual materials at the Garden will demonstrate:

- General concept of water cycle using the Garden as an example, the model will include the criteria used to identify goals for usage at the garden
- The Garden in the context of the Valley's watershed including inputs of water (land form, rainfall map, recharge areas map, soils map, geology map) as well as the natural (fixed ) and human and natural outputs of water.

Renovation of the Garden's water infrastructure and the development of a strong water conservation educational component will require support. The Garden will especially look to the City's xeriscape program and the County Water Agency for collaboration.

#### **4. Electricity:**

Due to restrictions from using electricity already on site, and the need for distribution of energy throughout the Garden, the Garden requires an independent electrical system.

##### How the Garden will generate energy:

Energy needs will be satisfied with solar technologies. The Garden will be an energy-generator. Facilities' roofs will be installed with solar panels.

##### What the Garden will do with surplus energy:

Excess energy will be "sold" back to the energy company, potentially as credits for the City of Sonoma, if the City is willing at some point to investigate this option. Possibilities for rebates, credits, and other benefits of solar technologies are being investigated.

### **Circulation**

Circulation elements at the Garden include transportation to and from the Garden, parking, trails, interpretive signs and information, ADA access, and spaces for gathering. The circulation has been designed to minimize vehicle use, to create a single, clear entrance, to unite all Garden features, and to provide space for movement of materials on site.

#### **1. Entrance and Trails**

The Garden will be served with a vehicle entrance and a main pedestrian entrance that link the visitor to a single Garden entrance and point of check-in near the office. A utility/fire dirt road circulates through the Garden and services all the main activity areas.

A crushed rock, ADA accessible trail four-five feet wide with interpretive signs will unite each Garden feature and be serviced with small meeting areas for groups to pause and gather. Permanent trails will be laid with materials that ensure low maintenance, cost, and high accessibility to all garden features. All other trails will be laid with wood chips and subject to change as Garden needs dictate.

#### **2. Public Transportation**

In order for the Garden to be linked to the City as a community resource and key landmark, it will be necessary to develop appropriate signage and transportation from the center of town. Currently, the Sonoma County Transit route 32 stops a half-mile from the Garden at 5<sup>th</sup> and MacArthur streets. This route crosses 7<sup>th</sup> St. East and could potentially service the Garden by offering passengers a stop on 7<sup>th</sup> St. East and eventually bring service to the Garden itself.

### **3. ADA and accessibility**

It is a priority to make the Garden accessible to everyone. An ADA path will be constructed to circulate through key Garden features so that individuals in wheelchairs can participate in Garden events. ADA access will be implemented in new structures such as bathrooms, offices, and classrooms. ADA parking is discussed below.

The SEC will also strive to make the Garden accessible to people with disabilities of sight and hearing, as well as to encourage appreciation and refinement of these abilities in people who have them.

Last, the SEC will strive to make the Garden culturally accessible, with bilingual signs and docents.

### **4. Children's Discovery Trail and Self-Guided Tour**

A self-guided tour of garden features will increase the Garden's capacity to educate the community. The Garden's educational elements will be incorporated into activity stations along the trail. (Eg. A honeybee station; a bird identification station; a butterfly station; a water conservation station). A map of the Garden with a key will be available near the entrance of the Garden in conjunction with an informational kiosk. An improved informational kiosk will orient newcomers to Garden policies, features, and programs.

### **5. Vehicular Access: Parking**

Accommodations for parking need to balance the needs of all interests. A parking plan must consider neighborhood concerns, capacity of off-site parking, projected magnitude and frequency of usage on site, efforts to encourage alternatives to the vehicle, and site-plans and natural elements of the Garden.

Parking for events or visits to the garden has occurred on 7<sup>th</sup> St. East. For the largest event in 2004, it is estimated that approximately 60 vehicles were parked in the neighborhood for the Garden. A neighbor has graciously provided parking for approximately 30 vehicles on his field. For future events, parking management will be explored. One idea is to charge per vehicle at events, to encourage carpooling and use of alternative transportation.

#### Parking Issues and needs

Since the Garden is located in a low-density residential area, frequent parking on the street may conflict with neighborhood protocol. Modification of the site on the west portion of the property for parking is limited by established trees, roads, and site plans. Modification of the east portion of the property is easier, yet access to parking would create traffic through the Garden, unless access from Denmark or Eighth streets was granted by a neighboring property owner. On-site parking accommodations are made for drop-off and pick-up, emergency, for handicap parking or to store an official Garden utility vehicle. Drop-off and pick-up stations are important for Harvest Market (in front of the barn), for the compost project, for drop-off of materials for construction, and for set-up of activities such as the Harvest Festival.

### Projected demand

In the future, larger crowds will be attending events at the Garden. Even with attempts to encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation, it is possible that over 60 vehicles will be parked twice a year; 40 vehicles will be parked several times each year; approximately 15 vehicles will be parked four times a month; approximately 10 vehicles a few times a week; and 3 vehicles at any given hour on a regular basis daily.

### Options for parking

The Ecology Center has explored options for increased parking capacity. The site plan shows 21 spaces accommodated in the western portion of the property. Overflow parking is accommodated on the Honey property north of the Garden (up to 30 spaces), and in the south-eastern section of the Garden (undeveloped—can accommodate 100 vehicles in the dry season when large events occur).

## **6. Bicycles**

Visitors will be encouraged to arrive to the Garden on a bicycle. Seventh St. East is a popular route for bicyclists and bicycle tours. Denmark could be a main bicycle route in the future. The Garden will actively encourage use of bicycles with the installment of bike racks, bicycle valet parking at large special events, and by networking with local bicycle tour guides and shops. The Garden will be promoting arrival on bicycle for large events. In 2004 for example, valet parking for bikes will be provided as a courtesy for the Harvest Festival.

## **7. Tours:**

The Garden will provide regularly scheduled Garden tours to the public on weekends and during special events. Tours will range from overviews of Garden projects, to specialized tours that focus on a certain topic. Paths will be kept wide and be serviced with meeting areas for large group tours. Meeting areas will be located at the entrance near the office under the shade of trees, in picnic area, in the center of the crop circle, in the family gardens, in front of the nursery, under the fig trees, and on the east side of the barn.

## **Safety & Liability**

The Garden is an opportunity ripe for scratches, boo-boos, and injuries, since visitors are working and playing in a natural environment. Individuals participating in classes, as well as volunteers are asked to sign a liability waiver and disclose any relevant allergies (especially to bees). The SEC maintains a 1 million dollar general liability policy that names the City of Sonoma as “additionally insured.”

## **1. First Aid**

A large first aid kit is available in the Straw-Bale Barn. To discourage use when the Garden is closed, the gate is locked and a sign lists Garden hours. Docents will be trained to host visitors at the Garden, and public access will be limited by volunteer capacity. Events that extend into the evening will be supervised by Garden staff and volunteers

## 2. Fire

Fire hazard reduction will include landscape design that demonstrates defensible public space (firebreaks, roads, particular plants), appropriate water storage, and approved road access for engines. Fire sprinklers or fire detection/suppression systems will be incorporated into new construction as appropriate.

Annual maintenance for fire hazard reduction will depend on the success of the hardscape in providing a fire break. Cultivation may be employed for one year only. Grazing may be employed for high grass mowing, with mowing as a back-up plan after nesting season is finished and the fields are dry enough for the mower in late June.

Campfires will be attended by staff and volunteers informed of safety protocols. The Fire Department is notified before fires are lit and the area is soaked with water to suppress any sparks. Water sources are available near the fire zone. A Fire extinguisher will also be installed near fire pit.

Larger capital improvements to accommodate emergency vehicles in case of fire include water storage and/or a fire hydrant, an identifiable, improved road to structures in property that will support a fire engine under all weather conditions.

Public education regarding fire hazard reduction will be considered and possibly integrated into the xeriscape and native plant projects.

**3. Water:** Potable and non-potable water sources will be marked. A secured cover will be constructed for the well.

## Opportunities for the Garden

Anyone who comes to a Garden event or to just visit, is struck by the opportunities of the site. The opportunities for the Garden to become a key landmark and center for education and recreation are clear. A number of constraints and challenges must be addressed properly in order to take advantage of these opportunities.

### a. Ecotourism.

The Garden is well-placed to benefit from Sonoma Valley's growing reputation as a premier destination for eco-travel. Its physical location is near the Plaza and is easy for visitors to find. Garden programs and events can be designed to be of interest to visitors as well as locals, creating income for the Garden as well as providing a compelling new reason for ecotourists to visit the Valley. The Garden is also along the route of many popular bicycle tours. Through the Garden is a member of the Visitors Bureau (via the SEC membership), which entitles Garden programs and events to be publicized on the Visitors Bureau website as well as at both Visitor Centers.

### b. Partnership with Valley Businesses.

The Garden has an established relationship with the restaurant community through our restaurant compost program, and plans are in progress for a program that will produce locally grown, organic food for sale to local restaurants. Partnering with local business,



especially around Garden events and programs that can be cross-promoted, can generate funding and in-kind donations as well as opportunities to engage with others about the issues of sustainability that concern everyone who lives and works in Sonoma Valley. Potential partners include businesses in the agriculture, tourism, wineries, restaurants, and hospitality industries, to name just a few.

c. Youth.

In 2004 alone, the Garden was used by more than 45 students each month, comprising over 300 hours of service to Valley students in 2003 and over 200 hours of service in 2004. The demand for outdoor, garden-based education is more than current staff and volunteers can satisfy. A number of schools in the Valley actually have created on-site gardens for the classes. Many of these programs are parent-supported and seek resources for improving the sites and the availability of the gardens to the students. The Garden has the opportunity to become a resource to school gardens in the Valley by offering training for parents and teachers interested in bringing students to the garden, or gardening with students at home, as well to provide experts who can travel to classrooms and school gardens to train young gardeners

d. Valley Organizations.

Local nonprofits benefit from the Garden as a source of food, beauty, volunteer opportunities, meeting space, and more. For example, the Garden provides produce for Sonoma Community Center events in exchange for free use of the Center's licensed commercial kitchen for Garden events such as the Harvest Festival. The Garden is investigating and expanding relationships with the Sonoma Valley Mothers Club, Girl/Boy Scouts, the Center for Bereaved Children, The Mentor Center, YFS/Community Service, Vintage House, FISH, Meals on Wheels, La Luz, and 4H. Future relationships could include agricultural festivals such as the Harvest Wine Auction and Sonoma Valley Olive Festival.

e. Valley Heritage and Preservation.

Those who live in and visit Sonoma love its natural beauty and the agricultural and epicurean economy. The Garden presents an opportunity to not only preserve land in the Valley, but also to preserve the lifestyle and practices associated to rural life. The Garden's objective to develop natural habitats, use site-appropriate planning, and grow native plants also presents an opportunity to demonstrate valuable elements of our Valley's natural and cultural heritage

f. Funding Opportunities.

The Garden will serve the entire community as well as specific groups. Garden programs will address significant social and environmental needs. Because of the many benefits the Garden brings to the community, there is strong potential for grant funding as well as substantial donations community groups and members. With creativity and strategic planning, there are also many ways for the Garden to generate funding through sale of produce, plants, and services.

#### h. Social Capital

The community of Sonoma is one that is lucky to have a concentration of wealth, knowledge, and resources. Nearby to the Garden are garden clubs, master gardeners, and universities. The diversity of professions, experience and wealth offers the Garden a broad pool of expertise and resources to draw from.

## Implementation

Qualified and dedicated staff, a broad base of volunteers, and stable revenue sources are all essential to the long-term sustainability of the Garden's site and programs. It is also a priority that the Garden is linked to other partner organizations to increase effectiveness and scope of programs and that development of Garden programs is linked to the needs of the community.

### Milestones and Development Priorities

Up to \$500,000 will be raised to fund capital improvements over a five year period. Anticipated donations and volunteer expertise support this estimate. Some facilities are less important in the near-term than others. Priority for development takes in the following criteria:

- Does this project compliment the Garden objectives?
- Does this project address a safety issue?
- Will this project increase accessibility?
- Will this project generate revenue or support self-sufficiency?
- Is there community support, or funding that is on hold? How long will the funding be earmarked?

Development of facilities is contingent on fundraising, availability of resources, and management capacity of staff and volunteers. First and foremost, the SEC must attract enough seed funding to support the staff necessary for facilitating development. Our focus will be to raise funds using community resources as well as the resources immediately available at the Garden. As the appropriate funding is identified and committed, the development priorities will fall in the following order:

- Design and specifications of priority structures: ADA route, parking, roads, restrooms, and utilities
- Temporary structures to meet usage needs (restroom, greenhouse, parking arrangements, office, sheds)
- Resolve parking needs and corollary circulation needs
- Utilities phased in to meet growing use
- Restroom to meet demand as programs grow
- Greenhouse to meet targets
- Educational programs implemented
- Multi-use facility designed to meet all facility needs

## **Organizational Structure**

The long-term success of Garden programs requires an effective SEC organizational structure and qualified personnel. Each of the following personnel categories plays an important role in the Garden: SEC staff, SEC Garden Advisory Board Committee, Garden Committees, Garden Members, general volunteer groups, and the public at large.

### Current and Future Staff Positions

Garden staff are employees of the Sonoma Ecology Center. There are currently three part-time positions at the Garden: Garden Manager (10 hrs), Volunteer Coordinator (10 hours), and Gardener (10 hrs). Staff energy is directed and prioritized for greatest productivity towards Garden objectives with limited resources available. Other SEC staff support program development at the Garden: The SEC education program will develop K – 12 programs, the SEC restoration program is developing the native plant nursery, the Garden Advisory Committee will be responsible for meeting fundraising goals for development of the site and programs. Additionally, the SEC has a core administrative staff including accounting, a volunteer and intern coordinator, and an IT specialist, all whom support staff and projects associated to the Garden.

Future staff positions will be more specialized and refined as organizational capacity expands. With sufficient funding the following full-time and part-time positions will be developed:

- Garden Programs Manager (10 – 40 hrs)
- Garden Volunteers and Outreach Coordinator (10 – 30 hrs)
- Garden Property Manager (20 – 30 hrs)
- Gardener(s) (production and maintenance) (35 hrs)

Each of these paid positions are to take on a managerial role in coordinating the work of staff, volunteers and students in these areas. All staff positions combined is equivalent to 3 positions at full-time equivalency.

### SEC and the Garden

The Garden is one project of the Sonoma Ecology Center. The Garden Manager reports to the Director of the Ecology Center. The Garden Manager also maintains a working relationship with the SEC Outreach Director, with SEC Administrator, and on special projects with the Restoration, Education, and Historical Ecology programs of the SEC.

### Garden Advisory Committee

The Garden Advisory Committee is an advisory team of SEC board members, volunteers, staff, and affiliates who are invited to bring insight, expertise, and skills into the development of the Garden site and programs. The Council began meeting in January 2005. (Previously, this role had been fulfilled by a group of volunteers called the “Garden Council,” that formed in Fall 2003.) The Council meets monthly to consider topics brought to the table by the Garden Manager and Committees. The Council

makes decisions on Garden policies, and anything that relates to the objectives and programs. The Council also requests information and actions from committees.

### Garden Committees

The Garden projects are split into committee areas for collaboration and optimization of resources, and are designed in particular for the development stages of the Garden. There are six committee areas: Facilities; Garden Operations; Volunteers and Outreach; Native Plants and Habitats; Development; and K – 12 Education. Committees work on projects in these thematic areas, report to the Garden Advisory Committee and the Garden Manager. The Garden Manager maintains a close working relationship with Committee Chairs. Committees are made up of volunteers and advisors that collaborate for particular projects. Specific collaborations are formed with advisors and partner organizations through networks and with active recruitment of the Garden Manager and Volunteer Coordinator. Terms of commitment are negotiated and vary depending on the committee.

### Garden Members

Members join the Garden to support the mission and become linked into Garden news and communications. Members receive discounts and a promotional item proportional to their contribution. Garden members will be given opportunities to give input into Garden programs such as which subjects are desirable for workshops, which movies to play at movie night, and other preferential matters.

### Volunteers

The Garden will build a volunteer program to assist in the retention and the optimization of volunteer energies. The Garden currently recruits three types of volunteers: General volunteers who are recruited by public announcements, email, word-of-mouth, or by happening to be at the Garden when help is needed; Community Groups such as the Key Club, philanthropic corporate groups, and others who come for a defined period of time; and community service from the County and from Youth and Family Services in Sonoma. The volunteer program at the Garden will expand this volunteer base, design volunteer positions, develop materials to effectively manage the volunteer base, and develop a system to thank and retain these valuable volunteers. Docent training will become an important part of the volunteer program, with the creation of the school garden docent network.

## Revenue and Funding

This section describes the activities and features that will sustain the Garden. A specific budget is shown in the following section. The Garden Council and staff have worked in 2004 and 2005 to identify potential income-generating activities and set financial goals that support the Garden's activities and objectives. The activities are categorized below as direct income, donation (cash), donations (in-kind), or grants.

Means for creating income should be:

- Aligned to the overall mission and goals of the Garden
- Self-supporting and targeted to capital improvements or staff wages

### Direct Income:

Direct Income will be generated from food sales, fees for use and education, events, fundraisers, and family gardening plots. It is projected that at full maturity, these services, events and products will bring approximately \$18,000 - \$40,000 annually, growing each year.

#### 1. Fee for service:

The Garden provides educational and recreational services to the public. To host events, the Garden must maintain the site adequately, provide appropriate facilities, and dedicate staff and volunteer time to hospitality, supervision, set-up and clean-up.

a. *Adult Education*: In the case of Garden-sponsored workshops, the public will be charged at a price set after negotiation with instructors and assessment of the materials cost. A base fee of \$20/person with 50% discounts for volunteers will cover costs of coordination and basic materials with a conservative expectation that at least ten people attend. (Over twelve people usually attend workshops)

b. *Classroom Visits*: K – 12 classrooms and after-school youth groups will also be charged on a sliding scale depending on the ability of the educational institution to pay. A suggested fee of \$ 3/child and \$30/hr would cover the most basic costs of making the Garden available for these purposes.

c. *Private Usage*: The cost and potential revenue of hosting events such as private parties will be investigated. It is projected that usage fees will be more appropriate as the facilities become more sophisticated and developed.

#### 2. Special events and fundraisers:

Special events successfully raise money, raise awareness of Garden programs, and serve the community with an entertaining and/or educational activity. Each of the following events is designed to pay for itself and raise money for the Garden. These are events in which Garden volunteers and staff are experienced in conducting and expect to conduct on a regular basis.

a. *Harvest Festival*: Harvest Festival is celebrated every year on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of October. At the Harvest Festival children can enjoy activities such as picking and

carving pumpkins, getting their face painted, exploring the straw-bale fort, and bobbing for apples. The families and children are entertained by volunteer entertainers such as puppeteers and musicians. Tours and classes take place throughout the afternoon. The evening's dinner features ingredients harvested from the Garden and is completed with a campfire and an invited guest such as a poet or storyteller. The Harvest Festival is a participatory event that relies on the generosity and creativity of volunteers, and it is a time to celebrate with all the gifts of the Garden. Approximately 200 people attended in 2003, a number expected to increase as the event becomes more popular. Additional parking, sanitary facilities, and other appropriate measures will be arranged as this happens.

*b. Spring Event:* In Spring, an event will be made of a Plant Sale combined with the first Harvest Market of the year. This event "opens the season" and is an opportunity to start the season off with a number of attractive events and to notify visitors of upcoming events throughout the summer and fall.

*c. Heirloom Celebration:* This is potentially the biggest fundraiser for the Garden and ties directly into an important objective to provide education about heirloom varieties and genetic preservation. The production of Heirloom varieties is an activity that also attracts grant funding. To raise money, tickets will be sold for a variety of plates cooked by a number of local chefs using Heirloom produce from the Garden. The Garden will not be prepared to host this event until August 2006 at the earliest.

### 3. The Community Gardens:

The Community Gardens are an opportunity for community members to bring individual expression to the Garden, garden in an educational and social atmosphere, and contribute revenue to the Garden. Garden plots are 100 sq. ft. and serviced by City water. Each plot costs \$150 per year for 100 sq. ft. and \$300 per year for 300 sq. ft. The Garden has approximately 4,000 sq. ft. set aside for garden plots, including pathways. We can project that at current usage, the Garden Plots will generate between \$5,000 and \$8,500 / yr, with some of this money being set aside for improvements to the Community Garden area. Water and staff coordination will also be paid out of the revenue.

### 4. Market Crop:

Food sales are intended to defray some of the cost of staff time for site management over the next few years. The Garden's area available for growing vegetables is up to an acre; another is devoted to fruit, another half acre to herbs and flowers.

#### *a. Saturday Harvest Market*

Harvest Market has occurred every Saturday morning from 9 – noon, in the cool shade of the Straw-bale barn. Garden customers select from the morning's unique harvest and often take the opportunity to spend some time in the Garden. Market runs from the first Saturday in May until mid-October. The market is one way to reach out to members of the community and expose them to what the Garden offers. The steady stream of customers brings a gravitational social energy to the site.

Revenue from the market could ideally support the market and the cost of production. Additional profit could be added to the general fund. Based on experience in

our market pilot in summer 2004, an average customer spends \$10 on produce. To support the labor of a vegetable gardener and a market coordinator for the market season, the market would need to generate approximately \$500/week. Based on the experience of other small farm markets, we believe this is an attainable goal after a couple years along with income generated from inviting other vendors. We will not develop this project further until other program elements are in place.

*b. Restaurants and Other Venues*

The Garden will explore direct marketing relationships with local vendors. Produce at the Garden could be sold to local restaurants who support organic, local produce. Restaurants featuring Garden produce will be encouraged to inform customers of the Garden. The Garden is exploring various marketing partnerships to make such a program mutually beneficial to the restaurant and to the Garden.

*c. Flowers and Herbs*

Flowers and herbs are potentially the most valuable use of land at the Garden. Flower bouquets can be sold at the Market and to Restaurants and other shops. Flower bouquets are an opportunity for outreach as well, for venues that host a bouquet in turn for making information about the Garden available. The grower will work to grow varieties that will sell for a high value, and develop business relationships with vendors.

**Donations (In-kind)**

Many of the contributions to the Garden are in-kind, in fact, in 2004 over 4000 hours of volunteer labor and thousands of dollars of donated materials were brought to the Garden. In-kind contributions are sought via the wish list which is published in the "Seedling" newsletter and posted on the Garden website. Donors are provided a Tax ID for their donation as well as recognition in the newsletter and other communications.

1. Professional services rendered

Professional services rendered include but are not limited to consulting in PR, consulting, construction, system design, and landscaping.

2. Reciprocal

The Garden seeks reciprocal exchanges of services. The Community Center participates in one such exchange: Produce from the Garden is provided for the Center's Holiday dinners and the Center of the Universe Café in exchange for use of the kitchen for various Garden events. Other possibilities for exchange exist with school groups and community groups who sponsor a Garden bed in order to enjoy the free use of the Garden for their meetings and gatherings.

3. Donations of property or equipment

Donations of property and equipment are key to funding initial capital costs for infrastructure that will support educational programs and overall operation of the Garden. Grants and revenue-generating activities will support the ongoing use of this infrastructure.

#### 4. Volunteer time

Volunteers can be highly productive and valuable. While it is a high cost to properly coordinate, recruit, and reward volunteers, the pay-offs can be end-products that community members are proud of and motivated to return care for and support.

#### **Donations (Cash):**

Donations in cash will be solicited at events and through outreach materials such as brochures, newsletters, and flyers. Cash donations come largely through networking with local community members and increasing Garden membership.

##### 1. Membership:

The Garden will offer a value-added membership program (discounts on class fees and public use fees, and canvass tote bag). Garden memberships will be granted through membership to the SEC. Contact with members will be established and maintained through newsletters, emails and invitations to events. Solicitation for new members will be ongoing, and expected to increase proportionally as the site becomes developed and programs mature. Expected earnings from membership will eventually reach \$3000 to \$6000 per year.

##### 2. Private Donations:

The SEC will solicit support from individuals, foundations, families, and businesses, as well as through special events through its development committee of the Garden Advisory Committee.

#### **Grants:**

With a primary focus as an educational facility, grants are expected to make up a large portion of the Garden budget after the first few years (20-40%). As programs and revenue-generating activities develop, it is expected that grants will be sought especially to support educational activities and continued evolution and development.

Grants will especially be sought for the support of capital expenses and educational facilities, for staff stipends to conduct educational activities, for the demonstrations of xeriscape, butterfly, and heirloom gardens, and for the creation and maintenance of a native nursery and habitat area. Local and national funders will be solicited. An projected average of \$60,000 per year could be raised through grants.

## **Evaluation**

The SEC will evaluate progress of programs and development through documentation of various indicators. Volunteer hours and tasks will be monitored. Staff will develop and refine management plans. Attendance at events will be tracked. Sold and donated produce will be monitored. Water usage will be tracked. Documentation of activities and developments through notes, databases and photos will be used for evaluation of the



Garden's progress in relation to objectives. The Garden Advisory Committee will be instrumental in using this information in revisiting strategies, refining, and redirecting strategies.

Community input will also be solicited when possible to ensure that the Garden is reaching an optimally large and receptive public. The Garden staff will take initiative in keeping the neighborhood apprised of activities and encouraging positive dialogs.

The Garden Manager's responsibility also includes communication with the City and community organizations, who will be invited to provide input into Garden activities when appropriate. The City will be apprised of activities at the Garden through quarterly reports in periods where City grants are used, and in an annual report otherwise. A yearly meeting with the Sonoma City Council could be a valuable opportunity for feedback, reporting, and strengthening the longstanding partnership between the Garden and the City.

### **1 Year Plan Objectives, Tasks and Budget**

In Year 2006, the Garden will accomplish project tasks in which there are volunteer energies and funding available. The Garden Manager and development committee of the Garden Advisory Committee will work to procure funding for projects that will generate revenue or contribute to the infrastructure needed for revenue generation in the Garden. Energy will be spent strategically to develop infrastructure and programs that will first generate revenue and stability for staff wages. Then more energy will be directed towards program development for services and education.

In Year 2006, the Garden Manager and Garden Advisory Committee will primarily focus on building a detailed management plan, a strong volunteer base, securing funding for development, and working with Council members and committees to manage projects that have sufficient funding and volunteer support. Outreach, fundraising and some development will be the priority. Staff Gardeners will focus primarily on production plans that meet the year's market, educational, and event needs, and in cultivation of these plans. The 2005 year will be spent largely improving current plant beds, cultivation schedules, and preparing the trees for a productive and healthy year in 2006, while staff simultaneously focus on fundraising for expansion.

Garden Committee members and volunteers will work primarily on a number of projects that have been selected by the Council as priorities for 2006. These mainly include the development of key infrastructure to make the Garden an accessible, safe, and comfortable public facility, initiation of an educational committee, as well as projects and programs that generate revenue.

## Five-Year Budget and Future Garden Development

Over the next five years, the Garden intends to complete many of the major improvements to its physical infrastructure. The attached budget shows anticipated activities. In areas where likely sources funding have not been determined but infrastructure needs are expected, a place in the budget has been shown, but the expense and accompanying revenue lines are blank.

In following years, various key factors will determine the cost and speed by which the Garden is built out. two principal alternative scenarios exist: In the first scenario, the homestead facility remains residential and the Garden develops accordingly with additional structures. In the other scenario, the Garden develops temporary structures to fulfill program needs until the homestead becomes available.

Based on the first scenario, to complete all physical infrastructure for all objectives by 2014, initial estimates indicate that the Garden will need to raise an additional \$500,000, mostly for materials. Other construction costs will likely be substantially reduced through volunteer labor and donations. In the second scenario, using the Pauline Bond homestead, costs for infrastructure could be reduced depending on the condition of the home. Assuming these costs, and ongoing support for infrastructure, programs, and program development, the five-year budget total is estimated to be on the order of \$1,000,000.

## Appendix

### A. Contact

The Garden is located on 7<sup>th</sup> St. East between MacArthur and Denmark Streets. For questions regarding the master plan, contact the Garden Coordinator:

Tiona Gundy

707.996-0712 ext 120

[tiona@sonomaecologycenter.org](mailto:tiona@sonomaecologycenter.org)

or, the Executive Director of the Sonoma Ecology Center:

Richard Dale

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### B. Site Location & History

The Garden is located in the southeastern part of the Sonoma Valley, in Sonoma County, California. Sonoma County lies north of the San Francisco Bay Area, and is known for its diverse and abundant agricultural production. The Sonoma Valley lies in the southeastern portion of the County, and its watershed drains into the San Pablo Bay

section of the San Francisco Bay. The Garden comprises approximately six acres of land that lies just east of the town of Sonoma, at 19990 Seventh Street East, north of Denmark Street, and south of East MacArthur Street.

The surrounding area once contained large farm and ranch properties, but is slowly developing to support large estates with vineyards, and suburban style homes. The Garden is zoned as a Public Facility and is surrounded by a rural neighborhood zoned for low-density residential. The Garden is located in an opportune area for preservation of Sonoma Valley's rural heritage. The Garden represents part of the Sonoma Valley landscape which is appropriate for human activity and interaction with the land.

The Garden's location in relation to the watershed provides historically rich soils and a high water table. Please refer to the map on page 6 of the Garden's location within the Sonoma Valley Watershed.

### **Program History of the Pauline Bond Property, 1977 to present**

#### **1977 – 1993**

The estate of Pauline Bond donated the six-acre Bond property to the City of Sonoma in 1977 for the purpose of creating and maintaining a park. The farmland lay unused for years, as the City contemplated various uses. In 1993, the City of Sonoma responded to community interest for a demonstration farm and garden and leased the farmland portion of the property to the Sonoma Ecology Center.

#### **1993 – Present**

The Pauline Bond Community Farm was established by members of the Sonoma Valley community, who joined together with a vision for creating an opportunity for Valley visitors and residents to experience local organic foods and to cultivate an awareness of the processes of small-scale food production. Since 1993, the Garden has had a continual base of community support and interest, and has undergone three different organizational structures. The original vision has been refined and restructured, yet has not been lost:

##### **1993 – 1996**

For the first three years, the Community Farm operated as a community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm, providing organic vegetables to local subscribers.

##### **1996 – 2001**

The Garden lacked resources for staff and all activities were based on volunteer initiative. In 1997, the mission and vision statements for the Sonoma Garden Park were developed to refocus and guide community energy in the use of the site. The first permitted straw bale structure in the Sonoma Valley was completed on the site in 1996 as an "appropriate technology" demonstration project, to

provide storage for the garden's tools and books. Irrigation lines (mostly for drip systems) were installed throughout the property, and a solar well pump installed to distribute water from the site's shallow well.

### **2002 - Present**

In early 2002 the garden began the transition to a project managed by SEC staff. The City approved the use of a portion of the Pauline Bond Maintenance Fund to provide stipends for part-time staff and funds for garden improvements and program development. With this and other resources the Garden has been organizing for a self-supporting operational structure that will carry out the vision and goals of the Garden.

## **C. Acknowledgements**

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