



Growing Home

Social Enterprise, Transitional Jobs, Community Development

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference, February 12, 2014

Advancing Healthy, Equitable Food Systems

Harry Rhodes, Executive Director



Growing Home's mission is to operate, promote, and demonstrate the use of organic agriculture as a vehicle for job training, employment, and community development.



Growing Home was founded in 1992 by Les Brown, Director of Policy for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

He wrote that “Homeless people are often without roots. They’re not tied down, not connected, not part of their family anymore. Our organic farming program is a way for them to connect with nature – to plant and nurture roots over a period of time. When you get involved in taking responsibility for caring for something, creating an environment that produces growth, then it helps you build self-esteem.”



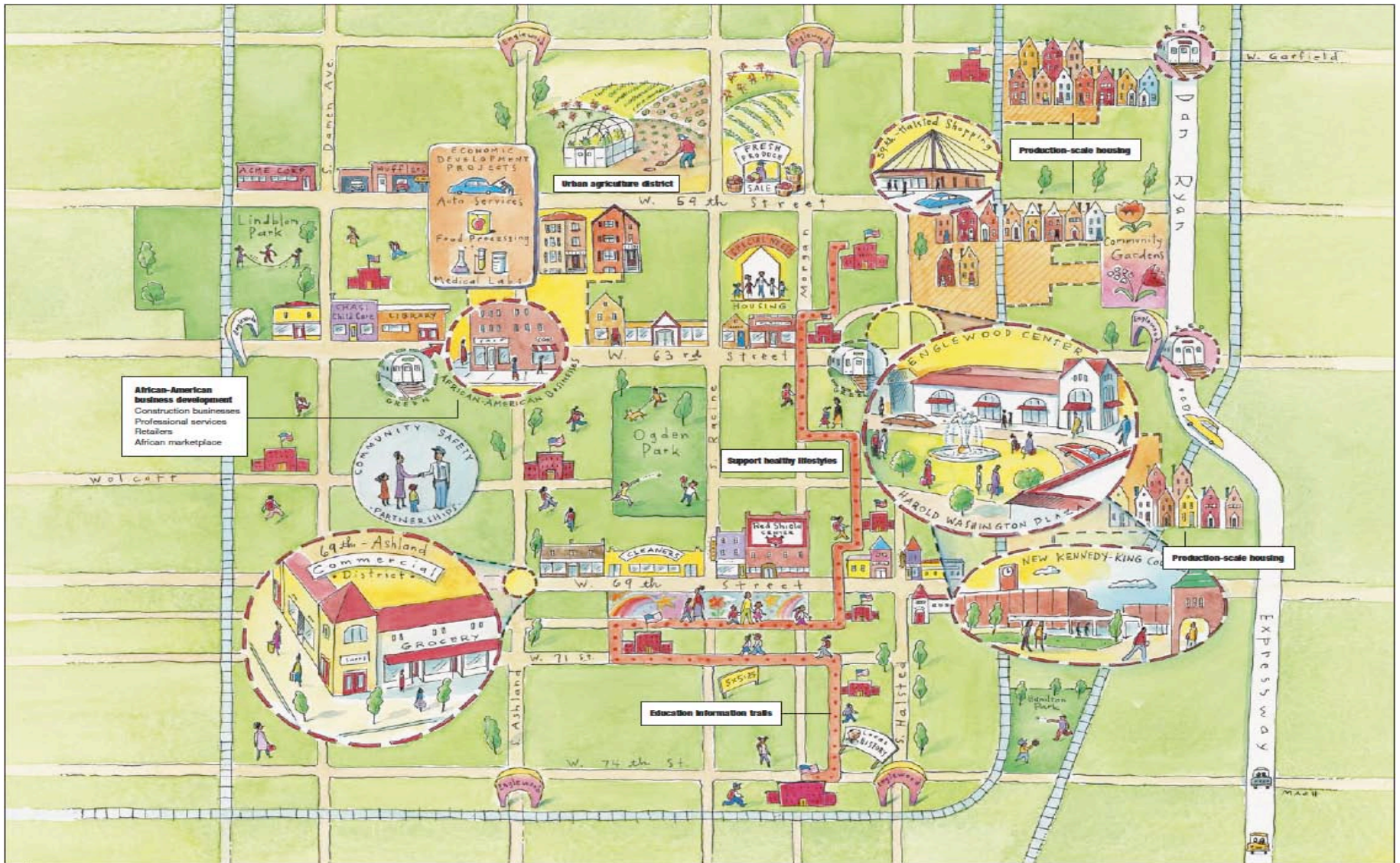
Growing Home operates an employment training program and social enterprise through four USDA Certified Organic farm sites.



Job Training: Growing Home's program targets individuals who have major barriers to employment, including having been previously incarcerated, homeless, and/or having a history of substance abuse.



"Plants are like people. Or people are like plants. They need nurturing, and help... to become stronger and to stand on their own." – 2011 Program Participant, Lisa R.



An Urban Agriculture District: In December of 2005 Growing Home was invited into Englewood by Teamwork Englewood and other stakeholders as part of the Quality of Life Plan for the neighborhood.

The Wood Street Urban Farm

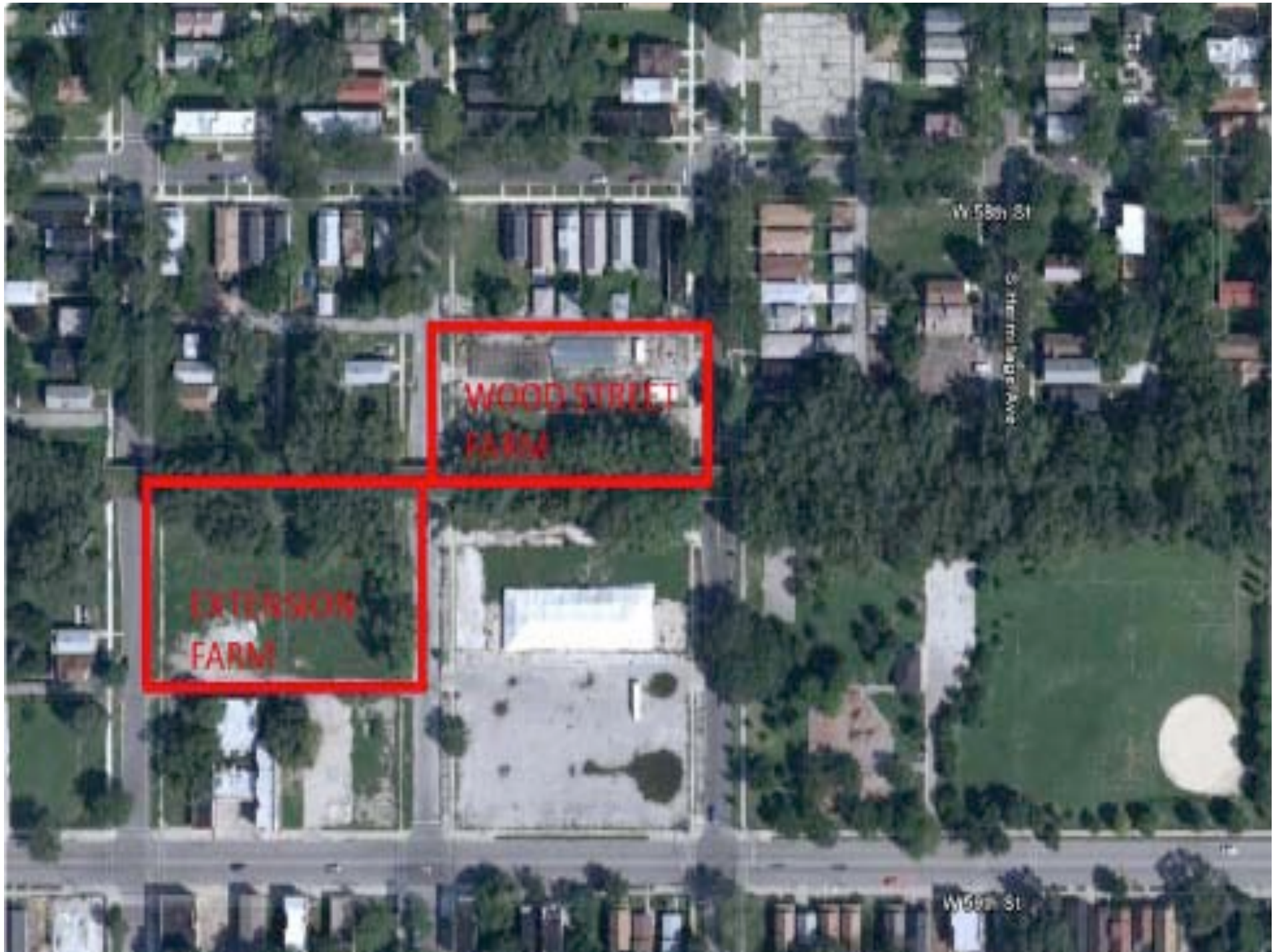


Before: June 2006

The Wood Street Urban Farm



After: April 2011



Honore St. Farm – September 2011







Community Outreach



- ◆ Farm stands
- ◆ Open houses and farm tours
- ◆ Outreach to local schools and universities
- ◆ Food and movie events
- ◆ Community meetings
- ◆ Gardening and cooking workshops
- ◆ Partnerships with local businesses



Opportunities: With the recent ordinance in favor of urban farms in Chicago, there is City-wide support of urban agriculture.

◆ Advocates for Urban Agriculture working with the City of Chicago

◆ "This policy is about taking land ... that is literally sitting fallow ... and turning it into a job creator and a revenue creator." - Mayor Emanuel

Greater Englewood Urban Agriculture Taskforce



The vision of the Taskforce is to transform Greater Englewood into a “food destination” by:

- ◆ Creating a large number of urban farms;
- ◆ Developing and promoting farmer training;
- ◆ Planning for food business and infrastructure development
- ◆ Supporting other elements of the Englewood Quality of Life Plan.





Opportunities: There is currently community and citywide support for urban agriculture and the local food movement that focuses on community and economic development

- ◆ Green Healthy Neighborhoods and City Food Plan
- ◆ Whole Foods Englewood, Englewood Food Hub, and Kusanya Cafe



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