

## Overview of “Growing Together” Project Concept

Old North St. Louis was identified by the United States Department of Agriculture as a food desert, despite the availability of healthy fresh foods just a few miles west. In the interest of providing the fresh foods to the Old North St. Louis community with the lowest environmental impact, the “Growing Together” project team proposes building a hydroponic farm in the middle of the community and then selling the products from the farm directly to residents in the surrounding areas. The Growing Together team has a great deal of confidence in the idea of a well-rounded meeting place for people to nourish their bodies and their minds as well as confidence in our ability to make this project something the community can become invested in.

On the bottom floor of the building to be constructed on Lot 3 would be a store responsible for selling the products grown in the farm as well as a variety of other locally produced items that couldn't be grown in the hydroponic farm or in the greenhouses. Also on the bottom floor would be a storage area and access to the farm, and office space for running and maintaining the store. The opportunity also exists to use part of that office space as a learning area for members of the community to better understand where their food is coming from and the importance of being geographically conscious when buying food.

Almost 85% of the space on the second floor would be devoted to the equipment for the hydroponic farm. Because hydroponic growing units take up fairly little space (about six inches for each plant) thousands of plants could be sustained on a cyclical basis without soil depletion or earth erosion that could occur with a traditional farm. The remaining 15% of the space would

be outdoors and devoted exclusively to collecting rainwater to moderately reduce the store and farm's reliance on city water.

Finally the roof would function as a seasonal space including six greenhouses would occupy half of the building's roof and an event space would occupy the other half. For practical purposes, some plants sold in the store could and would be grown on the roof during the summer months. The event space, thought not strictly related to farming, serves as a means for achieve our larger goals of making this community some place people want to be. For centuries, "the market" served as a meeting place for communities. If this idea gets implemented, the "Growing Together" project team wants to commit itself to making that a reality again. Allowing groups (be they artists, performers, school plays or touring musicians) interested in bringing something novel to the Old North St. Louis area, we can make Lot 3 a place people wish to be and a place people go to engage with other people