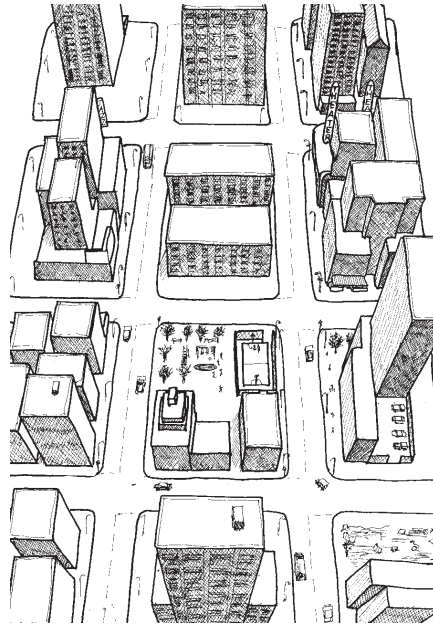


Land Use Action Projects

In the Land Use Action Project, youth learn about the relationship of people to land in their neighborhood. For example, the youth may meet with a city planner, survey vacant lots, or create a Green Map™ of the neighborhood. Or they might learn about threats to green spaces and gardens and conduct a campaign to support community gardens. The youth's interactions with the gardeners and their observations of the neighborhood during the *i-m-science investigations* will help them define their Land Use Action Project. Although the examples here come from community gardens, you should be able to adapt them for home or school garden or other youth programs.



Ideas for Land Use Action Projects

Create a Green Map of your neighborhood

Inventory multiple gardens and submit the data to the Community Garden Inventory

Make a presentation to government officials about the importance of community gardens to neighborhoods

Write a letter to local politicians about the need to preserve and create new community gardens

Organize a garden celebration and invite local politicians

Example Projects

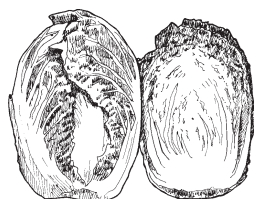
Following are example Land Use Action Projects. Our intent here is to give you a range of possibilities, which we hope will prove useful as you help the youth develop their own project.

Inventory Multiple Gardens

The youth have conducted the Community Garden Inventory *i-m.science investigation* and submitted their data online. They are aware that many community gardens in the neighborhood have not been added to the inventory. They decide to conduct the Community Garden Inventory and submit the data for all the gardens in the neighborhood. They work with Garden Mosaics to also post the data on the website for their youth organization.

Create a Green Map™

During the Neighborhood Exploration, youth observe the variety of ways that people use space in the neighborhood. They think it would be interesting to create a map of the neighborhood that would be a guide for residents and visitors, as well as a tool for influencing policy makers. They use the *Aerial Photographs* and *Topographic Maps Science Pages* to learn more about land use. They visit the Green Map™ website (www.greenmap.org) and learn about how other youth have mapped their community. After discussion and reviewing a street map, they establish the boundaries of their map. They next break into teams to look for the different types of places identified on Green Maps™, including farmers' markets, parks, public and community gardens, recreation areas, and pollution sources. When their map is complete, they make copies and distribute them to the gardeners, community members, and local officials.



Garden History

Youth learn from the garden manager that the garden is on the site of a former parking lot. The youth are amazed that what was once a barren landscape is now a thriving vegetable and flower garden. They realize however, that because of polluted soils, the gardeners must grow their plants in raised beds with soil that is delivered to the site. This story inspires them to further investigate the history of the land on which the garden now grows. Through contacting the local historical society and the city records office, and through conversations with elderly gardeners and neighborhood residents, the youth are able to create a timeline of the garden site history. They incorporate various photographs and airphotos from different time periods into the timeline. They present and discuss their findings with the gardeners and interested community members.

Garden Open House

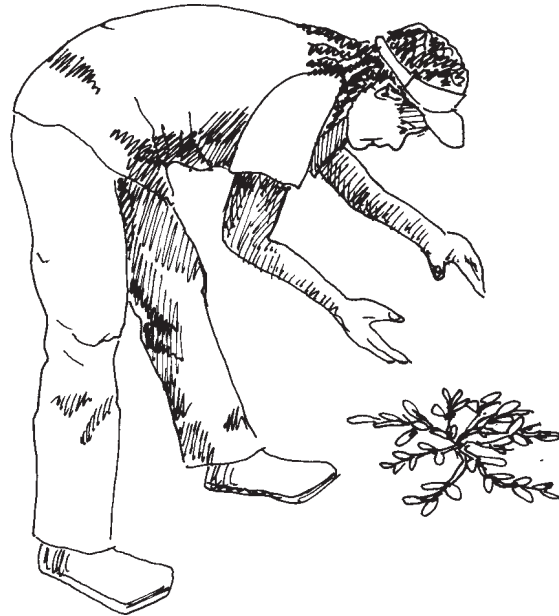
Several of the youth live near the garden. Before participating in Garden Mosaics, they didn't realize that there was a place like this in their community. They suggest to the gardeners hosting a garden open house or neighborhood block party as a way to introduce the garden to more neighborhood residents. The gardeners agree that this would be a nice way to tell community members that they are welcome to visit the garden and share its beauty. Also, the gardeners feel that vandalism would decrease if more neighborhood residents were aware of the garden and helping to keep an eye on it. The youth and gardeners discuss plans for the event with several neighborhood leaders and the youth offer to help advertise and organize the event. They invite friends and family to the garden block party and share what they've learned about the garden with the broader community.

Meet with a City Planner

On their walk around the neighborhood, the youth become aware of the lack of green spaces, such as parks, gardens, and tree-lined walkways. They discuss questions with their group leaders: What are other sections of the city like? Who decides where parks are located? Who decides where trees are planted? The group leader suggests that they talk with a city planner to learn more about green space in their city and about why the city ends up looking the way it does. During their meeting with the planner the youth learn a lot about green spaces and the urban development process. They also learn that the planner is very interested in having meetings with residents from different parts of the city and learning more about community gardens. The planner visits the garden to meet with the gardeners and everyone learns from each other.

Create a Plan for Vacant Lots

Visiting the garden, and learning about the history of the community gardening movement, inspires the youth to think about how vacant lots could have other uses. They decide to survey the neighborhood's vacant lots and come up with plans for how these lots might be used. They call a city planner who is very interested in hearing their plans and who will help them organize an event where they share their ideas with local officials. The planner explains how some lots are owned by the city and others by absentee landlords. He also tells the youth that the city has to pay several hundred dollars a year to maintain one vacant lot. Some of the city-owned lots might be available for lease by people interested in starting gardens. The planner shares with the youth the latest map showing the location of vacant lots. The youth next "ground truth" the map, adding any new vacant lots and indicating former vacant lots that now are community gardens or that have been developed. They present the updated map to the planner, and arrange for a meeting of the planner with gardeners, other neighborhood residents, and local officials to discuss the future of the lots.



Support Community Gardens

The group leader arranges for the youth to meet with a Cooperative Extension educator who works with community gardens. The educator takes the youth on a tour of gardens and the youth meet with several gardeners. During the tour, the youth learn about the problems gardeners face, such as lack of funding for supplies and the need for more garden plots. The youth are inspired by their tour and ask how they could support community gardens in the city. The educator makes suggestions about organizations that help with supplies and creating new gardens. The youth contact these organizations and arrange for a meeting between their staff and the gardeners to discuss the gardeners' needs.