



June 17, 2020

City of La Crosse
Board of Public Works
400 La Crosse St.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Members of the Board:

Please accept this letter as a request for your support of the Hunger Task Force in establishing an ADA Accessible Gardening area on the recently land-swapped block of 1109 St. James St.

Keeping up with gardening activities can be particularly challenging for wheelchair users or those with certain mobility limitations. The benefits of gardening are well-documented. Programs in horticulture therapy use plants and plant-related activities to promote health and wellness. This therapy has been used to improve mobility, muscle coordination and strength, balance, endurance, socialization and memory skills. Gardening can become a part of a healthy and active lifestyle for people of all abilities with adaptations to the garden.

The preliminary plan includes (see diagram) developing an approximately 22' x 56' area surrounded by a 4' wide flower bed. Poured concrete will provide the base for 5-6 raised garden beds with a center concrete unit which would be ADA accessible, and a van-accessible parking area with a ramp. Minor adaptations may occur as we work with our architect on the project.

Planters would be constructed from concrete block and wood to look attractive and withstand heavy and continuous use by the public with minimum maintenance. The Unitarian Universalist Church has committed to the construction of the cement planter and an Eagle Scout has made the remaining structures his project. The cement unit is designed to be semi-permanent in that it can be dismantled and moved. The remaining planters will be constructed from wood and can be moved to the garage for end of season storage. All costs for this project would be provided by The Hunger Task Force and community partners.

Partnering with the Aging and Disability Resource Center and AARP, we hope to begin offering clients the ability to participate in the Kane Street Community Garden activities within the 2020 growing season. This not only will allow them to share in the gardening, but also to access our three times per week distribution of free garden produce.

We appreciate the opportunity to develop an accessible area in the Kane Street Garden to reach our community neighbors who have limitations and hope you will support our preliminary plan.

In Service,

Shelly Fortner, Executive Director