



Sawmill CLT

Arbolera de Vida Community Garden

Background & Context:

In 1999, the Sawmill CLT won a development bid from the City of Albuquerque to plan and redevelop a 27-acre site to include affordable housing, economic development, and community gardening spaces. Neighborhood residents also wanted to celebrate the agricultural history of the site, by replanting part of the former apple orchard and by re-establishing the traditional ‘acequia’ flood irrigation system.

Implementation:

In 2008, a six-month community planning process was launched alongside a team of students from the University of New Mexico’s Advanced Planning Studio. The students were required to spend time with the community, outside of community garden discussions, in order to better understand the need and concerns of local residents and develop a site plan. The plan originally intended to house a larger 2-3 acre orchard, but the garden was scaled back due to maintenance concerns.

“ We are really looking to bring folks together around what was the history of this area. ”

Challenges

While the infrastructure work is complete, Sawmill CLT has experienced delays in accessing funding to complete the project. State funds were used to finance the initial stages of the project but were clawed back due to State budget shortfalls. Sawmill CLT is looking to secure grant funds from several foundations to complete the project.

Benefits

The project is anticipated to increase healthy food options and economic opportunities for neighborhood residents and generate nominal lease fees to fund on-going garden operations. The project aims to bring people together around the agricultural history of the land and will include educational programming on agricultural techniques and responsible water management practices.

Project at a Glance

Location:	Albuquerque, NM
Project Category:	Urban Agriculture
Year Completed:	In Progress
Agricultural Acreage:	1 Acre
CLT Role	Securing Land, Programmatic Support
Agricultural Activities:	Community Garden
Tenure Arrangements for Securing Land:	Fee Simple Ownership
Major Partners:	City of Albuquerque, United Way, Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Website:	www.sawmillclt.org
Staff Contact:	Wade Patterson, Executive Director wpatterson@sawmill.org

Lessons Learned

The community has to be involved from the earliest stages of the process. Sawmill CLT took the time to engage in a community visioning process and developed a plan that responded to the site’s unique history and the resident needs. However, progress has been delayed due to funding shortfalls. Meanwhile, Sawmill CLT has utilized other methods to bring agricultural elements to the site and have incorporated a small orchard and community garden outside a senior housing complex.