

McKinney Roots at Gray Branch Park

GROWING TO GIVE

MCKINNEY
ROOTS



a seed project
foundation initiative

DONATION FARM. WWW.MCKINNEYROOTS.ORG

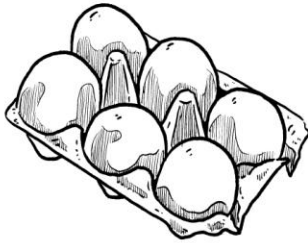
McKinney Roots. What we do

With the help of
240,000 bees we have
raised & donated



20,000 pounds
harvested in 2024

350 chickens
producing
200
dozen eggs
per week



Engaged with
500
volunteers

8 partner
organizations

1,600

children
educated from
McKinney ISD
per year



contributing to
6,300
meals served



350
families
per week

McKinney Roots. What we do



McKinney Roots is the Seed Project Foundation's biggest initiative.

The five-acre donation farm gives one hundred percent of its harvest back to the community through our nonprofit partners, who play a vital role in reducing food insecurity in McKinney and Collin County.

These partners include-

Neighbors Nourishing Neighbors, Community Food Pantry, McKinney Little Free Pantry, Community Garden Kitchen, The Salvation Army, The McKinney First Baptist Church, Community Lifeline Center and The Samaritan Inn.

McKinney Roots. What we do

One of the primary missions of our organization is agriculture education.

We believe in the importance for all people to know where their food is grown.

We also believe a child should be given this opportunity at a young age so that they will grow up curious about eating healthy, nutritious food.

The Seed Project Foundation formed a partnership with the McKinney Independent School District (MISD) to enhance the agricultural and nutritional education of the district's second graders.

In cooperation with the MISD's curriculum department, a two-step program was developed that enhances classroom instruction around plant life cycles, nutrition, and agriculture.

The students have hands-on learning experiences by planting seeds, harvesting vegetables, and collecting chicken eggs.

The experience provides equal learning opportunities to MISD's 21 elementary schools and approximately 1600 students per year.



McKinney Roots. What we do



The farm produces eggs from a large flock of chickens, hydroponic lettuce, and over a dozen seasonal crops.

Our farmers use all regenerative, organic growing methods, including cover crops, beneficial insects, and pasture grazing.

With the support of our team of employees, donors, and hundreds of volunteers, McKinney Roots helps to feed 350 families every week.



McKinney Roots. What we do



McKinney Roots. Program Expansion

Growing Impact: McKinney Roots is successfully feeding 350 families per week on average. We aim to further expand our reach and address food insecurity in the community. Through this expansion we expect to grow food production by 25 percent.

Enhanced Educational Opportunities: By relocating to Gray Branch Parkland, we can offer more comprehensive educational programs on healthy lifestyles, gardening, and environmental sustainability.

Increased Community Engagement: A move to Gray Branch would provide greater accessibility and foster deeper community involvement in our programs.

Secure Future: A long-term lease would enable us to secure larger grants and support our continued growth and mission.

Key Program Enhancements:

Expanded Farm and Garden: We plan to create a half-acre community garden where residents can learn sustainable agriculture, offering hands-on farming experiences and educational opportunities. Students, volunteers, and visitors can learn about sustainable gardening and food systems. By farming to serve the community, we aim to create a space for education, connection, and a deeper appreciation for local food production.

Nature Education: We will label trees, native plants, and produce to enhance visitor education and appreciation of the natural environment.

Improved Trails: By extending and maintaining the 4.5-mile trail system in partnership with MPF, we will provide more opportunities for outdoor recreation, exploration and education. We anticipate adding amenities like benches, swings, pergolas, along the pasture trail and picnic area with wayfinding/learning opportunities throughout the property.

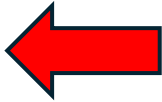
Rotational Grazing: To further demonstrate sustainable farming practices, we plan to introduce a rotational grazing system with cows and sheep alongside our existing chicken flock. This will not only provide a more diverse range of products but also enhance soil fertility through regenerative agriculture techniques.

Gray Branch. Trail Hub in Central McKinney

Future connector along
east side of Wilson Creek
passing under Lake Forest
just north of Boyd



Imminent connector under
Hwy 380 to North
McKinney



MR at Gray
Branch Park will
add new
community
trails/
amenities
wildflowers,
and trees to the
most
photographed
park in
McKinney

MR at Gray Branch Park will be
the regions natural/unique
destination connected by City
trails from Downtown, North
McKinney, and
Stonebridge/South

“Trail” on Gray
Branch Road to
Ridge/
Stonebridge



McKinney Roots. Infrastructure and access

Due to the beautification of this parkland through wildflower/tree planting and the trail system, Gray Branch Parkland is one of the most photographed areas in McKinney. McKinney Roots will add to this regional draw through additional enhancements.



Parking will be accessed from Gray Branch Rd south of the Wilson Creek bridge at a point where future park access will be created.

Existing 7200 sf City storage barn (currently shared with McKinney Parks Foundation) is large enough to accommodate City/MPF equipment and McKinney Roots

Staff Comments

1. Proposed use is not consistent with the Parks Master Plan (i.e. a contemplated use of public parkland).

- The last update to the Gray Branch Park plan was completed in 2012 before this parcel was purchased by the City. Since that time, the City has determined that floodplain challenges – and community survey data – suggest alterations to the preliminary design.

2. Proposed use is not an appropriate use of public parkland.

- Similar uses of public land/parkland can be found throughout the country in different forms (see high level summary at the end of this document).
- This unique project will position McKinney as a model for urban/suburban farming and sustainability on a national scale. Not only will it produce more than 30,000 pounds of food annually for area food agencies and expand relationships with MISD, Collin College and other learning institutions, but it will leverage and add to the existing nature trails created by the Parks department and McKinney Parks Foundation.

3. Facilities and proposed use would be in the floodplain.

- About 20 of the 62 acres is out of floodplain on the southern portion of the property. While certain facilities and parking may be in floodplain (based on preliminary design), this park will utilize most of that area as nature trails bordered by wildflowers, and seating areas as well as teaching paddocks containing cattle, sheep/goats, etc.
- McKinney Roots will work with the City to ensure appropriate floodplain remediation is completed according to code and in anticipation of future use of this property.

4. Lack of adequate utilities onsite.

- As of October 2024, the site has electric service. As of 2023, water is available on-site. Sewer access – although not yet on-site – is available a few feet east of Gray Branch Rd on the parkland across from the proposed entrance to MR on GBP.

5. Existing City building needed for storage of Parks Maintenance equipment.

- McKinney Roots proposes enhancing and sharing the existing metal barn on the southern portion of the property with the City/MPF. Any additional structures (classrooms, learning venues, greenhouses, barns, etc) will be added at McKinney Roots expense through sponsorships, grants, and donations.

6. Potential need for satellite offices for Parks Maintenance due to existing space needs.

- McKinney Roots will work with the Parks department to accommodate space needs in the future.

7. Potential length of license agreement as a restriction on future park development.

McKinney Roots anticipates the lease duration to approximate the amount of time the City anticipates before Gray Branch Park development is begun. The hope is to write the lease agreement with joint optionality to extend the relationship based on the success of the Park (MR at GBP) and the City's future needs.

8. If Council is in favor of exploring a partnership, staff recommends the request first go before the Park Board for discussion and formal recommendation to Council.

9. If the proposed use is ultimately approved, by law it would need to include public use/benefits including, but not limited to:

- (a) Public parking for patrons;
- (b) Adequate lighting;
- (c) Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- (d) Adequate hours of operation/use by the public;
- (e) Code compliance;
- (f) Adequate signage, both safety and directional/wayfinding; and
- (g) Adequate safety measures for any housed livestock.

McKinney Roots has anticipated these requirements and expects to provide these public use/benefits to the satisfaction of the City.

McKinney Roots. Preliminary Plan



MCKINNEY ROOTS LEGEND OF USES

- A. LEARNING CENTER
- B. VEGETABLE PRODUCTION GARDENS
- C. EXSITING EQUIPMENT AND TOOL BARN WITH SOLAR
- D. HYDROPONIC GREENHOUSE WITH SOLAR ARRAY
- E. ELECTRIC TRUCK CHARGING STATIONS
- F. PRINCIPLE ENTRY WAY FOR WEST UNIVERSITY DRIVE
- G. SHEEP MEADOW
- H. COW PASTURE
- I. FENCING WITH GATES
- J. EXISTING POND
- K. HERITAGE TREES
- L. TRAIL SYSTEM
- M. LIVESTOCK POND
- N. CISTERNS
- O. PARKING
- P. POULTRY AND EGG HATCHERY
- Q. CHICKENS AND POULTRY COOP AND PASTURE
- R. NATIVE PLANT GARDEN
- S. FRUIT TREES
- T. SHEEP PASTURE
- U. PICNIC AREA
- V. GRAY BRANCH RAOD
- W. TEXAS NATIVE FLOWERING PLANTS AND HEDGE ROW FRUIT
- X. WILDFLOWERS
- Y. CORN

Seattle’s Beacon Food Forest in Beacon Hill neighborhood, Seattle Washington-

- 7 acres of public parkland
- Focus: One of the largest public food forests in the U.S., Beacon Food Forest is located on city-owned parkland. The project encourages community participation, growing a variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and nuts accessible to the public. It also provides educational programs on sustainable gardening and food systems.
- Partnership: Operates in collaboration with Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Battery Urban Farm in Battery Park, Lower Manhattan, New York City-

- Approximately 1 acre in Battery Park of parkland.
- Focus: Battery Urban Farm is located within Battery Park, a public park, and is managed by The Battery Conservancy. The farm engages the community in hands-on farming, providing educational opportunities for students, volunteers, and visitors while growing fresh produce.
- Partnership: Operates in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture in Atlanta, Georgia-

- 5 acres (multiple sites, including one on parkland)
- Focus: Truly Living Well operates urban farms across Atlanta, including Collegetown Farm, which is located on public parkland. The farm serves as a community hub for sustainable agriculture, providing educational workshops and local produce to underserved communities
- Partnership: Works with the City of Atlanta and Atlanta Parks Department.

Hantz Farms in Detroit, Michigan-

- 150 acres (converted from vacant public land) of parkland
- Focus: Hantz Farms is an urban farming project aimed at revitalizing Detroit's vacant and underutilized public spaces. While not a traditional park, it transforms former city-owned properties into productive farmland, enhancing green spaces and providing food for the local community.

San Francisco’s Alemany Farm in San Francisco California-

- 3.5 acres of public parkland
- Focus: Alemany Farm is located on public land managed by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. It is the largest urban farm in San Francisco, focusing on sustainable agriculture and community education. Volunteers help maintain the farm, and the produce is distributed locally.
- Partnership: Operates in collaboration with the San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department.

West Oakland Urban Farm and Park in Oakland, California-

- 1.4 acres of parkland
- Focus: Located on public land, this urban farm is designed to address food insecurity in the West Oakland community. It features a mix of agricultural production, a public park, and community gardens, providing both fresh food and green space for local residents.
- Partnership: Operates in partnership with the Oakland Parks and Recreation Department.

Grow Dat Youth Farm in City Park, New Orleans Louisiana-

- 7 acres within City Park
- Focus: Grow Dat is a nonprofit urban farm that focuses on youth development and sustainable agriculture. Located on public parkland, the farm teaches young people about leadership, sustainability, and healthy eating while producing food for the local community.
- Partnership: Works with New Orleans City Park and local community organizations.