



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Commemorating 10 years of  
growing a healthier community in  
Lowell, Massachusetts

[MillCityGrows.org](http://MillCityGrows.org)



## Mill City Grows Board of Directors

John Wooding, *President*  
Emma Campbell, *Vice President*  
Craig Thomas, *Treasurer*  
Elizabeth Campbell, *Clerk*  
Sue Andrews  
Robert Boley  
Tara Hong  
Jamie Klufts, MPH  
Diego Leonardo  
Andrew McNaught  
Jack Moynihan  
Vannak Theng  
Kelly Will

**Many thanks to our board  
members who completed their  
service in 2023:**

Yesenia Maysonet



## MCG Team Members 2022-2023 (as of May 22)

### DIRECTORS

Jessica Wilson, *Executive Director*  
Enrique Vargas, *Associate Director*  
Ali Jacobs, *Director of Special Projects*  
Dai Kim, *Director of Food Access*  
Courtney McSparron, *Director of Education*

### ADMINISTRATION

Solimar Berrios, *Head of Office Operations*

### DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Kerri Keeler, *Development Manager*  
Suzanne Cromwell, *Marketing & Publicity Coordinator*  
Rebecca Ludvino, *Institutional Giving Manager*

### FARM & MARKET TEAM

Matthew Eiland, *Urban Farm Manager*  
Grace McKay, *Mobile Market Manager*  
Lydia Waite, *Urban Farm Field Crew*  
Cloudy Rosas, *Mobile Market Operator*  
Ted Hamm, *Urban Farm Coordinator*

### COMMUNITY TEAM

Trang Dong, *Community Gardens Manager*  
Chaya Sophon, *Community Gardens Assistant Manager*

### EDUCATION TEAM

Macayla Cote, *School Education Manager*  
Daphne Ekmanis, *School Education Coordinator*  
Amelia Horn, *School Education Apprentice*  
James Tierney, *CSA Manager*  
Loubna Belamar, *CSA Delivery Driver*

### UMASS LOWELL PUBLIC HEALTH

Tim Cobb, *Food Is Medicine & Outreach Intern*  
Rabia Haider, *Food Is Medicine & Outreach Intern*

# A Message from the Board President and Executive Director

Dear Mill City Grows friends and supporters,

In 2022 we celebrated an amazing milestone for MCG -- 10 years of growing for Lowell. We arrive at this milestone year with our foundational programs still successfully serving Lowell. Our 16 school gardens, 8 community gardens, and multiple urban farm spaces fuel our Mobile Market distributing food across the City.

We also were fortunate to kick start new programs to help build a stronger food system: a 10-month farm share, delivered directly to people's homes; our Food Is Medicine programming providing food access and education to those managing chronic illness; and our Merrimack Valley Growers' Aid program offering training and technical assistance to small growers across Lowell.

Over the next two years we will work with our partners, Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust and Mass Audubon, to purchase Rollie's Farm, a 20+ acre parcel of land historically recognized as Lowell's last family farm. This space will become the Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary (PFWS). Starting in 2024, we will begin to build a community garden, urban farm space, year-round farm stand, community education space, and all-persons trails.

PFWS is a new opportunity to bring all spheres of our work and parts of the food system together in one space where Lowell residents can grow, eat, learn, and play together.

We couldn't be more proud to be part of the team that envisioned and built more inclusive and equitable food access in Lowell. We thank you for all of your support, and invite you to join us in the coming years as we keep growing for Lowell.

In Solidarity,

Jessica and John





# Our Mission Statement

**Mill City Grows' mission is to improve physical health, economic independence, and environmental sustainability in Lowell through increased access to land, locally grown food, and education.**

Our vision is a community that understands how to grow and prepare fresh food to support the long-term health of people and the land. Equitable access to land, knowledge, and fresh, culturally connected food is necessary for positive health outcomes, sustainable food policies, and access to life-giving food for our entire Community.

## Strategic Plan Priorities for 2022



### **FOOD JUSTICE ADVOCACY**

Working in partnership with community members and stakeholders to advocate for policies, practices, and community resources that advance food justice.



### **FOOD ACCESS**

Improving access to affordable, culturally connected food in Lowell and beyond.



### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Ensuring relationship-centered engagement with community members with a special focus on historically underserved communities.



### **HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Instituting internal practices, policies, and culture that ensures the health, safety, and wellness of staff.



# Program Highlights

## COMMUNITY FOOD PARTNERSHIP OF LOWELL

In June, Mill City Grows worked with community members to form the **Community Food Partnership of Lowell**. The goal of the group is to be a community-driven collective advocating for and building more equitable food system policies in Lowell and beyond. CFP members are currently defining the first directive group, which will set the foundation for long-term sustainability. The group has a core membership of 7 individuals, and will begin targeted outreach at community events and with partner organizations to increase membership. In 2022, CFP members supported bills promoting Universal School Meals, full funding for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), and Food Literacy in schools. Locally, CFP members have begun conversations with social service agencies with a goal of increasing SNAP outreach and sign ups, ensuring those who are qualified to receive this benefit can access it.



## MOBILE MARKET PROGRAM

In 2022, the **MCG Mobile Market** offered 4 weekly stops from July-November, two winter markets at our ROOT community kitchen and training space, and launched a new location at UMass Lowell's University Crossing. Our UMass market also welcomed other vendors of locally produced goods. The Mobile Market reached gross sales of over \$103,000. In addition to our own produce, we offered \$40,000 worth of produce purchased from 13 MA and NH farmers. This included six small immigrant/refugee growers.

We continue to have very strong redemption of WIC and Senior coupons of over \$10,000! Our sales to customers using state assistance programs (SNAP/HIP, WIC and Senior Coupons) also increased to our highest ever rate of over over 80%.



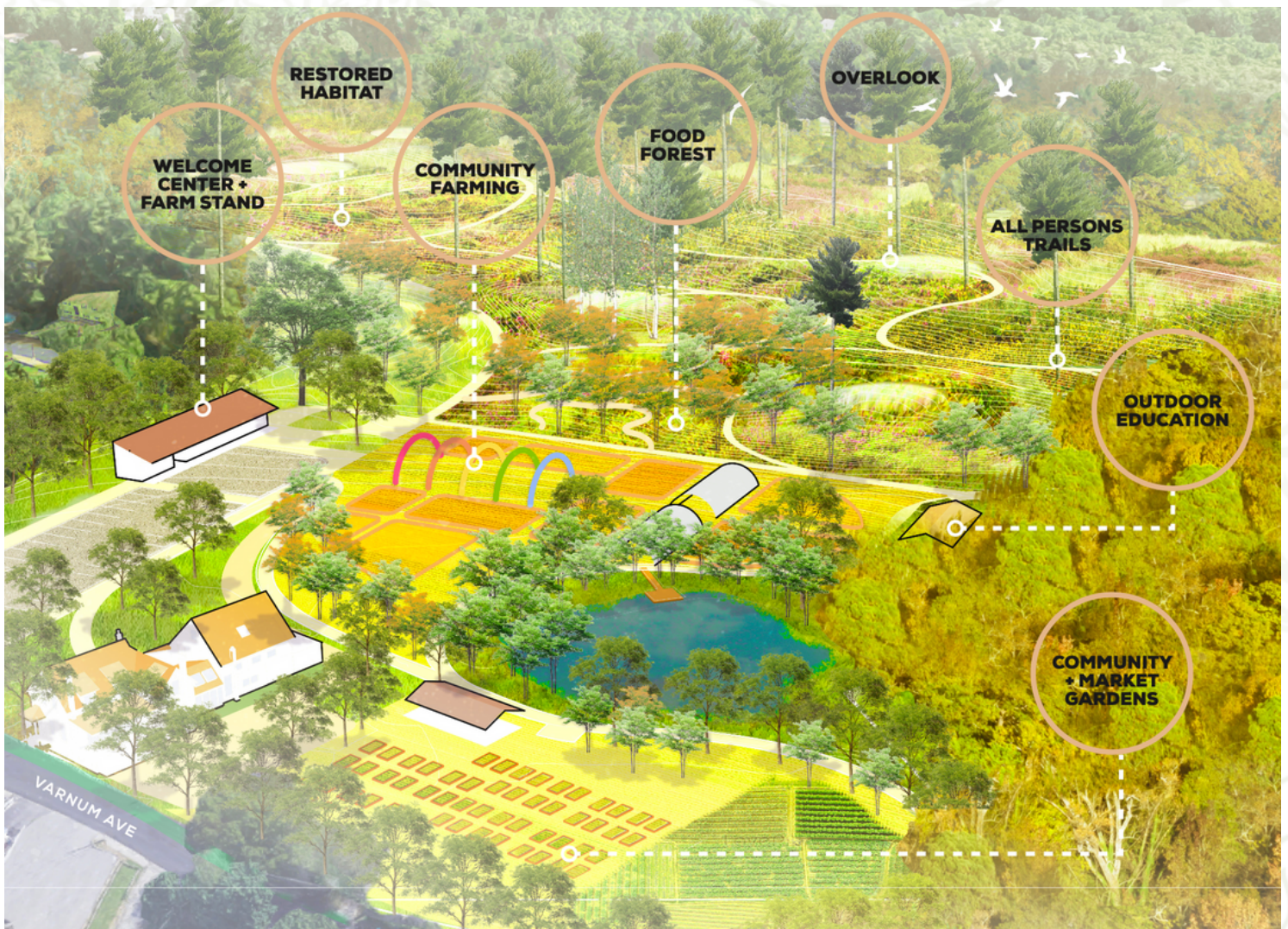


# Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust | Mass Audubon | Mill City Grows

In collaboration with Mass Audubon and Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust we completed a framework plan for the **Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary** project in the Pawtucketville neighborhood of Lowell. This project will convert a 20 acre holiday tree farm, currently the largest family farm in Lowell still in operation, into an urban community farm, nature conservation site, and wildlife sanctuary.

Pawtucket Farm will be open to the public with educational activities for children and adults on farming, foraging, food security, wildlife, conservation, native ecosystems, and more. It will include a year-round farm stand, pick-your-own fields, and a food forest. It will also include community gardens, spaces for community members to have small farm plots, and activities for all ages. With an emphasis on accessibility for all, education and recreation, growing space, and ecological sanctuary, Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary will be an important new site in Lowell's physical and social ecosystem.





# Convening the Community: ROLLIE'S FARM PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS

To arrive at this programming and direction, we held three public listening sessions with language interpretation available in Spanish, Khmer, and Portuguese. We also held six focus groups including one each specifically focused on Latinx, Cambodian, and Portuguese or Brazilian communities.

Overall, over 200 participants shared 180 ideas, and cast 730+ votes for program priorities.

With fundraising underway, we will complete the purchase of the property in 2024.

## LOCAL NEWS

Friday, July 29, 2022 | MORE AT FACEBOOK.COM/LOWELLSUN AND TWITTER.COM/LOWELLSUNNEWS

lowellsun.com

CITY PROPERTY

### People provide input on Rollie's Farm

Community gardens a main suggestion at first listening session on farm's future

By Prudence Brighton  
Correspondent

**LOWELL** - A sign for corn and tomatoes points up Varum Avenue to Roland Perron's farm, but this is one of the last summers that his farm stand will be open. The landmark Pawtucketville site will soon be preserved "in perpetuity" for conservation and wildlife protection.

Nearly a year ago, Perron entered into an agreement with Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, the Massachusetts Audubon Society and Mill City Grows to purchase the land, which is divided into two parcels, each carrying a price tag of \$1.925 million. Lowell's Community Preservation

Committee has approved \$3.5 million in funding toward the effort. About 40 neighborhood residents attended a Monday listening session at the Wang School on West Meadow Road to look at exhibits around the room. The exhibits were pictorial renditions of the farm's history and its future.

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust Executive Director Jane Calvin promised the crowd, "There won't be any presentations tonight. We want you to look at the exhibits and tell us what you think."

Calvin and Renata Pompano, senior regional director of Mass Audubon for Metro Boston, circulated among the neighbors get-

ting feedback and directing people to the center of the room where a three-dimensional display of the property drew residents' attention.

Pawtucketville residents were the first in the city to see the plans for the land and to vote unofficially on ideas for its future with the aid of that display. But all the city's neighborhoods will have a chance to see what's ahead for the historic property, Pompano said.

She promised Lowell residents more listening sessions. "Our work in Lowell represents a key component of Mass Audubon's Nature in the City initiative, focused



Lowell residents Susan Draper, left, and Alice Draper, center, discuss plans for Rollie's Farm with project architect Marie Sorenson, of Westboro, at a listening session held Monday at Wang Middle School. They're standing at a 3D display of the property.

## The Future of Rollie's Farm

**Help us design for the future of Lowell's historic farm!**

Mass Audubon, Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, and Mill City Grows have partnered to protect Rollie's Farm. We envision establishing an urban wildlife sanctuary, farm, and education center for the community of Lowell.

We want to hear from you about how we can connect the Lowell community to nature at this location. Join our first Community Listening Session to learn more about the farm and share your ideas!



## Welcome to ROLLIE'S FARM LISTENING SESSION

### YOUR VISION FOR THE FARM

You have helped to imagine a forever productive place where Lowell's diverse community can find sustenance, connection and respite. This 20 acre-site will offer places to grow, to learn, to discover, to identify and to connect.





# 365 Days of Growing Community

## GROW

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**39,000+** pounds of food were grown across urban farms and gardens.

**570** volunteers completed over **3,488** volunteer hours.

**215** community garden beds in **8** gardens used by 600+ residents.



## EAT

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**\$103,000** worth of produce was distributed through our Mobile Market, CSA veggie box, and school food programs. Of this food, **\$84,000** was completely free to residents through donations or benefits programs like SNAP/HIP, Farmers Market Coupons, and Flex Services.

**1,800** pounds of food was donated to emergency food and local feeding programs.



## LEARN

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Educators provided **230** hours of direct education to **1,700** students in public schools.

Over **6,000** students have access to a school garden.

**16** Farm to Table cooking classes were enjoyed by adult patients as well as youth and their caregivers.

**91** adults engaged in garden and community education.

**16** growers received training and technical assistance through our Growers' Aid program.

**10** residents engaged in our Food Policy Council.







## Thank you to our MCG volunteers!

In 2022, we hosted 570 volunteers who completed over 3,488 volunteer hours across all our programs. Mill City Grows welcomes both individuals and groups and we match skills-based volunteers with upcoming and ongoing projects that directly support our mission. We also proactively seek volunteers that have specific skills and/or are subject matter experts in a variety of fields, including fundraising, technical writing, photography, graphic design, and academic research.

**Learn more and volunteer with us!**  
**Visit [MillCityGrows.org/joinus](https://MillCityGrows.org/joinus).**





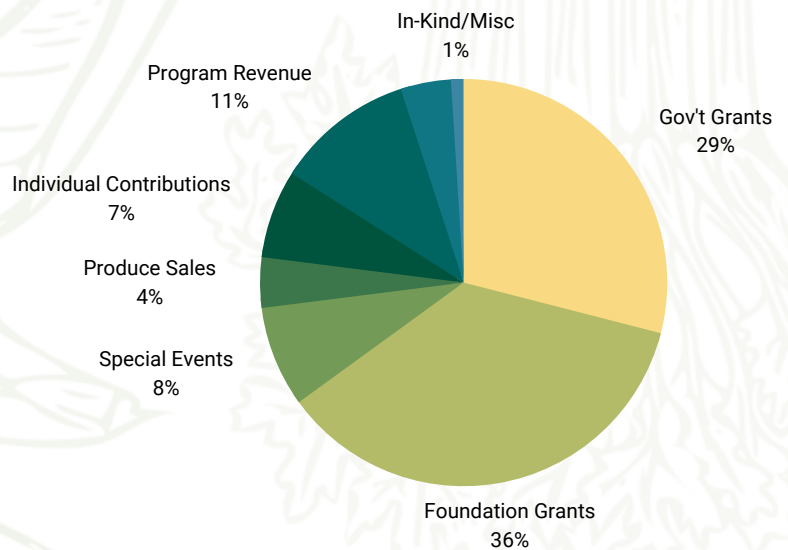
# Financial Statements

Mill City Grows is a 501(c)3 non-profit, as recognized by the IRS. The following figures are taken from audited financial statements from calendar year 2022.

Please visit [MillCityGrows.org/meet-our-supporters](http://MillCityGrows.org/meet-our-supporters) to learn more about the organizations that sponsor and fund our work.

## Revenue

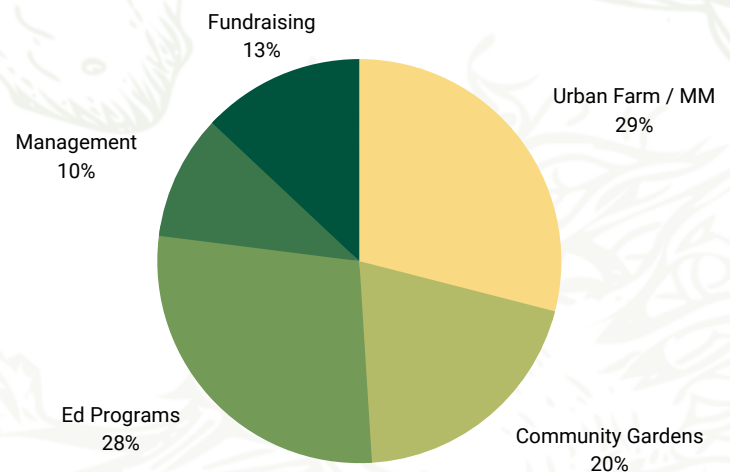
Government Grants	\$447,817
Foundation Grants	\$553,325
Special Events	\$121,144
Produce Sales	\$68,225
Individual Contributions	\$100,479
Program Revenue	\$176,252
Corporate Contributions	\$60,853
In-kind/Misc	\$17,525
Release from Reserve*	\$101,108
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,545,620</b>



*\*Not reflected in Total Revenue or pie chart.*

## Expenses

Urban Farm / Mobile Market	\$481,440
Community Gardens	\$334,788
Education Programs	\$455,156
Management & General	\$170,847
Fundraising	\$211,497
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,653,728</b>







Support our healthy food movement, invest in our community, and expand Lowell's food system.

Join us at [MillCityGrows.org](http://MillCityGrows.org)!







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Growing for Lowell Since 2011



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