

# STOP THE BULLDOZERS!

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**ORGANIZERS OF COMMUNITY GARDENING** programs have a responsibility to protect the right of their members to produce food on community land. Before doing 'battle,' review this list of proven strategies:



- **CONSIDER REDEFINING** the way you state your objective. How about "advancing your community's basic needs" or "organizing to resist a threat to community welfare"? These phrases give a more positive tone to your efforts.
- **CREATE YOUR OWN** special-issue organization. Choose a name that directly communicates the issue and your purpose. Elect officers. Do not depend on an existing organization to be the mainstay of your campaign; request support and ask for help from other groups when you need to.
- **COMMUNICATION**, both internal and external, is important. Build a mailing list, circulate newsletters, form a telephone chain, and keep enthusiasm at a high level.
- **HOLD INFORMATION** meetings where you invite local officials in to your neighborhood.
- **INVOLVE THE NEIGHBORS!**
- **RESEARCH THE SYSTEM.** How are decisions made? Who has the power? Know your community's petition procedures, special-use permits, zoning board, hearings that may be required, etc.
- **DO NOT RELY** on one bureaucrat to save the day. Cultivate the support of many community leaders.
- **TAP RESOURCE PEOPLE** for leverage. For instance, get support letters from important officials such as agency heads and local elected officials, and get resolutions passed by local government and citizen's groups.
- **WITH WHOM OR WHAT** are you battling? It may be with the entire Real Property Department or with the mayor, but it may be only one assistant administrator. To be successful, you need to carefully apply pressure where it will do the most good.
- **BE PERSISTENT!!**
- **FIND SPOKESPEOPLE** who are effective communicators and are representative of your constituency. Make statements that connect the garden to the bigger picture of neighborhood control, environmental health, etc.
- **CONSIDER ESCALATING** the confrontation after you have tried your best to negotiate quietly. This may involve legal action such as seeking a restraining order or organizing a public demonstration.
- **GET THE MEDIA INVOLVED.** Keep reacting publicly to 'official' actions and statements.
- **DEVELOP THE ART** of negotiation. Know what you want – and know your fall-back position.
- **PUBLICLY AND WARMLY THANK** and recognize your supporters, allies, and workers in the campaign.
- **GET IT IN WRITING!!!**