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# Accessibility in the Community Garden

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# What is Accessibility?

- The practice of making information, activities, and the surrounding environment meaningful and usable for as many people as possible
  - Other areas to consider including but not limited to: physical limitations, intellectual ability and socioeconomic access
  - Negative attitude toward accessibility, technological barriers of accessibility, physical barriers and mental barriers of accessibility
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- **Disability**: an imbalance between the needs and preferences of the user and the actual system or environment
  - **Accessibility**: the ability of the system or environment to accommodate and match the needs and preferences of each individual
  - Improving accessibility increases opportunities for everyone

# The Barriers of Accommodating Accessibility

- Lack of awareness
- Educational barriers
- Technological barriers
- Physical barriers
- Barriers of location
- Financial ability and resources
- Communication

People can be faced by multiple barriers when it comes to accommodating their particular situation...

## **Socioeconomic Common Limiting Factors:**

- Transportation
  - Place of residence
  - Income and financial ability
  - Education
  - Occupation
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# Transportation

## What already exists at Pitney?

- **Unlimited Potential** transports a group of people to the garden about once a week. Members of their program include developmentally disabled adults who are then provided with the support systems they need to be successful
- **Daniel Williams** Food Sovereignty Coordinator, ongoing project to bring garden beds and fresh produce to Pitney's partners and local community

## What can we implement?

- **Nature Bus** "Connecting people to nature one stop at a time!"
- **CDTA** services runs a block away from Pitney (via Route 50). Future stop at Pitney?

# Education

## What already exists at Pitney?

- Classes for and workshops for all ages and experience levels
- Community of people who want to educate and learn (staff, volunteers, gardeners, etc)
- Cooking classes for food sovereignty partners of Pitney
- Serves as a community space for local schools and groups
- On site farm and agriculture education through schools

## What can we implement at Pitney?

- Including those who may not have any prior knowledge or experience in gardening, farming, or fresh produce (open garden)
- Volunteer opportunities for all levels and backgrounds
- Emphasis on how everyone can benefit from what Pitney has to offer
- No matter the age, experience level, or ability, everyone brings something different to the table
- Teaching but also collaboration with different groups of people could be key to expand and reach even more people

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# Financial

## What already exists at Pitney?

- Sliding scale for garden beds
- Daniel William's Food Sovereignty Program
- Trails/grounds are free to walk around and open to the public
- Donation based classes and workshops

## What can be added?

- Free fresh produce stand

# Accessibility at Pitney Meadows Community Farm

- Stone dust paths make walking more accessible
- Wide paths ensure to fit wheelchairs of various sizes
- Sliding scale garden beds
- Garden materials and supplies provided to all

Community Gardeners

- Community of people willing and wanting to help each other
- Open to the public



I chose to focus on **physical** accessibility in the garden. I researched the most effective raised garden bed to install for those with physical limitations.





## V-Shaped Raised Bed

- Width of the garden bed and “V” shape allows someone to sit under the bed and reach further across the bed rather than bending at the hips
- Allows for someone to reach across the bed on both sides
- Accommodates for standing while gardening as well



# The Next Step:

- Collaborating and connecting with our local community
- The Joinery and working to assemble the bed
- Feedback from the Community and partners of Pitney Meadows
- Grants and funding for the garden bed



# Discussion Questions

1. What does accessibility mean to you?
2. Do you think that Pitney could meet more people's accessibility needs in the community garden? And you are comfortable sharing a personal experience?
3. Do you feel that Pitney Meadows Community Farm is an inclusive environment?
4. Are there local non-profit organizations that could serve as models of accessibility work for PMCF?
5. Do you think the addition of this raised bed will be a good fit for the garden? Do you think it will be of use?
6. Financial additions to Pitney...any suggestions?
7. Have you been a part of an accessibility project that has been successful & what did you take away from it?

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# Thank you!

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