



December 1, 2014

Danise Alano-Martin
City of Bloomington
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Gordon Hendry
CBRE Group, Inc.
gordon.henry@cbre.com

Dear Ms. Alano-Martin and Mr. Hendry:

Growing Opportunities is a new social business project of the South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP), a nonprofit agency that has served low-income families in our area for 50 years. Our goal is to build a self-sustaining commercial greenhouse business that provides job-training opportunities for low-income people with disabilities and other barriers to employment. The curriculum combines hands-on job training, indoor classroom education and therapeutic benefits of gardening. Our greenhouses will be hands-on learning environments for clients to practice their skills in a fully functioning business. We are building a first greenhouse at Stone Belt, and have a pending proposal to the City of Bloomington Community Development Block Grant program to develop a second site for additional greenhouse space.

The Certified Tech Park (CTP) would be an ideal location for a future greenhouse. SCCAP is interested in collaborating with potential CTP developers to include a greenhouse space in their building designs. Around the country, urban farms have taken root in the unlikeliest of places, such as [Sky Vegetables](#) and [Gotham Greens](#). There are several reasons why Growing Opportunities will be a successful feature in the redevelopment of the CTP:

- The goals of Growing Opportunities fit within the goals of the CTP. The greenhouse will be an example of how Bloomington will demonstrate its leadership creation of sustainable communities. The greenhouse will use hydroponic methods to grow produce, using 10% of the water of conventional agriculture. The produce will be sold year-round to local restaurants, grocers, and the public.
- The greenhouse will be a tourist destination as it will be the first of its kind. Its location within the walkable area of downtown and right off the B-Line Trail will make it easily accessible to visitors to Bloomington. The unique characteristics of the greenhouse will provide an exciting look into the world of hydroponic farming and innovative design.



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- The central location is essential for Growing Opportunities clients' ability to fully participate in our training services. One of the biggest hurdles this population deals with on a daily basis is transportation. The downtown location is not only serviced by public transportation, but it also accessible to bicycles and pedestrians on the B-Line Trail.
- Incorporation of a greenhouse a building design can reduce overall energy use. Rooftop greenhouses provide additional insulation in the winter and absorb sunlight in the summer, potentially contributing to LEED certification.
- Growing Opportunities will foster linkages between multiple industries in Bloomington. SCCAP has already collaborated on the planning for this project with other social service agencies and stakeholders in the growing local food movement. Soon, SCCAP will be working to find potential employers for program graduates in a variety of fields such as retail, horticulture, and landscaping.

The CTP will undoubtedly be a thriving center of new growth for Bloomington. We hope we can be a part of it by extending that new economic opportunity to the clients we serve.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposal. We would be happy to discuss the details of our program in person at a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,



Nicole Wooten
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Todd Lare
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