



October 5, 2017

Max Elliott
Executive Director
Urban Roots

Dear Max,

I am writing to express the GAVA Coalition's enthusiastic support for Urban Roots' proposal to create a central hub for the organization and its operations at 4711 Winnebago Lane in 78744. This main campus would house agricultural production, food preparation in a commercial kitchen, and a space for youth to learn, interact and grow.

GAVA is a coalition of residents, community leaders and nonprofits working together to improve access to healthy food and physical activity in the Southeast and South Austin zip codes—78744 and 78745—where socioeconomic barriers and the built environment have led to high rates of childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes. Over the past five years, GAVA has galvanized the energy and interest of over 1,700 residents and community stakeholders to implement a variety of evidence-based strategies in schools, parks, open spaces, early childhood centers, and neighborhoods to support healthy living.

Much of GAVA's work revolves around increasing access to nutritious foods, including fresh produce in the two zip codes. Urban Roots' relocation to this area promises three new opportunities: 1) a center of production of high-quality produce in an area with limited access to healthy food, 2) a source of leadership development and community engagement in the neighborhood coming from a stellar organization with a proven track record, and 3) the potential to combine our efforts of community organizing for health, improved nutrition, and community cohesiveness on a truly resident-led trajectory. These efforts strive to make healthy food more geographically, economically and culturally accessible to children and families while inspiring youth to be involved in their community and build life skills that will serve them through adulthood.

Given that the surrounding neighborhood associations and the Southeast Combined Neighborhood Planning Contact Team have offered their strong support for this initiative, and given that GAVA's community organizers and resident leaders work under a mission aligning strongly with that of Urban Roots, we know that there is tremendous potential for fruitful collaboration and we look forward to working with your team.

Sincerely,

Carmen Llanes Pulido
Executive Director, GO! Austin/iVAMOS! Austin (GAVA)

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