



WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH ARE YOU DOING FOR THIS PROJECT?

As much as we'd like to think our research will be 'exhaustive' for every project we work on, the truth is, exhaustive research is **relative** to the time and resources to which we have access. If we have two weeks for a project, we will 'exhaust' the time and resources we can dedicate to the research process much more quickly than if we have two months.

The **top section** on the research side of this form represents entry points to research—broad, generalized topics or 'first contact' with ideas—and the space should be well populated for almost any project.

Yet, as your research goes deeper, the breadth and depth of theory and knowledge that is available will become more populous, and you will need to make decisions in regards to the boundaries of your scope. Use this side of the sheet to remind you of the conscious decisions you've made to narrow your research to maintain actionability.

The sliver toward the center represents **primary research**—your own contributions to knowledge through contextual research, and user testing. There are always opportunities to bring your original insights into a project, as long as deep thought is given to what you hope to learn, and why you want to learn it. Like secondary research, primary research could range from quick explorations like street interviews or internet questionnaires, or longer explorations that include the above, along with deeper probes.

WHAT IS THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF YOUR SYSTEMS-SENSITIVE DESIGN?

Always design with an eye toward consequences—both intentional and unintentional. To help keep this in mind, three broad categories are defined here: **Framework**, **Strategic Application** and **Granular (Direct) Action**. One focus is not necessarily better than the others, as long as there is adequate attention given to the potential impacts your solutions have on the rest of the system in question. Solutions might also have elements of all three.

Direct Action might be: help a community create a garden, which is great, but if there is no attention paid to the capacity to maintain it, then the garden might have a short life. Direct actions must always be done with an eye toward longevity—or as a deliberate exercise in temporary disturbance.

Strategic Applications might manifest themselves in an array of carefully considered organizational tools to plan for and organize a community garden. Deliverables might include any number of tools, worksheets, and workshop ideas that can be found on websites like the American Community Garden Association (ACGA).

A **Framework** solution takes one step further out from the system in question to address demands and influences of other systems, such as regional trends, policy matters, collaborations between garden associations, etc. Frameworks are often comprised of clear visualizations of how the interconnectivity of actors, trends and institutions function together to support and maintain a direct action.