

Philadelphia's Urban Agriculture Plan:

GROWING FROM THE ROOT

PLAN SUMMARY

2023



January 2023

Dear Growers, Advocates and City Partners,

Growing from the Root is the City of Philadelphia's first-ever urban agriculture plan. Shaped by your lived experiences and input, this plan is a ten-year food policy road map that takes a comprehensive view of Philadelphia's food system, touching on land, production, preparation, consumption, food waste reduction, and the people holding this system together. This document offers equitable, sustainable, and community-centered recommendations in each of these areas. This road map will enable the City of Philadelphia to preserve and plan for long-term urban agriculture that contributes to equitable land use within the city. It emphasizes the importance of urban agriculture as an essential service to our city and creates a viable, productive, and permanent land use strategy that will be the catalyst for local food security and environmental sustainability.

Urban agriculture has the power to increase local food production and to address hunger and food apartheid, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, waste, and climate crisis. We can build a racially and economically just 21st-century local food system if we redistribute and invest long-term resources to build sustainable infrastructure for agriculture in the city.

Suggesting *Growing from the Root* to our team as the name of our plan was significant because it is reminiscent of a quote from Dr. Angela Davis: "If we are not afraid to adopt a revolutionary stance—if, indeed, we wish to be radical in our quest for change—then we must get to the root of our oppression. After all, radical simply means 'grasping things at the root.'" (Women, Culture & Politics, 1989). The roots represent our interconnected ancestral practices and signify our resilience and self-determination. The roots represent the communal nourishment that comes from working and strategizing collectively. *Growing from the Root* is a radical act that helps us envision our future and be accountable to that shared vision.

Aligned to Park's & Rec's mission of connecting people to the land and each other, this plan represents a commitment to leverage resources in support of community-rooted and community-accountable solutions. Parks & Rec solidifies this commitment by implementing this plan in collaboration with many partners. With this plan, we have reimaged the future of food in Philadelphia and affirmed our responsibility as a city to ensure that all residents can access nourishing, affordable, free and culturally appropriate food.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Ott Lovell".

Kathryn Ott Lovell
Commissioner
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ash Richards".

Ash Richards
Director of Urban Agriculture
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

IN PHILADELPHIA, URBAN AGRICULTURE IS:



"THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, HISTORICAL, EDUCATIONAL, INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE OF GROWING FOOD, PRESERVING FOOD, COOKING FOOD, AND SHARING FOOD IN A CITY."

- Quote from the first public meeting

GROWING FROM THE ROOT



Philadelphia is fortunate to have a robust tradition of urban agriculture, rooted in Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, and refugee growers and communities who have nurtured the city for generations. Here, urban agriculture is Bhutanese refugees cultivating Thai Roselle in South Philadelphia; beehives in Mount Airy; elders and youth tending an 80-year-old garden in Grays Ferry; thousands of pounds of produce shared with families who do not have enough to eat; young people selling vegetables to neighbors in Kensington, Mantua, Kingsessing, and North Philadelphia; residents across the entire

city stewarding abandoned land as a response to disinvestment and structural racism; fruit trees and berry bushes tended by and feeding residents and passersby; thousands of gallons of stormwater managed; and a network of farmers—across race, class, gender, and generations—supplying food shares, farmers' markets, businesses, and restaurants. Beyond the food itself, urban agriculture in Philadelphia, and in our local food system, can mean community food sovereignty: the ability to choose what nourishes you and your community.

***Growing from the Root* is a 10-year comprehensive plan for a thriving local food system and economy with an urban agricultural foundation. The plan addresses the systems, structures, resources, and policies necessary to sustain and grow urban agriculture in Philadelphia and nurture a more just local food system. It is Philadelphia's first urban agriculture plan, co-created with Philadelphia farmers, gardeners, and urban agriculture advocates. The purpose of the plan is to:**

- > Uplift Philadelphia's rich history of urban farming and gardening
- > Confront the legacy of structural racism and land-based oppression in the city
- > Establish a 10-year framework for investing in agriculture and food justice
- > Outline the resources, policies, processes, and programs necessary to sustain urban agriculture in Philadelphia for future generations

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec) led the plan's development, but its success will rely on collaboration between many City agencies, grassroots and nonprofit organizations, philanthropic partners, growers and residents across the city. Parks & Rec is committed to working with its partners within City government and across the city's urban agriculture community. By implementing this plan, together, and taking into consideration racial and economic equity when establishing food policies and programs, Philadelphia can set the precedent across the country as a just local food system that supports urban agriculture.

Growing from the Root is a plan commissioned by the City and grounded in community organizing. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation worked with community-based partners to co-develop the plan: Soil Generation, a Black and Brown grassroots agroecology coalition of Philadelphia growers and advocates, and Interface Studio, a Philadelphia-based city planning firm. This marked a new approach for Parks & Rec, bringing together planners, community advocates, and City staff to co-create a roadmap toward a more just local food system.

The narrative of the plan reflects the shared authorship; sometimes it echoes the City's voice, while at other times it captures the voice of Philadelphians who practice and advocate for urban agriculture.

To envision the kind of neighborhoods residents need and drive the change that farmers and gardeners seek, Soil Generation helped shape a culturally competent and equity-based approach to ensure that the residents most impacted by the topics addressed in this plan were engaged and represented throughout the planning process. From the outset, Parks & Rec and the project team committed to designing a process that was racially and economically equitable, accessible, responsive, and resourceful.

Building a team that embodied the guiding values of this plan took work, time, and ultimately a break in the planning process to invest in a five-month, anti-racist facilitation process designed by Parks & Rec's Director of Urban Agriculture, Ash Richards. The team entered the facilitation process to address accountability, white supremacy cultures, and anti-Blackness within the team and restore dignity to the internal process; resolve interpersonal conflict; and reconcile harm through education and guided conversations between Interface Studio and Soil Generation. The facilitators and the process served the project well, and the end product is not only made possible, but stronger for it.

“As a community group, being partnered in this process was important to us because we have participated in previous City plans with less than adequate community input. The City's decision to hire a community group to be partnered contractually with a design firm showed insight and a step in the right direction, but the planning process made us realize how much work is required on our part. During the facilitation process among the team, we centered the importance of naming the emotional labor required to review project work for anti-racism and accessibility. A plan that starts with a racial analysis and ends with a thorough review means taking time to identify steps and processes that ensure we are creating a plan that truly centers racial justice and anti-racism. This also ensures that we are not only accounting for the “invisibilized” labor that Black, Brown, and Indigenous folks do, but also that it is valued.”
—Soil Generation

“We thank our partners at Soil Generation for speaking up about team dynamics that were harming team members and the project's work. We are thankful that Parks & Rec and project funders granted us the time and space to participate in a carefully considered process of education and reconciliation. The facilitated process helped Interface become a better partner, helped build a stronger team, and helped the plan embody the project's values of centering Black, Brown, and Indigenous voices and applying an anti-racist lens to both the planning process and the end product.”
—Interface Studio



WHAT ARE THE PLAN'S GUIDING VALUES?

Growing from the Root advances five guiding values for Philadelphia's food system. These values echo the priorities of growers and gardeners across the city and reflect a common belief that farming in Philadelphia not only produces food, but also generates social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits. With these values, *Growing from the Root* proposes a new way to look at our food system in which urban agriculture supports:



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Increase access to nourishing, chemical-free food, which is essential for community wellbeing, and sustain gardens as vital spaces for food production and community gathering, bonding, and healing.



RACIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

Combat the cycle of land-based oppression and the systems of power that have disempowered, exploited, and extracted from BIPOC people by centering their voices and experiences.



CULTURE

Honor cultural heritage and traditional and ancestral growing practices, which reinforce and sustain each other.



RESILIENCE

Take climate action to support a local food system that increases access to nourishing chemical-free food, restores soil quality, mitigates the urban heat effect, manages stormwater, and reduces food waste and transportation costs.



TRUTH AND POTENTIAL IN HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Frame today's realities through the lens of history and structural racism. The plan includes a timeline that links historical context with people, land, and the practices of growing food in Philadelphia, connecting moments and movements in time.

Along with the five guiding values, *Growing from the Root* takes direction from the principles of agroecology. Agroecology integrates ecological and social concepts in the design and management of food and agricultural systems. It seeks to restore natural harmony between growing food and biology, the environment, people, culture, and political structures to achieve a sustainable and fair food system. Agroecology is also about place, community, and self-determination through land. The two threads that form the spine of this book represent land and people, which touch every part of the food system. Connection to land, connection to people through food, and the practice of growing and sharing food are at the heart of why Philadelphians value urban agriculture.

Finally, this plan aims to begin restoring integrity to how we are in relationship with the land and the Lenni-Lenape people here in Philadelphia. It does so first and foremost by returning to the understanding that the land is living. As residents care for the land, the land cares for residents and communities; the health of Philadelphia, its neighborhoods, and planet Earth depend in part on this balanced relationship. However, understanding alone cannot remedy the historic injustices inflicted on the Lenni-Lenape people. Members of the Lenni-Lenape tribal nation still grow food in this region and are still present. Strategies to advance justice for tribal peoples are necessary and important. This plan takes a small step, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

VALUES IN PRACTICE: Plan outreach included a survey about the relationship between people and land.

- 5% said my **ancestors are Indigenous** to the Americas and our **lands were stolen** from us during colonization.
- 15% said my **ancestors were displaced** from their land and identity through the **Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**.
- 22% said my family was **forced to leave our land as refugees** because of war, genocide or climate disaster.
- 27% said **race and ethnicity** have impacted their ability to obtain **access to land and land security**.

Source: data from second public meeting survey with a sample size of 128

WHO IS THE PLAN FOR?

GROWERS

This plan is for people who have been doing this self-determined community work for generations, people who just started because of the COVID-19 pandemic, people who do this for survival, and people who do this for the safety and mental health of the kids on their block. It is for everyone who grows food, medicine, flowers, pollinator gardens and orchards in the city, everyone who stewards animals and the land, all seed keepers and seed rematriators, all food and land justice educators, all organizers and advocates, everyone who wants to make a living from agricultural work, everyone who wants to learn about agriculture and be the next generation of growers, and everyone who wants a healthier, more just local food system that centers BIPOC presence/resistance/histories/and ancestral knowledge and practices.

CITY AGENCIES

This plan is also for the City agencies poised to invest in and help evolve our local food system. These agencies are key in moving Philadelphia toward a system that is more just -- one that understands the value of urban agriculture, honors the visions and needs of residents who make up the urban agriculture constituency, and contributes to realizing those visions. This includes members of City Council who will be responsible for supporting the plan, crafting legislation that supports the ideas contained in the plan, supporting land use decisions that protect and expand the footprint of agriculture in their districts, and approving budgets that enable plan implementation. This also includes City agencies or entities whose work intersects with urban agriculture, among them:

- > **Philadelphia Parks & Recreation** and its **Farm Philly** program
- > The **Philadelphia Land Bank**
- > **Philadelphia City Council**
- > The **Philadelphia City Planning Commission**
- > The **Office of Sustainability**
- > The **Department of Public Health's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention**
- > The **Philadelphia Water Department**
- > The **Philadelphia Department of Prisons**

SUPPORTING GROUPS

This plan is for the many individuals and groups who support City government and will help implement the plan and effect the change that the plan proposes. This includes diverse groups outside City government that steward and support Philadelphia's urban agriculture sites, programs, and advocacy agendas. These appointed bodies, nonprofits, advocacy groups, and other community-led projects work to fill gaps in the City's institutional support network and systems to protect and promote urban agriculture in Philadelphia, among them:

- > The **Food Policy Advisory Council's Urban Agriculture Subcommittee**
- > The **Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia's Garden Justice Legal Initiative (GJLI)**
- > The **Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)**
- > The **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)**
- > The **Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative (PGDC)** and
- > A diverse network of organizers, community activists and grassroots and community-driven organizations that work directly in and with communities to advocate for a more just and equitable local food system in Philadelphia.

PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

This planning effort was supported by **philanthropic partners**. Going forward, and in keeping with *Growing from the Root's* commitment to allocating power and resources to community partners most impacted and best positioned to co-lead implementation efforts, it will be necessary to invest philanthropic and government resources in a range of community-based organizations, large and small, established and emerging, diverse and reflective of the communities practicing urban agriculture in Philadelphia.

EVERYONE

If you eat food, *Growing from the Root* is for you, too. The people who are impacted by or have a stake in the outcomes of this plan are not limited to urban farmers and gardeners. The plan has the potential to influence the entire local food system of Philadelphia, making it relevant for virtually all who consume food within city boundaries.

RECONCEPTUALIZING PHILADELPHIA'S FOOD SYSTEM

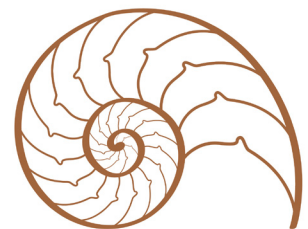
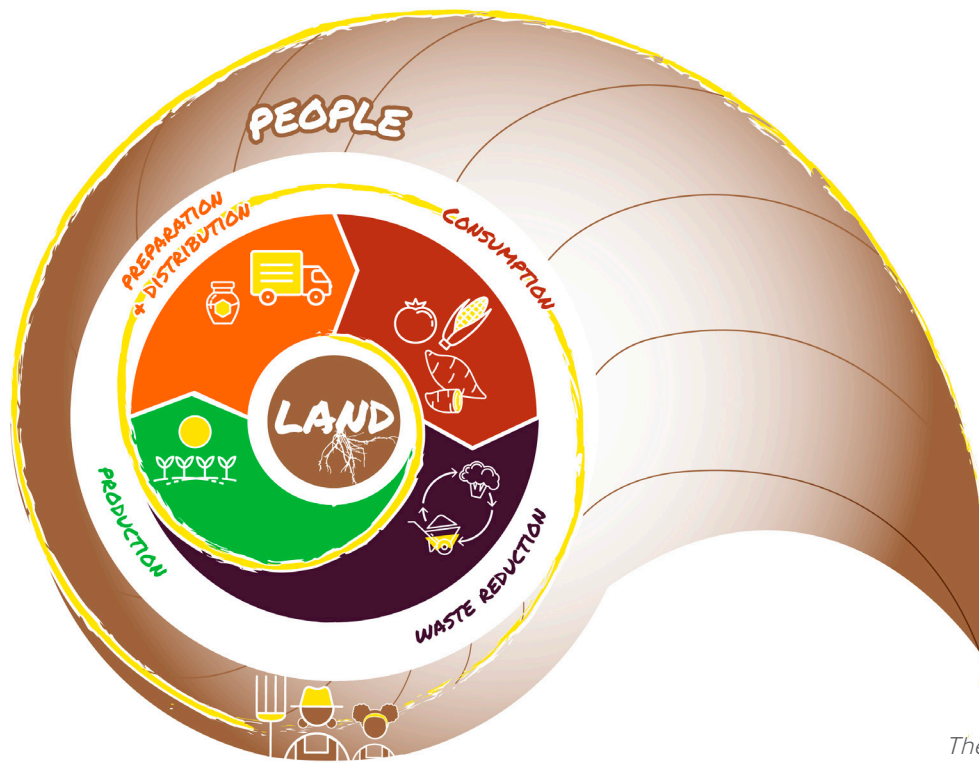
Generally defined, a food system is the network of mechanisms that produce, prepare, distribute, consume, and dispose of food. Even in the most basic of understandings, food systems are complex and interrelated, shaped by land, climate, policy, and people, and directly impacting the health and wellness of communities, the local economy, and regional ecosystems.

According to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's *Greater Philadelphia Food System* study, the Philadelphia region's population "consumes most of what is grown in or near the metropolitan area, does not have enough land to meet the demand, and is increasingly dependent on food sources farther away."

How, where, and by whom food is produced, prepared, distributed, consumed, and disposed of cannot be considered in isolation. To nurture a more just local food system and improve each of these steps, the entire food system must be considered, and urban agriculture has an important role to play.

Inspired by the Fibonacci spiral, also known as a sacred spiral, which occurs in nature at a range of scales—from shells, ferns, flowers, and vegetables to entire galaxies—*Growing from the Root* conceptualizes Philadelphia's food system as a spiral, as opposed to the traditional circular food system. This adaptation of the food system structure offers important benefits:

- The interconnected framework positions land at the center and people as the force that moves and holds the food system. Both are fundamental to how the system has functioned throughout time and key to unlocking a more just, equitable, and sustainable food system.
- The spiral metaphorically suggests that there is space for evolution within this version of the food system. Since it is not a closed loop, there is room for change and an opening that welcomes new people and future generations to the cycle.



The Fibonacci Spiral is named for the Italian mathematician who discovered this naturally occurring number sequence, which represents a universal pattern of growth and evolution.

This representation of Philadelphia's food system contains six elements: (1) Land; (2) Production; (3) Preparation and Distribution; (4) Consumption; (5) Waste Reduction; and (6) People.

GOALS FOR THE FOOD SYSTEM

Growing from the Root is organized into six sections that represent each element of the food system. Each element has an overarching goal and a series of recommendations to work toward achieving the goal.



1] LAND provides the physical space and nutrient-rich soil necessary for cultivation.

Goal Increase land security for growers, access to growing space in all neighborhoods, and stewardship of the land.

Recommendation Categories:

- Preserve existing growing spaces
- Create new growing spaces
- Invest in land stewardship to increase climate resilience



2] PRODUCTION is the act of cultivating crops, growing food, raising animals.

Goal Build long-term support for urban agriculture initiatives into the City's infrastructure, policies, and programs.

Recommendation Categories:

- Ground Philadelphia's urban farming programs and practices in agroecology
- Make physical improvements to growing spaces more feasible
- Support safe and appropriate animal keeping



3] PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION process, transport, and ready food for consumption.

Goal Invest in existing and new local systems necessary to support a sustainable, just, and equitable food system in Philadelphia.

Recommendation Categories:

- Invest in a network of food-processing facilities
- Fill gaps in the food transportation system
- Support opportunities to sell fresh produce



4] CONSUMPTION is the act of gathering food, eating food, and gaining access to food.

Goal Build long-term support for locally sourced, nutritious meals and increased fresh food access into the City's infrastructure, policies, and programs.

Recommendation Categories:

- Increase access to nourishing food
- Support safe foraging of wild foods



5] FOOD WASTE REDUCTION is a chance to recycle or repurpose food by-products.

Goal Be accountable to existing zero-waste commitments and create new ones.

Recommendation Categories:

- Improve and expand City operations to recover food waste
- Increase residential, business, and institutional participation in food waste reduction
- Prevent food waste by increasing food rescue and donations



6] PEOPLE and labor are the power that runs each part of Philadelphia's food system.

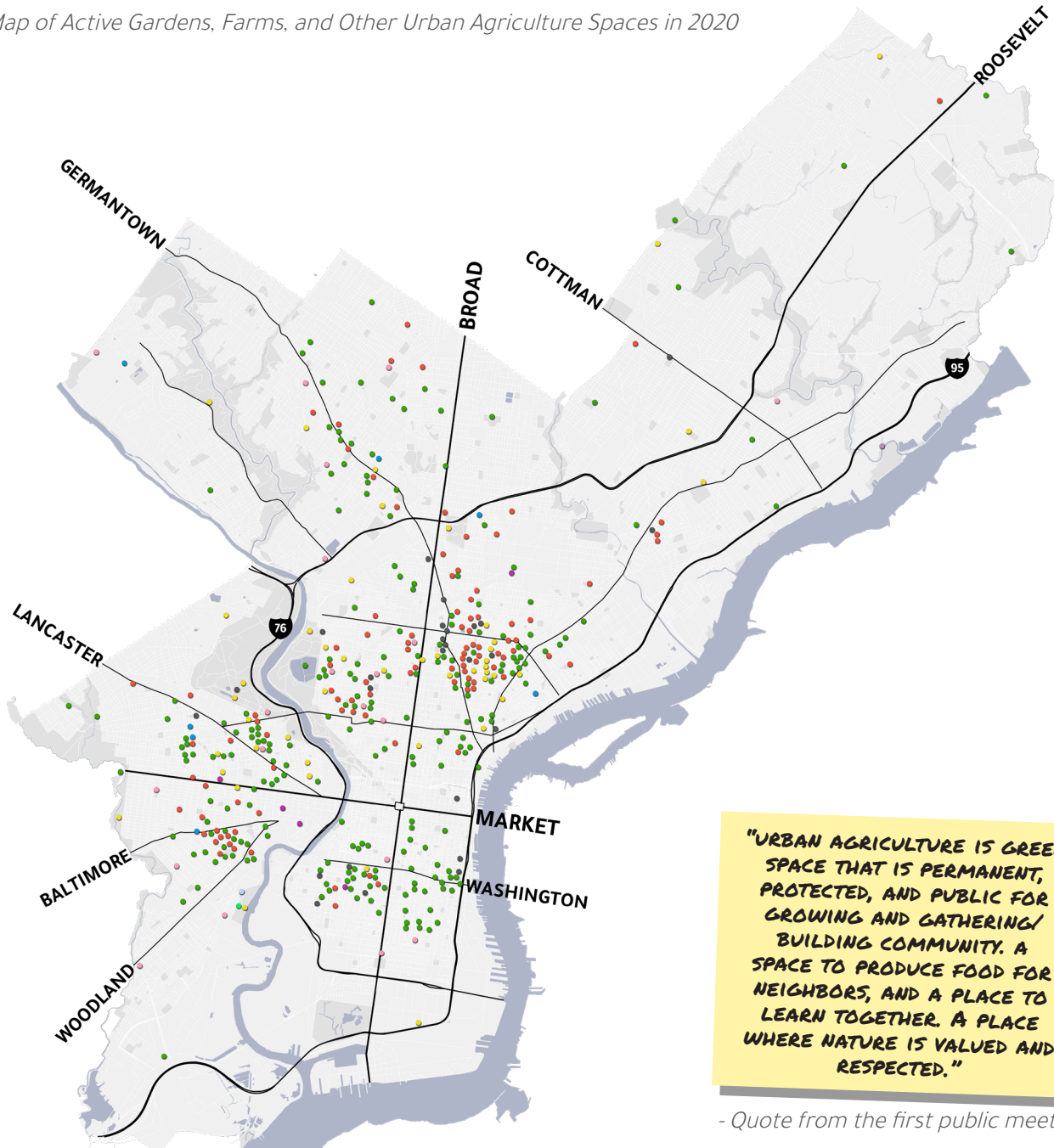
Goal Recognize the role urban agriculture can play in the lives and livelihoods of people and communities.

Recommendation Categories:

- Affirm and solidify community gardens and inclusive spaces for cultural preservation and community healing
- Offer educational opportunities and programs for young people
- Provide agricultural education and programs for adults
- Create pathways toward economic justice through agricultural jobs and business opportunities

WHERE IS URBAN AGRICULTURE HAPPENING?

Map of Active Gardens, Farms, and Other Urban Agriculture Spaces in 2020



"URBAN AGRICULTURE IS GREEN SPACE THAT IS PERMANENT, PROTECTED, AND PUBLIC FOR GROWING AND GATHERING/ BUILDING COMMUNITY. A SPACE TO PRODUCE FOOD FOR NEIGHBORS, AND A PLACE TO LEARN TOGETHER. A PLACE WHERE NATURE IS VALUED AND RESPECTED."

- Quote from the first public meeting

Source: Garden Data Collaborative Database / Interface Studio
Garden locations are approximate; points have been shifted to improve legibility.

BY THE NUMBERS: THE FOOTPRINT OF URBAN AGRICULTURE IN PHILADELPHIA TODAY

> Individual Gardens	84 spaces / 3 acres	> School Gardens	38 spaces / 5 acres
> Community Gardens	193 spaces / 58 acres	> Social Gardens	29 spaces / 5 acres
> Community Farms	71 spaces / 51 acres	> Orchards (stand-alone)	10 spaces / 1 acre
> Market Farms	10 spaces / 2 acres	> Other / Unknown	7 spaces / 2 acres
> Institutional Gardens	12 spaces / 6 acres		

TOTAL: ~450 known active urban agricultural spaces spread across more than 900 parcels
~130 acres of agricultural space

WHY GROWING FOOD IN PHILADELPHIA IS NECESSARY

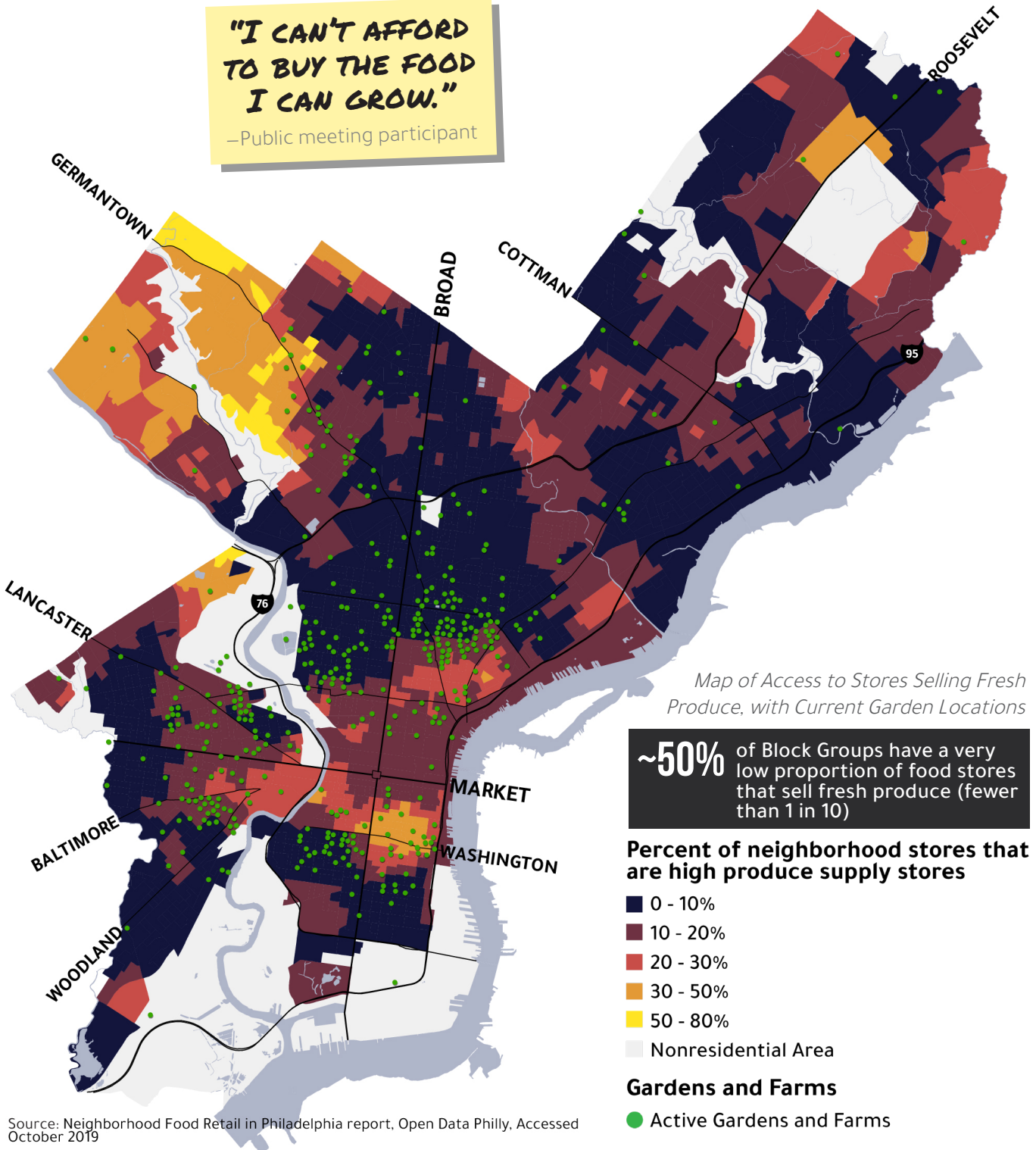
In many parts of the city, growing food is a necessity, as nutritious, affordable food sources are limited by historical disinvestment and structural and environmental racism. Indeed, in Philadelphia—where nearly one-quarter of the population (over 350,000 people) lives in poverty, surviving on less than \$25,000 per year for a family of four—part of the food access equation is the cost of food.

~70% of active gardens and farms are located in high-poverty areas where more than 20 percent of the population lives below the poverty level

~67% are in high-poverty areas where the population of people of color is greater than 50 percent

"I CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY THE FOOD I CAN GROW."

—Public meeting participant



Source: Neighborhood Food Retail in Philadelphia report, Open Data Philly, Accessed October 2019

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

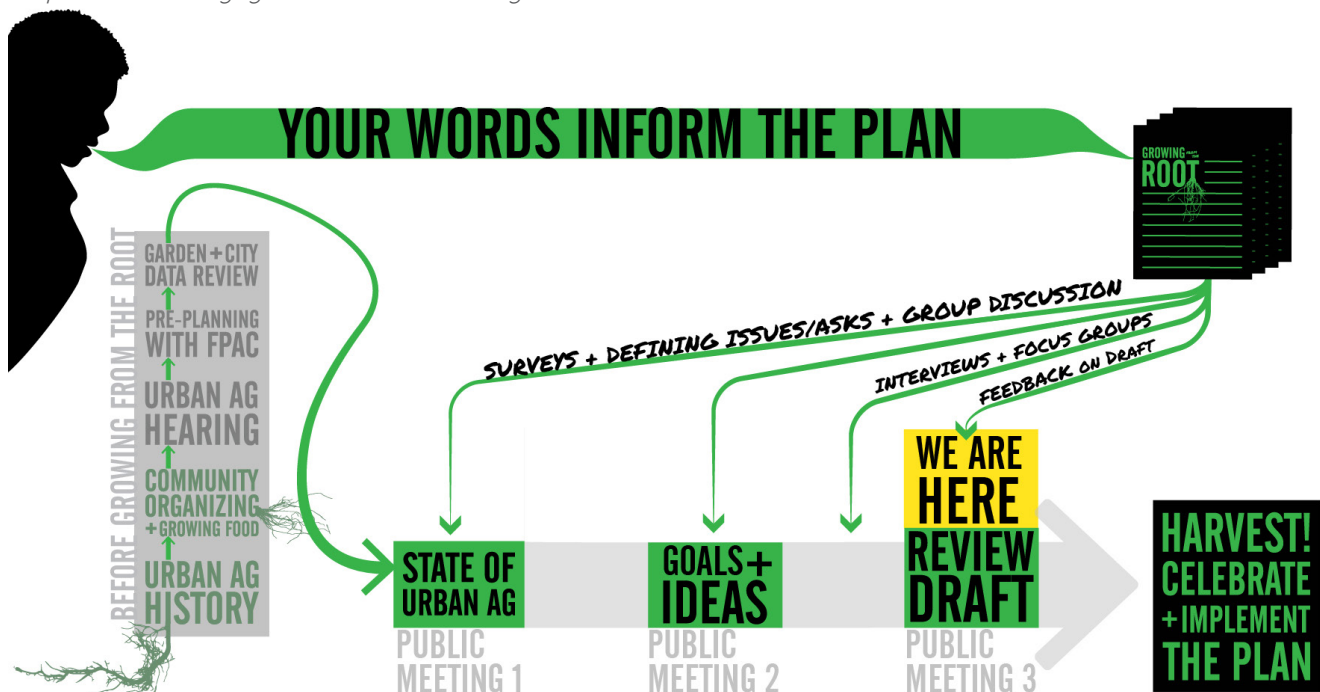
Residents' experiences, knowledge, and priorities give shape to *Growing from the Root*. The planning process involved multiple layers of community engagement and collaboration within City government. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation formed an advisory **City Project Team** with representatives from other City agencies whose work intersects with urban agriculture, including the Office of Sustainability, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Department of Public Property, Philadelphia Land Bank, and the Managing Director's Office. Parks & Rec also convened a **Steering Committee** to guide development of the plan, with equal representation from City agencies, partner organizations, and community members. Despite the physical distancing requirements created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the planning process engaged **hundreds of passionate and dedicated growers** and community advocates from across Philadelphia, both virtually and in person.

The community engagement plan for the process adopted a culturally competent and equity-based approach, aiming to:

- > Co-create an urban agriculture plan that is racially and economically equitable, responsive, and resourceful
- > Close gaps in participation by prioritizing accessibility, especially for marginalized groups
- > Center the experiences of the most impacted communities
- > Engage and organize a diverse body of people to develop solutions together
- > Foster transparency and accountability through the process

As such, *Growing from the Root* is grounded in the voices, vision, and values of the people who have the greatest stake in its outcomes: the diverse community of growers and gardeners across Philadelphia. Their words fill the pages of this plan, underscoring the importance of urban agriculture in this city, in the lives of residents and communities, and in the health and well-being of neighborhoods and local ecosystems.

Steps of Public Engagement in the Planning Process



This graphic represents the progression of public engagement activities throughout the planning process. It was used in public engagement to show participants how their input fit into the larger planning process.

HELP US

DEFINE URBAN AGRICULTURE

by describing it in your own words on the cards

[1] HOW DO YOU DEFINE URBAN AGRICULTURE?

[2] WHAT DO YOU VALUE ABOUT URBAN AGRICULTURE?

181 crowd-sourced definitions of urban agriculture collected at the first public meeting

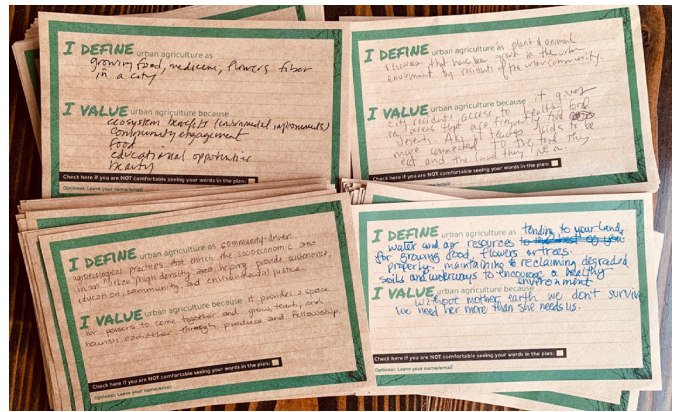
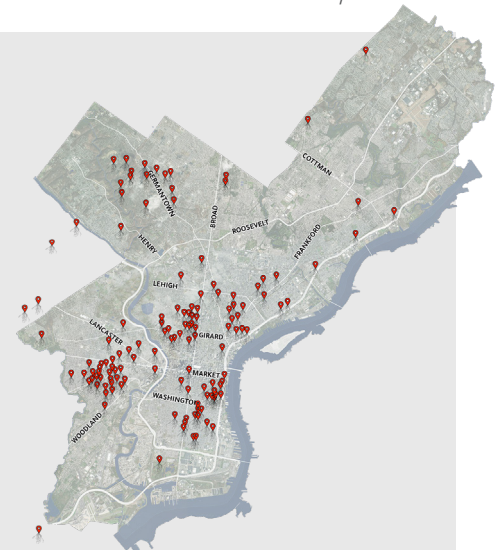


Photo Credits: Noise Soul Cinema

Nearly 300 people attended the first public meeting at the Free Library in December 2019. Participants wrote down how they define urban agriculture and what they value about it. The photo shows some of the responses.

WHO HELPED SHAPE *GROWING FROM THE ROOT?*

- > **Over 650 different residents and urban agriculture stakeholders** representing 35 of Philadelphia's 45 zip codes, plus 30 zip codes outside the city
- > **People of all ages:** youth, teens, adults, and seniors
- > **People who identify as** Black or African American; White, Hispanic; Latinx, or Spanish; Asian or Pacific Islander; Middle Eastern; American Indian or Alaska Native; by religious group; as human
- > **People who speak 16 different languages at home** aside from English, including Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, Italian, Greek, German, Polish, Slovak, Tamil, Bengali, Persian, Tagalog, Dutch, and Gujarati
- > **People who garden or farm in Philadelphia and those who don't**, people who used to and those who come from families of farmers
- > **Of those who practice urban agriculture** in Philadelphia, 36% garden at home, 19% in their neighborhood, 17% in a community garden, 8% at a farm, 7% with an organization, 6% at a school, 5% on parkland or other public land, and 2% at a cemetery (with many people listing multiple locations)



Map of home locations of participants in the first public meeting



1] LAND

Goal:

Increase land security for growers, access to growing space in all neighborhoods, and stewardship of the land.

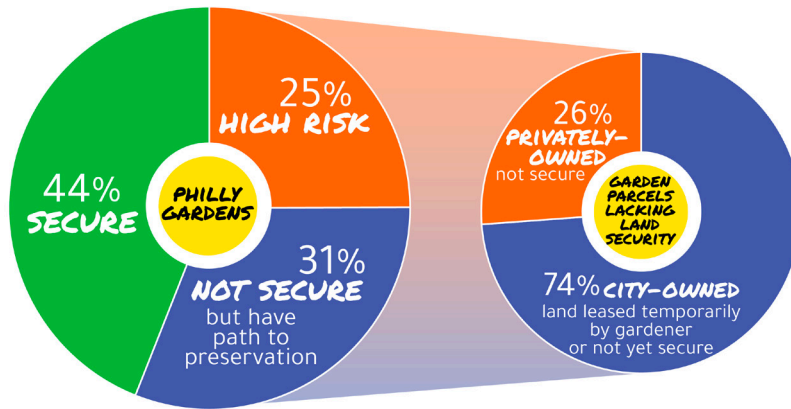
Description:

Land and land care are both central to food production. Within the food system, land provides the physical space and nutrient-rich soil necessary for cultivation. Land provides natural habitat, food that sustains people and animals, shade that cools communities, and a means to absorb stormwater. Land fosters cultural connections to ancestors and their practices, as well as to cultural traditions. It hosts places that bring people together and creates economic opportunities that support livelihoods.

Agriculture is dependent on soil, water, air, and *land*. Access to land, however big or small that piece of land may be, is essential for growing crops and trees and raising animals. In Philadelphia, people and communities practice urban agriculture in a variety of ways: in raised beds, directly in the ground, in containers, in buildings and on rooftops. They use land they find at home, in their neighborhood, at community gardens and farms, at schools, in parks, in cemeteries, on formerly vacant land, and on the grounds of places of worship and community-based organizations. Land is the common thread that underpins all agricultural activities. Therefore, issues tied to land—and particularly to a lack of land security—are among those most pressing for farmers, gardeners, and urban agriculture advocates in Philadelphia.

The Land chapter of *Growing from the Root* focuses on preserving existing growing spaces, creating new growing spaces, enhancing soil quality, and advancing racial and economic justice through improved policies, procedures, and processes for land access and land security. It calls for new programs and resources to expand the footprint of agriculture in the city, more environmentally sound practices for land care and soil testing, and restorative actions in response to land theft and discriminatory policies to put land in the hands of Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

Analysis of garden ownership and land security shows that the City of Philadelphia owns 74% of the garden parcels that lack land security.



> 54% of respondents know a garden that is currently being threatened, and 46% know of a garden that was lost/stolen. The majority of reported lost gardens were lost to development.

– Input from second public meeting survey (sample size 40)

Land Security Defined

- > A garden has land security when all of its parcels are owned by the gardeners or a trusted organization that will protect the garden over time.
- > Fewer than half (44%) of gardens in the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative database are secure.
- > A garden lacks land security when one or more of its parcels are owned by an individual or entity that does not intend to preserve the garden over time.

Land Access Defined

- > Gardeners and farmers have land access when they have a legal ability to use land for agriculture, provided through a lease, license, other arrangement, or permanent ownership.

The Land chapter includes 25 recommendations that aim to resolve long-standing issues with land ownership and access, improve City operations related to agricultural land, preserve and expand the footprint of urban agriculture by increasing access to land and land security, care for the land used for growing food and stewarding community, and address a legacy of land-based oppression experienced by Black, Brown, and Indigenous growers.

The following list presents eight priority recommendations for Land, chosen based on public input that conveyed need and strong support, as well as available resources and momentum for change. Some of the priority recommendations include early action strategies that will produce quick wins for the urban agriculture community on the heels of this planning process. Others contain critical first steps that should unfold in the short-term though implementation of the full recommendation will take longer.

- > Develop strategies to reduce the number of community gardens and farms on private land sold at sheriff sale. (Rec 1.1)
- > Seek improvements to how Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) and the Philadelphia Land Bank educate and inform the public about equitably selling, transferring, and leasing public land for community gardens and farms, agriculture projects, community-managed open spaces or other productive land uses. (Rec 1.3)
- > Increase the number of City-owned parcels preserved annually. (Rec 1.4)
- > Amend the City's acquisition and disposition policies to increase opportunities to preserve community gardens and farms on formerly vacant land. (Rec 1.7)
- > Explore the feasibility of allocating funding to purchase liens on community gardens and farms and side yards to allow the Land Bank to acquire the land. (Rec 1.8)
- > Continue to provide guidance to individual applicants who are interested in licensing, leasing, or owning land to increase land security. (Rec 1.9)
- > Increase availability of funding for growers and nonprofits to acquire land through philanthropic, state, and federal funding sources. (Rec 1.19)
- > Support existing land trusts and the creation of new community-led land trusts and land cooperatives to secure land and hold ownership/leases for community gardens and other shared open spaces. (Rec. 1.22)

To read the whole set of Land recommendations, see the full plan.



2] PRODUCTION

Goal:

Build long-term support for urban agriculture initiatives into the City's infrastructure, policies, and programs.

Description:

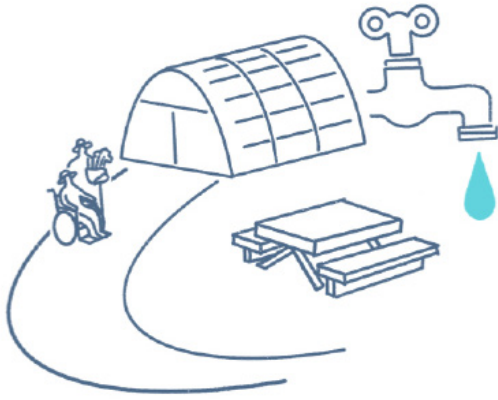
Production is the act of cultivating crops, growing food, and raising animals. Agricultural production starts from seed and continues through to harvest—and every step requires land. Practices of growing food, keeping seeds, and raising animals for food production are cultural—evidence of knowledge passed down and traditions carried on. These practices are practical and economical—creating access to nutritious, chemical-free food and business enterprises.

Production of food, flowers, medicinal plants, and fiber (such as hemp) requires adequate agricultural resources. The Production chapter of *Growing from the Root* focuses on access to and the availability of resources for growers, seed keepers, and stewards of land and animals. Necessary resources include the various inputs needed to grow food or tend farm animals: water infrastructure, tools, storage, organic materials (e.g., compost, mulch), seeds, and farm equipment, as well as new City legislation, code amendments, and guidelines that enable people to increase harvests and safely raise animals in the city.


It is important to also note the connection between food production and land security. Land insecurity has been the biggest barrier preventing communities from making capital and infrastructural investments in food production operations. In order to repair the systemic erosion of growing spaces across Philadelphia, growers need support installing improvements that have been prevented due to land insecurity, such as access to water, electricity, and building materials.

"I REMEMBER THE JOY OF EATING FRESH SNOW PEAS OFF THE VINE, SNACKING ON FRESH RASPBERRIES, AND MAKING MY FREEZER FULL OF FRESH PESTO TO LAST ALL WINTER. MY TODDLER LOVED WATERING THE GARDEN. I MISS IT SO MUCH. . . . A DEVELOPER FROM NYC BOUGHT THE LAND."

- Quote from the first public meeting



Physical improvements to growing spaces allow gardeners and farmers to increase their production and deepen their connection to place.

1st	LAND NEEDS: physical & ecological infrastructure
2nd	PEOPLE NEEDS: skills, training, support & resources for growers
3rd	COMMUNITY NEEDS: resources for cultivating relationships
4th	SYSTEM NEEDS: support navigating institutional regulations & resources

Garden and farm needs, prioritized by participants at the second public meeting, survey sample size 67.

The Production chapter includes 16 recommendations that aim to eliminate existing barriers and increase support for making significant investments in food production spaces, establish new public programs and resources for growers and growing spaces, create a more inclusive and equitable city culture around food production practices, and ease burdensome regulations on food production.

The following list presents eight priority recommendations for Production.

- Establish an Office of Urban Agriculture within the Department of Parks & Recreation to provide centralized support for growers, and coordinate with City agencies and partners to implement the plan and track progress. (Rec 2.1)
- Support orchard planting and care across the city, and prioritize neighborhoods with low to no tree canopy and those that have experienced extreme heat and decades of disinvestment. (Rec 2.4)
- Support and promote local seed saving practices with partnerships between the City and local organizations. (Rec 2.6)
- Advocate to update the City code and Land Bank disposition policies to allow urban agriculture accessory structures by right. (Rec 2.7)
- Develop resources (e.g., guides, tools, and funding) to support community gardens and farms incorporating universal design techniques to ensure that they are inclusive and accessible to people of all abilities. (Rec 2.9)
- Increase awareness of existing city and state programs and explore new programs to support gardeners and farmers with access to free or reduced cost resources for physical improvements. (Rec 2.11)
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a staffed agriculture and horticulture hub in West Fairmount Park as essential infrastructure for local food production and environmental stewardship. (Rec 2.12)
- Develop a long-term road map to explore safe and appropriate animal keeping within the City, prioritizing animals that are already in the City's code (e.g., bees, goats, horses, and fish/aquaponics). (Rec 2.14)

To read the whole set of Production recommendations, see the full plan.



3] PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION

Goal:

Invest in existing and new local systems necessary to support a sustainable, just, and equitable food system in Philadelphia.

Description:

Preparation and Distribution are about how food moves and changes as it transitions from production to consumption. Preparation and distribution includes the processing (e.g., harvesting and washing crops, butchering), packaging, storing, transporting, cooking, and serving of food. Depending on the food and where it was grown, harvested, sold, and distributed, food may travel many miles and be touched by many hands before it is consumed.

The Preparation & Distribution chapter of *Growing from the Root* focuses on preparing, processing, distributing, and bringing locally grown produce to market. Whereas the Consumption chapter that follows focuses on direct-to-consumer distribution of food, this chapter discusses processing and preparation of food for sale and larger-scale distribution. With coordinated effort, there is an opportunity to grow businesses and jobs to prepare and distribute Philadelphia-grown food. Doing so also has the power to reduce the city's food-related carbon footprint, and build a robust bridge between local and regional growers who are eager to expand their production and find local buyers for their harvests. This also presents an opportunity to improve the distribution quality, nutritional value, diversity, and cultural relevance of food consumed locally. Culturally relevant food is food that holds significance for a particular culture or subcultural group.

The Preparation & Distribution chapter looks at ways to ensure that local agricultural producers and related businesses can process, prepare, and distribute their products effectively throughout Philadelphia. Furthermore, it aims to foster a preparation and distribution system that is equitable; promotes environmental, climate, and racial justice; supports local BIPOC producers; and supports small-scale food and logistics entrepreneurs.



Affordable access to certified commercial kitchen space can create opportunities for food entrepreneurs and cottage industry.



Examples of small-scale food production.

The Preparation & Distribution chapter includes eight recommendations that aim to provide a broad, strategic vision for the system of preparation and distribution that stems from and services local agricultural production.

The following list presents **four priority recommendations for Preparation & Distribution.**

- > Assess and catalog the ways in which existing community-oriented kitchens are being used and how accessible they are to determine whether they can be used for affordable culinary community programming such as food preservation, fermentation, food safety, and medicine making workshops. (Rec 3.1)
- > Establish and connect gardeners and farmers to shared resources for critical aspects of food processing such as weighing, washing, and storage. (Rec 3.3)
- > Advance nonprofit efforts to facilitate and support partnerships with community gardens and farms and local food distributors, such as food banks, food pantries, and food cupboards. (Rec 3.7)
- > Provide enhanced education and information about City regulations and requirements for safe food vending. (Rec 3.8)

To read the whole set of Preparation & Distribution recommendations, see the full plan.

"PHILADELPHIA NEEDS MORE COMMUNITY KITCHEN SPACES WHERE PEOPLE CAN GATHER AND PREPARE LOCALLY GROWN FOOD."

–Public meeting participant

"WE NEED BETTER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LOCAL FARMERS AND FARMERS' MARKETS IN THE CITY."

–Public meeting participant



4] CONSUMPTION

Goal:

Build long-term support for locally sourced, nutritious meals and increased fresh food access into the City's infrastructure, policies, and programs.

Description:

Consumption is the act of gathering food, eating food, and gaining access to food. While people engage with all elements of the food system, all people engage with this particular element because all people need to eat. Consumption is not only about eating food, but also where people find that food, be it in gardens, nature, farms, farmers' markets, corner stores, supermarkets, or food pantries. Consumption requires physical and economic access to food, and all people deserve choice in the foods they consume.

The Consumption chapter of *Growing from the Root* explores the relationship between urban agriculture and access to affordable, nutrient-rich, chemical-free, and culturally relevant food within Philadelphia's food system. It focuses primarily on direct-to-consumer distribution of food. There is an opportunity and deep need for urban agriculture to play a role in providing consistent and reliable sources of nourishing food for the people who need it most. The Consumption chapter promotes consumption of locally grown and culturally relevant food, more inclusive food standards, and acknowledgment of the many different ways people experience food.

The foods that people consume are often considered a matter of choice: individuals decide what to buy at grocery stores, restaurants, or other food-related establishments. In reality, the foods that people eat are largely determined by what they can afford and where they live. In 2019, nearly 270,000 (14.4%) of Philadelphians were considered food insecure.

While food stores, food programs, gardens, and farms may be the primary way that most Philadelphians eat, public meeting participants also said that foraging can be a key source of food, medicine, and other plants. Foraging is the act of searching for and gathering food from the wild (i.e., parks, forests and open spaces, city sidewalks, and undeveloped areas).

"WE ALL NEED TO EAT! AND THE CLOSER TO HOME WE GROW IT, THE BETTER IT IS. EVERYONE DESERVES ACCESS TO LAND SOMEWHERE TO GROW A PORTION OF WHAT THEY EAT."

—Public meeting participant

Good Food Communities Campaign

The [Good Food Communities Campaign](#) is a national movement, calling to shift public dollars to food contracts that advance worker justice by providing living wages, fair working conditions, and racial equity. The campaign demonstrates that City policy can positively impact how food is sourced in our cities. It encourages establishing institutional food contracts with small-scale producers of color, demanding protections from food- and farm-related pollution for communities of color and frontline workers, and transparency by advocating for public access to supply chain data and community involvement in policy implementation.

Defining "Fair Food"

Fair Food programs can promote initiatives and strategies including cooperative land ownership or wage theft support systems, that prioritize procurement from small to mid-sized producers of color, that reduce food miles traveled and lowers emissions, that consider racial and environmental justice, and that create better living conditions (e.g., labor housing, affordable healthcare, and human services) for farm laborers and their families.

The Consumption chapter includes 12 recommendations that aim to make it easier for families to get fresh, locally grown food and to build a more equitable culture of food consumption in Philadelphia through collaboration with schools, community organizations, businesses, municipal services, and public spaces. The recommendations focus on reviewing existing nutrition standards and procurement practices to make them more reflective of community values, creating new responses to systemic food inaccessibility, and improving public understanding of, and public practices related to, food foraging, so it is safe and equitable for both people and the land.

The following list presents seven priority recommendations for Consumption.

- > Work to develop a Good Food Procurement and Fair Food program for all City meal programs that includes worker protections and assurances on a municipal level. (Rec 4.1)
- > Strengthen policies guiding the composition of publicly funded meals provided by the City to broaden the focus to include serving foods that nourish communities beyond adhering to federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (Rec 4.2)
- > Work with the School District of Philadelphia's Division of Food Services to expand meal offerings to accommodate more diet and allergy-related restrictions (e.g., celiac disease, lactose intolerance, nuts, eggs, soy) and consider the cultural relevance (e.g., halal, kosher) of food in addition to nutritional value. (Rec 4.3)
- > Investigate adopting policies and establishing partnerships throughout City government and the School District that result in the purchase and provision of more locally grown and prepared foods. (Rec 4.4)
- > Create a Farm to Public meal program that increases access to locally grown farm products in public meals. (Rec 4.5)
- > Support safe and fair farmers market and food stand operations throughout the city, and prioritize expanded food access and food security in areas with no to low access to grocery stores and limited access to fresh, high-quality, and nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables. (Rec 4.8)
- > Develop opportunities for new City-run and community-led food forests on public land, at the edges of City-owned forests, and in school yards to increase access to wild food, trees, and wildlife habitat in the city. (Rec 4.12)

To read the whole set of Consumption recommendations, see the full plan.



5] WASTE REDUCTION

Goal:

Be accountable to existing zero-waste commitments and create new ones.

Description:

Waste management presents opportunities to reduce, recycle, and repurpose the by-products of food production, preparation, distribution, and consumption. Food waste reduction can take the form of composting food scraps and other organic materials and returning their nutrients to the soil. Reduction can take the form of recovering and redirecting expiring or excess food from groceries, restaurants, and homes to people in need. This element supports the sustainability of the food system and a healthier environment.

The Waste Reduction chapter of *Growing from the Root* focuses on preventing and reducing food waste within the city's food system. To accomplish Philadelphia's *Zero Waste Action Plan* goal of completely phasing out landfills by 2035, reducing the amount of organic food waste generated in the city is critical, with the potential to lessen the municipal waste stream by up to 37 percent. Waste reduction at this scale will require citywide initiatives as well as small-scale efforts from businesses, neighborhoods, and individual households to divert organic materials (e.g., food scraps, yard waste, and manure) away from landfills and turn them into compost or other useful products.

Local government's role in managing waste and exploring internal policies can help divert food waste from landfills to productive public uses and save money. Additionally, educating the public on their role in this process can shift public habits helping to reduce the largest single source of food waste: residential households.

WHAT IS COMPOST?

Compost is decayed organic material such as food waste and plant matter. It can be used to add nutrients to soil, which can then be used to fertilize plants. Compost may also be used for other purposes, such as making clothing dye.



The reduction and management of food waste can result in direct environmental and economic benefits for farmers, distributors, businesses and organizations.

The Waste Reduction & Recovery chapter includes 12 recommendations that focus on reducing food waste from different sources and diverting it from the municipal waste stream. They encourage the City to uphold existing zero waste commitments, propose expanding the range of policies and programs for sustainable waste reduction and recovery practices at different scales, encourage economic development in agriculture and related sectors, and reduce the amount of food wasted in Philadelphia.

The following list presents seven priority recommendations for Waste Reduction & Recovery.

- > Attract additional resources to expand operations at Parks & Rec's Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center to support home gardens, community gardens, and farms, as well as other agriculture projects within the city. (Rec 5.2)
- > Find opportunities to work with the School District of Philadelphia and other City meal providers (e.g., prisons) to integrate food waste reduction and recovery measures. (Rec 5.4)
- > Launch an educational campaign about how and what to compost, targeting a range of audiences, including residents, businesses, and institutions. (Rec 5.7)
- > Expand opportunities for community-scale composting. (Rec 5.8)
- > Invest in the local economy to provide sustainable waste management solutions in Philadelphia, while investing in and creating local businesses and jobs. (Rec 5.9)
- > Incentivize major institutions and businesses (e.g., the City, hospitals, universities, major employers, and food businesses) to comply with existing food waste diversion policies/mandates and to adopt complete organic waste recycling. (Rec 5.10)
- > Create a food waste resource hub with information for institutions and businesses. (5.11)

To read the whole set of Waste Reduction & Recovery recommendations, see the full plan.



6] PEOPLE

Goal:

Recognize the role urban agriculture can play in the lives and livelihoods of people and communities.

Description:

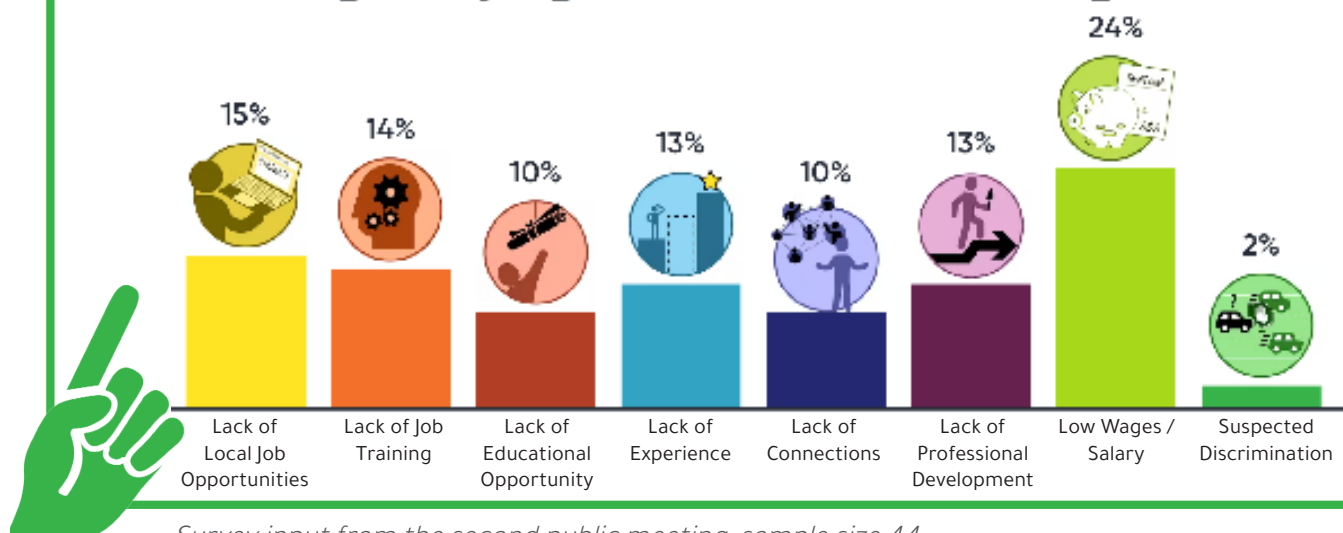
People and labor are the power that runs each part of Philadelphia's food system. People grow and harvest crops. People process, prepare, and serve the food that is eaten. People distribute and deliver food and supplies. People draft, implement, and enforce policies and programs that shape the food system. All people consume food and create food waste.

The People chapter of *Growing from the Root* focuses on the many ways that people engage with and practice urban agriculture as a part of Philadelphia's food system. If land is the root of the local agricultural system, then people are the stem from which all other stalks grow. Across the city, people grow plants for food, beauty, commerce, and medicine; they raise animals such as bees, goats, and fish; and they do so to educate and feed themselves and their communities, repair the environment, or make a living. People carry the skills, traditions, ideas, and ambitions that have defined urban agriculture in the past and present—and that can define it in years to come. The People chapter focuses on the resources and support that people who participate in urban agriculture need to continue and grow urban agriculture in Philadelphia.

"I FOUND A WONDERFUL JOB WORKING AT A WONDERFUL FARM IN THE CITY. THIS FARM DOES ITS BEST IN TERMS OF PAY AND OFFERS HEALTH INSURANCE, SICK AND VACATION DAYS, BUT I STILL HAD TO QUIT AFTER ONE YEAR BECAUSE THE PAY IS NOT SUSTAINABLE FOR MY FAMILY... IT WAS DEVASTATING FOR ME PERSONALLY BECAUSE I WANT TO CONTINUE TO FARM."

—Public meeting participant

What barriers have you faced looking for a job in farming or trying to build a career in agriculture?



Survey input from the second public meeting, sample size 44.

The People chapter includes 14 recommendations that aim to support people throughout the food system. They focus on ensuring that gardens are inclusive spaces, solidifying gardens' roles as locations for stronger neighborhoods and communities, expanding educational opportunities for youth and adults, and increasing opportunities for people to make a career in the agricultural field. Because people are the driving force that keeps our collective food system moving, it is important to meet the needs outlined in this chapter in order to sustain this force in all other chapters. It is difficult to silo the needs of people into a single chapter, so inevitably the opportunities and needs listed here overlap with all other chapters.

The following list presents six priority recommendations for People.

- > Encourage and support inclusivity in urban agriculture growing spaces by celebrating diversity in race, culture, age, ability, language, gender, and economic differences. (Rec 6.2)
- > Create opportunities for community gardens and farms to serve as access points for a wide range of public services. (Rec 6.5)
- > Partner with the School District of Philadelphia to assess existing gardens on school property, invest in new and improved gardens and green infrastructure, and increase garden programming and stewardship through community partnerships. (Rec 6.7)
- > Partner with the School District of Philadelphia to invest in existing and new out-of-school-time (OST) agricultural programs and create a justice-centered agricultural curriculum. (Rec 6.9)
- > Create opportunities for people to develop skills and find employment in agriculture. (Rec 6.13)
- > Help entrepreneurs establish and grow agricultural businesses. (Rec 6.14)

"WE NEED EDUCATION COMBINING HISTORICAL AND ANCESTRAL SCIENCE OF GROWING AND FORAGING TO INSTILL IN BLACK AND NATIVE AND BROWN FOLKS AND YOUTH ESPECIALLY! INCLUDE POLITICAL EDUCATION, SKILLS BUILDING, AND ENCOURAGE HONORING AND REVERENCE FOR THE LAND AND ANCESTORS."

—Public meeting participant

To read the whole set of People recommendations, see the full plan.



WHAT'S NEXT?

For this plan to take root, it will require sustained commitment and effort from across City government including City Council and City agencies and departments, nonprofit and community-based organizations, major institutions, philanthropic partners, and individual growers.

As the convening agency for this plan, Parks & Rec will act in a coordinating capacity, working with elected officials and other departments and agencies to advocate for proactive action, encourage mutually supportive policies and programs, and marshal resources for different recommendations within City government.

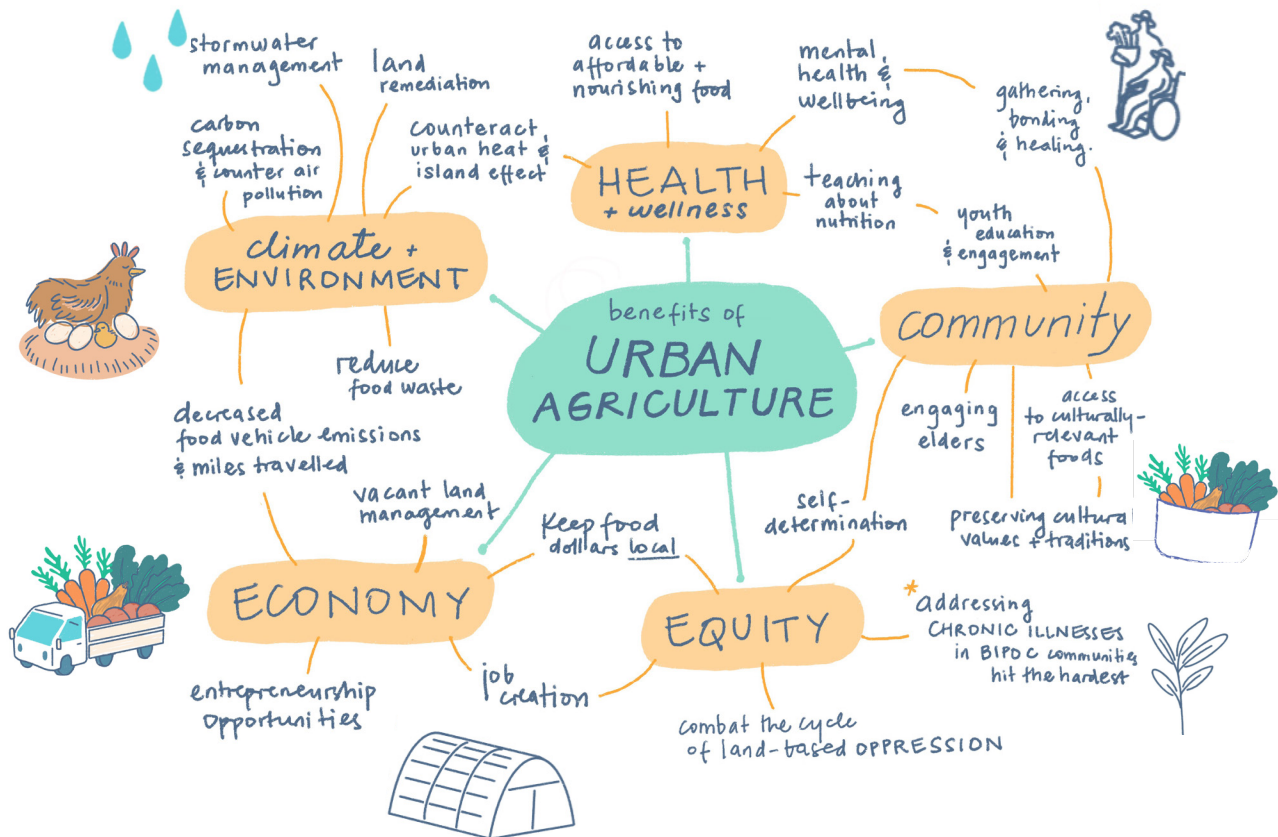
Like Philadelphia's urban agriculture movement, much of this work will come from the ground up, led by grassroots organizations and communities deeply engaged in growing food and other crops, raising animals, and working toward a more just and sustainable local food system.

Growing from the Root's recommendations provide a road map for change, and resources exist to continue current programs and take on new initiatives that build toward a more just local food system, but only swift action and accountability in implementing the plan will begin to build public trust. Equally important will be the continued involvement, advocacy, and leadership of Philadelphia's urban agriculture community (i.e. residents, gardeners and farmers, grassroots and nonprofit organizations, etc.) to ensure ongoing progress toward realizing the plan's vision and implementing its recommendations.

In the years to come, Parks & Rec and partner agencies throughout City government will need to continue to engage Philadelphia's dedicated and passionate urban agriculture community, maintaining a dialogue and seeking feedback about the plan's progress. Indeed, evaluating progress - both in plan implementation and in the outcomes of the policies and programs that stem from this plan - will be critical. City agency staff and leadership, together with community input will need to determine a framework and metrics against which to measure success and shortfalls, and this data should be translated into a publicly accessible, easily digestible annual report on investments, impacts, and outcomes in each segment of Philadelphia's food system: Land, Production, Preparation & Distribution, Consumption, Food Waste Reduction, and People.

Together we will know we're making progress toward implementing a more just local food system as we see evidence of our shared vision taking root:

- > All **People** have access to nutritious, safe, locally grown food that they want to eat, when they want or need it.
- > All communities have access to **Land** on which to garden and grow food, land security so that they may remain on that land, invest in their growing spaces, and prosper, and a shared commitment to care for the land in gratitude for all that it provides.
- > The City and all communities recognize the practices of **Production** - of seed keeping, growing food or other crops, and raising animals - as necessary functions within the city. These acts are given space to thrive and supported by local regulations and policies for the many economic, environmental, health, and community benefits they offer.
- > The City and communities support local **Preparation and Distribution** of food, incubating an urban agriculture economy that drives community-based business and job growth, job training and living wages for workers in the farm industry, food service, and nonprofit sectors, and new public resources for processing and transporting agricultural goods within the city and region.
- > All neighborhoods offer residents agency in the foods they choose to **Consume**, whether they are growing their own food, foraging for edible plants and fungi within the city's landscape, or buying food from nearby farms, farmers' markets and stores.
- > All residents can deepen their connection to the Earth, to their food, and to each other with opportunities to **Reduce Food Waste** by preventing or repurposing food waste and by participating in a food system that is more efficient and sustainable.
- > All **People** can engage in the food system, with opportunities to learn, practice, and teach agricultural skills in their own communities, make a livelihood in agriculture or related fields, preserve and honor their cultures, and heal and build community by reconnecting to the land and practicing self-determination.



Philadelphia's urban agriculture spaces provide a wide range of benefits.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR THE FULL PLAN, VISIT:
www.phila.gov/programs/farmphilly**

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The City of Philadelphia | Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

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On behalf of the City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and the planning team, *thank you* to all the people who came out to meetings and participated in virtual convenings, to all who participated in an interview or focus group, supported the planning process by facilitating small group discussions and taking notes, took a survey, read and reviewed this plan, and trusted the planning process with their ideas and desires for the future of food, land, and agriculture in Philadelphia.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The following is the Nanticoke Lenno-Lenape Tribal Nation's standard Land Acknowledgment for those who seek to honor Lenno-Lenape people and their territory.

The land upon which we garden, grow, and gather is part of the traditional territory of the Lenno-Lenape, called Lenapehoking. The Lenape people lived in harmony with one another upon this territory for thousands of years. During the colonial era and early federal period, many were removed west and north, but some also remain among the three continuing historical communities in this region, the Nanticoke Lenno-Lenape Tribal Nation, the Ramapough-Lenape Tribal Nation, and the Powhatan-Renape Tribal Nation.

We acknowledge the Lenno-Lenape as the original people of this land and their continuing relationship with their territory. In our acknowledgment of this continued presence of Lenape people in their homeland, we affirm the aspiration of the great Lenape Chief Tamanend that there be harmony between the Indigenous people of this land and the descendants of the immigrants to this land, as long as the rivers and the creeks flow and the sun and moon and stars shine. Wanishi.