

Philadelphia's Urban Agriculture Plan:

GROWING FROM THE ROOT

2023



Growing Home Garden | Photo Credit: Commonwealth Media Services for PA Department of Agriculture



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 reimagined 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.



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Growing from the Root would like to thank everyone who contributed to the planning process and the making of this document, Philadelphia's first urban agriculture plan.

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Special thanks to those who helped design and execute an inclusive, accessible, and racially and economically equitable planning process consistent with the values of the plan. From the start, *Growing from the Root* set out to co-create a culturally competent approach to ensure that residents most impacted were engaged and represented in the planning process. From assembling the Steering Committee convened to guide the plan's development to providing services such as translation, American Sign Language interpretation, and childcare, this process strove to encourage broad and diverse participation, and Philadelphia's urban agriculture community turned out in large numbers.

Thank you, all.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT	1
I. INTRODUCTION	2
How to Navigate this Plan	4
Reconceptualizing Philadelphia’s Food System	6
Guiding Values & Vision for the Future	10
A Community-Informed Definition of Urban Agriculture	12
A Snapshot of Urban Agriculture in Philadelphia	14
Why Growing Food in Philadelphia is Necessary	20
Planting the Seeds for Philadelphia’s First Urban Agriculture Plan	25
History through the Lens of Racialized Land-Based Oppression	28
II. OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS	
The Planning Process	36
Who is this Plan For?	43
Goals for the Plan	45
III. PHILADELPHIA’S FOOD SYSTEM: TODAY & TOMORROW	
1] LAND	47
2] PRODUCTION	77
3] PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION	101
4] CONSUMPTION	117
5] FOOD WASTE REDUCTION & RECOVERY.....	139
6] PEOPLE	159
IV. IMPLEMENTATION	183
APPENDICES	195
A: Resources for Growers	196
B: List of Acronyms	200
C: Glossary	201
D: Notes	203
E: Sources for Historic Timeline	207

LIST OF MAPS & FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Philadelphia's Food System.....	7
FIGURE 2. Map of Active Gardens, Farms, and Other Urban Agriculture Spaces in 2020	14
FIGURE 3. Range of Urban Agriculture Activities in Philadelphia	15
FIGURE 4. The Benefits of Urban Agriculture.....	18
FIGURE 5. Map of Poverty and BIPOC Residents with Garden Locations Overlaid.....	20
FIGURE 6. Map of Access to Stores Selling Fresh Produce, with Garden Locations Overlaid.....	21
FIGURE 7. Map of Density of New Residential Building Permits, with Garden Locations Overlaid.....	22
FIGURE 8. Map of Lost Gardens and Farms, 2008-2019.....	23
FIGURE 9. Methods of Racialized Land-Based Oppression.....	28
FIGURE 10. Historic Timeline of Urban Agriculture in Philadelphia.....	30
FIGURE 11. The Multiple Levels of Plan Engagement.....	36
FIGURE 12. How Various Inputs Combine to Shape the Plan.....	37
FIGURE 13. Steps of Public Engagement in the Planning Process.....	37
FIGURE 14. Diagram of a Typical Garden with Multiple Parcels and Owners.....	49
FIGURE 15. Analysis of Garden Ownership and Land Security.....	51
FIGURE 16. Surplus Land and Paths to Land Security.....	51
FIGURE 17. Examples of Small-Scale Food Production.....	105





LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Growing from the Root seeks to contextualize this plan about land, people, and agriculture by honoring and acknowledging the original stewards of what is currently known as Philadelphia.

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

The land upon which we garden, grow, and gather is part of the traditional territory of the Lenni-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 Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, the Ramapough-Lenape Tribal Nation, and the Powhatan-Renape Tribal Nation.

We acknowledge the Lenni-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.

I. INTRODUCTION

GROWING FROM THE ROOT



Philadelphia is fortunate to have a robust tradition of urban agriculture, rooted in 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 and establish a plan in which urban agriculture contributes to the equitable development of Philadelphia over the long-term
- Confront the legacy of structural racism and land-based oppression in the city
- Establish a 10-year framework for investing in and supporting agriculture and food justice, and identify pathways and opportunities for the City and affiliated partners to support new and existing urban agriculture projects, including community gardens, market farms, for-profit enterprises, and educational programs
- Outline the resources, policies, processes, and programs necessary to sustain urban agriculture in Philadelphia for future generations
- Clarify the roles that City government, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders should play in supporting urban agriculture, and develop recommendations for implementation and evaluation of the plan

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,

Photo Credit: Sonia Galiber

community advocates, and City staff (i.e., public service workers) 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



HOW TO NAVIGATE *GROWING FROM THE ROOT*

Growing from the Root is a ten-year comprehensive plan that will serve as a road map for a thriving local food system and economy, with an urban agricultural foundation. This introductory chapter provides an overview of Philadelphia's food system, describes urban agriculture in Philadelphia today, and traces the history of agriculture in the city through time. The second chapter documents the public engagement process that shaped the plan, including the community-driven values, vision, and goals for the future of urban agriculture in Philadelphia. The remaining chapters focus on the elements of the food system: Land, Production, Preparation & Distribution, Consumption, Waste Reduction, and People. Each chapter envisions a new way forward toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable food system. Each food system chapter includes:

- An overview of the topics covered
- Why these topics are important to the food system
- How the City currently interacts with this element of the food system, including information about what is working, critical needs, issues, and challenges
- Potential for change and lessons learned from other cities
- Recommendations for policy, programs, partnerships, projects, and more

Every recommendation has a set of action steps and names the City agencies and partners necessary to implement. The recommendations also address phasing, identifying short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities. It is important to remember that each chapter featuring a different element of the food system is interrelated with the others. The chapters work together to accomplish the goals of this plan.

A concluding Implementation chapter explores the institutional support and resources needed to take action on the recommendations. Altogether, this plan provides a blueprint for the infrastructure needed to support those who carry out and benefit from the work of urban agriculture in Philadelphia.

LAND & PEOPLE, THREADS THROUGHOUT THE PLAN

Land is central to how farmers and gardeners in Philadelphia understand the local food system and the role of urban agriculture within the food system. People are the driving force, holding and contributing to all elements of the local 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.

LOOK OUT FOR THE TWO LINES THAT RUN THROUGH THE CENTER OF THIS BOOK. They represent **land** and **people**—key to understanding every part of the food system.

ACCORDING TO LOCAL GROWERS (the people who contribute to our food system)

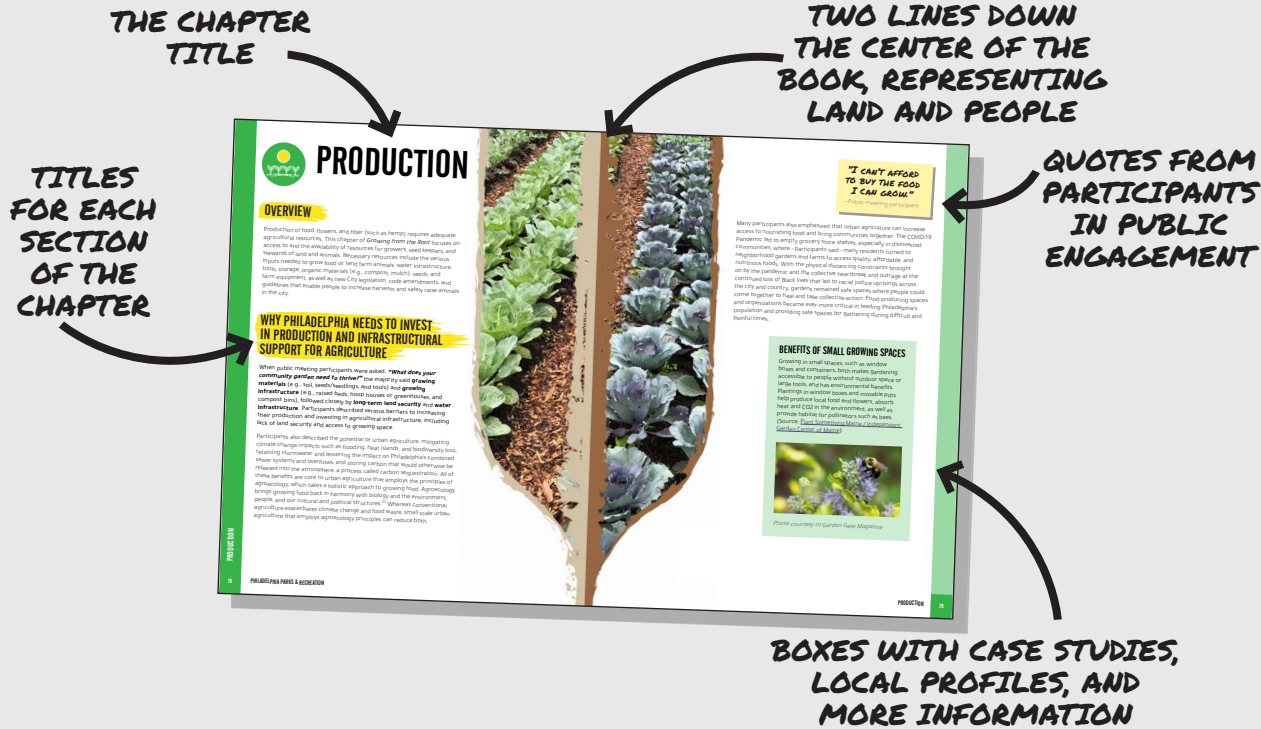
Urban agriculture is:

- **Using the land** in a dense city to grow, and using that growth to nourish communities, continuing ancestral knowledge
- **Stewardship of the land** by and for the people; remediating and improving the land through cultivation

Land is essential—urban agriculture:

- **Connects food, land, the environment, and culture across generations**
- **Reconnects us with the land, nature, ecology, and each other**
- **Connects us to the land and the food that sustains us**, and supports community building and empowerment
- Is a powerful practice in **economic, climate, land, and racial justice**
- Can help us **use land in regenerative, collective, just, and productive ways** to mitigate and/or adapt to a changing climate
- Teaches **respect for the land**, understanding of where food comes from and supports healthy and sustainable living
- Sustains our communities spiritually, emotionally, and nutritionally, teaching us to **take care of our land and each other.**

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FOOD SYSTEM CHAPTERS



HOW TO READ THE RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS are marked with an X

TYPE OF CHANGE including administrative actions, legislative change, operations changes, budgeting adjustments, and partnerships. Recommendations that are currently unfunded will need to go through the standard budget process to receive City funds.

LEAD AGENCY + PARTNERS with the lead agencies listed first and partners next

TIMELINE needed to accomplish the recommendation, including short-term (one to two years), medium-term (three to five years), and long-term (six to ten years)

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Ground Philadelphia's Urban Farming Programs and Practices in Agroecology and Develop Resources, Facilities, and Partnerships that Directly Support Agriculture Activities in Philadelphia			
X	2.1 Establish an Office of Urban Agriculture within the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide centralized support for growers, and coordinate with City agencies and partners to implement the plan and track progress.	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Mayor's Office, City Council, Finance, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Increase the number of permanent positions dedicated to local food production and policy, and advocate for and implement urban agriculture related programs and policies.	Budget	City Council, Finance, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Administer an operational budget for Parks & Recreation's Farm Philly program to expand and sustain its programs, including but not limited to improving, expanding, or relocating the Carousel House Farm (i.e., Parks & Rec's public education and production farm).	Budget	City Council, Finance, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY...?

Wondering about an acronym or the definition of terms such as agroecology, food sovereignty, and rematriation? **SEE APPENDIX C.**

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."¹ Further challenges in our current food system include hazardous growing practices that rely on chemicals and monocultures, extreme food waste, and labor exploitation of farm workers in the region.

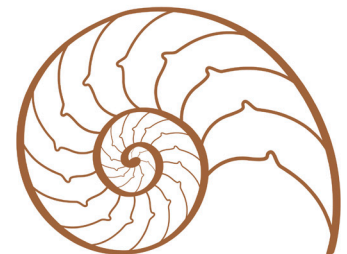
How, where, and by whom food is produced, prepared, distributed, consumed, and disposed of cannot be considered in isolation. To nurture a more just local food system and improve each of these steps, the entire food system must be considered, and urban agriculture has an important role to play.

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 several 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.
- Just as the spiral opens, 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.
- Every element of the food system is interrelated. Each part of the cycle informs the others and is in constant dialogue with people and constant relationship to land.



*Illustration of a traditional food system
Image courtesy of UC Davis Sustainable Agriculture
Research and Education Program*



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.

FIGURE 1. Philadelphia's Food System

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.



Photo Credit: all photos provided by Philadelphia Parks & Recreation except the image of peppers courtesy of PHS

UNRAVELING PHILADELPHIA'S FOOD SYSTEM

Growing from the Root unravels the spiral of Philadelphia's food system to take a closer look at each inter-connected element.



LAND

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, storage for carbon (CO₂) in the soil, and a means to absorb stormwater. Land fosters cultural connections to ancestors and their practices, as well as connections to cultural traditions. It hosts places that bring people together and creates economic opportunities that support livelihoods. People care for the land so the land may sustain not only people today but also the generations to come.



PRODUCTION

Production is the act of cultivating crops, growing food, and raising animals.

Agricultural production starts from seed and continues through to harvest—and many of these steps require land and soil. 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.



PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION

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.



CONSUMPTION

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.



FOOD WASTE

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 (e.g., eggshells, banana peels, apple cores) and other organic materials (e.g., horse manure, leaves, lawn clippings, and straw) 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. Repurposed food waste brings value to other elements of the food system (e.g., compost for gardens and farms). This element supports the sustainability of the food system and a healthier environment.



PEOPLE

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.

GUIDING VALUES

Growing from the Root advances five guiding values that are the foundation of the plan's vision for Philadelphia's food system. These values and the vision for the future are built from the words and ideas of growers and gardeners across the city. They reflect a 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:



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Support 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 Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) by centering their voices and experiences.²



CULTURE

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



CLIMATE 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 structural racism, and pull from past examples while exploring new policies, programs, and possibilities.

Along with the five guiding values, *Growing from the Root's* vision for Philadelphia's food system takes direction from the principles of agroecology, which are woven throughout this plan. Agroecology is "an integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems. It seeks to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans, and the environment while taking into consideration the social aspects that need to be addressed for a sustainable and fair food system."³ Agroecology is also about place, community, and self-determination through land. People who grow food understand that "growing with a garden" is a fundamental principle and experience. Growers pay attention to the needs of the plants they are growing and learn over time what conditions work best. The results are nourishing food crops, medicines, aromatics and seeds, all influenced by the grower's care, respect, and labor throughout the plant's growing cycle.

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 within this plan's vision, 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 efforts towards justice for tribal peoples are necessary and important. This plan takes a small step towards justice for tribal peoples, but there is still a lot of work to be done. See page 85 for examples from other cities of strategies to advance this goal.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Based on the guiding values and community input collected through the planning process, *Growing from the Root* proposes the following vision for Philadelphia's food future.

Together, Philadelphia envisions a food future in which:

- > 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 have 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.

Continued collaboration between the City, residents, and community advocates will be required to make this vision for a racially and economically just food system in Philadelphia a reality. Real progress will require removing barriers that hinder urban agriculture and investing in community-driven solutions. Supporting policy changes, public programs, and funding, and making necessary resources and facilities available to farmers and gardeners will be critical. Tracking change will require a system for accountability and measuring progress and ultimately allow for a more just local food system to thrive.



A COMMUNITY-INFORMED DEFINITION OF URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban agriculture, commonly known as urban farming, community gardening, or foraging, refers to growing plants, rearing animals, or harvesting what grows naturally, to produce food within a city. Urban agriculture is integral to every part of the local food system, and it can include food production, marketing, distribution, sale, and sharing within the city.

The definition of urban agriculture for this plan also extends beyond food. Urban agriculture means building community with neighbors, cultivating wellness and wellbeing, and learning, teaching, and passing down knowledge. It means connecting with the Earth,

with ancestral practices, and with family histories. It encompasses a range of economic opportunities: community-based work and job creation, nonprofit initiatives, private and cooperative business enterprises, and the public sector's role in supporting living wage jobs in agriculture and agriculture-related fields. Urban agriculture means tending to the health of people and the planet, and working to restore the soil, improve air and water quality, mitigate heat and flood risk, and reduce waste. And it means doing all of these things right here, in all neighborhoods across Philadelphia.

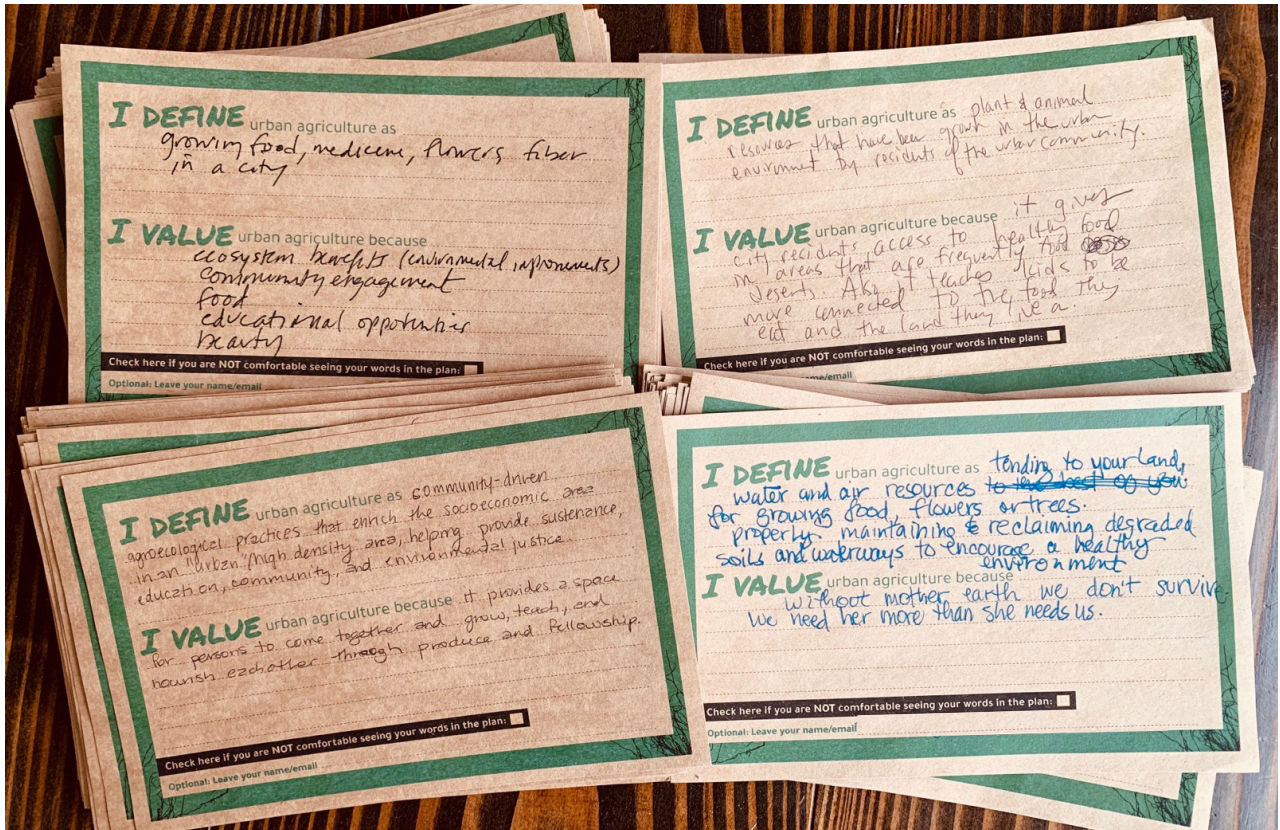
HELP US

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?



Participants in the first public meeting wrote down how they define urban agriculture and what they value about it. The photo shows some of the responses.

This broad and community-informed definition of urban agriculture was shaped by over 180 statements submitted by participants in *Growing from the Root's* first public meeting, representing Philadelphia's diverse urban agriculture population. Participants' submissions emphasize the importance of food access, land access,

and the benefits that stem from coming together to learn and share as culturally diverse communities. They speak to human relationships to the natural world around us, to history, culture, livelihood, and self-determination—the freedom and ability to take action with purpose.

IN THE WORDS OF GROWERS FROM ACROSS THE CITY, 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."

"SHARING. DURING THE PANDEMIC, I WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE EGGS TO ELDERLY NEIGHBORS WHO COULD NOT GET TO A STORE OR THE STORE WAS OUT."

"[A TRADITION THAT] PROMOTES COMMUNITY BUILDING AND HEALING, AND PUSHES US TO THINK ABOUT OUR POSITION AS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS, AND LASTLY OUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE ANOTHER."

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

"[A PRACTICE THAT] BREEDS RESISTANCE THROUGH COMMUNITY CONTROL OF OUR BACKYARDS AND THE OPEN GREEN SPACES THAT STILL EXIST UNDER CAPITALISM."

"AGRICULTURE THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO ANYONE IN THE CITY."

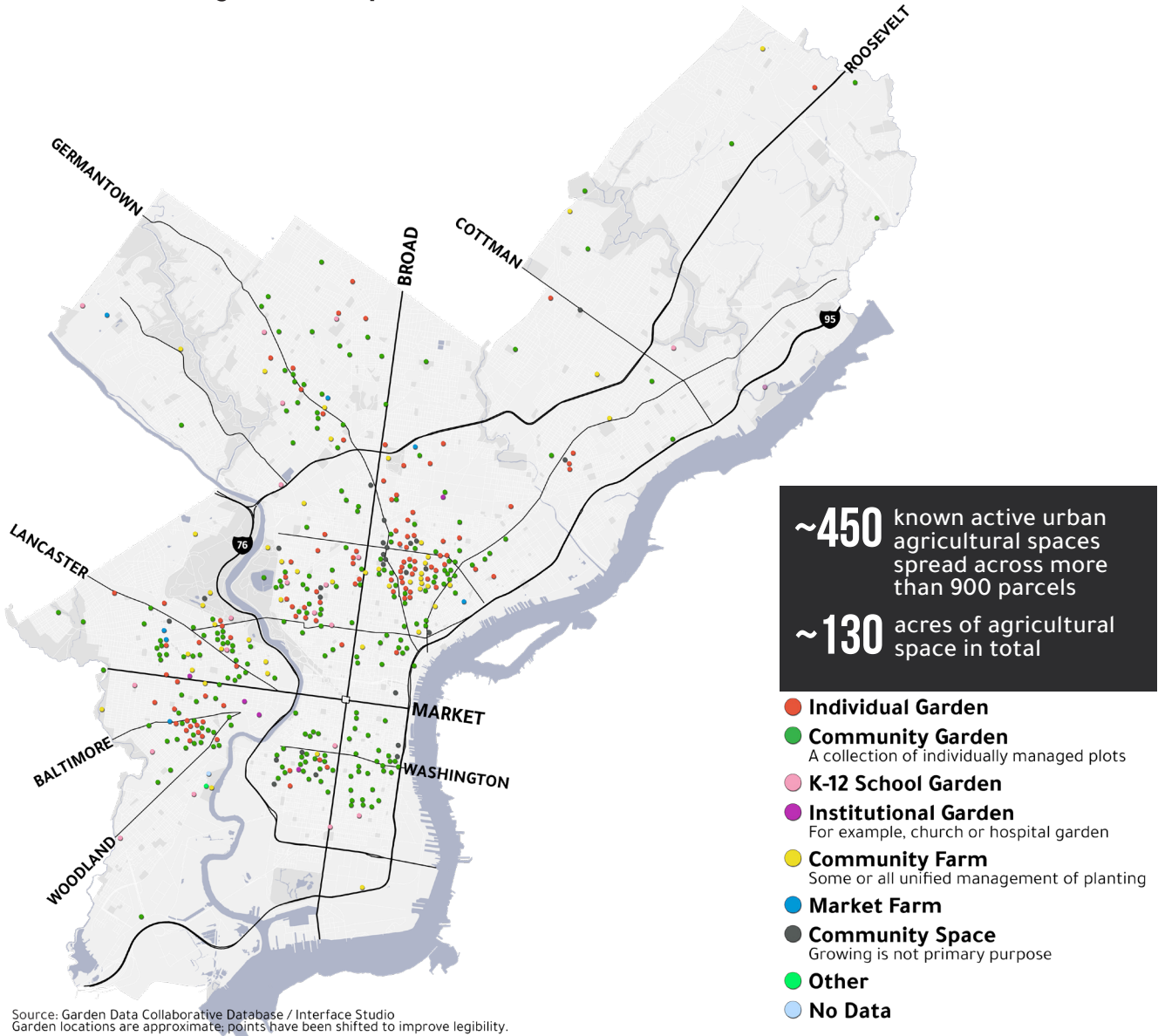
"[A PRACTICE THAT] WILL CARRY US INTO A MORE JUST, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE, SHOULD WE CHOOSE TO INVEST IN IT."

"[A PROCESS THAT] GIVES AGENCY TO INDIVIDUALS OVER THEIR LIVES, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING. IT HELPS PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT IT TAKES TO GROW FOOD AND PUTS A HIGHER VALUE ON THE FOOD THEY PURCHASE. IT ROOTS US IN OUR PAST AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCE THAT MANY OF US HAVE HAD AND WANT TO KEEP UP WITH IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS."

- Quotes from the first public meeting

A SNAPSHOT OF URBAN AGRICULTURE IN PHILADELPHIA

FIGURE 2. Map of Active Gardens, Farms, and Other Urban Agriculture Spaces in 2020⁴



BY THE NUMBERS: THE FOOTPRINT OF URBAN AGRICULTURE IN PHILADELPHIA TODAY⁵

> 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		

IN PHILADELPHIA, URBAN AGRICULTURE IS:

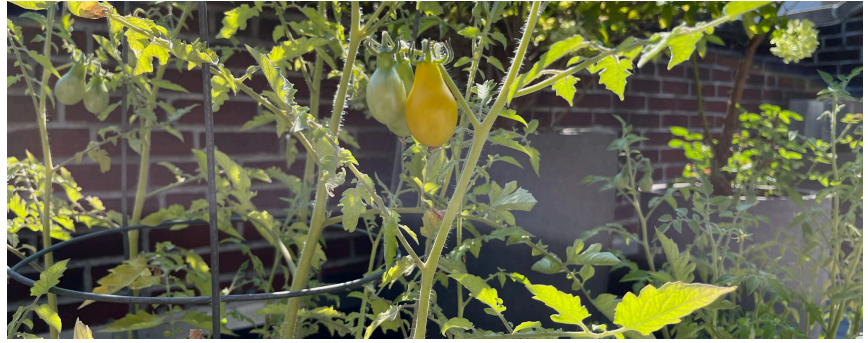


FIGURE 3. Range of Urban Agriculture Activities in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA GROWING SPACES

Growing from the Root classifies growing spaces into ten garden types.

Individual Gardens are run by one person, family, or business. They are typically private and production is generally for personal use. Individual gardens are often located on an individual's home property or side yard.



Community Gardens contain individual plots for use by community members. They are generally publicly accessible or open to the community members who maintain plots.



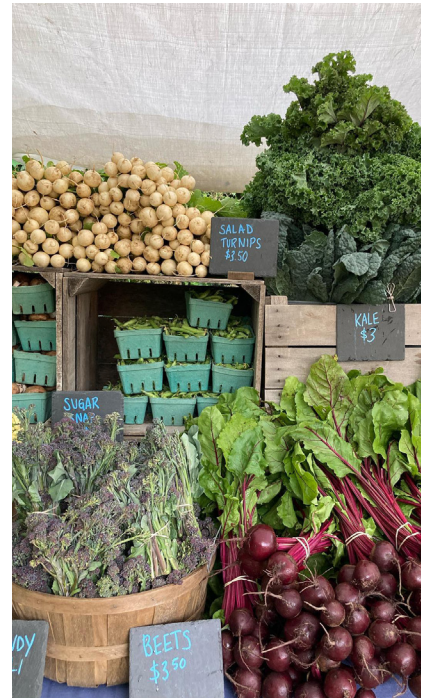
Growing Home Garden

Source: PA Department of Agriculture, Commonwealth Media Services

Community Farms take a unified approach to the management of planting raised rows, instead of individual plots. They are often run by community organizations, groups, or nonprofits, and crops are often shared or sold locally.

Mill Creek Farm

Source: www.millcreekurbanfarm.org



Market Farms are business enterprises that produce crops, seeds, or flowers for sale. They can be run by an individual (with workers) or by a cooperative of farmers.

Germantown Kitchen Garden

Source: www.facebook.com

Social Gardens are green or open spaces that function primarily as a social space for community use. They are not necessarily food-producing.

Hicks Street Garden

Source: www.facebook.com





Institutional Gardens are run by places of worship, hospitals, libraries, prisons, universities, or other institutions (excluding K-12 schools).

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) Sea Garden
Source: www.chop.edu



School Gardens are run by a K-12 school, generally on school property. They are generally used by students and teachers, with some access for parents, other known and trusted individuals, or community members who help maintain the garden.

Gideon Elementary Garden
Source: www.phila.gov



Food Forests/Orchards

are cultivated edible landscapes producing fruits, nuts, and other perennial crops. Other city spaces like public right-of-way, parks, and other natural areas may also include edible and medicinal plants sought by people knowledgeable about foraging.

Source: www.phillyorchards.org



Indoor Agriculture and Rooftop Gardens

may employ vertical growing techniques, hydroponics, aquaponics, and other methods within or on top of buildings. They may be run by individuals, institutions, nonprofits, business enterprises, or other entities.

Aquaponics in Adaire School's Science Lab
Photo Credit: Michaela Winberg for Billy Penn



Agricultural Uses include other farming activities such as greenhouses, nursery crop cultivation, raising animals (e.g., bees, goats, hogs, hens, and cows), large animal veterinary facilities, and agricultural support services (e.g., farm machinery equipment, organic materials or compost facilities).

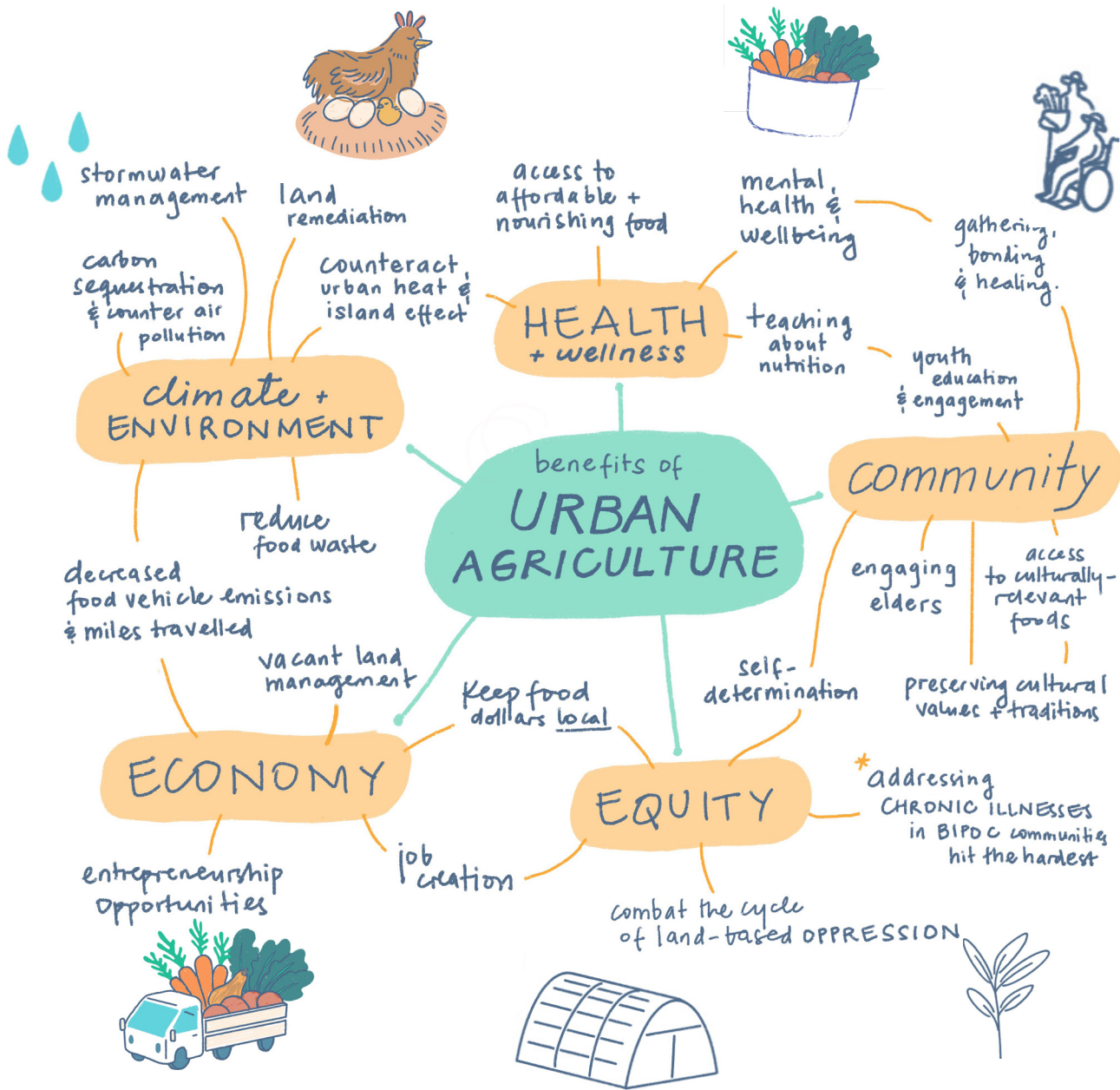
Milling Trees at Organics Recycling Center
Source: Philadelphia Parks & Rec

THE BENEFITS OF URBAN AGRICULTURE IN PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia's urban agricultural spaces provide a wide range of benefits, both to the people who tend them, who find community and nourishment there, and to the city overall. These productive green spaces support climate resiliency and a healthier environment, the local economy, and health and wellness. They support

food sovereignty and food justice work undertaken by neighbors for neighbors. In Philadelphia and elsewhere, urban agricultural spaces are an integral part of a healthy neighborhood, co-existing with existing land uses and complementing potential new affordable housing and equitable development.

FIGURE 4. The Benefits of Urban Agriculture



LOCAL PROFILES

FOOD JUSTICE IN ACTION

Gardens in Philadelphia have for generations told the story of Black communities escaping sharecropping and Jim Crow in the South and bringing farming traditions to Philadelphia. Similarly, immigrants to this city have sustained cultural connections and traditions through growing. The formation of food justice spaces and organizations led by these communities have been instrumental in providing food production support in their communities.

> **Glenwood Green Acres**, a 3.5-acre space in North Philadelphia, is considered one of the city's nine Keystone Gardens—a special designation from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) for gardens “distinguished by their large size, longevity, and commitment.” In existence for over 30 years, it is the largest preserved community garden, and one of the oldest. Growers cultivate heritage vegetables like collard greens, lettuce, peppers, eggplant, squash, string beans, okra, and blackberries. Started by a husband and wife who were gardeners and lived across the street, the garden remains active today, with many Black elders still tending their plots and sharing knowledge, produce, and stories with the next generation of growers.⁶



> **VietLead** is a grassroots community organization serving the Vietnamese and Southeast Asian communities in Philadelphia and South Jersey. Its Farm and Food Sovereignty Program stems from a belief that “the land provides refugees and immigrants along with other communities of color a source of self-determination through growing and cooking fresh cultural foods.” At two local garden sites, the group facilitates intergenerational relationships between youth and elders, grounds participants in the “history of our plant-cestors and people ancestors,” and fosters mental, physical, and emotional health among “descendants of a people impacted by war and trauma.”⁷



> Beginning in 1973, **Norris Square Neighborhood Project (NSNP)** has created and fostered places of gathering, cultural vision, and resiliency for the Puerto Rican community of Kensington and beyond. Through its network of six gardens, including Las Parcelas, all dedicated to Puerto Rican cultural heritage and the delivery of youth programming. NSNP continues to embody and reflect the cultural wisdom that is deeply rooted in community and intergenerational relationships therein. NSNP values the cultivation of young leaders in and around Norris Square, and endeavors to prepare these youth for a future in which art, agriculture, technology, and cultural awareness can be leveraged for individual agency and community prosperity.



Top: Eddie Corbitt, of Germantown, waters his plot at Glenwood Green Acres (Photo courtesy of Akira Suwa for The Philadelphia Inquirer).

Middle: Students gather at Furness Community School Garden as part of VietLead’s Farm and Food Sovereignty Program (Photo courtesy of VietLead, www.vietlead.org).

Bottom: The late Tomasita Romero and Iris Brown standing in front of the Casita at Las Parcelas; co-creators of Las Parcelas, Villa Africana Colobo, Raíces, La Paz, El Batey and Butterfly gardens in Norris Square, and leaders of the original group of women activists. (Photo courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania, www.philaplace.org).

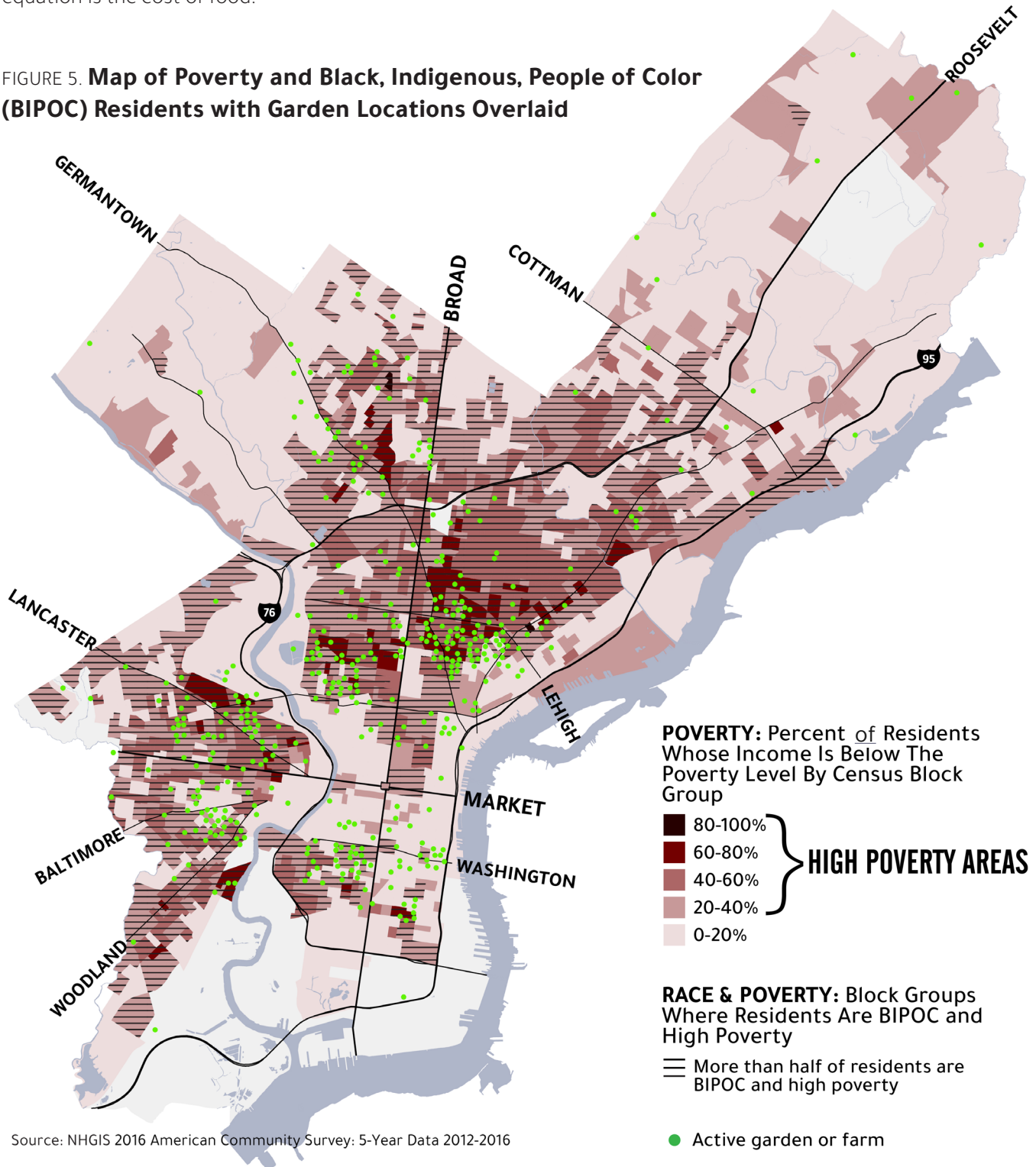
WHY GROWING FOOD IN PHILADELPHIA IS NECESSARY

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 four⁸—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

FIGURE 5. **Map of Poverty and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Residents with Garden Locations Overlaid**

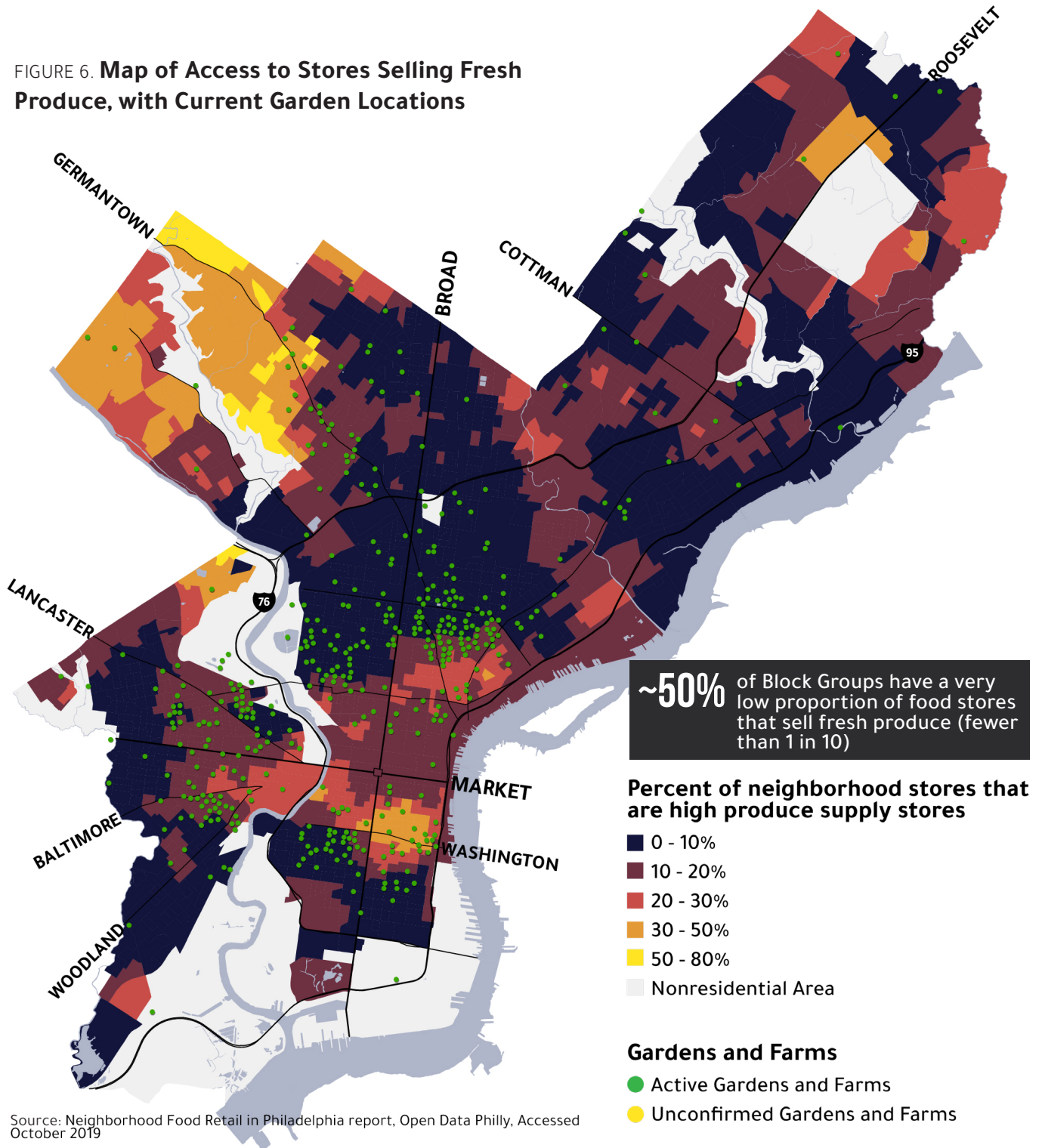


Source: NHGIS 2016 American Community Survey: 5-Year Data 2012-2016

In Philadelphia, 78 percent of Black residents and 80 percent of Spanish-speaking residents live in high poverty areas. Data on active garden and farm locations show that they are located predominantly in these high-poverty, Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) neighborhoods, especially in North, West, and South Philadelphia. About two out of every three active gardens and farms in the city are in Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty (RCAPs), where over 50 percent of residents are BIPOC and over 20 percent live below the poverty line. This affirms the role of urban

agriculture in providing essential food, especially in low income BIPOC communities where need is dire and food stores do not provide enough access to fresh produce. According to the Department of Public Health's 2019 *Neighborhood Food Retail Study*, in roughly half of the city's Census Block Groups have fewer than one in every 10 food stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables.⁹ While gardens and farms could play a role in providing produce in those low-produce areas, only 20 percent of low-produce Block Groups have at least one active garden or farm.

FIGURE 6. **Map of Access to Stores Selling Fresh Produce, with Current Garden Locations**

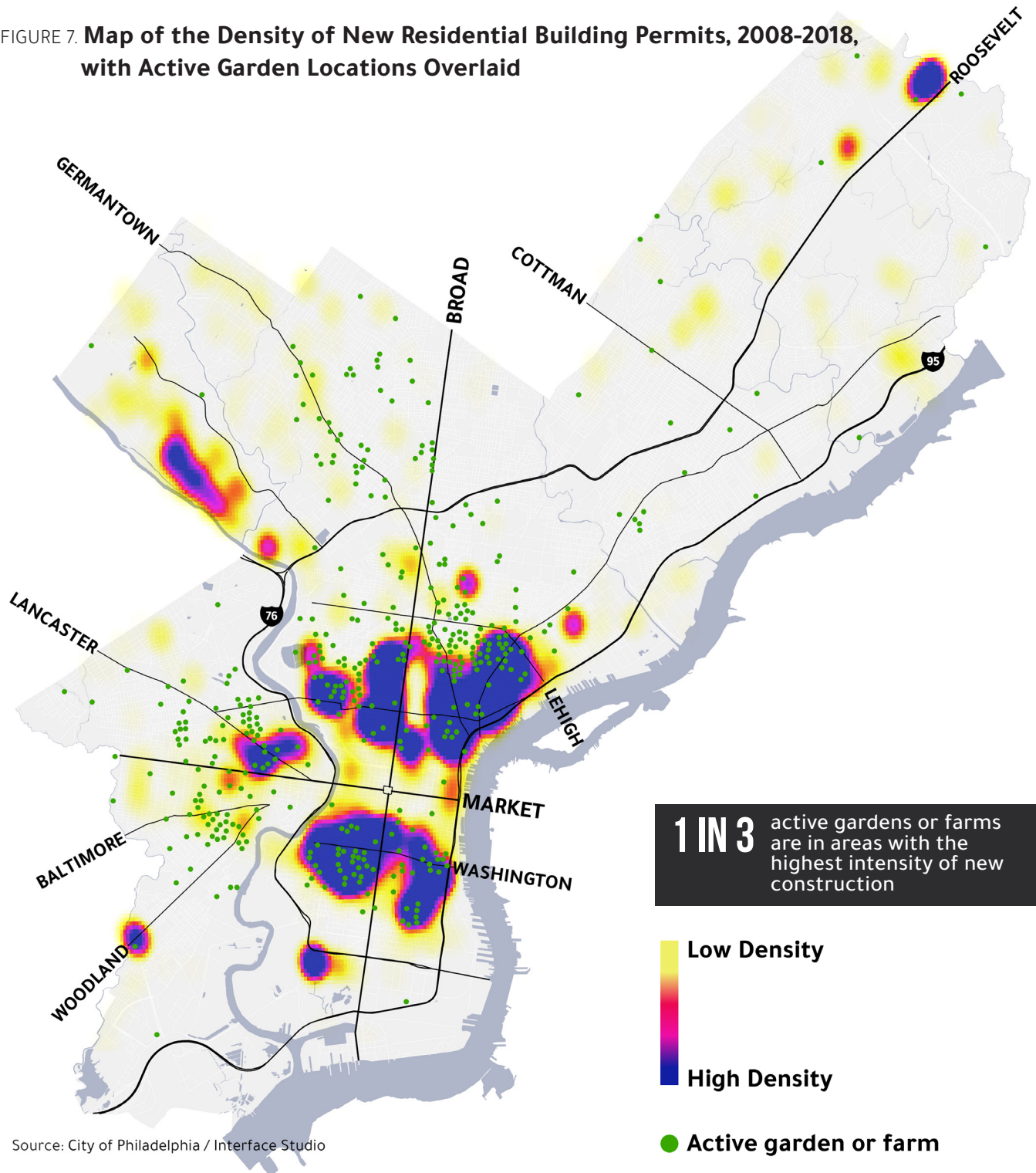


Source: Neighborhood Food Retail in Philadelphia report, Open Data Philly, Accessed October 2019

With land insecurity the number one issue for Philadelphia growers, the future of many active and essential growing spaces is uncertain. A full third are in areas with the highest intensity of new construction, making them vulnerable to demolition and/or redevelopment.

In fact, some gardens and farms have been lost to new development, which poses immense risks to gardens that do not have secure ownership; some have been demolished, only to remain vacant; and some are overgrown and overlooked today, after programs and resources that once supported community use of these spaces ended.

FIGURE 7. **Map of the Density of New Residential Building Permits, 2008-2018, with Active Garden Locations Overlaid**

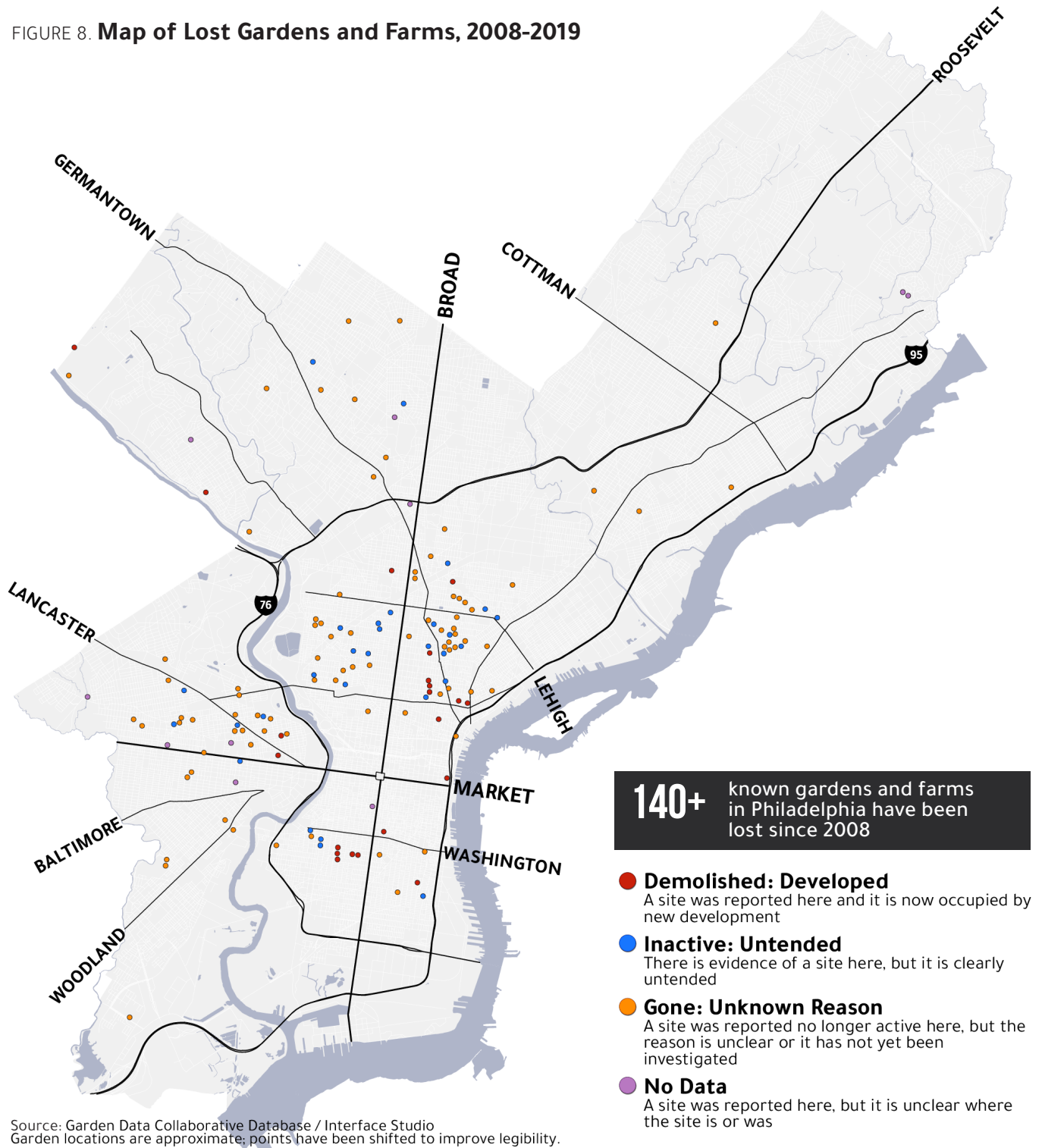


Source: City of Philadelphia / Interface Studio

More than half (54%) of participants polled during the planning process said they know of a garden that is currently threatened, and 46 percent know of a garden that has already been lost due a range of reasons including demolition by land owners, redevelopment, and burnout or departure of garden leaders. An analysis of 2019 data from the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative, supplemented by data from the planning team and participants in public engagement,

revealed a loss of over 140 known gardens and farms that were in existence and documented in the *Community Gardening in Philadelphia 2008 Harvest Report* by Drs. Domenic Vitiello and Michael Nairn of The University of Pennsylvania.¹⁰ The data also identifies new gardens that have taken root in the years since 2008, so the data does not show a net loss of over 140 gardens over this time period. Nonetheless, issues of land insecurity remain the number one issue for farmers and gardeners citywide.

FIGURE 8. **Map of Lost Gardens and Farms, 2008-2019**



Lost and Threatened Gardens cards (e.g., the image to the right) were available at the first public meeting. Each completed card allowed the Planning Team to verify and update the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative database. The insights shared also helped better understand current threats and what was lost and why.

"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."

—Public meeting participant

KNOW A LOST GARDEN?
We hope to map your entry to better understand how this closure or removal fits within the context of wider changes across Philadelphia

GARDEN NAME _____
ADDRESS or INTERSECTION _____

...TELL US MORE MARK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

COMMUNITY GARDEN [INDIVIDUALLY MANAGED PLOTS]
 COMMUNITY FARM [COLLECTIVELY MANAGED PLOTS]
 COMMUNITY SPACE [FOR SOCIAL USE]
 INDIVIDUAL GARDEN [PRIVATE]
 OTHER/UNSURE

TELL US WHAT HAPPENED, HOW WAS THIS GARDEN LOST?

DATE OPENED - CLOSED _____
 WAS THIS GARDEN DEMOLISHED? YES NO
 HAS THE SITE BEEN DEVELOPED? YES NO

ABOUT PHILADELPHIA'S GARDEN DATA

TRACKING THE FOOTPRINT OF URBAN AGRICULTURE OVER TIME

The maps and statistics about Philadelphia's agricultural spaces presented in this plan rely on September 2019 community garden data provided to the Planning Team by the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative (PGDC). The Planning Team updated the database to reflect current conditions and returned the data to PGDC in October 2021 for ongoing stewardship. Years of study, data collection, and tracking preceded *Growing from the Root's* data analysis. Below is a summary:

- **Penn State Extension's first garden coordinator, Libby Goldstein**, reports 501 community vegetable gardens supported by Penn State Extension in 1994.¹¹
- **Community Gardening in Philadelphia 2008 Harvest Report** by Drs. Domenic Vitiello and Michael Nairn of The University of Pennsylvania documents a decline in food producing community gardens from 501 in 1994 to 226 in 2008. The authors based their analysis on a list of over 600 possible garden sites received from Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) and Penn State Agricultural Extension; rigorous ground-truthing verified 226 food producing community gardens, a 54% decline since 1994.
- Vitiello and Nairn entrust their data to Amy Laura Cahn at the **Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP)'s Garden Justice Legal Initiative (GJLI)**, founded in 2011, which begins advocacy to preserve and protect local growing spaces by pursuing land security for existing gardens and farms.
- The **Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative forms** in 2016, with PILCOP, PHS, Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT), Haverford College, Villanova University, and community growers (today, Soil Generation) working together to combine the 2008 *Harvest Report* data with PHS's newest garden list and a variety of other sources. PGDC members then begin a lengthy process of cleaning the data, removing duplicates, fixing errors, and identifying gardens lost over time. NGT hires The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) to produce an initial map of community garden locations and parcels. Faculty and student research assistants at Haverford College complete the mapping and data cleaning effort, and the Collaborative's partner organizations, supported by student labor from Haverford, Villanova, and Temple, ground-truth the new garden database and join it to parcel data from the Philadelphia Water Department. PGDC members update this database periodically, with notable contributions from Dr. Craig Borowiak of Haverford College and Dr. Peleg Kremer of Villanova University.
- The **Growing from the Root** Planning Team begins with PGDC's community garden database and adds 2019 Philadelphia Food System data collected by Dr. Kremer on Institutional Gardens, Urban Farms, and Orchards, 2020 Philadelphia Orchard Project locations, 2020 NGT Owned and Leased Property data, and 2020 PHS CityHarvest data, plus survey data collected from participants at the first *Growing from the Root* public meeting. This is the data represented in the plan and returned to PGDC.

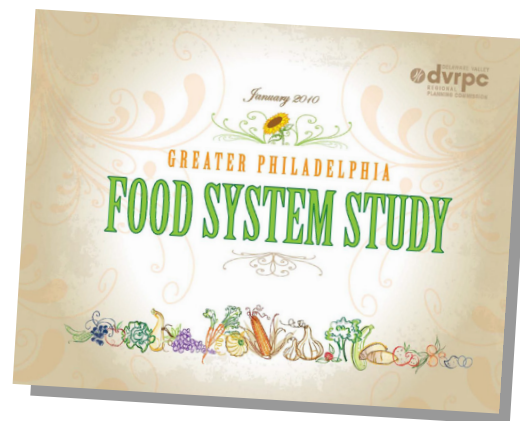
PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST URBAN AGRICULTURE PLAN

For well over a decade, growers, community advocates, nonprofits, and Philadelphia City staff and elected officials have called for more support for urban agriculture and more investment to build an equitable and sustainable food system. Currently, the food system continues to underserve residents who live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of deep poverty and low-to-no walkable access to food markets. According to the US Department of Agriculture, over 18 percent of Philadelphians lack access to enough food for a healthy, active life.¹²

Land insecurity, hunger, and food-related illnesses, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease, disproportionately affect the city's BIPOC communities, which make up more than half the population. Systemic structural, racial, and socioeconomic barriers prevent communities from being able to create and self-determine their own food systems. Meaningful change requires systemic solutions that address the root causes of harmful cycles and patterns.

Today, the effort to ensure that all Philadelphians have access to fresh, nourishing, and affordable food is simultaneously losing and gaining ground. Zoning changes in 2012 made gardening and farming permissible activities on most land in the city, and the 2013 Philadelphia Land Bank Law identified urban agriculture as a priority community beneficial use for vacant land. In 2016, City Council voted to approve a stormwater fee discount for gardens. However, this evidence of forward progress and demonstration of support for urban agriculture within the City, contrasts with ongoing concerns about access to land for growing food in Philadelphia.

In 2008, University of Pennsylvania researchers reported that the number of community gardens in Philadelphia declined by 54 percent between 1994 and 2008.¹³ This study, along with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's (DVRPC) 2010 *Greater Philadelphia Food System* report, solidified the need for more advocacy around growing food and land access in Philadelphia. DVRPC's study concluded that the food supply in the region's 100-mile foodshed is



“not sufficient to meet Greater Philadelphia’s consumer demand.”¹⁴ The DVRPC study highlighted a “deficit of nearly 2.8 million acres of farmland that would be needed to supply the current population,”¹⁵ and the need for “a plan for a more sustainable and resilient food system... [with] recommendations for different audiences, ranging from federal and state policymakers to county planners, and from nonprofit service providers to individuals.”¹⁶

Part of the problem is a lack of direction, investment, and coordination at the city, state, and federal level necessary to support a thriving urban agriculture community. Presently, philanthropic resources also do not meet the growing needs of the urban agriculture community. *Growing from the Root*, Philadelphia’s urban agriculture plan, is an opportunity to address some of the challenges of the current food system with strategies to encourage a more localized food economy.

It has taken time and dedication both within City government and through community organizing to lay the groundwork and build the political will for the City’s first urban agriculture plan. In 2008, then-Mayor Michael Nutter pledged to make Philadelphia the greenest city in America, creating the Office of Sustainability and establishing the Philadelphia Food Charter by executive order. The charter affirmed the City’s commitment to developing coordinated municipal food and urban agriculture policy, and providing safe, affordable, locally grown, and healthy food for all Philadelphians.

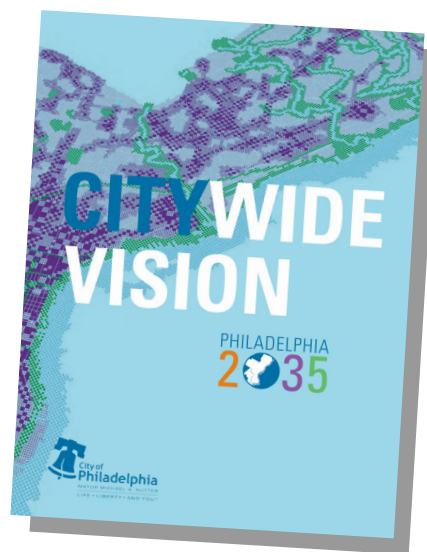
In 2009, the Office of Sustainability published its first *Greenworks* plan, targeting an improved local food system with urban agriculture as a key component of a more sustainable city. In 2011, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission published *Philadelphia2035*, which wrote urban agriculture into the citywide vision. Also in 2011, the Office of Sustainability together with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec), created the Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC), a diverse body of volunteer local and regional stakeholders appointed to advise the City in efforts to create a more just food system.



While institutional change was afoot within City Hall, farmers, gardeners, and urban agriculture advocates across the City were organizing, educating, and campaigning for more sweeping change. Youth food justice leaders presented the Youth Food Bill of Rights at the National Constitution Center, naming their rights to “culturally affirming foods,” “nutrition education,” and “healthy foods in school.” The Public Interest Law Center, a nonprofit law firm that fights for Philadelphia communities facing discrimination, inequality, and poverty,¹⁷ launched the Garden Justice Legal Initiative (GJLI) in 2011 to provide *pro bono* legal support to gardens and farms at risk of losing their land, and to offer community education.¹⁸

Meanwhile, a diverse coalition of advocates, among them the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land Coalition, Garden Justice Legal Initiative, Healthy Foods Green Spaces, and the Philly Land Bank Alliance worked to pass the Philadelphia Land Bank Law¹⁹ through the City Council in 2013. Successful advocacy helped pave the way for the new Land Bank, empowered to “return vacant and underutilized property to productive use through a unified, predictable, and transparent process,” including urban agriculture. The first Land Bank Strategic Plan, published in 2015, identified seven primary goals to guide Land Bank activity, among them to “reinforce open space initiatives and urban agriculture.”²⁰

As the Land Bank operationalized, development continued to threaten and destroy gardens and farms. In early 2016, Soil Generation—a Black- and Brown-led grassroots coalition of growers—organized alongside other community organizations, gardeners, farmers, nonprofits, city agencies, and FPAC to bring over 100 advocates to testify at City Council’s first Urban Agriculture Public Hearing. At the hearing, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, chair of the Committee on the Environment, said: “I have struggled as I sit here, trying to figure out and remember the last time we had an audience of witnesses, testifiers, and advocates that were as richly diverse—in terms of age, in terms of cross-sections of the city, in terms of ethnicity, in terms of energy and enthusiasm.”²¹ The collective voice of the community helped build support for urban agriculture and raise awareness that a plan was needed.



Prior City plans identified the need for urban agriculture and preservation of growing spaces in Philadelphia, helping to set the stage for Growing from the Root. Above are images of these plans, including the original Greenworks Philadelphia Vision Plan (2009), Philadelphia 2035 Citywide Vision (2011), and the original Philadelphia Land Bank Strategic Plan (2015).

In 2017, FPAC appointed and ex officio members began laying the groundwork for the creation of an Urban Agriculture Plan. FPAC contracted with Corajus (Coalition for Racial Justice) to survey the needs of growers, residents who raise agricultural animals, neighborhood leaders, nonprofits, and City agencies. Over 300 Philadelphia residents participated.

In the years since, responsibility for carrying out food policy work within the City has been broadly shared across departments including Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, the Department of Public Health, Office of Sustainability and FPAC. FPAC has made progress with interdepartmental relationship building, but struggled to establish leadership support, a sense of urgency for urban agriculture, and an accountability system for carrying out the food policy recommendations presented to the mayor on an annual basis.²² Finding a permanent home for urban agriculture within City government became a priority. In 2019, advocacy culminated in the creation of a new director of urban agriculture position within Parks & Rec and the launch of the process to develop the City's first Urban Agriculture Plan, *Growing from the Root*.

The release of this plan follows two other aligned City documents: the *Philly Tree Plan* and FPAC's Strategic Plan. All three of these documents underscore the need and point the way toward a greener, more just, and more sustainable food and land future for Philadelphia.



Advocates outside City Hall for Public Hearing

Photo Credit: Catalina Jaramillo for Plan Philly

HISTORY THROUGH THE LENS OF RACIALIZED LAND-BASED OPPRESSION

History informs the state and stories of urban agriculture in Philadelphia today. While this plan focuses on present and future urban agriculture, it is critical to provide a historical overview as context, grounding the plan in past events, policies, and political movements that have been at work in this nation and this city. The following timeline offers relevant historical context as it relates to people, land, and the practices of growing food in Philadelphia. It also highlights the connections between specific moments in time and racialized land-based oppression.

Methods of Racialized Land-Based Oppression

Racialized land-based oppression primarily happens in four ways. The following methods demonstrate that racism underpins the history of the United States.

- > **Displacement of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC):** The removal or displacement of peoples from their ancestral homes and/or sanctuary communities through forced migration, colonization, and gentrification.
- > **Commodification of Land:** Capitalism and values change human relationships with the land, which results in the privatization and individual ownership of land. Land is seen as non-living, exploitable, and a means for building private wealth.
- > **Exploitation and Erasure:** BIPOC communities have experienced labor exploitation and cultural appropriation in the context of land. The exploitation of BIPOC labor upholds colonial power over time while keeping these communities at a disadvantage.
- > **Exclusionary Institutions:** Historically white institutions, both private and public, prioritize white communities, offer resources and opportunity to compound generational wealth and power and systematically exclude BIPOC communities.

Collective Action & Self Determination

Yet throughout history, BIPOC communities have relied, provided, and cared for themselves through agriculture, organizing solutions on the ground to resist the compounding methods of land-based oppression. These solutions often arise from cooperative strategies, such as communities pooling resources, sharing power, and utilizing traditional and cultural practices to survive colonial violence and erasure.

This plan, grounded in values of racial and economic justice, sets the stage to address land-based oppression and support the continuation of collective action by Philadelphia's urban agriculture community.

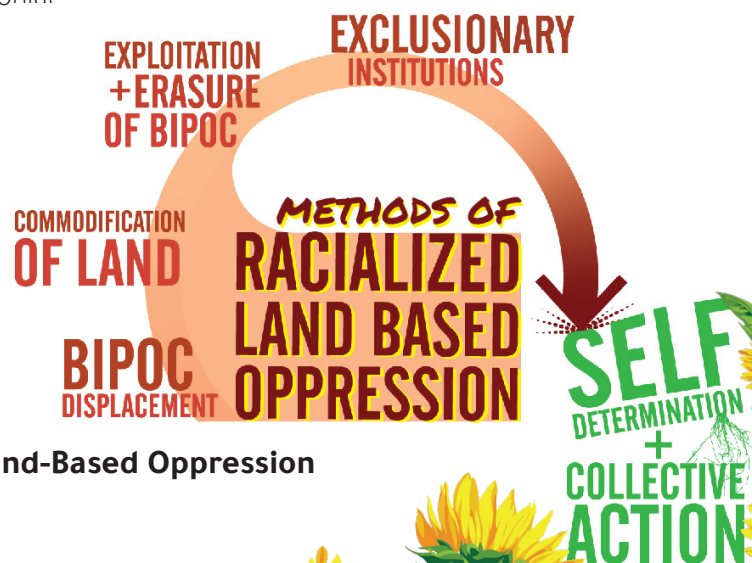


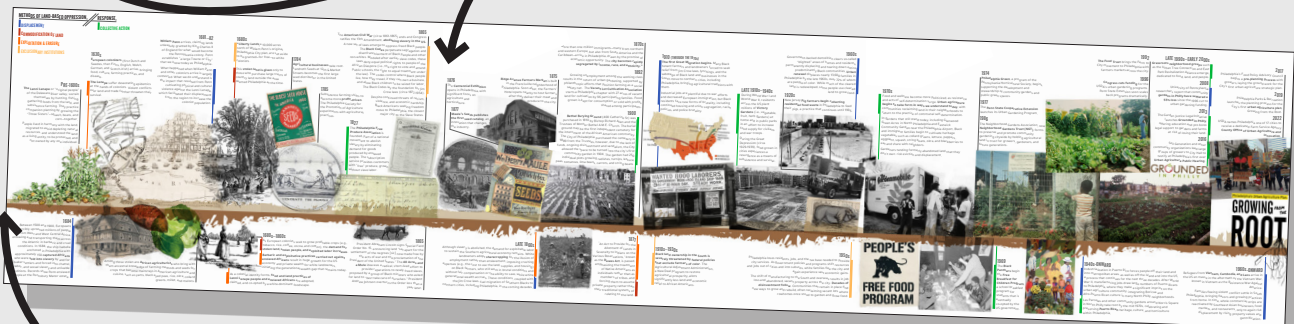
FIGURE 9. **Methods of Racialized Land-Based Oppression**

HOW TO READ THE HISTORIC TIMELINE

KEY:

METHODS OF LAND-BASED OPPRESSION:	RESPONSE:
DISPLACEMENT	COLLECTIVE ACTION
COMMODIFICATION OF LAND	
EXPLOITATION & ERASURE	
EXCLUSIONARY INSTITUTIONS	

LOOK FOR THE COLORED BARS THAT CONNECT HISTORICAL EVENTS TO THE METHODS OF RACIALIZED LAND-BASED OPPRESSION



PHILLY-SPECIFIC HISTORIES ABOVE THE LINE, BROADER NARRATIVES BELOW

For sources, SEE APPENDIX E

The second public meeting included a survey that invited honest reflection about advantages and barriers tied to land access over time. The statistics and quote below document survey respondents' varied relationships to land ownership.

- > 5% said **my ancestors are Indigenous** to the Americas and **our lands were stolen** from us during colonization and settler colonialism.
- > 15% said **my ancestors were displaced from their land and identity because of enslavement** through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
- > 22% said **my family or I were forced to leave our land as refugees** because of war, genocide or climate disaster.
- > 26% said **my ancestors have benefited from US government subsidies** including the 1862 Homestead Act, 1944 G.I. Bill, and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) grants.

"MY ANCESTORS WERE EARLY GERMAN SETTLERS IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY... ONE OF MY COUSINS FARMS LAND THAT HE SAYS HAS BEEN IN THE FAMILY SINCE THE GOVERNMENT TOOK IT FROM THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THAT REGION. MY FAMILY IS TIGHT-KNIT AND ROOTED IN THIS REGION BECAUSE WE HAVE BENEFITED FROM LAND THEFT AND HAVE NOT BEEN TARGETS OF DISPLACEMENT. MY ABILITY TO TRAVEL AND STUDY AGROECOLOGY - AND WORK MANY UNPAID OR LOW-PAYING FARM INTERNSHIPS - IS A RESULT OF MY FAMILY'S INHERITED WEALTH ACCUMULATION. MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY IS CURRENTLY IN CONVERSATION TO REALLOCATE MY GRANDMOTHER'S INHERITANCE FOR REPARATIONS FOR RACIAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE."

—Public meeting participant

METHODS OF LAND-BASED OPPRESSION: // RESPONSE:

DISPLACEMENT

COMMODIFICATION OF LAND

EXPLOITATION & ERASURE

EXCLUSIONARY INSTITUTIONS

COLLECTIVE ACTION

1681–82

William Penn arrives, claiming lands unlawfully granted by King Charles II of England for what would become the Pennsylvania colony. Penn establishes “a large Towne or City” that we know today as Philadelphia.

What happened when William Penn and other colonists arrive is largely contested. What we do understand is the impact that resulted from Penn cultivating physical and cultural violence against the Lenni Lenape, which facilitated their displacement from the region to increase the colonist population.

PRE-1600s

The Lenni Lenape or “original people” of the Delaware River valley, sustain themselves by hunting, fishing, gathering foods from the land, and subsistence farming. They practice companion planting by growing the “Three Sisters”—squash, beans, and corn—together.

People lived in harmony with the land, migrated to avoid depleting natural resources, and understood the land as a living entity, to be protected, and not owned by any one individual.

1630s

European colonizers (first Dutch and Swedes, then Finns, English, Welsh, German, and Scotch-Irish) arrive, bringing food, culture, farming practices, and disease.

The Lenape suffer devastating epidemics at the hands of colonists. Violent conflicts over land and trade further threaten their survival.



1684

Between 1500 and 1900, Europeans forcibly uprooted millions of people from West and West Central Africa, enslaving and transporting them across the Atlantic in barbaric and cruel conditions. In 1684, the ship *Isabella* anchored in Philadelphia with approximately 150 **captured Africans** who were **sold into slavery** by and for Quaker settlers and forced into chattel labor, and sexual slavery and unlivable conditions. Records show Penn enslaved people at the Pennsbury Manor estate.



Among those stolen are **African agriculturists** who bring with them ancestral knowledge of farming methods and seeds for crops that become mainstays in American agriculture and cuisine, such as yams, black eyed peas, rice, okra, collard greens, millet, and melons.

1680s

“**Liberty Lands**,” 10,000 acres north of William Penn’s original Philadelphia City plan, are set aside to be granted—for free—to white colonists.

This **stolen land is given** only to those who purchase large tracts of country land outside the area deemed Philadelphia at the time.

1784

Agricultural businesses take root. Landreth Seeds at 12th & Market Streets becomes the first large seed distributor in the United States.

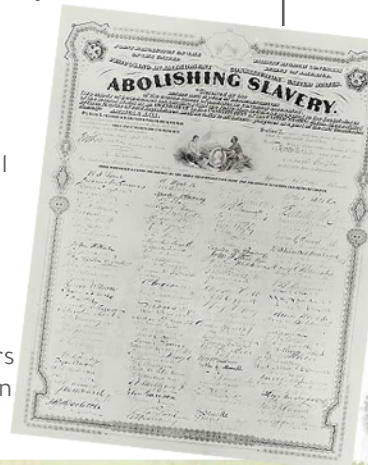
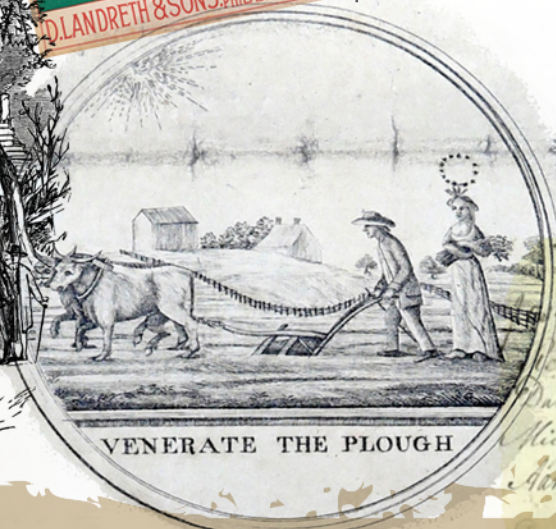
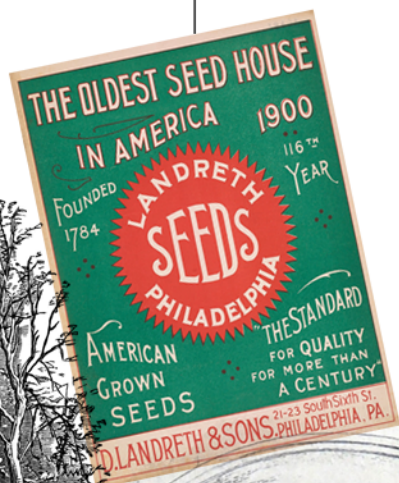
1785

Subsistence farming shifts to become more **profit-driven**. The Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture experiments with agricultural practices.

1827

The **Philadelphia Free Produce Association** is founded, part of a national movement to abolish slavery by eliminating demand for goods produced by enslaved people. The subscription service provides customers with “free” produce, grown without slave labor.

Despite continued threats of racism, violence, and economic hardship, Black Americans seeking freedom move to Philadelphia, the closest major city to the Slave States.



SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES	DONATION	STOCK-SHARES	DRY GOODS	GROCERIES
Joseph Catow		1 share	\$7.00	\$48.00
Stephen Benedict		1/4 do	15.00	3 10.00
David Osborn		1/4 do	10.00	
Miriam Dillingham		1/4 do	10.00	
Arthur J. Benedict	\$5.00	1/4 do	10.00	10.00
		1 share	100.00	100.00



1680s–1860s

As European colonists seek to grow profitable crops (e.g., tobacco, rice, coffee, cocoa, and cotton), the **demand for stolen land, stolen people, and exploited labor increases**.

Barbaric and exploitative practices carried out against enslaved Africans result in huge growth for the US economy and private wealth for white landowners, initiating the generational wealth gap that remains today.

As a colonial identity forms, **food and land practices of Lenni Lenape people and enslaved Africans** are adopted, claimed, and co-opted by a white-dominant foodscape.



1865

President Abraham Lincoln signs Special Field Order No. 15, announcing land “set apart for the settlement of the negroes [sic] now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.” The **40 Acres and a Mule** idea was a radical, short-lived effort to provide reparations to newly freed slaves, proposed by a group of Black ministers who asked for land to “best take care of ourselves.” President Andrew Johnson overturns the Order less than a year later.

METHODS OF LAND-BASED OPPRESSION: // RESPONSE:

DISPLACEMENT

COMMODIFICATION OF LAND

EXPLOITATION & ERASURE

EXCLUSIONARY INSTITUTIONS

COLLECTIVE ACTION

1870s

More than one million immigrants—many from northern and western Europe, but also from South America and the Caribbean—arrive in Philadelphia, drawn by the promise of economic opportunity. The **city becomes rapidly segregated by income, race, and ethnicity.**"

1892

Growing unemployment among the working class results in the return of urban gardening, supported by philanthropic efforts that position farming as a social safety net. The **Vacant Lot Cultivation Association** starts a Philadelphia chapter with 27 acres of vacant land for cultivation by 96 participating families. Food grown is kept for consumption or sold with profits shared among participants.

1900

Bethel Burying Ground (400 Catherine St) was purchased in 1810 by Bishop Richard Allen and the Trustees of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church. The burial ground may be the first independent cemetery for the interment of the African American community. The City of Philadelphia purchased the cemetery in 1889 from the Trustees; however, due to the lack of funds, ongoing disinvestment and vandalism, the City allowed the space to be turned into the city's first community garden in 1904. The garden had 250 individual plots growing radishes, turnips, lettuce, peas, tomatoes, lima beans, carrots, and string beans.

1876

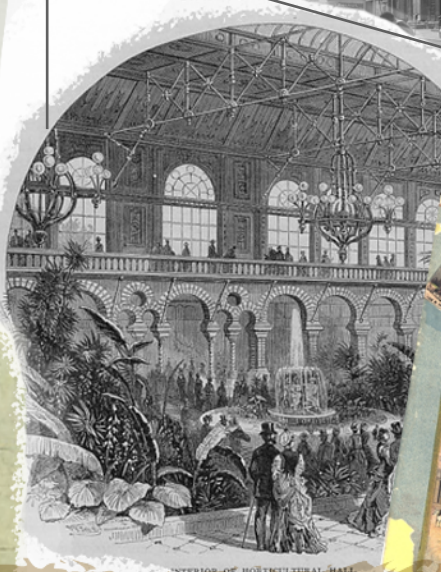
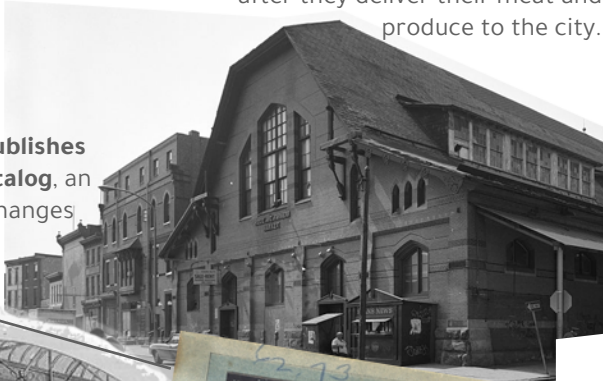
The **Centennial Exhibition** opens in Philadelphia, with significant focus on agriculture and horticulture.

1877

Maule's Seeds publishes the first seed catalog, an innovation that changes the industry.

Ridge Avenue Farmers Market is built in the Francisville neighborhood of Philadelphia. Soon after, the Farmers' Hotel opens nearby to host farmers after they deliver their meat and produce to the city.

1875



LATE 1860s

Although slavery is abolished, the demand for exploitable labor to sustain the Southern agricultural economy remains. White landowners adopt **sharecropping** for the illusion of employment rather than enslavement, imposing crushing expenses (e.g., the cost to use the land, supplies, and housing) on Black farmers, who still work in brutal conditions and without fair compensation or the ability to save, while white generational wealth accrues. These conditions, coupled with the Jim Crow laws, fuel migration of Southern Blacks to northern cities, including Philadelphia, in the coming decades.



1877

"An Act to Provide for the Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Indians on the Various Reservations," known as the **Dawes Act**, is passed, emphasizing the treatment of Native Americans as individuals rather than as members of tribes, and forcing them to assume private property rather than their traditional systems of relating to the land.

1960s

Government-backed demolition clears so-called “blighted” areas of homes and residents, permanently displacing and tearing down entire predominantly Black communities. **Urban renewal** displaces nearly 13,600 families in Philadelphia by the late 1960s, over 72% of whom are people of color. While much of the cleared land is redeveloped, some people use cleared land to grow food.

1920s

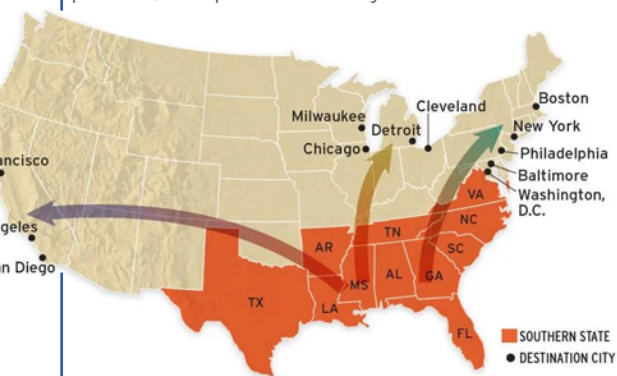
New Jersey **pig farmers begin collecting residential food waste** in Philadelphia to feed their pigs, a practice that continues until 1995.



1910 (THROUGH THE 1970s)

The first Great Migration begins. Many Black tenant farmers and landowners forced to seek relief from Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and the sabotage of Black land and businesses in the South move to northern cities, including Philadelphia, bringing agricultural traditions with them.

Industrial jobs are plentiful due to war efforts and decreased European immigration, but Black residents face new forms of brutality, including continued housing and union segregation, racist policies, and police brutality.



LATE 1910s–1940s

During World War I and World War II, residents across the US plant millions of **Victory Gardens** (i.e., vegetable, fruit, herb gardens) at home and in public parks in an effort to increase food supply for civilians and war troops.

During the Great Depression (circa 1929-1939), food grown in cities experiences a resurgence as a means of subsistence and survival.



1910s–1930s

Black land ownership in the South is severely threatened by federal policies that exclude farmers of color. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration, a New Deal program to restore agricultural prosperity, allots significantly less land and economic relief to African Americans.

1950s

Philadelphia loses residents, jobs, and the tax base needed to provide city services. As government policies and programs shift resources and jobs out of cities and into suburbs, white families flee the city and again experience vast economic gains.

The shift of manufacturing to the South and overseas results in job loss and abandoned, vacant property across the city. **Decades of disinvestment follow.** Communities that remain in place find new ways to grow and rebuild, often reclaiming vacant lots where rowhomes once stood to garden and grow food.

METHODS OF LAND-BASED OPPRESSION: // RESPONSE:

DISPLACEMENT

COMMODIFICATION OF LAND

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COLLECTIVE ACTION

1970s

Food and wellness become more politicized, as resistance and acts of self-determination surge. **Urban agriculture begins to take form in ways we understand today**, with communities reclaiming land in their neighborhoods to return to the practice of communal self-determination.

In gardens that still stand today, including Glenwood Green Acres in North Philadelphia and Eastwick Community Garden near the Philadelphia Airport, Black and immigrant families begin to cultivate heritage vegetables such as collard greens, lettuce, peppers, eggplant, squash, string beans, okra, and blackberries to eat and share with neighbors.

Gardeners tending formerly abandoned land that they don't own risk eviction and displacement.

1974

Philadelphia Green, a program of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, begins, supporting the development and stewardship of community gardens and public green spaces.

1977

The **Penn State Cooperative Extension** launches its Urban Gardening Program.

1986

The Neighborhood Gardens Association, now **Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)**, forms to preserve and promote community gardening citywide by holding agricultural land in trust for growers, gardeners, and future generations.



PEOPLE'S

FREE FOOD PROGRAM



1969

The **Black Panthers** begin the **Free Breakfast for Children Program**, a school breakfast program for students that is eventually co-opted by the US government.



1992

The **Food Trust** brings the Farm to City movement to Philadelphia with farmers markets across the city.

1996

Congress cuts funding for the USDA's urban gardening programs. Penn State Extension soon scales back programs dramatically.



LATE 1990s—EARLY 2000s

Grassroots neighborhood groups such as the Urban Tree Connection and East Park Revitalization Alliance emerge, dedicated to food, land, and people.

2008

University of Pennsylvania researchers report that **community gardens in Philly have suffered a 55% loss** since the 1996 cut to urban gardening funding.

2013

The Garden Justice Legal Initiative launches **Grounded in Philly**, offering education and pro bono legal support to gardens and farms at risk of losing their land.

2016

Soil Generation and other community organizations lead large groups of growers to City Hall to testify at Philadelphia's first ever **Urban Agriculture Public Hearing**.

GROUNDED
IN PHILLY



2017

Philadelphia's Food Policy Advisory Council begins a **pre-planning process** with growers, laying the ground work for the City's first urban agriculture strategic plan.

2019

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation launches the planning process for the City's first **urban agriculture plan**, *Growing from the Root*.

2022

USDA names Philadelphia one of 17 cities to receive a dedicated Farm Service Agency **County Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovation**.



Philadelphia's Urban Agriculture Plan:

GROWING FROM THE
ROOT

1940s-ONWARD

Industrialization in Puerto Rico forces people off their land and into metropolitan areas, as well as off the island and into the US, a process that continues for the next three decades. After World War II, manufacturing jobs draw large numbers of Puerto Ricans to Philadelphia, where they make a significant imprint on the urban agriculture community, integrating Boricua and Afro-Puerto Rican culture in many North Philly neighborhoods.

Las Parcelas and other community gardens around Norris Square in North Philly take root by the mid 1970s, celebrating and preserving **Puerto Rican** heritage, culture, and horticulture within Philadelphia.

1960s-ONWARD

Refugees from **Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos** arrive in the US en masse in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, known in Vietnam as the Resistance War Against America.

Families fleeing violent conflict settle in South Philadelphia, bringing flavors and growing practices from home. In time, whole commercial strips are reactivated by Southeast Asian businesses, food markets, and restaurants, only to again risk displacement by rising property values and gentrification.



II. 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.

FIGURE 11. **The Multiple Levels of Plan Engagement**

The planning process involved multiple levels of engagement, from the core planning team of the consultants and project manager through broad public engagement. This graphic was shown to participants in public engagement as a way of ensuring the planning process was as transparent as possible.

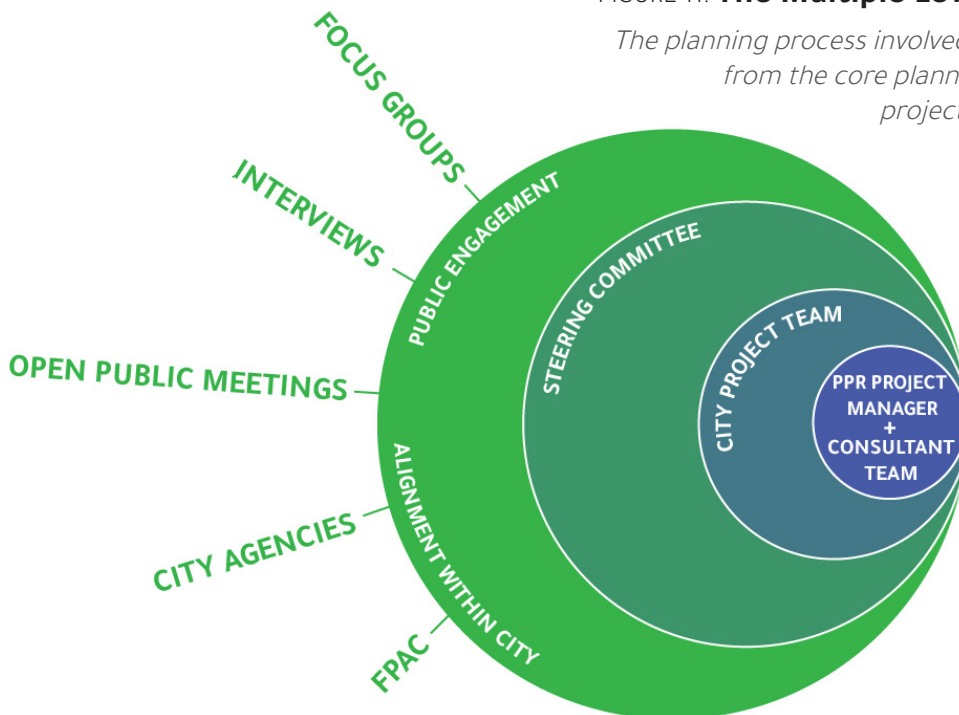


FIGURE 12. **How Various Inputs Combine to Shape the Plan**

This graphic was used at public meetings to show participants how ideas from many sources funnel into the plan.

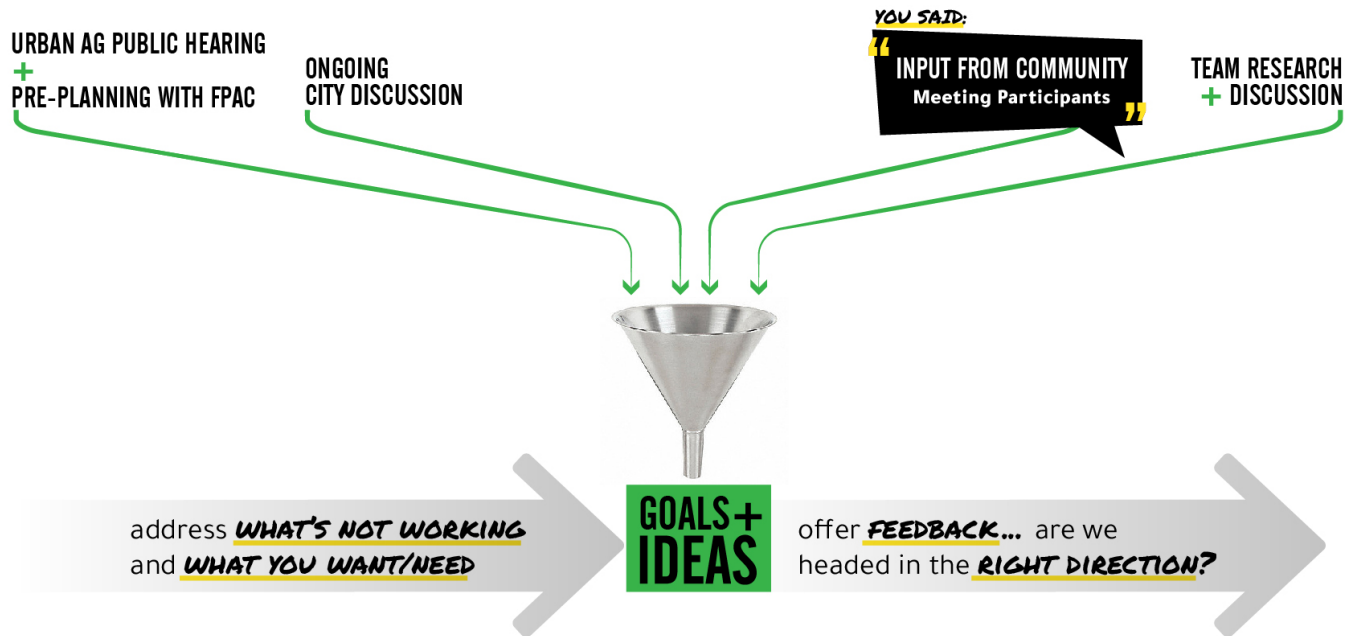
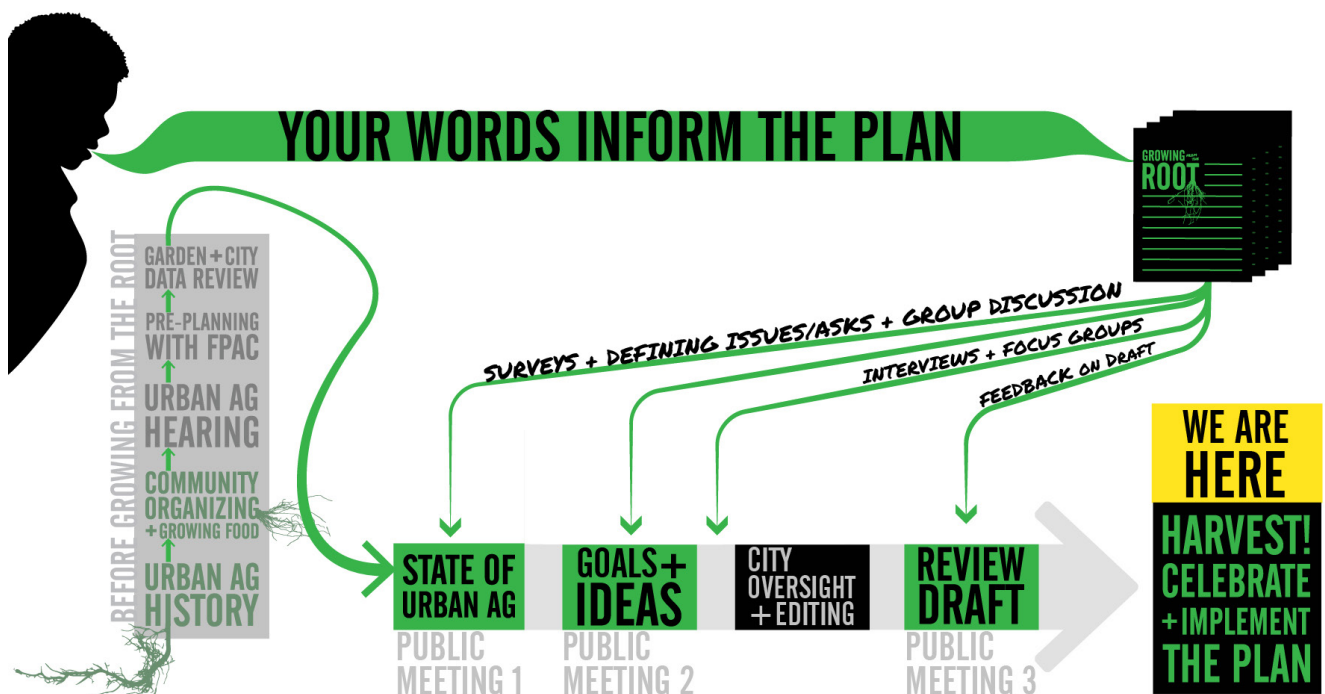
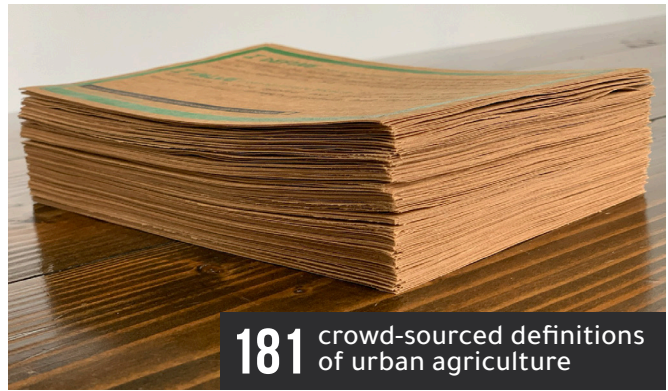


FIGURE 13. **Steps of Public Engagement in the Planning Process**

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.



The first public meeting took place at the Free Library of Philadelphia's Parkway Central location in December 2019. Nearly 300 people passionate about the future of urban agriculture in Philadelphia attended. Participants represented over 50 community gardens and 110 other organizations and City departments.



181 crowd-sourced definitions of urban agriculture

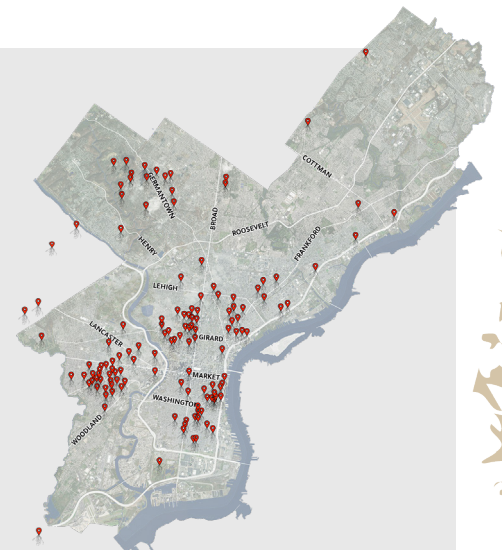
For a full summary of activities and outcomes, **SEE APPENDIX F.**



Nearly 300 people attended the first public meeting at the Free Library in December 2019.

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

The **second public meeting** was scheduled to take place on March 19 and 24, 2021 in two different locations in the city. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both meetings were canceled, and the Planning Team instead developed an online engagement process using an interactive website. The website and web-based activities remained open throughout April and May 2021, with the window for public comment officially closing June 1, 2021. Community input gathered from the site shaped the plan's recommendations. Nearly 300 diverse respondents participated in discussions around a range of topics, including:

- > History and the cycle of racialized land-based oppression
- > Access to land
- > Resources for community gardens and farms
- > Animal keeping in the city
- > Farming careers and businesses
- > Educating the next generation of growers
- > Cultural practices in growing and gathering (e.g., seed saving and foraging)
- > Food systems and policy



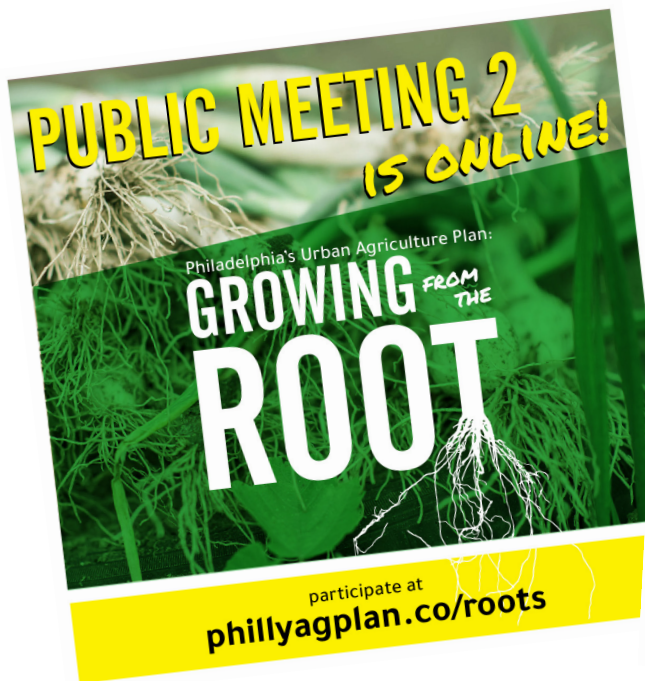
> **Statistics highlighted throughout the plan with this hand reflect data collected via the interactive online Public Meeting 2.**

WHAT DID THE MEETING INCLUDE?

<p>STATION 1 Video Orientation</p> <p>STATION 3 Access to Land</p> <p>STATION 5 Animal Keeping</p> <p>STATION 7 Educating the Next Generation of Growers</p> <p>STATION 9 Food Systems and Policy</p>	<p>STATION 2 Historical Timeline</p> <p>STATION 4 Resources for Community Gardens</p> <p>STATION 6 Farming Careers and Businesses</p> <p>STATION 8 Seed Saving and Foraging</p> <p>STATION 10 Vote for Your Favorite Ideas</p>
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Ten online stations comprised the second public meeting. The web-based information and activities were offered in English and Spanish.

For a full summary of activities and outcomes, **SEE APPENDIX F.**



KEY THEMES FROM THE COMMUNITY INPUT ACROSS THE 10 STATIONS

- **Land Security:** Land insecurity is the number one issue for growers and the top priority for how investments should support community-led efforts. If people don't have land security, then long-term investment in infrastructure cannot happen. Land insecurity creates barriers to belonging.
- **Infrastructure Support:** The second priority is the need for infrastructure support - water, electricity, lumber, greenhouses, etc. These needs go unmet either due to a lack of resources or because residents are hesitant to invest in infrastructure because there is no land security for their gardens.
- **Economic Self-Sufficiency & Opportunities:** Low wages and lack of job security prevent people from entering agricultural fields or pursuing it full time, but for many, agriculture is a livelihood, not a hobby. The inability to secure land or invest in it makes it harder for businesses or cooperatives to succeed. Market forces and federal regulatory structures tend not to support small-scale agriculture and food justice in a system that heavily subsidizes large-scale agriculture.
- **Education:** Participants indicated a desire for more agricultural education and training. Many want to see more agriculture curriculum in schools as well as more funding, specifically for Career and Technical Education (CTE) or similar programs.
- **Community Building, Connections & Mental Wellbeing:** The relationship between land and people is not only one of sustenance, but also one of reconnecting with community practices and teachings, childhood memories, and cultural and family ties. Beyond improving physical health and nutrition, there were many responses about agriculture improving people's mental health.
- **Retention of Culture and Ancestral Practices:** Across multiple stations, people talked about growing, foraging, and seed saving as being important for learning about and holding onto their cultural traditions. Participants also expressed the importance of connecting with methods and techniques their ancestors used to grow food.
- **Trust & Skepticism:** Given the history of land struggles, many comments indicated a lack of trust and skepticism about accountability and implementation of the plan's vision. Trust in City agencies varies compared to trust in community-led organizations, so participants called for transparency and follow-through.
- **Partnerships:** The City cannot implement the plan's recommendations alone. Participants believe the City should funnel funding and support for agriculture through existing community organizations who have demonstrated an ability to effectively do food justice work. Input acknowledged a need for strengthening and creating more formalized networks of growers who work together.

What does THE LAND at your garden need to thrive?

Show some LOVE to your TOP 3 by clicking the heart below the images and adding a comment

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT BEEKEEPING IN THE CITY:

Are you **HOT** (strongly in favor of policies to support raising bees in Philly) or **COLD** (strongly opposed) or somewhere in between?

HOT
BEES!
COLD

1

2

3

4

5

HOT (strongly support)
Neutral
COLD (strongly oppose)

TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY ABOUT BEES:

Sample questions and formats for the online activities

With input from the second public meeting, the planning team began drafting the plan's recommendations. To test these draft ideas, *Growing from the Root* hosted nine virtual focus group sessions with over 80 participants in total, inviting residents, City staff, and representatives of organizations from across Philadelphia. The topics for the **focus groups** built upon input from the second public meeting and included:

- An Indigenous Food and Land Circle
- Market Farms and Enterprise
- Community Gardens and Farms (x2)
- Health and Environmental Justice
- Anti-Gentrification
- Education and Innovation
- Workforce
- Open-Ended, all topics welcome

Participants discussed the issues of greatest concern for their specific group, and the process allowed for a more open dialogue and transparency with groups that have experienced discrimination in the past and/or ongoing exclusion. The focus groups helped the planning team refine the recommendations and imagine new ways to address systemic issues. All participants were offered honorariums for their participation in these smaller discussion groups. Participants were also allowed to redirect their honorariums to local community, nonprofit or tribal organizations.



The third and final public meeting was held virtually on November 3, 2022 with the release of the draft plan for public review and comment. The planning team provided an overview of the planning process and the draft plan itself to a crowd of 115. Attendees learned how and where to access the draft plan and provide written feedback during the open public comment period, which ran from November 3 through 28, 2022.

The City and planning team designed all public meetings with equity, diversity, and inclusion in mind. The first public meeting included language translation and American Sign Language interpretation. The website and communications for the public meetings had English and Spanish versions. The team also made efforts to ensure both in-person and online meetings were accessible to those with disabilities (e.g., buildings for the public meetings were wheelchair accessible, and online engagements were compatible with assistive technologies).



Small group discussions made deeper conversations possible during the first public meeting.



American Sign Language interpretation during first public meeting presentation

WHO IS GROWING FROM THE ROOT FOR?

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. The plan is for young people looking to learn about farming and for elders who have knowledge and experience to share. It lays the groundwork for formerly incarcerated residents in need of work to create new connections within the community, and it honors Indigenous people who are still here and whose ancestors first inhabited and stewarded this land.

FOR CITY AGENCIES

This plan is also for the City agencies poised to invest in, support, 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, which supports 60 farming projects on Parks & Rec land, including youth education gardens, community gardens, vegetable farms, orchards, community



composting programs, and a public greenhouse for growing seeds and plant cuttings. Farm Philly supports communities to design and lead their own agriculture projects, redistributes resources to communities impacted by food apartheid and displacement, and ensures equitable distribution of food produce on public land.

- > The **Philadelphia Land Bank**, established in 2014 and housed at the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, which manages the City's portfolio of surplus property and grants leases to gardeners and farmers tending public property, to acquire privately owned, vacant, tax-delinquent properties for garden preservation, and to transfer surplus public properties that host gardens and farms to private owners who will steward those growing spaces.
- > **Philadelphia City Council** members, who are responsible for representing their constituents. District Council offices field requests for land and are key players in the Land Bank's process to acquire or dispose of property. They legislatively approve all transfers of land into and out of the Land Bank. City Council also approves the City's budget each year.
- > The **Philadelphia City Planning Commission**, which drafts changes to the Zoning Code, advises on land use and development decisions, and undertakes comprehensive planning efforts for the City, including strategies that support urban agriculture.
- > The **Office of Sustainability**, currently home to the Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC), and whose *Greenworks* Plan includes policies and strategies to increase access to healthy food and drinking water, reduce emissions, improve air quality, preserve natural resources, and reduce waste.
- > The **Department of Public Health's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention**, which works to ensure access to affordable, nutritious food choices for residents citywide and develop good food purchasing policies and standards for City meal programs.
- > The **Philadelphia Water Department**, whose programs provide water access and stormwater fee exemptions for urban farmers.
- > The **Philadelphia Department of Prisons**, which has converted unused green space into a small-scale farm, orchard, and compost facility that offer agricultural workforce development and re-entry support for incarcerated individuals.

FOR SUPPORTING GROUPS

Additionally, this plan is for the many individuals and groups who collaborate with 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.

- > **The Food Policy Advisory Council** and its **Urban Agriculture Subcommittee** guides the development and implementation of new laws and policies that support the conversion of Philadelphia's vacant and underutilized lands into sustainable community assets that increase food access, food security, and food sovereignty for all city residents.
- > The **Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia's Garden Justice Legal Initiative (GJLI)** provides *pro bono* legal support, policy research and advocacy, and community education and trainings to community gardeners and market farmers interested in land access.
- > The **Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)** provides land security for over 50 gardens across Philadelphia, offers technical assistance and capital improvements to preserved gardens within the NGT network, and works with City partners to remove barriers to land security for all gardens and farms.
- > The **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Community Gardens programs** offer educational workshops, gardening supplies and materials, seedlings, access to the PHS tool library, technical assistance, volunteer support, and infrastructure improvements to Philadelphia-area community gardens.
- > The **Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative (PGDC)** is a coalition of organizations formed in 2017 to track and steward data on public and community-based gardens and farms within the city. The Collaborative includes members from the GJLI, NGT, PHS, Soil Generation, and researchers from Haverford College and Villanova University. Together, and with the trust of Philadelphia's urban agriculture community, these entities designed and implemented a citywide ground-truthing and garden census effort, and created a database documenting the footprint of public and community-based gardens and farms.

- > A network of organizers and community activists including, among others, **Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (SEAMAAC), Sankofa Community Farm, Urban Creators, Soil Generation, VietLead, Urban Tree Connection, Norris Square Neighborhood Project, Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities, Philadelphia Orchard Project, Philadelphia Backyard Chickens, Cesar Andreú Iglesias Community Garden, Eastwick Community Garden** and other 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.

FOR 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 into city programs and projects and a range of community-based organizations, large and small, established and emerging, diverse and reflective of the communities practicing urban agriculture in Philadelphia.

FOR EVERYONE

If you eat food, *Growing from the Root* is for you, too. Because of the interconnectedness of urban agriculture, 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.

INTERESTED IN A CERTAIN TOPIC?

Use the next page as a guide to the recommendations. Each element of the food system has its own chapter, goal, and series of recommendations.

GOALS OF *GROWING FROM THE ROOT*

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.



LAND

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

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



PRODUCTION

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

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



PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION

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

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



CONSUMPTION

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

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



FOOD WASTE REDUCTION & RECOVERY

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

- > 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



PEOPLE

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

- > 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



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

Land, land care, and land security are central to food production.



1. LAND



LAND

OVERVIEW

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.

This 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.

WHY LAND SECURITY IS NECESSARY FOR PHILADELPHIA AGRICULTURE

Land access and security is the **number one issue** for Philadelphia's urban agriculture community, according to the growers and advocates who participated in public engagement for this plan. More than half of participants in this plan's second public meeting (58%) said the most important action the City should take to invest in community-led agricultural efforts is to help gardeners and farmers achieve land security. Fifty-three percent said the most important policy commitment the City can make is to a transparent process for selling and leasing land for agriculture.






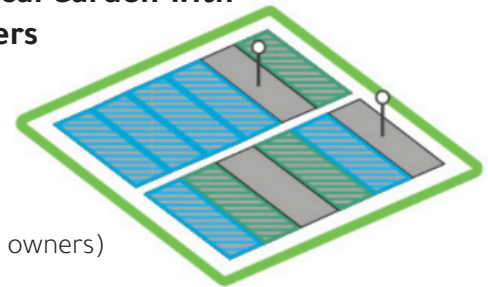
The Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative (PGDC) database identifies more than 400 active gardens and farms across more than 900 parcels, or pieces of land in Philadelphia.²³ Sometimes a garden consists of just one parcel, while other gardens are made up of multiple parcels. In many cases, the parcels on which gardens are located are owned by multiple entities, public and private. Before they were gardens, these parcels were often vacant and disinvested over decades through deindustrialization, acts of landlord abandonment, and structural racism. Through the efforts of Philadelphia’s gardeners and farmers, this land now cultivates not just plants, but also soil quality, water quality, wildlife habitats, stormwater management, physical space, and community relationships.

FIGURE 14. **Diagram of a Typical Garden with Multiple Parcels and Owners**

COMMUNITY GARDEN

TOTAL PARCELS: 12

-  Garden Owned Parcels: 3
-  Publicly Owned Parcels: 6
-  Privately Owned Parcels: 3 (3 owners)
-  Tax Delinquent: 2



Source: Philadelphia Land Bank Strategic Plan

WHAT IS LAND SECURITY? WHAT IS LAND ACCESS?

Land Security

- > A garden has land security when all of its parcels are owned by the gardeners or a trusted organization or entity that will protect the garden over time.
- > Fewer than half (44%) of gardens in the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative database are secure, meaning that the whole garden is owned by the gardeners, farmers, or a supportive organization (e.g., Parks & Recreation, schools, or land trusts).
- > 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

- > 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.


HOW PHILADELPHIA APPROACHES LAND FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

Racial and socio-economic barriers often prevent communities from being able to stay on the land they tend. Lacking land security, these growing spaces are at risk for eviction, demolition, and redevelopment. Stories from local gardens and farms, news articles, and research by members of the PGDC identify over 140 former gardens in Philadelphia that are no longer active, though the actual number may be much higher.


The land struggles experienced by Philadelphia gardeners and farmers are part of a much larger history of land-based oppression that stretches across the United States and throughout history. Data shows that historic and current US legislation has resulted in Native American tribes experiencing loss of over 90 million acres of land,²⁴ and Black farmers have experienced land theft of 80 to 90 percent of the 16 million acres they owned in 1920.²⁵ For more information about this history, see the historic timeline on page 30.

These land struggles are personal for growers, communities, and agricultural businesses, as the statistics from the survey at the second public meeting illustrate.


AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS



> **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.**



> **27% of respondents have personally experienced race and ethnicity impacting their ability to obtain access to land and land security.**



> **25% of respondents reported that a lack of land security is a major barrier to establishing or expanding their agricultural businesses.**

— Input from survey at second public meeting

City policies recognize urban agriculture as a long-term land use. The majority of community gardens and farms in Philadelphia are located on public land (e.g., Eastwick Garden on Philadelphia International Airport property) or surplus, formerly vacant land owned by a public agency or absentee private owner. Among City agencies that host gardens on their property, **Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec)** has policies and programs designed to expand the footprint of urban agriculture in Philadelphia. Parks & Rec's Farm Philly program currently hosts 60 farming projects on public land (e.g., community gardens, school farms, leased farms) and aims to support long-term leases and public benefits with all of its agriculture projects, gardens, and farms. Farm Philly supports the self-determination and sovereignty of communities to grow their own food in spaces that nourish and heal their communities. The program is also committed to the redistribution of public resources for urban agriculture, specifically to communities impacted by historical and ongoing disinvestment, food apartheid, and displacement.

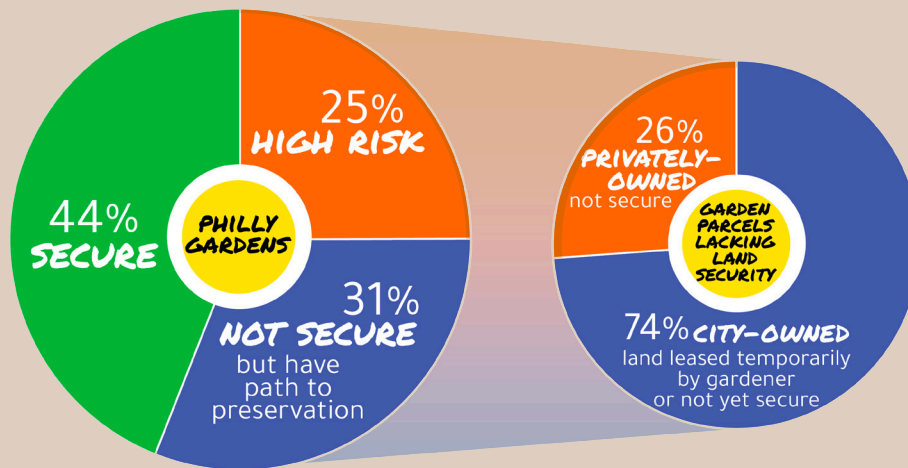
Other gardens are located on publicly owned land that the City considers vacant or surplus, and gardeners face significant barriers to establishing long-term land security on these lots. Roughly one-fifth (20%) of the estimated 40,000 plus vacant properties citywide are publicly owned.²⁶ One of the **Philadelphia Land Bank's** key functions is to sell, transfer, or lease surplus publicly owned property for use as gardens and community open space, including urban agriculture. In addition, the Land Bank's Strategic Plan calls on the Land Bank to "take action to preserve active gardens" by proactively acquiring privately owned, tax delinquent "vacant" properties that host active gardens and preventing the sale of such properties to speculators or developers at Sheriff's Sale.²⁷ The Land Bank can clear the back-owed taxes and then transfer the properties to the individuals and organizations who tend the land in order to preserve gardens. However, throughout this planning process, growers mentioned consistent challenges to purchasing or leasing land from the City, including confusing or complicated processes, slow response times, a lack of information, and lack of follow-up.

To date, most urban agriculture-related land transactions through the Land Bank have granted one-year garden license agreements.²⁸ However, one-year agreements do not provide adequate land security, according to growers who participated in public engagement for this plan. Growers expressed a desire for more options for long-term leasing

WHO OWNS GARDEN PARCELS?

The City of Philadelphia owns 74% of the garden parcels that are lacking land security. The remaining 26% are privately owned.

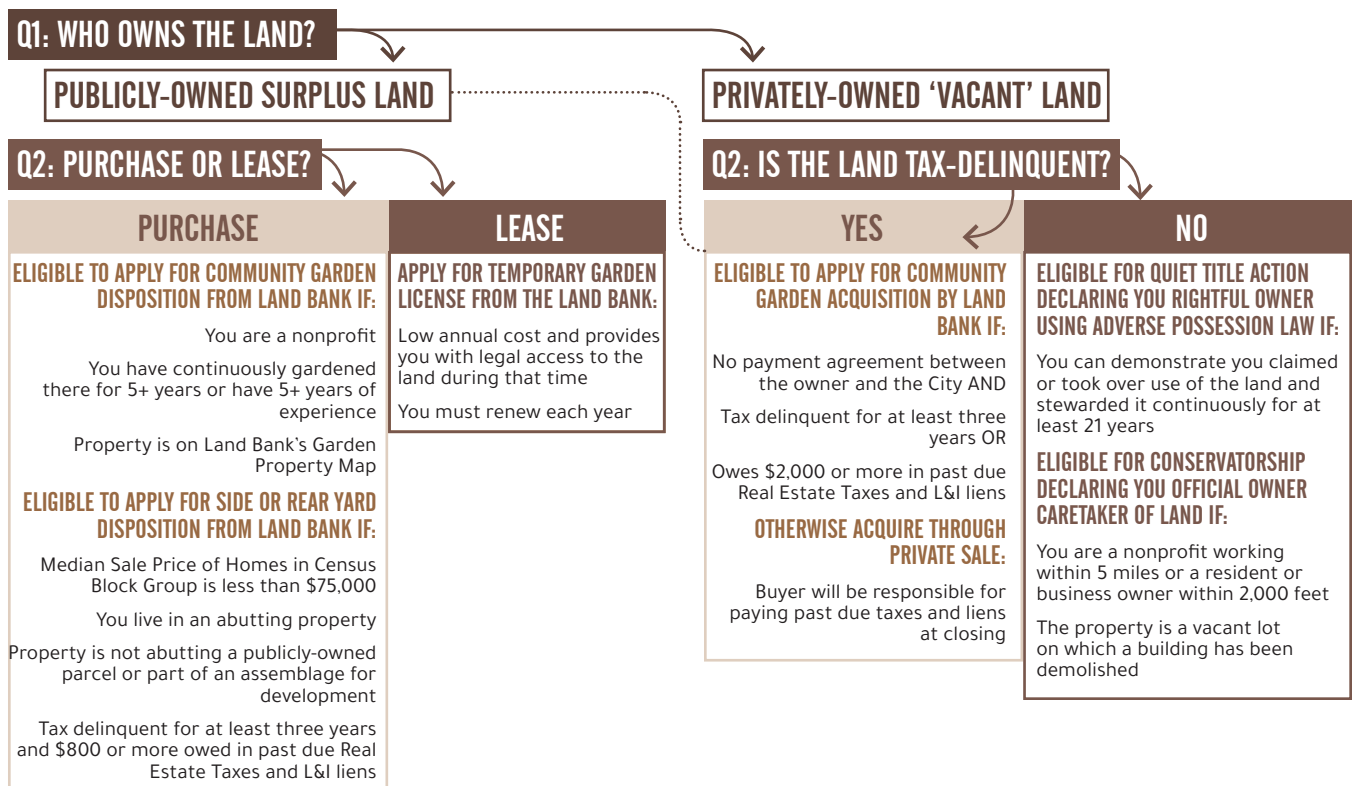
FIGURE 15. **Analysis of Garden Ownership and Land Security**



Sources: Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative, Philadelphia Office of Property Assessment, research by planning team, information from participants in public meetings

FIGURE 16. **Surplus Land and Paths to Land Security**

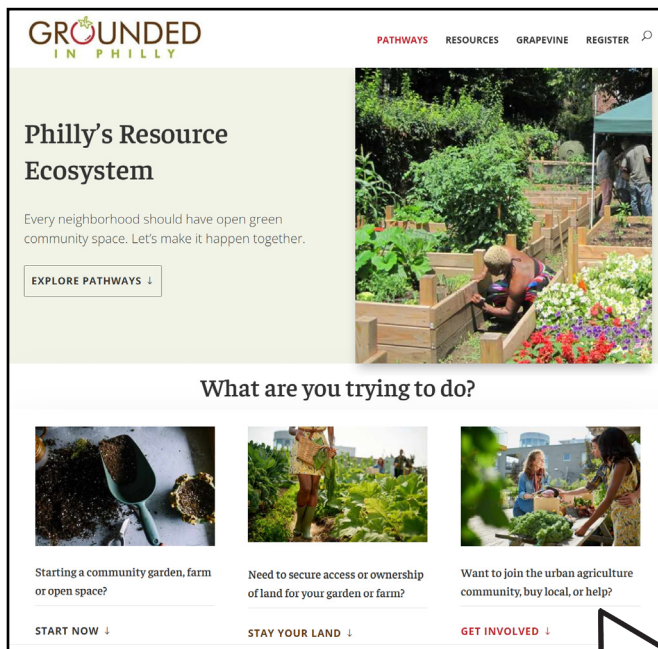
The Land Bank's Acquisition and Disposition Policies detail the process and eligibility requirements for those looking to secure land for urban agriculture; decisions require support from the Philadelphia Land Bank Board and the City Council District representative.



and permanent land transfer, so they can plan for the future and grow without fear of losing their property. Long-term lease agreements (of a minimum of five to ten years) and permanent land transfers can provide growers with adequate land security when they are made to an individual or group tending the land or a long-term land owner committed to garden preservation, such as a land trust or nonprofit organization.

Nonprofits and community-based organizations have helped growers and gardeners navigate the Land Bank's processes for gaining access to land.

The **Public Interest Law Center's Garden Justice Legal Initiative (GJLI)** launched **Grounded in Philly**, an online information hub with resources, data, and informative guides on how to start a community garden or urban farm, how to gain legal access to land, and how to connect with other growers and activists across the city.²⁹ GJLI also provides *pro bono* legal counsel for gardens, and works with local organizations and the City to craft policy related to urban agriculture.



Visit <https://groundedinphilly.org> for more information

Soil Generation, a Black- and Brown-led coalition of gardeners, farmers, individuals, and community-based organizations working to ensure people of color regain community control of land and food,³⁰ has made policy demands and led campaigns to hold the Land Bank accountable to the urban agriculture community. Soil Generation is currently incubating a nonprofit, **4DaSoil**,

that will support disenfranchised communities with access to land for growing projects and technical assistance for food and land projects.

The **Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities (PCAC)** has advanced land justice legislation that would support community control of City-owned vacant land for permanently affordable housing as well as growing space.³¹ **Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)**, a land trust established in 1986 to preserve vegetable and flower gardens across the city for future generations,³² has worked closely with the Land Bank and other advocates to identify properties for garden preservation and remove roadblocks to land security, such as third-party liens that have prevented the Land Bank from acquiring tax-delinquent properties for garden preservation at Sheriff's Sale.

Other nonprofit, city, and state agencies intersect with land and urban agriculture physically, below ground—in the soil—and at surface level.

Penn State Cooperative Extension offers soil and water testing services to evaluate soil composition, fertility, and pH, as well as water quality for drinking or irrigation water for greenhouses and food crops.³³ However, these basic soil test kits, which cost \$9 do not include an investigation of soil toxins, which can be present in Philadelphia soils due to previous land uses and demolition practices. Optional tests for particular toxins (e.g., lead, arsenic, mercury) are available for additional fees.

The City contracts the **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Philadelphia LandCare** program with funding from federal Community Development Block Grants to help maintain formerly vacant lots across the city with grass, trees, and plants; and the program sub-contracts to community organizations that provide local jobs and workforce development.

The City's **Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP)** enforces the City's regulations to make sure vacant lots are kept clean. The **Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I)** issues citations that can lead to fines for front-yard growers, wildlife habitats, gardens, and farms for what may appear to the untrained eye to be overgrowth or scattered unwanted plants. It is necessary to recognize that overgrowth of gardens could be related to productive agricultural uses or habitat creation for pollinators. Therefore, it is important for agencies (e.g., CLIP and L&I) to work with growers to ensure that their gardens are not mistaken as a nuisance, which could result in ticket violations or removal of community growing spaces.

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

Urban farmers and gardeners need land access and land security. Actions that expand that access will help create new growing spaces in Philadelphia, which will not only grow the footprint of agriculture in the city, but also create more opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to build community, to heal, to learn, and to work. Establishing legal pathways to land security is critical for those who tend and care for growing spaces that do not have legally recognized access to or ownership of their land. These pathways, including ownership and long-term leases, must assure growers that their gardens and farms will remain sources of nourishment and community for years to come.

In addition to City-led pathways to land security, community-led efforts can create new opportunities for gardeners and farmers. Examples of collective land ownership include community land trusts (CLTs), in which a nonprofit typically owns land to preserve and protect it for agricultural uses forever, or cooperative models, in which member-owners pool resources to extend their buying and selling power.

Addressing issues related to land will also advance Philadelphia's need for climate justice and restoration. Restoring natural land and soil for agricultural use will boost Philadelphia's resiliency in the face of ongoing climate change. This means caring for, cleaning, and building the soil, and healing the Earth while ensuring that those who eat from these gardens are eating foods that are culturally relevant, nutritious, chemical-free, and safe.

Finally, society needs land justice, which means repairing the history of Black, Brown, and Indigenous land loss in this country and this city. Land is the key to freedom, wealth, and power in this country. Redistribution of land or rematriation—"restoring a people to their rightful place in sacred relationship with their ancestral land"³⁴—recognizes land as a tool for advancing racial, economic, and environmental justice and holds transformative potential for community healing, growth, transformation and cohesion.

CASE STUDY

DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE, BOSTON

The Boston-based [Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative](#) (DSNI) provides an historic example of how Black communities have used community land trusts (CLTs) to preserve land for growing and other community development. DSNI started one of the nation's most notable CLTs, called Dudley Neighbors, Inc. (DNI), in the late 1980s. Today DNI property is home to housing, businesses, farms, parks, and more. DSNI also established the Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network to support emerging CLTs by sharing information and advocating for policies and programs that aid in their creation, maintenance, and expansion. DNI also hosts its own urban agriculture program, Dudley Grows, in partnership with The Food Project.³⁵ Residents lead the farm and greenhouse³⁶ on DNI CLT property, as well as three resident-owned markets and two restaurants.



Photo courtesy of DSNI

LAND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations 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. There are three categories of Land recommendations, which work together to:

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

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
	Preserve existing growing spaces.
X	<p>1.1 Develop strategies to reduce the number of community gardens and farms on private land sold at sheriff sale.</p> <p>Establish a relationship with the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative (PGDC) to cross reference their garden dataset with City data sets, including the inventory of privately-owned, tax-delinquent “vacant” property, to ensure that active/inactive gardens are not listed for purchase.</p> <p>Coordinate with the Department of Revenue, Sheriff’s Office, and Land Bank to proactively acquire non-US Bank garden properties in the sheriff’s sale pipeline.</p> <p>Work to increase awareness and marketing of how to make formal requests to acquire privately owned, tax delinquent, non-US Bank garden properties.</p>
	<p>1.2 Support the work of the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative, including sharing garden data with the collective, to ensure the City has access to updated garden data in order to preserve gardens.</p> <p>Work with philanthropic partners to identify funding for the PGDC to continue to develop and sustain its work, providing financial support to identify an institutional home for the database and standardize protocols around data intake, updates, and sharing.</p> <p>Establish an agreement between Parks & Rec and the PGDC (e.g., memorandum of understanding) to exchange data, preferably on an annual basis, with the assurance from the City that all garden data provided remains internal, and utilized for city planning and garden preservation purposes only. Support the collective’s determination of standardized protocols around data intake, to facilitate updates and sharing.</p>

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative, Operations	Land Bank, Revenue, Sheriff's Office, District Council Offices	Short-Term
	Administrative, Partnership	Revenue, Sheriff's Office, Garden Data Collaborative	Short-Term
	Operations	Revenue, Sheriff's Office, Land Bank	Short-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank, City Council	Short-Term
	Administrative	Nonprofits, Area Universities, Funders, Mayor's Office, Parks & Rec, School District	Short-Term
	Budget	Nonprofits, Area Universities, Funders, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations, Administrative	Nonprofits, Area Universities, Grassroots Orgs, Parks & Rec	Short-Term



Photo Credit: Catalina Jaramillo for Plan Philly

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
X	<p>1.3 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.</p>
	<p>Improve online guidance so it is accessible to all residents engaged in community gardening and farming, outlining the process for growers to lease or own City-owned and tax-delinquent privately owned property.</p>
	<p>Improve responsiveness and accessibility to notify the public on Land Bank policy and solicit feedback on land management policies and all proposed changes prior to taking effect.</p>
	<p>Continue to present at community workshops such as Vacant Land 215 hosted by the Public Interest Law Center, and collaborate with grassroots and local community organizations to ensure growers are informed about the Land Bank’s services and procedures.</p>
	<p>Improve response times to public inquiries on lease renewals, ownership applications, and requests for support within a commonly understood timeline and estimated waiting times.</p>
	<p>Streamline and ease the path to secure land leases and ownership for gardens and farms by developing a multilingual online and mail-in application, specifically designed for agriculture and open space projects (e.g., individual gardens, community gardens, and market farms).</p>
	<p>Promote and advertise opportunities for public and stakeholder feedback on Land Bank and disposition policy processes.</p>
	<p>Integrate more community garden and farm experiences and representation within the Land Bank Board, prioritizing BIPOC, low-income, working-class, and immigrant farmers, to provide community oversight and voice in decisions tied to the disposition of public land.</p>
X	<p>1.4 Increase the number of City-owned parcels preserved annually.</p>
	<p>Partner with City Council to identify and transfer ownership a minimum of 50 City-owned garden or open space parcels per year from the Land Bank to eligible gardeners, farmers, community land trusts, cooperatives, community organizations, unincorporated associations, or other legally recognized entities committed to preserving these green spaces. Prioritize those transfers in communities that have suffered from discriminatory policies.</p>
	<p>1.5 Create a land use code specifically for urban agriculture to minimize land use conflicts and preserve agricultural spaces.</p>
	<p>Utilize data provided by the Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative (PGDC) to facilitate an update of the City’s land use data by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) to include urban agriculture for gardens that have land security, with the assurance from the PCPC that all garden data provided for gardens that lack land security remains internal, utilized for city planning and garden preservation purposes.</p>
	<p>Reclassify community gardens and farms as “community managed open space” in the City’s land use and vacant land databases to acknowledge gardens, distinguish them from vacant property or residential use (when the managed open space is the primary land use), and more accurately identify properties that support the City’s agricultural and food access goals. Include community gardens, farms, orchards, and other agriculture uses that involve the growing and harvesting of food and non-food crops and the raising of farm animals under the urban agriculture use definition. Where the food production space is not the primary land use, consider</p>

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Budget	Land Bank, City Council, PHDC, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank, Office of Immigrant Affairs	Short-Term
	Partnership	Land Bank, City Council, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Administrative	City Council, Mayor's Office	Medium-Term
	Operations	Land Bank, District Council Offices	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank, District Council Offices, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Administrative	City Planning	Medium-Term
	Administrative, Partnership	City Planning, Garden Data Collaborative	Medium-Term
	Operations	City Planning	Short-Term

RESOURCES FOR CHANGE

The Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) has 30 appointed members and ex officio (i.e., City staff) members from across the food system who advise the mayor and local government on ways to create a more just food system. FPAC's Fiscal Year 2023 Recommendations advocate providing Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation the organizational capacity to implement new internal practices that increase land access and ownership for agriculture use as outlined in the Land Bank's 2019 Strategic Plan. FPAC has continuously recommended providing additional resources to the Land Bank (2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019). Staff members who serve on FPAC as a function of their position within the administration have met with department leadership to discuss issues and coordinate potential solutions that support urban farmers and gardeners and increase their access to land ownership.

LOCAL PROFILE

URBAN TREE CONNECTION

[Urban Tree Connection's](#) (UTC) mission is to build a neighborhood rooted food and land system through community leadership development and land-based strategies in West Philadelphia. For more than two decades, UTC has partnered with residents to transition abandoned lots into six greening and gardening spaces to address food insecurity, short-dumping, and social isolation. This includes Neighborhood Foods Farm, a 3/4 acre urban farm. Together, the community has transformed and stewarded these spaces for communal gathering, sustainable food production, and holistic health and wellness education. Lots that had been neglected for years are now community assets filled with fresh produce grown with and for neighbors. UTC is part of a larger ecosystem practicing and advocating for food sovereignty within historically marginalized communities. Its long-term vision is to build a local, sustainable, and equitable food and land system that is community governed.

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

1.6 Develop City legislation, resolutions, plans, and studies that establish urban agriculture and community gardens and farms as permanent, viable, and essential long-term land uses.

Formally accept the *Growing from the Root* as the City's pathway toward a racially and economically just food system.

Establish an Urban Agriculture Charter that affirms the City's commitments to future investments in urban agriculture that affirm and acknowledge culturally based and ecologically friendly methods of growing and safe and appropriate animal keeping, using the principles of agroecology.

Support increased food security by establishing urban agriculture, community gardening and farming, and green space as stated priorities for all public landholding and planning agencies. Administer interagency coordination and planning to support these initiatives via an urban agriculture policy.

Work with City Council to develop urban agriculture policy, including reviewing and amending the zoning code periodically to introduce new opportunities for advancing agriculture.

Work with residents to identify new and existing urban agriculture opportunities and support systems needed in future comprehensive and neighborhood planning efforts led or commissioned by the City. Assist in identifying opportunities for urban agriculture for community groups seeking to develop neighborhood plans.

Where relevant, consider the role, relationship, and benefits of urban agriculture in all City studies (e.g., air and soil quality, crime reduction, access to food, public health and well-being, community relationships, and workforce development).



1.7 Amend the City's acquisition and disposition policies to increase opportunities to preserve community gardens and farms on formerly vacant land.

Work with urban agriculture stakeholders in coordination with PHDC, City Council, and the Philadelphia Land Bank Board to update the acquisition and disposition policies.

1.7a Acquisition Policies

Better explain and promote the process for eligible gardens and farms with demonstrated capacity to partner with the City in asking the Land Bank to acquire privately owned tax delinquent properties for garden or farm preservation.

1.7b Disposition Policies

Continue to prioritize community gardens and farms to be classified as productive, community-benefiting permanent uses of land that should be eligible for nominal (if transferring ownership to a nonprofit or community garden) or discounted (if selling property to an agricultural business or market farm enterprise) pricing.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Legislative	City Council, Parks & Rec, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Planning & Development, PHDC, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroot Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Administrative	City Council, Parks & Rec, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Planning & Development, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Short-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, FPAC, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Managing Director's Office, City Council	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, PHDC, Planning & Development, Parks & Rec, School District	Medium-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Planning and Development, Parks & Rec, FPAC	Long-Term
	Operations	Planning and Development, Parks & Rec, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Planning & Development, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Parks & Rec, Streets	Long-Term
	Legislative, Administrative	City Council, Land Bank, Mayor's Office, Parks & Rec, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Legislative, Administrative	City Council, PHDC, Land Bank, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Operations	City Council, Land Bank, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank, City Council	Medium-Term

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

1.7 cont'd Work in partnership to broaden and build gardeners' eligibility to receive transfer of property for a community-benefiting agricultural use beyond nonprofits (e.g., land trusts, cooperatives, unincorporated associations, businesses, and other legally recognized entities). Increase residents' awareness and engagement in accessing public and tax delinquent land.

Streamline the process for renewing leases by offering online and in-person options. Establish contact with the lease holder to confirm that the garden is not seeking renewal prior to any lease termination.

Explore a land swap clause within the disposition policy that allows for privately held parcels within a garden or farm to be swapped with a nearby public parcel of a similar value. (For more see Land recommendation 1.1; land swaps can be phased out once recommendation 1.1 is implemented.)

Develop workshops and education opportunities for growers interested in market farms, including leasing or purchasing land for a nominal fee or farm market value.

X 1.8 Explore the feasibility of allocating the funding necessary to purchase liens on community gardens and farms and side yards to allow the Land Bank to acquire the land.

Change the Land Bank's acquisition policies to allow the Land Bank to acquire and manage vacant properties with US Bank liens as a systemic solution to putting this land into use, explicitly for equitable community development (e.g., community gardens, affordable housing/public housing, open space, etc.).

X 1.9 Continue to provide guidance to individual applicants who are interested in licensing, leasing, or owning land to increase land security.

Develop improved application language for community gardens and farms, nonprofit farms, and market farms seeking to own or gain legal access to land for urban agriculture, providing a clear pathway and front door for growers.

Assign a project manager to help track the process of garden and farm applications and follow these properties through the leasing and disposition process.

Better promote existing opportunities for waivers to cover fees associated with land transfer for nonprofits and low-income gardeners and farmers obtaining land through the Land Bank.

1.10 Promote community gardens and farms in the city as cultural resources that should be acknowledged in the telling and preserving of all Philadelphians' histories.

Preserve the cultural and physical history of community gardens and farms in the city that have been stewarded by growers and residents for decades. Commemorate historic gardens and farms by nomination through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Historical Marker Program, and explore the nomination of sites to the National Register of Historic Places, formally recognizing gardens and farms that have been tended for a decade or longer, including but not limited to, the following historic sites:

- > Eastwick Community Garden (Bartram Avenue & Island Avenue)
- > Bethel Burial Ground
- > Glenwood Green Acres
- > Viola Street Community Garden
- > Wiota Street Community Garden
- > 25th and Tasker Garden
- > Uber Street Garden
- > Urban Creators
- > One Art Oasis
- > Bel Arbor
- > Aspen Farms
- > South Philadelphia Boys & Girls Club

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Land Bank, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank	Short-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Land Bank, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	City Council, Land Bank, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Revenue	Short-Term
	Legislative	City Council	Short-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank	Short-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank	Short-Term
	Operations	Land Bank	Short-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Land Bank, FPAC, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, City Planning, Historical Commission	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, PA Historical and Museum Commission	Medium-Term

LOCAL PROFILE

NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS TRUST

Philadelphia's [Neighborhood Gardens Trust](#) is a nonprofit land trust which supports community gardens through working with gardeners and the City to acquire or lease land that is home to a garden of three growing seasons or more. Once a garden's application is accepted, NGT also provides insurance, support on maintenance and improvements, safety monitoring, and access to other gardeners and technical assistance. These services aid the garden by protecting the lot from being displaced by a sale for development, and allow gardeners to feel more secure that their improvements are here to stay.

CASE STUDY

NEIGHBORSACE, CHICAGO

[NeighborSpace](#) is a nonprofit land trust in Chicago that supports urban agriculture preservation through property ownership, insurance, stewardship, education, tool lending, project planning, fundraising, and more. Existing active garden groups with a community organization partner can apply to be part of NeighborSpace, which will pursue long-term ownership and share resources and connections to other gardens.

CASE STUDY

EARTHSEED LAND COLLECTIVE, DURHAM, NC

[Earthseed Land Collective](#) is a "center for community resilience" created by "seven black and brown folx" committed to "addressing the overwhelming racial wealth gap through cooperative ownership of land and resources." Together, they steward 48 acres of land, growing food, jobs, and political movements, as well as relationships between people and the land. Earthseed is a successful BIPOC led cooperatively owned land project, and it demonstrates the potential reach and benefits of the cooperative ownership model.

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
	Nominate historically and culturally significant building structures in gardens for local historic designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission (e.g., Norris Square Neighborhood Project's La Casita de Abuela).
	Participate in the Philadelphia Historical Commission's Cultural Resource Survey Plan project to reinforce the role and need for preservation of urban agriculture in Philadelphia's cultural heritage.
1.11	Support the use of adverse possession as a tool to help growers obtain legal access to privately owned land within the city and state.
	Support the Public Interest Law Center's efforts to reduce the adverse possession statutory period from 21 years to 10 years for gardens and green spaces on privately held land in Philadelphia.
	Collaborate with local community organizations and nonprofits, as well as out-of-state grassroots farming organizations (e.g., Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-op) and Food Policy Advisory Councils, to engage state politicians and law makers to support and sponsor PA Senate Bill 939 to shorten the existing adverse possession statutory period.
	Develop a payment plan process for back taxes or liens owed when a garden or farm is successfully secured through an adverse possession claim.
1.12	Use funds from federal and state agencies (e.g., US Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency), the City of Philadelphia, and philanthropic sources to create and sustain a Food and Land Justice Fund dedicated to the preservation of community gardens and farms.
	Use the Food and Land Justice Fund to offer accessible community grant opportunities that support growers in purchasing land and resources (e.g., water lines, tools, soil, hoop houses, etc.).
	Use the Food and Land Justice Fund to support garden and farm data tracking, as well as land stewardship over time. Allow funds to be used for human development, including training and education to ensure growers have all the tools they need to manage relationships and growing spaces.
	Apply for federal funding available for urban agriculture and food policy development in city municipalities.
Create new growing spaces.	
1.13	Establish a Land Access Program within a new Office of Agriculture to provide long-term affordable leases on public park land for growers citywide.
	Survey public land within Parks & Rec's inventory, including neighborhood parks and recreation centers that do not yet include agriculture or food growing spaces, to identify spaces that could support urban agriculture. Also, survey residents within a half-mile of these sites to gauge interest in growing food and participating in agricultural projects (e.g., Fox Chase Farm).
	Identify priority areas for the Land Access Program tied to benefits for residents, including increasing food supply and food security in low-income communities.
	Explore opportunities for long-term cooperative land care partnerships with growers, land stewardship, and tribal organizations on park land.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Parks & Rec	Long-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Legislative	FPAC	Medium-Term
	Partnership	FPAC, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Dept of Revenue	Medium-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Fund for Philadelphia, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Federal Agencies	Long-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Fund for Philadelphia, Office of Sustainability, Federal Agencies	Long-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Fund for Philadelphia, Office of Sustainability, Federal Agencies	Long-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Fund for Philadelphia, Office of Sustainability, Federal Agencies	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term

LOCAL PROFILE

EASTWICK COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Eastwick neighborhood is home to the largest community garden (7.64 acres) in Philadelphia. The garden space, also known as “the airport garden,” comprises two gardens that have been operating there for over 40 years, Eastwick Community Gardens and The Victory Gardens. Over 100 diverse gardeners from the Southern US to the Caribbean, Italy to Southeast Asia, grow bountiful crops of culturally important foods to feed their families and communities. Many of the gardeners are elders for whom the garden is their main source of exercise, healthy food, community, and purpose. Elder gardeners share seeds, tools, knowledge, skills, and life lessons with the younger generation of gardeners. The gardens are coordinated by advisory boards made up of gardeners, and the land is owned by the Philadelphia International Airport. Growers have shown interest for many years in preserving these gardens for permanent use as a beloved asset of southwest Philadelphia.



Eastwick Community Garden (Photos courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture)

**RECOMMENDATION /
ACTION STEP****1.13
cont'd**

Explore opportunities for cultural heritage conservation easements and agreements, which would allow for formalized Native American and Indigenous access to land for cultural purposes (e.g., foraging and ceremonies).

Connect all leaseholders to the network of City resources (e.g., compost, mulch, garden beds, translation services, etc.).

In partnership with growers and advocates, develop guidelines for community gardens and urban agriculture projects on public lands to ensure long-term maintenance, public environmental benefit, and transparency between gardeners and Parks & Rec.

1.14 Facilitate collaboration between Parks & Rec and Rebuild Philadelphia to evaluate potential and need for garden creation or preservation at Rebuild recreation centers.

Develop assessment sheets for each Rebuild site that documents food insecurity in the surrounding area, the potential to grow food on site (i.e., access to sun, water, soil), and nearby community gardens and farms with expertise as potential partners.

Ensure community gardening and farming activities are presented to residents as a recreation option during the community engagement and design process.

Establish a protocol for Rebuild and future initiatives to coordinate with the proposed Office of Agriculture during pre-planning and site assessments for improvements at Rebuild sites.

Conduct training on how to facilitate community conversations about community gardening and farming for Rebuild Project Users (i.e., the nonprofit entities facilitating Rebuild community engagement, design, and construction processes).

Work with Rebuild design teams to assess the feasibility of creating or reconstructing gardens with ADA accessibility (e.g., sidewalks and pathways, accessible garden beds) to further promote inclusive recreation.

1.15 Work with the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) to incorporate community gardens and agriculture projects at existing and future public housing developments.

Offer informational sessions for PHA's Resident Advisory Board and Resident Councils to build awareness about City and PHA support for growing food, community gardening, and food-related programs.

Survey residents at all public housing developments to gauge resident interest in growing food and participating in agricultural projects (e.g., bee keeping, composting, indoor and vertical farming).

Partner with PowerCorpsPHL, relevant City agencies, and nonprofits to build out new community gardens and bring agricultural programming (e.g., farm stands, food and wellness cooking demonstrations) for residents to access free, fresh, locally grown produce at PHA sites.

Formalize and codify the process for residents of PHA housing to create gardens on PHA property for future reference.

Incorporate community gardening, agriculture projects, and/or space for fresh food and wellness programming in the design of all new public housing developments.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Streets, Office of Immigrant Affairs	Medium-Term
	Administrative, Partnership	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Rebuild	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Rebuild, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Administrative	Rebuild, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Rebuild, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Partnership	Rebuild, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	PHA	Long-Term
	Operations	PHA, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Operations	PHA	Short-Term
	Partnership	PHA, PowerCorpsPHL, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Administrative	PHA	Medium-Term
	Operations	PHA	Long-Term



RECOMMENDATION /
ACTION STEP**1.16 Build awareness about pathways to land ownership and long-term leasing opportunities for growers tending Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)'s vacant and scattered site properties.**

Share information throughout the network of local growers to market PHA's Community Choice Program through which nonprofits can register with PHA and request surplus PHA land for community-serving uses, including community gardens and farms.

Create a process for PHA residents and neighboring residents to develop or preserve gardens on PHA land.

Explore expanding eligibility for PHA's Community Choice Program to include legally recognized entities (e.g., community land trusts, cooperatives, and unincorporated associations) beyond neighborhood-based nonprofits.

1.17 Work across City agencies and with major institutions to support the creation of new community gardens and market farms to increase food production in the city.

Partner with PWD's Vacant Land Program to create a new community gardens and farms initiative that incorporates green stormwater infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens) as part of a shared stewardship and long-term land protection and maintenance plan. Develop a call for submissions by neighborhood to select interested community partners.

Seek opportunities to co-locate community gardens on Free Library property (e.g., Lillian Marrero Library) where there is suitable space and demonstrated interest among staff and community members. Coordinate efforts with other food- and agriculture-related initiatives based in the library system.

Partner with the School District of Philadelphia to establish a process for creating new community gardens and leasing land to provide access for neighboring residents. Explore liability challenges and provide support for clearances to allow residents to work in gardens on school grounds.

Develop innovative zoning incentives and designations (e.g., urban agriculture zones) to encourage urban agriculture production.

Collaborate with PIDC/PAID to do a land suitability analysis to identify vacant or underutilized public land and buildings that are suitable for a diverse range of agriculture projects, including vacant industrial buildings (e.g., hydroponics, indoor agriculture, vertical farming) that could be candidates for market farms or other agricultural enterprises. Develop an outreach and engagement process to connect farmers and agricultural producers to available land and buildings.

Partner with universities to make their surplus land and underutilized spaces available to growers, while encouraging students and residents to grow together (e.g., Temple University Community Garden).

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	PHA	Short-Term
	Partnership	PHA, Grassroots Organizations, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Partnership	PHA, Local Growers, Grassroots Organizations, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Administrative	PHA, Grassroots Organizations, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations, Partnership	PWD, Free Library, School District, Planning & Development, PIDC/PAID, Commerce, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations, Partnership	PWD, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	Free Library, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Planning & Development, Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	PIDC/PAID, Land Bank, Commerce, DVRPC, Planning & Development	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

1.18 Partner with environmental stewardship organizations, City agencies, and advocates throughout Philadelphia to evaluate whether a countywide Conservation District should be established, which could create new access to technical and financial resources.

Establish the mission and components of the Conservation District in collaboration with FPAC and urban agriculture and environmental stewardship community stakeholders, and partner City agencies.

Seek funding from the National Association of Conservation Districts Urban Agriculture Conservation (UAC) Grant Initiative, philanthropic partners and federal and state agencies to implement plan recommendations within the city.

Utilize the Conservation District to preserve agricultural land within Philadelphia, in addition to other mutually beneficial efforts to stabilize and grow the local tree canopy and improve soil and water quality, among other initiatives.



1.19 Increase availability of funding for growers and nonprofits to acquire land through philanthropic, state, and federal funding sources.

Increase and advocate for more available funding for urban agriculture activities under the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Pennsylvania Farm Bill program.

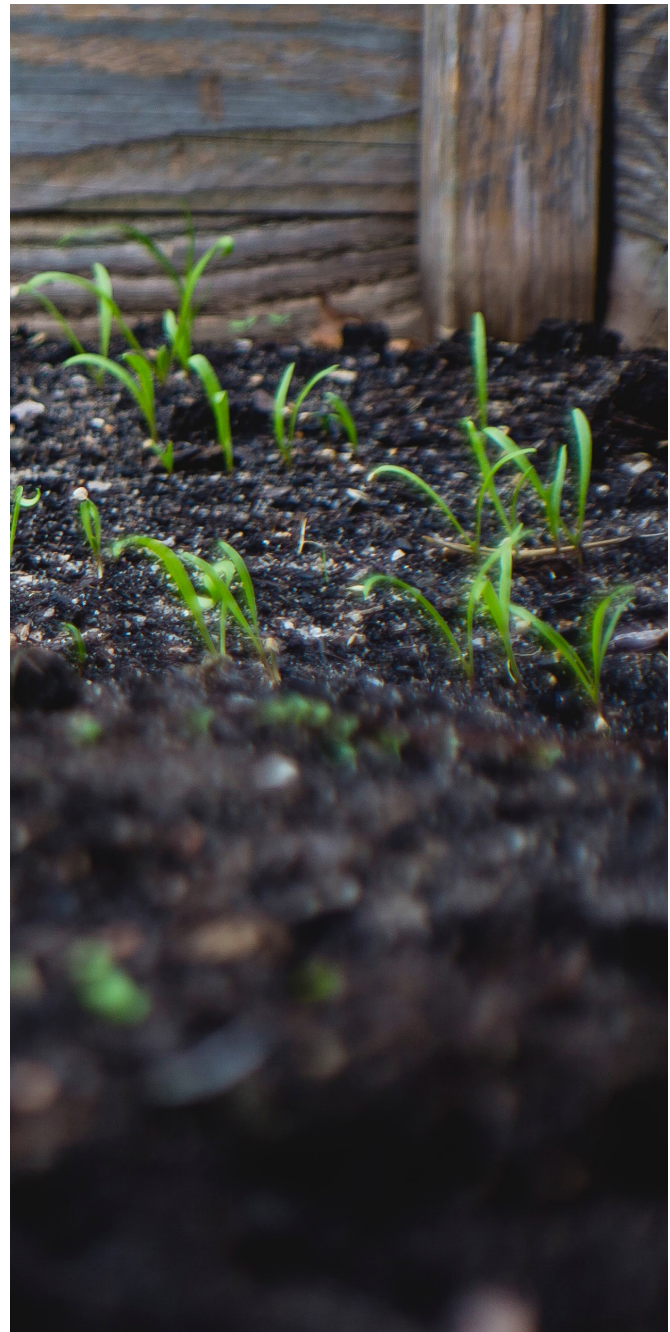
Seek philanthropic support from mission-aligned foundations, private donors, and universities. Support building relationships between community garden and farm operators and philanthropic partners interested in supporting land preservation efforts as well as racial and economic justice.

Utilize state grants, including Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnerships and Department of Community and Economic Development Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grants, to support land acquisition and garden preservation.

Utilize federal grants (e.g., the Community Development Block Grant) to acquire land for growers who are land insecure and fund capital projects on public land such as installing water lines and green stormwater infrastructure, building new community gardens and food forests on City-owned vacant land, and redeveloping City-owned buildings.

Provide an annual report of incoming funds and funds spent on land acquisition for community gardens and farms within the proposed Office of Urban Agriculture.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, PWD, Office of Sustainability, School District, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, PWD, Office of Sustainability, Streets, School District, Mayor's Office, FPAC, Nonprofits, Area Universities, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, PWD, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, PWD, Office of Sustainability, School District, FPAC	Long-Term
	Budget	Funders, PA Dept of Ag, Fund for Philadelphia, Federal Agencies (e.g., USDA, EPA)	Medium-Term
	Budget	PA Dept of Ag, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Fund for Philadelphia, Funders, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Budget	Planning & Development, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Long-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Long-Term



DEFINITION SOIL REMEDIATION

Healthy food starts with healthy soil. Some methods of removing contaminants and pollutants from poisoned soil include bioremediation and phytoremediation which both use plants to draw up particles such as pesticides, petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, and chlorinated solvents. These plants are then considered to be biohazards and need to be disposed of responsibly. (For more information, see the [FPAC Healthy Soil Report](#)).

Photo Credit: Marcus Spiske, via Unsplash

Invest in land stewardship to increase climate resilience.

1.20 Review and revise current City practices for land care, including Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP), Parks & Rec, Licenses & Inspections (L&I), and private contractors to be more sustainable, friendly, and effective in supporting resident health, the environment, and growing practices.

Investigate common land care issues, how and why they occur (e.g., citations for tall grass and weeds, unintended mowing, destruction of food gardens, fruiting trees, and green stormwater infrastructure), and develop guidelines for City entities and contractors to prevent those situations.

Produce and distribute urban agriculture, green stormwater infrastructure and pollinator habitat training and manuals (referencing the Citywide GSI Maintenance agreement) for City agencies and private contractors hired by the City, to prevent the removal or destruction of plants and trees grown by residents and unjustified fines for gardeners (i.e., pollinator habitats, fruit-bearing trees, code-compliant animal keeping, front yard gardens growing food and native or medicinal plants).

Increase training for land management agencies about how to manually remove plants to effectively manage disruptive (i.e. invasive) species and better manage larger tracts of natural lands. Explore public campaigns and workdays with partners to remove disruptive (i.e., invasive) species within the parks system.

Continue to utilize Integrative Pest Management, agroecology, and other sustainable technologies to reduce the potential negative impacts of these practices on human and animal health, water quality, soil quality, and air quality.

Ensure synthetic herbicide (e.g., Monsanto’s Roundup) and pesticide applications do not take place within 50 feet of play equipment and food producing gardens and farms on Parks & Rec properties. In the event there is an application of herbicides or pesticides within the parks system, staff will continue to post signs providing notice in advance and until the chemical dries.

Continue to ban synthetic herbicide and pesticide applications by community gardens and farms located on park land, educating residents on the health impacts of glyphosate and encouraging alternatives for residential use.

Institute a pilot program, on selected sites, to test the efficacy of organic pest management products.

Create education and hands-on opportunities for residents, universities, and growers to remove disruptive (i.e., invasive) species within the parks system for creative purposes (e.g., removing pokeweed berries as a plant dye for textiles or removing kudzu vine to process as fiber for fabric).

1.21 Explore how to expand City-funded programs to recognize, protect, and compensate gardens for their stewardship of formerly vacant land.

Encourage continued collaboration between PHS and Community LandCare staff whose maintenance work occurs at sites where residents are gardening in raised beds or other formats; offer training to LandCare staff about how to support gardening activities and work with growers.

Consider City sponsorship of a new longer-term and more resource-intensive track under the PHS LandCare program that directs funds to community gardens on the LandCare maintenance list, so that gardeners can support their own operations, equipment, and physical improvement needs over multiple growing seasons.

Create a pathway to move City-owned PHS LandCare sites where community gardening and agriculture activities are taking place towards open space/urban agriculture protection rather than treating these lots as surplus vacant land.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	CLIP, Parks & Rec, Licenses & Inspections, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Administrative, Partnership	Licenses & Inspections, CLIP, Parks & Rec, PWD, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, PWD, Licenses & Inspections, CLIP	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, CLIP, Licenses & Inspections	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Grassroots Organizations, Area Universities, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Mayor's Office, Planning & Development, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Planning & Development, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Partnership	Planning & Development, Nonprofits	Long-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank, Planning & Development, Parks & Rec	Long-Term

CASE STUDY

TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH SOIL STUDY

Toronto Public Health's [guide for soil testing](#) in urban gardens. From the Ground Up, was created to provide guidance on when and how to test soil for contaminants prior to initiating garden operations, which previous uses make a site more likely to have contaminated soil, and what efforts to take (such as raised beds or adding clean soil annually) to mitigate contamination in crops.

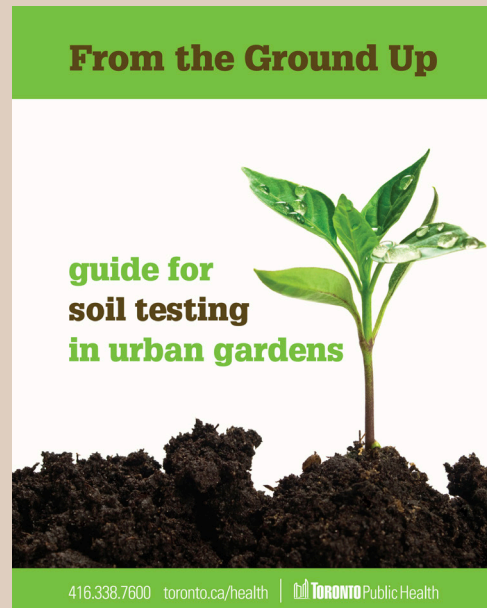


Photo courtesy of Toronto Public Health

CASE STUDY

PHILADELPHIA SOIL KITCHEN

[Soil Kitchen](#) was a temporary architectural intervention by Futurefarmers, powered by a windmill at 2nd Street and Girard Avenue in 2011. Residents could attend lectures and workshops on agriculture, cooking, soil remediation, composting, and windmill construction, as well as enjoy free soup in exchange for samples of soil from their neighborhood. The intervention coincided with the 2011 EPA National Brownfields Conference, and Soil Kitchen was able to test soil samples and produce a Philadelphia Brownfields Map and Soil Archive.

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP



1.22 Support existing land trusts and the creation of new community-led land trusts and land cooperatives in the city to secure land and hold ownership/leases for community gardens and other shared open spaces.

Provide technical assistance to support existing and new land trusts and land cooperatives working with residents and community organizations that need land security. Assist in navigating City processes and policies, securing funding for land purchases, liability insurance, and other costs, as well as navigating real estate tax exemptions, water access, and any other common landowner responsibilities.

Work with community partners to host teach-ins and trainings for residents and community organizations interested in land trusts and cooperative ownership models for their land projects and farms; including significant topics such as heirs' property laws, tangled title, class and race analysis, wealth and legacy (passing down of land) needs and desires.

Advance land reclamation by Black farmers and the Land Back movement for Indigenous/Native farmers by helping to organize and raise awareness of legal skill shares with partner organizations on Black, Afro-Indigenous, and Native Indigenous land tenure models.

1.23 Develop a citywide Healthy Soils and Education Program to support urban agriculture, build up topsoils, address carbon sequestration, increase water capture in soils, and prevent water contamination from soil runoff.

Update guidelines for safe growing in the city that are accessible in multiple languages, both online and in print. Develop a step-by-step site history guide for growers to learn about what the land they are growing on was used for previously (e.g., housing, gas station, laundry mat), and to understand the implications that prior land use may hold for soil health. Work with local organizations to develop and deploy educational materials to encourage public practices that build up healthy soil (e.g., using compost, biochar, fermented nutrients, manure to boost soil nutrients).

Subsidize workshops and skill shares hosted by community gardens and farms that teach traditional and agro-ecological soil remediation techniques.

Partner with community organizations to create community education campaigns and cultural events about the benefits of healthy soil, compost, biodiversity, and traditional agriculture techniques. Conduct soil safety outreach and education in neighborhoods, prioritizing low income and predominantly BIPOC neighborhoods that have experienced decades of disinvestment due to structural racism and environmental injustice.

Create a guide, in partnership with building and trades organizations, on how to build raised beds and other out-of-ground growing structures to grow food in safe, chemical-free, and affordable ways.

Conduct healthy soil projects with community gardens in areas with high amounts of soil contamination and air pollution to demonstrate how to improve soil health and safety.

Submit grant applications to state and federal programs and partners for brownfields and soil remediation funding and other soil health programs to support community garden and farm soil testing and other related projects.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations, Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, FPAC, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, FPAC, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, FPAC, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, FPAC, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Office of Immigrant Affairs, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Short-Term

**RECOMMENDATION /
ACTION STEP**

1.24 Collaborate with Penn State University Extension, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture and other local organizations, institutions, colleges, and universities to provide affordable soil testing services, including guidance and resources for gardeners and farmers submitting soil samples for testing.

Advocate to ensure that tests include a more complete analysis specific to Philadelphia (e.g., lead, arsenic, persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs), mercury, solvents).

Support efforts to ensure that scientific results of soil tests are communicated in a way that residents and non-scientists can understand; provide definitions, key take-aways, and recommended action steps for health and safety.

Support residents in identifying sources of contamination, risk levels, and strategies for dealing with contaminants.

Establish contaminant concentration thresholds specific to urban agriculture in Philadelphia. Review and update these thresholds regularly for urban gardeners to reference.

Analyze soil in existing gardens to determine the impact of long-term gardening on soil quality.

1.25 Collaborate with community gardens and leaseholders to increase wildlife habitats on park land, public right-of-way, and other open or riverine spaces to improve the environmental quality for wildlife, enhance the City’s climate change mitigation efforts, and increase wildlife viewing and recreational opportunities (e.g., birding, bee keeping).

Expand and promote the nation’s first City-owned Freshwater Mussel Hatchery at Fairmount Water Works and other initiatives to return mussels to the Delaware River watershed where they help improve and protect freshwater systems. Support Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and partners in creating a large-scale mussel hatchery at Bartram’s Garden, expected to bring millions of mussels back into the Delaware River.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Area Universities, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Administrative	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Nonprofits, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, NRCS, EPA, PA DCNR, Streets, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Area Universities, Institutions, PWD, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term

DEFINITION

NATURAL BIVALVE WATER FILTRATION

Bivalves such as oysters, clams, and mussels are natural filtration systems in our waterways, but due to pollution and over harvesting, their numbers have declined. Local organizations such as Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) and Fairmount Water Works have been working toward restoring the local mussel population in the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers, which will help clean our water, prevent shoreline erosion, and provide habitats for smaller organisms. PDE and Bartram's Garden have partnered to create a new watershed education and restoration complex at Bartram's Garden. The project will include a 9,000-square-foot hatchery, where freshwater mussels will be placed in the riverbeds of local streams, wetlands, and waterways, and a 12,000-square-foot education center that will provide hands-on, year-round opportunities for intergenerational learning and exchange within a teaching kitchen and indoor/outdoor classroom spaces.



Mussels (Photo courtesy of the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary)

Visit <https://bartramsgarden.org/hatchery/> for more information.





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

Production is the act of cultivating crops, growing food, and raising animals.



2. PRODUCTION



PRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Production of food, flowers, medicinal plants, and fiber (such as hemp) requires adequate agricultural resources. This 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.

WHY PHILADELPHIA NEEDS TO INVEST IN PRODUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE

When public meeting participants were asked, **“What does your community garden need to thrive?”** the majority said **growing materials** (e.g., soil, seeds/seedlings, and tools) and **growing infrastructure** (e.g., raised beds, hoop houses or greenhouses, and compost bins), followed closely by **long-term land security** and **water infrastructure**. Participants described various barriers to increasing their production and investing in agricultural infrastructure, including lack of land security and access to growing space.

Participants also described the potential of urban agriculture: mitigating climate change impacts such as flooding, heat islands, and biodiversity loss; retaining stormwater and lessening the impact on Philadelphia’s combined sewer systems and overflows; and storing carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, a process called carbon sequestration. All of these benefits are core to urban agriculture that employs the principles of agroecology, which takes a holistic approach to growing food. Agroecology brings growing food back in harmony with biology and the environment, people, and our cultural and political structures.³⁷ Whereas conventional agriculture exacerbates climate change and food waste, small scale farming and urban agriculture that employs agroecology and agroforestry principles can reduce both.



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

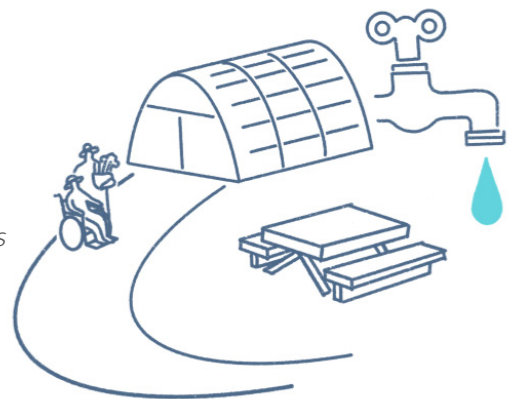
—Public meeting participant

Many participants also emphasized that urban agriculture can increase access to nourishing food and bring communities together. The COVID-19 pandemic led to empty grocery store shelves, especially in disinvested communities, where - participants said - many residents turned to neighborhood gardens and farms to access quality, affordable, and nutritious foods. With the physical distancing constraints brought on by the pandemic and the collective heartbreak and outrage at the continued loss of Black lives that led to racial justice uprisings across the city and country, gardens remained safe spaces where people could come together to heal and take collective action. Food-producing spaces and organizations became ever-more critical in feeding Philadelphia's population and providing safe spaces for gathering during difficult and painful times.

In addition to plants and growing spaces, animals are a key part of urban agriculture in Philadelphia. Many participants indicated support for animal keeping in Philadelphia: nine out of every 10 participants said they support keeping bees, and three-quarters said they support goats. Participants mentioned wide-ranging benefits that these animals provide to local ecosystems, including bees' essential role in pollination and propagation.

Participants also described the social benefits of infrastructure improvements. Seating, tables, outdoor kitchens, washing stations, and sun shelters can transform gardens from functional growing spaces into welcoming and comfortable common spaces. Walkways and raised beds can make gardens and farms more accessible to elders and people with limited mobility. More permanent infrastructure, such as water lines, electricity, cold storage, tool storage, and fencing, gives growers a greater sense of permanence, with investments reflecting an understanding that the land will be used for agricultural purposes for the foreseeable future.

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



HOW PHILADELPHIA APPROACHES FOOD AND AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

State and City governments, large nonprofits, and grassroots communities all work to support agricultural production, though there is still much to be done. Since 2019, **Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture** has offered funds to improve agricultural infrastructure in urban areas through the Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program, an innovation that arose out of the first Pennsylvania Farm Bill.³⁸ Through the program, individuals or single entities can apply for micro-grants of up to \$2,500, and groups of several partners can apply for collaboration grants up to \$50,000. Additionally, the **Penn State Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener Program** provides horticultural research, education, knowledge, and technical skills to residents and interested gardeners, especially in the Philadelphia area. They focus on best practices in sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship.

There are also several **City initiatives** that support urban agriculture production. **Philadelphia Parks & Recreation** (Parks & Rec) offers [free mulch](#), [compost](#), and [lumber](#) through the Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center and hosts the [Community Propagation Program](#) at Fairmount Park Horticultural Center, where city growers can apply to share greenhouse facilities at a nominal fee. In 2019, Parks & Rec also launched the Community Compost Network, which currently supports public composting at 13 sites across Philadelphia, with plans to expand. (For more information, see the Food Waste Reduction & Recovery chapter.)

Additionally, the **Philadelphia Water Department** (PWD) offers several opportunities to help growers access water for their gardens and farms. PWD's [Rain Check program](#) offers [rain barrels](#) that can be connected to home gutter systems to support stormwater retention and provide water to residential growing spaces. PWD also provides growers with [fire hydrant permits](#) on a case-by-case basis.

As of 2017, City legislation made community gardens eligible to receive a 100% discount on **stormwater management service charges** (the [Stormwater Exemption](#)) for parcels classified by PWD as Community Gardens following an application (which must be renewed every three years) and approval.

In an effort to support community-led efforts that address food apartheid, the **Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention** partnered with **The Reinvestment**



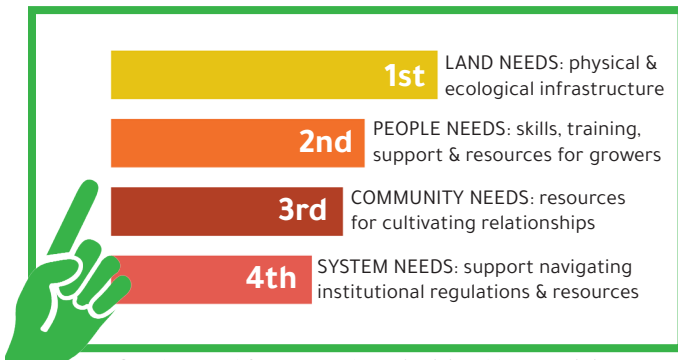
WHY “FOOD APARTHEID” AND NOT “FOOD DESERT”?

“Food deserts” are generally defined as low-income areas with little access to nutritional foods and large grocery stores. This term has been used by many organizations, academic institutions, and government entities, including the USDA and food movements. The term “desert,” however, may give the impression that these food landscapes are naturally occurring, when in fact they are a result of compounding systemic injustices and racism. The co-founder of Black Urban Growers, Karen Washington, has said, “Food apartheid looks at the whole food system, along with race, geography, faith, and economics. When we say food apartheid, the real conversation can begin.”³⁹

Fund to offer grants to local food justice and community organizations, gardens, farms, and businesses. The **Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative (PFJI)** funds community-driven solutions “informed by health justice, the collective movement to heal society and remove barriers that prevent individual and community well-being.”⁴⁰ The initiative has funded dozens of projects throughout the city.

Some City regulations prevent or place constraints on people growing produce and raising animals in the city. For example, the Philadelphia Land Bank’s Disposition Policies do not allow accessory structures for urban agriculture by right,⁴¹ preventing the installation of greenhouses for seed starts, tool sheds and storage, temporary high and low tunnels for season extension, and infrastructure for washing stations and refrigeration unless expressly permitted in the agreement. City regulations also make it unattainable to keep egg-laying hens in Philadelphia.

According to the City’s code, “farm animals,” including “any chicken, goose, duck, turkey, goat, sheep, pig, cow, or other farm animal”⁴² are allowed only on parcels of land that are three or more acres in size—bigger than the average city *block*—or at a facility used for education or scientific purposes.⁴³



Garden and farm needs, prioritized by participants at the second public meeting

The above structure provides storage, room for seed starts, and houses the garden’s planting plan/plot map.

Philly-area **nonprofits** also have several programs that support urban agriculture production. The following are just a few examples:

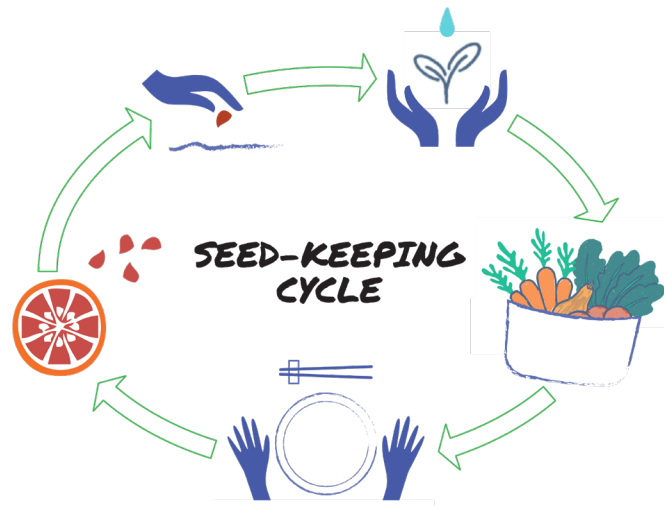
- > **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)** offers classes that teach introductory gardening skills as well as urban agriculture and gardening support through its Community Gardens Program. Gardens can apply and access resources, tools and other materials including seedlings grown and distributed through the City Harvest Initiative.
- > The **West Philly Tool Library**, established in 2007, loans tools to community members so they can perform simple home maintenance, tend their yards and gardens, build furniture, start projects, and learn new skills in a safe and affordable manner.

Community-based organizations and businesses

practice and promote urban food production as a means of preserving traditions and culture—and of resistance against racist and discriminatory systems. Food production enables communities to decide for themselves what foods are relevant and nourishing, and to promote health and identity from the grassroots up. The following are just a few examples of the many community based organizations and programs that engage in urban agriculture with a focus on its social, cultural, and health impacts.

- > **Sankofa Community Farm, Resilient Roots Farm,** and **Urban Tree Connection** each host farms and community gardens that provide fresh produce to their communities through farmers' markets and community-led food distribution, while also offering workshops and programs to learn about cultural seed keeping and preservation, agroecology, and more.

Growing Home Gardens is a collection of community gardens across South Philadelphia that offer a safe space for refugees putting down roots in the city. Originally established by the Nationalities Services Center in partnership with Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the City, the gardens are now managed



Seed-keeping can maintain connections to culture, tradition, and ancestral practices.

by Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (SEAMAAC) and serve over 300 gardeners, more than 70 percent of whom are refugees⁴⁴ from Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other nations. With seeds for vegetables and herbs from their home countries, families are able to extend their food budgets, grow the food and flavors of home, and maintain connections to their cultures and traditions.⁴⁵

- > **Truelove Seeds** is a farm-based “profit-sharing seed company that grows, preserves, and sells rare and culturally significant seeds.”⁴⁶ The seeds are collected from over 50 small urban and rural farmers who share a commitment to “community food sovereignty, cultural preservation, and sustainable agriculture.”⁴⁷ Through TrueLove, farmers share seeds and stories of their “ancestral and regional crops,” while also earning additional income from the sale of these seeds to others.
- > In 2021, **Soil Generation** released a manual titled [Agroecology From the People: Volume 1](#), which shares the history of the group’s organizing and formation, technical and culturally based farming practices from growers around the city, and political organizing strategies.

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

A range of actions are necessary to ensure growers have the resources they need to enhance agricultural production in Philadelphia, from citywide policy changes to new programs and initiatives to help growers invest in improved infrastructure. At a citywide policy level, growers need supportive land policies. Zoning changes can provide institutional clarity, lend legitimacy, and standardize agricultural practices. Several US cities have passed zoning ordinances and other policies that Philadelphia can look to as models. The City of Cleveland Urban Garden District ordinance includes regulations on permitting uses and structures, including greenhouses, hoop houses, chicken coops, beehives, rain barrels, and farm stands.⁴⁸ Seattle's highly detailed urban agriculture ordinance clarifies regulated uses and structures for urban food production and animal raising.⁴⁹

Regulations should be based on a broad understanding of food production that includes culturally based, agroecological practices as well as training for code inspectors, who may not be familiar with these practices. Regulations must also be paired with financial assistance and support for navigating the new rules to ensure equitable outcomes for growers, and assistance must be distributed in a racially equitable way, so it reaches the communities most likely to be negatively impacted by new regulation.

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.

CASE STUDIES NEW YORK'S GREENTHUMB PROGRAM & BOSTON'S GRASSROOTS PROGRAM



New York City's [GreenThumb program](#) supports community gardens through workshops, supplies, information, and connections to organizations and funding. GreenThumb also facilitates communication with the City if residents are interested in growing on a City-owned lot.⁵⁰

In Boston, the [Grassroots program](#) provides funding up to \$100,000 per project, City-owned land, and technical assistance to neighborhood garden groups in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.⁵¹ Both Grassroots and GreenThumb are successful examples of a City program that provides gardening resources to their residents.

"Rainbow Garden of Life and Health", a community garden in the Bronx managed by community members under the City of New York's GreenThumb Program.

Photo credit: Phillip Kester for GreenThumb

PRODUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations 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. There are three categories of Production recommendations, which work together to:

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

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
	<p>Ground Philadelphia’s urban farming programs and practices in agroecology, and develop resources, facilities, and partnerships that directly support agriculture activities in Philadelphia.</p>
X	<p>2.1 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.</p> <p>Increase the number of permanent positions dedicated to local food production and policy, and advocate for and implement urban agriculture related programs and policies.</p> <p>Administer an operational budget for Parks & Rec’s Farm Philly program to expand and sustain its programs, including but not limited to improving, expanding, or relocating the Carousel House Farm (i.e., Parks & Rec’s public education and production farm).</p> <p>Engage directly with gardeners and farmers to provide information about, including, but not limited to, accessing land, education and training programs, permitting, zoning, soil safety, ongoing maintenance responsibilities, and free or low-cost resources.</p> <p>Manage a Land Access Program that would provide long-term affordable leases on public park land for growers citywide.</p> <p>Build relationships to explore opportunities for cultural heritage conservation easements and agreements, which would allow for Native American and Indigenous access to park land for cultural purposes (e.g., foraging, ceremonies, gatherings). Work with the Lenni-Lenape communities located in Pennsylvania, Delaware, the Ramapough Lenape Nation in New Jersey, the Delaware Tribe in Oklahoma, and the Delaware Tribes of the diaspora in Wisconsin and Canada, as well as other Indigenous groups to promote Native/ Indigenous food sovereignty and traditional food ways and agriculture practices within the city.</p> <p>Study best practices from other cities that have established a practice of paying a voluntary land tax to local tribal nations or organizations in recognition of current access to stolen Indigenous land. For more, see https://nativegov.org/news/voluntary-land-taxes.</p>

WHAT IS VOLUNTARY LAND TAX TO A TRIBAL NATION?

Such a payment is a continually necessary debt paid in acknowledgment of land expropriation and genocide, not a grant or opportunity that can be paid with limit or in exchange for services.

CASE STUDY

SOGOREA TE LAND TRUST, OAKLAND

Sogorea Te Land Trust is a community land trust led by Indigenous women in the San Francisco Bay Area that works to return Indigenous land to the Chochenyo and Karkin Ohlone people. This land trust demonstrates how CLTs can be used to restore or “rematriate” land back to Indigenous communities. Sogorea Te facilitates healing from the legacies of colonialism and genocide. At the Lisjan farm site, Indigenous people cultivate traditional and medicinal plants alongside fruits and vegetables and maintain a rainwater catchment system with over 5,500 gallons of potable water storage. Sogorea Te also accepts a Shuumi Land Tax, a voluntary annual contribution that non-Indigenous people living on traditional Lisjan Ohlone territory make to support the work of the land trust.



Visit <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/> for more information.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Mayor's Office, City Council, Finance, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Budget	City Council, Finance, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Budget	City Council, Finance, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Indigenous leaders and communities	Short-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Policy Office, Parks & Rec	Short-Term

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

2.1 cont'd

Support farmers markets, market farms, community gardens, and other urban agriculture projects selling or distributing produce. For more on the City’s role in supporting these vending opportunities, see Preparation & Distribution recommendation 3.8 and Consumption recommendation 4.8.

Provide technical assistance (e.g., land and tree care, water hookup access, plant propagation, and material supplies such as compost and mulch), as well as guidelines and tools to increase the self-sufficiency of community gardens and farms on public land.

Formalize the process for Parks & Rec to transfer gardens to preserve gardens if growers want access instead of ownership. Extend support systems offered to “Friends of Parks” groups to gardens on park and other publicly owned land.

Provide connections to translation services made available to City agencies to community gardens and farms and nonprofits working with non-English speaking growers. Plan for translation as a budget item in projects that will require this service.

Develop targets and metrics to implement recommendations and track the progress of *Growing from the Root*. Continue to survey and keep an inventory of agriculture projects, including but not limited to community gardens, farms, orchards, and beehives on park land.

Convene an Urban Agriculture Task Force that includes community gardeners and farmers, local food producers, advocates, City staff, and elected officials to support the implementation of the plan. Prioritize a diversified group of community members including those who identify as BIPOC, low income/working class, women, LGBTQIA, disabled, and/or immigrant owned.

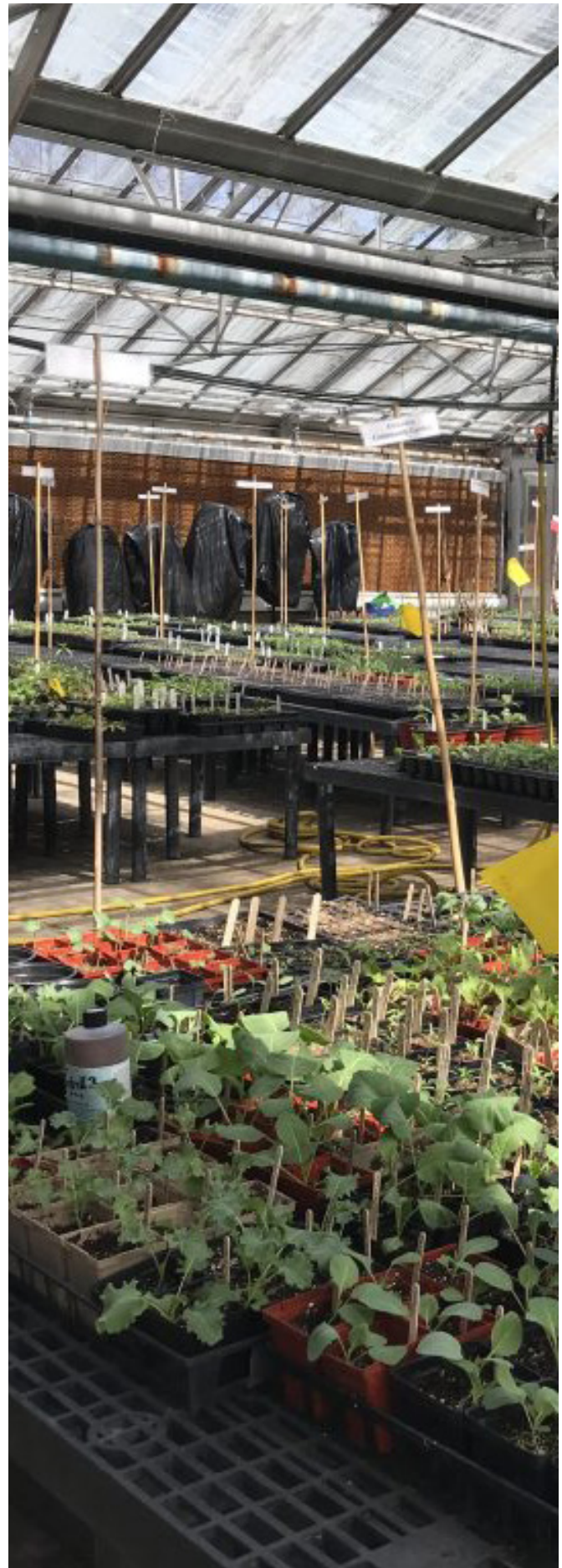
Collaborate with the Philadelphia Land Bank in reviewing, issuing, maintaining, and tracking all leases for urban agriculture, and alongside local partners to identify pathways and tools to preserve existing gardens and establish new gardens. Work with the Land Bank and local partners to identify preservation-ready urban agriculture projects and facilitate a pathway to preservation.

Continue diversifying Parks & Rec’s programming to provide race, culture, and gender inclusive youth and adult programming that focuses on the next generation of farmers.

2.2 Coordinate across departments to develop and implement policies, procedures, and processes that support urban agriculture, food distribution, and markets.

Explore establishing designated staff at City agencies to provide assistance and technical support and answer inquiries from gardeners and farmers.

TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
Administrative	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Universities, Funders	Short-Term
Administrative	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Funders	Medium-Term
Administrative	Parks & Rec, Office of Immigrant Affairs, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
Administrative	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Short-Term
Administrative	Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
Operations	Parks & Rec, Land Bank, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
Operations	Parks & Rec, Partner City agencies	Medium-Term
Administrative	Parks & Rec, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Commerce Dept, Land Bank, PWD, School District, Licenses & Inspections, Streets, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term



Community Propagation Program space at the Fairmount Park Horticultural Center

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
2.2 cont'd	Engage staff across the City departments to expand their expertise on issues related to urban agriculture, particularly on the values that drive the urban agriculture community, the ways in which their agencies interact with gardeners and farmers, and the benefits that gardens and farms can have for Philadelphia.
2.3	Create additional resources and expand services to address known needs identified by gardeners and farmers, such as access to insurance, trash collection, and tree care.
	Partner with local food justice organizations and legal nonprofits to develop shared resources and guidance documents to help growers meet requirements of the City's disposition policies and the Philadelphia Code and Home Rule Charter.
	Explore how to subsidize insurance costs for organizations and individuals as financial support to new gardens and relief funds for existing gardens.
	Partner with the Streets Department to explore the possibility of providing trash collection at community gardens and farms.
	Assess local garden and agricultural organizations, nonprofits, community development corporations (CDCs) and business partners' ability to provide technical or financial support for growers seeking to meet the requirements of the City's disposition policy (e.g., umbrella liability insurance policy for growers) and fiscal sponsorship.
	Work with gardeners to contact local organizations and institutions to be their partner in holding liability insurance or to be their fiscal sponsors in order to receive grant funding.
	Classify community gardens, farms, and areas of urban agriculture activity as priority areas for illegal dumping prevention and remediation.
X	2.4 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.
	Connect community gardens and passive green spaces with tree resources, including free fruiting trees through Parks & Rec's TreePhilly program and other resources in conjunction with efforts to implement the Philly Tree Plan, to increase access to food and tree canopy (i.e., shade).
	Coordinate with the Philadelphia Water Department to prioritize neighborhoods vulnerable to extreme heat for green stormwater infrastructure and urban agriculture interventions.
	Coordinate with and provide support for local orchard organizations (e.g., Philadelphia Orchard Project and others) in the installation, pruning, and maintenance of orchards. Prioritize neighborhoods with low to no tree canopy.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Commerce Dept, Land Bank, PWD, School District, Licenses & Inspections, Streets, Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Streets, Finance, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Streets, Finance, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Streets, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	PWD, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Parks & Rec, Streets	Short-Term

CASE STUDY

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA CULINARY LITERACY CENTER & EDIBLE ALPHABET PROGRAM

The Free Library of Philadelphia demonstrates its interest in and ability to host valuable agricultural programming with their existing programs. Their [Culinary Literacy Center](#) aims to further educational opportunities through events ranging including cookbook author visits, cooking classes for school-age kids, immigrant-led cooking workshops, and nutrition courses. Their [Edible Alphabet Program](#)'s mission is to teach English language and literacy skills through cooking and cultural exchange.



Photo courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

2.5 Expand education, knowledge sharing, and cultural preservation and exchange through expanded agricultural programming and materials available through the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Expand the selection of books on agriculture, with an emphasis on books authored by BIPOC and other historically under-represented authors and scholars.

Continue investing in and expand existing programs such as the Free Library’s Culinary Literacy Center. Increase collaborations with local chefs, growers, and cultural workers.

Pursue partnerships to share knowledge and develop public programming about cultural heritage, ancestral foods and food-related practices (e.g., fermentation, medicine making, etc.). Also see Consumption recommendations 4.9 and 4.10 about foraging.



2.6 Support and promote local seed saving practices with partnerships between the City and local organizations.

Spread knowledge about seed saving and its significance to make it more accessible in agricultural programs and through conversations with local gardens, agricultural organizations, and in- and out-of school learning opportunities. Focus especially on culturally relevant and climate resilient crops.

Work with existing seed saving networks as well as BIPOC and immigrant and refugee community organizations to design and implement a public seed library within the Free Library of Philadelphia system with culturally relevant and ecologically diverse plant species in the inventory of seeds. Ensure this resource is community-led and informed, and that educational materials include the origin stories of the seeds.

Educate and hire seed keepers from local growing communities to staff the public seed library.

Build relationships with Lenni Lenape communities located in Pennsylvania, Delaware, the Ramapough Lenape Nation in New Jersey, the Delaware Tribe in Oklahoma, and the Delaware Tribes of the diaspora in Wisconsin and Canada, to promote and support traditional seed saving practices. Connect this work with existing seed saving networks and programs within the city.

Produce policy recommendations and communications that aim to protect the rights of residents to save and share seeds, especially culturally significant and climate resilient crops.



- > **35% of people talked about connections to their ancestry, family and culture when talking about seed saving**
- > **30% mentioned that the practice allows them to save money and have greater access to nourishing foods**

Input from survey at second public meeting

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Free Library	Short-Term
	Operations	Free Library, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Partnership	Free Library, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Partnership	Free Library, Parks & Rec, School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations, Partnership	Free Library, Parks & Rec, School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations, Partnership	Free Library, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Free Library, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Free Library, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Medium-Term

CASE STUDY

PHILADELPHIA SEED EXCHANGE

Philadelphia Seed Exchange hosts citywide and neighborhood gatherings of gardeners and farmers, botanists, and seed savers working together to maintain personal and collective seed collections, preserve local biodiversity, and offer public educational opportunities and classes about saving seeds and plant propagation. The Exchange is a project of Truelove Seeds, and since 2015, they have organized and hosted several seed swaps every year in partnership with the Free Library of Philadelphia and other neighborhood groups. At the swaps, gardeners and farmers from the region bring their extra seed harvests and half-used seed packets to trade with each other. Growers are able to connect and share stories of why they love their particular seed varieties. Truelove also brings their collection of seeds to the gathering, and provides seed saving handouts to share advice and tips.



*Philadelphia Seed Exchange gathering
(Photo courtesy of Truelove Seeds)*

Make physical improvements at growing spaces more feasible.



2.7 Advocate to update the City code and Land Bank disposition policies to allow urban agriculture accessory structures by right.

Amend code requirements on accessory agricultural structures (e.g., high tunnels, cold frames, hoop houses, and greenhouses) to reduce side setbacks (currently a minimum of 20 feet) and reduce regulatory barriers (e.g., permit requirements) for temporary structures whose intended use is longer than 180 days. Explore the possibility of making accessory agricultural structures eligible for the EZ Permit process.

Explore revising the Land Bank's disposition policies to permit a variety of accessory agricultural structures for urban agriculture on land transferred or leased by the Land Bank (e.g., green houses for seed starts, tool sheds and storage, high and low tunnels for season extension, and infrastructure for washing stations and refrigeration), and allow multiple structures on a single lot when appropriate. In instances that require earth disturbance (i.e., any construction or other activity that disturbs the surface of the land), gardeners/farmers may still need to get a permit to protect underground infrastructure (e.g., pipes, electrical lines).

2.8 Update Parks & Rec's design standards to include guidelines for garden design and construction for growing spaces, including structures and safe and appropriate animal keeping on public land.

Specify allowable uses and necessary restrictions (e.g., apiaries not allowed within a certain distance from playgrounds). Specify necessary design considerations such as sunlight, water access, and accessibility. Share resources with other land-holding partners (e.g., School District of Philadelphia).



2.9 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.

Coordinate with the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and the Office for People with Disabilities to access existing and new resources for City staff and community partners on equitable engagement practices (e.g., the Equitable Engagement Playbook).

Partner with organizations such as AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians and ArtReach to provide community gardens and farms with access to disability resources.

Seek funding for community garden and farm renovations that enable meaningful access for people with diverse disabilities, including people who are deaf, blind, or have cognitive, sensory, and mental health disabilities.

Pilot a growing space located on Parks & Rec land to demonstrate universal design solutions for inclusivity.

Support community gardens and farms who want to adapt their spaces with training, technical assistance, and securing volunteers for construction.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Legislative, Administrative	City Council, Licenses & Inspections, Land Bank, Planning & Development, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Planning & Development, Licenses & Inspections	Short-Term
	Administrative	Land Bank, Planning & Development	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Office for People with Disabilities, School District	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Office for People with Disabilities, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Office of Civic Engagement, Office for People with Disabilities	Short-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Budget, Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN? HOW DOES IT MAKE GARDENS MORE ACCESSIBLE?

Universal design is “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability... By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples’ needs.” ([Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#))

In gardens, universal design could mean: flat walkway designs to meet the needs of people with limited vision, cognitive disabilities, or mobility aids; raised beds and frequent, flexible seating for people with limited mobility; high-contrast plantings, tactile pavement, and auditory cues for people with limited vision; visible and nearby bathrooms for people who need them; non-slip and non-glare materials; direct access to engage with plants and other garden visitors to help visitors with loneliness, mental illness, and cognitive disabilities; as well as circular or figure-eight paths and multi-sensory wayfinding (such as smell, sound, or textures) to help more people navigate independently. ([ASLA](#))



Photo of the Chicago Botanical Garden courtesy of Clare Cooper Marcus / ASLA

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

2.10 Increase awareness of existing programs and explore new programs to assist gardeners and farmers with agriculture-related bills and utilities, especially in low-income, low-wealth communities and for gardens that employ sustainable practices.

Continue existing and explore new exemptions and price/bill reductions for community gardens and farms (e.g., Philadelphia Water Department (PWD)'s stormwater bill exemption and L&I's Vacant Residential Property License fee exemption).

Explore designing a program that provides gardens and farms free tie-ins to the electric grid where possible.

Increase awareness of existing discount and credit programs from PWD, including :

- 1) Chapter 2 of the PWD Regulations, which provides guidance on assistance programs, such as the Community Garden Stormwater Charge Discount in section 203.0;
- 2) Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the Water, Sewer and Stormwater Rate Board's Rates and Charges (a.k.a. PWD Rates and Charges) document that provides guidance on discounts for special customers, including community gardens as defined under Philadelphia Code 19-1603, and Land Bank properties;
- 3) Section 4.5 of the Water, Sewer and Stormwater Rate Board's Rates and Charges (a.k.a. PWD Rates and Charges) document that provides details related to Stormwater Management Services Credits for non-residential and condominium properties.

Explore the possibility and outline the impact of new utility subsidies and tax reductions tied to the environmental and health benefits of agricultural land uses and/or the use of sustainable farming techniques.



2.11 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.

Design a program through partnerships with nonprofits and community organizations to provide individual residents with the necessary materials and information to create container gardens, to increase access to growing space and food, especially for residents who live in homes without access to a yard or areas with no access to community gardens or farms.

Investigate physical improvements that may be necessary to take advantage of City programs that benefit agricultural uses, and design specific micro-grants and technical assistance to help gardens and farms make those improvements (e.g., PWD's fire hydrant permit program requires the purchase and installation of a backflow preventer; gardens may benefit from help purchasing and installing this hardware). Work with the relevant City programs to integrate information about available assistance into their communications.

Explore how to increase resources for PWD's Rain Check Program to provide more consistent access to rain barrels specifically for gardens and farms. Pair with education on water catchment systems and necessary precautions to reduce mosquito larvae.

Explore examples of affordable city programs that offer solar power at community gardens and farms, and develop a pilot program to make it easier and less expensive to install solar panels. Encourage the expansion of local solar programs (e.g., Philadelphia Energy Authority's Solarize Philly program) to include gardens and farms as an eligible property type.

Explore providing broadly advertised micro-grants and technical assistance to help gardens and farms make physical improvements that will increase their production yield and increase the accessibility of their gardens to folks of all physical abilities.

Expand the Green Roof Tax Credit to include additional benefits for the construction of agricultural, food-producing roofs.

Utilize federal and state funding sources, such as the PA DCNR's Land Acquisition and Conservation funding and PA Department of Agriculture's Urban Agriculture Grant, to purchase properties for community garden and farm preservation in low-income communities.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative, Operations	Parks & Rec, PWD, PECO	Short-Term
	Legislative	PWD, Licenses & Inspections, PECO, City Council	Short-Term
	Partnership	PECO	Long-Term
	Partnership	PWD	Medium-Term
	Administrative	PWD, PECO	Long-Term
	Operations, Budget, Partnership	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Operations, Budget	Parks & Rec, PWD	Short-Term
	Operations, Budget	PWD, City Council	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations, Budget	Parks & Rec, Office for People with Disabilities	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Planning & Development, PWD, Dept of Revenue	Medium-Term
	Budget	Nonprofits, PA DCNR, USDA, PA Dept of Ag	Short-Term

EXISTING PHILADELPHIA WATER DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT WATER ACCESS FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

The Philadelphia Water Department [offers programs](#) to help urban farms and gardens gain water access, including installing sub-meters on personal water meters, interest-free loans to support garden water hook up costs, free rain barrels, permits to connect to fire hydrants, and up to 25% charitable discount. Nearby water access helps a garden to be successful in its growing— though it's important to note most rain water cannot be used on edible crops.



Photo of rain barrel courtesy of the Philadelphia Water Department

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP



2.12 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.

Develop a centralized City-operated public agriculture tool library and resource center that serves the garden, farm, agriculture and horticulture community city-wide.

Locate the agriculture tool library and resource center with the goal of providing a one-stop shop for gardening and basic food production needs, including tools, seeds, compost, soil testing, etc.

Host gatherings for engaging new and existing growers who can participate in workshops, training, and public programming.

Explore other publicly accessible locations for satellite tool libraries with partnering organizations.

Ensure that BIPOC, low-income, and immigrant communities and their experiences are centered in this resource's programming.

2.13 Within the City's budgeting process, assess the feasibility of expanding public programming and repairing the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center's public greenhouses as a garden hub that provides centralized resources for gardeners and farmers.

Expand Farm Philly's Community Propagation Program to allow more residents and businesses to propagate their plants for the growing season and increase local food production.

Invest capital dollars in modernizing (e.g., new HVAC, automated systems) and replacing the roof of the propagation green house.

Create a clear method for members of the urban agriculture community to rent the greenhouse space for events and meetings for free or at a reduced cost.

Work with SEPTA to add an additional bus line to improve access to the Horticulture Center.

Support safe and appropriate animal keeping.



2.14 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).

Conduct educational sessions for residents about the importance of safe and appropriate animal keeping, providing information and guidance on what is allowed in the City's code.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, City Council, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, City Council, Nonprofits, Area Universities, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Long-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Budget, Operations	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council, Funders, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council, Funders, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council, Funders, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, SEPTA	Long-Term
	Administrative, Operations, Legislative	FPAC, Office of Sustainability, ACCT, MDO, Parks & Rec, nonprofits, grassroots orgs	Long-Term
	Administrative, Operations, Legislative	FPAC, Office of Sustainability, ACCT, MDO, Parks & Rec, nonprofits, grassroots orgs	Long-Term

HOW MUCH SPACE DO YOU NEED TO KEEP SMALL ANIMALS IN THE CITY?

Space needed for animals in the City varies for each type. Some common farm animals that are feasibly able to be kept in the City are:

- > **Goats:** Two goats need at least 400 square feet of outdoor space (20 ft. x 20 ft.) with a shed on the lot to provide shelter
- > **Bees:** A common bee box is 20 in. long x 16 in. wide x 10 in. tall
- > **Fish:** A 50-gallon, 3 ft. x 2ft. x 2ft. tank paired with 6 cubic feet of plant growing space for aquaponics

HOW MUCH SPACE DOES THE PHILADELPHIA CODE REQUIRE CURRENTLY?

Space needed for animals in the City varies for each type. The Philadelphia Code currently requires the following for these common animals:

- > **Goats:** 3+ acres OR a facility used for education or scientific purpose
- > **Bees:** No regulations, but all apiaries must register with the PA Department of Agriculture
- > **Fish:** No regulations



Photo of bee boxes in East Fairmount Park

**RECOMMENDATION /
ACTION STEP**

2.15 Adopt climate adaptation policies and practices that support the health of Philadelphia's bee, bat, butterfly, and bird populations for pollination and plant propagation.

Maintain natural areas on public parkland, reducing the level of active management and allowing a diversity of blooming plants and trees to thrive in order to attract pollinating insects (bees, butterflies, etc.) that fertilize many food crops and other plants. Utilize natural areas to mitigate extreme weather events, enhance carbon sequestration (i.e., storage), and provide space for plants and animals to adapt to a changing climate.

Work with PWD to incorporate pollinator gardens in new green stormwater infrastructure projects.

Organize an annual bulk distribution of native wildflower seed mix to gardens, farms, residents, and community organizations who tend and maintain land to encourage the creation of pollinator corridors.

Launch a public campaign in support of pollinators, and share information about how to support bee populations through interpretive signage, plantings, avoidance of pesticides, and provision of shelter and water sources. Work with partners to establish more wildlife corridors in the city.

Work with the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and PHS to develop and fund pollinator gardens in lots maintained by PHS's LandCare program.

2.16 Support aquaponics as a key opportunity to steward local waterways, produce local food, and create jobs.

Offer educational programming and resources to establish aquaponic growing systems. Focus especially on a culturally relevant approach to the topic, which is grounded in ancient cultivation traditions of Central America and Asia.

Connect educational programs within the School District of Philadelphia with local and regional aquaponic programs (e.g., Aquaculture Research and Education Laboratory at Cheyney University) to increase career pathways in science, research, and food production.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative, Operations	Parks & Rec, PWD, Office of Sustainability, NRCS, EPA, PA DCNR, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Universities	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Operations	PWD, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Parks & Rec, NRCS, EPA, PA DCNR, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Administrative, Budget	DHCD	Medium-Term
	Partnership	PWD, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Area Universities, Institutions, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Partnership	School District, Area Universities, Nonprofits	Medium-Term

BENEFITS OF SMALL GROWING SPACES

Growing in small spaces, such as window boxes and containers, both makes gardening accessible to people without outdoor space or large tools, and has environmental benefits. Plantings in window boxes and movable pots help produce local food and flowers, absorb heat and CO2 in the environment, as well as provide habitat for pollinators such as bees. ([Plant Something Maine / Independent Garden Center of Maine](#))



Photo courtesy of Garden Gate Magazine

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

Preparation and Distribution are about how food moves and changes as it transitions from production to consumption.



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Robertson for The Philadelphia Inquirer



3. PREPARATION + DISTRIBUTION



PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION

OVERVIEW

This 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, such as Halal or kosher foods.

This 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.

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

—Public meeting participant

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

—Public meeting participant





WHY PHILADELPHIA NEEDS A SMALL-SCALE, EQUITABLE FOOD PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

The importance of preparation and distribution for Philadelphia's urban agriculture system cannot be overstated. Without readily available and affordable preparation, storage, and distribution options, the other recommendations in this plan would have only a fraction of the intended positive impact. A healthy food economy has preparation and distribution spaces and services that encourage entrepreneurship, increase agricultural and food service wages, and ultimately create a more resilient local food system.

Public meeting participants expressed support for a range of ideas related to preparation and distribution. About eight out of every 10 participants expressed support for a centralized, City-run food processing facility specifically to support City meal programs and the preparation of locally sourced food. However, a number of participants felt that nonprofits and community organizations should take the lead in this area.

Many participants in public meetings and focus groups said it is essential that recommendations related to this part of the food system be equitable, collaborative, and designed to support the producers and residents who need it most. Some participants also expressed that opportunities for food processing and distribution are revenue-generating and business-focused, signaling that there may be opportunities to draw in private investors, encourage entrepreneurship, and produce tax revenue for the City over time. Additionally, larger-scale public projects such as a multi-million dollar food processing facility for City meal programs may have the potential to provide significant cost savings for the City over time while also creating living-wage local jobs and supporting area farmers by sourcing ingredients locally.

Photo Credit: Philabundance Community Kitchen

HOW PHILADELPHIA APPROACHES PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION

A number of existing nonprofit, for-profit, and community efforts provide food processing, preparation, and distribution infrastructure in Philadelphia. However, there are gaps in the system. A broader strategic effort could explore the potential to scale these operations, while also addressing challenges like access to affordable space, equipment, vehicles, and licensing.

On the preparation front, **community kitchens**—clean, commercially licensed facilities available for rent by food businesses who share the space and equipment—are a core and growing piece of infrastructure for processing food on a smaller scale. However, such rentals can be cost-prohibitive for emerging food businesses if sliding-scale pricing or windows of free usage time are not available. The following are a few examples of this type of preparation space in Philadelphia:

- > **Philabundance's commercial kitchen program** has offered culinary and life skills training to over 900 people since 2000. The organization opened its new permanent facility, the Philabundance Community Kitchen,⁵² in North Philadelphia in 2020. The 16-week program is targeted at low- to no-income adults, and it provides ongoing services for up to two years to help graduates secure employment. Graduates complete the program with a Manager's ServSafe Food Handler's Certificate and eight college credits that are transferable to the Community College of Philadelphia towards a certificate or Associates in Culinary Arts.
- > **The Dorrance H. Hamilton Center for Culinary Enterprises,**⁵³ opened in 2012 by the Enterprise Center in West Philadelphia, offers membership access to commercial kitchen space for established and start-up food businesses and processors. The center also offers workshops and events, as well as business support services, including feasibility studies, access to capital, training, and more. It includes three eateries that are open to the public and staffed by clients of the center.

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



- > **The People's Kitchen** in South Philadelphia produces chef-prepared meals for free distribution to elderly, undocumented and low-income residents and a network of nonprofits that serve food-insecure residents. Food is sourced from community gardens across South Philadelphia, as well as donated and purchased. Started in 2020 by chefs Aziza Young, Cristina Martínez, and Ben Miller (the latter two from the restaurant South Philly Barbacoa), the People's Kitchen operates out of Martínez and Miller's El Compadre restaurant. Founded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to address a crisis of food insecurity, it has expanded to now offer commercial kitchen space for rent.⁵⁴
- > **Drexel Food Lab (DFL)**, founded in 2014, designs food products that aim to improve health, the environment, and the economy. The Lab assists local food businesses, entrepreneurs, and restaurants in research and product development to develop new food products, and introduce new products to market. In 2021, DFL teamed up with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) to develop the Good Food Accelerator Program, designed to offer small businesses assistance in accelerating their "good food" products to market. PDPH and DFL defined "Good Food" as "products [that] support health, sustainability, fair labor practices, economic investment, and support communities most negatively impacted by the food system." Participants in the program included Authentic Ethnic Cuisine, TRIBU, Saté Kampar, and Honeysuckle Projects.⁵⁵

FIGURE 17. Examples of Small-Scale Food Production

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS



SMALL-SCALE FOOD PREPARATION



COMMUNITY KITCHENS



CASE STUDY MASA COOPERATIVA

Masa Coopertiva is a worker-owned cooperative business that shows how collective community efforts can lead to business opportunities that also honor cultural foodways. Masa harvests corn from local farms and members' backyards to make and sell corn masa to Philadelphia-area restaurants for tortillas. The collective is "designed to give undocumented immigrants a legal way to profit from their labor,"⁵⁶ while continuing the culinary traditions of their ancestors and native countries.

Photo credits (clockwise from top): Jennifer Fumiko Cahill for the North Coast Journal, USA Architects for Philabundance, GrowNYC

When it comes to **transportation and distribution**, there are a number of programs and organizations dedicated to connecting communities of farmers with market opportunities in the city. The following are a few examples that serve various types of buyers at a range of scales:

- > **Reading Terminal Market** is one of the oldest public markets in the country and home to more than 80 merchants offering a mix of “locally grown and exotic produce, locally sourced meats and poultry, plus the finest seafood, cheeses, baked goods, and confections” to individual consumers—locals and tourists—as well as larger-scale buyers from area restaurants.⁵⁷
- > **The Italian Market** on South 9th Street is home to over 200 businesses, many of them owned by immigrant families⁵⁸ — some who have been in Philadelphia for generations and gave the market its name, others who arrived more recently from Asia and Central America. The market offers a wide range of fresh foods at a wide range of prices, from very affordable to luxury goods, and it serves a diverse clientele reflective of the surrounding neighborhoods and food businesses.
- > **Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market** is a large-scale distribution center in Southwest Philadelphia that opened in 2011 as “the largest refrigerated building in the world, housing some 700,000 square feet of the world’s freshest produce.”⁵⁹ The market offers wholesale prices to bulk purchasers, among them restaurants, grocers, and institutional food producers. In 2014, community organization Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha formed their **Food Buying Club**, which bought food collectively for member families who were able to save “up to 75 percent on the cost of fresh, high-quality produce.”⁶⁰
- > **The Common Market** is a nonprofit regional food distributor that operates in the Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Texas, and Chicago.⁶¹ The organization was founded in 2008. It sources food from small family farms for distribution to institutions, hospitals, eldercare facilities, community organizations, workplaces, restaurants, retailers, and more. The Common Market and its vendors support more than 3,100 urban and rural jobs and steward more than 24,000 acres of land. It also helps organizations set up community-led farmers’ markets, and they operate the Philly Good Food Lab, a 70,000-square-foot warehouse space set up for food distribution and located in Northeast Philadelphia, offering co-location opportunities to other mission-driven businesses.
- > **Share Food Program** is a nonprofit fighting food insecurity that distributes food from “government partners, supermarkets, wholesalers, restaurants, farms, and food drives” to community-based organizations and school districts engaged in food distribution and meal provision. Through its network, Share distributes food to over 1 million people in need each month including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.⁶²
- > **Philabundance** started in 1984 as a “small food rescue organization” and is now the “largest hunger relief organization in the Delaware Valley.”⁶³ It accepts donations from grocers, food industry partners, retailers, farmers, and individuals and redirects these goods to food pantries, reducing food waste and connecting neighbors in need with safe, high-quality food.



During public engagement, local growers listed a lack of access to vehicular transport as a limiting factor in their ability to bring harvested produce to market.

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

Currently, Philadelphia spends roughly \$25 million per year on food service for its summer and after-school recreation, shelter, and prison programs. The City outsources meal production due to scale (tens of thousands of meals daily), and \$1.25 million (5 percent) goes to local sources.⁶⁴ A new City-run food processing and meal preparation facility could provide training for people with a GED or high school diploma; create living-wage jobs in agriculture, food service, and education; source food locally to support area growers; improve food quality and labor practices; and invest tax dollars back into Philadelphia's economy.

While a centralized food production facility is a costly and long-term project, there are smaller-scale opportunities to cultivate agricultural businesses too. Affordable kitchen processing and storage space can help grow and formalize cottage industry (small-scale enterprises often run out of the home, such as baking and catering) and value-added product manufacturers such as hot sauce, honey, jams, and other items made from agricultural produce. Given Philadelphia's access to large regional farms producing oats, hemp, corn, and dairy, shared processing infrastructure in the city could seed new local businesses that make high-value products out of raw local produce (e.g., ice cream, oat milk, bread, and tortillas), as in the Masa Cooperativa case study on page 105.



Carousel House Farm harvest getting ready to leave the farm.

PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to provide a broad, strategic vision for the system of preparation and distribution that stems from and services local agricultural production. There are three categories of Preparation & Distribution recommendations, which work together to:

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

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
	Invest in a network of food processing facilities.
X	<p>3.1 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.</p> <p>Partner with City agencies, as well as community and nonprofit organizations, to gauge interest in providing public programming (e.g., Free Library Culinary Literacy Center) at recreation and senior center kitchens.</p> <p>Contract local chefs, medicine workers and herbalists, and farmers for community programming at recreation and senior center kitchens, to provide nourishing and culturally relevant foods to surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>Seek opportunities through Rebuild and other Parks & Rec capital improvement projects to upgrade kitchen facilities in order to accommodate a greater range of culinary community programming in more sites throughout the system, targeting underserved geographic- and program areas.</p>
	<p>3.2 Develop a network of affordable community kitchens that support small food programs and emerging community food businesses throughout the city.</p> <p>Identify existing public infrastructure (e.g., recreation and senior centers, school cafeterias) that can be outfitted to support food entrepreneurs in value-added product development and pre-packaged meal production.</p> <p>Explore resources to fund the installation of functional outdoor kitchens in community gardens.</p> <p>Explore ways to invest in existing community-run kitchens (e.g., places of worship/religious institutions, Boys and Girls Club facilities) that do not yet meet commercial standards in order to be used by community food businesses.</p> <p>Support existing and build out new community kitchens and culinary innovation spaces in partnership with food entrepreneur support organizations (e.g., Philabundance Community Kitchen, The Enterprise Center), to allow for affordable rental commercial kitchens where food service operators, farmers, chefs, bakers, caterers, food entrepreneurs, and food trucks can prepare and store their food. Prioritize locations at or near existing gardens and farms, community institutions and schools.</p> <p>Provide information and assistance to new commercial kitchens as they navigate building codes, secure permits and leases, and deal with other logistical and regulatory issues such as leasing and insurance.</p>

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Area Universities, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations, Partnership	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Rebuild	Medium-Term
	Operations, Partnership*	Commerce, Parks & Rec, School District, Nonprofits,	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, School District	Medium-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Sustainability, Fund for Philadelphia	Medium-Term
	Operations, Budget	Commerce Dept, Area Universities, Nonprofits, Community & Religious Institutions	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Commerce Dept, Area Universities, Nonprofits, Community & Religious Institutions	Long-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, Licenses & Inspections	Medium-Term



Photo Credit: B. Dale for Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
3.2 cont'd	Provide comprehensive wrap-around technical assistance (e.g., food safety education and certifications, and business planning) for producers and chefs using community kitchens. Prioritize BIPOC, low-income, and immigrant producers, including translating all materials.
X	3.3 Establish and connect gardeners and farmers to shared resources for critical aspects of food processing such as weighing, washing, and storage.
	Explore opportunities to provide resources for the installation of infrastructure for washing, processing, and weighing harvested produce and building cold storage spaces at community farms and gardens for communal use.
	Support the creation of a commercial-scale washing and rinsing facility for market farmers and food processing and preparation businesses that pack food for sale or make value-added products. Partner with a returnables business operator that picks up recyclable packaging from food processing and preparation businesses, washes it, and makes items available for buy-back at a price that is cheaper than buying new.
3.4	Connect agricultural businesses and nonprofit partners in the city with regional food producers to bring produce and products into the city for smaller-scale craft food processing operations.
	Seek opportunities for food processing business development tied to key crops and products from the region (e.g., dairy and grain farms whose products can support craft ice cream production, plant milks, brewing operations, etc.)
	Support and expand nonprofits partnering with regional and local farmers to create nutritious retail food items (e.g., added-value products, cheeses, sauces, pickles) from surplus farm products (e.g., vegetables, fruits, dairy, eggs).
3.5	Conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a food production and distribution facility for city programs that provide public meals (e.g., schools, prisons, hospitals).
	Conduct a feasibility and impact study that evaluates potential sites for a centralized or decentralized food commissary. Evaluate costs to develop and operate such a facility, and the potential benefits, including the economic benefits of new living-wage job creation and local food sourcing compared to existing food contracts, health benefits, and environmental benefits.
	Seek funding to support this initiative.
	Align workforce development partners and training programs to build a career pipeline to these new local jobs. Explore how to expand existing workforce development opportunities while prioritizing formerly incarcerated individuals, recent high school graduates, immigrants, and adult workers without college degrees.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	EHS, Dept of Public Health, Commerce, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Budget, Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, PASA, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, PASA, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Commerce Dept, PASA, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Commerce, Planning & Development, FPAC	Long-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Commerce, Finance, School District, Prisons, Planning & Development, FPAC, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Budget	Dept of Public Health, Finance, City Council, Nonprofits, Funders	Long-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Commerce, Finance, School District, Prisons, Planning & Development, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Long-Term

CASE STUDY

OAKLAND CENTRAL KITCHEN, INSTRUCTIONAL FARM, AND EDUCATION CENTER

Oakland Unified School District [Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm and Education Center](#), which opened in August 2021, is the nation's first City-run central food processing facility. The \$40 million facility feeds 35,000 students fresh nutritious meals daily, from preschool through high school. The Center [connects nutrition, education, and community programs](#) at schools, kitchens, gardens, and produce market stands.

CASE STUDY

THE COMMON MARKET

The Common Market in Philadelphia demonstrates a local example of nonprofit agricultural distribution that helps to fill the gaps in the food transportation system. TCM [describes itself](#) as “a nonprofit regional food distributor on a mission to connect communities to good food grown by sustainable family farmers. [The Common Market] strive[s] to improve food security, farm viability, and community and ecological health.” In addition to providing a platform for sustainable local farmers to sell their produce, TCM offers a discount to nonprofit customers, pop up farm stands, fundraising opportunities, and a lab for local food entrepreneurs to co-locate with the market's operations and contribute to the local food economy.



Photo courtesy of The Common Market

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

Fill gaps in the food transportation and distribution system.

3.6 Partner with workforce and economic development programs and nonprofit partners to foster new economic and mutual aid opportunities in agricultural transportation.

Extend or share transportation services that meet pick-up and delivery needs of farmers bringing materials and produce to and from their growing locations (e.g., utilization of PHS’s pick-up trucks by growers).

Explore opportunities to connect local growers with regional food distribution support networks (e.g. The Common Market, Philly Foodworks, SHARE, Philabundance, Sharing Excess) to create employment opportunities and transport food from gardens and farms to food markets and businesses.

Design and fund a distribution pilot program that helps farmers to distribute their goods locally, such as a ride share program with refrigerated trucks.



3.7 Advance nonprofit and other efforts to facilitate and support partnerships with community gardens and farms and local food distributors, such as food banks, food pantries, and food cupboards as well as with small food retailers and local restaurants.

Expand programs such as PHS’s City Harvest and Philadelphia Orchard Project that incentivize gardens to donate to local food pantries/banks. Connect community gardens and farms on public land to such programs.

Establish a crop sharing network to support coordinated production, aggregation, transport, and distribution of local harvest. Extend this network to supply anti-hunger, food distribution and food rescue organizations that serve housed and unhoused residents (e.g., food access organizations such as Broad Street Ministry, Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission, Philabundance, SHARE, and Sharing Excess).

Explore the feasibility of installing refrigerators and other food preservation infrastructure at participating gardens. Encourage and support collaboration with local community fridges (e.g., Mama-Tee Fridge, South Philadelphia Community Fridge) and mutual aid (e.g., The People’s Kitchen, West Philly Bunny Hop) organizations.

Expand ongoing efforts and create new opportunities to connect growers with small grocers, corner stores, and other local markets, such as The Food Trust’s Healthy Corner Store Initiative, which is piloting a program to support the sale of locally grown fresh produce in corner stores.

Support opportunities to sell fresh produce.



3.8 Provide enhanced education and information about City regulations and requirements for safe food vending.

Make existing informational resources for existing and new market vendors to easy to locate online so they can readily access information on permits, licenses, and any other guidance to help them run safe markets in various spaces (e.g., street vending, indoor and outdoor markets, etc.).

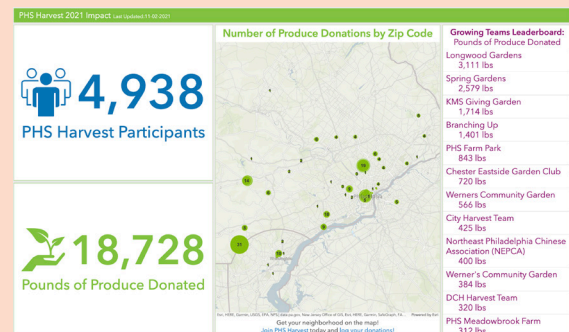
Provide clear online information and resources about food safety standards and certifications to ensure food safety compliance.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Commerce, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Community Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Community Organizations, Area Businesses, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	Commerce, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Office of Children & Families, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Office of Children & Families, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Office of Homeless Services, Office of Children & Families	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	EHS, Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Immigrant Affairs	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, EHS, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	EHS, Dept of Public Health	Short-Term

CASE STUDY

CITY HARVEST AT SOUTHWARK GARDEN, SPRING GARDEN, ROBERTO CLEMENTE, AND MORE

Many gardens in Philadelphia donate all or some of their harvests to the local community, either directly or through food banks, pantries, or community cupboards. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Harvest program is an example of a program that facilitates those relationships. The program oversees distribution of produce from community gardens such as The Spring Gardens and Southwark-Queen Village Community Garden to local food banks and public housing developments to provide local fresh food to community members in need.




Online 2021 Harvest Impact Dashboard courtesy of PHS

Visit <https://phsonline.org/for-gardeners/phs-harvest> for more information.



PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
3.8 cont'd	Prioritize historically disinvested neighborhoods and communities when providing education, certifications, and hiring educators.
	Create multilingual and easy to use documents that describe the requirements of running a farmers market, food stand, or food truck (e.g., poster, pocket guide). Plan to budget for translation services.
	Create multilingual, culturally appropriate signage for farmers markets within diverse communities in the city (e.g., signage prohibiting animals at markets). Include resources for translation services.
3.9	Connect farmers and food producers with wholesale opportunities to sell produce or get their products into local businesses such as restaurants, corner stores, and other small food retailers, helping vendors and farmers access multiple income streams.
	Work with businesses, farmers, and food producers to establish new business-to-business connections with networking events.
	Incentivize entrepreneurship around new aggregation and distribution businesses that source produce from local gardens and distribute it to local commercial buyers.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	EHS, Dept of Public Health, FPAC	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Immigrant Affairs	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Office of Immigrant Affairs	Short-Term
	Partnership	Commerce Dept, Nonprofits, Area Businesses, Local Growers	Long-Term
	Partnership	Commerce Dept, Nonprofits, Area Businesses, Local Growers	Long-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, Nonprofits, Area Businesses, Local Growers	Long-Term



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

Consumption is the act of gathering food, eating food, or gaining access to food.



4. CONSUMPTION



CONSUMPTION

OVERVIEW

This 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, whereas the Preparation & Distribution chapter focused on food processing and larger-scale distribution between businesses or other entities. 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. This chapter promotes consumption of locally grown and culturally relevant food, more inclusive food standards, and acknowledgment of the many different ways people experience food.

WHY PHILADELPHIA NEEDS A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO ENSURING ACCESS TO FRESH, LOCALLY GROWN FOOD

Philadelphia has hundreds of emergency food providers, like pantries, that provide supplemental food, as well as many providers that serve free meals to children and adults through federally funded programs. Nonetheless, in 2019, nearly 270,000 (14.4%) of Philadelphians were considered food insecure.⁶⁵

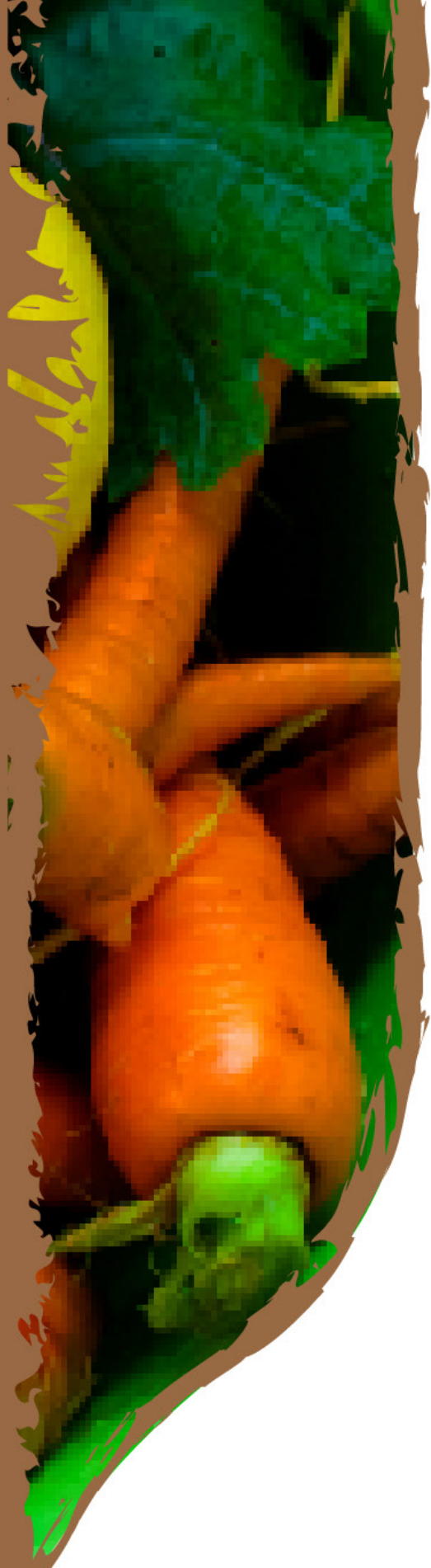
The foods that people consume are often considered a matter of choice: individuals decide what to buy at grocery stores, restaurants, or other food-related establishments. In reality, the foods that people eat are largely determined by what they can afford and where they live. According to the Department of Public Health's Neighborhood Food Retail study, roughly half of the city's Census Block Groups have a very low proportion of food stores that sell fresh produce, with fewer than one in every 10 food stores in the Block Group selling fresh fruits and vegetables.

While gardens and farms could play a role in providing produce in those low-produce areas, only 20 percent of low-produce Block Groups have at least one active garden or farm. See Figure 6.⁶⁶

"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





Residents also choose what to eat based on their culture and background. Foods that are important or fulfilling to one culture may not appeal to another. Food and food preparation practices that are significant for a particular culture, religion, or subcultural group are considered “culturally relevant.” Two common examples are halal foods, in which animals are slaughtered in adherence with Islamic law, and kosher foods, which meet Jewish dietary laws. It is important that all City of Philadelphia nutrition standards, food purchasing, and meal provision programs prioritize cultural relevance to ensure families have access to nourishing food. The City’s food offerings should reflect the variety and richness of its people.

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). It is a traditional practice in many of the city’s ethnically diverse communities that has deep historical and cultural roots. Prior to the arrival of European colonists, Native American tribes across the continent thrived by foraging, among other means of procuring food (e.g., subsistence farming, cultivating fruit trees, hunting, and fishing). In the South, enslaved Africans foraged for subsistence. After the Civil War, anti-foraging laws sought to restrict the foraging rights and practices of newly freed Black people. Throughout history, immigrant groups have brought foraging practices with them to the United States, as a means of self-reliance and maintaining connections to the flavors and habits of their homeland.

Public meeting participants said they forage for wild foods in Philadelphia for different reasons: for economic access, for a sense of connection to nature, and for self-reliance. Six out of every 10 participants shared that foraging is culturally significant to them. Four out of every 10 respondents said they currently forage in the Philadelphia area, and 35 percent said they do not but would like to learn more.

Photo Credit: Sonia Galiber

HOW PHILADELPHIA APPROACHES CONSUMPTION

The **City of Philadelphia** is a major public meal provider. Through City-funded after-school and summer programming, early care and education facilities, housing shelters, and correctional facilities, the City serves more than 20 million meals per year to Philadelphia residents.⁶⁷

The City adopted [comprehensive nutrition standards](#) via Executive Order in 2014 to ensure that City meal programs offer a broad range of healthy food and beverages to employees and constituents. These standards provide guidance for all meals purchased, served, sold, or prepared through City-funded programming. The **Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH)** has been working with affected City agencies since 2014 to help them implement the standards within their contracts and food purchasing, preparation, and service activities. PDPH maintains nutrition standards, annually assesses the nutritional quality of City program meals, and conducts a public process for updating the standards.⁶⁸ PDPH also aims to include cultural relevance as a part of its nutritional standards. However, this work requires additional resources to build capacity and better align with Philadelphia's demographics.

When it comes to food purchasing, the City of Philadelphia employs a **Food Supply Chain Program Manager** (formerly the Good Food Purchasing Coordinator), co-housed in the PDPH's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention and the Procurement Department. The program manager serves as an ex-officio member of the Food Policy Advisory Council as well.

The **School District of Philadelphia** offers students low-cost or free breakfast and lunch each day through the federally assisted National School Lunch Program.⁶⁹ The District is able to provide free meals through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Eligibility Provision, which reimburses schools based on the percentage of students determined to be eligible for free meals.⁷⁰

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA'S MEAL GUIDELINES?

The School District of Philadelphia's Student and Staff Wellness Policy meal guideline language reads: "All reimbursable school meals served through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, After School Feeding Program, and any other reimbursable school meal programs implemented by the district shall:

- Be appealing and attractive to students.
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Be in compliance, at a minimum, with nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations, including USDA guidelines under the School Meals Initiative.
- Ensure that all grains offered in meals are whole grain rich.
- Ensure that foods are free of artificial sweeteners, flavors, or colors.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables daily, including dark green, red/orange, and legumes weekly."⁷¹

With over 200,000 students enrolled and eligible for two free meals a day, the District's Division of Food Services provides over 70 million meals per 180-day school year. The District ensures that all meals served to youth in schools follow the USDA nutrition guidelines.⁷² Historically, there was no consideration for cultural relevance in these guidelines, although recently, as part of a standards revision process, the District has begun to address cultural relevance.

The **School District's current policy on food gardens** on school grounds allows students to eat garden produce as part of a class or after-school activity, but the produce cannot be served as part of school meals. There are however examples of site-specific pilot programs—including one at W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences—where lettuce grown at the school is incorporated into school meals. In addition, teachers and students have been allowed to sell the products grown in these gardens at farmers' markets, and to make food products from them.

In other instances, federal funding and guidelines influence the meals served to Philadelphia residents by private entities. The federal **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults. Eligible populations include children and youth in daycare, childcare, and after-school care programs, or those residing in emergency shelters, and adults over the age of 60 or living with a disability who are enrolled in daycare facilities. CACFP contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and adults in the United States.

There are also a number of **markets and sellers**, both citywide efforts and individual operations, that offer produce to residents who have limited to no access to fresh, nourishing food. Some small-scale operators have brought **produce trucks** to various sections of the city, providing an alternative to grocery stores and an opportunity for entrepreneurship. Examples include the West Philly Fresh Food Hub, Village Market Produce Truck, and Solomon Fruit and Produce, all of which operate in West Philadelphia. A small number of **gardens and farms sell produce on-site**, including **Urban Creators** and **Mill Creek Urban Farm**; however, the reach of this activity is limited because of City policies that restrict the amount that growers can sell if the underlying land is City-owned.⁷³

CASE STUDY

HENRY GOT CROPS PROVIDES FRESH PRODUCE TO SAUL'S CAFETERIA

Students at Philadelphia's W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences provide fresh fruits and vegetables to students in the School District. Henry Got Crops is a community-supported agriculture (CSA) operation made up of Saul High School, Weavers Way Co-op, Weavers Way Community Programs, and Fairmount Park (which leases farmland to Saul); through this partnership, Henry Got Crops provides locally grown produce to School District of Philadelphia cafeterias, including Saul's.⁷⁴



"Saul Cafeteria Now Serving Up School Harvest."
WHYY, October 22, 2013.

Photo credit: Nathaniel Hamilton for NewsWorks

On a citywide scale, **farmers' markets** provide an essential opportunity for the distribution of fresh produce to communities that may not have access to it otherwise. The USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) provides **Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)**⁷⁵ coupons in addition to regular WIC benefits for purchasing locally grown fruits, vegetables, honey, and herbs from farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands, as does the **Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** for low-income seniors.⁷⁶

Currently, most farmers' markets in the city are run by two organizations: **The Food Trust** and **Farm to City**. Those organizations provide centralized expertise and resources, and The Food Trust increases access to fresh produce and supports its affordability with the **Philly Food Bucks** program that encourages shoppers paying with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars to buy more fruits and vegetables from local growers; customers who spend \$5 using their ACCESS card receive an additional \$2 to purchase fresh produce. The Food Trust also distributes promotional Food Bucks during cooking demonstrations and through community partners as well as Food Bucks Rx, produce prescription vouchers that healthcare providers distribute to patients and can be redeemed at farmers markets and stores around the city.

Though the Food Bucks program was initially funded through the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, when that investment ended The Food Trust was able to secure a combination of USDA GusNIP funds, private foundation grants, and individual donations to support the program. The demand for Food Bucks and growth in volume of the program has demonstrated the need for diverse funding of this resource. Other states have leveraged city and state funding to draw down larger grant awards from the USDA to support nutrition incentive programs. This issue and program deserves more attention and is critical to supporting the health of Philadelphia residents.

CASE STUDY

FRESH TRUCK, BOSTON

Serving the Boston area, Fresh Trucks are retrofitted school buses that bring weekly mobile markets to communities with low access to fresh produce. The program shows a sustainable way to get fresh produce into neighborhoods experiencing food apartheid, while also providing jobs and engaging health professionals in the effort. The Fresh Trucks were originally started to address health disparities created by lack of access to healthy and affordable food options. Doctors can provide Fresh Connect cards to patients to fund their Fresh Truck purchases.⁷⁷



Image courtesy of Fresh Truck

Finally, many Philadelphians acquire fresh food and other plants from the city's public spaces by foraging. Public input for this plan indicates that foraging may be fairly common among Philadelphians, but there is limited knowledge among the broader public about best practices to prevent overharvesting and misidentification of naturally occurring foods, which is essential to ensuring that foraging remains a sustainable and safe method of accessing food. Input about the plants participants forage for paints a colorful picture of existing foraging practices in Philadelphia.

PUBLIC INPUT

WHERE DO PHILADELPHIANS FORAGE?

Locations that stood out among those mentioned by public meeting participants were the **edges** of parks, public spaces, or school grounds, which are **spaces that are not officially designated as gardens** but have the space or other conditions for growing.

Philadelphians forage in the woods, in parks and gardens, in Tinicum, and across the City, though mainly in West Fairmount Park, East Fairmount Park, the Wissahickon, and Pennypack Park.

PUBLIC INPUT

WHY DO PHILADELPHIANS FORAGE?

"FORAGING HELPS ME FEEL CONNECTED TO PLACE. I CAN EAT FOODS AND MEDICINE THAT I WOULD NOT OTHERWISE BE ABLE TO ACCESS...IF I WERE EVER IN A DESPERATE SITUATION, I COULD STILL FIND SOME FOOD."

—Public meeting participant

"MY GREAT AUNTS AND UNCLES FORAGED FOR FOOD IN THE SOUTH. IT FEELS A PART OF MY CULTURAL LEGACY AND MY SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO THE EARTH."

—Public meeting participant

"THERE WAS A MULBERRY TREE NEXT TO OUR HOUSE IN WEST PHILLY GROWING UP. A FAMILY FRIEND MADE JAM FROM IT AND I HAVE ALWAYS REMEMBERED THAT TASTE. ALSO, I SPENT A LOT OF TIME AROUND SOME CRABAPPLE TREES ON THE PARKWAY AND ON KELLY DRIVE AS A KID. THEY ARE TIED TO MY SENSE OF PHILADELPHIA AS A PLACE AND TO MY IDENTITY AS SOMEONE WHO GREW UP HERE."

—Public meeting participant



Philadelphians forage for food, herbs and medicinal purposes.

PUBLIC INPUT

WHAT DO PHILADELPHIANS FORAGE FOR?

Public meeting participants reported foraging for a wide range of plants in Philadelphia, including:

- > **Herbs/herbaceous plants**
- > **Edible flowers and greens**
- > **Fruits** (including pawpaws, crab apples, native persimmons, cornelian cherries, and figs)
- > **Berries** (including black raspberries, mulberries, juneberries, wineberries, serviceberries, aronia berries, elderberries, and dewberries)
- > **Nuts** (including ginkgo nuts, black walnuts, and acorns)
- > **Mushrooms** (including morels, oyster mushrooms, wine caps, lion's mane, black trumpets, puffballs, chicken mushrooms, and hen of the woods).

Residents also forage for Japanese knotweed, lambsquarters, garlic mustard, wood sorrel, field garlic, stinging nettle, burdock, purslane, dandelion, ailanthus, pine needles, spruce, juniper, goldenrod, chickweed, watercress, mugwort, plantain, and wild asparagus.



Pawpaws. Image courtesy of the Philadelphia Inquirer



Juneberries harvested by neighbors. Image courtesy of the Philadelphia Inquirer

LOCAL PROFILE

OAK LANE MAPLE

Oak Lane Maple (OLM) was formed in 2021 in the East Oak Lane neighborhood as a way for residents to engage with local trees by tapping them to make maple syrup. In two seasons it has grown to include multiple neighborhoods and organizations. Through its efforts, OLM increases awareness, stewardship and growth of our urban sugarbush and food forest while expanding K-12 grade hands-on educational opportunities through a number of school partnerships, including with Wyncote Academy which hosts OLM's educational sugar shack. In the 2022 season OLM and program participants tapped 110 trees, making over 40 gallons of syrup.



Oak Lane maple products from maple trees in North Philadelphia. Image courtesy of Jethro Heiko

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

There is an urgent need for sustained investment in increased food access for communities struggling with poverty in Philadelphia—and a community-informed process to guide it. Additionally, food standards must shift away from focusing solely on nutrition and toward a nuanced approach that recognizes foods that are culturally appropriate. Standardizing what constitutes nutritious foods erases the varied cultural preferences and health needs of different groups. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the understanding of nutrition and diet inclusivity beyond adhering to federal nutrition guidelines. The nutrition and cultural relevance of food can be heightened when it is grown locally and responsibly, travels fewer miles between production and consumption, or is grown by a person or in a place that feels more connected to home.

When it comes to buying food, the City of Philadelphia's nutrition and purchasing standards can have a tremendous effect on the local food system because of the City's large-scale food contracts, relationships with existing institutions, and direct connection to food production, preparation, distribution, and waste management. The City could find opportunities to redirect food funds into contracts that reflect a commitment to a more equitable local food economy. A Good Food Purchasing Policy⁷⁸ would ensure that public food contracts reflect community values. It would encourage City government to direct its buying power in support of racial justice, local economies, environmental sustainability, a valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition. With the City's buying power behind it, the policy would increase access to both high-quality jobs in the food system and healthy, sustainably produced food.

Among public meeting participants, 92 percent are in favor of the City adopting and implementing a Good Food Purchasing Policy. When asked how the City should implement a Good Food Purchasing Policy, participants answered:

- *"Require City funding to be spent on local foods, sustainably produced and fair trade foods, and incentivize zero waste practices"*
- *"Start with a consultant to help craft a policy specific to the issues facing Philadelphians"*
- *"Look to the Common Market model in schools and hospitals"*
- *"Require similar purchasing by non-City institutions"*

Explore strategies to prioritize buying local produce cultivated and delivered through sustainable and just methods. Funds that ordinarily go toward larger corporate food distributors and providers can instead be invested in smaller food and agricultural businesses. This would not only help keep money in the local economy, but also impact food consumption practices citywide and encourage higher standards related to chemical use and fair working conditions.

There is also a need to reduce transportation and geographic barriers to accessing nourishing and culturally relevant foods. In areas known to have inadequate food accessibility, locally grown, nourishing foods should be made more available in ways that can be sustained and are responsive to neighborhood-specific needs. For example, mobile markets offering fresh produce, as well as corner stores and local grocers such as halal shops and Asian food markets, are existing resources that could be better supported in the city. Data on the location of areas with inadequate food access is also crucial when considering where to make financial investments in food-producing gardens to respond directly to localized food inaccessibility.

It is important to consider cultural relevance not only in terms of what foods are essential to multicultural communities but also how residents want to source their food. The practice of foraging for wild foods needs to be better understood both by governing institutions and the public. Supporting and investing in people and organizations who are rooted in the practice and tradition of foraging for food deepens the public's relationship to the land and creates an accessible, safe and environmentally conscious source of food.

Lastly, there is an opportunity to better utilize public outdoor spaces currently not in use for growing food and include more edible wildlife, creating more opportunities to eat from the land. Doing all of this responsibly and equitably requires intentional partnerships with residents, growers, grassroots organizations, local Tribal Nations, and individuals already practicing these traditions.

CONSUMPTION RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations take a whole community approach to improving access to healthy food. They 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. There are two categories of Consumption recommendations, which work together to:

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

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
	Increase access to nourishing food.
X	<p>4.1 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.</p> <p>Develop a Fair Food Program teach-in led by national leaders (e.g., Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Network, Migrant Justice) for City employees and members of the Food Policy Advisory Council involved in food policy and food procurement. Explore “Farm to Institution” educational materials and assess the feasibility of a city-wide Farm to Institution policy.</p> <p>Support legislation for values-driven food procurement across all programs funded or administered by the City, and support policy implementation by increasing procurement budget for City meal programs and emergency food planning to support purchase of values-driven regional foods.</p> <p>Establish values-driven food procurement policies citywide that support creating resilient regional agricultural supply chains.</p> <p>Establish a food purchasing system for City food programs and events to purchase food directly from farmers and local producers at a fair market price, paying the cost of production, fair return for their products, and livable conditions and wages for workers.</p> <p>Invest in the local food supply chain, with a targeted effort to increase the number of certified Minority-owned Business Entity (MBE) food producers in the Office of Economic Opportunity registry, and increase purchases from small, local producers of color for City meal programs.</p> <p>Conduct a study of current food miles traveled under existing food procurement policies.</p>

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Dept of Public Health, Procurement, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Procurement, Parks & Rec, Office of Children & Families, Office of Homeless Services, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Dept of Public Health, Procurement, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Long-Term
	Administrative	Dept of Public Health, Procurement, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Procurement, FPAC	Long-Term
	Operations	Office of Economic Opportunity, Public Health, Office of Children & Families, Office of Homeless Services	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term

CASE STUDY

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 in deciding how public food contracts are awarded.

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 - but not limited to - 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.

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

4.1 cont'd Implement transparency in City food procurement by issuing annual public reports on supply chain spending and contracts based on Good Food Procurement values.

Create a coalition of participating early childhood education providers and charter schools who already purchase collectively to access nutritious food from the city and region.

Encourage Philadelphians interested in Good Food Procurement and just, resilient, and ecologically responsible food systems to develop a local coalition associated with other organizations working toward food supply chain restructuring (e.g., Center for Good Food Purchasing, Real Food Generation, Health Care Without Harm).



4.2 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.

Continue to amend the Philadelphia Nutrition Standards to ensure that meals served at City-funded after-school and summer programs, senior programs, shelters, healthcare facilities, correctional facilities, and youth detention centers are culturally relevant (e.g., halal, kosher) and inclusive of diet (e.g., celiac disease, lactose intolerance) and allergy (e.g., nuts, eggs, soy) restrictions. Add a section on Cultural and Religious Guidelines, similar to the Sustainability Guidelines.

Coordinate with FPAC on efforts to define and operationalize Good Food values in the City's Nutrition Standards.

Continue and deepen the Department of Public Health's annual assessment process for evaluating the nutritional quality of City program meals, and ensure that these assessments are transparent and community-informed, considering both the nutrition and the cultural relevance of foods provided.

Develop a transparent community-informed process to provide recommendations for revisions to meal policies, in response to the results of annual assessments and food waste audits.

Explore financing opportunities to have more competitive prices for procurement and contracting with local meal providers. Consider a decentralized approach that would consider multiple providers from the city and region.

Incorporate a food waste audit as part of the review process to understand preferences throughout the meal programs and better tailor meal plans to reduce food waste. Also see recommendation 5.4 in Waste Reduction chapter re. food waste audits of meals served in the School and Prison systems.



4.3 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.

Encourage and support the School District in amending its student and staff wellness policy to include language on culturally relevant and diet appropriate foods.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Dept of Public Health, Procurement	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Public Health, Office of Children & Families, ECE Providers, Area Schools	Short-Term
	Partnership	FPAC, Grassroots Organizations, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, Dept of Public Health, FPAC	Short-Term
	Administrative	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, Office of Children & Families, Office of Homeless Services, Dept of Prisons	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Procurement, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Budget, City Council, Parks & Rec, Office of Children & Families, Office of Homeless Services, Dept of Prisons, Dept of Public Health	Long-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec, Office of Children & Families, Office of Homeless Services, School District, Dept of Prisons	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District, Dept of Public Health	Long-Term
	Administrative	School District, Dept of Public Health, Mayor's Office, FPAC	Short-Term



Photo Credit: Emma Lee for WHYY

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

4.3 cont'd Expand school meal monitoring by developing a survey for students to weigh and provide feedback/ suggestions on the meals provided at school.

Increase local efforts to push for new nutrition standards in school meals by exploring opportunities to attract more resources for school meals and food programs.

Work with local farmers and gardeners to grow crops and develop curriculum that pairs with the District's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and Harvest of the Month Program, connecting produce provided through these programs with culturally based food histories and methods of growing. Coordinate with the District's GreenFutures program on ways to integrate student learning opportunities tied to sustainability and operations.



4.4 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.

Raise funds for public schools to update or build full-service kitchens where feasible to enable more elementary, middle, and high schools to serve meals that are produced on site rather than off site and delivered for reheating at school.

Advocate for the School District to adopt a Good Food Procurement policy to establish plans for equitable & sustainable food purchasing and preparation.

Explore opportunities to establish contracts with local and regional BIPOC, low-income, working-class, disabled and/or immigrant farmers (e.g., a pre-buying program that identifies several specific crops to be purchased locally toward a designated quantity for use in school meals) in order to provide a steady seasonal cash flow for area growers. Increase procurement from local and regional farms over time, prioritizing farms owned by BIPOC, low income/working class, disabled, and/or immigrant farmers and building in provisions for the additional communication and logistics necessary.

Survey and invest in existing and new school gardens in the district, and establish a process for the incorporation of school garden-grown produce in school meals.

Expand Farm to School and the School District's EAT.RIGHT.NOW. programs into a robust and comprehensive education program that matches schools with local gardens, farms, and chefs certified to provide nutrition curriculum and fresh, ready to consume local produce. Consider partnering with Penn State Extension Master Gardeners to gain support in school garden maintenance and curriculum development and the District's GreenFutures program around integrating sustainability into lessons.

Continue supporting and expanding the School District's GreenFutures committee, focusing on sustainability, increasing outdoor learning environments and play areas, and providing more opportunities for edible gardens and hands-on, project-based gardening lessons with educators.



4.5 Create a Farm to Public meal program that increases access to locally grown farm products in public meals.

Design and implement a program whereby Philadelphia urban and regional farmers can sell their produce to institutional, commercial, and community kitchens that produce meals to be purchased by City entities and other publicly funded programs (e.g., pre-K sites, Out of School Time meals, etc.).

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	School District, Dept of Public Health, Mayor's Office, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District, Dept of Public Health, Mayor's Office, FPAC, Nonprofits, Funders	Long-Term
	Partnership	School District, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District, Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits, Area Universities, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Budget	School District	Long-Term
	Administrative	Dept of Public Health	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District, Local Growers, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District	Short-Term
	Partnership	School District, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Area Universities, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Budget	School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term

DEFINING "FARM TO SCHOOLS"

Farm to Schools is an initiative to bring locally grown farm products into school kitchens and cafeterias where this fresh produce can be incorporated in snacks and meals served to students. Farm to School programs can be implemented at individual schools or district-wide, and can extend beyond fresh food access to include lessons on nutrition and hands-on learning in school vegetable gardens and meal preparation spaces.

CASE STUDY

ITHACA FRESH SNACK PROGRAM, ITHACA, NY

In Ithaca, the [Youth Farm Project's Fresh Snack program](#) demonstrates how local produce can help nourish children in schools and early childhood education centers. The program provides free fruit and vegetable snacks two to three days a week through the school year to over 2,000 Ithaca Elementary School students, with a preference for local and organic produce. This helps kids explore new, healthy snacks.



Image courtesy of Youth Farm Project.

PRIORITY

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

4.6 Create opportunities for early childhood education centers to provide nutritious locally grown snacks in schools.

Continue education and outreach to PHLpreK and other early childhood education providers about the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks provided to eligible children and adults enrolled at care facilities.

Assess the feasibility to provide tools and technical assistance for early childhood education programs that wish to incorporate gardening on site.

Create a process to match early childhood education providers with local gardens, farms, and chefs certified to provide fresh, ready to consume local produce for students to eat as well as immersive programming for youth.

4.7 Revise Department of Prisons policies and program management procedures to ensure that incarcerated individuals can provide feedback on the choices of foods available and to consume food produced as supplements to meals or share with their communities/neighborhoods, etc.

Continue to provide opportunities for incarcerated individuals to acquire work and wellness skills related to food production and preparation (e.g., ServSafe certification, nutrition education, cultural food preparation).



4.8 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.

Investigate requiring Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits acceptance at all farmers markets in the city, and provide the necessary funding, EBT technology, training, and technical assistance to support this requirement.

Promote SNAP utilization at markets by increasing awareness of and funding for the Philly Food Bucks program (which provides an additional \$2 for every \$5 spent using SNAP at participating markets). Increase outreach about the Philly Food Bucks program to new farmers market and farm stand sites.

Promote utilization of Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers at farmers markets. Develop a campaign to expand outreach to residents across the city. Explore opportunities to improve shopping experiences for WIC, SNAP, and other public benefit using customers.

Explore expanding vendor eligibility beyond food vendors at farmers markets to increase public interest and foot traffic.

Investigate ways to expand affordable and discounted vending opportunities to local and regional farmers and producers at all farmers markets.

Increase the public's awareness about all Philadelphia farmers markets by developing a comprehensive campaign. Develop support systems for farmers market operators, and community organizations, gardens and farms that run farm stands.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Office of Children & Families, ECE Providers, Dept of Public Health, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Office of Children & Families, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Dept of Public Health, Office of Children & Families, ECE Providers, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Prisons, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Prisons, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Dept of Public Health, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations, Budget	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Local Vendors	Short-Term
	Administrative	Nonprofits, Area Businesses, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Short-Term

CASE STUDY

ROSA PARKS PRODUCE MARKET, JACKSONVILLE, FL

[Rosa Parks Produce Market](#) in Jacksonville demonstrates how cities can partner with organizations to get food into areas experiencing food apartheid, while also providing job opportunities to young people. It is a partnership between teens in the I'm A Star Foundation youth leadership program and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority in which the teens own and operate the weekly market at a major bus terminal, Rosa Parks Transit Station. The community's nearest grocery store is more than five miles away, and the market provides access to fresh, locally grown foods in a location people are already going to regularly.



Produce market at the Rosa Parks Transit Station. Image courtesy of the I'm A Star Foundation.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

4.8 cont'd

Raise funds to provide bulk reusable bags to local farm vendors to raise awareness about the plastic-bag ban and support vendors' transitions from plastic bags to alternatives.

Support market operators establishing new markets with local and culturally appropriate vendors - such as BIPOC, low-income, and immigrant farmers and producers - to provide additional social, cultural, and economic soil benefits.

Support new community-based mobile market programs that bring fresh produce to neighborhoods without access to existing farmers markets or other fresh food vendors, prioritizing operators who are from the communities they will serve and who aim to source food from local and regional growers.

Support the establishment of farmers markets along commercial corridors, at neighborhood centers, and at transit stations, prioritizing operators who are from the communities they will serve and who aim to source food from local and regional growers.

4.9 Explore ways to connect transportation services and land use planning with food access.

Encourage grocery stores, corner stores, and outdoor markets that provide fresh produce and products to locate at key transit intersections and within transit-oriented development zones.

Work with partners to implement the City's District Plans and Comprehensive Plan, which identify opportunities for new farmers markets at major transportation stations (e.g., Church, Margaret-Orthodox, and Frankford Transportation Center El stations and Somerton Station and Boulevard Direct bus stations).

Assess the relationship between food access, transit, and bike lane access across the city, and designate priority areas for transportation infrastructure and other projects that will expand easy access to food options.

4.10 Convene community health and wellness partners from hospitals across Philadelphia to share and test best practices that integrate nutritious, locally grown food in hospital operations and patient care.

Coordinate with farmers markets or mobile vending farmers markets to establish vending days at medical institutions.

Develop a Farm Rx program at hospitals across the city that provides patients with nutritious, locally grown food as part of their medical treatment and wellness plans.

Support partnerships between farmers and medical institutions to design on-site farms and grow fresh produce for on-site cafeterias and patient meals.

Establish more Farm to Families programs at hospitals not currently running the program.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Area Businesses, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Commerce Dept, Dept of Public Health, Nonprofits, Local Growers & Distributors	Short-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Commerce, City Planning, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Operations	Commerce Dept, City Planning, Dept of Public Health	Short-Term
	Partnership	Commerce Dept, City Planning, Dept of Public Health	Medium-Term
	Partnership	City Planning, SEPTA	Long-Term
	Operations	City Planning, OTIS, Streets, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Partnership	Dept of Public Health, Area Hospitals, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Dept of Public Health, Nonprofits, Area Hospitals	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Hospitals, Local Growers & Distributors	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Hospitals, Area Universities, Nonprofits, Local Growers	Long-Term
	Partnership	Area Hospitals, Area Universities, Local Growers	Long-Term

CASE STUDY

BOSTON GENERAL ROOFTOP FARM

Boston Medical Center's Rooftop Farm is a 2,500+ square foot farm on top of the hospital's power plant, and its hyperlocal harvests are provided to hospitalized patients, the cafeterias, the Demonstration Kitchen, and Preventative Food Pantry. The farm also provides habitat for pollinator bees and helps reduce the hospital's carbon footprint and energy use.



Photo courtesy of Boston Medical Center

Visit <https://www.bmc.org/nourishing-our-community/rooftop-farm> for more information.

CASE STUDY

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S FARM TO FAMILIES INITIATIVE

St. Christopher's Foundation for Children in Philadelphia is home to the Farms to Families Initiative, which supplies registered families with weekly boxes of fresh produce and local eggs and meat at a reduced cost. The Initiative also leads nutrition education programming, cooking demonstrations, and advocates for policy change to increase affordable fresh food access in the region. Any family of any income can register for the program, and there is special collaboration with patients who receive a Fresh Rx "prescription" from doctors for healthy foods.

Visit <https://scfchildren.org/farm-to-families/> for more information.

Support safe foraging of wild foods.

4.11 Promote safe and ethical foraging, recognizing Native and Indigenous land management and cultural practices.

Assess and amend the Parks & Rec regulations to allow for guided foraging.

Catalog and share information about native species in Philadelphia and where to safely forage them. Ensure residents understand the liabilities and personal responsibility of practicing foraging.

Identify and map existing and potential areas within the parks system that are considered safe and designated for foraging. Create online and printed resources at public facilities (e.g., libraries, recreation centers, environmental centers) where residents can access this information freely.

Teach residents how to harvest "disruptive" species (e.g., garlic mustard and pokeweed, Japanese knotweed, bindweed) for consumption. Promote foraging of nonnative species, in particular those that cause ecological harm or threaten native species and biodiversity.

Provide funding for community organizations and experienced individuals to lead programming and produce content related to foraging techniques and traditional food stories, to increase wild food and foraging literacy.

Partner with local agricultural organizations and growers to publish public guides on how to safely and ethically harvest food and medicinal plants from designated safe areas within the parks system, public land, the public right of way, and local forests.



4.12 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.

Coordinate to identify locations for growing fruit and nut-bearing trees, prioritizing safe planting in areas of food insecurity and disinvestment.

Work with the Philadelphia Orchard Project and other community organizations to plant, maintain and prune public food-producing orchard locations on public land, and seek funding from the state and federal agencies to expand training and educational programs on best practices. Explore funding opportunities to broaden the scope of PHS's Tree Tenders program to include fruit and nut bearing trees.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, School District, Dept of Public Property, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, PA Dept of Agriculture, USDA	Medium-Term

CASE STUDY

BROWNS MILL FOOD FOREST, ATLANTA

The [Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill](#) is a 7.1-acre formerly abandoned family farm that has been refreshed and repaired by local residents, community organizations, City agencies, and The Conservation Fund to become the nation's largest public food-producing forest. The site is based around the concept of agroforestry, which is "the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic, and social benefits," according to the USDA, and the project also has a partnership with Greening Youth Foundation to support workforce development to build parts of the forest and gardens. Other benefits of the Urban Food Forest include increased access to healthy, local food; healthier wildlife, tree canopy, and wildlife; educational programming; and recreational opportunities like walking and birdwatching.



Photo courtesy of Shannon Lee / The Conservation Fund

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

Food Waste management can mean reducing, recycling, or repurposing the by-products of food production, preparation, distribution, and consumption.





S. FOOD WASTE



FOOD WASTE

OVERVIEW

There are many types of food waste. These include uneaten prepared food; spoiled food; food that is not edible; peels, rinds, and other kitchen trimmings typically considered inedible; and food by-products, such as eggshells and coffee grounds. About 43 percent of food waste comes from homes; 40 percent from restaurants, grocery stores, and food service companies; 16 percent from farms; and two percent from manufacturers, according to *Food Waste in America 2022*, a study released by the company RTS.⁷⁹

Depending on the local food system and general public practices, wasted food can be a valuable resource. It can generate nutrient-rich soil when it is composted, or be repurposed as animal feed, processed into food ingredients such as spices, converted into fertilizer, or anaerobically digested to create energy. Alternatively, it can be thrown away as garbage, feeding landfills and incinerators, where it releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere.

Excess food at risk of being wasted can also be recovered and donated to feed people. Like food waste, the extent to which excess food retains its value depends on policies, practices, and relationships within the local food system. Recovery and donation of excess food does not prevent the creation of food waste, though it will reduce the amount of food that is thrown away, while also reducing hunger among Philadelphia residents. This chapter of *Growing from the Root* focuses on preventing and reducing food waste within the city's food system.

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.





WHY PHILADELPHIA NEEDS TO REDUCE AND RECOVER FOOD WASTE

People generate food waste on a daily basis, at home, in restaurants, at grocery stores, as well as at farms and food manufacturing facilities. Residential properties in Philadelphia throw out about 335,000 tons of organic waste each year, including food scraps and yard waste, according to the Philadelphia Office of Sustainability. Of that, about one-third—117,000 tons—is food waste.⁸⁰ Efforts to reduce, rescue, and repurpose food waste are essential because:

- 20% of edible food is thrown out in Philadelphia each day,⁸¹ while one in five Philadelphians experience hunger every day.⁸²
- Food and yard waste fills 55 trash trucks in Philadelphia every day, or roughly 37 percent of the municipal solid waste stream, according to the Streets Department.
- At \$65 per ton in landfill fees,⁸³ disposing of an estimated 335,000 tons of food and yard waste costs the city roughly \$21 million per year.
- Wasted food sent to the landfill creates greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

Investing in sustainable food waste management policies and initiatives is a priority for residents, according to public meeting participants. Ninety percent of participants favor City-provided curbside compost pick-up, but they are realistic about the challenges. Concerns include people putting contaminants in with their compostable food scraps; complaints about pests and smells if food scraps and composting sites are not well managed; and skepticism given the City's limited resources and historic struggles with litter, waste management, and recycling practices.

Participants say they are confident experienced local companies can partner with the City to make progress toward zero waste; 71 percent said public-private partnerships are critical to sustainable food waste management processes in Philadelphia, along with buy-in from City agencies. Residents also emphasize that public education is key to success.

HOW PHILADELPHIA APPROACHES FOOD WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Today the City of Philadelphia works with residents, community organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and institutions to reduce and recover food waste. In 2017, Philadelphia adopted a Zero Waste goal and published the [Zero Waste Action Plan](#), which aims to move the city toward a waste- and litter-free future. The plan calls for a complete phase out of landfills by 2035. However, in 2020 amid COVID-19 pandemic budget cuts, the City disbanded its Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet, which Mayor Kenney created in 2016 to coordinate citywide efforts to reduce litter and waste.

The Philadelphia Office of Sustainability (OOS) sets the City's agenda for a more sustainable future. Through its *Greenworks* plan, OOS helps other City agencies work toward goals that include:

- Increasing access to healthy, affordable, sustainable food
- Reducing carbon pollution
- Eliminating waste
- Supporting training, employment, and business opportunities focused on sustainability

To tackle food waste in Philadelphia, OOS joined the Natural Resources Defense Council's Food Matters Regional Initiative in 2020 to pursue new strategies to reduce food waste in the Mid-Atlantic region. Through this initiative, OOS is developing an educational campaign for residents that is informed by community focus groups, and aims to increase public awareness of the impacts of food waste and how Philadelphians can take action to prevent it. The campaign launched on Earth Day in 2022, and will be promoted across the city at bus stops, in grocery stores, and on social media.

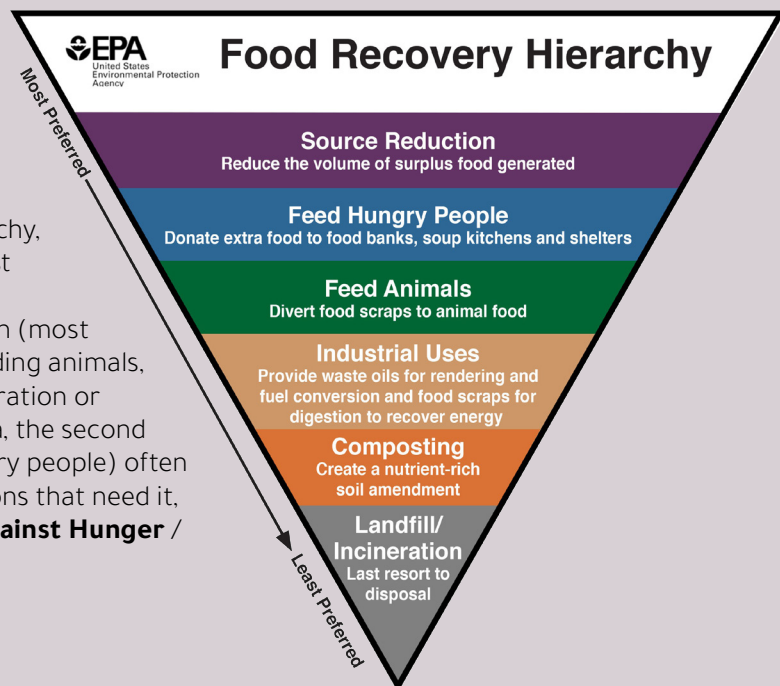
OOS is also piloting a [Food Waste Business Challenge](#), which encourages local businesses to work one-on-one with the OOS to implement a food waste action plan and test waste-reducing strategies. Throughout the process, businesses can provide feedback to the City that will inform policy and programs for food businesses in the future.

CASE STUDY

HOW CAN FOOD WASTE BE REUSED?

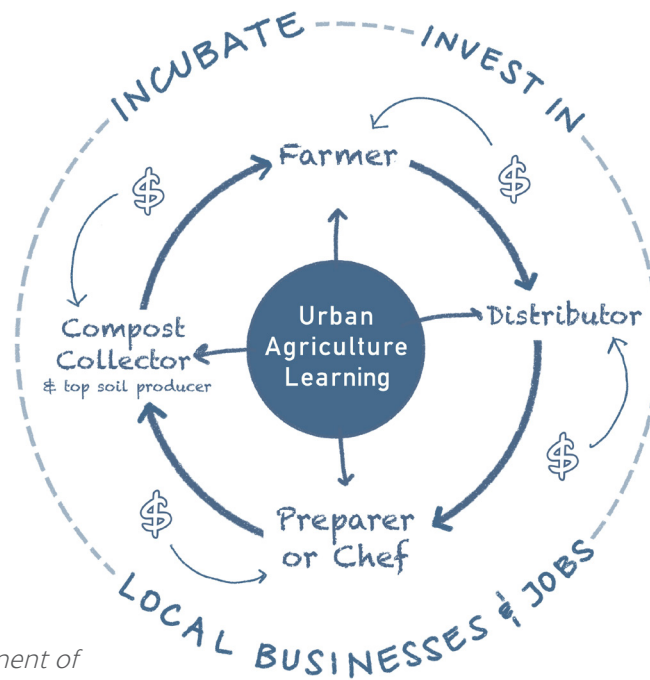
The US Environmental Protection Agency defines priority areas for food recovery with its Food Recovery Hierarchy, which outlines strategies from the most environmentally preferred to the least preferred.⁸⁴ These are: source reduction (most preferred), feeding hungry people, feeding animals, industrial uses, composting, and incineration or landfill (least preferred). In Philadelphia, the second most preferred strategy (feeding hungry people) often involves redirecting food to organizations that need it, such as **Food Connect** and **Grocers Against Hunger / Philabundance**, and **Sharing Excess**.

*The EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy
Image courtesy of the EPA*



Currently, the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) provides the City's largest-scale solution for diverting food waste from the municipal waste stream: in-sink garbage disposals allow residents to put food scraps down the kitchen sink, and that waste is processed with sewage at PWD's facilities and converted into organic fertilizer and renewable energy (e.g., gasses from waste that create electric power). In 2012, PWD entered a 20-year contract for a public-private partnership with Synagro, a company that operates the [Philadelphia Renewable Bio-Fuels Facility](#). The facility converts sewage and food waste from in-sink garbage disposals processed at PWD's wastewater treatment plant into more than 50,000 tons of fertilizer pellets each year, which can be used to fertilize food crops for animal or human consumption throughout the East Coast. The partnership not only recovers and recycles food and human waste, but also reduces the costs of and greenhouse gas emissions caused by trucking waste away from homes and businesses and disposing of it in landfills.⁸⁵

In 2018, the Philadelphia Streets Department published the *Philadelphia Organics Diversion Feasibility Study*⁸⁶ to explore ways to divert organic materials, including food waste, from the municipal waste stream. The study explored what it would take to develop a large-scale regional composting operation in the City, and looked at the feasibility of City collection of leaves and yard waste, food waste, and compostable paper; commercial business and institutional composting requirements to reduce waste; community-based and -led composting programs; and in-sink food garbage disposals as a solution to residential food waste. The study concluded that successfully reducing organic waste in Philadelphia will require a combination of all of these actions, as well as new strategies, working together into the future.



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

The study also explored municipal curbside compost pickup, which has become popular in cities across the country, but found that it is too costly in Philadelphia today. While municipal curbside compost collection remains a long-term option, the Streets Department lacks the budget for more drivers, waste management staff, and a new fleet of trucks to collect separated food and yard waste from Philadelphia homes and businesses. In addition, the City would need facilities large enough to process the amount of organic waste generated in Philadelphia. Partnering City agencies are exploring strategies to overcome these challenges, including public-private partnerships and decentralized and community-led approaches to offering composting services to residents.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec) has found three successful ways to increase resident and recreation center composting activities, tackling both yard waste and food scraps.

- > Parks & Rec operates the **Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center**, which has received and processed yard waste for over 50 years. Businesses can pay a tipping fee to drop off leaves, grass clippings, brush, herbivore manure, and wood chips. Residents can drop off bagged leaves and yard waste on designated days at the Streets Department's sanitation convenience centers or place them out for curbside pickup by City trucks on special collection days each fall. City residents and growers can get up to 30 gallons of free organic materials including screened leaf compost, shredded wood mulch, herbivore manure, wood chips, and firewood. These materials are available for purchase by businesses.
- > In 2019, Parks & Rec launched the **Community Compost Network**, which currently supports composting at 13 sites across Philadelphia. Parks & Rec aims to grow the program to 25 sites citywide, inviting the community to compost their food and yard waste at their neighborhood site. Parks & Rec provides a full range of support for these community-led and resident-powered projects, from in-person and virtual training, educational materials, every basic tool to compost start-to-finish and composting bins, as well as scales and binders for measuring and recording organic waste collected. Parks & Rec has also developed its Community Compost Manual, a blueprint for any group interested in developing a plan and infrastructure for grassroots community-led compost collection. This manual will be published online and in print as a resource for residents and municipalities across the country, as it also details how Philadelphia established its network.
- > In 2021, Parks & Rec launched a **pilot program in partnership with the private company Bennett Compost to collect and compost food scraps from meals served at 25 City recreation centers**. To make this program possible, Parks & Rec worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) to modify the State's existing On-Farm Composting permit to include farms or urban sites as small as 0.7 acres, which will reduce hauling distances and emissions for organic waste. Bennett established a composting facility on a former Parks & Rec maintenance yard, where they process the food scraps collected from rec centers along with those from Bennett's 5,000 residential and commercial customers. Parks & Rec plans to grow the program, adding 25 to 30 sites per year until all recreation centers (with senior, after-school, and summer camp programs) are composting.

HELPFUL GUIDES ON FOOD WASTE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES



Photo source: City of Philadelphia

In summer 2021, the Philadelphia Office of Sustainability (OOS) published a number of educational materials for food businesses, including a guide on [Food Waste Management for Commercial Properties](#) and a [Zero Waste Guide for Food Service Establishments](#). On Earth Day 2022, OOS launched a new campaign, [Eat Away at Food Waste](#), with resources for households and businesses.

Similarly, programs within the School District of Philadelphia are finding ways to keep organic waste out of landfills and educate students in the process.⁸⁷ At Henry Got Crops, located at W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences, the composting program processes manure from the school's livestock and Philadelphia Zoo animals, as well as food scraps from three local composting companies, three Weavers' Way Co-op stores, coffee grounds from High Point Coffee, and grain from six area breweries, which is also fed to Saul's dairy cows. Students at Penn Alexander Elementary School, like Saul students, separate out food waste from trash during school meals. A new partnership among Parks & Rec's Fox Chase Farm, Reading Terminal Market, and Urban Worm Company is teaching students about vermicompost while launching a composting operation at Reading Terminal Market run by urban agriculture students from Philadelphia public schools.⁸⁸

CASE STUDY LA COMPOST



Photo source: L.A. Compost

[LA Compost](#) is a community-based nonprofit that shows one way community-led efforts can play a role in reducing food waste. The organization is a POC-owned compost project working across Los Angeles County to educate residents and provide resources related to food waste. LA Compost “supports a healthy transition where food is never wasted, but returned to the soil for the next cycle of life.” It provides jobs, education, and resources, as well as access to community compost hubs. “The healthy soil that is created by a community compost hub stays in the community and is used locally to enrich the soil in the neighborhood in which it was created.”

Philadelphia Department of Prisons runs a closed-loop composting system, taking food waste generated from all six correctional facilities in the City's prison system (approximately 900 tons per year)⁸⁹ and converting it to compost for use within the department's agricultural program. The department built its composting facility at the former Holmesburg Prison with funding from the Philadelphia Office of Sustainability's Greenworks Sustainability Fund. The inmate-run composting operation provides vocational training to help formerly incarcerated residents find jobs.

Aside from the City's efforts to advance composting and other food waste reduction and recovery initiatives, **private compost companies** are growing, offering curbside food waste pick-up for households who can afford to pay for the service. Many **restaurants** are also aware of the importance of reducing their food waste, and they try to incorporate as much of each food product into their meals as possible (e.g., using vegetable scraps to make broth). **Individual gardens and farms** also play a large role in reducing food waste by maintaining their own composting operations.

“ When I put our garbage out for the pig farmer I feel good, knowing I'm saving the city taxpayers money and also recycling food waste. ”

*- Former City Council Member,
Happy Fernandez*

THE GRAVY TRUCKS OF PHILADELPHIA



Pigs eat a meal of scrap produce sourced from Baltimore City's Office of Sustainability, which collects food scraps from residents every weekend at farmers markets for animal feed
Source: Kenneth K. Lam for *The Baltimore Sun*

Did you know that as recently as 1995 many Philadelphia residents had the option to direct their food waste to hog farmers in New Jersey who would feed the table scraps to their livestock?⁹⁰

Between 1920 and 1995, the City's Sanitation or Streets Department paid pig farmers in southern New Jersey to collect table scraps from galvanized buckets placed curbside by Philadelphia residents twice a week. The opt-in program covered roughly three-quarters of the city, and resulted in the collection of over 24,000 tons of food waste each year from roughly 2,000 households in the mid-90s,⁹¹ costing the City less than half of what it would have cost to send the scraps to a landfill. According to a Streets Department supervisor in the 1990s, Philadelphia was the only remaining city in the country with such a program, then called "Waste-for-Pigs."

At its peak—before home garbage disposals, increased reliance on packaged and processed foods, and composting—the program sent over 100,000 tons of food waste per year to hog farms in New Jersey, but the program dwindled as suburban development drove pig farmers from the area and consumer habits changed.

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

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.



Photo source: L.A. Compost



Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Bennett Compost Facility on Rising Sun

FOOD WASTE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this chapter 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. There are four categories of Food Waste reduction recommendations, which work together to:

- Improve and expand City operations to recover food waste
- Increase resident, business, and institutional participation in food waste reduction
- Invest in sustainable food waste management technologies and systems
- Prevent food waste by increasing food rescue and donations

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
Improve and expand City operations to reduce food waste.	
5.1	Continue to seek sustainable waste management solutions within Streets Department and Water Department operations.
	Explore options to extract organics from the municipal solid waste stream to separate organics before they enter the waste stream. Specifically, work with large producers of organic waste (e.g., groceries, farms, farmers markets, restaurants, large public events, zoo, stadiums, etc.).
	Investigate additional funds (e.g., staff, fleet, and processing) to pilot a curbside compost pick up program in select neighborhoods.
	Invest in necessary capital upgrades (e.g., digester mixing and sludge screening) to improve PWD's anaerobic digesters and promote a more robust digestion process, making the concept of food waste co-digestion more feasible.
	Investigate the establishment of a public private partnership with business entities to haul and process intercepted food waste into usable food slurry that can be safely introduced into PWD's anaerobic digestion or another merchant digestion facility. Continue to increase bio-gas yields and fertilizer through advanced digestion processes.
X	5.2 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.
	Allocate more staff and invest in necessary capital upgrades (e.g., additional equipment) at the Center to adequately expand the operations of the facility.
	Establish a leaf bank to store fall leaves for residents who are engaging in composting or mulching and need brown materials.
	Develop a potting soil mix for residents, City agencies, and businesses.
	Remain committed to exploring operational costs and resources to increase the center's ability to pick-up and deliver organic material (e.g., compost, soil, mulch) to new and existing gardens and farms. Develop a new urban agriculture operations crew to increase services to community gardens and farms in the city, including delivery of organic materials.
	Create a local wood lumber yard for residential and private business from downed trees in the park system, and offer growers free lumber and wood chips for farms and gardens.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Streets Dept, PWD, Office of Sustainability	Long-Term
	Operations, Partnership	Streets Dept, Office of Sustainability, Institutions, Businesses	Medium-Term
	Budget	Streets Department, Finance, City Council, Office of Sustainability	Long-Term
	Budget, Partnership	PWD, Finance, City Council	Long-Term
	Budget, Partnership	PWD, Finance, City Council, Area Businesses	Long-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council	Short-Term
	Budget	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Finance, City Council, Funders	Medium-Term

CASE STUDY COMMERCIAL ORGANICS REGULATIONS, NEW YORK



Photo courtesy of [RTS](#)

New York City and New York State's [commercial organics regulations](#) demonstrate how policy targeting businesses and institutions can curb food waste effectively. The regulations mandate that food scraps-generating businesses and institutions over certain sizes must separate and recycle their organic waste from other trash and recycling. This includes colleges and universities, restaurants, food stores, correctional facilities, malls, sports venues, hotels and motels, and more. This helps reduce organic waste in landfills emitting methane gas, and keeps food scraps from being liquefied and drained into the sewer system.

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
5.2 cont'd	Partner with local research institutions to explore the use of recycled materials (e.g., glass) as growing mediums for plants for other agricultural uses.
5.3	Encourage all City operations to adopt composting practices to divert organic waste from the waste stream and lessen municipal landfill costs.
	Develop comprehensive educational materials and guidelines to structure municipal composting efforts within City government, and cultivate support and buy-in across agency leadership. Clarify how recycling and food waste regulations apply to building operators of major meal providers (e.g., School District, Parks & Rec).
	Explore funding opportunities to create a compost training program for formerly incarcerated individuals.
	Scale up Parks & Rec's public private partnerships for composting food waste from recreation center programs to include additional sites within Parks & Rec's system.
	Expand municipal composting of food waste to other City agencies and entities engaged in meal provision and food service.
	Work with the Philadelphia International Airport to develop a closed-loop food waste composting and recyclables operation.
X	5.4 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.
	Consider joint development of operational and educational guidance across youth programming agencies (e.g., School District, Parks & Rec, Libraries) for standard operating procedures around recycling and composting, perhaps with Saul Agricultural High School as a pilot.
	Support source-separating programs within individual schools, and connect the district with area businesses and sites poised to receive properly sorted food waste for compost creation. Work with Food Services to get buy-in internally within the district.
	Undertake a waste audit in school cafeterias throughout the district as well as prison cafeterias to better understand dietary preferences and common sources of food waste. Collaborate on data collection strategy, goals, and metrics, and design the process together with food services.
5.5	Identify sites where composting can occur in or near Philadelphia to close the loop within the city's food system.
	Develop educational materials about well-managed composting sites and successes from Parks & Rec's Organic Recycling Center and partnership with Bennett Compost to address public concerns about nuisance issues and demonstrate feasibility.
	Work with the City's land holding agencies, Commerce Department, and PIDC to find a selection of geographically distributed, suitable, small- to mid-sized sites (e.g., Sanitation Convenience Centers) for commercial composting facilities in Philadelphia.
	Partner with nonprofits and skilled trades organizations (e.g., PowerCorpsPHL) who maintain facilities and workforces well-positioned to support, sustain, and encourage use of local composting operations (e.g., PHS's Green Resource Centers). Partner with local environmentally focused skilled trades organizations (e.g., Energy Coordinating Agency), to expand their technical training programs to include sustainable construction (e.g., solar and waste systems) for urban agriculture.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Area Universities, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec, Office of Children & Families, Office of Homeless Services, Prisons, Streets	Long-Term
	Administrative	Sustainability, Streets, Parks & Rec, Mayor's Office, School District	Medium-Term
	Operations, Budget	Prisons, Streets	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Children & Families, Homeless Services, Parks & Rec, Streets	Long-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Airport	Long-Term
	Operations	School District, Prisons, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	School District, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Partnership	School District, Office of Sustainability, Area Businesses	Short-Term
	Operations	School District, Prisons, Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Operations	Planning & Development, PIDC, Commerce Dept, Parks & Rec, Streets, Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Area Businesses	Short-Term
	Operations	Planning & Development, PIDC, Commerce, Streets, Parks & Rec, Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term

Increase residential, business, and institutional participation in keeping food waste out of the trash.

5.6 Support at-home solutions to help residents reduce food waste.

Invest in expanding the newly launched Phila.gov/FoodWaste website to develop a comprehensive Food Waste Resource Hub online, and share more accessible information about public composting sites (Parks & Rec Community Compost Network) and private compost companies available for hire by households who can afford it.

Consider developing a City program to provide in-sink garbage disposals for interested households (e.g., PWD's Rain Check Program, which provides free rain barrels for residents to capture stormwater), requiring education and communication about best practices for usage. Increase educational and promotional campaigns for proper usage of garbage disposals and what types of food waste can be grinded to prevent issues caused by misuse.

Bring back the program offered by the Streets Recycling Office that provides free compost tumblers for interested households who attend a training (e.g., Parks & Rec's Tree Philly free yard tree program).

Fundraise and partner with area businesses for composting scholarships for households who cannot afford private compost pick-up services but would like to participate, and provide free compost tumblers or bins for interested residents, as with the City's blue recycling bins offered at no cost to residents.



5.7 Launch an educational campaign about how and what to compost, targeting a range of audiences, including residents, businesses, and institutions.

Expand the Office of Sustainability's newly launched [Eat Away at Food Waste](#) educational campaign, created in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council, to include education for the public about the benefits of composting, what materials can be composted safely, how to compost and vermipost, and where to do so.

Provide more education about existing yard-waste composting services offered at the Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center.

Involve organizations, businesses, and residents who keep animals and participants in the local compost network in food waste reduction conversations to integrate animal waste in composting operations and direct food scraps for animal consumption.

Continue the Office of Sustainability's community conversation series with residents to understand the neighborhood-level interests in and barriers to food waste reduction and composting resources.

Collaborate with the School District's GreenFutures program in the planning, development, and roll-out of outreach campaigns to explore ways to engage students, families, and education experts.



5.8 Expand opportunities for community-scale composting.

Designate additional sites for community-scale composting through Parks & Rec's Community Compost Network, where residents can drop off food scraps and other organic waste at no cost to neighborhood community gardens, farms, schools, and other public spaces.

Explore the feasibility of collaborating with local nonprofits, area businesses, and community organizations to develop a residential food scrap drop-off program within Farmers Markets in the City.

Provide food waste pick-ups to community and nonprofit organizations hosting large public events that will generate a significant amount of food waste.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Operations	PWD, Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Streets	Medium-Term
	Budget	Office of Sustainability, Area Businesses, Funders	Long-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers, Area Businesses	Short-Term
	Administrative	Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership	Office of Sustainability, School District	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Medium-Term
	Operations, Partnership	Parks & Rec, Dept of Public Health, EHS, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Operations	Streets Dept, Grassroots Orgs, Nonprofits	Medium-Term

CASE STUDY

CLEAN KITCHEN, GREEN COMMUNITY

In 2013, the Philadelphia Water Department participated in a five-city pilot project funded by InSinkErator, a garbage disposal manufacturer, studying *The Food Waste Disposer as Municipal Tool for Waste Diversion*. InSinkErator installed 173 garbage disposals in the kitchen sinks of participating residents in Philadelphia's Point Breeze and West Oak Lane neighborhoods and encouraged residents to put grindable food waste down the drain. The project reported a 30 percent reduction in trash volume over three years,⁹² demonstrating one example of a simple strategy for reducing food waste--and a public-private partnership to explore its impact.

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
X	<p>5.9 Invest in the local economy to provide sustainable waste management solutions in Philadelphia, while investing in and creating local businesses and jobs.</p>
	<p>Explore ways to offer discounted lease rates or public/private partnerships to local businesses qualified to operate local composting sites on City land. Prioritize BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, disabled, and/or immigrant-owned enterprises.</p>
	<p>Invest in and support local food waste and food recovery businesses, and diversify business operators offering competitive and consistent revenue streams to emerging businesses. Prioritize businesses that are BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA, disabled, and/or immigrant owned.</p>
	<p>Invest in composting as a business enterprise by partnering with community-based organizations, nonprofits, and skilled trades organizations to develop a training program focused on cultivating skills for food waste processing and distribution. Specifically, create a diverse learning experience and curriculum by including modules focused on youth and individuals with disabilities.</p>
	<p>Assess the Streets Department's <i>Organics Diversion Feasibility Study</i> and work with local area businesses and nonprofits to identify business opportunities and gaps in the local economy and market, assessing food waste from haulers to processors, and producers of new products made with recovered waste or recyclable materials.</p>
X	<p>5.10 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.</p>
	<p>Clarify and disseminate guidance about existing Commercial Organics diversion rules that require businesses and institutions generating food waste to divert grindable food waste away from the landfill.</p>
	<p>Explore ways to increase enforcement and oversight of existing Commercial Organics diversion rules.</p>
	<p>Pass legislation to adopt Commercial Organics rules that require businesses and institutions to source-separate their organic waste for compost, aerobic or anaerobic digestion, or other approved processing methods, either to be outsourced to a private processor or processed on-site. Begin with large facilities over 25,000 square feet, and phase in all food scrap-generating institutions and businesses over multiple years.</p>
	<p>Connect institutions and businesses with existing composting businesses in the private sector to encourage procurement of composting services, and with resources and education to prevent food waste.</p>
	<p>Provide education and support for institutions with large footprints (e.g., universities, museums, the Navy Yard, stadiums, etc.) that could implement closed-loop waste systems and conduct composting on site with fewer permitting issues/barriers.</p>

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Streets Dept, Commerce Dept, Office of Sustainability, Office of Economic Opportunity, Office of Children & Families, Parks & Rec, School District, Office of Homeless Services, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, Parks & Rec, Streets, PIDC, Philadelphia Land Bank	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Office of Economic Opportunity, Streets, Parks & Rec, Office of Homeless Services, Office of Children & Families, School District	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Office of Economic Opportunity, Mayor's Office of Youth Engagement, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities	Medium-Term
	Operations	Streets, PWD, Parks & Rec, Commerce Dept, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Office of Sustainability, City Council, Planning & Development, Nonprofits, Institutions, Area Businesses, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Planning & Development	Short-Term
	Legislative	City Council, Office of Sustainability	Long-Term
	Partnership	Office of Sustainability, Area Businesses, Institutions	Medium-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term

Prevent food waste by increasing food rescue and donations.**5.11 Create a food waste resource hub with information for institutions and businesses.**

Compile existing guides and rules (e.g., health code) around food donation as well as resources to inform other preventive measures in one easily accessible place online.

Work with the Office of Sustainability, Health Department (e.g., Environmental Health Services Unit), and Commerce Department to evaluate the impacts of existing City Health Codes as they relate to wasted food prevention and management. Communicate regulations and best practices for food waste management to impacted businesses and institutions (e.g., restaurants, caterers, grocers, distributors, universities, museums, etc.).

5.12 Increase options for private and public food donation citywide to support food relief efforts and prevent food waste.

Develop systems for existing organizations (nonprofits and business enterprises) that collect excess and donated food and redistribute it to food distribution and meal sites (e.g., senior centers, shelters, community centers, schools). Integrate these organizations and efforts into all printed and online City resources to ensure residents and anti-hunger organizations are aware of these resources.

Provide training and start-up support to community-based organizations and nonprofits wanting to provide these services, with input from the Health Department.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Office of Sustainability	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, EHS, Dept of Public Health	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, EHS, Dept of Public Health, Commerce Dept, Area Businesses, Institutions	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Partnership	Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Businesses	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Dept of Public Health, EHS	Short-Term

CASE STUDY

FOOD CONNECT

Founded in 2014, Food Connect is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit dedicated to bridging the gap between surplus food and hunger. The organization rescues excess food from area restaurants and food retailers and redirects the food to local community organizations that provide hunger relief including homeless shelters, senior centers, family resource centers, veteran facilities, and soup kitchens. Food Connect's technology makes it easy to request a pick-up of food to be donated or to sign up to receive food. Food Connect's model fills critical gaps in our food system so that procurement, distribution, and feedback loops can happen seamlessly at scale while leveraging hyper-local networks. They also work with organizations to streamline their food programs so that more people can gain access to healthy, nourishing food while also eliminating food waste within those programs and tapping into local businesses to provide culturally appropriate food. Food Connect's circular economy solution allows for all segments of the food system to work more cohesively and sustainably together to ultimately build healthier, more sustainable communities.




*Food Connect picking up excess food.
(Photo courtesy of Food Connect)*

Visit <https://www.foodconnectgroup.org> for more information.





A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a leafy green vegetable, likely a collard green, in a garden. The background is slightly blurred, showing other plants and a white covering. The text is overlaid on a brown, torn-edge background at the top of the image.

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

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

6. PEOPLE



PEOPLE

OVERVIEW

This 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. This chapter focuses on the resources and support that people who participate in urban agriculture need to continue and grow urban agriculture in Philadelphia.

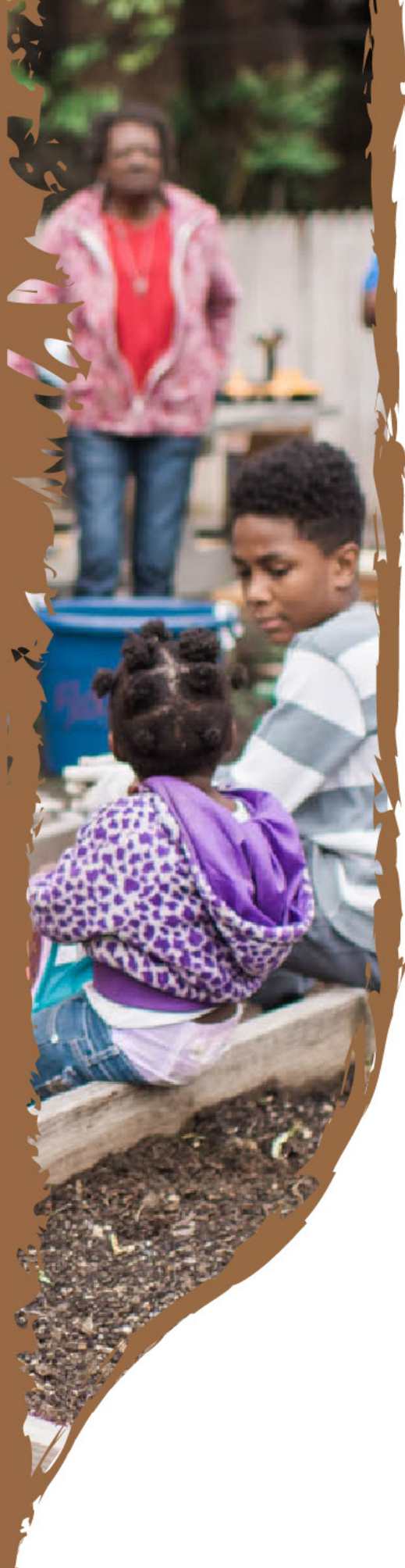
WHY PHILADELPHIA NEEDS STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT PEOPLE IN THE URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

The people who practice urban agriculture in Philadelphia are diverse. They include young people looking to learn about farming and elders with knowledge and experience to share. They are formerly incarcerated residents in need of work and new community connections. They are Indigenous people whose ancestors first inhabited and stewarded this land. They are Black and Brown residents, be they lifelong Philadelphians or relative newcomers, immigrants and refugees from Asia, Africa, South America, and elsewhere. For many, agriculture is a cultural and spiritual practice, a connection to home and family, and an act of self-reliance and self-determination. It is necessary for this plan to consider how to support people, so they can continue to define and grow the urban agricultural community.

Throughout the community engagement process for this plan, residents have emphasized that growing, foraging, and seed saving are important for learning about and holding onto their cultural traditions. They have expressed the importance of connecting with different methods and techniques their ancestors used to grow food. The relationship between urban agriculture and community building is strong and clear. Participants reported that they value urban agriculture because:

- “It promotes community building, healing, and pushes us to think about our position as environmental stewards, and lastly our social responsibility to one another.”





- “It connects us to the land and the food that sustains us, and because of the immense opportunities for community building and empowerment that it provides.”
- “It is healing—a way for me and my family to connect to our culture, grow our own food and medicine, a way to connect to other people and my community, and beautify our space.”
- “Growing your own food . . . can be a radical way that resists our current system of oppression and control by connecting you with your community, ancestors, and God.”

Additionally, public meeting participants indicated a desire for more agricultural education and training for adults, for young people, and for broader education campaigns about the benefits of urban agriculture across the city. For people of all ages, the benefits of learning about urban agriculture extend far beyond skills for growing food and raising animals. It relates to everything from science to self-reliance, from crop planning to construction, from biology to business skills and offers many health benefits. Parents, elders, educators, and students want to see more agriculture curriculum in schools as well as more funding specifically for agricultural Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, such as those at W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences, the U School, Fox Chase High School, and Lankenau High School.

Interest in education is not limited to in-school learning for school-aged students. Public meeting participants expressed a desire to learn a wide range of skills related to urban agriculture: how to grow fruits and vegetables; how to build raised beds, compost bins, and benches; and how to raise animals. Residents said that growing, foraging, and seed saving are important for learning about and holding onto many of their cultural traditions. Many also expressed an interest in learning more specialized skills, such as building solar panels and plumbing systems, undertaking other larger construction projects, accounting and management or administrative skills, and digital skills such as website and social media management.

“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

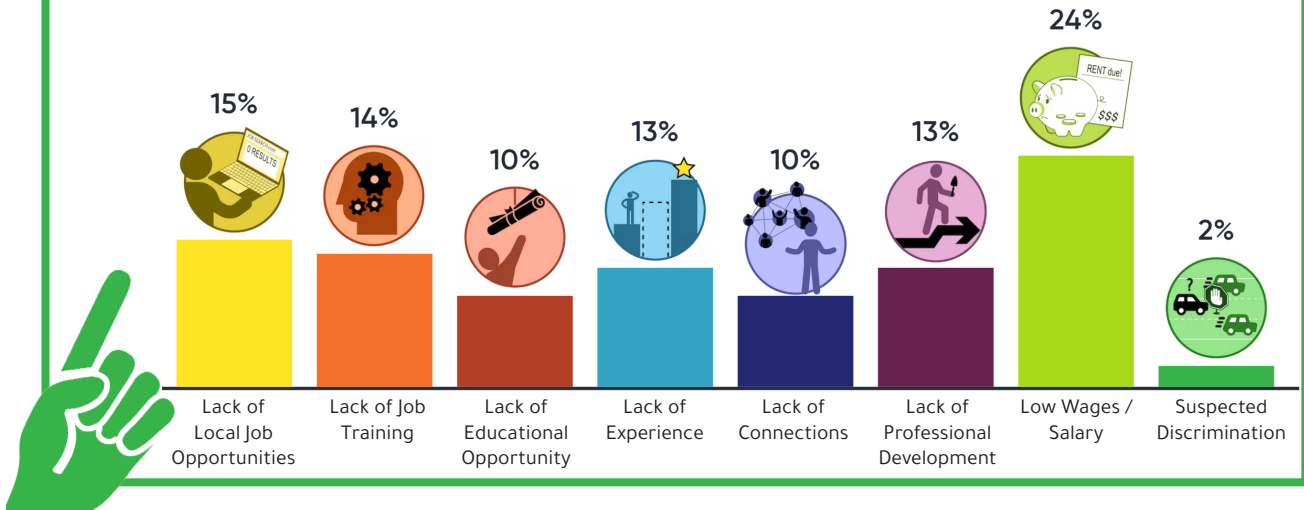
People who make their livelihood in urban agriculture (or who would like to) have expressed a desire for a stronger foundation from which to build their careers. Public meeting participants who have worked in urban agriculture told stories about difficult working conditions, poor wages, and a lack of job security and opportunities to advance. Others described how difficult it can be to break into the field and learn skills while still making a living.

For new business ventures, it was apparent from public meeting participants that it can be very challenging to enter into urban agriculture as a private enterprise. It becomes more difficult when competing with larger businesses, typically owned by white people or people not from Philadelphia. These businesses often have more access to financial resources and capital.

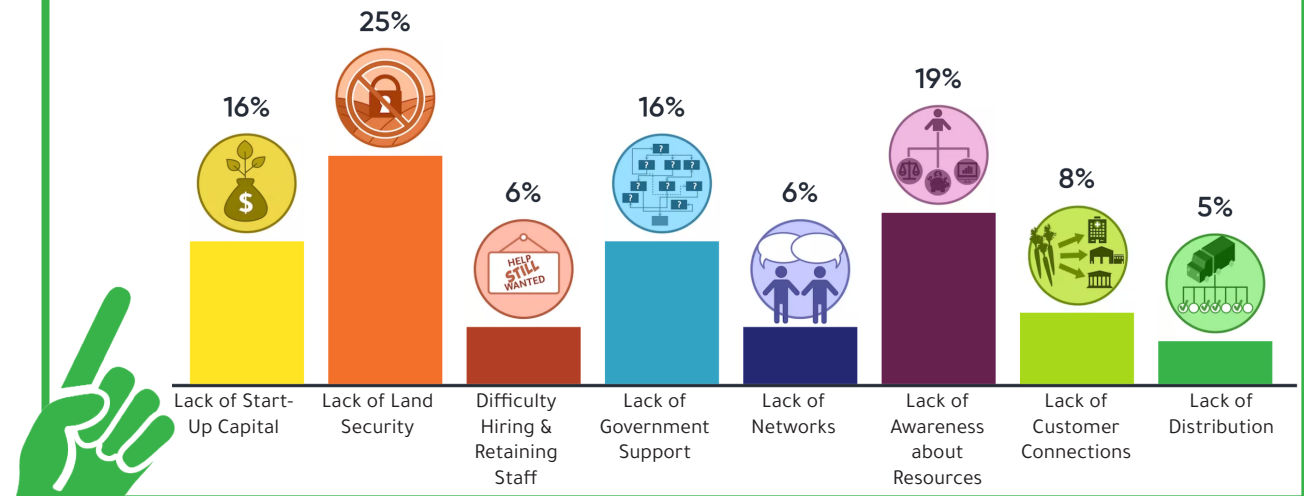
"I FOUND A WONDERFUL JOB WORKING AT A WONDERFUL FARM IN THE CITY. THIS FARM DOES ITS BEST IN TERMS OF PAY AND OFFERS HEALTH INSURANCE, SICK AND VACATION DAYS, AND SO FORTH, BUT I STILL HAD TO QUIT AFTER ONE YEAR BECAUSE THE PAY IS JUST NOT SUSTAINABLE FOR MY FAMILY... IT WAS DEVASTATING FOR ME PERSONALLY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



Do you own or operate a business in urban agriculture? Do you want to? What barriers have you faced?



Survey input from the second public meeting

HOW PHILADELPHIA APPROACHES THESE TOPICS

The City of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia, and the network of grassroots community organizations and nonprofits that work in gardens, farms, food forests, and other urban agriculture-related initiatives offer a range of programs and services for and with people engaged in urban agriculture or interested in learning more about it. The Overview of the Planning Process (pages 43-44) provides a snapshot of City agencies and selected nonprofit partners whose work intersects with urban agriculture. Carousel House Farm, featured below, focuses on ensuring that urban agriculture in Philadelphia is inclusive and accessible to all who care to participate.

Similarly, the School District of Philadelphia has a range of programs and opportunities to integrate growing spaces and agriculture-based learning, though currently, resources are lacking to expand and

sustain these initiatives district-wide. The District's *Greenscapes Resources Guide* is a policy reference for schools that want to undertake greening projects in their school yards, including raised beds and orchards. Such improvements could make agriculture-based learning accessible to more students, but seed money is needed for capital improvements and operating resources to keep the programs running over time. In practice, these projects require a champion—often a teacher—to envision, advocate, and take action, and without more institutional support within the district and curriculum, the projects can wane or collapse when a teacher moves on or cannot find resources to continue. Partnerships with local growers and community organizations could help add capacity and teaching knowledge in the schools, provided that resources are made available.



Photo courtesy of Fairmount Park Conservancy / FarmPhilly

LOCAL PROFILE

CAROUSEL HOUSE FARM

Located on almost an acre of land at Carousel House Recreation Center, the Farm currently grows up to 4,000 pounds of food (vegetables, fruit, and herbs) per season, as well as flowers. The Farm is Philadelphia's only publicly-run production and education farm, open to residents and growers across the city. Farm Philly delivers educational opportunities, job training programs and peer-to-peer exchanges for youth and adults who want to learn hands-on farming, composting, harvesting and food production skills. The farm also serves as a work and educational site for partner PowerCorps PHL. Residents can purchase vegetables, herbs, and flowers through a Farm Share (i.e., Community Supported Agriculture), while Farm Philly also ensures that a portion of the food produced is redirected to food pantry partners.⁹³

Saul High School, The U School, Lankenau High School, and Fox Chase High School have more robust agricultural CTE programs, including partnerships with the National Society of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS). MANRRS supports professional development, which is critical. For CTE programs to be approved, the district must be able to match each classroom seat with relevant jobs that pay \$15/hour. This requires both a pipeline to local businesses and nonprofits that are accessible by transit and supportive training as students enter the workforce.

For both young people and adults interested in learning agricultural skills and finding work in the field, one of the biggest barriers is finding living wage jobs with benefits. The City has taken some steps towards supporting people whose livelihoods are tied to urban agriculture. In 2018, Mayor Kenney signed the Philadelphia Minimum Wage Bill, which raised the minimum wage to \$13.25 an hour as of July 2018 and includes gradual increases until the minimum reaches \$15 an hour by July 2022. The ordinance applies to City employees and companies or nonprofits doing business with the City, including recipients of leases, City concessions, or direct financial assistance of more than \$100,000.

Complementing these efforts are many community-building agriculture programs that have historically been led by various organizations. Public meeting participants expressed the importance of creating and strengthening more formalized networks of growers who support this work.

- Currently, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) hosts a Community Gardens Program that supports gardeners with educational workshops, access to gardening supplies, seedlings, tools and technical assistance, as well as infrastructure improvements. PHS offers volunteer opportunities where growers meet and get involved in service projects such as Garden Tenders, Green City Teachers, and the City Harvest Program, which facilitates the collection and distribution of local produce donations to area food pantries.
- Community organizations have historically led and carried out the work of organizing people who grow food in Philadelphia. For years, Soil Generation has hosted opportunities for growers to connect, learn from, and build community with each other. North Philly Peace Park also hosts dozens of events and workshops for their neighbors, as does Sankofa Community Farm.

LOCAL PROFILE

W. B. SAUL HIGH SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

W.B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences, located in the Roxborough neighborhood of Philadelphia, is the City's only farm-focused high school. Students learn about agricultural and environmental challenges in a hands-on way, including taking care of livestock, crops, food production, and more. The four "majors" students can choose from are animal sciences, food sciences, horticulture, and natural resource management,⁹⁴ with a focus on career and college pathways. All programs have a foundation of biology and chemistry, and students take part in real-world projects.⁹⁵ The high school also partners with Weavers Way Co-op to run Henry Got Crops, through which community members can buy CSA shares.



Photo courtesy of Art Petrosemoló for Lancaster Farming.

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE



For many, urban agriculture feeds not just the mouth, but the mind, body, and soul.

- Online, there are several mailing lists, newsletters, and Facebook groups where farmers and gardeners share information and resources. Philadelphia Urban Farm Network (PUFN) and one managed by Soil Generation for growers of color are virtual gathering spaces where growers can ask questions, exchange information, and share materials and job postings. Philadelphia Backyard Chickens is one example of a topic-specific interest group on Facebook.
- Grounded in Philly is a project by the Public Interest Law Center's Garden Justice Legal Initiative. This website provides a front door for growers with a comprehensive online hub with resources and legal support related to growing food in Philadelphia.
- Outside of school, there are numerous community farms and farming projects in almost every area of the city that work with young people—employing them and teaching about food and environmental justice. Some examples are Urban Tree Connection, Sankofa Community Farm, Food Moxie, Fishadelphia, PhillyEarth, Norris Square Neighborhood Project, VietLead, 8th and Poplar Farm, and Urban Creators. In these programs, young people learn about nutrition, composting, cooking and growing practices, and social issues, among other things. These programs help make young people more civically engaged, more knowledgeable about food ways, and more interested in healthy environments. However, after high school there are significant barriers that keep young people from staying in these fields.

There is an opportunity to nurture community building through strengthened urban agricultural programs and policies. To sustain the practice of growing food, adults and the next generation of growers who want to build their urban agriculture skills need direct programs and resources aimed at cultural preservation, information exchange, training, and accessibility. For people of all ages, urban agriculture provides benefits far beyond the skills for growing food and raising animals. It relates to everything from science to self-reliance, from crop planning to construction, and from biology to business skills. Connecting Philadelphians with this knowledge will require a set of coordinated strategies.

For people who make their career in urban agriculture and food-related businesses (or would like to), there is an opportunity to establish fair working conditions, including livable wages, and benefits such as healthcare, paid sick leave, and year-round job security instead of seasonal positions; however, implementing such changes will require commitment from local nonprofits and farms. In addition, for people and organizations, there is a need for assistance procuring appropriate equipment (e.g., tools, boots, gloves, cold weather gear, protective and safety gear, and sun hats), which can make a big difference in efficiency and off-set costs for marginalized staff.

And expanding hiring at organizations that do food and farming work can reduce the burden of current staff with unsustainable work hours and expectations of their labor. This would require more job training, especially for managerial positions, which could include subsidized apprenticeships. Prioritizing BIPOC communities for these trainings can help close racial and economic equity gaps in management of agricultural and food organizations.

It is also important to consider people who have (or would like to start) urban agriculture and food-related businesses. Agricultural businesses and individuals owned or run by people from disinvested communities should be able to qualify for public land ownership at discounted pricing, thereby increasing economic security. For-profit gardens should also benefit from garden preservation initiatives for land security, since their interests are in serving their communities. Addressing economic barriers by introducing tax reductions and insurance breaks or subsidies for agriculture-related businesses owned or led by BIPOC residents can also address historic economic injustice, and establish a more equitable local food system.

PEOPLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations 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. There are four categories of People recommendations, which work together to:

- Affirm and solidify community gardens and inclusive spaces for cultural preservation and community healing
- Offer educational opportunities and programs for young people to deepen their relationships to land, water, food, and each other
- Provide agricultural education and programs for adults
- Create pathways toward economic justice through agricultural jobs and business opportunities

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP
	Affirm and solidify community gardens as inclusive spaces for cultural preservation and community healing.
6.1	Ensure that programming (e.g., training, education, cultural events) for urban agriculture is culturally appropriate, centering BIPOC, low-income/working-class, disability, and immigrant experiences and communities.
	Develop guidelines for the design of City-sponsored agricultural programming to ensure that all programs contribute to racial and economic justice efforts through their content, collaborators, and accessibility to historically underserved communities.
	Offer ongoing programs in partnership with Philadelphia's wide range of agricultural communities that affirm their cultural traditions.
	Collaborate with experts from BIPOC, low-income, working-class, disability, and/or immigrant communities to design training and curriculum to ensure that gardens are safe and inclusive spaces for all people.
X	6.2 Encourage and support inclusivity in urban agriculture growing spaces by celebrating diversity in race, culture, age, ability, language, gender, and economic differences.
	Ensure that all programs and materials in urban agriculture spaces are accessible to the language and ability needs of the public by funding interpretation and other accessibility services. Seek resources and plan to budget for translation and accommodations in programs and materials to ensure that they are accessible.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Short-Term
	Administrative, Budget	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Institutions, Area Universities, Funders	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC,	Medium-Term
	Partnership, Budget	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Partnership, Budget	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Office of Sustainability, Office of Immigrant Affairs, FPAC, Nonprofits, Funders	Short-Term



**RECOMMENDATION /
ACTION STEP**

6.2 Ensure gender-inclusive language in all programs and materials.
cont'd

Partner with the City's Office of LGBT Affairs and LGBTQIA+ organizations (e.g., William Way Community Center, GALAEI, Morris Home, The Attic Youth Center) to offer resources to growers on building gender inclusive spaces, including gender neutral bathrooms, and welcome members of LGBTQIA+ community to growing spaces. Collaborate with centers and organizations to offer support for the creation of new growing spaces at or near their facilities.

Partner with the Office of Immigrant Affairs and immigrant and refugee organizations in Philadelphia (e.g., Juntos, African Cultural Alliance of North America, Coalition of African Communities, Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition, VietLead, New Sanctuary Movement, and Asian Americans United) to welcome and integrate new Philadelphians into the urban agriculture community and garden spaces across the city. Explore how to fund the creation of multilingual signage at urban agriculture spaces.

Sponsor programs and events that build relationships between elder gardeners and younger growers and between diverse groups of growers, to share knowledge and to support the maintenance & transitioning of garden spaces over time.

Offer support to community gardens and farms to nominate culturally significant garden sites to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's Historical Marker Program. See Land recommendation 1.10 for more information.

6.3 Build relationships with Leni Lenape communities in Pennsylvania and Delaware, the Ramapough Lenape Nation in New Jersey, the Delaware Tribe in Oklahoma, and the Delaware Tribes of the diaspora in Wisconsin and Canada to promote Native/ Indigenous food sovereignty and traditional food ways and agriculture practices within the city.

Raise awareness of Indigenous perspectives about food and agriculture as part of building equitable food systems and programming in the city.

Continue to support local initiatives and organizations, including Indigenous Peoples' Day Philly, Inc. (IPD Philly) and assess ways to incorporate Indigenous self-determination into local agriculture programs and policies.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Institutions, Area Universities	Short-Term
	Partnership	Office of LGBT Affairs, Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Institutions	Short-Term
	Partnership	Office of Immigrant Affairs, Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Institutions	Short-Term
	Partnership, Budget	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Grassroots Orgs, Nonprofits, Institutions	Short-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Philadelphia Historic Commission, PA Historical and Museum Commission	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

6.4 Sponsor training on interpersonal challenges and governance issues that arise in gardens for community garden leaders and members.

Offer resources and trainings to community gardens and farms on topics such as: conflict resolution, racial bias, sexual harassment, ageism, gender-based oppression, homophobia, and trauma-informed care.

Support community gardens and farms in developing sustainable leadership and decision-making processes by offering trainings and resources on cooperative economics, collective ownership, democratic decision-making and other collective models.

Provide opportunities for community garden leaders to participate and be recognized within City leadership programs (e.g., Citizens Planning Institute, Participatory Budgeting).



6.5 Create opportunities for community gardens and farms to serve as access points for a wide range of public services.

Establish partnerships between public service providers (e.g., BenePhilly mobile Benefits Access Unit, Philly 311, PA Department of Human Services), farmers markets and community gardens and farms, to connect residents to programs related to healthcare, housing, utility assistance and other public services.

6.6 Explore the creation of a Food Policy Cabinet within the City of Philadelphia to connect urban agriculture to all citywide food-related policies and decisions.

Formalize the work of the staff collaborating on food-specific initiatives (e.g., City Food Policy Steering Committee) by codifying a Food Policy Cabinet to develop values around food policy decisions and guide programmatic and funding decisions. Ensure diversity (e.g., race, class, gender, ability) among City staff serving on the Food Policy Cabinet.

Preserve the institutional knowledge convened and developed through the Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) by appointing ex officios from within City government to serve on the cabinet.

Work with the FPAC to integrate community oversight and input into the work of the food policy cabinet.

Integrate more community garden and farm experiences and representation within the FPAC membership to ensure that the most impacted communities serve as experts and have a role in holding the City accountable for plan implementation.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Funders	Short-Term
	Partnership, Budget	Parks & Rec, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Funders	Short-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Parks & Rec, FPAC, Funders	Short-Term
	Operations	Planning & Development, Finance, Office of Sustainability, PWD, Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations	Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity, Office of Children & Families, Office of Sustainability	Medium-Term
	Operations	Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity, Office of Children & Families, PHA, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, FPAC	Medium-Term
	Administrative	FPAC, Mayor's Office	Short-Term
	Administrative	FPAC, Mayor's Office	Medium-Term

CASE STUDY

NEIGHBORHOOD FOOD FARM & GREEN WALL STREET MARKET, NORTH PHILLY PEACE PARK

Many neighborhood farms and gardens in Philadelphia act as access points for residents to access a range of other services provided by the same organization behind the garden or from other partner organizations. [North Philly Peace Park](#), for example, is not only a space for community members to farm and distribute free produce in the community, but also hosts educational school group visits, free health and wellness programming, and Green Wall Street – a weekly local entrepreneur market. [Neighborhood Foods Farm](#), in Haddington, West Philadelphia, and partners Urban Tree Connection work together to lead workshops on food justice and how residents can use farming to grow closer to food sovereignty and their cultural roots.



Photo courtesy of [PhillyPeacePark.org](#) featuring product manufactured from the harvest of the garden.

Offer educational opportunities and programs for young people across the city to deepen students' relationships to land, water, food, and each other.



6.7 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.

Conduct a survey and comprehensive map of school lands across the city to catalog existing school gardens and farms and their stewards (e.g., teachers, students, parents) to assess what those stewards need to maintain the gardens long-term, as well as locations that could be suitable for future educational, growing, and sustainability opportunities

Create a streamlined approval process at the School District of Philadelphia for schools that want to host a new garden on their property. Communicate the approval process to each school in the District through the GreenFutures Greenscapes Committee's Greenscapes Resource Toolkit.

Secure sustained funding to provide community residents, partners and teachers with budgets, materials, technical and administrative support. Compensate garden stewards year-round to run after-school and summer programs about agriculture and nutrition education, which can support student experiential learning (e.g., students building and maintaining a vegetable garden, students making added-value products such as hot sauce).

Maintain policies allowing after-school programs and in-class snacks to incorporate foods grown by students in the school garden. Allow garden produce to support both student learning and the local community through produce distribution, farm stands, and/or culinary programs.

Support partnerships between schools and community residents, organizations, local colleges and universities or technical schools to allow volunteers to work in school gardens throughout the year, particularly in the summer, and to provide educational activities in keeping with the school's mission.

Work with PWD and other City and philanthropic partners who can invest in infrastructure improvements to start or improve school gardens, including depaving, green stormwater projects, and garden construction such as green and food-producing roofs on schools, which reduce dangerous and excessive heat and increase access to green space, especially in low-income and working-class areas with limited access to green space or trees.

6.8 Support the creation of urban agriculture-specific Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, and develop links between the School District of Philadelphia and organizations that offer job opportunities for young people.

Host "open house" days at CTE programs to raise awareness about existing offerings and expose younger students to new opportunities.

Work with Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture, Philadelphia Youth Network, and other nonprofits and for-profit entities to develop relationships between CTE programs and existing urban agriculture businesses, organizations, and programs to place CTE students in living-wage positions during summers or after school.

Add new majors at Saul High School to cover key topics in the field, including, but not limited to, food justice; social justice in food; hash, flower, and vegetable production; financial management and nonprofit development training, and management skills.

Develop college and vocational career pathways that are agriculture-specific, to allow students to continue into agricultural fields. Support schools in developing career planning for students, including internships and job placement opportunities.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Operations	School District, Parks & Rec. PWD, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District	Short-Term
	Budget	School District, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, PA Dept of Ag, Funders	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District	Short-Term
	Administrative	School District, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers, Nonprofits	Short-Term
	Partnership, Budget, Operations	School District, PWD, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Rec, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District, Nonprofits, Area Universities, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District	Short-Term
	Partnership	School District, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District	Long-Term
	Partnership	School District, PA Dept of Ag, Area Universities, Area Businesses	Long-Term



Urban agriculture offers a range of learning topics.

CASE STUDY

FOX CHASE FARM, NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

The [Fox Chase Farm](#) is a 112-acre educational pastoral and livestock farm in Northeast Philadelphia. Located on public park land, the farm is a campus managed by the School District of Philadelphia, serving all Philadelphia school students, plus students from surrounding counties, and hosting more than 30,000 visitors each year. Teachers from all Philadelphia district schools utilize the farm to provide hands-on opportunities for their students. In addition, the farm is open to the public once a month for special events including maple sugaring, sheep shearing, farm to table day, and Applefest. A 4-H Club operates at the farm, in partnership with Friends of Fox Chase Farm (FFCF), raising pigs, sheep, goats, and beef cattle. The farm participates in a mini-farm show and the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

6.8 cont'd

Partner with the nonprofit organization Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences, to invest in existing and develop new collegiate and junior chapters within the city and region. Invest in existing chapters (e.g., WB Saul High School, Lankenau High School, Penn State University) to continue promoting academic and professional advancement for youth and young adults in agricultural fields.

Make educational connections to urban agriculture within the Culinary CTE program by providing support to start herb and medicinal gardens, etc. that students can use when they are cooking.

Create School District CTE Urban Agriculture Programs in other public schools, covering topics such as Food Processing Science, Horticulture, Natural Resource Management, and Animal Sciences. Work with the School District's GreenFutures program and Fox Chase Farm to identify additional program opportunities and funding sources.

Align lesson plans for agriculture and horticulture with Pennsylvania Department of Education-approved curricula, including the National Wildlife Foundation's Eco-Schools Program, National Science Foundation's GLOBE Program and other highly rated urban agriculture educational programs.



6.9 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.

Secure transportation for youth between Recreation Centers participating in after-school programs and summer camps with Environmental Education Centers and Recreation Centers (e.g., Cobbs Creek, Schuylkill, Wissahickon, Pennypack) and utilize those centers for community agriculture programming.

Integrate traditional Indigenous agriculture and wildlife care into the environmental science curriculum. Hire garden educators who can help integrate garden lessons into many classrooms, as well as students and graduates from agricultural CTE programs seeking work in afterschool and summer programs.

Contract local urban agriculture organizations to formulate culturally relevant curriculum recommendations to integrate agriculture and related topics—such as food and climate justice, environmental justice, and other culturally appropriate content—into OST teaching.

Develop OST partnerships between local schools and agricultural businesses and organizations to provide young people with entrepreneurial business skills while compensating them for growing and maintaining gardens, running fresh food markets, and developing value-added products.

Expand Farm Philly's programs by creating a public farm school for youth, teens, and adults to reconnect to land, learn how to care for and be cared for by plants, and understand traditional growing methods to produce food.

Recruit youth to agriculture programs with outreach at schools, churches, community centers, and elsewhere. Coordinate outreach efforts between schools, community organizations, recreation centers, and OST programs.

Integrate agricultural and food-related content into teacher in-service days.

Partner long-term to integrate agricultural content into formal science curriculum, working to align scope and sequence, to help sustain school gardens and broaden access and involvement by all students.

Support community organizations to secure funding, resources, staff, and training to develop a variety of culturally relevant and developmental agriculture programs for youth in their neighborhoods. Encourage accessible and inclusive programming, with consideration to varied language, learning, and physical needs.

Secure funding for year-round paid apprenticeships and internships for youth at local community farming organizations or with other partners (including Parks & Rec and Philadelphia Youth Network) who can offer experience in agriculture, food systems, food waste reduction, and food security work.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	School District, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District	Long-Term
	Administrative	School District	Medium-Term
	Operations, Administrative	School District, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec	Short-Term
	Operations, Partnership	School District, Parks & Rec, Native & Indigenous Partners	Medium-Term
	Partnership	School District, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, PA Dept of Ag, Funders	Long-Term
	Operations	School District, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Administrative	School District, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Partnership	School District, Parks & Rec	Long-Term
	Partnership, Budget	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, PA Dept of Ag, Funders	Medium-Term
	Partnership, Budget	School District, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Medium-Term

LOCAL PROFILE

FISHADELPHIA

Fishadelphia is a community seafood program which brings “fresh, local seafood to Philadelphia’s diverse communities.” Fishadelphia offers sliding scale monthly and annual seafood memberships, with pickups at 15+ sites across the Philadelphia region. Fishadelphia works with middle and high school students at Mastery Charter Thomas Campus in South Philadelphia and Simon Gratz Mastery Charter in North Philadelphia, where students support day-to-day operations of the program. The organization strives to pay its staff appropriately, while keeping young people central to the work, and providing and educating customers about the delicious, affordable and sustainable regional seafood that they sell. Fishadelphia is working on scaling up, and will be looking for part-time operational and storage space as part of that process.



*Mastery Charter School Gratz fish stand in fall
Photo courtesy of Fishadelphia*

Visit <https://fishadelphia.com> for more information.



Provide agricultural education and programs for adults.

6.10 Support culturally specific and relevant community-based agriculture and forestry educational opportunities at recreation centers and Free Library branches.

Provide accessible and comprehensive training for Recreation Center leaders, staff, and after-school teachers on culturally informed agriculture and wildlife habitat curricula and training. Prioritize recreation centers in areas that have low to no access to fresh food or green space. Partner with the School District of Philadelphia to offer garden and farm locations as sites for student field trips.

Use programs at recreation centers and Free Library branches as opportunities to provide free or reduced-cost materials to residents interested in starting to grow food and other plants. Utilize partnerships with community-based organizations to increase outreach and programming.

Provide inclusive programming that supports growing for differently abled people, elders, and people with varied access to land, including small container growing and raised bed growing, among other methods.

6.11 Develop partnerships between the City, local universities, and adjacent communities to encourage institutions of higher learning to support the health, safety, and advancement of growing practices citywide as well as economic opportunity in surrounding neighborhoods.

Advocate for the preservation and expansion of growing spaces on institutional land (e.g., Penn Park Farm, Temple Community Garden).

Encourage continued technical assistance for community gardens and farms (e.g., garden database management, horticulture skills, legal clinics, business clinics) and research on the qualitative and quantitative benefits of urban agriculture.

Establish partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that have agricultural programs and land grant institutions (e.g., Lincoln University, Cheyney University) to share and build knowledge and develop joint programming with local growers. .

Work with Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) to find ways to integrate urban agriculture into its courses, programs, and curriculum. Support CCP peer exchange and learning from other local and regional universities that have agriculture and horticulture programs.

Establish relationships with local and regional university labs (e.g., Penn State, Drexel, LaSalle, Penn, St. Joseph's, Temple University) to provide free resources (e.g., soil and water testing, animal care, plant propagation, high tunnel support) to community gardens and farms and surrounding neighborhoods.

Integrate Penn State Extension Master Gardeners as a volunteer resource into City and community-led programs to gain support in capacity building (e.g., garden and farm maintenance, school garden maintenance, animal keeping and curriculum development). Promote the Master Gardeners program among the city agriculture community to receive technical training and education in agriculture and horticulture.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership, Operations	Free Library, Parks & Rec, School District	Short-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, School District	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Operations	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Office for People with Disabilities, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Short-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities	Long-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Nonprofits, Office of Sustainability, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Long-Term
	Partnership	Parks & Rec, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Short-Term

LOCAL PROFILE

LAND-BASED JAWNS

Land-Based Jaws (LBJ) is a spiritually rooted organization offering education and training to Black people on agriculture, land-based living, safety, and carpentry that works to help Philly communities become collectively self-sufficient, self-reliant, and self-determined. The group supports healing from the impacts of racism, healing in relationships with each other, and healing in relationships with the land. Through the Earthseed Skillshare, a four-month education series, LBJ brings together Black women and femme folk as a cohort that learns and grows together. During these workshops, LBJ highlights many of the themes and skills present in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*. Participants learn natural agricultural methods; land-based living skills such as shelter making, fire starting, identifying wild edible plants; carpentry skills such as building raised garden beds, tables, and shelves; safety skills such as self-defense; as well as self and community healing techniques taught by a somatic therapist.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION STEP

6.11 cont'd Encourage the adoption of policies that ensure gardeners, farmers, and movement organizations are fairly compensated for the value they bring to collaborations with nonprofit and higher education institutions through stipends for collaboration, partnerships, and engagement.

Create pathways toward economic justice through agricultural jobs and business opportunities.

6.12 Promote sustainable and equitable working conditions for agricultural workers.

Partner with local worker-led organizations such as the Philadelphia Coalition for Restaurant Safety and Health, Restaurant Opportunities Center, and others to develop materials, and offer policy resources and guidance on healthy and equitable working conditions for agricultural and food businesses. Extend this resource to local universities, hospitals, museums, and other institutions that have large workforces or contract with large, multi-national companies (e.g., Aramark or Sodexo).

Institute training and resources for all food and food waste-related public-private partnerships and holders of urban agriculture leases with the Department of Parks and Recreation on fair food standards and equitable working conditions.



6.13 Create opportunities for people to develop skills and find employment in agriculture.

Secure sustained funding and positions for youth summer and year-round employment through the Philadelphia Youth Network and other organizations.

Support the sustainability and cultural continuity of community gardens and farms by funding growers to offer their own programming on agricultural practices. Connect them with spaces to teach, including in-person classes, live online classes, pre-recorded online classes, and at-home learning options, while ensuring living wages.

Partner with the Philadelphia Housing Authority and Philadelphia PowerCorpsPHL to engage local communities in building new and supporting existing gardens at public housing sites. Provide outreach to gauge residents' interest in applying to the PowerCorpsPHL program (i.e., AmeriCorps workforce development initiative administered by Education Works).

Support and expand job and work-ready programs for formerly incarcerated residents, focused on land care, green jobs, and agriculture.

Share existing job training resources that have succeeded in helping workers in agriculture, and help to grow new job training resources based on successful models.

Work with Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) to bring apprenticeship programs into Philadelphia to provide a guided pathway for beginner farmers to start and manage their own vegetable farms. Explore opportunities to broaden PASA's apprenticeship program to other crops suitable for urban agriculture (e.g., hemp, cannabis, flowers, etc.). Center and prioritize beginner BIPOC, low-income, working-class, disabled, and/or immigrant growers as the recipients of the apprenticeships and BIPOC/immigrant-led farms as the hosts.

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	Nonprofits, Area Universities, Grassroots Organizations, Local Growers	Medium-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Policy Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Parks & Rec	Long-Term
	Administrative	Mayor's Office, Office of Sustainability, FPAC, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Universities, Institutions, Area Businesses	Long-Term
	Administrative	Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Area Businesses	Long-Term
	Operations, Partnership	School District, Parks & Rec, Free Library, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Businesses, Area Universities, Funders	Medium-Term
	Budget	Finance, Funders	Short-Term
	Partnership, Budget	Parks & Rec, Free Library, Dept of Public Health, Office of Sustainability, Nonprofits, Institutions, Area Universities, Nonprofits	Long-Term
	Operations	PowerCorpsPHL, PHA, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Operations	Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations, Area Universities, Funders	Medium-Term
	Operations	School District/CTE programs, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Organizations	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Nonprofits, School District, PA Dept of Ag, Area Businesses	Medium-Term

CASE STUDY

GREEN CITY FORCE FARMS, NEW YORK CITY

[Green City Force](#) demonstrates the potential of a collaborative workforce development program focused on urban agriculture. In partnership with the New York City Housing Authority and neighborhood organizations, Green City Force supports six farms at six different housing developments that provide work experience and green career pathways through AmeriCorps to young public housing residents (ages 18 to 24). In addition, all NYCHA residents can pick up produce, drop off compost, volunteer, and attend public events like cooking demonstrations at the farms.⁹⁶



Photos courtesy of NYCHA Journal

**RECOMMENDATION /
ACTION STEP**

6.13 cont'd Build a relationship between PASA and agriculture programs within the School District of Philadelphia to connect graduates with potential training or placement options at host farms in the city and region.



6.14 Help entrepreneurs establish and grow agricultural businesses.

Build awareness among growers and food entrepreneurs about business resources (e.g., Department of Public Health's Good Food Accelerator Program), and expand opportunities for local growers and food entrepreneurs to access these services as clients.

Provide educational resources to help new businesses access land, soil, and water, and navigate Philadelphia business licensing and funding opportunities.

Support incubator programs that train and support new businesses and agricultural businesses.

Support community-based models for shared business support including legal resources, insurance, technology, and skills training.

Create opportunities for agricultural entrepreneurs to access start-up capital and grants - especially BIPOC and/or immigrant-owned businesses.

Provide funding for training and certifications in emerging food and cottage industry businesses (e.g., certifications and technical assistance in food safety, licensing, marketing, financing).

Ensure investment in diverse models of agriculture, not just aquaponic, hydroponic and vertical but also larger-scale, soil building farms, and support businesses to provide living wages.

Continue to support and invest in programs that directly invest in culturally relevant food businesses and organizations (e.g., Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative).

	TYPE OF CHANGE	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS	TIMELINE
	Partnership	School District, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Operations	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity	Long-Term
	Operations	Dept of Public Health, Area Universities, Parks & Rec, Nonprofits, Grassroots Orgs, Local Growers	Short-Term
	Operations	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity	Medium-Term
	Partnership	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity, Nonprofits, Area Universities	Short-Term
	Partnership	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity, Nonprofits, Area Universities	Medium-Term
	Budget	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity, Nonprofits	Medium-Term
	Budget, Operations	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity	Medium-Term
	Budget, Operations	Commerce, Office of Economic Opportunity	Long-Term
	Partnership	City Council, Finance, Dept of Public Health Commerce, Grassroots Orgs, Nonprofits	Long-Term

CASE STUDY

GARDENING FOR GREENBACKS, CLEVELAND

This program provides an example of how City departments can provide financial support to for-profit agriculture operations. “The Cleveland Department of Economic Development, through its [Gardening for Greenbacks program](#), awards grants of up to \$5,000 to for-profit urban farms. The program aims to help reduce the overhead cost of urban farming, and grants may be used to purchase tools, hoop houses, irrigation systems, rain barrels, fencing, and soil, among other things.”⁹⁷

LOCAL PROFILE

PHILADELPHIA FOOD JUSTICE INITIATIVE

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health, in partnership with the Reinvestment Fund and Wells Fargo, launched the [Philadelphia Food Justice Initiative](#) in 2019, which makes funds available to creative community-led projects that increase access to healthier food and community well-being. The program, which “prioritizes projects led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, immigrants, and people living with disabilities, and those with lived experience with health injustice,”⁹⁸ is a valuable example of a City initiative providing funds to BIPOC community-led projects.





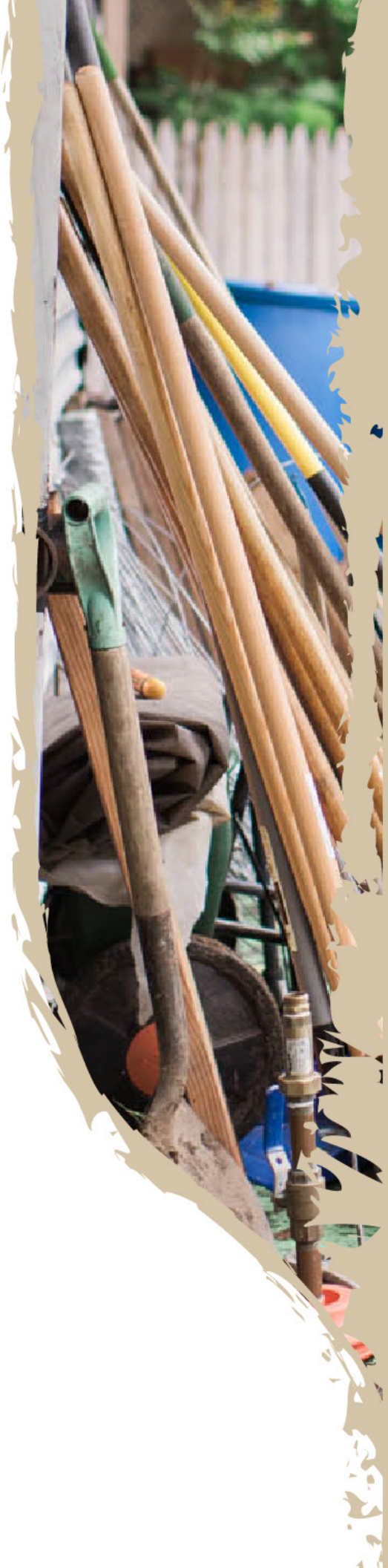
IMPLEMENTATION

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

Though Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec) managed and coordinated this planning effort, the food system sections make clear that urban agriculture intersects with the work of multiple branches of City government and a range of external partners. As such, implementation of this plan will require sustained commitment and effort from across City government including City Council and numerous City agencies and departments, as well as nonprofit and community-based organizations, major institutions, philanthropic partners, and individual growers. As the convening agency for this plan, this plan includes recommendations to resource Parks & Rec to 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.

But much like Philadelphia's urban agriculture movement, much of this work will come—and indeed must 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.





A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTING CHANGE

Each of the recommendations in the food system sections of the plan has a series of supporting action steps, categorized by type, lead agency, phasing, and priority, informed by the following definitions:

TYPES OF CHANGE The plan organizes recommendations and action steps in five categories.

- > **Legislative** recommendations suggest changes to City law, regulations, and codes, which must be led by City Council
- > **Budget** recommendations suggest added resources to support new City-sponsored programs, projects, and staff to carry out new initiatives; recommendations that are currently unfunded will need to go through the standard budget process to receive City funds
- > **Administrative** recommendations suggest changes in departmental policies and structure that can be implemented by City agencies themselves
- > **Operations** recommendations suggest changes in the way City agencies undertake their day-to-day work
- > **Partnerships** recommendations suggest outside leadership, expertise, and resources and which City agencies can support as partners

LEAD AGENCIES & PARTNERS The plan identifies a lead agency or City entity for each action step, followed by a list of supporting partners that may be within or outside of City government. As the convening agency for this plan, Parks & Rec will take the lead on some recommendations. Other initiatives could be led by City Council, the Philadelphia Land Bank, the Department of Public Health, the Office of Sustainability, the Philadelphia Water Department, or other partnering City departments. Some recommendations present opportunities for institutional, nonprofit, and community partners.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS For each set of recommendations, the plan highlights several as top priorities, 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.

Growing from the Root contains a total of 87 recommendations to achieve the plan's vision. These 40 are the priority recommendations.

LAND

- 1.1** Develop strategies to reduce the number of community gardens and farms on private land sold at sheriff sale.
- 1.3** 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.
- 1.4** Increase the number of City-owned parcels preserved annually.
- 1.7** Amend the City's acquisition and disposition policies to increase opportunities to preserve community gardens and farms on formerly vacant land.
- 1.8** Explore the feasibility of allocating the funding necessary to purchase liens on community gardens and farms and side yards to allow the Land Bank to acquire the land.
- 1.9** Continue to provide guidance to individual applicants who are interested in licensing, leasing, or owning land to increase land security.
- 1.19** Increase availability of funding for growers and nonprofits to acquire land through philanthropic, state, and federal funding sources.
- 1.22** Support existing land trusts and the creation of new community-led land trusts and land cooperatives in the city to secure land and hold ownership/leases for community gardens and other shared open spaces.

PRODUCTION

- 2.1** 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.
- 2.4** 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.
- 2.6** Support and promote local seed saving practices with partnerships between the City and local organizations.
- 2.7** Advocate to update the City code and Land Bank disposition policies to allow urban agriculture accessory structures by right.
- 2.9** 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.
- 2.11** 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.
- 2.12** 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.
- 2.14** 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).

PREPARATION & DISTRIBUTION

- 3.1** 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.
- 3.3** Establish and connect gardeners and farmers to shared resources for critical aspects of food processing such as weighing, washing, and storage.
- 3.7** 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.
- 3.8** Provide enhanced education and information about City regulations and requirements for safe food vending.

CONSUMPTION

- 4.1** 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.
- 4.2** 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.
- 4.3** 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.
- 4.4** 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.
- 4.5** Create a Farm to Public meal program that increases access to locally grown farm products in public meals.
- 4.8** 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.
- 4.12** 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.

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION & RECOVERY

- 5.2** 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.
- 5.4** 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.
- 5.7** Launch an educational campaign about how and what to compost, targeting a range of audiences, including residents, businesses, and institutions.
- 5.8** Expand opportunities for community-scale composting.
- 5.9** Invest in the local economy to provide sustainable waste management solutions in Philadelphia, while investing in and creating local businesses and jobs.
- 5.10** 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.
- 5.11** Create a food waste resource hub with information for institutions and businesses.

PEOPLE

- 6.2** Encourage and support inclusivity in urban agriculture growing spaces by celebrating diversity in race, culture, age, ability, language, gender, and economic differences.
- 6.5** Create opportunities for community gardens and farms to serve as access points for a wide range of public services.
- 6.7** 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.
- 6.9** 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.
- 6.13** Create opportunities for people to develop skills and find employment in agriculture.
- 6.14** Help entrepreneurs establish and grow agricultural businesses.

WATERING THIS WORK: RESOURCES FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

PHASING The plan assigns a general timeline to each recommendation, identifying **priority recommendations** that can and should move forward in the coming year, at least in part, as well as **short-, medium-, and long-term strategies**, which can be accomplished in one to two years, three to five years, and six to ten years, respectively.

While many of the recommendations can move forward with existing staff and resources, the plan's recommendations also call for new work and additional resources to explore new policies, programs, and initiatives requiring added City government staff capacity and support.

Resources to fund investments in urban agriculture also exist at the federal and state level. In March 2022, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) held the first public meeting of its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP), first authorized in 2018. The OUAIP signals a new commitment by the USDA to direct agricultural funds into cities and suburbs, in addition to rural areas. In its first two years, the Office of Urban Agriculture awarded \$10 million

in competitive grants for projects that address fresh food access and food waste reduction, and funding is expected to increase going forward. At the state level, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PA DA) has an Urban Agriculture Infrastructure (UAI) Grant Program.

Because *Growing from the Root* adopts a broad definition of urban agriculture -- one that emphasizes the relationships between urban agriculture and climate adaptation, community and economic development, and environmental stewardship, there may be opportunities to access additional federal and state dollars. As implementation efforts commence, opportunities to explore potential funding exist with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the National Association of Conservation Districts at the federal level and with state agencies such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED). Additional grant opportunities with mission-aligned foundations and philanthropic partners exist as well.



NATIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The **United States Department of Agriculture** has open grant opportunities including:

> **USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP)** is a competitive grant program that supports the development of urban agriculture and innovative production activities by funding two types of projects, Planning Projects (PP) and Implementation Projects (IP). These projects can be led by nonprofit organizations, local or Tribal governments, and schools that serve any of the grades K-12. These grants can expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, residents, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access; education; business and start-up costs for new farmers; as well as development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/urban/grants>

> **USDA Farm to School Grant** is a competitive grant program that supports planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. These competitive grants are designed to improve access to local foods in eligible schools by funding activities such as training, operations, planning, equipment, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs. This funding supports school and education communities ability to initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program>

> **USDA Team Nutrition Training Grants for School Nutrition Professional Readiness and Retention** is a competitive grant program that supports states' strong school nutrition workforces by funding up to \$1,000,000 per state agency in nutritious meals that meet the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications. There are three categories of grants, including (1) Coaching and Mentoring for School Nutrition Professionals, (2) Incentivized Training for School Nutrition Professionals, and (3) Nutrition Education for School Nutrition Professionals, Students, and Families.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/grant/fy-2022-team-nutrition-training-grants-school-nutrition-professional-readiness-and-retention>

> **USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR)** is a competitive grant program in the form of cooperative agreements that assist local and municipal governments with local compost, food waste reduction or food waste diversion projects. This program allows local governments to pilot or test out effective and scalable strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost/food waste reduction projects and plans. The benefit of this grant program is that it has the potential to supply and increase access to compost for agricultural producers, as well as offer a program for producers to contribute farm surplus and waste, divert food waste from landfills and improve soil quality.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/urban/coop-agreements>

> **USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)** offers an assortment of research awards and funding through a combination of competitive grants and funds allocated to states. One example of a popular grant program is the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program (CFPCGP), which provides funding (e.g. \$10,000-\$400,000) for community food projects that combat food insecurity and promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities by increasing their access to fresher, more nutritious food supplies. Projects preferred by this grant promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues, create innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers, support entrepreneurial projects, and assist in long-term dialogues between communities, food policy councils and municipal agencies to address food and agricultural issues.

<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants>

- > **USDA Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI)** offers grants and loans to grocery stores, healthy corner stores, farmers markets and other retailers of nutritious food in low- and moderate-income and under-resourced communities to increase and support the availability of fresh foods in these communities.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/initiatives/healthy-food-financing-initiative>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has open grant opportunities that support urban agriculture including:

- > **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)** is a non-disaster grant for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that supports local communities through capability- and capacity-building, encouraging and enabling innovation, promoting partnerships which reduce risk from future hazard events, and reliance on federal funding in future disasters. The BRIC program is an annually funded nationwide competitive grant program, where a federal disaster declaration is not required. The Philadelphia Health Department has collaborated with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation on projects related to urban agriculture with the support of this grant.

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has open grant opportunities that support soil health within urban agriculture including:

- > **EPA Brownfields Assessment** grants assist entities with soil testing on vacant parcels. These grants provide funding to inventory, characterize, assess, conduct a range of planning activities, develop site-specific cleanup plans, and conduct community engagement related to brownfield sites. Essentially, through this program there are several possible avenues for funding work on soil sampling, testing, and remediation. Grants can be utilized through a Community-wide Assessment or Site-specific Assessment.

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-assessment-grants> and for general information on the EPA Brownfields Program: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Land Reuse Program provides funds to health departments, universities, nonprofit groups, or vendors to conduct activities, sponsor meetings or provide needed services which support ATSDR's mission. These funds support communities ability to conduct health pilot activities at brownfield and land reuse sites. The Land Reuse Health Program works to promote a well-rounded approach to redevelopment, include health as an important part of redevelopment, and restore and revitalize communities in a way that is fair to all community groups.

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/brownfields/index.html>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) is an organization that offers competitive grants to fund research and education projects that advance sustainable agricultural practices. The organization seeks to instill the principles of sustainable agriculture into practice on farms and ranches across the country.

<https://www.sare.org/>

STATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Grants is an electronic grants system that provides one-stop shopping to the grantee community for all DCNR grants. DCNR Grants standardizes the application process and provides an environmentally friendly way to submit a grant application to DCNR through a secure internet connection.

apps.dcnr.pa.gov/grants/

- > **DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Land Acquisition** grants allow eligible land trusts, local governments and recreation and conservation organizations to apply for funds

for the planning, acquisition, and development of public parks, recreation areas, motorized and non-motorized trails, river conservation and access, and the conservation of open space. This could include the conservation of community gardens and farms.

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) has open grant opportunities including:

- > **Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program** is a grant program derived from Act 13 of 2012, which is a law that affects Oil and Gas Operations in the state, including the collection of impact fees on all unconventional wells drilled in the state. The law establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds to the Commonwealth Financing Authority (the "Authority") for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects using the Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP). The grant may be used for projects which involve development, rehabilitation and improvements to public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails, and river conservation.
<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/greenways-trails-and-recreation-program-gtrp/>
- > **Local Share Account Program** is a Philadelphia program to distribute a portion of slot machine license operation fees from casino facilities operating within the City of Philadelphia. Funds are available for economic development, neighborhood revitalization, community improvement, and other projects in the public interest within the City of Philadelphia.
<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/local-share-account-lsa-philadelphia/>
- > **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)** provides federal funds to enable communities to effectively address local economic development needs. The fund seeks to develop viable communities through the provision of modest housing and a suitable living environment. Funds can also be used to expand economic opportunities geared to low-and moderate-income individuals and to improve infrastructure critical to community health and welfare. Many cities in the country have used CDBG's to develop urban agriculture projects and initiatives.
<https://dced.pa.gov/housing-and-development/community-development-block-grant/>
- > **Neighborhood Assistance Program** is a tax credit program to encourage businesses to invest in projects which improve distressed areas. Projects within this program must serve distressed areas or support neighborhood conservation. Projects must fall under one of the following categories: affordable housing programs, community services, crime prevention, education, job training or neighborhood assistance. One of the several components offered is the Charitable Food Program (CFP), which is focused on improving food security in Pennsylvania. CFP assists charitable programs that provide food to low income populations in distressed areas. Land acquisition is an eligible expense within the Neighborhood Assistance Program.
<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/neighborhood-assistance-program-nap/>

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has open grant opportunities including:

- > **Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program** is a Pennsylvania Farm Bill Program that provides funding in the form of a reimbursement grant to eligible applicants seeking to improve urban agriculture infrastructure in Pennsylvania. The grant supports improving urban agriculture by investing in the local projects, filling gaps where resources are needed, encouraging entities to work together, expanding operations that want to grow, addressing food apartheid, supporting social entrepreneurs and community development, and promoting the sharing of resources among urban agricultural entities. The grant includes two categories: "Microgrants" available for one-time projects or a single entity applicant and "Collaboration" grants available to projects that support cooperative and regional efforts to share resources by partnering agricultural products and producers.
<https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Funding/Farmbill/Pages/default.aspx>
- > **Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (PA FFFI)** is a public-private financing program administered by The Food Trust that helps business owners open or expand healthy grocery outlets

throughout the state. The program offers one-time grants and loans to nonprofit, for-profit, and cooperative food businesses working to increase access to fresh, nutrient-rich, and affordable foods in underserved urban and rural communities and create economic opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents. The state added a new complementary program for PA FFFI retailers impacted by COVID-19. In recognition of the disproportionate impacts of both COVID-19 and food apartheid on communities made up of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), prioritization will be given to businesses that are owned by and serve low-income BIPOC communities.

https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Food_Security/Pages/Fresh-Food-Financing-Initiative-COVID-19.aspx

<https://thefoodtrust.org/what-we-do/hffi/pa/>

LOCAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FROM PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

- **Merck Family Fund** is a nonprofit organization based in Massachusetts that contributes to tax-exempt organizations in the United States. The Fund has two primary goals, which is to restore and protect the natural environment and ensure a healthy planet for generations to come and to strengthen the social fabric and the physical landscape of the urban community.
<https://www.merckff.org/>
- **Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation** is a nonprofit organization that seeks to prevent and end hunger and food insecurity through direct service programs and/or advocacy efforts in the five-county Philadelphia region and Indian River County, FL through grants and investments. The foundation offers program and project, as well as general operating support.
<https://piercefamilyfdn.org/>
- **William Penn Foundation** is nonprofit organization whose mission is to “help improve education for children from low-income families, ensure a sustainable environment, foster creative communities that enhance civic life and advance philanthropy in the Greater Philadelphia region.” The foundation has three primary focus areas, including Creative Communities (i.e., ensuring people benefit from inclusive, diverse, and high-quality public spaces and arts and culture experiences), Great Learning (i.e. ensuring all children have access to high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in life), and Watershed Protection (i.e. working to protect and restore clean water in the Delaware River watershed).
<https://williampennfoundation.org/>
- **Thomas Scattergood Foundation’s Community Fund for Immigrant Wellness** is a fund that supports community-based, immigrant-serving organizations working to remove barriers and provide opportunities for individuals to live with dignity and joy, and improve behavioral health as a dynamic state of well-being. This fund provides financial support and capacity building to these service organizations and is meant to directly support the well-being of immigrant and refugee communities in Southeastern Pennsylvania.
<https://www.scattergoodfoundation.org/support/community-fund-for-wellness/>
- **Patricia Kind Family Foundation** is a private, family managed, not-for-profit philanthropic organization. The mission of the foundation is to “financially support Philadelphia organizations that help those struggling daily with the effects of poverty. This includes helping individuals and families obtain physical and mental health care and related human services, such as food, shelter, clothing and education. The Foundation is interested in encouraging practical and caring solutions to community problems by supporting preventive and direct service efforts.”
<https://pkindfamilyfoundation.org/>
- **Claneil Foundation** is a private foundation that seeks to improve the health of families and communities through advancements in health and human services, sustainable food systems, education and the protection of the environment. The foundation provides general operating grants and funds to emerging projects and organizations that have the potential for significant impact in the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions.
<https://claneil.org/>

SOWING SUCCESS

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 have 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.





V. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES FOR GROWERS

This resource list was adapted from **Philadelphia Parks and Recreation's Farm Philly** program resource document.

Pathways to Land

- > **Public Interest Law Center, Garden Justice Legal Initiative** is an organization that represents growers in need of pro bono counsel, and provides key policy research and analysis on urban agriculture, garden, and open space policy in Philadelphia.
<https://www.pubintlaw.org/cases-and-projects/garden-justice-legal-initiative-gjli/>
 - > The Center has produced several resources for agriculture communities, including:
 - > **Grounded in Philly** is a hub for growers that provides access to data on vacant land throughout Philadelphia and offers resources for residents interested in starting or preserving community-led vacant land projects
<https://pubintlaw.org/cases-and-projects/grounded-in-philly/>
 - > **Vacant Land 215 Toolkit** is a comprehensive self-guide for gardeners looking to maintain or create community spaces on vacant land. The guide was produced in 2016, therefore some of the resources might be out of date.
<https://www.pubintlaw.org/cases-and-projects/garden-justice-legal-initiative-releases-vacant-land-215-toolkit/>
- > **Philadelphia Land Bank** is an entity created from a decision in 2013, when the Philadelphia City Council passed a law to create the Philadelphia Land Bank. The role of the Land Bank is to put city owned vacant land back into productive use, including as gardens and farms. The Land Bank also has the power to buy property at sheriff's sale for the same purpose. This entity is housed within the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) and is a resource to learn more about acquiring a publicly owned property or obtaining an urban garden agreement.
<https://phdcphila.org/land/buy-land/community-gardens-and-open-space/>
- > **Farm Philly** is the urban agriculture program of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation. Farm Philly connects Philadelphians to the natural world and provides opportunities for accessible physical activities while supporting the self-determination and sovereignty of communities to grow their own food. The program supports gardeners, farmers, and residents' ability to grow in spaces that nourish and heal their own communities. The program supports over 60 urban agriculture projects (e.g., community gardens, production farms and orchards) on park land and is actively involved in food policy and advocacy within the City. The program administers the process for residents to gain access (e.g. long-term leases) to park land for gardening, farming, or other agriculture projects. Additionally, Farm Philly provides growers with program support, supplies, outreach materials, workshops and training technical support.
<https://www.phila.gov/programs/farmphilly/>
- > **Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)** is a Philadelphia-based land trust dedicated to preserving and supporting community gardens and other shared open spaces across the city. To prevent the threat of development taking place on gardens, NGT works with self-organized gardeners, community organizations, property owners, and the City of Philadelphia to secure ownership or long-term leases for community-managed open spaces.
www.ngtrust.org

- > **Pennsylvania Farm Link (PFL)** is a nonprofit organization working to “Link Farmers to the Future.” PFL works closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, other agricultural organizations and businesses across the Commonwealth to support farmers located in the state. Amongst many resources, the organization has a land-linking database which allows those interested in farming to connect with those who have access to land. This function supports the potential for land insecure farmers to work directly together with existing farms through lease or purchase options. It also enables farms to think about and implement succession planning.
<https://pafarmlink.org/>

Free Compost, Mulch, Wood Chips

- > **Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center** offers free and affordable compost, mulch, and wood chips. This facility is managed and operated by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.
<https://www.phila.gov/services/trees-parks-the-environment/get-organic-materials/>

Water Access and Water Testing Support

- > **Philadelphia Water Department (PWD)** produced a guide in 2023 (Guide for Urban Gardens & Farms: Getting Water Access) to support growers in gaining access to water resources (e.g. fire hydrants permits, new water lines).
<https://water.phila.gov/pool/files/urban-garden-guide.pdf>
- > **Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension** offers many resources to support food production and safety. One of those resources is water testing. Testing water is important for diagnosing problems that may be related to water quality as well as for assessing water nutrient content. Penn State’s Agricultural Analytical Services lab offers water testing for interested growers.
<https://agsci.psu.edu/aasl/water-testing>

Fruit Trees, Yard Trees, and Street Trees

- > **Philadelphia Orchard Project (POP)** is a nonprofit that supports community-based groups and volunteers to plan and plant fruit and nut orchards.
<https://www.phillyorchards.org/>
- > **TreePhilly** is a program of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and the Fairmount Park Conservancy that supports city residents in planting and caring for trees, and increasing tree canopy coverage in every Philadelphia neighborhood. The program also hosts free yard tree giveaway events.
<https://treephilly.org/yard-trees-2/>
 - > For a resource about how to get street trees and yard trees planted in the city, please see:
<https://treephilly.org/street-trees/>
- > **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Tree Tenders** is a free education program for residents to learn the basics of tree biology, identification, planting, and care.
<https://phsonline.org/programs/tree-programs>

Public Greenhouse Space

- > **Community Propagation Program** is a program of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation that provides rentable table space for residents to start seedlings for the season in a City-operated greenhouse located at the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center.
<https://www.phila.gov/programs/farmphilly/propagation/>

Farmers Markets

- > **Operate a Farmers Market** is a City of Philadelphia guide for residents or business owners who want to register and operate a farmers markets to sell food directly to customers.
<https://www.phila.gov/services/permits-violations-licenses/get-a-license/business-licenses-permits-and-approvals/food-businesses/operate-a-farmers-market/>
- > **The Food Trust** is a nonprofit that operates a network of farmers markets in Philadelphia. Community organizations and residents can partner with the Food Trust to start new farmers markets in their neighborhoods.
<http://thefoodtrust.org/farmers-markets>
- > **Farm to City** is a local business that operates many farmers markets and aids community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms to find members and serve local communities and markets year-round with locally grown food.
<https://www.farmtocitymarkets.com/>

Soil Testing and Safety

- > **Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension** offers many resources to support food production and safety. One of those resources is soil and compost testing services and reports to inform growers what's in their soil.
<https://agsci.psu.edu/aasl/soil-testing/fertility>
 - > For more background on the soil testing, please see:
<https://extension.psu.edu/soil-testing>
 - > For compost testing, please see:
<https://agsci.psu.edu/aasl/compost-testing>
- > **Soil Safety and Urban Gardening in Philadelphia Guide** was released in 2017 by the Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC). FPAC's Vacant Land Subcommittee (now known as the Urban Agriculture Subcommittee) convened the Philadelphia Soil Safety Working Group in summer 2014. The committee generated this report that seeks to guide readers through the process of creating the Philadelphia Soil Safety Working Group, the policy research, process conclusions and policy recommendations given to the City of Philadelphia for soil testing and evaluation for urban agriculture projects. The document also informs growers of soil health and safety, and provides resources to research land where food production is taking place.
<https://www.phila.gov/documents/soil-safety-and-urban-gardening-report/>

Gardening Resources

- > **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Community Gardens Program** is a resource program for new and existing community gardens in the city that offers resources, workshops, supplies, technical assistance, and educational support for growers.
<https://phsonline.org/programs/community-gardens>
- > **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Garden Tenders** is an education program for residents to learn all the basics of starting a community garden.
<https://phsonline.org/events/garden-tenders-spring-2022>
- > **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Green City Teachers** is an education program for anyone working with young people or youth educators inspiring the next generation of gardeners. The program covers topics including basic horticulture, light gardening (i.e. indoor growing), container gardening, worm bins, and much more.
<https://phsonline.org/events/green-city-teachers-2022>

Gardening Resources, Cont'd

- > **Penn State Extension Master Gardener Program** is a program that offers in-depth workshop and training series on gardening and horticulture. Master Gardener volunteers support Penn State Extension's educational programs and support the extension in better serving the home gardening public by answering community questions, speaking to community groups, writing gardening articles, working with youth, gardening in the demonstration gardens located across the city, participating in the Penn State pollinator research program, and in many other ways. Candidates must be 18 years old or older.

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/master-gardener>

Connect with Other Growers

- > **Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council** A food policy advocacy organization made up of members from across the City who advise the mayor, city agencies, and City Council on the food system that seeks to create a more economically and racially just local food system.
<https://phillyfpac.org/>
- > **Soil Generation** is a Black- and Brown-led coalition of growers in Philadelphia, building a grassroots movement through relationship building, honoring culture, community education, organizing, activism, and advocacy.
<https://soilgeneration.org>
- > **Philadelphia Urban Farm Network (PUFN)** is a Google group where Philadelphia growers share resources, agriculture- and horticulture-related questions, job opportunities, and engage each other with mutual aid support.
groups.google.com/g/pufn
- > **Cesar Andreú Iglesias Community Garden** is multi-racial, multi-generational community of growers and activists that aims to preserve community gardens and community-led spaces through grassroots organizing and to provide multi-generational activities for the local community, create harmony and balance with local ecosystems, and grow edible fruits and vegetables and plant medicine. The garden is currently engaged in a campaign to stop the City of Philadelphia's Sheriff Sale and solve the US Bank Liens challenges to protect community land.
<https://iglesiassgardens.com/>
- > **PASA Sustainable Agriculture** is a statewide network of farmers, food system professionals and change-makers focused on farmer-to-farmer based education. The organization runs citizen science-based benchmark studies to facilitate research with the farmers on their land alongside cohort meetings to address the challenges different farmers are facing across the state. This compiled on farm research helps farmers navigate decision making on financial viability and soil health practices over time. These reports are available for free on the organization's website and opportunities to join the on-farm research cohorts are expanding. PASA offers scholarships to our annual sustainability conference in Lancaster, PA which facilitates farmer connections through speakers, networking events and a trade show that features business organizations with funding opportunities and tools for farmers.
<https://pasafarming.org/>

APPENDIX B: LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCT	(Philadelphia) Animal Care & Control Team	MOU	Memorandum of understanding
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and people of color	NGT	Neighborhood Gardens Trust
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program	NRCS	(US) Natural Resources Conservation Service
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	NSNP	Norris Square Neighborhood Project
CDCs	Community Development Corporations	OOS	Office of Sustainability
CLIP	Community Life Improvement Program	OST	Out-of-school time
CRSH	(Philadelphia) Coalition for Restaurant Safety and Health	OUAIP	(USDA) Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture	PASA	Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
CTE	Career and Technical Education	PBTs	Persistent bioaccumulative toxins
DCED	(Pennsylvania) Department of Community and Economic Development	PCAC	Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities
DCNR	(Pennsylvania) Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	PECO	Philadelphia Electric Company
DHCD	(Philadelphia) Division of Housing and Community Development	PGDC	Philadelphia Garden Data Collaborative
DVRPC	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	PHA	Philadelphia Housing Authority
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer	PHDC	Philadelphia Housing and Development Corporation
ECA	Energy Coordinating Agency	PHS	Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
EHS	Environmental Health Services (within Philadelphia Department of Public Health)	PIDC	Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation
EPA	(US) Environmental Protection Agency	PILCOP	Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia
FMNP	Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	POP	Philadelphia Orchard Project
FPAC	Food Policy Advisory Council	PPR	Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec)
GJLI	Garden Justice Legal Initiative	PWD	Philadelphia Water Department
GMOs	Genetically modified organisms	Rebuild	City of Philadelphia Rebuilding Community Infrastructure Program
GSI	Green Stormwater Infrastructure	RCAP	Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty
HBCU	Historically Black colleges and universities	RFP	Request for Proposals
HELP	Homeowner's Emergency Loan Program	ROC	Restaurant Opportunities Center
HFGS	Healthy Foods Green Spaces	SEAMAAC	Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition
L&I	(Department of) Licenses & Inspections	SEPTA	Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
LAMA	Land Management	SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
LAMS	Land Administration and Management System	TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
MANNRS	Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences	UAC	Urban Agriculture Conservation
MBE	Minority Business Enterprise	USDA	(US) Department of Agriculture
MDO	(Philadelphia) Managing Director's Office	WIC	Women, Infants, and Children

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

Accessory Structure	A structure on the same parcel of property as a principal or main structure, and whose use is related to that of the principal structure (i.e., a residential structure may have a detached garage or a farm may have a storage shed for garden tools).
Agroecology	An integrated approach to agriculture that applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems, seeking to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans, and the environment while also taking into consideration the social aspects that must be addressed for a sustainable and fair food system.
Aquaponics	Circular system of growing food that combines “aquaculture” (raising fish in tanks) with “hydroponics” (cultivating plants in water). In these systems, fish waste fertilizes the plants, and plants remove toxins from the water.
Community Kitchen	A shared kitchen available for communal cooking in a social atmosphere. Community kitchens can be health and safety certified and can provide free or rentable space for food preservation and preparation activities. Community kitchens are often part of a community center or other social facility.
Cooperative	Cooperatives are people-centered enterprises owned, controlled, and run by and for members working together toward common economic, social, and cultural needs and goals.
Culturally Relevant	Foods that reflect the preferences and cultural contexts of a particular the community. Food literacy around culturally relevant and appropriate foods recognizes that the connections people have to food go beyond nutrition, with important connections to our families, histories, cultures, and environments.
Food Apartheid	Referencing the man-made political and economic systems that perpetuated discrimination and segregation in South Africa based on race, the term ‘Food Apartheid’ speaks to the geographic distribution of increased barriers to food access that can be explained by the continued legacy of racially discriminatory economic and political structures.
Food Desert	Generally defined as low-income areas with little access to nutritional foods and large grocery stores. This term has been used by many organizations, academic institutions, and government entities, including the USDA and food movements. However, the term “desert,” may give the impression that these food landscapes are naturally occurring, when in fact they are a result of compounding systemic injustices and racism. See Food Apartheid, above.
Food Sovereignty	As defined by the Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, in 2007, “food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.” In other words, food sovereignty is the ability to choose what nourishes you and your community.
Food System	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.

Food Ways	The food traditions and customs of a group of people, including growing methods, nutritional and culinary practices, what people eat and why they eat it, and the social practices related to foods.
Foodshed	The geographical area between where food is produced and where the food is consumed; how far food travels from production to plate.
Foraging	The act of searching for wild food or acquiring food by hunting, fishing, or gathering plant matter from the natural world.
Land Access	The legal ability to use land for a purpose, such as agriculture, provided through a lease, license, other arrangement, or permanent ownership.
Land Bank	Quasi-governmental entities created by counties or municipalities to effectively manage and repurpose an inventory of underused, abandoned, or foreclosed property. They are often created by enabling legislation to have powers that allow them to accomplish these goals in ways that existing government agencies can not.
Land Security	A state of potential permanence enjoyed by a land use such as a garden when all of its parcels are owned by the gardeners or a trusted organization or entity that will protect the garden over time. The opposite of Land Insecurity, which is a situation that exists when one or more of a garden's parcels are owned by an individual or entity that does not intend to preserve the garden over time.
Land Trust	Nonprofit corporations that own and manage land for the purpose of stewarding the land, preserving the uses on the land, or conserving the natural resources on the land.
Middle Passage	The forced voyage of enslaved Africans from their homeland across the Atlantic Ocean. The term refers to the middle leg of the triangular trade route that took material goods (such as weapons, tools, and fabrics) from Europe to Africa, enslaved Africans to the Americas and West Indies, and raw materials, produced on the plantations (sugar, rice, tobacco, indigo, rum, and cotton) back to Europe.
Monoculture	A commercial or industrial practice of cultivating of a single crop on a farm or in a particular region to increase yields and profits, often stripping the soil of nutrients and relying on synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides.
Racialized Land-Based Oppression	Methods of discrimination based on race and connected to land, land access, and land security.
Rematriation	The process of returning land, seeds, or foods back to Indigenous communities.
Seed Saving	The practice of saving seeds from harvested plants for replanting in the near future or exchanging for other desired seeds.
Seed Keeping	The practice of preserving seeds in secure locations such as libraries or archives along with their identification information, place of origin, and documented stories. Seed keeping can also benefit from cultural and scientific knowledge of growing methods and plant maintenance.
Ugly Produce	Fresh, edible, produce deemed imperfect and not fit to sell due to its size, shape, or slight bruising or damage.
Universal Design	Architectural designs that make places (buildings, public space like sidewalks, or outdoors spaces) accessible to all people, including disabled, differently abled, seniors, and small children.
Whole Community Approach	A framework for addressing health and education adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The model focuses on schools and the relationships between health and academic achievement and identifies nutrition environment and services as one of ten key components critical for a child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development.

APPENDIX D: NOTES

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