



## Project Profiles

### Food District @ Weinland Park (Agrarian Urbanist Overlay)

**Project Location:** Columbus, Ohio

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)

**Project Partners:** Ohio State University, Local Matters, Wagenbrenner Development, Godman Guild Association, City of Columbus

**Number of Municipalities:** One

**Project Population Area:** 4,386

**Scope of Project:** The \$864,000 Community Challenge Grant in 2011 was to plan for an "Agrarian Urbanist Overlay" in the Weinland Park neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. The goal was to incorporate all aspects of local food into the revitalization of a struggling working class neighborhood between downtown and Ohio State University. While the project included community gardens, backyard gardens, and efforts to get fresh food in local retail markets, the cornerstone was a proposed food-processing facility that would provide jobs and workforce development programs in the city, and markets for local produce from urban and rural farms in the region. The reasoning was that putting food at the center of the neighborhood economy would make people more aware of food and nutrition and promote healthy eating.

**Food Systems:** Planning for this grant began about the same time MORPC released its 2010 Central Ohio Local Food Assessment and Plan, which identified local food processing and distribution as a priority. From the start, the Community Challenge project was planned in the context of MORPC's efforts to promote a regional food system. The Food District was always intended to be a model for, and a component of, that regional system. CEDCO (the Community Economic Development Corporation of

Ohio) is a member of MORPC's Central Ohio Regional Food Council and is part of the discussion of and planning for other food hubs and processing centers in the city and region.

**Barriers/Challenges:** Financing is a challenge for any project such as this. The original plan for the Food District called for an ambitious, multi-functional facility built around food processing, but also including a co-op market, café, cash-and-carry wholesale market, shared-use kitchen, event and catering space, and business services. Prospective funders saw this as too much at once. CEDCO, which is managing the effort now, has decided to break the multiple functions into long-range phases, starting with the biggest generator of revenue: food processing. Because of financing challenges and a slower, phased-in model, the Food District processing center is still on the drawing board. It is progressing more slowly, but also more surely. But the fact that it has been in the public eye for two years has promoted the concept of local food systems and has helped other, smaller, food businesses get started, and contributed to growth among existing food businesses. It has been, and will continue to be, a catalyst in regional food system planning.

**Equity Considerations:** From the start, this was a community effort - intended to strengthen a mixed-income, mixed-race neighborhood that, as recently as 15 years ago, was a site of drugs and violent crime, but is now benefiting from reinvestment in adjacent neighborhoods. In fact, one of the challenges is fending off too much gentrification in trying to stabilize the neighborhood. Because the community cited jobs as a priority, the planning became focused on a food-processing plant that would provide jobs for residents. The increased involvement of the local settlement house, Godman Guild, enhanced the goal of inclusiveness.

## **One Region Forward**

**Project Location:** Buffalo Niagara metropolitan region (Western New York)

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

**Project Partners:** Too many to list

**Number of Municipalities:** 2 counties; 64 municipalities

**Project Population Area:** 1,134,115

**Scope of Project:** One Region Forward is a regional planning initiative focused on collaborative ways to promote more sustainable forms of development in the Buffalo Niagara region in land use, transportation, housing, energy and climate, access to food, and more. It combines research and public engagement with planning and action to help our region meet the combined economic, environmental, and social challenges of the 21st century.

**Food Systems:** Food systems planning was central to our regional planning initiative and was integrated into our engagement and community learning activities. "Strengthen

Our Systems Food for a Healthier Population and Economy" is one of the five big ideas the plan is centered around. We engaged the "Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab" at the University at Buffalo to develop a detailed strategy document to drill down deeper and we made food a key point in how we engaged the community.

**Barriers/Challenges:** While there is momentum to make the region's food system a policy and economic development priority, there is plenty of work to do.

**Equity Considerations:** Many of the strategies relating to food systems are focused on issues of equity. In particular, there are a host of strategies designed to overcome barriers to accessing food and ensure that farming remains a viable option in the region.

## **Resilient Region (Choose Health Project)**

**Project Location:** Five-county region in Central Minnesota

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Region Five Development Commission

**Project Partners:** Hunger Free MN, SPROUT MN, EnSearch Inc., Todd County Public Health, Lakewood Health System, UofM Extension, Prairie Bay Restaurant

**Number of Municipalities:** 5 counties, 65 cities

**Project Population Area:** 162,000

**Scope of Project:** The Choose Health project sprung from our region's Sustainable Communities Planning Grant we titled *The Resilient Region*. The goal of Choose Health was to launch a pilot project that would create a unique partnership between private and public health providers, nutrition educators, and local growers that would provide healthy locally grown commodities to residents where an improved diet could improve health standings. The secondary goals were to offer a referral service to other programs that prevent hunger, to ensure privacy of the program participants, and to measure impacts of the program outcomes.

**Food Systems:** "Hunger Free Minnesota" has specifically supported this pilot program and has strengthened the food system by connecting health and hunger to economic impacts of local growers.

**Barriers/Challenges:** Building a trusted relationship between public and private health was the first challenge, and then connecting that space of "health" to local growers was the second challenge. Both have been successfully addressed and relations are improved and valued across the board. The next challenge will be to sustain the programs - which is where we are today - and the last challenge will be to replicate the program elsewhere in the region.

**Equity Considerations:** This project operated in a relatively small rural town, (population 1,500) making it important to provide protection of the identities of the low-income families. Therefore in addition to the 50 food insecure program participants, 50 employee families from Lakewood Health System and the National Joint Powers

Alliance (a local company with over 100 employees) participated in the program. The Lakewood and NJPA participants were employees who performed well in employee health challenges and the company offered the CSA as an employee perk/benefit/bonus. The rationale for this was to ensure that not only health deprived low-income families would receive CSA boxes, but other community members would as well, thereby reducing any stigma with participation in the program.

The work we are doing around small family farm policy development and the work we are doing with Latino and Amish growers has also added value to the Choose Health project and to our overall local food hub initiatives. Our next project is to build out a food processing facility for value-added ag and to host an indoor winter farmers market at the processing facility site.

## **East TN Local Food Guide**

**Project Location:** Knoxville, Tennessee

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization

**Project Partners:** University of Tennessee, Knoxville Knox County Food Policy Council, Three Rivers Market

**Number of Municipalities:** 11 counties

**Project Population Area:** 997,400

**Scope of Project:** Plan East Tennessee (PlanET) was an ambitious project to chart a path to reach a shared vision for a five-county region in East Tennessee (Anderson, Blount, Knox, Union, Loudon). PlanET was funded by a 2010 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. As part of this work we engaged over 10,000 individuals with a large scale, multi-faceted public outreach effort that allowed citizens to share their thoughts through surveys, public forums, focus groups, and small group meetings. We developed leadership forums and have created over forty resources for community members. These resources include demonstration projects in each county that reflect the goals and objectives that emerged from the planning effort, a low impact development manual, a regional food systems analysis, and a local food guide. The main goal of this project was to develop a shared vision for the future of the five-county region. The primary components of the project are the resources created to help guide future planning work in the region (this includes the regional Playbook), the foundation for future partnerships that was built, and indicators to help us measure progress over time.

One of the goals that emerged as a top priority in our region was local food production. For this reason, we are sending two of our local food leaders to participate in the Louisville workshop: Nourish Knoxville and the Knox County Health Department. Both of

these organizations served as core partners during the PlanET process. Nourish Knoxville was a sub-recipient of a HUD grant to Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization. HUD funds were used for PlanET, a regional partnership to plan for the future of East TN. One of the eight regional goals identified was increased local food production. As a way to support local food production, the study identified promotion of local sustainable agriculture and support of local food access and awareness. Nourish Knoxville was identified as a partner, and subsequently started the East TN Local Food Guide. The main goal of the food guide is to help consumers identify sources of local food in their area, and connect growers to additional markets for their products. The food guide lists farms, CSAs, farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, and value added products utilizing locally grown food in a 50 mile radius. Guides are distributed in the 11 counties covered.

**Food Systems:** At the most basic level, the existence of the guide elevates the perception that our community cares about local food. The guide strengthens the food system by identifying existing resources and giving greater visibility to those resources. Through our first guide, we have already received positive feedback from those listed that they have connected with additional outlets and customers. The farmers market section in particular has been helpful for communities to know which markets accept EBT. Our regional food systems analysis has also been a key resource in understanding the local food economy in East Tennessee. The analysis documents current food production in the region, measures the economic impact of increasing production, and identifies next steps in building a strong, resilient local food system. Both of these projects were instrumental in our recent award from the USDA to explore the feasibility of a regional food hub.

**Barriers/Challenges:** There are economic barriers to many communities in accessing local food. We also find that there are logistical challenges to restaurants and grocers utilizing local food, and that supply isn't always there to meet the demand of restaurants. This unfortunately also seems to lead to "local-washing," where a restaurant makes claims that they are using a great deal of local food, when in fact they are not. We find that many of those that are interested in local food are not aware of the types of products available in our region.

**Equity Considerations:** Equity and access to opportunity were a core part of the PlanET effort. The PlanET Equity Team met regularly throughout the project to assist staff in prioritizing outreach efforts for those in our region identified as the most negatively affected by inequity and to lead and help with a regional equity assessment. As part of the PlanET effort we developed a regional equity profile that examined the historical background and current conditions of equity and access to opportunity for all residents in the region. We are currently using this work to guide efforts around implementation and resource allocation.

Nourish Knoxville and the Knox County Health Department are on the forefront of addressing equity and inclusiveness as it related to access to healthy, local, and nutritious foods. The Knox County Health Department is currently analyzing the physical access individuals have to healthy foods in low-income communities in Knoxville. They are looking at specific locations of food sources in the community and examining physical infrastructure and transportation to those food sources. Nourish Knoxville has distributed guides through many assistance agencies to increase awareness of local food options in various communities, and also to make sure to list groceries and markets that take EBT.

## **Warren Community Challenge Program**

**Project Location:** Warren, Ohio

**Lead Grantee Organization:** City of Warren

**Project Partners:** Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership

**Number of Municipalities:** One

**Project Population Area:** 40,000

**Scope of Project:** This is a planning grant meant to further the existing city plan and inform current and future community development efforts. The main components of the project are a residential parcel inventory and an expansive outreach effort to promote the reuse of derelict vacant property and improve quality of life in neighborhoods.

**Food Systems:** Much of the land use initiated and supported through this work has been food production in nature; in addition, grant-supported staff has organized and maintained a farmers market as well as a CSA, and has participated in multiple regional convenings around the local food system.

**Barriers/Challenges:** High levels of blight and vacancy, depopulation, and disinvestment of Warren's neighborhoods.

**Equity Considerations:** The outreach effort has gone to great lengths to include as broad and diverse a subset of residents as possible.

## **Delta Cuisine Commercial Kitchen and Business Incubator**

**Project Location:** West Memphis, Arkansas

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Delta Cuisine

**Project Partners:** Mid South Community College, Delta Regional Authority, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Arkansas State Assembly

**Number of Municipalities:** 20 plus counties, primary is Memphis SMSA

**Project Population Area:** 1,000,000

**Scope of Project:** Provide access to commercial kitchen suitable for start-up food focused businesses, as well as the business skill training to improve the chance for

sustainability. Our target client base is low and moderate income participants in the greater Memphis area, and our goal is to provide the kitchen access as well as technical assistance and support entrepreneurs lack.

**Food Systems:** Delta Cuisine will fill a critical gap in strengthening the food system in the Memphis area. DC will also serve as a value chain facilitator (manager has been trained in WealthWorks Value Chain curriculum). Facility is in final construction phase and anticipates an April 2015 opening. Many commercial kitchen business incubators experience challenging cash flow until they are established, as there is a balance between making client access affordable and generating adequate cash to support expenses. We project additional grant support will be required for at least one additional year.

**Barriers/Challenges:** Basic and advanced business skills are lacking in would-be entrepreneurs. Food business is widely appealing and many have culinary skills, but lack basic business skills and capital to launch their business.

## **Sustain Southern Maine**

**Project Location:** Cumberland & York Counties, Maine

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Greater Portland Council of Governments

**Project Partners:** 45 Partners: Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission; Cities of Biddeford, Portland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland and Westbrook; Towns of Brunswick, Freeport, Gray, Kennebunk, Kittery, Scarborough, Standish, and Wells; Biddeford, Brunswick, Portland, Sanford and Westbrook Housing Authorities; Avesta Housing; Bicycle Coalition of Maine; Casco Bay Estuary Partnership; Cumberland County; Cumberland District of Public Health Council; Eat Local Foods Coalition of Maine; GrowSmart Maine; Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System; Maine Clean Communities; Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry; Maine Department of Transportation; MidCoast Regional Redevelopment Authority; Mobilize Maine; Muskie School of Public Service/University of Southern Maine; Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority; Opportunity Alliance; Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System; Portland Society of Architects; Southern Maine Agency on Aging; Southern Maine Regional Water Council; Trust for Public Land; Wells Reserve; York County; and York County Community Action Corp.

**Number of Municipalities:** 66 municipalities and 2 counties

**Project Population Area:** 488,271

**Scope of Project:** The initial planning phase for Sustain Southern Maine was carried out through a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant completed in April 2014. The main goal of the planning phase was to bring communities, organizations, and businesses together to create a suite of strategies and actions to create a more

prosperous region. Issues regarding land use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, economic development, New Mainers, energy, climate change, and community conservation were explored through a five-pronged, interdependent approach. The approach included: 1) growing the Partnership; 2) a series of municipal Centers of Opportunity pilot projects that explored opportunities and obstacles to growth; 3) a series of stakeholder processes to identify top and inter-related regional priorities; 4) identifying prospects for leveraging resources; and 5) capacity building Knowledge Sharing sessions.

**Food Systems:** Within the suite of priorities set by Sustain Southern Maine is the desire for an improved regional delivery system where Maine producers can connect directly with consumers, wholesalers, and retailers to exchange products, including produce, fish, meat and poultry, dairy, greenhouse, fiber, and other goods. A key Partner and the economic development arm of Sustain Southern Maine is Mobilize Maine.

Mobilize Maine is a state-wide asset-based approach to economic development carried out by the State's seven Economic Development Districts (EDDs). It is driven by business leaders from the private sector, leverages unique assets across geographic and political boundaries, utilizes indicators to benchmark and measure the regional economy, and empowers action teams to implement short-term wins at any time during the process. Through Mobilize Maine, agriculture was identified as one of Greater Portland's four target clusters, and a regional profile of the potential size and scale of the local food movement was developed. The profile provided the basis for convening members of the agricultural community from across the region to discuss what is needed to grow their businesses and increase profitability.

The convened group evolved into the Greater Portland Sustainable Food Production Cluster partnership and recently became one of only 12 Improving Manufacturing Communities Partnerships designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, and the only to be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Greater Portland Sustainable Food Production Cluster (GPSFPC) promotes collaboration among universities, nonprofits, and businesses that show potential for growth within agriculture and fisheries. It endeavors to leverage public and private investment over a five year period in projects, programs, and services to generate jobs in the region's food sector.

**Barriers/Challenges:** For Sustain Southern Maine, the challenges to success will be maintaining commitment, growing leadership, and willingness to change. Insufficient funding to continue facilitation of the Partnership and administration necessary to move strategies forward makes it hard to maintain commitment from project Partners. Visionary and collaborative leadership from key institutions in the region will be needed, but is difficult to inspire as so many institutions are currently struggling to meet their basic needs. And the strategies with the most promise for transformative results will

require almost everyone to operate differently than they currently are. For the Greater Portland Sustainable Food Production Cluster partnership a long-term, dedicated focus will be necessary to achieving the goals of their \$90 million plan. As local food is a very hot topic in the region, many are vying to be the center of attention. This competitive environment makes convening all the necessary players and getting them to collaborate and cooperate difficult.

**Equity Considerations:** The planning for New Mainers component of Sustain Southern Maine focused on vocational needs. Targeted outreach was conducted through focus groups held at ESL teaching facilities and neighborhood institutions; an inventory of vocational programs and services for refugees and immigrants was developed; and a set of priorities to address gaps in and needed services was developed. Building on this the Greater Portland Sustainable Food Production Cluster partnership's plan recognizes that New Mainers represent a fast-growing segment of the workforce. Existing efforts will be coordinated and targeted to offer a clear pathway for New Mainers to both enter the food industry and access Portland's entrepreneurial networks. Examples of existing efforts include local processors increased the diversity of their workforce by offering English as a Second Language classes on-site as well as tuition scholarships for the attainment of an Associate degree; the region's hospitality industry launched an effort to boost the hiring of new Mainers; and Coastal Enterprises developed a small business counseling program aimed at New Mainers.

## **East Central Vermont: What We Want**

**Project Location:** East Central Vermont

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

**Project Partners:** Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Champlain College, Vital Communities, Vermont Natural Resources Council, Vermont Law School Land Use Clinic, Sustainable Energy Resource Group

**Number of Municipalities:** 40 towns: All towns in Windsor County, most towns in Orange County, one town in Rutland County, and two towns in Addison County

**Project Population Area:** 80,707

**Scope of Project:** To increase our effectiveness in planning for and permitting a more compact form of land use that is better accessed by transit, includes more options for a diversity of housing types, and is closer to employment. The plan focused on addressing housing, transportation, public utilities, natural resources (air, water, land, and wildlife) and energy use in ways that bend the impacts of development toward a region that uses less energy (especially fossil fuels), is more healthy and walkable, is more affordable, and creates increased economic opportunity. East Central Vermont: What We Want will vastly increase public understanding of these issues and forge a new regional consensus on policy matters that embody the Livability Principles in a

meaningful way.

**Food Systems:** Our plan was just accepted by HUD on January 15, 2015. Therefore, we are just beginning. That said, the following three projects are underway:

1. Panel discussion/workshop is scheduled to discuss the impact of the local food system on our economy.
2. Research has begun on the need and possibility of a food hub/distribution center in our region.
3. In addition to food systems, we are hoping to generate a report of the impact of artisan makers of all types (including food) on our regional economy.

**Barriers/Challenges:** The plan's goal that relates to our food system is as follows: "Encourage economic growth that supports and enhances our working landscapes and craftspeople." There is an acute need for highly networked communication and coordination among food system enterprises, markets, technical assistance providers, and advocacy organizations regarding products, activities and services. And, of course, funding is a big obstacle.

**Equity Considerations:** Access to quality and affordable food is an equity issue that we are exploring. This may involve increasing healthy foods in our smaller general stores, expanding the farm to school programs, increasing farmers markets, and partnering with social and elder service agencies to deliver produce. Our hope is to find existing efforts that are currently succeeding in improving equity in food systems across the country to see if we are able to replicate those successes at any level in our region.

## **City Kitchen and Food Systems Coordination**

**Project Location:** Denver, Colorado

**Lead Grantee Organization:** City of Denver CPD

**Project Partners:** Denver Livability Partnership, City agencies, Live Well Colorado

**Number of Municipalities:** City and County of Denver

**Project Population Area:** 700,000

**Scope of Project:** The City and County of Denver completed with the 2010 Challenge Grant a study of food hubs and outline for business plan feasibility for a potential pilot urban food hub along the West Corridor. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food hub as "a business or organization that is actively coordinating the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified locally or regionally grown food products from primarily small to mid-sized producers." The project will identify a plausible solution to improve access to healthy foods and nutrition education for consumers on Denver's West Side. Additionally the project will identify economic development or workforce opportunities for area residents, as well as local and regional food producers. The project will analyze potential opportunity sites for an urban food

hub proximate to the Decatur-Federal light rail station area or other light rail stops along Denver's portion of the West Corridor. Funding for the project comes from US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the agency's Community Challenge grant funds awarded to the City in 2010. The tasks and deliverables will occur within the following phases of the City Kitchen Urban Food Hub Study and Business Plan development:

1. City Kitchen stakeholder and project development
2. Public Outreach Plan development and approval
3. Food Hub Model Case Studies
4. Case Study Review; Vision and Goal Development
5. Alternatives Analysis

**Food Systems:** City Kitchen was a stepping stone to creating more enhanced dialogue with and between the City's Sustainable Food Policy Council, Denver Environmental Health, Office of Economic Development, and city leaders. While the project itself lists a host of study options for food hub models, what it really did was create the argument for why coordination is important leading us to the need to complete a citywide food systems assessment and actively coordinate approaches to sustaining a local food economy. The food hub discussion in Colorado, and even bigger, in the West is largely dependent on creating a regional context for discussion regarding supply and climate to support a destination food hub as recommended in City Kitchen. The Plan acknowledges different food hub "types" based on services provided, starting with Wholesale, then Brokerage, all the way to a Terminal Destination food hub. This food hub "typology" allows for the integration of a "stepping stone" approach toward building a food hub model that is sustainable. The key to this approach is to think big but identify early champions and partner on efforts that might be part of the solution. Our conversation continues to grow into the need for a regional food system assessment as Denver relies on its agricultural neighbors for opportunity to forge partnerships with the growing economy.

**Barriers/Challenges:** To be successful, a food hub must increase market access for local and regional producers, add value to the current system, and impact the community through innovative and sound business practices including job creation. Community feedback aligns with these objectives, but in reality to meet them all will take continued dialogue about the City's and partner priorities to create such a dynamic hub. Project partners like Denver Housing Authority are expressing interest in being part of a food hub solution in the future, and everyone supports some of the smaller steps (urban gardening and education) to move toward an understanding of the benefits of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables into the community. Whatever the action, the question each time must be whether or not the action provides fresh food access to a community that doesn't have this opportunity right now.

**Equity Considerations:** During City Kitchen, our consultant met with low-income and

traditionally marginalized populations as part of larger planning processes that integrated food discussions as well as smaller meetings in homes and churches to ensure we had opportunity to integrate cultural needs into the study's considerations. One nonprofit within the city has actively pursued a food cooperative and desires to grow a food hub.

## **Rockford Region Vital Signs**

**Project Location:** Rockford Metropolitan Area, Illinois

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning

**Project Partners:** The Rockford Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, Vital Signs, was an initiative led by a local consortium of over 30 agencies in Boone and Winnebago Counties agreeing to support and align their strategic plans and long-range visions into a set of common goals and action steps. The local consortium was anchored by the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP), our regional, federally-designated metropolitan planning organization. The executive team for RMAP Policy Committee includes Winnebago County, Boone County, City of Rockford, City of Belvidere, City of Loves Park, and Village of Machesney Park. In addition, the RMAP Policy Committee formed a Steering Team of nearly 100 community leaders to help develop regional goals for the sixteen areas of sustainability. One of these sixteen areas of sustainability was Food, specifically food processing and local food systems.

**Number of Municipalities:** 18 municipalities within Boone and Winnebago Counties

**Project Population Area:** 344,623

**Scope of Project:** Since the award of the Sustainability grant, the Rockford Region has worked to develop and maintain our first regional plan for sustainable development. This initiative, called "Rockford Region Vital Signs," is based first and foremost on taking the social, economic, and environmental pulse of the Rockford Region. Once community leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the region's sustainability and well-being, it is our belief they can be more strategic in determining what needs to be done to improve the community. As a result of the HUD partnership in the Vital Signs Project, three reports have been released aiming to empower community leaders from diverse backgrounds - for perhaps the first time in concert - to have a clear picture of the region's interworking parts. The ability of the Rockford Region to remain economically, socially, and environmentally viable depends on our collective capacity to address these three areas in unison with current challenges. With respect to one of our areas of sustainability, Food and Food Systems, our regional food goals include 1) increasing local farm-produced food for local processing and consumption including food entrepreneurship; 2) increasing business and personal disposal of food waste using environmentally conscious methods; 3) increasing distribution of locally-produced food to local industry, business, and consumers; 4) increasing local processing of locally-

grown food for industrial and commercial use; and 5) increasing accessibility, awareness, and consumption of healthy food for all residents.

**Food Systems:** With respect to Goal 1) "increasing local farm-produced food for local processing and consumption including food entrepreneurship," we continue to add vendors to our popular downtown Rockford City Market, and have recently expanded another major city market to the northwest part of Rockford where food deserts exist. We are also working to build an indoor, year-round city market next to the downtown Rockford City Market that will include a commercial kitchen that will support entrepreneurs looking to expand local farm-produced food. The Markets are just one outlet for locally grown vegetables. Angelic Organics Learning Center leverages partnerships between farmers and area residents as the cornerstone of a healthy local food system. Angelic Organics Learning Center's Farmer Training Initiative is working to train our next generation of sustainable farmers. We help urban and rural people learn directly from our region's best farmers and begin growing for market.

With respect to Goal 2) "increasing business and personal disposal of food waste using environmentally conscious methods," we are working with a local non-profit, "Keep Northern Illinois Clean and Beautiful," on educational brochures that educate homeowners and businesses on composting practices. Angelic Organics uses food waste as livestock feed and compost, to the fullest extent possible, for sustainability and organic benefit.

With respect to Goal 3) "increasing distribution of locally-produced food to local industry, business and consumers," since Angelic Organics Learning Center's founding in 1998, it has linked diverse communities with sustainable farms and urban gardens. The partnership with the Rockford Housing Authority produced 9500 lbs. (>47,000 servings) of fresh locally produced food in 2014. We are now working with our largest local school district, Rockford District 205, on a farm to school grant application to increase the District's use of local food producers for School District food and nutrition programs.

With respect to Goal 4) "increasing local processing of locally-grown food for industrial and commercial use," we are working on a project to develop an indoor aquaponics facility at a city-owned factory site located in the middle of a large food desert to enable us to start developing a new industry within the Rockford area that would be geared towards hiring low-income, disadvantaged, and disconnected individuals with high barriers to employment. Important to this project will be our connections to our High School career academies, where students are learning how to build and develop aquaponic facilities. We are in the initial facility and business planning stages for this.

With respect to Goal 5) "increasing accessibility, awareness, and consumption of healthy food for all residents," the Rockford Housing Authority, in collaboration with Angelic Organics ( a community supported agriculture farm) and Zion Outreach (a local

community development corporation) have developed a public housing resident-driven project called Blackhawk Courts Farm and Garden. In its third year, the participants learn how to grow and produce local food on a half-acre plot of land adjacent to the housing complex. Participants also learn business skills, leadership, how to make healthy meals for their families and how to create community in a housing development where cohesion can be difficult to build. Last year their program helped residents grow two tons of vegetables, most of which were sold at 32 market stands and through 15 shares in a Community Supported Agriculture program where investors received weekly bags of fresh organic produce. Blackhawk Courts residents, who were also allowed to pick produce for free from a 2,200-square-foot community garden, were among the biggest farm stand buyers.

The Housing Authority has also aided the City in obtaining a grocery store in one of the most blighted areas of our community. As part of the grocer's lease, the grocer is required to perform (with local partners Health Council, University Outreach, and Angelic Organics) healthy living/eating outreach included but not limited to community newsletters, in store demonstrations, and acquisition of locally grown meat and produce.

We are also working with our local farmers markets, such as Rockford City Market, to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) customers at all of our markets to enable equal access. We have also identified underutilized properties that may be suitable for urban agriculture or community gardens and have expanded community gardens programs, especially in underutilized lots where USDA food deserts exist. Working with Rockford Human Services, the region's federal community action agency, as well as Neighborhood Network, a non-profit dedicated to improving neighborhoods, we have built over 50 neighborhood gardens where volunteers grow, produce, donate, and sell food to local markets. This successful program continues to expand.

**Barriers/Challenges:** One challenge is there is not one agency that is managing the collective efforts and strategies that have been set out through the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, therefore coordination of varying efforts can sometimes be disconnected. We also have capacity challenges as it relates to funding many of these initiatives. In addition, institutional barriers such as "low-bid" procurement mandates make purchasing local produce challenging for government, institutional purchasers. Lastly, getting a coordinated system for farmers to be able to connect into local food opportunities is a barrier that we are working towards fixing.

**Equity Considerations:** Attainment as well as poor health outcomes underscores the need to do more to increase better local food options and opportunities for a substantial portion of our population who live within federally designated food deserts. Many of our initiatives are driven to respond to these equity issues faced within our

community, as identified in the previous answers. As example the Rockford City Market will integrate the acceptance of LINK/SNAP into its platform over the summer of 2015.

## **Teton View Regional Plan for Sustainable Development**

**Project Location:** 3 Idaho Counties and 1 Wyoming County

**Lead Grantee Organization:** Fremont Country, Idaho

**Project Partners:** Cities, USFS, BLM, IDL and U of I

**Number of Municipalities:** 7 municipalities and 4 counties

**Project Population Area:** 83,000

**Scope of Project:** The final product of the three-year grant will be a "Regional Plan for Sustainable Development" that will serve as a guiding, comprehensive resource for all the cities, counties, and agencies involved. The Consortium has contracted with a nationally-recognized firm to learn how ecosystem-based sustainability concepts can best be incorporated into local land use plans and development codes. Code Studio of Austin, Texas, is managing the locally-driven process in cooperation with Driggs, Victor, and Teton County, Idaho, in a two-year pilot project. The Consortium also has launched region-wide assessments of affordable housing needs, multi-modal transportation, and broadband and recycling infrastructure. Other projects include technical assistance grants available to assist communities with sustainability certifications and economic development projects. Local officials are also benefiting from the project's training opportunities. Finally, the Consortium is developing sustainability indicators to help communities measure their progress in carrying out local land use plans as well as the voluntary regional plan for sustainable development.

**Food Systems:** U of I and High Country RC&D completed an Ag Assessment of production and marketing of food for local and regional markets. There were a number of findings and recommendations made as a result of the assessment. There is a fledgling local food system in the area that needs to be strengthened at all levels: more production, supporting existing local markets and developing new markets, increasing our processing and distributor capabilities, and education at all levels - producers, processors, consumers.

**Barriers/Challenges:** Geographic Barriers - The Teton Mountain Range separates many of our ag producers from markets in Jackson Hole, WY. Long distances between local population centers, and from strong potential regional markets of Salt Lake City, UT; Bozeman and Missoula, MT; and Boise, ID. Other Challenges - Low population and low income households (over 34%). Education of producers and consumers. Need to find effective ways of engaging and capitalizing on our seasonal tourism.

**Equity Considerations:** Many of our low income and Hispanic populations have access to gardens and small pastures, and are growing food for home consumption. There is a

possibility that expanding their existing efforts could result in another revenue stream for these households. Working with the existing farmers markets to gain the capability to accept SNAP cards is another.

## **OneSTL**

**Project Location:** St. Louis, Missouri

**Lead Grantee Organization:** East-West Gateway Council of Governments

**Project Partners:** St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Metro, Heartlands Conservancy, Great Rivers Greenway, FOCUS St. Louis, St. Louis Equal Housing Opportunity Council, Trailnet, Citizens for Modern Transit, Applied Research Collaborative

**Number of Municipalities:** 200 municipalities and 8 counties

**Project Population Area:** 2.5 million

**Scope of Project:** OneSTL is the product of a regional planning grant. OneSTL lays out a regional vision for sustainability. The nature of the topic prohibited OneSTL from becoming a true policy document, but it is growing as a rallying point for all of the people and the organizations in the region concerned about and working toward becoming more sustainable.

**Food Systems:** Before the project, food systems and access to healthy food were not regional topics. People across the region were talking about it, but the conversations were localized. Through OneSTL we now have the opportunity to come together as a 2-state region and discuss policy.

**Barriers/Challenges:** A major barrier to regional food policy is the conflicting views of what is a sustainable food source. St. Louis is a hub for biotech firms. There may be a tendency for local food producers to lean organic that will conflict with large producers of GMO products present in the region.

**Equity Considerations:** OneSTL has an entire section dedicated to promoting inclusiveness including 5 goals, 11 objectives, and 40 objectives.

## **The Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory; Poughkeepsie, NY**

The Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory is the adaptive re-use of a former mill building by Hudson River Housing, Inc. as a combination of housing and social enterprises that showcase the Hudson River Valley's food and arts resources. Listed on the National Historic Register, our vision is to give this vacant property a new life for the 21st century, and in the process galvanize a sustainable and inclusive rebirth of Poughkeepsie, NY's Main Street corridor. In addition to fifteen units of new housing, the 22,000 square foot factory will become home for local food entrepreneurs and educators of the Hudson River Valley, and provide employment, training, and educational opportunities. The Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory will help address the gap between our strong Hudson

Valley regional food economy and our struggling inner city neighborhoods by providing pathways to jobs in the food sector for low-income city residents, and by increasing access to and education about healthy, locally-sourced food.

From 2010 – 2012, Hudson River Housing was a participant in a Community Food Assessment led by the organization Poughkeepsie Plenty that identified food insecurity issues in the City of Poughkeepsie. Our decision to include food-based enterprises as part of the redevelopment of the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory stems from information gathered as part of that assessment, which surveyed 1,000 participants: over one in four (26 percent) City of Poughkeepsie households experience food insecurity, including eleven percent that are food insecure with hunger. Despite these statistics, the City of Poughkeepsie sits in the center of the bread basket of the Hudson River Valley, surrounded by an enormous wealth of food resources, including the Culinary Institute of America, and a host of leaders and innovators in the sustainable and local foods movement.

Artists and creative professionals will co-locate in the remaining commercial space in the building to develop and sell their products in a market-like atmosphere, and multipurpose space will be set aside for job training, workshops, and events. The project site is also home to an urban green infrastructure demonstration project, a community garden and a public park, all created through initial phases of the redevelopment. All these enterprises are bringing new investment to the area, and we will seek to grow strong links with the tourism, agriculture, and artisanal food assets of the Hudson River Valley region.

The restoration of the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory is the centerpiece project of Hudson River Housing's Middle Main Initiative, a cross-sector collaboration focused on the Main Street corridor in the City of Poughkeepsie. Our goal is to build a strong, vibrant, and creative neighborhood of choice by celebrating the many assets of the community and employing dynamic strategies to build from them. Our multi-pronged approach in this neighborhood includes existing and planned real estate investments of over \$17 million dollars, including affordable housing, mixed use, streetscape, and historic preservation. This work is coupled with an extensive community building and neighborhood marketing strategy that works to: increase pride among residents and business owners; empower and engage stewards of the neighborhood; and cultivate demand among current and future residents, community leaders, and investors.