



MENU OF ACTIONS FOR COMMUNITY DRIVEN FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

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WHAT IS THE MENU OF ACTIONS

This tool was developed by the Modeling the Future of Food in Your Neighborhood Study (foodNEST 2.0), a project of the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. The foodNEST 2.0 study brings together researchers and community leaders working to unpack the complexity and deeply rooted forces structuring our local food system. Greater Cleveland has been at the forefront of food systems innovation through local efforts to advance urban farming, community gardening, fruit and vegetable incentive programming, and food retail development. These efforts, however, have not shifted inequitable trends related to economic opportunity, food security, affordable food access, and community health. We came together as a collaborative with a belief that shifting the status quo will require transformation of the system. As shown in this tool, we reckoned problems of the food system as it is and envisioned the food system we hope for.

The Menu of Actions brings together our collective insights, captured through various data-gathering approaches, about the dynamic complexity of the local food system in Greater Cleveland. From the beginning, our goal was to conduct this deep examination in a manner that mobilizes community driven food systems change. These insights build on 10+ years of local innovation that pointed to the need for more integrated approaches to food systems change. Like many cities, food systems change in Greater Cleveland has often occurred without fully linking connections between different strategies that may be even more powerful when they are working together. In this tool, we draw attention to the interconnectivity of forces that are combined into five potential leverage points to target future food systems change.

Lessons learned presented here are specifically focused on food systems in historically redlined neighborhoods within a Rust Belt city. This means our insights are focused less on food production and the broader forces shaping food supply since mass agricultural production is not as common within Greater Cleveland. In systems modeling, our work gets complex quickly. Therefore, we were tasked with drawing boundaries around what is "in" and "outside" of the system of interest with the goal of diving deeper on those forces considered to be "in" the system of focus. Capitalism and broader macroeconomic forces were recognized by our team as being critically important but "outside" of our current analysis. We acknowledge the role of these broader food system forces, yet limited our attention to food system dynamics that may be changed directly within urban neighborhoods. This aligned with our goal to mobilize community driven food systems change. The coupling of these community driven changes may have an impact on broader forces that were not directly targeted by our team.

GOALS

1. Share insights about the food system as it is and the food system we hope for, which were derived through two years of data gathering, community conversations, and participatory modeling.
2. Define potential leverage points for transforming the local food system in historically redlined neighborhoods to achieve justice.
3. Identify opportunities for transforming the local food system through community driven actions.
4. Provide a framework for communities to build solidarity around collective actions needed to achieve hopes for their food future.

The Menu of Actions was created to allow for transparency about system insights uncovered through intensive community discussions and deliberations from 2018-2020. It provides a record of our process. It serves as a primer for thinking about the complexity of the local food system and why it is not producing outcomes of justice. Most importantly, the menu is designed as a tool for ideation to jumpstart community driven food systems changes that lead to:

- Households with financial strength and food security,
- Neighborhoods with fair access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods,
- Communities that are strong in body, mind, and spirit.

This Menu of Actions calls for new partnerships and collaborative approaches to build food systems we hope for while attending to immediate food needs today. This work is even more important now due to the realities of COVID-19. This is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list of what is needed to transform each and every community. Based on feedback from hundreds of stakeholders from across Greater Cleveland, this menu serves as a starting point for imagining what it will take to ignite community driven food systems change. It is designed to begin conversations about hopes for our food future and provide ideas about pathways of actions that may move us there faster.

WHO IS IT FOR

The Menu of Actions was developed for residents, food retailers, community leaders, and elected officials working to mobilize actions that lead to community food security through efforts that advance fair access to fresh and healthy foods as well as financial strength within households. It was designed for people living and working in historically redlined urban neighborhoods. Like the process used to form this menu, it is to be used in community with people coming together to co-create a vision for the future and build the trust needed to realize change.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

The Menu of Actions is intended to be used in combination with other tools—such as interactive workshops to develop community driven action plans and computer modeling to trial different pathways of actions (i.e., “what if” scenarios)—before moving forward with specific change strategies. Collaboratives using this tool will have a chance to reflect on readiness for food systems change by engaging in conversations around the following questions:

- Who needs to be at the table as we plan for food systems change?
- How will we grow and nurture relationships needed for collaborative change?
- What are the possibilities for transformation within our community?
- What are the leverage points for tipping the deeply rooted forces toward fairness?
- How may our actions today lead to impacts tomorrow?
- Who will benefit the most from our approach?
- What are the unintended consequences of our work?

LEARN MORE

Visit our website to learn more about food systems work of the Modeling the Future of Food in Your Neighborhood Study.

<https://case.edu/swetland/>

Redlining

Starting in the 1930s during the Great Depression, redlining is an example of structural racism shaping our food system. Redlining was established through practices by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) to deny access to home mortgages for people living in racial and ethnic minority neighborhoods throughout the US. These mortgagees became the bedrock for growing the White middle class. Redlining now refers to lending (or insurance) discrimination that bases credit decisions on the location of a property to the exclusion of characteristics of the borrower or property.

Learn More

- Reece, J., Martin, M., Bates, J., Golden, A., Mailman, K., & Nimps, R. (2015). History matters: Understanding the role of policy, race, and real estate in today's geography of health equity and opportunity in Cuyahoga County. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and City and Regional Planning Program at The Ohio State University. Available online at <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/history-of-race-real-estate.pdf>
- K.T. Jackson. (1985) Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States. Oxford University Press.
- Greer, J. (2013). The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Development of the Residential Security Maps. *Journal of Urban History*, 39: 275–296.

WHAT IS THE MODELING THE FUTURE OF FOOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY (FOODNEST 2.0)

foodNEST 2.0 GOAL

Provide trustworthy and practical decision-making tools that use a system lens within an equity framework to guide future community driven food systems change.

OUR STORY

Led by Darcy Freedman, PhD, MPH, Swetland Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, the foodNEST 2.0 study launched as one of five grantees of the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research's "Tipping Points" grant program. Our team, like other Tipping Points' grantees, sought to better understand complexities of local food systems, how parts of the food system influence one another, which strategies of change work best in different environments, and how they can be changed or combined to boost their impact on local food systems as well as overall community health and the economy.

In 2018, a team of academic researchers and community leaders in Cleveland, Ohio united to better understand how food systems in historically redlined neighborhoods could be leveraged in new ways to realize goals of equity and justice. Building on a long history of innovation and investment in the Greater Cleveland food system, we decided to take a step back to examine the forces that shape the foods we are able to put on our collective tables. Through a process of participatory system dynamic modeling, we mapped out our hopes and fears for local food systems. We examined the complex web of forces that structure economic opportunity, food security, and access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods. We grounded this work by focusing on the web of forces—held together by structural racism—that shape food systems in historically redlined neighborhoods in Cleveland, Ohio.

Racial justice

"The proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all. The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond 'anti-racism.' It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of *deliberate systems and supports* to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures."

Structural racism

"Normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism."

Learn More:

Racial Equity Tools Glossary.
<https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

This process clarified that the underlying problem of the food system is not lack of food. Rather, problems stem from unjust and deeply rooted forces that play out in daily practices and policies (i.e., policing, incarceration, gentrification, education and training). These combine to impact community food security by limiting fair access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods as well as financial strength within households.

This process also revealed that change is possible. If we want to tip the food system towards fairness then we need to disrupt the system at key leverage points. As described later in this tool, some leverage points are more squarely in line with traditional understandings of the food system while others extend beyond conventional boundaries. The Menu of Actions is one of several tools developed by the foodNEST 2.0 collaborative to mobilize community driven food systems change. Our work is iterative and adaptive and always open for deliberation and evolution, which aligns with our collective belief that transformation is a living process.

“ WHAT MAKES A HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEM? ... THAT’S KIND OF HARD TO EVEN SINGLE OUT BECAUSE IT TAKES ... BECAUSE IT’S SO MANY OTHER PIECES. ”

-RESIDENT INTERVIEW

Food apartheid

is a term used instead of “food desert” because it considers the whole food system rather than one part like supermarkets including the ways the food system is structured along lines of race, class, gender, and their intersections.

Learn More:

Brones, A., (2018). Food apartheid: The root of the problem with America’s groceries. *The Guardian*. Available online at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/15/food-apartheid-food-deserts-racism-inequality-america-karen-washington-interview>.

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.” Declaration of Nyeleni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, Mali, 2007

Learn More:

National Family Farm Coalition. (2020) What is food sovereignty? Available online at: <http://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>

Food security

is when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

Learn More:

United Nations Community on World Food Security. <http://www.fao.org/cfs/en/>

Community food security

is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.

–Mike Hamm and Anne Bellows (2003)

Learn More:

Sattanno, K., Swisher, M.E., & Moore, K.N. (2017). Defining community food security. Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, University of Florida. Available online at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/WC/WC06400.pdf>

HOW WE GOT HERE

The Menu of Actions is a compilation of key insights gained through an intensive data gathering process from July 2018 to August 2020. We engaged hundreds of stakeholders from across Greater Cleveland to gather feedback using participatory system dynamic modeling methods, in-depth interviews, review of data trends over time, and a series of public convenings organized in partnership with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (CCCFPC). This process was designed to illuminate existing injustices of the food system and provide guidance for redressing these dynamics.

We focused on defining hopes and fears for our food system.

We hope for a food system wherein:

- Households have financial strength.
- Communities have ownership over and leadership of food systems change.
- People have fair access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods.
- Communities are healthy in body, mind, and spirit.
- People have freedom, agency, and dignity over their food traditions.

We acknowledged fears about roadblocks for achieving our food future including:

- Lack of attention to deeply rooted forces such as structural racism that impact community food security.
- Loss of the big picture.
- Limited community voice and engagement in shaping the future.
- Inadequate follow through on action planning and implementation.
- Lack of capacity and resources to support change.

We dug deep to identify root causes of failures of the current food system.

We explored the metaphor of a plant to highlight the difference between the obvious problem (i.e., things the eye can see) and the root causes (i.e., things that are hard to see). We agreed that a focus on the obvious problem (i.e., lack of fresh and healthy food in a neighborhood or hunger) does not go deep enough. It too often leads to “fixes that fail.” This is when a solution is provided for a *symptom* of a problem rather than the problem itself. We committed to digging into the deeply rooted forces that determine the foods we put on our collective tables.

We imagined what it would take to achieve our hope for the future.

As we dug deeper, it became clear that our food system is complex and interconnected yet evolving and adaptive. We identified actions that can be coordinated to build a food system that prioritizes justice as well as sovereignty.

As we plan for food systems change, we must deliberately recognize the role of structural racism and focus our collective energy around targeted disruption at key leverage points. We must embark on a process of transformation hand-in-hand with the community and with attention given to potential unintended consequences of our actions. Trusting partnerships with open and honest communication and adaptive models of change are essential for our food future.

We identified foundational concepts for community driven food systems change.

Catalyzing change toward justice and sovereignty requires sequencing, integration, and tailoring of actions. While not exhaustive, the following were identified as potential targets that may be addressed in tandem as we work to build the food systems we hope for.

- Address immediate needs today (i.e., hunger, health, housing, jobs, child care, policing) and prepare for a future that shifts the status quo.
- Further capacity, agency, and opportunity in historically redlined neighborhoods to build financial strength of households and communities.
- Build trusting collaborative partnerships with shared vision, planning, metrics, and communication to achieve system-wide change.
- Increase policy engagement and grassroots organizing to change the forces that impact fair access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods.
- Expand infrastructure of social connectivity for neighbors to support neighbors.

Participatory system dynamics modeling

is a method to engage diverse stakeholders in collaborative problem solving, by testing ‘what-if’ scenarios that inform strategies of transformation that can achieve desirable, sustainable outcomes.

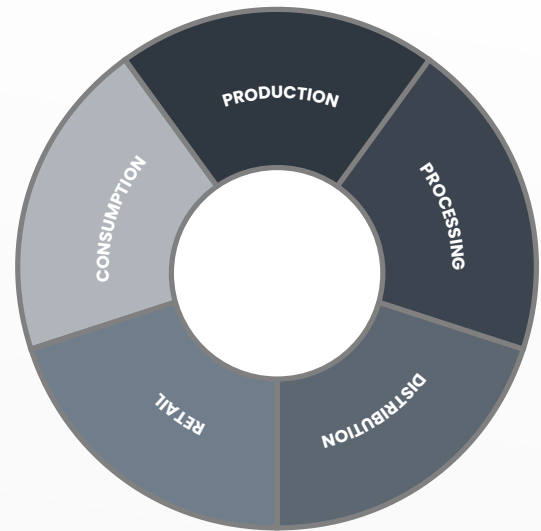
Learn More:

Hovmand, P. (2014). *Community based system dynamics*. Springer.

FOOD SYSTEM AS IT IS...

The food system as it is has not produced justice or sovereignty within historically redlined neighborhoods. The food system has many parts from production to consumption, yet other forces that influence every part of the food system remain hidden. It is essential to bring these other forces into clearer focus because they provide insights about why the food system as it is yields low wages and unfair conditions for food workers as well as vicious cycles of food insecurity, limited access to and ownership of full-service grocers, nutrition inequity, and chronic disease among racial and ethnic minorities and people with low-income. These are products of the food system as it was designed to be, an unjust system characterized as...

- Closed and automated.
- Disconnected and siloed.
- Resistant to change.
- Hierarchical with unfair power dynamics.
- Constrained with limited choice.



Food system as it is.

Food is the focus. You get what you get.

FOOD SYSTEM WE HOPE FOR...

Building the food system we hope for requires solidarity with people who are historically marginalized and racialized. Change is rooted in their lived experiences and informed by the realities of local neighborhood trends. The food system we hope for can serve to achieve justice where people and communities have freedom, agency, and dignity to be authentic with their food traditions. Communities have ownership over and leadership of food systems change. Indicators of success are households with financial strength; neighborhoods with fair access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods; and communities that are strong in body, mind, and spirit. These are products of the food system we hope for, a community driven system characterized as...

- Equitable and fair.
- Connected and complex.
- Open, engaging, and evolving.
- Vibrant and abundant.
- Devoid of structural racism.
- Self-reliant.
- Nutritious and enriching.



Food system we hope for.

People and communities are the focus.

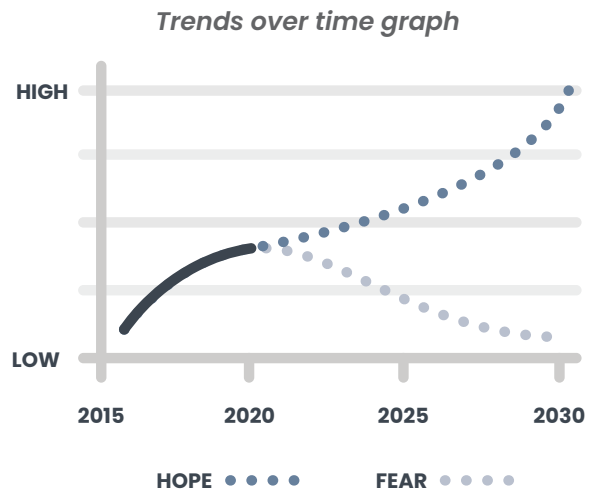
You get what you want today and in the future.

THINKING IN SYSTEMS

The food system, just like the human body, is a series of interacting components that combine to achieve something bigger than any one part. Our bodies are more than our digestive system and the food system is more than agricultural production. While we recognize this complexity, efforts to change the food system often focus on parts rather than the system-as-a-whole. Understanding the system-as-a-whole requires engagement from many people since we each bring a fresh perspective to the inter-workings of the system. Participatory system dynamic modeling is a method for examining the system-as-a-whole. This method strives to gather different perspectives to generate multi-layered stories about how the system works, which also reveals how it does not work for specific groups. These system insights provide evidence for changing the system-as-a-whole to achieve new goals.

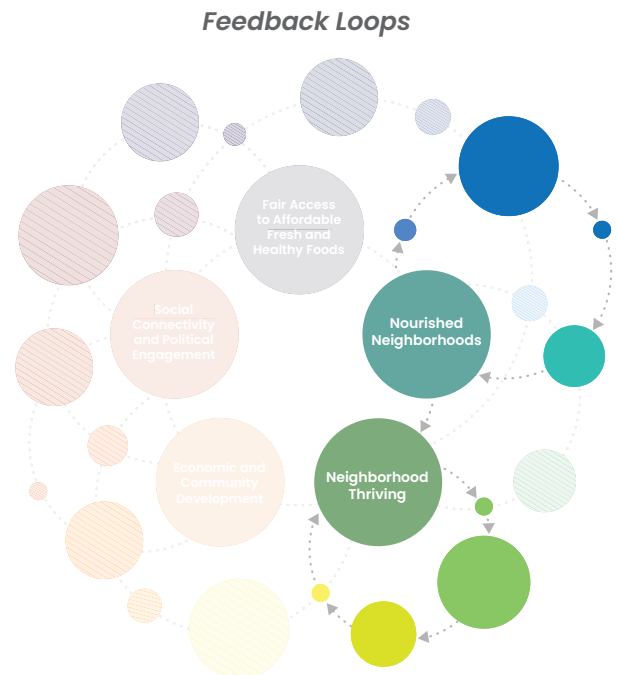
Trends over Time

Trends over time allow you to see behaviors resulting from the food system. Trends may be improving, getting worse, or in a steady state where trends are not changing. Trend lines can be of a desirable outcome like food security or an undesirable outcome like poverty. Participatory system dynamic modeling asks us to think about trends in two ways: *What is our hope for the future?* and *What is our fear?* The goal is to examine trends of indicators that are deemed by the local team to be meaningful and modifiable. In the foodNEST 2.0 study, we focused our trend lines on three main indicators considered to be products of an equitable local food system including (1) economic opportunity, (2) food security, and (3) fair access to fresh and healthy foods in historically redlined neighborhoods.



Feedback Loops

Systems are made up of many interconnected components linked together into cycles of feedback. This is in contrast to a linear view of change. Adjusting one part of the feedback loop generates change throughout. For example, increasing household food budget may increase a family's ability to meet food needs (i.e., be food secure), which may in turn reduce chronic disease. Lower levels of chronic disease may increase household wages that will lead to more funds for the household food budget and greater ability to achieve food security. This is a reinforcing cycle where, over time, more leads to more or less leads to less (i.e., change in same direction). Other forms of feedback are balancing where more leads to less or less leads to more (i.e., change in opposite directions). For example, lower household food budget may lead to lower food security, which increases



the gap in a household's ability to meet their food needs. This results in effort to close that gap such as a side hustle (i.e., babysitting, cleaning, extra job) to get additional income that will increase the household food budget.

Feedback loops are connected to other forces in the system like availability of well-paying jobs and other household costs (i.e., child care, housing, debt) that influence household food budget. Feedback loops tell a story about the web of connected forces that may be *collective targets* for local food systems change. They also illuminate why changes to just one part or parameter of the system is unlikely to yield the change needed to achieve our hopes for the food future.

Leverage Points

Leverage points have the potential to transform the system-as-a-whole. Results of the foodNEST 2.0 data gathering process revealed *five potential leverage points* that are the focus of this tool. These potential leverage points reflect broader concepts for change that inspire actions that may be sequenced, integrated, and/or tailored in different ways for different communities. For example, investments to advance neighborhood sovereignty and community driven development may be combined with comprehensive approaches that better link quality and affordable food supply with consumer demand. Collectively, these may result in significant improvements in economic opportunity, food security, and fair access to affordable, fresh, and healthy foods in historically redlined neighborhoods.

Because of their broad impact, it is critical for teams to examine potential unintended consequences and tradeoffs of leverage points. The three dozen example actions presented in this menu related to the five potential leverage points are designed to support ideation. While the potential leverage points are expected to resonate over time, the actions are evolving and should be driven by community interests.

Learning How to S.I.T. when Planning Food Systems Change

Sequence

What actions should be sequenced in time together? For example, A should go before B and B before C?

Integrate

What actions are synergistic when paired together? For example, A and B should always be implemented together because without A then the impact of B is lessened or delayed.

Tailor

No two communities are the same. In some, A is a good fit for achieving goal C. In others, A should be replaced with B to achieve C.

FIVE POTENTIAL LEVERAGE POINTS

Transforming the food system to achieve justice and sovereignty will require disruption at key leverage points. Leverage points can be pulled to more rapidly transform the system into a new state. Results of the foodNEST 2.0 data gathering process revealed that shifting the food system to a state of equity and justice will require community driven, coordinated, collaborative, and responsive actions within and across these five potential leverage points. The goal is to transform the food system from one characterized by *cycles of instability* into one that builds *cycles of freedom*. Cycles of instability are hard to navigate and offer few choices for realizing change. In contrast, cycles of freedom mobilize people and communities to have agency and dignity to be authentic with their food traditions and activate ownership over and leadership of food systems change. Partnerships that build solidarity through trusting and sustained relationships that are rooted in the lived experiences of the community are needed to catalyze these leverage points.

DEFINITIONS



A. Fair Access to Affordable Fresh and Healthy Foods

Comprehensive, community driven approaches are in place that better link quality and affordable food supply with consumer demand so people get the foods they want.



D. Economic and Community Development

Investments are made to advance neighborhood sovereignty and community driven development so people are empowered to thrive.



B. Nourished Neighborhoods

All residents have nourishment for optimal wellbeing—in body, mind, and spirit—to achieve fully individual, family, and neighborhood capabilities.



E. Social Connectivity and Policy Engagement

Collective power is cultivated to transform political, social, and economic forces shaping community capacity to nurture dignified and flourishing lives.



C. Neighborhood Thriving

Connections within the neighborhood feed the soul of the community while growing local wealth and ownership.




Social
Connectivity
and Political
Engagement

Nourished
Neighborhoods

A. FAIR ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE FRESH AND HEALTHY FOODS

Comprehensive, community driven approaches are in place that better link quality and affordable food supply with consumer demand so people get the foods they want.

- A1.** Establish a fund to support locally-owned food business development in historically redlined neighborhoods (i.e., access to capital, training, business advisors).
- A2.** Promote cooperatives for growing, processing, and/or distributing fresh and healthy foods.
- A3.** Establish incentives for farmers to grow fruits and vegetables with funding priority given to growers from historically underfunded populations (i.e., racial and ethnic minorities, women), and supporting applications for already existing initiatives.
- A4.** Develop merchants' association to support procurement of affordable fresh and healthy foods in smaller food retail venues.
- A5.** Provide resources for smaller food retailers to stock and sell affordable fresh and healthy foods (i.e., refrigeration, marketing) including connections to larger food retailers to support bulk buying needed to lower costs.
- A6.** Promote use of community kitchens/incubators among residents living in historically redlined neighborhoods and create a pipeline for these products to come to market.
- A7.** Establish business competitions that reward integration of fresh and healthy foods into food products that are affordable and enticing.
- A8.** Implement social marketing campaign to promote consumption of fresh and healthy foods (i.e., engage influencers such as athletes, community leaders) and highlight featured foods via diverse approaches (i.e., from pulpit, inclusion in school meal).
- A9.** Increase utilization of systems designed to link organizations or businesses with excess food to people and places with need (i.e., app, distribution network).
- A10.** Adopt wasted food reduction policies and practices within organizations, businesses, or the home with the goal of enacting city or county policy to ban food waste over the long-term and creating pathways for this food to be used for good.
- A11.** Develop a "food systems liaison" or specialist who raises awareness about and connects individuals and organizations to food systems resources.



Fair Access
to Affordable
Fresh and
Healthy Foods

Social
Connectivity
and Political
Engagement



B. NOURISHED NEIGHBORHOODS

All residents have nourishment for optimal wellbeing—in body, mind, and spirit—to achieve fully individual, family, and neighborhood capabilities.

- B1.** Increase funding for programs to subsidize costs of fresh and healthy foods for people at risk for chronic disease (i.e., produce prescriptions, Produce Perks).
- B2.** Widespread implementation of hands-on nutrition education, taste testing and demos, recipe development and cooking practice, and provision of resources to support home-based cooking (e.g., knives, cutting board) within settings with high reach (i.e., public schools, health centers, community centers, grocery stores, food pantries).
- B3.** Incentivize community driven, comprehensive (i.e., one-stop-shop) model of health and wellness care in historically redlined neighborhoods (i.e., medical and social services, mental health, transportation, food assistance, legal supports).
- B4.** Expand organizational supports for coordinated, neighborhood-based emergency response systems to provide fresh and healthy food provisions during times of personal, community, and environmental crisis (i.e., pandemic, homelessness, reentry).
- B5.** Expand efforts to reduce stigma for accessing food assistance resources.



Economic and
Community
Development

C. NEIGHBORHOOD THRIVING

Connections within the neighborhood feed the soul of the community while growing local wealth and ownership.

- C1.** Expand universal pre-k education that is of high quality and free.
- C2.** Enact housing development strategies to curb gentrification by financially incentivizing existing homeowners, especially those living in historically redlined neighborhoods, so these residents can choose to stay in their home (i.e., scaled rent model based on income, lease-to-own options, long-term homeowner tax cap, tax abatement for existing homeowners).
- C3.** Establish and/or expand network of high quality, affordable and safe housing options.
- C4.** Reform criminal justice system through targeted efforts aimed at reducing racial bias to lower incarceration rates among racial and ethnic minorities and offer opportunities for upward mobility among people who were formally incarcerated.
- C5.** Expand access to high speed internet.
- C6.** Promote neighborhood safety (i.e., street lighting, blight removal, safe bike lanes and bus stops).
- C7.** Promote neighborhood place making and beautification (i.e., parks and green space, community art, community gardens).
- C8.** Raise awareness about existing and creating new “third spaces” (i.e., share meeting areas) for community gatherings and access to resources.
- C9.** Expand public transportation options.

D. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Investments are made to advance neighborhood sovereignty and community driven development so people are empowered to thrive.

- D1.** Advocate for living wages needed for workers to meet their basic needs related food, housing, and other essential needs like health care and child care.
- D2.** Increase the value of SNAP benefits (i.e., cover more than 80% of household food needs, adjust to family need, account for needs of fixed income households).
- D3.** Create “financial bridge” to support tapering off of SNAP or other federal benefits to prevent an abrupt reduction of financial resources as households gradually increase earnings needed for self-reliance to avoid the benefits “cliff.”
- D4.** Remove barriers for people who were formally incarcerated to qualify for living wage jobs to experience upward mobility.
- D5.** Expand free or low-cost job training options that directly link graduates to livable wage jobs in fields such as healthcare, technology, and others that offer meaningful and stable employment.
- D6.** Establish new or expand existing funds to provide financial incentives for local resident-owned businesses.



E. SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY AND POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Collective power is cultivated to transform political, social, and economic forces shaping community capacity to nurture dignified and flourishing lives.

- E1.** Get neighbors out to vote and ensure voters are aware of issues that directly and indirectly impact fair access to fresh and healthy foods through voter registration, voter education, and reducing barriers on voting day.
- E2.** Empower community champions who are committed to promoting fair access to fresh and healthy foods to take on positions in elected offices (i.e., organizational boards, city council, school board, local government, state legislature, US congress).
- E3.** Develop new or coordinate with existing grassroots coalition(s) to mobilize policy changes that have a direct impact on fair access to fresh and healthy foods.
- E4.** Train neighbors in advocacy skills to ensure messages about fair access to fresh and healthy foods are conveyed in a manner that ignites policy actions (i.e., testimony, op-ed, social media).
- E5.** Establishing a full-time position for a food policy coalition coordinator.
- E6.** Identify and increase utilization of avenues of input for community members to collectively review and authorize neighborhood changes that directly and indirectly impact fair access to fresh and healthy foods (i.e., zoning commissions, food licensing, purchasing processes, etc.).

WHAT IS NEXT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

What are the possibilities for transformation within our community?

What are the leverage points for tipping the deeply rooted forces toward fairness?

Who will benefit the most from our approach?

Who needs to be at the table as we plan for food systems change?

How will we grow and nurture relationships needed for collaborative change?

How may our actions today lead to impacts tomorrow?

What are the unintended consequences of our work?
