

EAST POINT

CITY

AGRICULTURE

PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

6	INTRODUCTION
10	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
16	PLAN STRUCTURE
18	PRIORITY A: IMPROVING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS
32	PRIORITY B: SUPPORTING LOCAL URBAN GROWERS
40	PRIORITY C: ESTABLISHING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
58	PRIORITY D: CULTIVATING ENVIRONMENTALLY RESILIENT PRACTICES
66	PRIORITY E: BRANDING EAST POINT AS A LOCAL FOOD DESTINATION
78	NEXT STEPS
80	MATRIX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:





Community Engagement Partner

MISSION

Food Well Alliance is a collaborative network of local leaders working together to build thriving community gardens and urban farms in metro Atlanta.

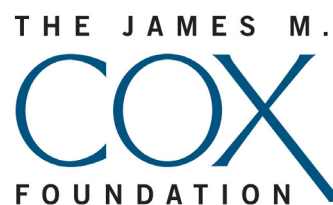
VISION

Food Well Alliance believes that food is a tool to build healthier communities and that thriving gardens and farms strengthen the heart of cities.

WHY CITY AGRICULTURE PLANNING?

Food Well Alliance believes that farms and gardens strengthen the heart of our cities and that they must be prioritized as cities continue to grow and develop. Successful City Agriculture Plans are possible when cities and communities are equally engaged in the process and urban growers have a seat at the planning table. When municipal leaders and diverse community leaders plan together for inclusive policies and projects, urban growers can provide greater access to locally grown food across the city, leading to healthier people, environments, and communities.

We were able to realize this innovative pilot program through the generous support of the James M. Cox Foundation and the Zeist Foundation.



Atlanta Regional Commission

Planning Partner

MISSION

The Atlanta Regional Commission advances the national and international standing of the region by leveraging the uniqueness of its evolving communities, anticipating and responding to current realities and driving a data-driven planning process that provides a high quality of life, balancing social, economic and environmental needs of all our communities.

VISION

The Atlanta Regional Commission employs shared foresight, expert staff, the ability to convene diverse communities and its reputation as a regional and national leader in order to support local governments, enhancing the lives of all our citizens by providing world-class infrastructure, building a competitive economy and shaping a regional ecosystem comprised of healthy and livable communities.

WHY CITY AGRICULTURE PLANNING?

In its role as the regional planning agency, ARC develops and updates the Atlanta Region’s Plan, a long-range blueprint that details investments needed to ensure metro Atlanta’s future success and improve the region’s quality of life. As a part of this long-range plan, ARC develops a Regional Resource Plan to protect and manage metro Atlanta’s natural and cultural resources. City Agriculture Planning aligns with two adopted policies outlined in the Regional Resource Plan. Creating and protecting space for urban farms, gardens, and orchards fulfills the plan’s objectives to preserve passive greenspaces as well as to preserve areas for local food production activities.



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2018, Food Well Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) initiated the process to develop Metro Atlanta’s first City Agriculture Plan. The community engagement-led process resulted in the City of East Point being selected to pilot Metro Atlanta’s first City Agriculture Plan.

What is a City Agriculture Plan?

A City Agriculture Plan provides a roadmap for a community to achieve its vision of creating a vibrant and sustainable community food system over the next 5-10 years. A community food system refers to the place-based relationships between producers, processors, distributors, consumers, and post-consumer waste disposal of food. In contrast to conventional food systems, a community food system makes these ties visible and integrates them to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of a community and its residents.^{1,2}

Urban agriculture is an integral part to the community food system and goes beyond food production in urban areas. Urban agriculture is the production, distribution, and marketing of food, pollinator plants and flowers, and related products within metropolitan areas and their edges. Within cities, urban agriculture encompasses community and school gardens, green roofs and backyard gardens, and other methods that maximize food production in limited space. At metropolitan edges, urban agriculture encompasses smaller-scale farms that supply farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and family farms. Overall, urban agriculture is a complex activity that affects food security, community development, environmental sustainability, and land use.³

The City Agriculture Plan is developed using a consensus-based and community-led process that brings together urban growers, residents, and City

officials to identify community priorities. It also identifies strategies to achieve community food system priorities as well as prioritize implementation over time. A City Agriculture Plan is not meant to be a stand-alone document but is meant to identify ways in which local food can be integrated into City plans and programs.

How can East Point benefit from one?

Like the rest of the Atlanta region, East Point is experiencing incredible development pressure. East Point’s proximity to downtown Atlanta and the world’s busiest airport draws both new businesses and new residents, driving up population growth and property values. Residential land values have risen by roughly 80% from 2012-2018.⁴ Its population has grown by over 3,000 residents since 2010 and is expected to grow even more in the decades ahead.⁵ While this growth brings economic opportunity, East Point residents want to ensure that supporting and growing urban agriculture and its community food system is a both a current and future priority. This plan establishes urban agriculture as a community development strategy for East Point.

Strengthening and growing East Point’s community food system has emerged as a priority for East Point residents. This plan communicates this priority and unites the existing local food community and the City government in a shared vision for urban agriculture. With the guidance of East Point urban growers and local food advocates, this plan charts a course on how the City government and its urban agriculture community can preserve and grow its existing urban agriculture network and community food system to address a range of current and future issues as well as cultivate community pride.

1. *Growing Food Connections. "Community Food Systems Planning."* (2017).
2. *Samina Raja, Branden Born, and Jessica Kozlowski Russel. "A Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning: Transforming Food Environments, Facilitating Healthy Eating."* American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service (2008).
3. *Kimberley Hodgson, Marcia Caton Campbell, and Martin Bailkey. "Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places"* American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service (2007)
4. *Federal Housing Administration Land Value Data, 2012-2018*
5. *Population Trends; Esri Business Analyst Online, American Community Survey Estimates*

EAST POINT CITY AGRICULTURE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

The East Point City Agriculture Plan aims to cultivate community pride and relationships amongst East Point residents, businesses, and local government. This plan builds, promotes, and sustains East Point's commitment towards socially equitable policies, programs, and sustainable land use practices that benefit the community food system, ensuring economic and ecological opportunity now and for future generations.

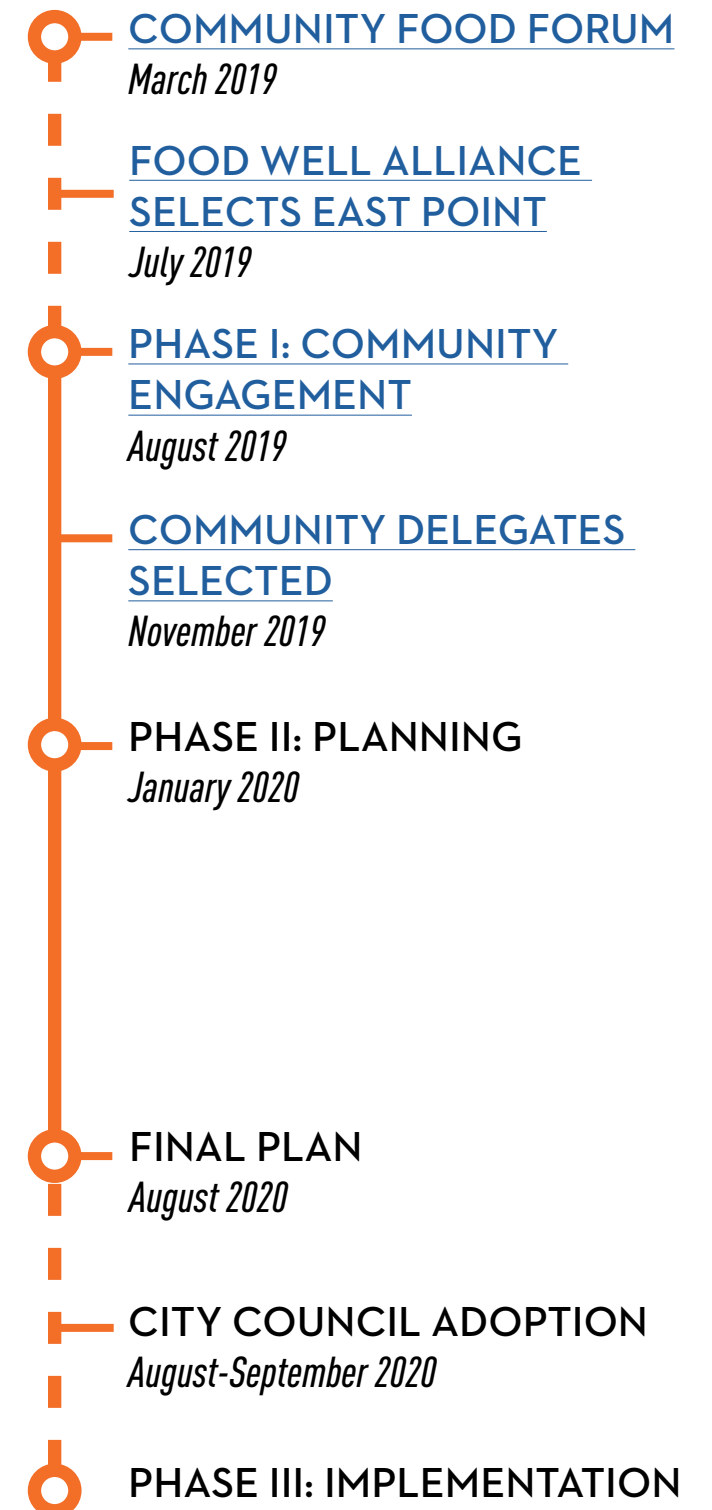
PROCESS

The East Point City Agriculture Plan was conducted in three phases:

1. Community Engagement Phase
2. Planning Phase
3. Implementation Phase

Food Well Alliance engaged Taproot Consulting to conduct the community engagement phase to identify priorities and existing urban agriculture assets in the city. During the planning phase, ARC led monthly steering committee meetings to generate ideas and recommendations that address the identified community priorities. The steering committee included urban growers, local food advocates, and City staff.

This document serves as an outcome of the first two stages and will guide Food Well Alliance and the City of East Point in the final implementation phase once adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging the community was imperative to the success of this plan. The planning team engaged community members and stakeholders in both phase 1 and 2 of the planning process. In phase 1, the community participated in the community food forum, the plan kick-off event, the City Agriculture Tour, individual and group interviews, and focus groups at neighborhood association meetings. A group of stakeholders chosen to serve on the steering committee directed the plan through the second phase of the process.



COMMUNITY FOOD FORUM

On March 14, 2019, over 100 community members attended East Point's Community Food Forum to learn about City Agriculture Planning and to share ideas for how East Point can prioritize urban agriculture in their future development. At the forum, Food Well Alliance asked attendees the following three questions:

What makes East Point Unique?

Food Forum attendees believed that East Point is unique because the City is diverse in its people and its culture. Residents expressed that the City is an affordable community that is both walkable and transit accessible. East Point offers an abundance of greenspace and is located at the headwaters of the Flint River. Furthermore, the City is brimming with enthusiasm for progress. East Point plans to construct almost 25 miles of trails within the City limits in 10 years. It is leveraging its proximity to the busiest airport and collaborating with neighboring cities for economic development. The City is a hub of food system experts and organizations ready to coordinate their efforts for a future focused on urban agriculture.

How can community agriculture play a role in East Point's vision?

East Point residents expressed that community agriculture will:

- » **Strengthen East Point's economy** by creating green jobs and job training opportunities for people of all walks of life.
- » **Promote health and wellness** across all demographics
- » **Build community** by connecting people across different ages and cultures
- » **Foster a connection to the environment** that will lead to resource conservation.
- » **Provide educational opportunities** through mentorships and partnerships with schools
- » **Reduce crime by creating a sense of community** ownership and providing opportunities for those previously incarcerated.

Who are the Local Food Champions?

East Point residents identified several local food champions from individuals to local businesses. People like Tenisio Seanima, an East Point resident who owns Nature's Candy Farms in nearby Decatur, GA, are strong advocates for local food. Physicians and nutrition specialists promote the local food movement by encouraging their patients to eat healthy, locally sourced foods. The East Point Farmers Market and community supported agriculture (CSAs) programs like those supported by The Common Market offer fresh, local produce to their community. School and community gardens educate people of all ages about the importance of local, fresh food. Non-profit farms like East Point's Truly Living Well provide produce, foster community, and offer urban agriculture training. Local businesses and restaurants like East Point's Arden's Garden do their part to promote healthy living. East Point is truly a hub of food system experts and advocates.



COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

Through a kick-off event, a City Agriculture Tour, individual interviews, and focus groups, the planning team gathered feedback from East Point residents. The appendix includes a full account of this process and its results. During the kick-off event, the planning team facilitated an asset-mapping exercise to identify existing components of East Point's community food system. The map on the following page depicts the results.

Community members identified 40 urban agriculture related assets throughout East Point and in neighboring cities. These included assets categorized as:

- » Urban growers and home gardeners
- » Cultural and community centers
- » Culinary assets
- » Health and wellness professionals
- » Institutions
- » Greenspace
- » Direct marketing outlets for local food

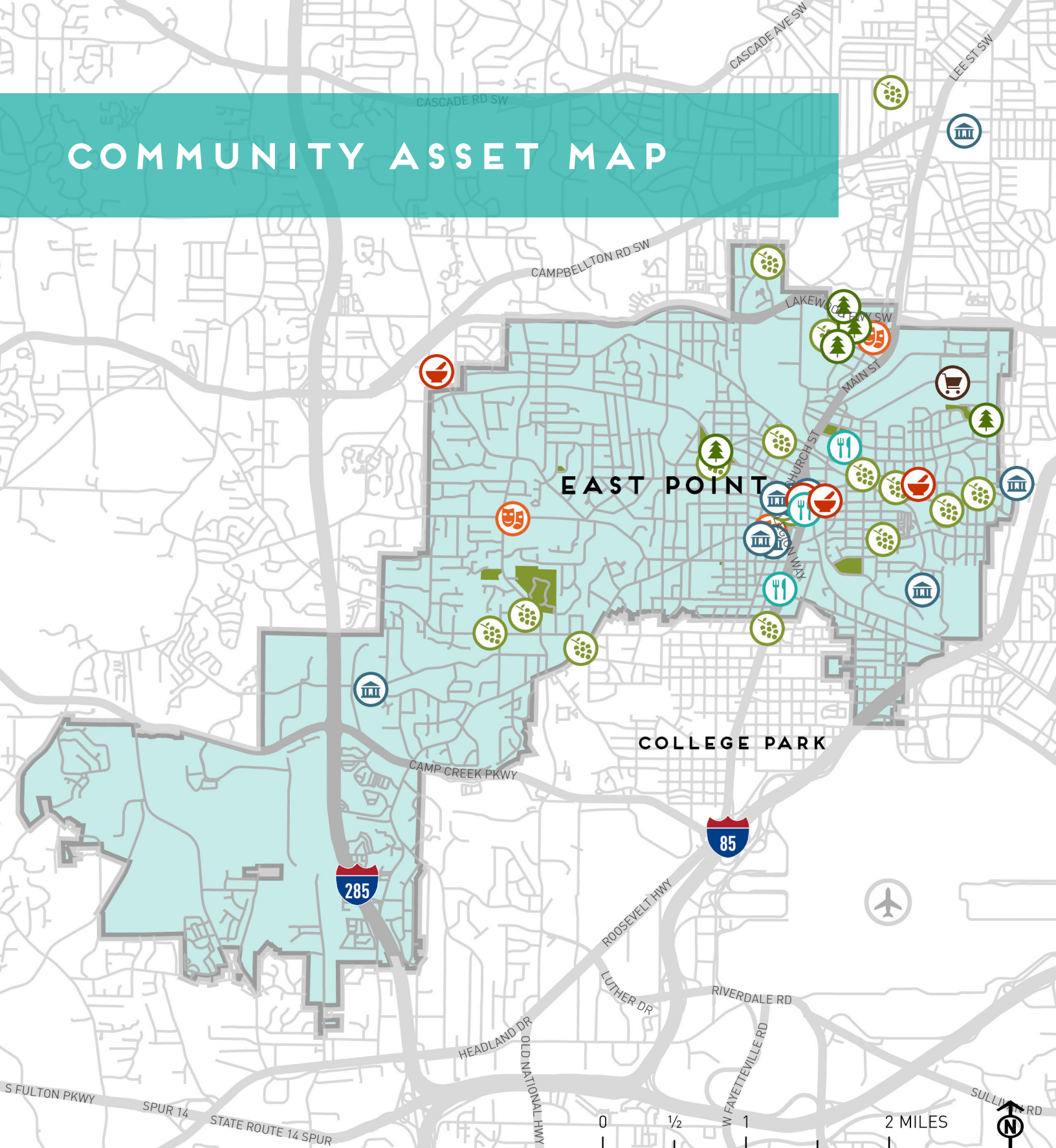
Residents and existing data identified 16 food producing spaces across categories. Residents mapped 9 gardens and urban growers within East Point. Two institutions also have community gardens: Resurgence Hall Charter School and East Point Housing Authority. In addition to the community asset mapping exercise, data from the Atlanta Local Food Initiative (ALFI) showed 3 additional food producing spaces in the City:

- » Woodland Middle School Garden
- » East Point Historical Society Orchard
- » KIPP South Fulton Academy Garden

The specific assets for each ward are shown in the appendix.



COMMUNITY ASSET MAP



COMMUNITY ASSETS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| CULINARY | FARMERS/PRODUCERS | HEALTH & WELLNESS |
| CULTURAL/COMMUNITY | INSTITUTIONS | PARKS |
| DIRECT MARKETING OUTLETS | GREENSPACE | |

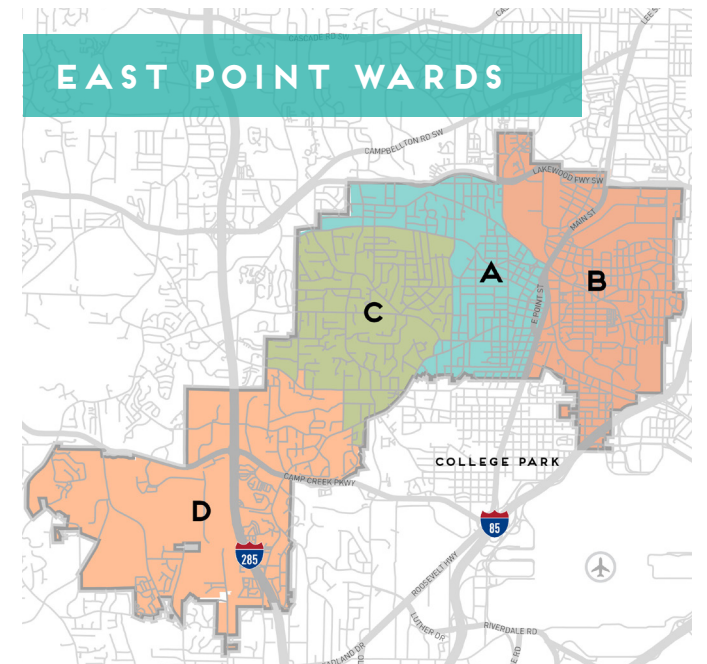
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Throughout the month of September 2019, the planning team conducted four focus groups at neighborhood association meetings in each of the four wards of East Point: A, B, C, and D. In total, these focus groups engaged over 100 East Point residents.

Using information gathered from both the Community Food Forum and the community engagement phase, the planning team identified the following community priorities for urban agriculture in East Point:

1. Brand East Point as a Local Food Destination
2. Define Local Government Commitment
3. Support Environmental Stewardship
4. Improve Food Security and Health Outcomes
5. Increase Education & Training Resources
6. Expand Local Agriculture Product Availability
7. Focus on Pest Control Management

EAST POINT WARDS



STEERING COMMITTEE

In the planning phase, a steering committee worked with ARC to develop ideas, strategies, and recommendations to address the community priorities.

The steering committee included urban growers, non-profit leaders, local food advocates, and City staff. Three members served as community-appointed delegates. During a Community Choice Night, East Point residents voted and selected these delegates. The City Council appointed four additional members to represent the City's four wards. The Mayor also appointed a member. City staff from Economic Development and Planning & Community Development departments filled the remaining positions. The planning team worked extensively with the steering committee to develop ideas, strategies, and recommendations to address the community's seven priorities.





PLAN STRUCTURE

PLAN STRUCTURE

The planning team discussed the seven priorities over the course of seven monthly meetings and condensed them into 5 sections listed below. Sections such as 'Establishing the Role of Local Government' and 'Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination' directly translate into distinct plan sections while the remaining five priorities appear throughout all recommendation sections. These categories simply frame the plan's analysis and recommendations. While distinct, many of the goals and recommendations in these sections overlap and feed into one another.

- A. Improving Local Food Access
- B. Supporting Local Urban Growers
- C. Establishing the Role of Local Government
- D. Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices
- E. Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

Many steering committee members plan to continue their partnership and leadership through implementation; thus, this group appears in many of the recommendations. For the remainder of the

document the plan refers to this group of steering committee members and local food leaders as the Urban Agriculture Collective (UAC).

Each section documents recommendations that address the community-identified priorities. These are ideas that the City could implement but require independent processes to incorporate considerations for other City-wide goals as well as determine additional details for implementation. The plan does not intend for these recommendations to be strictly prescriptive but simply, to provide a framework of potential policies and programs for the City and the UAC to address community-identified priorities.

The recommendations appear in short-term, long-term, and ongoing timeframes. Short-term strategies refer to 'low-hanging fruit' and those that the City, the UAC, and other stakeholders could implement in the first two years after plan adoption. Long-term recommendations look further ahead on a 2-5-year timeline. Finally, ongoing activities refer to those that East Point could continue for years to come.





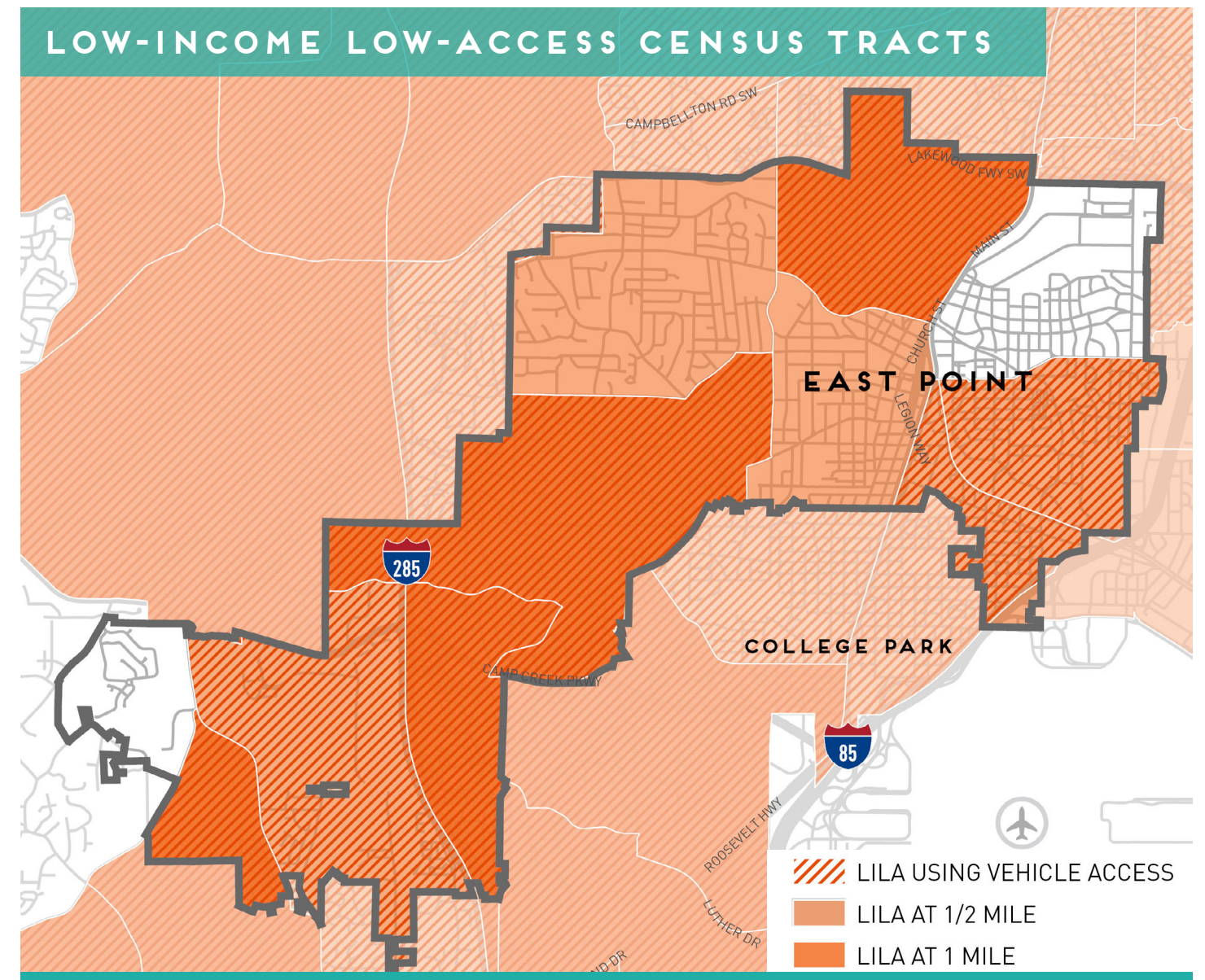
PRIORITY A: IMPROVING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS

IMPROVING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS

Access to fresh, local food is a cornerstone of healthy communities, and was identified by residents of East Point as a priority for the City Agriculture Plan. Studies show that limited access to healthful foods within neighborhoods act as barrier to eating healthily and have negative health impacts on residents.¹ East Point residents' desire to increase their access to local food is shared by East Point Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham, who has stated her commitment to work with residents and other partners to create a food system that "promotes health and makes health attainable, affordable, and fun for our residents."

Based on US Census data, 91.3% of East Point residents live in a USDA-designated Low-Income Low-Access (LILA) census tract. The data also shows that many residents also lack access to a car, providing a significant barrier to fresh, healthy food. A map showing these census tracts appears below. The following recommendations offer strategies on how the City of East Point can increase access to healthy, local food.

1. Samina Raja, Branden Born, and Jessica Kozlowski Russel. "A Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning: Transforming Food Environments, Facilitating Healthy Eating." American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service (2008).



ONGOING STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION A-1:

Leverage Existing Farm-to-School Educational Opportunities in East Point

There are several benefits to participating in farm-to-school programs and related educational opportunities, including improved nutrition for school meals, market diversification for local urban growers, and a boost to the local economy.

Since 2011, the Fulton County School Nutrition Program has participated in the National Farm-to-School Initiative. This program supports local urban growers while providing fresh, local produce in school lunches. As the Fulton County School District oversees programming for schools within East Point, the UAC (see page 17 for definition) and the City of East Point could encourage Fulton County Schools to implement the program in East Point's public schools and also, to enroll qualifying schools in the National School Lunch Program. This program offers cash reimbursements to participating schools for every local meal served. More money is given to schools based on financial eligibility status, and schools with >=60 percent free or reduced lunches are eligible for the highest reimbursement tier.



Renaissance Middle School in Fulton County promotes their use of Georgia grown lettuce. Image courtesy of Fulton County Schools.

Several schools in East Point would qualify for the higher reimbursement tier from NSLP if participating in this program including:

- » Asa Hilliard Elementary School
- » Parklane Elementary
- » Brookview Elementary
- » Conley Hills Elementary
- » Hamilton E. Holmes Elementary
- » Woodland Middle School
- » Paul D. West Middle School
- » Tri-Cities High School

In addition to supplying local food to schools, the UAC could also encourage the Fulton County School district to tap into educational programs and resources offered by the UGA Extension, which has a location in East Point. The University of Georgia (UGA) Extension offers K-8 curriculum that fits within State of Georgia educational standards. These include lesson plans related to agriculture, earth science, physical science, and life science curriculum.



Image courtesy of UGA Extension.

Additionally, the UAC could partner with the Greening Youth Foundation that focuses on engaging underrepresented youth in environmental education, exposing students to healthy lifestyle choices to create an overall healthy community. Their Urban Youth Corps program, for instance, trains youth between the ages of 17 and 25 in the areas of conservation, urban agriculture, professional development, and entrepreneurship. The Greening Youth Foundation also offers a Public School Initiative, where high school and college students can participate in an internship program while learning about sustainability, conservation, and the benefits of gardening.



Greening Youth Foundation's Urban Youth Corps plants pollinator gardens in the Vine City neighborhood of Atlanta. Image courtesy of Greater Atlanta Pollinator Partnership.

The Georgia Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) program provides educational content for middle and high school students related to agriculture. This includes STEM content in agriscience, biotechnology, turf management, landscaping, food science, forestry, environmental science, agricultural engineering, and agribusiness management.

The above strategies would not only improve access to local food for school-aged East Point residents, but would train and educate the next generation in urban agriculture skills.



REAP employees stand by a garden bar that offers locally grown produce to elementary school students in Madison. Image courtesy of REAP.

Case Studies

Madison, Wisconsin has a REAP Farm-to-School Program. Ingredients for school meals are sourced from over 20 sustainable area farms. Each year, thousands of pounds of local fruits and vegetables are purchased from local farms, supporting local urban growers. Through the program, students also learn about nutrition, food systems, sustainability, and farming.

RECOMMENDATION A-1:

Leverage Existing Farm-to-School Educational Opportunities in East Point

TIMEFRAME:

Ongoing

ADDRESSES:

- » **Improving Local Food Access**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices
- » Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

LEAD:

UAC and City of East Point

SUPPORT:

National School Lunch Program; Fulton County Farm-to-School Program; Greening Youth Foundation; and Georgia CTAE Program

STARTING STEPS:

- » Make contacts with school administrators and teachers and inquire about the possibility of Farm-to-School participation
- » UAC and the City of East Point could encourage Fulton County Schools to implement existing National Farm-to-School Initiative program, or similar programs, in the City of East Point.

RESOURCES:

1. [National Farm-to-School Initiative](#)
2. [East Point Schools](#) qualifying for higher NSLP reimbursement tier
3. [REAP Farm-to-School Program](#)
4. [UGA Extension agricultural curriculum](#)
5. [Greening Youth Foundation](#)
6. [Georgia CTAE](#)

RECOMMENDATION A-2:

Continue Pursuit of Mobile Market Partnership

The East Point Farmers Market and Market 166 Grocery & Kitchen Co-op have partnered to create a mobile farmers market to address food insecurity exacerbated by COVID-19. The mobile market would expand the East Point Farmers market reach to provide access to affordable, fresh, locally-grown produce to residents in areas that otherwise lack access to fresh food. Additionally, the program will offer options to double SNAP dollars. The UAC and the City can support this endeavor through advertising and grant applications, even after the pandemic ends.

The City could adjust its zoning ordinance to allow for a mobile market to service residential streets. Currently, the zoning ordinance prohibits all food trucks from entering residential districts. The City could make special considerations for food trucks with the express purpose of selling fresh produce

to East Point residents, as a mobile farmers market addresses food insecurity.

Case Studies

The Forsyth Farmers Market in Savannah, Georgia has executed a successful mobile market. In 2015, the USDA awarded the Forsyth Farmers Market a National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant to kickstart the Farm Truck 912 mobile market. After a rocky start of disappointing sales, the market restructured its approach. The market organizers increased stops and adjusted hours to increase access specifically in neighborhoods located in LILA census tracts. The East Point Farmers Market and Market 166 could connect with the Forsyth Farmers Market to understand and adapt to early challenges.



Fitzgerald Smith and Sissy Lang of the East Point Farmers Market. Market 166 logo courtesy of its Facebook page.

RECOMMENDATION A-2: *Continue Pursuit of Mobile Market Partnership*

TIMEFRAME:

Ongoing

ADDRESSES:

- » **Improving Local Food Access**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

LEAD:

East Point Farmers Market; Market 166

SUPPORT:

UAC; East Point Economic Development Department; Forsyth Farmers Market; and UGA Cooperative Extension

STARTING STEPS:

- » Connect with Forsyth Farmers Market and/or other successful mobile market programs to discuss early challenges
- » Determine feasibility of using SNAP-doubling benefit on mobile market
- » Identify funding sources for van purchase and other equipment
- » Identify methodology for mobile market locations (i.e. food insecurity indicators, population density, existing events)

RESOURCES:

1. [Forsyth Farmers Market Farm Truck](#)

RECOMMENDATION A-3: *Encourage Home Growing to Increase Food Security*

To improve local food access in East Point, residents can be empowered to grow their own produce and increase their food security through a City-sponsored initiative designed to provide materials and assistance needed for home-growing. By providing containers or materials for raised beds, seeds or starter plants, and informational brochures on home growing, the City of East Point can demonstrate a long-term commitment to improving residents' food security in East Point.

Recently, several initiatives aimed to improve food security through providing local residents with materials to grow their own produce have been implemented. For example, the City of South Fulton launched the South Fulton Grows initiative to improve local food security by providing resources for residents to grow their own food. Through the initiative, the City is providing 200 free grow box kits (valued around \$150 a piece) which will be made available to local residents on a first-come, first-

served basis. The initiative was created between the City manager's office and local agriculture operation, Miller City Farms. The kits consist of the instructions and materials needed to plant and grow vegetables, including the lumber needed to create a 4x4 raised bed. Each kit is expected to yield enough produce for a family of three. Similarly, Food Well Alliance has partnered with the City of East Point and Metro Atlanta Urban Farm to prepare bucket gardens, containing starter plants, to food-insecure families in East Point.

The City of East Point, in partnership with the UAC, Food Well Alliance and/or other local partners could implement a similar program aimed to increase local food security among East Point residents. This program could include a sponsored table at the East Point Farmers market where residents can pick up kits, including seeds or starter plants, and informational brochures on plant care, to start growing their own produce.



During the COVID-19 outbreak, Food Well Alliance and Metro Atlanta Urban Farm distributed bucket gardens to East Point residents, so they could grow their own food.

RECOMMENDATION A-3:
Encourage Home Growing to Increase Food Security

TIMEFRAME:

Ongoing

ADDRESSES:

- » **Improving Local Food Access**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices
- » Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

LEAD:

UAC, City of East Point

SUPPORT:

Food Well Alliance, Metro Atlanta Urban Farm, Other local urban growers

STARTING STEPS:

- » Determine initiative type, budget, and required resources
- » Meet with potential partners to discuss logistics of implementation

RESOURCES:

1. [Food Well Alliance and Metro Atlanta Urban Farm "Bucket Brigade"](#)
2. [South Fulton Grows](#)

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION A-4:
Develop a Healthy Corner Store Incentive Program

Per the convenience and grocery store map on the next page, East Point is home to only two conventional supermarkets, a Wayfield Foods and a Piggly Wiggly. There are also two small, independent grocery stores that offer a limited, but specialized selection. In comparison, there are 25 convenience stores throughout the City, 14 located at gas stations and 11 standalone stores. Developing an incentive program for corner stores to carry local produce can help to support urban growers while also providing residents with increased access to healthy food.

East Point could implement a corner store incentive program as a part of the existing Healthy Point initiative. The UAC and the City could partner with local public health institutions like those identified in the community asset mapping. These include Morehouse Health System, Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center South, and Grady East Point Health Center. Other partners could include Morehouse School of Medicine, Emory University, the CDC, or Fulton County Board of Health. Next steps include cataloguing corner stores, determining cost of incentives per store and the workload involved, identifying potential funding sources, and outreach and advertising of the program. The map on the next page documents existing corner stores and grocery stores.

The program provides community education and launch events to increase public awareness, provides interior signage for corner stores – including displays that will inform customers that the produce is locally grown, provides store owners with technical assistance with bookkeeping, building distributor relationships, managing coupon promotions and pricing, and provides access to loans to install energy efficient refrigeration equipment with which to store the produce.

Locally, the Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center has partnered with Georgia State University's School of Public Health to create the Healthy Corner Store Initiative (2), intended to promote access to healthy foods in South Atlanta neighborhoods in order to improve public health outcomes. Corner stores participating in the program are identified as Healthy Corner Stores, and each must stock a minimum of 4 healthy food choices including fruits and vegetables. While this program does not partner with local urban growers, it could serve as a local resource, or potentially partner with the UAC to expand to East Point corner stores and incorporate produce grown at local gardens.

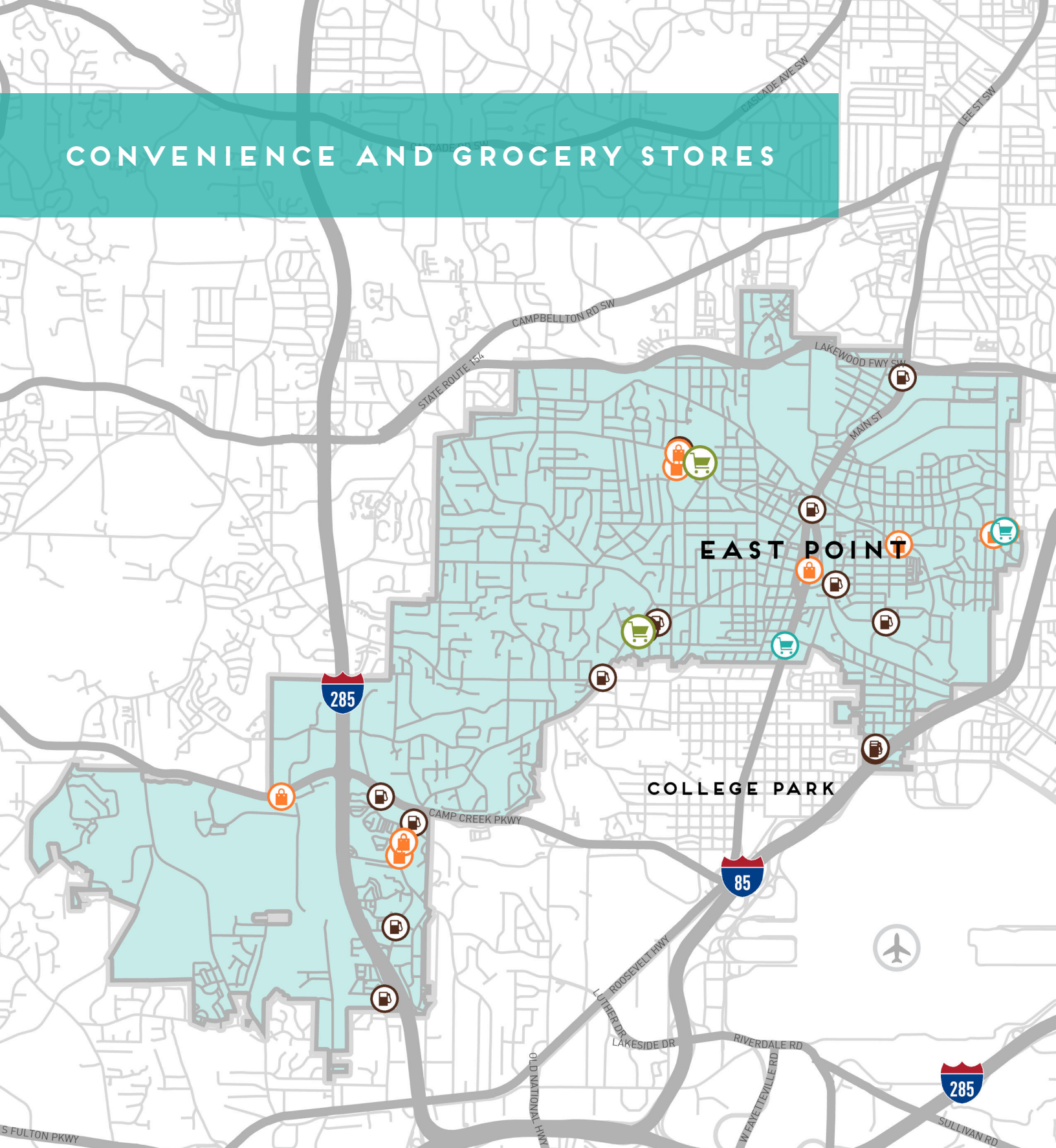
Case Studies





In Seattle, the Healthy Foods Here Program (1) links local urban growers with corner store owners to increase fresh food access in LILA census tracts. The program is possible through funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), partnerships between the Seattle Office of Economic Development, and local public health department, among others. The program recognizes that outreach and education to the community about the program is a critical step to create the demand needed to make the program successful, as changing stock alone is not enough to change behaviors



Image courtesy of the Morehouse School of Medicine.

CONVENIENCE AND GROCERY STORES



-  SUPERMARKET
-  SMALL GROCERY STORE
-  CONVENIENCE STORE
-  CONVENIENCE STORE AT GAS STATION

0 1/2 1 2 MILES



RECOMMENDATION A-4:

Develop a Healthy Corner Store Incentive Program

TIMEFRAME:

Long-Term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Improving Local Food Access**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government

LEAD:

UAC and City of East Point Planning & Community Development and Economic Development departments

SUPPORT:

Market 166; Morehouse Health System; Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center South; Grady East Point Health Center; Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center; Georgia State School of Public Health; Emory University School of Public Health; the CDC; and Fulton County Board of Health.

STARTING STEPS:

- » Connect with potential partners in public health fields
- » Determining cost of incentives per store and the workload involved
- » Identify potential funding sources
- » Catalogue corner stores
- » Strategize outreach and advertising of the program

RESOURCES:

1. [Seattle Healthy Foods Here Program](#)
2. [Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center Healthy Corner Store Initiative](#)

RECOMMENDATION A-5:

Support the Creation of a Full-Service Grocery Store

Given the lack of traditional supermarkets in East Point, the City could support the creation of a full-service community grocery store that predominantly sells produce from local growers and allows the community to shape its food system to improve equity.

There are many benefits associated groceries and co-ops that stock local produce at affordable prices. Benefits include providing residents across the income spectrum access to fresh produce while supporting local growers, boosting the local economy by circulating food dollars locally, and also helping to brand East Point as a local food destination. Additionally, the presence of a full-service co-op that stocks local produce would also be a sustainable practice, as it would encourage residents to eat seasonally, and would reduce the number of miles involved in the transport of produce.

Market 166 strives to serve as a community co-op to equitably serve the local food needs of its community. The City could support it and other local food start-ups through incentive programs as well as seek other regulatory opportunities for additional support.

Several existing initiatives in East Point and the state could be leveraged to incentivize the creation of a community co-op. Through the State's Opportunity Zone program, \$3,500 tax credits per job are available

for eligible new businesses creating two or more jobs. East Point's Utility Rate Reduction Extension can be applied to small businesses (those with 9 or fewer employees) to save 30% on utilities in the first year of operation, 20% in the second year, and 10% in the third year with a limit of \$10,000 in savings per year.

Case Studies

Beyond existing programs, other financial and regulatory incentives for groceries that serve local produce have appeared across the country. In Washington, DC, the Supermarket Tax Exemption Act waived property taxes, business license fees, personal property taxes, and construction material sales and use taxes for grocery stores in designated areas. New York City established the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) Program in 2009 to help establish and retain grocery stores in underserved communities by partnering with the Department of City Planning to offer zoning incentives including development rights, reductions in required parking, in addition to a 25-year land tax abatement and building tax stabilization. The UAC could explore the pursuit of similar programs in East Point.



RECOMMENDATION A-5:

Support the Creation of a Full-Service Grocery Store

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Improving Local Food Access**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices
- » Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

LEAD:

City of East Point Economic Development Department, Market 166

SUPPORT:

UAC, City of East Point Planning and Community Development

STARTING STEPS:

- » Review existing programs in East Point that could be leveraged to incentivize a full-service community co-op
- » Meet with the City of East Point Economic Development department to discuss existing and potential programs best suited for this initiative

RESOURCES:

1. [DC Supermarket Tax Exemption Act](#)
2. [NYC FRESH Program](#)



PRIORITY B: SUPPORTING LOCAL URBAN GROWERS

SUPPORTING URBAN GROWERS

East Point community members identified ‘ensuring urban agriculture can be a viable business’ as a planning priority. In pursuing opportunities for the City to support local urban growers, a resident discussed the importance of having the right programs in place “to help attract the right businesses, because it’s not going to just take community, it’s going to take entrepreneurs and people who can run a business” in order to have a successful community of local urban growers. Further, residents also expressed that “developing incentives and policies to attract better businesses and entrepreneurs” has a “potential economic growth impact” for the City of East Point.

A strong urban agriculture presence can boost the local economy by encouraging more money to circulate locally, fostering strong community ties, and

by providing a unique draw to the City. The presence of incentives and resources can help support urban agriculture as a viable business, thereby supporting the local community and economy.

Such incentives and resources are particularly important as starting an urban agriculture operation often involves steep costs for things like land and equipment, which can be prohibitive expenses for many potential urban growers. Further, running an urban agriculture operation also involves substantial costs for labor, planting, fertilization, water utilities, and storage, among others. Additionally, local urban growers need to connect with buyers, and locate opportunities to sell their products to turn a profit and maintain their business. The UAC and the City of East Point can pursue the following opportunities to support urban agriculture as a viable business.



SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION B-1:

Advocate for Urban Agriculture in Existing and New Incentive Programs

Small business incentives and assistance programs can support entrepreneurial urban growers to start an urban agriculture operation as well as markets that sell local produce. Such programs not only benefit local urban growers, but help to boost the local economy, and to keep the community unique. The City, in partnership with the UAC, could adjust its existing incentive programs (1), so that urban growers can fully leverage these benefits.

The City of East Point is within a state-designated Opportunity Zone. Through the State's existing Opportunity Zone program, businesses are eligible for a tax credit of \$3,500 per job if the business creates at least 2 new jobs, regardless of the type of industry. The business can apply this credit for a period of 5 years. While the City does not have control over the elements of this program, the economic development department could work with UAC to promote this program and other applicable incentive programs to potential urban growers and food distributors and existing urban agriculture operations and markets.

The East Point Garage to Storefront Incentive waives permit fees and plan review for qualifying applicants. The program could explicitly include urban growers and local food distributors in its advertising. This program would apply to home-based urban growers looking to start an urban agriculture business with a home-based business license. The program could also include information on how home urban growers can sell at the East Point Farmers Market.

Furthermore, East Point could create an urban greening incentive program to encourage residents and businesses to grow vertical and rooftop gardens. Leveraging these areas would enhance the City's beauty and provide more growing space.

The City could also introduce new incentive programs that promote urban agriculture. Once completed, these incentive programs can be included in the resources database, a recommendation discussed later in this section.



A rooftop garden. Image courtesy of Living Architecture Monitor.

RECOMMENDATION B-1:

Advocate for Urban Agriculture in Existing and New Incentive Programs

TIMEFRAME:

Short-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Supporting Local Urban Growers**
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government

LEAD:

UAC and City of East Point Economic Development Department

SUPPORT:

City of East Point Planning & Community Development Department

STARTING STEPS:

- » Review existing programs and consider ways to explicitly include or advertise to existing, local growing operations and potential urban growers seeking to start a business
- » Add details of the applicable incentive programs to the resource database (see recommendation B-4)

RESOURCES:

1. Local urban growers and food advocates can find information on East Point's economic development assistance programs [here](#).

RECOMMENDATION B-2:

Develop a List of Agriculture Resources for an Online Database and How-to Guide for Urban Growers

The UAC could compile existing resources and provide content for an online urban agriculture resource database and develop a 'How-to-Guide for East Point Urban Growers.' This list would provide information pertaining to starting or maintaining an urban agriculture operation including, but not limited to the following:

- » grants and loans
- » job tax credit programs
- » available land
- » zoning requirements
- » tool lending programs
- » opportunities to create connections between urban growers and buyers

Long-term, the City of East Point would host this resource database on its website, and the webpage would serve as one-stop-shop for potential urban growers to find information about starting their urban agriculture operation. The UAC may publish these resources elsewhere as well.

Many organizations like UGA Extension and Georgia Organics have existing databases that the City and the UAC can point urban growers to while they develop their own resource list and online platform.



HOME COVID-19 AGLANTA GROWN GROWS-A-LOT PROGRAM FRESH FOOD ACCESS REPORT URBAN FOOD FOREST AT BROWNS MILL AGLANTA EATS FESTIVAL

AGLANTA CONFERENCE ACCESS AGLANTA RESOURCES FOOD MATTERS CALENDAR GRANTS

AgLanta Grows-A-Lot Resources



Photo credit - Park Pride

The City of Atlanta's urban agriculture program, 'Aglanta,' has its own resource page that offers information on relevant legislation & permits, toolkits, training & business planning programs, as well as other resources. Image courtesy of Aglanta/Park Pride.

RECOMMENDATION B-2:

Develop a List of Agriculture Resources for an Online Database and How-to Guide for Urban Growers

TIMEFRAME:

Short-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Supporting Local Urban Growers**

LEAD:

City of East Point Economic Development and Planning & Community Development departments; UAC

SUPPORT:

UGA Cooperative Extension, Georgia Grown, Georgia Organics, etc.

STARTING STEPS:

- » Research and record existing resource databases and potential partnerships
- » Identify the City of East Point webpage & other websites where the information could be shared
- » Identify point person(s) to create content for the database and to keep the site updated
- » Create a City webpage to promote those existing resources to urban growers
- » Develop a How-to-Guide for urban growers and publish it to the City webpage
- » Use social media to share educational videos, publicize workshops, etc.

RESOURCES:

The following are examples of existing resources that can be added to the database and webpage. These resources are not exhaustive. The UAC in partnership with the City of East will determine the specific resources to include.

Existing Databases

- » [UGA Extension](#)
- » [USDA](#)
- » [Georgia Grown](#)
- » [Georgia Organics](#)

Financial and Educational Resources:

- » [USDA Family Farm Microloan Program](#) offers microloans for up to \$35,000.
- » UGA Cooperative Extension's partnership with the East Point Farmers Market offers the [Journeyman certification course](#) (small farm business planning, small fruit and vegetable production, and hands-on production assistance)

Tools and Volunteers

- » Food Well Alliance's [Urban Agriculture Tool Lending Program](#): allows local urban growers to affordably rent equipment, reducing operational costs for local urban growers.
- » [Atlanta Community Toolbank](#) offers tools and other equipment.
- » [Hands On Atlanta](#) serves to connect volunteers and tools to non-profits and community-based organizations.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION B-3:

Create Restaurant and Institutional Procurement Incentives

Restaurant and institutional procurement incentives can encourage local chefs and institutions to purchase produce grown on local urban agriculture operations. These partnerships support local urban growers, boost the local economy by investing money back into local resources, and promote sustainable food supply chains, among other benefits. East Point could offer incentive programs that encourage locally owned restaurants and catering companies to use local food. This program could offer direct financial incentives or promotional incentives. A promotional incentive could be a branded certification awarded to participating East Point restaurants and institutions and advertised on the restaurant's storefront or website. The UAC could also promote these participating restaurants on their own media channels.

Case Studies

Before creating a city-run program, the City of East Point and the UAC can encourage East Point urban growers and restaurants to participate in the existing Georgia Organics Farm-to-Restaurant program. The program connects local urban growers with local chefs and is intended to encourage responsible food sorting and to help the local patchwork of farms grow and thrive. The program hosts events such as chef/farmer "speed dating" to create connections between urban growers and the restaurants that can use their produce.

Given COVID-19's effect on the restaurant industry, restaurant-specific incentives may require longer-term development.



Images courtesy of Georgia Organics Farm to Restaurant Program.

RECOMMENDATION B-3:

Create Restaurant and Institutional Procurement Incentives

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Supporting Local Urban Growers**
- » Improving Local Food Access
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices
- » Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

LEAD:

UAC and City of East Point Economic Development department

SUPPORT:

Stakeholders from local East Point restaurants and institutions; Georgia Organics

STARTING STEPS:

- » Connect East Point urban growers to Georgia Organics Farm-to-Table program
- » Determine what incentives are feasible (i.e. financial, promotional, ad space, etc.)
- » Create branded certification in line with branding scheme discussed in Priority 5.

RESOURCES:

1. [Georgia Organics Farm-to-Restaurant program](#)



PRIORITY C: ESTABLISHING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government plays an important role in urban agriculture, as local laws and plans can hinder or support the growth of urban agriculture. East Point community members identified support from local government as critical to the success of establishing East Point as a local food destination, as local government can partner with the UAC to provide services and enact policies and regulations that support local urban growers and encourage the economic success of their operations. A resident noted that:

"With this being a smaller municipality, it's very easy to link the warehouses on OakLeigh Street that are shipping food all out to Atlanta. We are a local food purveyor here with farmers here within the City. Being able to comprise a holistic system is really the opportunity that we have here in East Point."

The existing food production and distribution centers, in addition to the size of the City, affords East Point the opportunity to become a thriving center for urban agriculture with the right forms of support from the local government. The following recommendations address how local government policies, programs, and plans can support existing urban growers and encourage urban agriculture growth in East Point.



SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION C-1:

Transition Steering Committee into Urban Agriculture Collective (UAC)

Steering committee members for the East Point City Agriculture Plan were selected by City of East Point City Council members and the community based on their expertise in the local food system. These representatives could continue working in partnership with the local government to ensure urban agriculture initiatives are carried out according to the plan in concert with City policies promoting urban agriculture. The steering committee could seamlessly transition into the UAC. The UAC could be formed as a 501(c)(3) or as a City-appointed commission. As a 501(c)(3), the collective would be

able to operate more independently, and could work with the City, via an MOU renewed each year. As a non-profit, the group would not need City Council approval to apply for grants but could apply for them in partnership with the City. This set-up would also allow more opportunities for fundraising events. In contrast, the steering committee could also form a City-appointed commission that could later become an autonomous organization. In either capacity, the UAC would work to implement programs, initiatives and help guide changes in local government policy, as well as, identify and apply for relevant grants.



RECOMMENDATION C-1:

Transition Steering Committee into Urban Agriculture Collective (UAC)

TIMEFRAME:

Short-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Establishing the Role of Local Government**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers

LEAD:

UAC

SUPPORT:

City of East Point

STARTING STEPS:

- » Discuss the pros and cons of a 501(c)(3) vs. a City-appointed commission
- » Consider a phased approach from volunteer organization to more formalized non-profit partner supported by the City

RECOMMENDATION C-2:

Conduct a Zoning Code Audit to Identify Potential Barriers to Urban Agriculture

The City, in partnership with the UAC, could conduct a zoning code audit to identify elements of the code that particularly limit urban agriculture and East Point's community food system. Per the zoning map on page 48, the City has one agricultural district in its southwestern part. It is the only district that expressly allows for community gardens and farms without an administrative permit. The agricultural district also explicitly allows for roadside sales of agricultural products; however, suburban residential development characterizes this area rather than farms, and the City will likely rezone this district accordingly per the future land use map included in the appendix.

Oftentimes, residents worry that gardens and farms will become nuisances and thus, become detrimental to property values. On the contrary, economic research shows that local food system elements like community gardens and community farmers markets tend to increase property values.^{1,2} With the right buffer allotments between homes and potential gardens, the zoning code can promote the opportunity for increased property values as well as reduce nuisances. Across the country, developers are using urban agriculture to increase the desirability of their developments. For instance, the Urban Land Institute released *Agrihoods: Cultivating Best Practices* in 2019 amidst growing evidence that developments centered on urban agriculture positively affect health,

the natural environment, as well as real estate success for single family, multi-family, and mixed-use communities. Nearby Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia is cited in this report because of Serenbe, a successful, walkable, mixed-use development that features an organic farm at the heart of the community.³

Because of its flexible nature, urban agriculture can thrive even in densely developed environments. The zoning code does not need to sacrifice density in order to accommodate a community food system. For instance, allowing for rooftop and vertical gardens via a permit contributes to food production in denser environments. Overall, urban agriculture can work with a City's land use and growth goals rather than at its expense.

The City of East Point plans to undertake an overhaul of its zoning code in fiscal year 2021. When crafting a request for proposals (RFP), the City could consider including food systems planning as a qualification for its consultants as well as include urban agriculture considerations in the scope in addition to a zoning code audit. Furthermore, the City could engage the UAC during this process to gather input on how the zoning code can better accommodate a community food system.



"Farm wall" in downtown Laramie, Wyoming.
Image courtesy of Strong Towns

BELOW: The Little Ones Learning Center in Forest Park, Georgia is nationally recognized for educating preschoolers about nutrition in its own organic garden. The center hosts a farm stand to sell its produce to residents. The City shut down the farm stand citing code violations. This shutdown motivated Wande Okunoren-Meadows (not pictured) to call for the Farm Stand Zoning Amendment.



Case Studies

There are several other examples of how other cities have created flexible code languages to promote urban agriculture. The neighboring City of Atlanta adopted an urban agriculture ordinance in 2014, allowing urban gardens and market gardens throughout several zoning districts in the city. Originally, the City and the consultants developed the ordinance without involving local urban growers in the process. These urban growers demanded inclusion, and the ordinance ultimately reflected their needs. If East Point pursues its own urban agriculture ordinance, involving local urban growers at the outset of the ordinance's development and using the City of Atlanta's ordinance as a model may prove helpful.

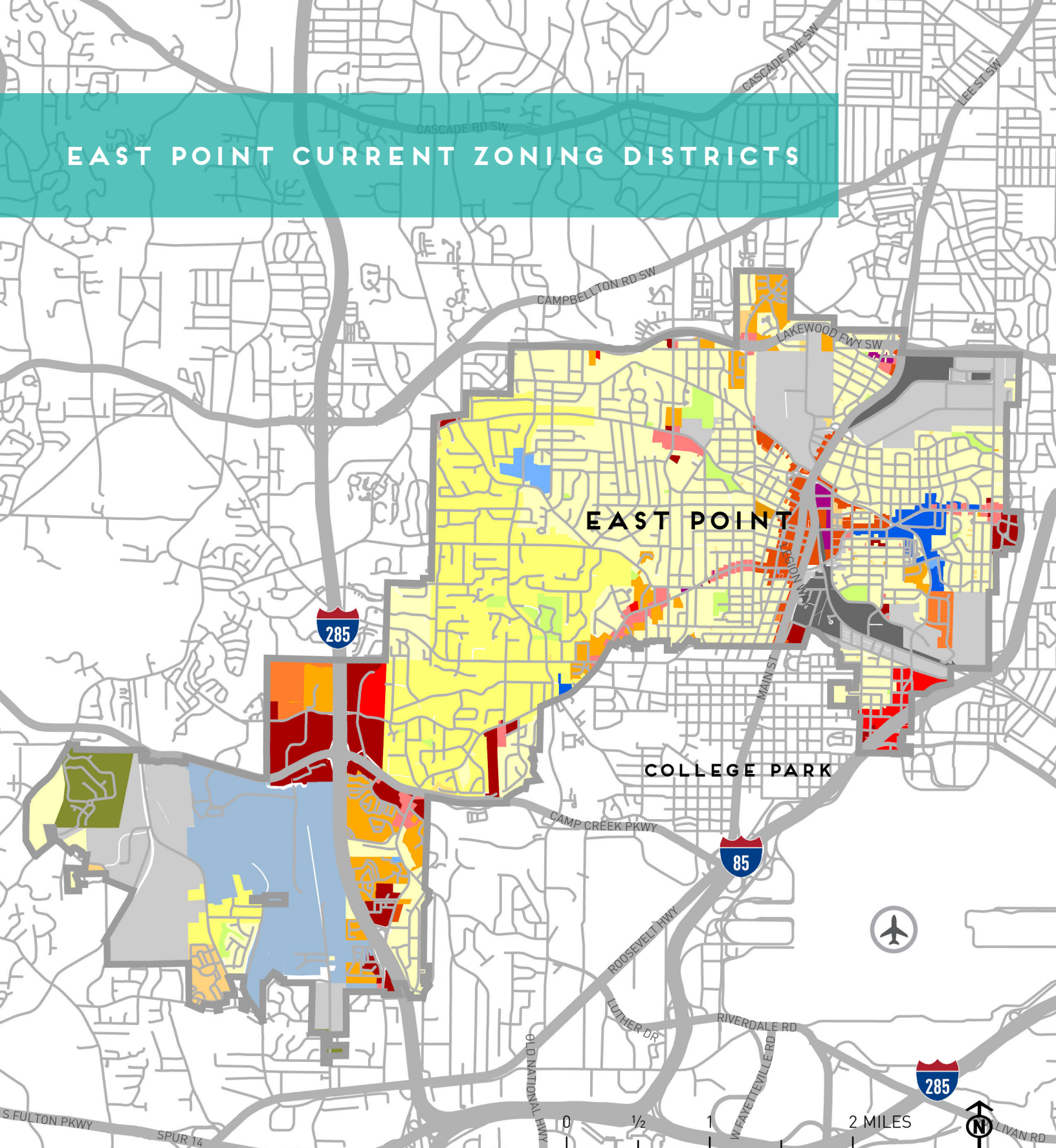
Another example includes the Cleveland zoning code. It established an Urban Garden District as part of the code to "ensure that urban garden areas are appropriately located and protected to meet needs" for the community. The Cleveland urban agricultural overlay allows urban agriculture uses in urban

environments including community gardens, hoop houses, and market gardens. This policy encourages a productive reuse of vacant land, to provide economic opportunities, and to have positive health impacts for local community members through increased access to fresh produce.

Similarly, a Milwaukee Zoning Ordinance permits the "raising of crops" in residential districts. In Nashville, the commercial and non-commercial community gardening zoning ordinance allows commercial and non-commercial community gardens as a permitted use or a special exception use. Sacramento passed an ordinance that removes barriers to planting fruits and vegetables in residential front lawns. Nearby Forest Park, Georgia recently passed a Farm Stand Zoning Amendment to allow farm stands in more areas throughout the City allowing on-site sales of produce and thus, encouraging more fresh food access points. These ordinances could be cited as models for developing zoning policy that is more accommodating for urban agriculture and a community food system.

1. Iacono Voicu & Vick Been. "The Effect of Community Gardens on Neighboring Property Values." *Real Estate Economics* 36, no.2 (2008).
2. USDA ERS. "Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems." Report to Congress (2015).
3. Matthew Norris. "Agrihoods: Cultivating Best Practices." ULI Center for Sustainability and Economic Performance Report (2019).

EAST POINT CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS



AG-1: AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT	R-4: MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	M-I: MEDICAL INSTITUTIONAL
R-1: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	C-1: NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL	B-P: BUSINESS PARK
R-L: RESIDENTIAL LIMITED	CR: COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT	I-1: LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
R-2: TWO FAMILY DWELLING DISTRICT	CL: COMMERCIAL LIMITED	I-2: HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
R-T: RESIDENTIAL TOWNHOMES	C-2: CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	PARKS, REC, AND CONSERVATION
R-3: MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	MIX: MIXED USE DISTRICT	
CUP: COMMUNITY UNIT PLAN DISTRICT	E-I: EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL	

RECOMMENDATION C-2:

Conduct a Zoning Code Audit to Identify Potential Barriers to Urban Agriculture

TIMEFRAME:

Short-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Establishing the Role of Local Government**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Improving Local Food Access

LEAD:

City of East Point Planning and Zoning Department, UAC

SUPPORT:

East Point Main Street Association, City of East Point Economic Development Department

STARTING STEPS:

- » Develop scope and RFP for zoning code re-write with urban agriculture considerations
- » Engage the UAC and other local food advocates in zoning code audit and update

RESOURCES:

1. [City of Atlanta Urban Agriculture Ordinance](#)
2. [Cleveland Urban Garden District Ordinance](#)
3. [Milwaukee Zoning Ordinance](#)
4. [Nashville Commercial and Non-Commercial Community Gardening Ordinance](#)
5. [Sacramento Ordinance No. 2007-025](#)
6. [Forest Park Farm Stand Zoning Amendment](#)

RECOMMENDATION C-3:

Leverage Public Land, Schools, Utility Easements, and Appropriate Private Sites for Growing Space

The UAC, in partnership with various City and county departments, can leverage public land for a demonstration community garden. This demonstration community garden can be used a space to provide instruction about a variety of topics related to urban agriculture, including plant varieties, growing techniques, and irrigation methods.

In the long-term, the City and the UAC can continue to leverage publicly owned property and appropriate private sites to develop new food-producing spaces. The Atlanta Local Food Initiative's (ALFI) Orchard Project offers communities and schools fruit trees to start or supplement orchards free of charge (1). The UAC and the City could leverage this and other existing programs to grow community gardens throughout East Point.

The UAC could partner with the City's parks and recreation department to identify parks and trail sites suitable for growing. Parks and trails tend to be well suited for agriculture, as they typically have existing irrigation infrastructure. They are also highly visible spaces and provide an opportunity for education and developing community pride.

The UAC and the East Point Planning & Community Development department could leverage underutilized utility easements to develop garden

plots as well. For example, the Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District received a \$50,000 grant to convert underutilized power line easements into growing space in USDA-designated low-income low-access census tracts. The district collaborated with the City of Atlanta, Georgia Power, and local non-profits on this 15-acre endeavor. (2)

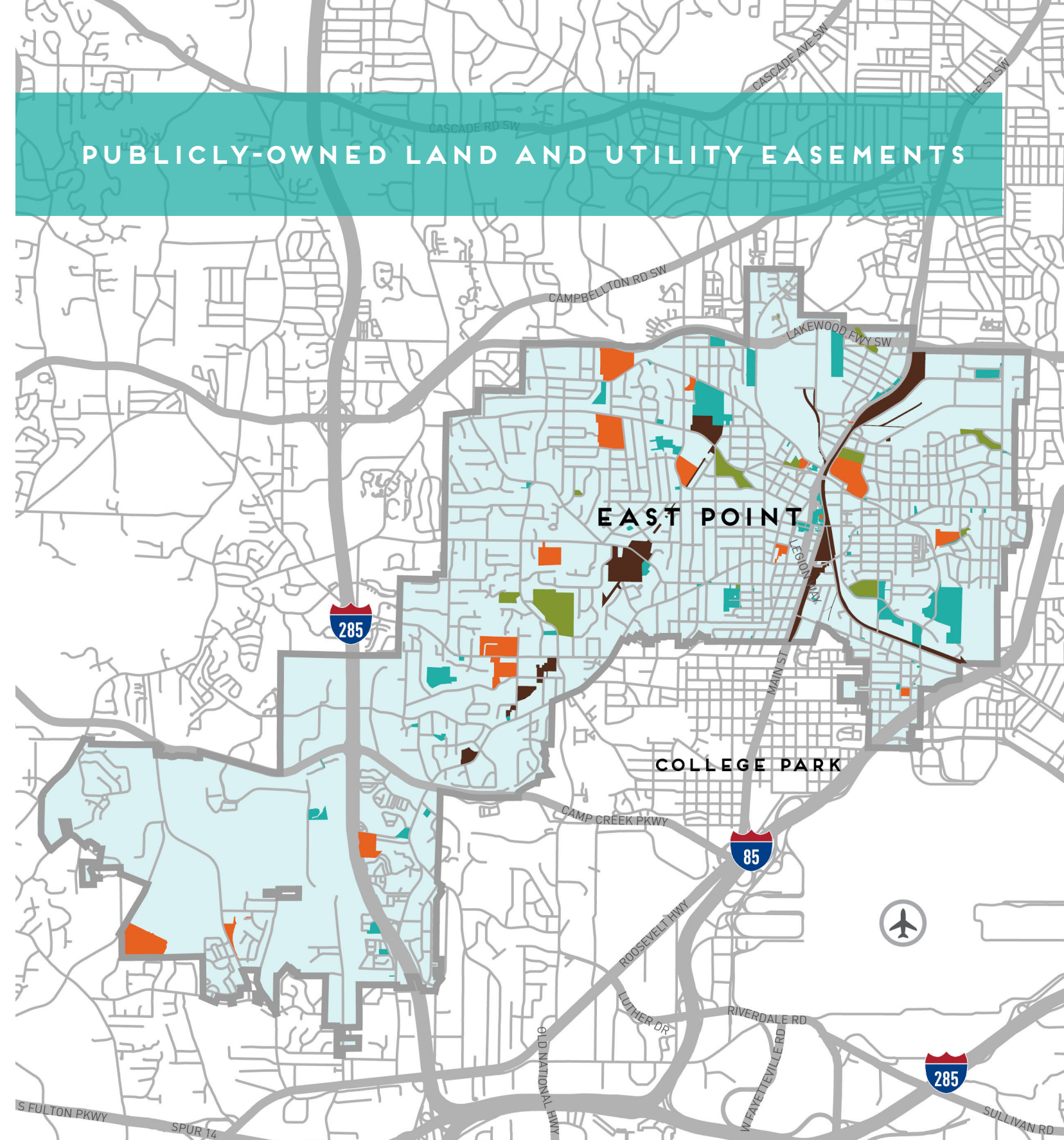
Additionally, the UAC could also partner with Fulton County Schools to encourage the development of educational gardens in East Point schools. These spaces also typically have existing infrastructure for water. Increasing school gardens would provide opportunities for education programming. The following East Point schools have already started a school garden and can be used as a model for others:

- » Woodland Middle School Garden
- » Resurgence Hall Charter School
- » KIPP South Fulton Academy

Finally, the UAC could work with the East Point Housing Authority and other housing developments to create additional growing space on underutilized land holdings and housing developments. Increasing access to community gardens for senior housing, both publicly and privately owned, could be a priority.



East Point's PATH trail system runs by Sumner Park. This is a highly visible space that the City already maintains. When choosing a site for a demonstration community garden, the UAC and the City could consider visibility and pedestrian traffic in addition to sunlight. Image courtesy of Curbed Atlanta.



■ COUNTY-OWNED
■ CITY-OWNED
■ PARKS
■ TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND UTILITIES

0 1/2 1 2 MILES

RECOMMENDATION C-3:

Leverage Public Land, Schools, Utility Easements, and Appropriate Private Sites for Growing Space

TIMEFRAME:

Short-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Establishing the Role of Local Government**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Improving Local Food Access

LEAD:

UAC and the City of East Point Parks and Recreation department

SUPPORT:

Fulton County Schools; Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District; Georgia Power; and East Point Housing Authority

STARTING STEPS:

- » Initiate conversations with potential partners (i.e. East Point Parks and Rec, Georgia Power, etc.)
- » Identify and verify parks, utility easements, and school sites for growing capabilities
- » Identify and apply for grants for start-up funds

RESOURCES:

1. [ALFI Orchard Project](#)
2. Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District's [grant award](#)
3. Food Well Alliance provides [financial assistance to community gardens](#)

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION C-4:

Hire a Dedicated Staff Member to Coordinate Programs and Initiatives Between the UAC and the City

The City could hire a dedicated staff person, or the UAC could acquire the position through grants or an MOU with the City. The hired person should have urban agriculture or food systems planning experience to organize the UAC and City urban agriculture efforts and to work with City departments. In collaboration with existing City staff, the dedicated staff member can assist local urban growers with issues such as permitting and zoning, applying for urban agriculture grants, maintaining an inventory of available lots, evaluating existing policies related to agriculture, and can also help weave urban agriculture into broader urban sustainability, economic development, and planning goals. Over time and as budget allows, an increase in staff dedicated to urban agriculture could be acquired through grants or other funding opportunities.

For example, the City of Atlanta has its own urban agriculture director and staff to lead City-supported urban agriculture initiatives as a part of the Mayor's Office of Resilience, and now ONE Atlanta. Under this group, the City of Atlanta runs its Grows-a-lot Program which allows local urban growers to adopt a vacant City-owned plot for a renewable 5-year license. City staff tracks local fresh food access, provides resources on legislations, permits, grants and funding, tools, growing produce in right-of way, pollinator resources, and more. However, the staff is few in numbers and largely relies on non-profit partners and other groups to implement the work.



Former City of Atlanta Urban Agriculture Director Mario Cambardella inspects a raised bed alongside Truly Living Well's Executive Director Carol Hunter. Image courtesy of the AJC.

RECOMMENDATION C-4:

Hire a Dedicated Staff Member to Coordinate Programs and Initiatives Between the UAC and the City

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Establishing the Role of Local Government**
- » Improving Local Food Access
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices
- » Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination

LEAD:

City of East Point Planning and Zoning Department; UAC

SUPPORT:

Food Well Alliance

STARTING STEPS:

- » Determine if staff person would work in existing department or in City-supported UAC (if 501(c)(3))
- » Explore funding options, including grants

RESOURCES:

1. City of Atlanta's [Aglanta Program](#)

RECOMMENDATION C-5:

Incorporate Urban Agriculture in Planning Initiatives

The UAC could work with the City of East Point Planning and Community Development department as well as other City departments to include urban agriculture in all relevant planning documents. This collaboration would ensure local government goals, policies, and plans align with urban agriculture goals. These plans include but are not limited to comprehensive plans, zoning ordinance rewrites, housing studies, parks and recreation master plans and more.

Case Studies

For example, the Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Activity Plan is a parks and recreation initiative that is integrated with other long-range planning initiatives in the City. Specifically, the goals and strategies for urban agriculture are woven into the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Regional Parks Policy Plan, and the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan – a document designed to guide policy efforts intended to improve the local food system. The main goals of the Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Activity Plan are:

1. Park programs and services provide public education, access to healthy foods, and economic support for the local food system
2. Park facility renewal and development fosters urban agriculture activities
3. Food available on parkland benefits residents, park visitors, and the environment.

Incorporating these goals into other long-range plans in Minneapolis helps to ensure these efforts are aligned with and supported across other planning initiatives. This is an important step, as failure to coordinate these initiatives could result in plans with incompatible visions that could complicate efforts to achieve the goals of the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan.

As another example, Urban Agriculture goals are woven into the Madison, Wisconsin Comprehensive Plan in two key ways. The Neighborhoods and Housing portion of the plan recommends identifying locations to create or expand community gardens in order to provide increased neighborhood access to fresh food. The Green and Resilient portion of the plan includes recommendations to support sustainable agriculture production, including the recommendation to establish guidelines to reduce the use of harmful fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides due to their negative impact on public and environmental health. Additionally, the City of Madison updated its zoning code to allow for the creation of Urban Agriculture Districts to help support small-scale urban agriculture. City Ordinances have also been passed to permit community gardens, fruit and nut trees, beehives, and backyard chickens on residential properties. The incorporation of urban food production strategies in long-range planning activities, alongside supporting zoning codes and ordinances, help ensure the success of Madison's urban agriculture operations.



Left image courtesy of Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. Right image courtesy of Madison 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

STRATEGY 9 OF MADISON'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

Support sustainable farming and gardening practices that protect the ecosystem and public health.

RECOMMENDATION C-5: *Incorporate Urban Agriculture in Planning Initiatives*

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Establishing the Role of Local Government**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Improving Local Food Access

LEAD:

City of East Point Planning and Zoning Department; UAC

SUPPORT:

City of East Point Parks and Recreation Department

STARTING STEPS:

- » Identify East Point planning processes in which urban agriculture goals can be incorporated (i.e. zoning code re-write in 2021, comprehensive plan update in 2022)
- » Meet with the participating departments to coordinate these efforts between plans

RESOURCES:

1. [Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Activity Plan](#)
2. Madison, Wisconsin [Comprehensive Plan Strategy 8](#): Ensure access to food that is affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific.
3. Madison, Wisconsin [Comprehensive Plan Strategy 9](#): Support sustainable farming and gardening practices that protect the ecosystem and public health

RECOMMENDATION C-6: *Target Economic Development Efforts to Further Elevate and Locate Food Distribution Centers*

Urban agriculture operations cannot thrive without a holistic community food system. A crucial part of that system is the processing and distribution of local agriculture products. With its proximity to the airport and prominent freight routes, East Point is already home to both industrial food system and community food system distribution operations. For example, The Common Market Southeast, a regional community supported agriculture (CSA) distributor, operates on Oakleigh Drive in a light industrial zoning district. The City's Economic Development department could continue its efforts to locate community food system distributors and other community food system businesses like the Common Market to leverage this existing infrastructure.

Not only would recruiting new businesses generate additional tax revenue and local jobs, but it would also help local urban growers and the overall East

Point food system thrive. East Point produce would be purchased, processed, and distributed regionally by East Point distributors.

Case Studies

In 2015, the Chocoday Township in Michigan adopted a similar economic development strategy in their master plan:

Strategy Ed-2.5: Promote and pursue a niche economic development opportunity associated with local food systems, including the support of kitchen incubators, food processing facilities, food aggregation and storage facilities, distribution centers, and agritourism (events, food stands, farmer's markets, breweries, wineries, tasting rooms, and other distributors of value-added ag products). Local zoning should reflect this goal.



The Common Market Southeast packages locally-sourced produce and distributes farm share packages around the region. It currently operates on Oakleigh Drive in East Point. Image courtesy of the Common Market Southeast's Facebook Page.

RECOMMENDATION C-6:

Target Economic Development Efforts to Further Elevate and Locate Food Distribution Centers

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Establishing the Role of Local Government**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Improving Local Food Access

LEAD:

City of East Point Economic Development Department

SUPPORT:

City of East Point Planning and Zoning Department; UAC

STARTING STEPS:

- » Identify vacant or underutilized property in industrial/warehousing zones ideal for food distribution and/or processing
- » Connect with food distributors or food processors with a focus on sustainable food systems

RESOURCES:

1. Growing Food Connections: Community Food Systems and Economic Development (includes information on the economic development strategies of the Chocolay Township)

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**PRIORITY D:
CULTIVATING
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESILIENT
PRACTICES**

ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

East Point community members identified environmental stewardship as a priority for the City Agriculture Plan. Environmental stewardship refers to responsible natural resource use and protection of the environment through the use of sustainable practices. Local urban growers typically use more environmentally sustainable practices than large agribusinesses. According to Food Well Alliance's 2016 Leaders Growing Community Gardens

survey, over three quarters of metro-Atlanta urban growers use organic or natural growing practices. Local food systems are dependent of closed loop composting systems and supporting pollinator habitats. Establishing these practices within an urban agriculture system will enhance the health and prosperity of local urban agriculture and East Point's environment.



SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION D-1:

Undertake Initial Steps to Create a Centralized Composting and Mulch Program

The UAC, in partnership with the City, can begin initial steps to create a composting and mulch program. Initial steps could include identifying a piece of City-owned land, or part of a park, where wood chips and compost can be dumped. A cost analysis can be performed, followed by a procurement process.

These efforts can ultimately lead to a City-wide compost and mulching program, which would provide multifaceted benefits for the City. Compost programs divert organic materials from landfills, which can instead be reused by residents and urban growers to improve the health of their crops. As food waste in landfills generates methane, compost programs help abate greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Additionally, compost greatly reduces the need for petrochemical fertilizers, which has the secondary benefit of promoting local watershed health. Finally, a local compost and mulch program would result in cost savings for the City of East Point, as the City currently spends \$40 per unit to dispose of woodchips in the landfill.

Specifically, the UAC and the City could consider using curbside pick-up of food scraps and yard trimmings and transporting this waste to a centralized site. At the centralized site, food scraps would be converted to compost and yard trimmings would be converted to mulch. Urban growers could then go to one location to pick up both compost and mulch. When determining a site, the UAC and the City could consider neighboring land uses as well as contracting with a private company or managing the program itself.

Procuring a privately-run organization to manage the composting and mulch program is an option. For example, East Point is the new home of Compost Now's operations. The organization offers doorstep food scrap pick-up and customers can choose to receive their compost or donate it to a local farm or garden. The UAC, in partnership with the City, could potentially partner with Compost Now to offer

curbside compost pick-up for City residents. The State of Georgia mandates that composting and collection operations require a permit-by-rule. Given that Compost Now has the necessary permitting, a City-wide composting program in partnership with the organization may ease implementation. However, any service agreement would have to go out for bid and follow the City's procurement process.

Additionally, the UAC and the City could explore a City-run composting and mulch program. For example, DeKalb County manages its own mulch and compost operations. The county takes in yard trimmings and recycles them into mulch and compost. This mulch and compost can be picked up free of charge to county residents or can be delivered for a fee. The City would have to determine the budgetary feasibility of a city-run program.



RECOMMENDATION D-1:

Undertake Initial Steps to Create a Centralized Composting and Mulch Program

TIMEFRAME:

Short-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government

LEAD:

UAC and the City of East Point Public Works

SUPPORT:

Potential private contractor (i.e. CompostNow)

STARTING STEPS:

- » Conduct a cost analysis of private contractor vs. a City-run compost and mulch program
- » Select a site with compatible neighboring land uses for compost and mulch processing and pick-up

RESOURCES:

1. For an example of a private contractor/[CompostNow's Services](#)
2. [DeKalb County's Mulch and Compost Program](#)

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION D-2: *Create a Seed Bank*

Seed banks are useful in supporting the genetic diversity of seeds which supports food security. Seeds are saved and exchanged locally, particularly from crops that grow well in local soil and climate conditions.

For example, Native Seeds Search in Tucson, Arizona is a nonprofit that conserves regional crop genetic resources. The organization offers bulk seed exchange programs, where seed recipients will return 1.5 times the amount of seed at the end of season than they were given, provided a successful harvest, ensuring an expanded supply into the future. Native Seeds Search operates a seed backup for added security.



Image courtesy of East Point Historical Society

Through non-profit partners, the UAC and other community stakeholders could start a regionally-specific seed bank. First steps include investigating options for self-financing as well as the legal and political framework for operation. The UAC could engage the East Point Historical Society in this endeavor to preserve local heirloom varieties.

The UAC and the City could also explore smaller dissemination of seeds, similar to the little free library model. Community members could start their own seed library in their neighborhood with support from the seed bank. The distribution points could look similar to the little free libraries, much like the one pictured to the left.



Image courtesy of Seattle Urban Farm Company

RECOMMENDATION D-2: *Create a Seed Bank*

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers

LEAD:

UAC

SUPPORT:

East Point Historical Society

STARTING STEPS:

- » Investigate options for self-financing as well as potential partners
- » Determine legal and political framework for operation

RESOURCES:

1. [Native Seed Search](#)

RECOMMENDATION D-3:
Develop a City-Wide Pollinator Protection Strategy

The health and biodiversity of native pollinators is essential to the wellbeing of our agricultural systems. Taking steps to support pollinators, including the creation and enhancement of pollinator habitats, will help support the health and productivity of local agriculture. The UAC and the City could create a strategy to protect existing and increase pollinator habitats.

This strategy could encourage residents to plant pollinator-friendly plants, replace traditional landscaping with pollinator gardens on city-owned property, as well as promote cultivating hives on rooftops.

A number of East Point residents cultivate beehives. The UAC and the City could partner with these residents as well as other organizations like the Georgia Tech Urban Honey Bee Project, the Greater Atlanta Pollinator Partnership, the Atlanta Botanical Garden Plant Pollinator Program, and Think Green, to develop a strategy to protect and cultivate pollinators. The Georgia Tech Urban Honey Bee Project is a research program that studies the effect of urban environments on honey bee populations. The Greater Atlanta Pollinator Partnership supports pollinator

conservation research and habitat restoration, develops clear guidelines for pollinator-friendly habitat design and installation, and helps restore both abandoned and endangered pollinator sites. The Atlanta Botanical Garden Plant Pollinator Program focuses on the creation and restoration of metro Atlanta pollinator habitats, surveying and monitoring insect pollinators, and developing educational material on pollinator conservation for the region.

Case Studies

For example, the City of Toronto Pollinator Protection Strategy prioritizes actions that support and sustain native pollinator biodiversity. This strategy aims to create, enhance, and protect habitat in natural and urbanized areas, recognizing that habitat loss is a great threat to pollinators. Communities are engaged and provided support to take action to help sustain Toronto's native pollinators. The strategy includes six priorities and 30 actions to support pollinators. Additionally, the program provides grants of up to \$5,000 to provide pollinator habitats in Toronto neighborhoods.



Image courtesy of Mathew Shepherd

RECOMMENDATION D-3:
Develop a City-Wide Pollinator Protection Strategy

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices**
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers

LEAD:

UAC

SUPPORT:

East Point Residents Dr. Jason Riedy and Cynthia Roseberry; Georgia Tech Urban Bee Project; Greater Atlanta Pollinator Partnership; The Atlanta Botanical Garden Plant Pollinator Program; Think Green

STARTING STEPS:

- » Cultivate partnerships between East Point residents and potential pollinator nonprofits
- » Seek out related grants to fund the development of a pollinator strategy

RESOURCES:

1. [Georgia Tech Urban Honey Bee Project](#)
2. [Greater Atlanta Pollinator Partnership](#)
3. [Atlanta Botanical Garden Plant Pollinator Program](#)



PRIORITY E: BRANDING EAST POINT AS A LOCAL FOOD DESTINATION

Image courtesy of Marietta Daily Journal

BRANDING

City branding involves identifying and promoting the unique characteristics of a City. Branding East Point as a hub for urban agriculture and local food will have multiple benefits, including:

- » Establishing a recognizable identity and reputation for East Point
- » Highlighting and elevating the existing local agriculture network in the community
- » Allowing East Point to differentiate itself from other cities in the region and establishing East Point as a destination
- » Building a competitive edge to help retain existing institutions, businesses and residents and to attract investment, talent, and visitors

Community members voiced that branding the City as a local food hub was a crucial step in sustaining the City Agriculture Plan's goals. A local food brand would build long-term commitment to plan implementation among East Point City officials and residents. Effective branding would also advance the economic growth of East Point, boosting agritourism and business for existing urban growers as well as attracting more local food businesses to the area.

Efforts to brand East Point as a local food hub will align with existing East Point branding. East Point currently brands itself as an international city of the future. Around the globe, international cities like New York are strengthening their community food systems in innovative ways. For instance, the City of New York is home to several rooftop gardens. The City supports community garden programs in their Parks and Planning Departments as well as their Housing Authority. East Point's brand as a local food destination, therefore, can advance East Point's existing brand as a progressive, international city.¹

The following recommendations address how the UAC in partnership with the City of East Point and the City's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) could successfully brand itself as both a leader in and destination for local food.

The UAC, City of East Point and the City's DMO could develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to develop a long-term brand as a local food destination that includes but is not limited to using local messaging campaigns, identifying and pursuing existing certifications and co-branding opportunities, social media outreach, and local events.

The screenshot shows the top of the South Metro Neighbor website. It includes a weather widget for 79° Mostly Cloudy, social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and a navigation menu with links for Home, News, Sports, Education, Business, Community, Legals, Classifieds, and Neighbor Newspapers. The featured article is titled "GREEN GROWTH" and has a sub-headline: "East Point is on its way to becoming an urban agriculture destination thanks to this new plan". The author is Christine Fonville (@NeighborXine), dated Aug 1, 2019, with 0 comments and a 2-minute read time.

Image courtesy of South Metro Neighbor
1. See NYC's Urban Agriculture programs [here](#).

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION E-1:

Pursue Local Messaging Opportunities

There are several local messaging approaches that the UAC, the City, and the City's DMO could pursue to contribute to a larger marketing strategy. A few of them include:

- » Utilizing billboards
- » Utilizing MARTA bus stops and train stations
- » Social media

Billboards are useful for City branding as they offer constant and repeated exposure to a large audience and are more inexpensive than most mass marketing strategies.

In pursuit of this strategy, billboard space can be donated, the UAC could raise funding through grants, the City could allocate funds, or the DMO could identify eligible funds from sources such as hotel/motel taxes toward advertisements intended to increase tourism. Additionally, the City could partner with ArtsXchange or other local arts institutions to design the visual components. To start, East Point could put out a call for billboard designs from local artists to submit ideas.

In addition to billboards, wrapped MARTA cars and buses could contribute to the local messaging campaign. Advertising on transit, including wrapped MARTA cars and buses, can be a relatively inexpensive method to promote City branding to a local audience. The UAC, the City and potentially the DMO can market both East Point as a local food destination and the East Point Farmers Market through advertising on MARTA. This would not only address branding, but advertising the farmers market can increase awareness of a local food access point.

Developing a social media strategy is also a useful way to build an online brand presence with which to reach and grow a target audience. The UAC, in partnership with the City, could reach out to local universities with communications programs. A student could take on this work in exchange for college credits or a stipend.

There are several ongoing efforts in East Point that could serve as a starting point for some of these recommendations. For instance, the City of East Point has partnered with the East Point Farmers Market to create weekly postings focused on local agriculture on social media sites including Facebook and iContact. Messaging for urban agriculture related posts could be coordinated in the same manner.

Additionally, the City of East Point and the East Point Farmers Market have both had programs for interns to help create marketing. These programs can serve as a model for internships related to branding efforts. Finally, existing initiatives related to East Point's Healthy Point program and East Point Farmers Market programming, including cooking classes and food demos hosted by local urban growers, can help support the branding of East Point as a local food destination.



Case Studies

The City of Hapeville launched a billboard campaign to brand the City as an arts village. Hapeville focused on simple messaging, simply stating "Hapeville: A Home for the Arts." The phrase is to the point and easy to remember. Hapeville's billboards and branding strategy have built momentum for their existing local arts movement, and the South Atlanta region is becoming increasingly known as a hub of the arts.

Just last year, the Atlanta Journal Constitution published a story about the growing art scene in West End and the Tri-Cities area, further illustrating Hapeville as a center for the arts. Like Hapeville, East Point can leverage both its neighboring and its own arts community to curate messaging as well as visual components to brand the City as a local food destination.

Another branding example includes the Forsyth Farmers Market in Savannah, Georgia. The market has advertisements at bus stops, on taxicabs, and other modes of transit. These advertisements

include a consistent brand logo and messaging. More importantly, these ads provide information about SNAP doubling benefits and how to get to the market using transit. While the market's advertising initiative does establish a brand for the farmers market, it more importantly serves to address and increase food access. As a result of the campaign, the market has witnessed 4-5 new customers per week who use SNAP.

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub uses its website, Facebook, and Instagram pages to promote events including farm-to-table events, agriculture-related movie screenings, farm stand pop-ups, farmers markets, farmer trainings, and other activities related to their brand.

Another example is the Healthy Savannah Initiative. This program uses social media to promote urban agriculture and health related events, film screenings, lunch and lectures, and sponsored events such as group runs, 5ks, and bike rides which promote visibility of their program.



Image courtesy of 11Alive.

RECOMMENDATION E-1:
Pursue Local Messaging Opportunities

TIMEFRAME:

Long-term

ADDRESSES:

- » **Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination**
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government

LEAD:

UAC

SUPPORT:

City of East Point Economic Development department; Destination Marketing Organization; ArtsXchange; East Point Farmers Market; and City of East Point Healthy Point program

STARTING STEPS:

- » Collaborate with East Point's local arts community to develop local messaging and visuals
- » Determine if City Agriculture Plan initiative will be communicated through a city-branded or a UAC-branded social media channel
- » Identify other funding sources and opportunities for advertising

RESOURCES:

1. [Forsyth Farmers Market](#)
2. Hudson Valley Farm Hub [social media](#)
3. Healthy Savannah Initiative [social media](#)

ONGOING STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION E-2:
Identify and Pursue Certifications

Existing certifications can further communicate East Point's brand as well as meet several goals of the City Agriculture Plan.

Case Studies

Several measures included in ARC's Green Communities Certification would support local urban agriculture initiatives as well as the branding of East Point as a destination for local agriculture. These following measures would support urban agriculture as well as the goals identified by the steering committee:

- » Measure 31. Adopt organic and drought tolerant landscape practices at local government facilities.
- » Measure 35. Support and designate space for community gardens or orchard.
- » Measure 36. Support and designate space for farmers markets.
- » Measure 37. Develop, adopt, and implement a local food systems plan to influence and shape how food is produced, processed distributed, consumed and disposed within the community.
- » Measure 38. Become a Bee City USA or a Community Wildlife Habitat,
- » Measure 62. Implement organics and yard debris collection for composting and other beneficial uses.
- » Measure 75. Develop and implement a program to engage the community's youth around the environment and community sustainability.

East Point has already dedicated space for a Farmers Market and this plan could serve as the local food systems plan requirement. Pursuing the other listed measures among the additional certification requirements would contribute to East Point's brand not only as a local agriculture hub but also an environmentally sustainable community. The East Point Environmental Collective has expressed interest in pursuing this certification and could be a potential partner to the City in this endeavor. ARC is also available in assisting participants along the path to certification.



RECOMMENDATION E-2:
Identify and Pursue Certifications

TIMEFRAME:

Ongoing

ADDRESSES:

- » **Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination**
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers
- » Improving Local Food Access
- » Cultivating Environmentally Resilient Practices

LEAD:

City of East Point Planning and Community Development

SUPPORT:

East Point Environmental Collective, ARC

STARTING STEPS:

- » Implement relevant certification goals

RESOURCES:

1. [ARC Green Communities Program](#)
2. [Bee City USA](#)
3. [Community Wildlife Habitat](#)

RECOMMENDATION E-3:
Pursue Co-Branding Opportunities

The City is currently pursuing several public health initiatives that could incorporate urban agriculture as a way to boost community benefits. For instance, the City of East Point could capitalize on the existing momentum of the City's trails plan and implementation. The presence of these plots make urban agriculture highly visible to the trail users, reinforcing the City's brand. Furthermore, urban agriculture sites along trail networks provide education opportunities and food access in highly visible locations. Research has shown that visibility, and ease of pedestrian access are important considerations for the success of urban agriculture projects (Milburn, L. and Vail, B., 2010; Marcus, C., 1979). To incorporate urban agriculture

into the growing trail network, the UAC and City of East Point could work with its Parks & Recreation department and local urban growers to develop an urban agriculture trails program that creates urban agriculture sites and educational signage.

Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham started the City of East Point Healthy Point 90-day health initiative. The initiative partnered with the East Point Farmers Market and other entities to offer cooking demonstrations among other activities. This program could continue incorporating local produce into its cooking demonstrations and other educational programming.



Image courtesy of 11Alive.

"Sowing the Seeds of Success: Cultivating a Future for Community Gardens", L.S. Milburn and B.A. Vail.

RECOMMENDATION E-3:
Pursue Co-Branding Opportunities

TIMEFRAME:

Ongoing

ADDRESSES:

- » **Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination**
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Improving Local Food Access

LEAD:

City of East Point Parks and Recreation Department, UAC

SUPPORT:

East Point Farmers Market, East Point Healthy Point program

STARTING STEPS:

- » Discuss locating plots, signage near trails with Parks and Recreation Department
- » Discuss cobranding opportunities with East Point Farmers Market and Healthy Point project

RESOURCES:

1. [“Sowing the Seeds of Success: Cultivating a Future for Community Gardents”](#), L.S. Milburn and B.A. Vail. “Sowing the Seeds of Success: Cultivating a Future for Community Gardents”, L.S. Milburn and B.A. Vail.

RECOMMENDATION E-4:
Continue Urban Agriculture Local Events

Hosting local food events sponsored by the UAC and the City of East Point is a useful strategy to build community identity and pride around local agriculture, while showcasing and supporting local urban growers and chefs. The City, the East Point Farmers Market and East Point Main Street Association already host a number of local food events, from a weekly farmers market to an annual vegan festival. Continued commitment to those events, as well as, the UAC adding more local agriculture events reinforces the local food brand and supports local agriculture businesses and restaurants. Ticket sales and sponsorships from these events can help City- supported urban agriculture initiatives.

In Fall of 2019, Food Well Alliance hosted their Love Local event on a closed street in downtown East

Point. Local urban growers and local food leaders shared a meal with City officials, funders, developers, etc. to have meaningful conversations about the local food movement. Meals were prepared by local chefs using local ingredients.

Case Studies

The Forsyth Farmers Market hosts an annual Farm Picnic that raises about \$20,000 in proceeds through ticket sales and sponsor packages. The proceeds fund various farmers market programs. Local farm-to-table restaurants participate by supplying attendees with dishes sourced from fresh, locally grown food.



Image courtesy of 11Alive.

RECOMMENDATION E-4:
Continue Urban Agriculture Local Events

TIMEFRAME:

Ongoing

ADDRESSES:

- » **Branding East Point as a Local Food Destination**
- » Establishing the Role of Local Government
- » Supporting Local Urban Growers

LEAD:

UAC, City of East Point Economic Development department

SUPPORT:

East Point Farmers Market, East Point Healthy Point program

STARTING STEPS:

- » Brainstorm ideas for more local events involving local food
- » Identify other local events to incorporate local food

RESOURCES:

1. [Food Well Alliance Love Local Event](#)

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NEXT STEPS

This plan sorts the recommendations into short-term, ongoing, and long-term goals; however, there are a few immediate next steps that East Point must take to ensure the plan's success. After the East Point Community Agriculture Plan is approved and adopted by East Point's Planning Commission and City Council, several steps can be immediately implemented to advance the goals of the plan. In addition to organizing the City Agriculture Planning process, Food Well Alliance has offered \$75,000 for plan implementation. The City of East Point has matched this grant with an additional \$75,000 in implementation funds. The following immediate steps could leverage these grants to kickstart implementation.

An important first step is to formally create the UAC, comprised of steering committee members involved in the creation of the Community Agriculture Plan. Whether as a volunteer-based 501(c)(3) or a City-appointed commission, the UAC will play a vital role in carrying out the recommendations from this plan alongside partner organizations and City departments. The role of the UAC includes guiding

and implementing recommendations, guiding changes in local government policy, and identifying and applying for grants to fund these efforts.

Another important step following plan adoption is to create an RFP and scope for a zoning code audit and update. The City of East Point plans to undertake an overhaul of its zoning code in fiscal year 2021. When crafting an RFP, the City could consider including food systems planning as a qualification for its consultants as well as include urban agriculture considerations in the scope. Furthermore, the City could engage the UAC during this process to gather input on how the zoning code can better accommodate urban agriculture.

Once formally established, the UAC will convene and develop a catalyst project to kickstart plan implementation. Supported by grants from Food Well Alliance and the City, this project will have a particular focus on promoting existing assets and supporting community access and empowerment.



Image courtesy of Strong Towns

MATRIX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

MATRIX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	RECOMMENDATION	TIME-FRAME	LEAD	SUPPORT
PRIORITY A: IMPROVING LOCAL FOOD ACCESS	A-1. Leverage Existing Farm-to-School Educational Opportunities in East Point	Ongoing	UAC, City of East Point	National School Lunch Program, Fulton County Farm-to-School Program, Greening Youth Foundation, Georgia Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Program
	A-2. Continue Pursuit of Mobile Market Partnership	Ongoing	East Point Farmers Market, Market 166	UAC, East Point Economic Development Department
	A-3. Encourage Home Growing to Increase Food Security	Ongoing	UAC, City of East Point	Food Well Alliance, Metro Atlanta Urban Farm, Other Urban Growers
	A-4. Develop a Corner Store Incentive Program	Long-term	UAC, Planning & Community Development and Economic Development Departments	Market 166; Morehouse Health System; Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center South; Grady East Point Health Center; Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center; Georgia State School of Public Health; Emory University School of Public Health; the CDC; and Fulton County Board of Health.
	A-5. Support the Creation of a Full-Service Grocery Store	Long-Term	East Point Economic Development, Market 166	UAC, City of East Point Planning & Community Development Department
PRIORITY B: SUPPORTING URBAN GROWERS	B-1. Advocate for Urban Agriculture in Existing and New Incentive Programs	Short-term	UAC, East Point Economic Development	East Point Planning & Community Development Department
	B-2. Create an Urban Agriculture Resource Database and How-to Guide for Urban Growers	Short-term	UAC	Other stakeholders (i.e. other urban growers and food advocates), East Point Economic Development, and Planning & Community Development
	B-3. Create Restaurant and Institutional Procurement Incentives	Long-term	UAC, East Point Economic Development	Stakeholders from local East Point restaurants, Georgia Organics

PRIORITY C: ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RECOMMENDATION	TIME-FRAME	LEAD	SUPPORT
C-1. Transition Steering Committee to UAC	Short-term	UAC	City of East Point
C-2. Conduct a Zoning Code Audit to Identify Potential Barriers to Urban Agriculture	Short-term	East Point Planning & Community Development, UAC	East Point Main Street Association, East Point Economic Development
C-3. Leverage Public Land, Schools, Utility Easements, & Appropriate Private Sites for Growing Space	Short-term	UAC	Fulton County Schools, East Point Parks and Recreation, Fulton County Soil and Water District, Georgia Power, East Point Housing Authority
C-4. Hire a Dedicated Staff Member to Coordinate Programs and Initiatives between the UAC and the City	Long-term	East Point Planning & Community Development, UAC	Food Well Alliance
C-5. Incorporate Urban Agriculture in Plans	Long-term	UAC	East Point Planning & Community Development Department
C-6: Target Economic Development Efforts to Further Elevate and Locate Food Distribution Centers	Ongoing	East Point Economic Development	East Point Planning & Community Development; UAC
D-1. Undertake Initial Steps to Create a Centralized Composting and Mulch Program	Short-term	UAC and East Point Public Works	Potential private contractor (i.e. CompostNow)
D-2. Create a Seed Bank	Long-term	UAC	East Point Historical Society
D-3. Develop a City-Wide Pollinator Protection Strategy	Long-term	UAC	East Point Residents Dr. Jason Riedy and Cynthia Roseberry; Georgia Tech Urban Bee Project; Greater Atlanta Pollinator Partnership; The Atlanta Botanical Garden Plant Pollinator Program; Think Green

PRIORITY D: BRANDING

RECOMMENDATION	TIME-FRAME	LEAD	SUPPORT
E-1. Pursue Local Messaging Opportunities	Short-term	UAC	East Point Economic Development, Destination Marketing Organization, ArtsXchange, East Point Farmers Market, City of East Point Healthy Point program
E-2. Identify and Pursue Certifications	Ongoing	East Point Planning & Community Development	East Point Environmental Collective, ARC
E-3. Pursue Co-Branding Opportunities	Ongoing	East Point Parks and Recreation Department, UAC	East Point Farmers Market, East Point Healthy Point program
E-4. Continue Urban Agriculture Local Events	Ongoing	UAC, City of East Point	East Point Farmers Market, East Point Healthy Point program

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