



ATLANTA
OFFICE OF
RESILIENCE



Department of
CITY PLANNING

GA SENATE IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS AND
ENDING FOOD DESERTS STUDY COMMITTEE
Wednesday October 6, 2021

City of Atlanta Food System Focus Areas



Food Access



Urban
Agriculture



Waste Diversion
(food recovery
& compost)

Policies, Permits, Plans, Partnerships, Programs

Public x Private x Community Intersection

The City of Atlanta employs a multi-layered & multi-pronged collaborative approach to address the community’s fresh food access, justice, & equity needs

ROLE	MAYORS OFFICE OF RESILIENCE	DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
PRIMARY	Urban Agriculture Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Systems Planner • AgLanta Grown Project Coordinator • Community Programs Manager
SUPERVISORY	Chief Sustainability Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Director of Office of Housing and Community Development • Director of Office of Housing and Community Development
COLLABORATIVE (intragovernmental)	Parks & Recreation, Watershed Management, Public Works, others	
COLLABORATIVE (external)	Community Members, Social Enterprise, Non-profits, Philanthropy, Private & Corporate Sector	

Real, accessible people!



j. olu baiyewu
Urban Agriculture Director



Elizabeth Beak
Food Systems Planner



Justin Nickelson
AgLanta Grown Project Coordinator

www.aglanta.org



► **WHAT:** AgLanta is a City program created to support Urban Agriculture initiatives in Atlanta.

► **MISSION:** Cultivate a more resilient, equitable, and accessible food system for Atlanta.

► **GOAL:** Ensure 85% of Atlanta residents are within a 0.5 mile of fresh affordable food by 2022.



Social Infrastructure is as essential as physical infrastructure

Reducing food insecurity requires comprehensive, thoughtful, intentional, community informed & engaged, intersectional solutions. These solutions should acknowledge, document, and address the systemic inequities that currently & historically have the highest near and long term negative impacts on systemically underserved and under resourced communities. Often, these same communities are largely comprised of Black, Indigenous, & other People of Colour (BIPOC), as well as have sizable youth & senior populations

Systemically underserved & under resourced & communities are often the most vulnerable populations to experience:

- ▶ Lower individual & household food security,
- ▶ Lower access to affordable housing,
- ▶ Higher individual & household energy/utility burdens and cost,
- ▶ Higher individual & household transportation costs,
- ▶ Lower performing primary & secondary public educational institutions,
- ▶ Lower access to living wage paying employment opportunities & higher unemployment rates.

▶ Sources: [One Atlanta Economic Mobility Index](#), [Greenlink Equity Map](#), USDA LILA & Census data

A solution is to utilise an equity centered, racial & social justice lens across multiple sectors, internally & externally. This strategy will help advance us along the the journey from food access & food insecurity to food justice & food sovereignty. This requires the will, continuous collaboration and financial investment of public sector, private sector, non-profits, philanthropy, and others. Communities need to be at the forefront of vocalizing gaps and deficiencies in their local food system; it's part of our role to support them with the data, toolkits, resources, and subject matter expertise we possess, while also reducing barriers for local communities to create the local food realities they desire.

some recent happenings



► FRESH FOOD ACCESS REPORTS (2020)

► Press Release

► *“The Fresh Food Access Report helps us understand where to target resources as we continue advancing our goal of ensuring a greater and more equitable distribution of fresh food access in the city.”*

► 2020 FRESH FOOD ACCESS MAP

► On-site Farm Stand Sales Ordinance passed

► Press Release

► *“Urban farms are a key component to establishing a healthier and more resilient city. The Farm Stand Ordinance will foster a more equitable distribution of fresh food access for residents and visitors across Atlanta and expand economic opportunities for our urban farmers.”*

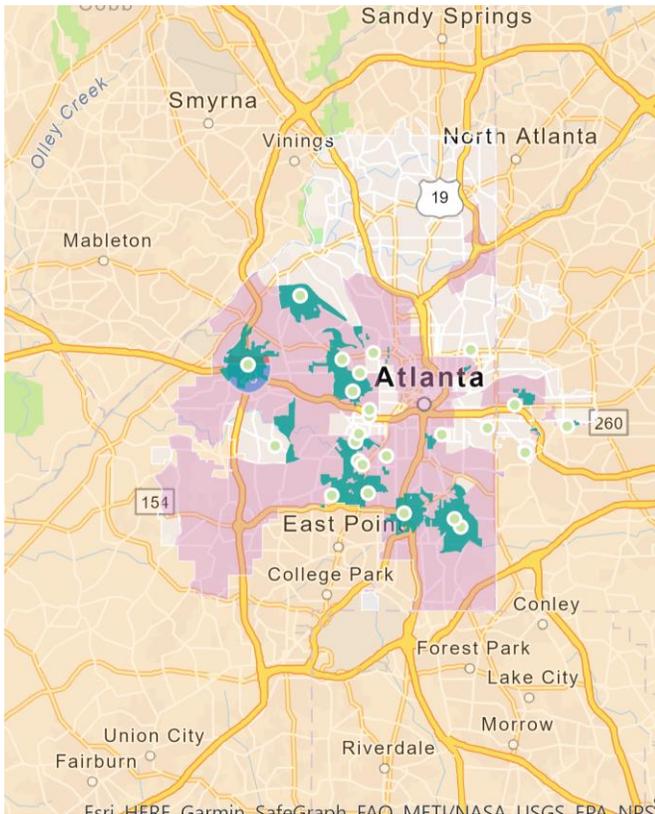
► Establishing the 2nd City of Atlanta Public, Community Food Forest at the Outdoor Activity Center; a City Park property (developing)

► Creating a City-wide ambassador program (AgLanta Ambassador) that will become the institutionalized mechanism for Atlanta residents to communicate with City of Atlanta government in matters pertaining to Urban Agriculture & Food Access. (developing)

► Exploring opportunities for potential tax abatement programs for multi-family residential developments that include affordable housing and urban agriculture/food production elements and benefits (developing)

2020 Atlanta Fresh Food Access Report (FFAR)

- key takeaways



Urban Farms in LILA areas. Source, 2020 FFAR

- ▶ Black residents are the largest population in LILA areas, and seniors (residents over 65) and children live in LILA areas at higher rates than non-LILA areas, which has important implications for equity and access.
- ▶ About 75% of residents are within a half-mile of fresh food as of 2020, a 23-percentage point increase from 2015.
- ▶ Neighborhood markets have provided the greatest share of former LILA residents with access to fresh food within city limits.
- ▶ Grocery stores and farmers markets play a smaller but important role in fresh food access expansion. Relatively few LILA residents gained access to fresh food through supercenters.
- ▶ LILA areas near Midtown saw the greatest increase in access to fresh food, while less dense areas in the south and west of the city saw far less gains in access to fresh food.
- ▶ COVID-19 has created risks associated with indoor food access, but has also led to opportunities and innovations in food access to adapt to social distancing and outdoors, like farms and online food delivery.

Top Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Consider expanding the MARTA Markets program, which provides fresh food stands at MARTA stations throughout Atlanta.
- ▶ Allow on-site sale of food on all farms and gardens citywide to connect growers with nearby residents that would benefit from increased fresh food access.
- ▶ Create a City of Atlanta food systems master plan for equitable development, in partnership with residents and other stakeholders groups.

Public, Community Food Forests connect nature, sustainability, & people



Source, Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill

Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill (SE Atlanta)

- ▶ Atlanta's first Public, Community Urban Food Forest, as well as a new model for a City of Atlanta park (7.1 acres). The food forest produces a wide variety of fresh, flavorful, and healthy nuts, fruits, vegetables, herbs, and mushrooms, which are available for public consumption via onsite community partners as well as a growing number of foraging opportunities
 - ▶ also preservation of an agrarian site. as recently as 2000, former owners Ruby and Willie Morgan left excess produce from their farm on fence posts for neighbors to claim and enjoy.

Food Forest at Outdoor Activity Center (SW Atlanta, developing)

- ▶ This 20+acre site has some similar elements to UFFBM as well as includes a certified old growth forest, and the practice baseball field of the City's oldest National Baseball Team, the Atlanta Black Crackers. It's located in a Neighbourhood Planning Unit (NPU) with no retail Fresh Food Access Points
- ▶ established onsite community partner of fifteen (15) years, [West Atlanta Watershed Alliance \(WAWA\)](#); a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life within the West Atlanta Watershed by protecting, preserving and restoring our community's natural resources. WAWA represents African American neighborhoods in Northwest and Southwest Atlanta that are most inundated with environmental stressors, but are least represented at environmental decision-making tables.

Food Forests are an ecological & environmental focused approach to food security; there is food planted for human consumption, as well as for the needs of pollinators, and other species of wildlife below and above.

2021 FARM STAND ORDINANCE - Overview

- New fresh food access points are needed throughout Atlanta, particularly in USDA designated Low-Income, Low-Access (LILA) neighborhoods.
- In September 2021 a City Zoning ordinance was passed that allows on-site sales of on-site grown produce, at urban farms located in residentially zoned areas.
- Residents have the opportunity to purchase & eat local, fresh, and healthy food in their own neighbourhood



Mena's Farm

Benefits of Farm Stands

- **Access:** Farm stands would bring new local, fresh food access to 30,000+ low-income residents.
- **Economic:** Creates economic mobility opportunities for Atlanta's farmers, 92% of which are operated by women or B,I,& POC residents
- **Community:** Urban farms are community farms that anchor local neighborhoods by cultivating food security, neighborhood resilience, safety, and the local economy.
- **Resilience:** Supports increased food awareness, education, nutrition, environmental health, wellness, and community empowerment.



Farmer J of Patchwork City Farms & Ivory of From Farm to Fork

What's next? – Farm Stands

- Updating SAP (Special Administrative Permit) document and application process
- Creating a “Farm Stand Toolkit” for applicants that will provide more guided resources & contacts to City Zoning, Buildings, Watershed, Public Works (trash & recycling), Studio Design, and more
- Pursuing partnership opportunities for wrap around services & resources such as 2-for-1 EBT/SNAP benefits
- Ongoing stakeholder communication (farmers & consumers) as well as marketing



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