
JONESBORO
CITY
AGRICULTURE
PLAN

The background of the cover is a photograph of a wooden crate filled with fresh purple chives. The chives are in various stages of bloom, with some showing their characteristic globe-like flower heads. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the green leaves and the delicate structure of the purple flowers. The overall color palette is dominated by the purples and greens of the chives, with a white text overlay.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Mayor and City Council of Jonesboro

The Steering Committee:

David Allen, Director of Community Development, Interim City Manager, City of Jonesboro

Mary Bruce, Community Garden Club President, Jonesboro Community Garden

John Burdin, Director of Public Works, City of Jonesboro

Christopher Cato, Police Lieutenant, City of Jonesboro

Ellen Divins, Jonesboro Community Member

Tommy Henderson, Chief of Police, City of Jonesboro

Kim Jennings, First United Methodist Church

Samaria McCoy, Former Jonesboro Community Garden Manager

Wande Okrunoren-Meadows, Executive Director, Hand, Heart, and Soul Project

Mike Quick, Master Gardener, Jonesboro Community Garden

Pat Sebo-Hand, Former City Councilmember and Farmers Market Manager, City of Jonesboro

Andrew Simpson, Director of Economic Development, Current Farmers Market Manager, City of Jonesboro

Demond Timberlake, Assistant Director of Community Organizing and Operations, Hand Heart and Soul Project

Derry Walker, Chief Code Enforcement Officer, City of Jonesboro

ARC PROJECT TEAM:

Kristin Allin, Project Manager

Keri Stevens, Planning Administrator

Samyukth Shenbaga, Project Advisor

FOOD WELL ALLIANCE PROJECT TEAM:

Sarah Brown, Senior Manager of Policy and Planning

Emma Hugonnet, Policy and Planning Coordinator

Kate Conner, Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

06 INTRODUCTION

12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

22 PLAN STRUCTURE & MATRIX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

26 BASELINE CONDITIONS FOR A STRONG LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

32 PRIORITY A: EQUIP CURRENT AND BEGINNING GROWERS

42 PRIORITY B: INCREASE EQUITABLE FOOD ACCESS

56 PRIORITY C: PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM OPPORTUNITIES

66 PRIORITY D: BUILD ON CITY AND COUNTY RESOURCES

82 NEXT STEPS

84 APPENDIX

PREPARED FOR:



PREPARED BY:



Unless otherwise specified, all photos are provided by the project team or courtesy of City of Jonesboro



Community Engagement Partner

MISSION

Food Well Alliance provides resources and support to local growers to connect and build healthier communities.

VISION

Food Well Alliance’s vision is an equitable, local food ecosystem in which everyone can participate and benefit.

WHY CITY AGRICULTURE PLANNING?

Food Well Alliance’s vision is to bring local governments together with growers and their communities to ensure that cities incorporate local food and agriculture into their plans for development. When municipal leaders and diverse food system stakeholders plan together for inclusive policies and projects, growers can provide greater access to locally grown food across the city, leading to healthier people, environments, and communities.

The City Agriculture Plan initiative was made possible through funding from the James M. Cox Foundation.



Planning Partner

MISSION

Foster thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments.

VISION

One Great Region

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 preserving areas for local food production activities.





INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The City Agriculture Plan program was launched in 2018 to address the major findings of Atlanta's Local Food Baseline Report developed by Food Well Alliance (FWA). This comprehensive review of the metro Atlanta regional food system revealed a need for growers and community members to have more meaningful participation in the development and implementation of policies and programs affecting local food and agriculture. FWA and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) partnered in 2019 to develop the region's first City Agriculture Plan for the City of East Point, Georgia. After finalizing East Point's Plan in 2021, the program expanded to the City of Alpharetta, GA. In 2022, after considering applications from cities across FWA's five-county service area, ARC and FWA selected the City of Jonesboro to develop the region's third City Agriculture Plan.

Jonesboro's plan draws upon community priorities and feedback from diverse stakeholders to lay out guidelines for integrating local food and agriculture into the City's policies, programs, and development. The Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan intersects with the work of other key local partners to be a framework for actions that will strengthen the local food system through collaboration.

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 local food system over the next five to ten years. A local 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 strong local food system makes these ties visible and integrates them to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of a community and its residents. A City Agriculture Plan is developed through a collaborative process that builds community around local food and agriculture, formalizes a local government's commitment to prioritizing health and sustainability, and brings innovative ideas and valuable resources to cities. Designing a plan that connects communities and strengthens local food systems takes time, collaboration, and investment. The City Agriculture Plan initiative involves a community engagement phase led by Food Well Alliance and a traditional planning phase led by ARC, all supported by committed city leaders and enthusiastic community members. The plan outlines strategies for achieving these priorities including initial steps and recommended partners for implementation. A City Agriculture Plan is not meant to be a stand-alone document, but is meant to identify ways in which local food and agriculture can be integrated into city plans and programs.

Why Jonesboro?

In the fall of 2022, Food Well Alliance and ARC solicited applications to develop the next City Agriculture Plan from the 5-county metro Atlanta region. Five cities across multiple counties applied, but Jonesboro's application was selected due to a number of factors:

- » Strong community engagement with ongoing food and agriculture activity at the Farmers and Makers Market and Community Garden.
- » Committed and involved city staff leading efforts to increase opportunities for residents to build community around growing food.
- » Forward-thinking ideas to incorporate food access and intergenerational engagement into the city's development.



Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan Community Kickoff Event

How Can Jonesboro Benefit from a City Agriculture Plan?

Jonesboro leadership has long recognized the need for local food and agriculture to become more of an integral part of the community. The city, in conjunction with University of Georgia Clayton County Extension Office, started the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market in 2018 which has continued to grow and be a resource and community gathering spot at Lee Street Park. The city also began the Jonesboro Community Garden by securing a 50-year land lease with Clayton County. Today the garden is run by the dedicated staff of the Jonesboro Police Department and the Community Garden Club. The vision of the garden is to create a point of contact and source of healthy food for vulnerable populations in the city, especially senior citizens.

These two resources have shown the potential that a strong long food system could have in driving community connection, sustainability, and economic growth in Jonesboro. A City Agriculture Plan will encourage cross-sectional partnerships to give more residents the opportunity to grow and access local food.





JONESBORO CITY AGRICULTURE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

The Jonesboro Agriculture Plan builds on the City of Jonesboro Blueprint by establishing an accessible and equitable local food economy. Through cultivating resources and growers, building partnerships, and creating innovative programming, the City of Jonesboro will establish community-centered, cooperative production, funding, and education to engage residents of all generations.

Process

The City of Jonesboro Agriculture Plan was conducted in three phases:

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

Food Well Alliance launched the community engagement phase of the City Agriculture Plan with a kickoff event at the Jonesboro Community Garden on Saturday, April 15, 2023. The event celebrated a new season of the Community Garden and introduced residents to the City Agriculture Plan process. The kickoff was a collaborative effort with the City of Jonesboro, the Jonesboro Police Department, Food Well Alliance, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and community members who attended the event to ready the garden for spring planting. Food Well Alliance and the ARC also led community engagement efforts at existing city events and through surveys and focus groups to discuss the City Agriculture Plan with attendees.

To lead the planning phase, diverse stakeholders were selected to form a steering committee, facilitated by ARC and Food Well Alliance, which met monthly from June to October 2023 using community priorities to build strategies for the plan. Steering committee members represented multiple city departments, community members, garden advocates, local non-profit organizations and religious organizations.

This document serves as an outcome of the first two phases and will guide the City of Jonesboro in the implementation phase once the plan is adopted by the Jonesboro City Council.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a core tenant of the City Agriculture Plan process and provides the basis for the priority areas and recommendations in this document. The City Agriculture Plan is developed using a community-driven process that brings together growers, food system advocates, residents, and city officials to identify community priorities. The primary goal for this engagement was to create accessible opportunities for diverse residents to contribute their thoughts on Jonesboro's local food system.

The community engagement process included community asset mapping to identify existing local food and agriculture assets along with focus groups, community surveys, and stakeholder interviews to collect feedback.



Steering Committee Meeting

Community Conversations and Outreach

Food Well Alliance hosted four focus groups, or “Community Conversations” that were open to the public as a forum for resident input. These events were held on weekend mornings and weekday evenings in accessible locations, both indoor and outdoor, for equitable access. FWA and the City of Jonesboro promoted these events through social media, email, and the city newsletter as well as on QR flyers and postcards at over twenty-five strategic locations around the City.

Food Well Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Commission attended community events to gather input from residents regarding their need for healthy foods, education, markets, and other topics.



Community outreach, 6th Annual Clayton County Back to School Block Party; Hand, Heart, and Soul Project event

CITY AGRICULTURE PLAN

GROW IN CITIES | 100% COMMUNITY

City of Jonesboro

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

All city residents are invited to share their vision! Join us at one of four community conversations to discuss what issues and opportunities need to be addressed in the plan and play a role in the future of Jonesboro’s development.

Thursday 4.20 6:30pm	Arts Clayton Gallery 136 S Main St Jonesboro, GA 30236	Saturday 4.22 10:00am	City Center Community Room 1859 City Center Way Jonesboro, GA 30236
Thursday 4.27 6:30pm	Arts Clayton Gallery 136 S Main St Jonesboro, GA 30236	Saturday 4.29 10:00am	Lee St. Park Pavilion 155 Lee St Jonesboro, GA 30236

FOODWELL ALLIANCE | ARC | Jonesboro

Community Conversations distributed advertisement

Community Survey

Resident feedback was also solicited through an open community survey from March through July of 2023. The survey was distributed digitally via Survey Monkey as well as at in-person city events such as the St. Patrick's Day Event and Farmers Market and via physical QR code flyers and postcards posted at over 25 strategic locations around the City. This was a broad survey on the ways that residents currently access food in their community and their vision for improving opportunities to engage with the local food system. Survey feedback was provided to steering committee members for further discussion and insight, which has shaped the recommendations contained in this plan. Key takeaways from the collective survey data are summarized on the following pages.

CITY AGRICULTURE PLAN

GROWN IN CITIES 100% COMMUNITY

City of Jonesboro

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Participate in the City Agriculture Plan process by sharing your experience with accessing and growing local food in Jonesboro through the community survey. Tell us about your vision for the future of Jonesboro's local food system!

Visit the link below to register or scan the QR code!
www.surveymonkey.com/r/DV388S6

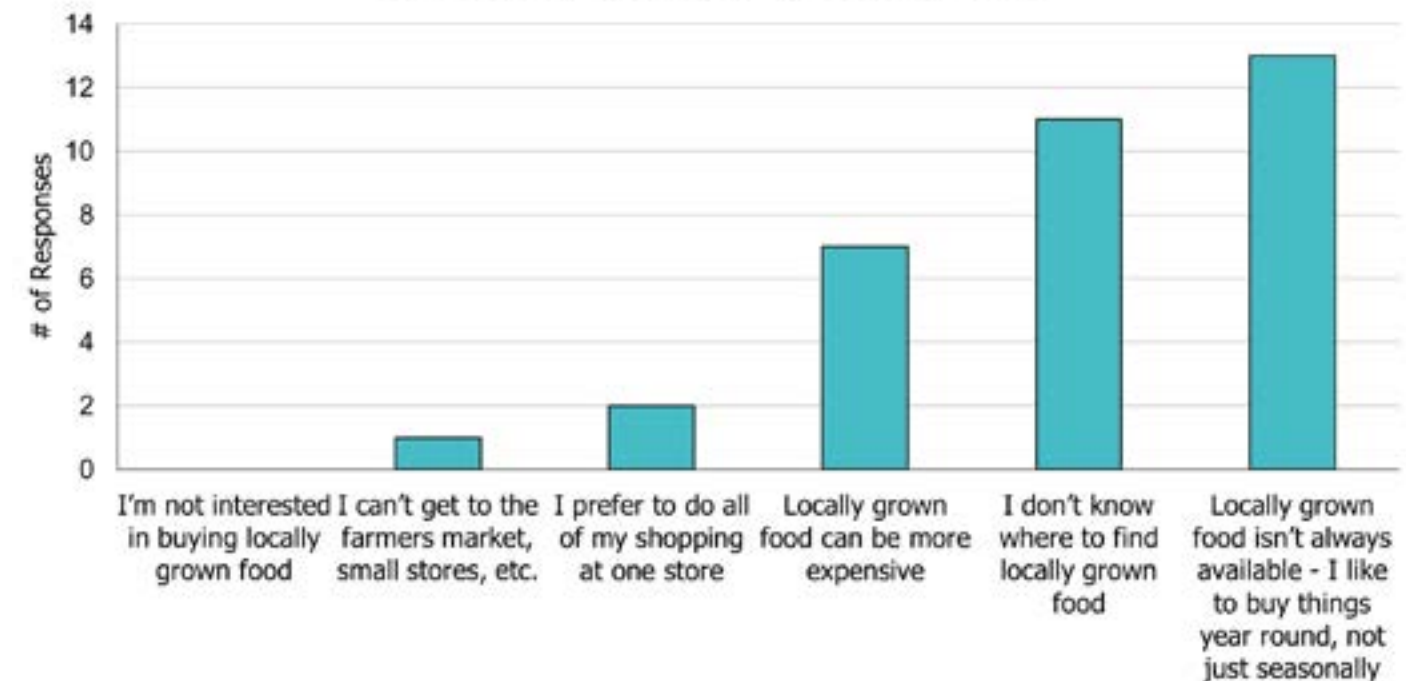


Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan community survey distributed flyer

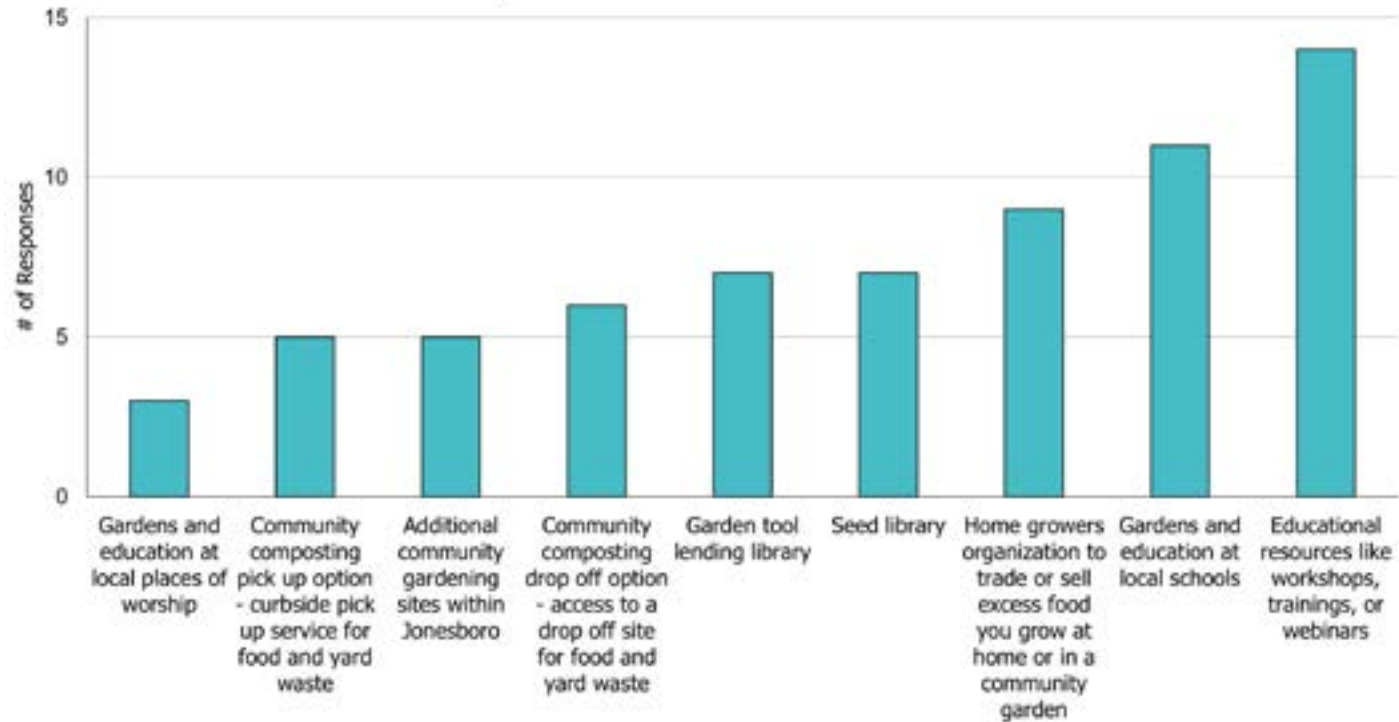
Overall, how easy is it for you to access local food within the City of Jonesboro?



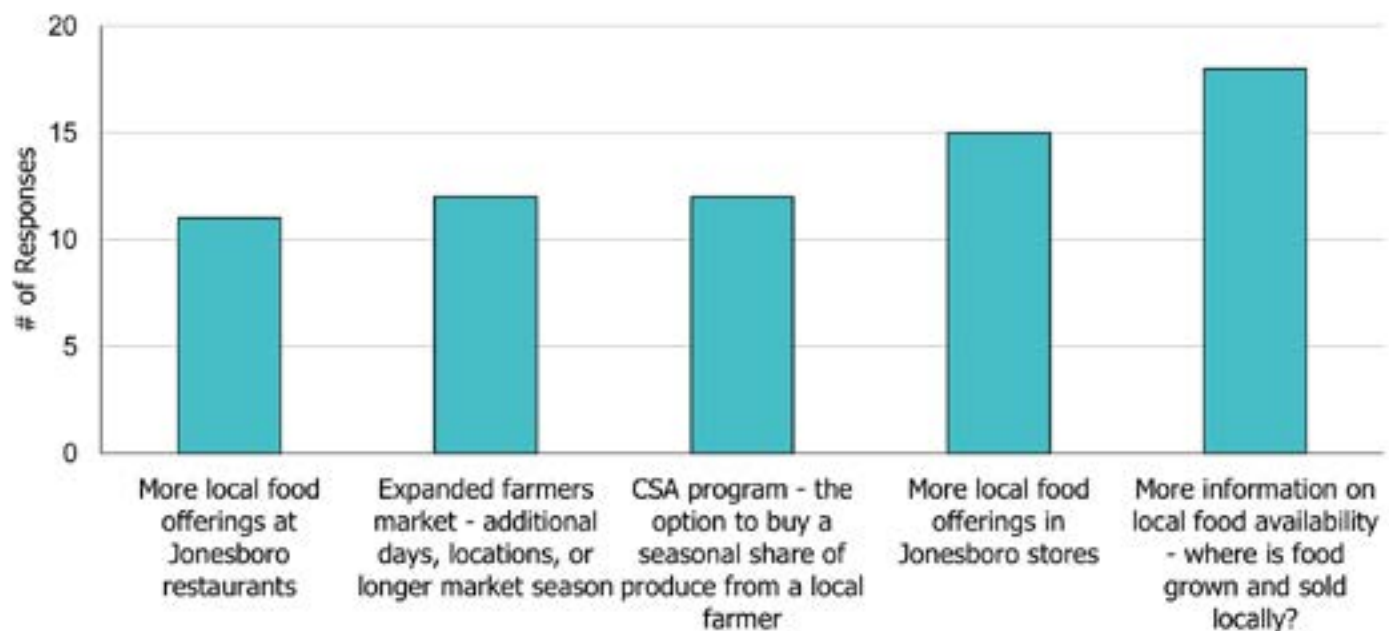
What barriers, if any, have kept you from purchasing locally grown food?



What additional activities or programs related to growing your own food do you wish were offered in Jonesboro?



What additional options or programs related to accessing local food do you wish were offered in Jonesboro?

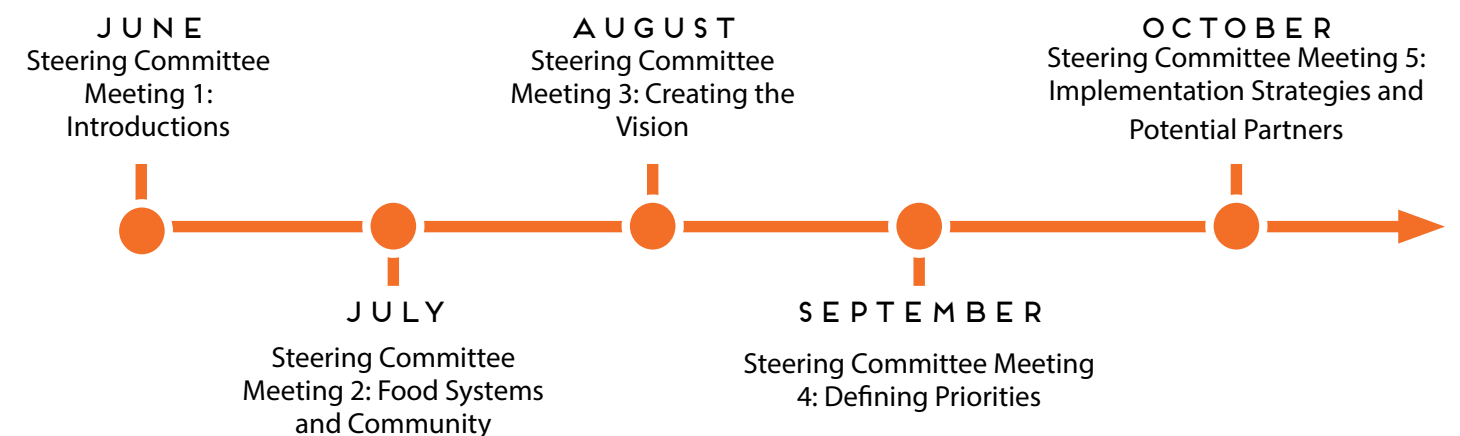


Steering Committee

A steering committee was convened to review the key themes and details that emerged during the community engagement phase and generate innovative ideas that would respond to challenges faced by residents in accessing and growing food. The steering committee consisted of city staff, leaders from local food and agriculture organizations, and residents who met monthly at the Jonesboro City Center for meetings facilitated by ARC. City staff from the Police Department, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Economic Development, and the City Manager contributed their expertise to discussions about feasible action items that could be outlined in the plan.



Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan, Steering Committee



Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to community input, FWA and ARC also sought feedback from key local organizations to gain perspective on integrating recommendations into ongoing work in the area. One-on-one stakeholder meetings were held with Make It Village; the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project; UGA Clayton County Extension Agriculture and Horticulture departments; the Clayton County Health Department; the Jonesboro Community Garden Club President; and UGA Master Gardener Volunteer Program representatives.

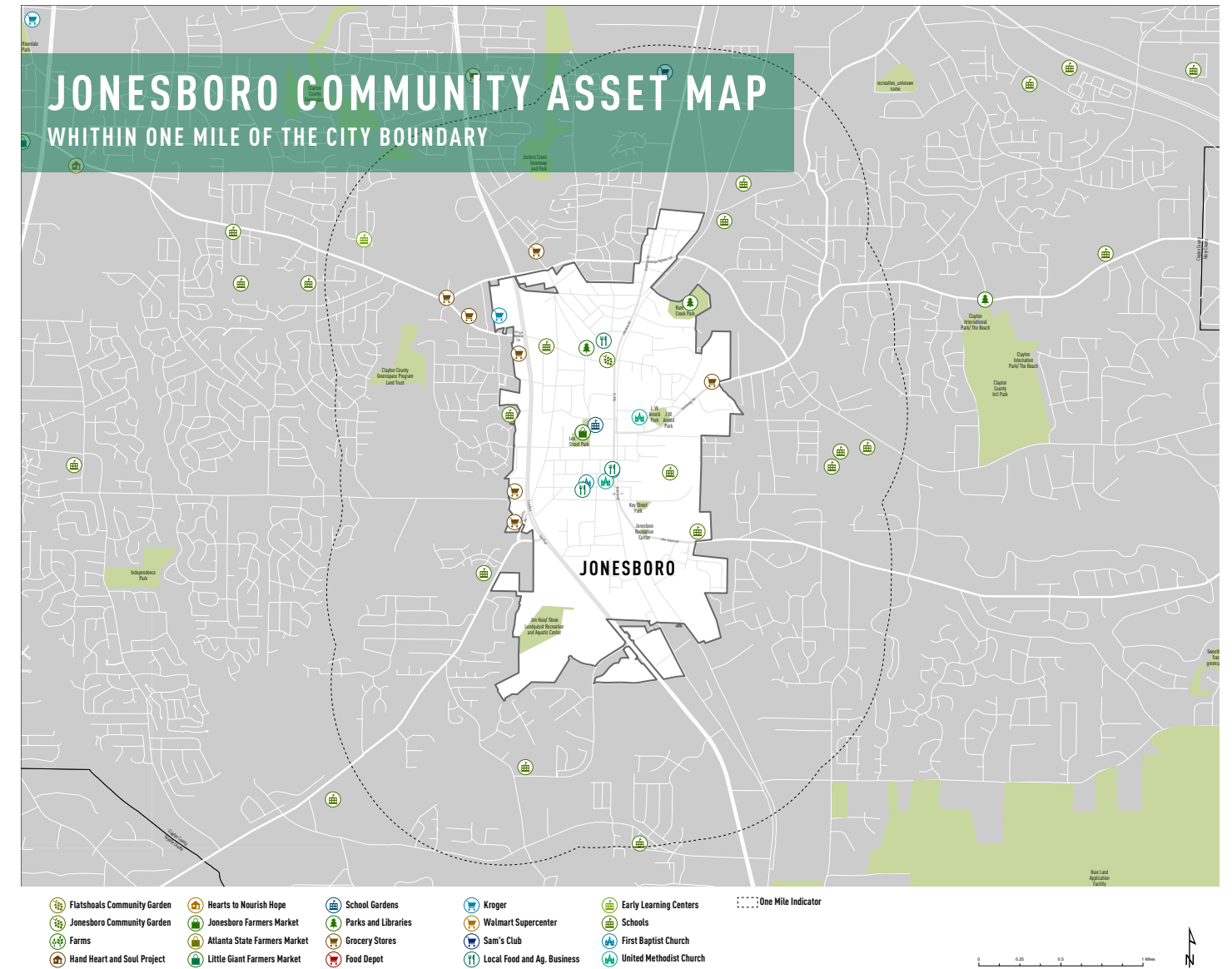
Community Asset Mapping

The Community Asset Map represents a collaborative effort of research by FWA and ARC and validation from Steering Committee members to identify and map social and physical food system assets in and around the city. An extensive list of Jonesboro's assets was compiled across eight categories: farms, community gardens, parks and libraries, schools and school gardens, food and agriculture organizations, farmers markets, local food and agriculture businesses, and grocery stores.

Through this process, over 50 community assets were identified in the incorporated City of Jonesboro and surrounding area. The map on the following page shows these assets by category. The process also revealed Clayton County and City of Jonesboro owned land that could be a valuable resource as future growing or educational spaces. For a full listing of assets, please see the accompanying Appendix.



Steering Committee Meeting, Asset Map creation process





PLAN STRUCTURE

PLAN STRUCTURE

PRIORITIES & STRATEGIES

Six key themes emerged from the community engagement phase:

1. Increasing food access and enabling food sovereignty for Jonesboro residents
2. Expanding existing resources such as the community garden and farmers market
3. Increasing food education and activities
4. Engaging and cultivating new growers
5. Supporting current growers
6. Increasing communication regarding existing resources

These key themes were the basis for discussion at the two steering committee meetings held in July and August 2023. Starting broadly, the steering committee members evaluated data from public outreach events and the survey, as well as their own experience in their community, to provide a range of ideas and activities that would address the needs expressed by Jonesboro residents. These ideas were condensed into the plan priority areas over the two steering committee meetings through group discussion and interactive exercises such as a polling mechanism. The four priority areas for Jonesboro’s City Agriculture Plan are:

- » **Priority A: Equip Current & Beginning Growers**
- » **Priority B: Increase Equitable Food Access**
- » **Priority C: Promote Local Food System Opportunities**
- » **Priority D: Build on City & County Resources**

These categories are not mutually exclusive, and many recommendations address multiple priority areas. Each recommendation includes a projected time frame for implementation. Short-term items are actionable for implementation within the next one to two years following plan adoption. Long term recommendations can be pursued over the next three to five years.



Jonesboro Community Garden greens

Recommendations Matrix

Priority Area	Recommended Strategies	Time Frame
Priority A <i>Equip Current and Beginning Growers</i>	A-1 Expand partnerships for youth engagement through gardening education	Short Term
	A-2 Create shared agricultural resources including a seed library and tool bank	Short Term
	A-3 Support the creation of a home-growers cooperative	Short Term
	A-4 Identify space for a commercial kitchen or value-added processing facility and examine feasibility	Long Term
Priority B <i>Increase Equitable Food Access</i>	B-1 Increase SNAP/WIC enrollment and accept benefits at the Farmers Market	Short Term
	B-2 Expand partnerships to support senior nutrition and growing opportunities including the SCOPE program	Short Term
	B-3 Expand partnerships with faith-based organizations and pantries for food distribution	Long Term
	B-4 Support a fleet of mobile markets	Long Term
	B-5 Create a free/take-what-you-need community stand at the Farmers Market	Long Term
Priority C <i>Promote Local Food System Opportunities</i>	C-1 Increase gardening education opportunities	Short Term
	C-2 Offer classes on cooking and preserving food	Short Term
	C-3 Improve communications on current and future local food system assets and opportunities	Long Term
	C-4 Increase local food and agriculture events	Long Term
Priority D <i>Build on City and County Resources</i>	D-1 Host a seedling sale at the Community Garden to boost revenue and provide a resource for growers	Short Term
	D-2 Enhance the Farmers Market offerings by attracting more produce and food vendors with improved outreach and incentives	Short Term
	D-3 Install a food forest on city-owned land and promote other edible landscaping	Short Term
	D-4 Invest in infrastructure at the Community Garden to expand resource offerings	Long Term
	D-5 Expand community gardens in the City of Jonesboro	Long Term



Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan Kickoff Event, Jonesboro Community Garden



BASELINE CONDITIONS FOR A STRONG LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

BASELINE CONDITIONS FOR A STRONG LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

In order to foster a thriving local food system and enhance access to local foods, the City of Jonesboro and Clayton County must establish a supportive policy environment and leverage engaged partnerships.

A **supportive policy environment** includes one where policies, laws and regulations at the city and county level support strong local food systems. Supportive policy will enable collaboration between the city, county, and plan partners through open communication, access to funding and financing, and community outreach and engagement. City assets including available land, building resources, and staff support can enable partners to advance the City Agriculture Plan. The goals of the City Agriculture Plan should be incorporated into future planning efforts so that updates to the Jonesboro Blueprint, the Downtown Jonesboro Community Transformation Concept Plan, and Comprehensive Plan Updates can seamlessly incorporate goals of the City Agriculture Plan into Jonesboro's overarching community goals.



Seedlings, FWA

Examples of supportive policies might include:

- » City incentives for new food services and independent businesses within developments;
- » Creating physical connections between people and resources through edible plantings and beautification;
- » Creating effective outreach and communications for food-related activities and opportunities in collaboration with partners;
- » Utilizing school partnerships to revitalizing efforts to establish youth gardens and implement food education programs;
- » Incorporating growing space and greenspace into new paths, beside new walkways, and within developments.

A central principle of the plan is to advance equity through food justice and food sovereignty. Financial resources and staff time are critical to advancing these goals without straining the capacity of implementation partners. The City of Jonesboro can play a pivotal role by supporting partners through grant applications, assisting in data collection and sharing, facilitating land or building leases, and allocating city funds to initiatives outlined in the plan.

A second key component of a thriving local food system is **engaged partnerships** between the City of Jonesboro and identified organizations whose missions align with plan recommendations. Partners can extend the reach of the local government by taking on the goals and objectives of the City of Jonesboro that lie beyond the expertise, capabilities, or time commitment of local officials. The Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan identifies local partners who can help carry out the plan's recommendations. These partners have been identified through their experience in the industry, shared vision and values, access to area resident networks, and innovative programs that will better the environment for food education, access, and community participation. The City of Jonesboro can support plan implementation partners by facilitating engagement with the partners identified in the City Agriculture Plan; establishing clear and consistent communication to ensure the city and partners' goals are aligned; and by continuing to encourage their added value and contribution to the plan implementation. A regular schedule for meetings and feedback will help keep programs and communications on track.



Jonesboro Chief of Police Tommy Henderson, speaking at the Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan Kickoff Event

JONESBORO IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

Leveraging engaged partnerships and supporting ongoing work by local stakeholders is integral to the City Agriculture Plan framework. Below are some of the key organizations that FWA and ARC identified as potential implementation partners for strategies within this Plan. Suggestions for lead and support partners are included in each strategic recommendation.

Organization	Mission & Key Local Food System Work
Arts Clayton	The mission of Arts Clayton is to enrich lives through the arts. They currently offer summer camps, classes, and community gathering space suitable for educational opportunities.
Clayton County Public Schools	CCPS is the 5th largest school district in Georgia committed to serving over 50,000 diverse students just south of metro Atlanta, including the City of Jonesboro.
First Baptist Jonesboro	FBJ was founded in 1825 and has served the community with its ministry for over 190 years including emergency food distribution and service at the Fig Tree Cafe and Magnolia House and Garden.
Hand, Heart, and Soul Project	Hand, Heart, and Soul Project is a not for profit organization that seeks to nurture, celebrate, and advance the needs of the people they serve by creating equitable access to quality educational, nutritional, and community resources. With a focus on educating young minds and preparing them for future leadership, their programs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Farm to Early Care and Education » Farmers to Families » Little Lions Farm Stand » Garden stewardship » Policymaker education and advocacy
Jonesboro Community Garden Club	The Community Garden Club of Jonesboro is a collective group of citizens, City officials, and friends coming together for the purpose of growing together at the Jonesboro Community Garden. The Club manages garden administration and programming.
Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market	The Jonesboro market is hosted by the City every Saturday from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM at Lee Street Park from May - September to connect local growers and makers with community residents.

Organization	Mission & Key Local Food System Work
Jonesboro First United Methodist Church	Jonesboro First UMC serves the community through a food co-op program, other emergency food distribution, and connection with local health clinics and other programs.
Make It Village	Make It Village was founded to motivate and unify the community by providing access to stimulating educational STEAM opportunities. Their future Jonesboro Campus, Harvest Urban Village, will be a space to create art, take cooking classes, and learn more about sustainable community gardening in a proven environment.
Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program	The purpose of the Georgia MGEV program is to assist UGA Extension in providing unbiased horticultural information through volunteer community service and consumer horticulture programming. The mission of the MGEV program and that of Extension is to connect the community with research-based, unbiased information.
UGA Clayton County Extension	Clayton County Cooperative Extension extends lifelong learning to county residents through unbiased, research-based education in agriculture, the environment, communities, youth, and families. Their goal is to help Clayton County residents become healthier, more productive, financially independent and environmentally responsible. Clayton County Extension agents stay in touch with issues relevant to people in the county. The Jonesboro Extension office offers soil, plant, and water analysis and holds an annual plant sale for the community.
4-H Youth Development	Georgia 4-H has a mission to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. This mission is accomplished through hands-on learning experiences and a focus on agricultural and environmental issues, agriculture awareness, leadership, communication skills, foods and nutrition, health, energy conservation and citizenship. 4-H offers clubs centered around cooking, gardening, and community, as well as summer camp programs to engage local youth.



PRIORITY A: EQUIP CURRENT AND BEGINNING GROWERS

PRIORITY A: EQUIP CURRENT AND BEGINNING GROWERS

Through the community conversations and survey, Jonesboro community members identified the need to support both existing and new growers through expanded programs and as means of increasing equitable food access in Jonesboro. The recommendations in this section aim to bolster the current grower community in Jonesboro and create new opportunities for potential growers by cultivating a culture of inclusion and accessibility. These recommendations will also address solutions to areas of growth identified by residents and stakeholders during the community engagement phase such as the need for a more connected home growers network, youth gardening programs, and a value-added processing facility like a community kitchen.

Equipping current and beginning growers means building upon the community that Jonesboro has already established. Working to strengthen these connections by increasing capacity within the growing community through access to growing resources, land, and knowledge, will help reduce barriers faced by potential and existing growers. Equipping growers with resources and education will create sustainable solutions and support residents' agency and ability to grow fresh produce within their community.



City Councilmember Alfred Dixon, Jonesboro Community Garden

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION A-1:

Expand partnerships for youth engagement through gardening education.

During the community engagement phase, residents supported incorporating agriculture and gardening programming into schools and other youth spaces such as summer camps. Gardening education for children can help cultivate a new generation of growers and empower students from early childhood through high school. The Hand, Heart, and Soul Project (HHSP), is a not-for-profit organization that provides children and families access to nutrient-dense foods and works with early childhood education programs to develop holistic programs focused on health, wellness, nutrition, and education. Currently they implement early childhood education (ECE) curricula in five learning centers within Clayton County. In a USDA grant funded report published in 2022, HHSP found that nearly all teachers were ready to implement nutrition education through Farm-to-ECE best practices.

Expanding education programming into elementary and secondary schools within Jonesboro would address food insecurity through community efforts, empower families and students to build skills, and develop strategic partnerships between parents, schools, and community organizations. The City of Jonesboro could create a pilot program at Lee Street Elementary, Fayetteville Elementary, or Arnold Elementary.

By partnering with HHSP, curricula can be adapted and implemented at developmentally appropriate levels alongside school leadership. Make-It-Village, a local STEAM, agriculture, and arts collective based in Jonesboro, has been working to pilot an agriculture education program at Michelle Obama STEM Academy. HHSP and Make-It-Village have both agreed to assist in the creation of a gardening curriculum to be piloted in one of the identified elementary schools within Jonesboro. Initial steps would include identifying a teacher-leader at a school to work collaboratively with school leadership and external partners.

Shorter term opportunities for expanding youth education options could involve partnering with the Jonesboro Community Garden and Master Gardener Program to create targeted programming for youth as a part of their monthly gardening education series (see Recommendation C-2). Additionally, the City of Jonesboro can utilize connections with the University of Georgia Clayton County Extension Office and the 4-H Youth Development program. Expanding relationships between the city and extension office would increase opportunities to engage more local youth in current opportunities in the region.



Youth gardening at Jonesboro Community Garden (right)

RECOMMENDATION A-1:

Expand partnerships for youth engagement through gardening education.

ADDRESSES

- » **Equip Current & Beginning Growers**
- » Increase Equitable Food Access
- » Expanding Growing Spaces in Jonesboro

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » Make It Village
- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » 4-H Youth Development
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » City of Jonesboro
- » Clayton County Public Schools

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Connect with 4-H Youth Development program director at UGA Extension
- » Identify pilot school with supportive teacher-leader
- » Develop pilot curriculum alongside Hand, Heart, and Soul Project and Make It Village

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [Acta Non Verba](#) is one example of what youth garden education programs through an external partner might look like. Acta Non Verba is an organization based out of Oakland, CA that incorporates youth programming into areas of low-income and food access. Their programming is targeted towards beginner youth growers who might not have had access to green, healthy, growing spaces. They offer summer camps, after-school programming, and monthly farm trips to help grow youth into well rounded citizens. Their after school programming is offered through partnerships with local elementary schools in the area.

RECOMMENDATION A-2:

Create shared agricultural resources including a seed library and tool bank.

A seed library benefits both community growers and the local ecosystem by contributing to the genetic diversity of plants grown in the area, encouraging growers to plant native varieties year after year, and reducing costs for seeds and plant starts. A seed library promotes a culture of sharing, community resilience, and strengthens education about plant varieties.

A seed library in Jonesboro could operate similarly to a traditional book library. Users would “check out” a packet of seeds and return them after the season. Once users raised their own plants and gathered seeds from their harvest, they would add them to the library collection. Under this model, the seed library would be a self-sustaining, community-driven entity.

Currently there is a seed library at Battle Creek Library in Jonesboro. Expanding the current seed library into at least two other locations, such as the Jonesboro Community Garden or Lee Street Elementary, would increase equitable access to growing resources. Expansion costs would include funds for the initial seed packet supply, an organized box or cabinet, and marketing materials. Developers could work alongside the UGA Clayton County Extension Office and Master Gardener Volunteers to identify appropriate seed varieties and sources.

A tool bank would operate similarly and work to cultivate principles of sharing, accessibility, trust, and community building. The presence of a tool bank in Jonesboro would encourage home growing projects that may not have been possible otherwise due to lack of resources. The tool bank could be hosted at the community garden in a shed with a coded lock and a check-out system similar to a library. Loan terms would be based on tool varieties and would be managed by the community garden administration. The initial start-up costs could be higher than that of a seed library, due to acquiring multiple tools to be used and having storage built to contain the inventory, but could be offset by a local tool drive. Instruction on proper tool usage would ensure longevity of the inventory. Depending on the types of tools, renting may require safety training and/or liability waivers. Training and education would also serve as marketing and help promote the existence of the program.



Seedlings, FWA

RECOMMENDATION A-2:

Create shared agricultural resources including a seed library and tool bank.

ADDRESSES

- » **Equip Current & Beginning Growers**
- » Increase Equitable Food Access
- » Build on City and County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro, Department of Public Works
- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Battle Creek Library

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Master Garden Volunteer Program

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify locations for expanded seed library and tool bank
- » Develop administration and management structure
- » Obtain tools and seeds
- » Develop training schedule for tool library usage
- » Develop marketing materials to increase community awareness and participation

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [The Hickory Flat Library](#) in Cherokee County, GA hosts a seed library. Renting from the library requires members to fill out a membership form before they are allowed to choose from the wide selection donated by master gardeners in the area, and local seed companies. The library is organized based on types of plant, and ease of growing to increase accessibility for all levels of growers. The motivation to create the library was to help gardeners in the area learn about seed saving, promote biodiversity, and expand the practice of seed libraries to the state of Georgia. The library was opened and maintained in conjunction with the University of Georgia Extension Office in Cherokee County and library staff.

RECOMMENDATION A-3:

Support the creation of a home-growers cooperative.

According to the community survey, over 58% of respondents reported growing food at home, and an additional 33% of respondents expressed the need for a home-growers cooperative network to support their capacity and foster community. The cooperative could be a resource for knowledge sharing, offering assistance in starting garden beds, sharing seedlings, exchanging harvests, discussing best practices, and advertising local food events and activities within the City of Jonesboro and surrounding community.

A home-growers cooperative in Jonesboro could be both a digital and physical space. Creating an online community that is centralized, accessible, inclusive, and easily navigated would help new and current growers feel empowered with knowledge and support to grow their own food. A digital space would include a younger audience and create intergenerational connections within the community. The home-growers cooperative could be piloted by members of the Jonesboro Community Garden, and identified home-growers in the area. The online space should be established collectively among initial members. Potential websites include Facebook, Reddit, or an independently created free website via WordPress or Wix.

In addition to an online forum, a physical space for the home-growers co-op could be established at the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market. A dedicated booth at the market could be a space to sell excess produce and market the cooperative itself. Over 40% of survey respondents expressed the need for more local food offerings and expanding the offerings at the current farmers market. By establishing a home-growers booth at the farmers market, it would provide an additional fresh produce, allow growers to have an alternative source of income, and contribute to the creation of a wider growing community in Jonesboro. A home-growers cooperative could be expanded through new and existing volunteers to the Master Gardener Program and the 4-H Youth Development Program, offered through the UGA Clayton County Extension. The Master Gardener Volunteer Program seeks to expand its members, who must maintain volunteer hours annually in the community through project assistance and education.



Farmers market basket, FWA

RECOMMENDATION A-3:

Support the creation of a home-growers cooperative.

ADDRESSES

- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Increase Equitable Food Access
- » Promote Local Food System Opportunities

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- » City of Jonesboro
- » Jonesboro Community Garden

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Local religious organizations
- » Community Garden participants

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify leadership and potential founding members to begin network
- » Identify and build out platforms for communication
- » Identify funding for initial supplies needed
- » Create marketing materials and campaign to increase community participation
- » Coordinate with the City of Jonesboro for a space at the Farmers and Makers Market

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » According to the Oregon State University Extension Office, belonging to an agricultural organization has multiple benefits. Potential benefits include increased business networking and marketing opportunities, improved relationships among other growers, advocacy for issues, and increased opportunities for educational programming and connection with other growers. Agricultural organizations, such as a home-growers cooperative, would increase modes of communication among growers in the area, and be tailored to serve Jonesboro residents and community garden members. An example of an agricultural organization is Keep Growing Detroit. Keep Growing Detroit is a local cooperative which assists urban growers in the Detroit Metropolitan area by providing them with high quality resources for their growing operations. Staff also provides technical assistance for growers. The home-growers cooperative in Jonesboro would be able to provide similar services through knowledge sharing, resource sharing, and community support.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION A-4:

Identify space for a commercial kitchen or value-added processing facility and explore feasibility.

During the community engagement and planning phases, residents expressed interest in the use of a commercial kitchen to produce value-added goods and prepared food products. Additionally, residents expressed a strong interest in cooking classes. This facility could function as a space for education, health and wellness programming, and small business opportunities. Exploring the feasibility of a commercial kitchen space would help provide an in-depth blueprint for development and future implementation. A commercial kitchen would provide the space and opportunity for vendors at the Farmers and Makers Market to preserve or prepare food to be sold while adhering to state licensing requirements. Residents in Jonesboro have reported purchasing fresh produce, but are interested in learning more about how to prepare it. A commercial kitchen would provide space for educational opportunities about preparing and cooking fresh produce.

The first step in implementing this recommendation is to identify existing commercial kitchens in Jonesboro. There is currently a commercial kitchen space located in Douglas High School which could potentially be used to accommodate more in-depth programming and rental capacity for small businesses and independent growers. Other facilities that have commercial kitchen space include First Baptist Church and First United Methodist Church. Make It Village is currently constructing their Urban Village within Jonesboro which would have a commercial kitchen space on their property for potential use by city residents. The kitchen could potentially build upon the “Produce Powerhouse Party” series, an online program hosted by the University of Georgia Extension Office which focuses on purchasing and preparing fresh produce. Make It Village, UGA Extension Office, and Hand, Heart, and Soul Project could be potential leaders in curating public classes on cooking and preserving homegrown food.

A feasibility study would need to explore zoning requirements within the City of Jonesboro or Clayton County, ownership agreements which may include a memorandum of understanding or a lease agreement, and business considerations such as start-up and maintenance costs. The City of Jonesboro could initiate a request for proposals (RFP) to pinpoint a suitable research and business development partner. The study, designed to include insights from the target audience, including home-growers, farmers market vendors, and program coordinators for a cooking series, would consider regulatory compliance needs, including licensing requirements, zoning laws, and health and safety standards. Additionally, it would explore operational considerations such as maintenance, management, and security measures.



Commercial kitchen

RECOMMENDATION A-4:

Identify space for a commercial kitchen or value-added processing facility and explore feasibility.

ADDRESSES

- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Increase Equitable Food Access
- » Promote Local Food System Opportunities
- » Build Upon City and County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Make It Village
- » Jonesboro Farmers Market
- » Jonesboro Community Garden

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » First Baptist Church
- » First United Methodist Church

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify potential spaces for a pilot commercial kitchen program at schools, religious organizations such as the First United Methodist Church and First Baptist Church, or City-owned buildings
- » Market use of existing kitchen space and analyze interest from potential clients
- » Use data to determine need for a feasibility study for a dedicated commercial kitchen and education space



PRIORITY B: INCREASE
EQUITABLE FOOD ACCESS

PRIORITY B: INCREASE EQUITABLE
FOOD ACCESS

Jonesboro residents and steering committee members identified building equitable food access and food security into the plan's goals as a top priority. Meeting the goal of food access and food security will ensure Jonesboro community members have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food at all times to meet their dietary needs and food preferences in order to lead a healthy and active life¹.



Farmers Market, FWA

1. FAO, 2006

Food Justice and Food Sovereignty

Residents highlighted the need to go beyond increased access to create a shared understanding of how a thriving local food system also embeds food justice and food sovereignty, and to incorporate these themes into the report to reflect the city's values. Food justice moves to eliminate disparities in food access caused by systemic problems of race, gender, politics, and socioeconomic disparities². Food sovereignty embraces the rights of people not only to have access to healthy and culturally appropriate foods but to define their own food and agriculture systems. Food sovereignty initiatives place the needs of those who produce, distribute, and consume at the center of food systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations³. The concept of food sovereignty is defined by the United Nations and includes localized food systems, local control that rejects privatization and commodification of food, respecting local ecosystems and shared knowledge of agricultural practices, and prioritizing small-scale agriculture and resilience within its Six Pillars of Food Sovereignty⁴.

The recommendations in this section seek to strengthen collaborative, community-based solutions to issues of food access that center and empower residents and growers.



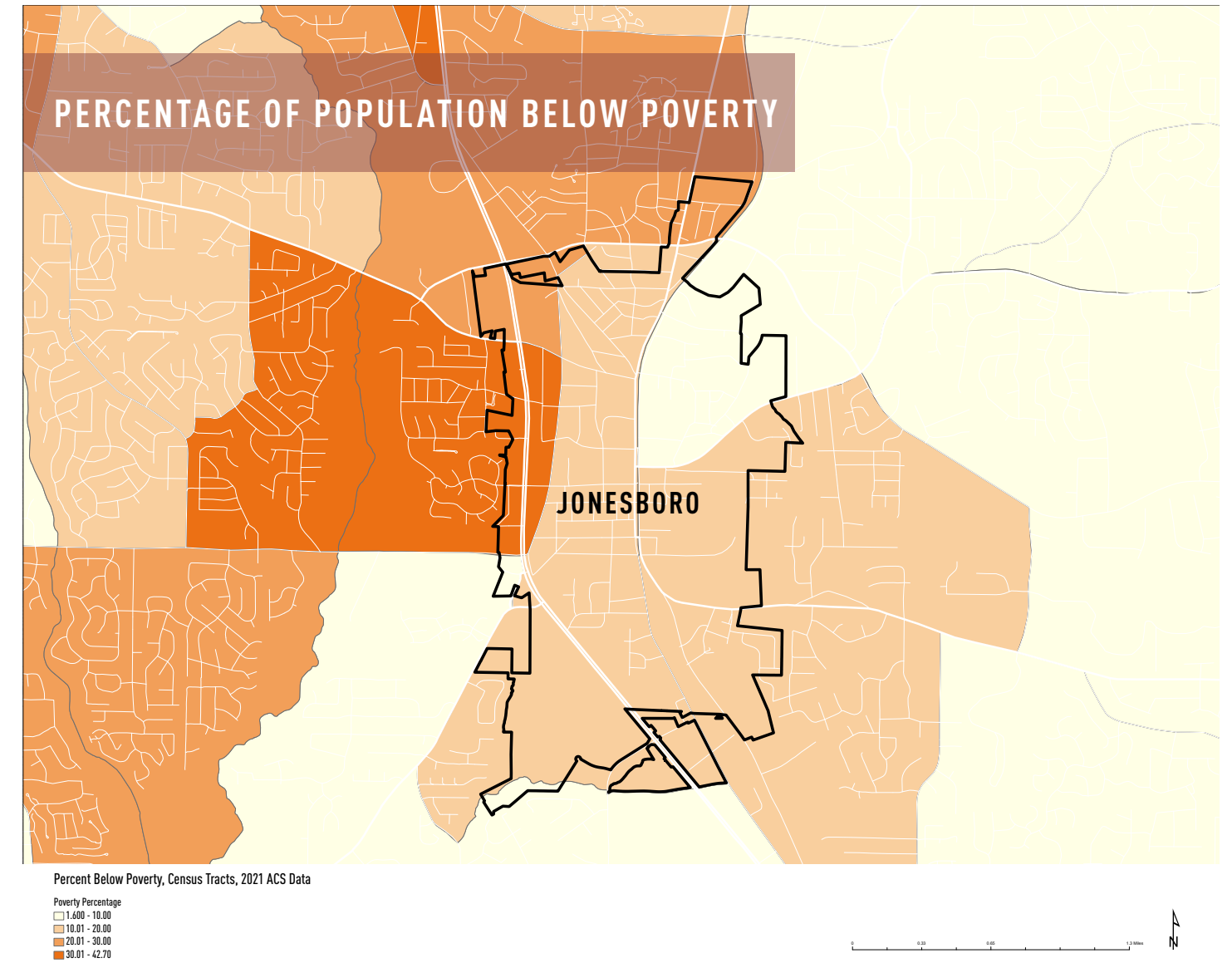
Farmers Market, FWA

2. *Food Justice in US and Global Contexts, 2017*

3. *Food Justice in US and Global Contexts, 2017*

4. *Food Secure Canada, 2012*

The map below indicates the percentage of Jonesboro's population who are below the federal poverty level, as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2021. The census tract that borders the west side of the city has the highest poverty rate at between 30% and 42.7% of the population. North of the city is also a higher poverty rate of between 20% and 30% of the population. The majority of Jonesboro's population has between 10% and 20% of residents that are at or below the federal poverty level.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year ACS Data, 2021

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION B-1:

Increase SNAP/WIC enrollment and accept benefits at the Farmers Market.

The Jonesboro Farmers Market is hosted by the city and held each Saturday from May-September at Lee Street Park. Residents who participated in community surveys and focus groups all expressed that the number of fresh produce vendors at the Farmers Market is limited. This plan acknowledges the need to expand the presence of local produce and aims to incorporate more local food vendors into the current farmers market through partnerships with farmers, the creation of a home grower's cooperative, and the development of a commercial kitchen space.

To increase access to fresh, locally grown food for families and individuals receiving federal nutrition benefits, the City of Jonesboro can enroll in a program which would double SNAP/EBT dollars at the farmers market. Wholesome Wave Georgia is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food for all Georgians. Through the Georgia Fresh for Less program, Wholesome Wave Georgia matches SNAP/EBT dollars spent on fresh produce at farmers markets. The program would connect low-income families to fresh, local produce while also making it clear that they are welcome at the Jonesboro Farmers Market and increase an overall sense of community.



SNAP and WIC company logos

RECOMMENDATION B-1:

Increase SNAP/WIC enrollment and accept benefits at the Farmers Market.

ADDRESSES

- » **Increase Equitable Food Access**
- » Build on City and County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » Wholesome Wave Georgia
- » Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Coordinate with Wholesome Wave Georgia to explore expanding Fresh for Less program to Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » Wholesome Wave Georgia currently partners with 37 metro Atlanta markets for their Fresh for Less program, including two sites facilitated by the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project - the Little Ones Learning Center Farm Stand and the Unity Farm Stand and Market. Jonesboro should coordinate with these local partners to glean best practices for accepting and leveraging EBT benefits at the market. Wholesome Wave Georgia's 2016 customer survey showed that this program helped 80% of shoppers increase their daily servings of fresh fruits and vegetables. It also helps to boost produce sales, supporting and encouraging additional farmer vendors at the market and contributing to the local economy.

RECOMMENDATION B-2:

Expand partnerships to support senior nutrition and growing opportunities including the SCOPE program.

Supporting and increasing access to local food for seniors is an important aspect of this plan. Jonesboro community survey respondents tended to skew older, with 85% of participants being over the age of 40, and 39% of residents being over the age of 50. Respondents indicated the need for accessible gardening spaces for older residents, volunteers or youth programs to help facilitate care and creation of garden boxes, and an overall interest in wanting increased access to fresh, local produce. These types of programs would increase physical and mental well being for senior residents and provide opportunities for intergenerational cooperation.

The City of Jonesboro Police Department currently operates the SCOPE program, Senior Citizens Outreach Plus Engagement. This program uniquely benefits the senior community by providing social interaction through wellness checks paired with needed resources including fresh produce from the Jonesboro Community Garden. As of 2023, the program serves approximately 17 participants. The SCOPE program primarily serves senior homeowners, and the donated food is grown by both home growers and at the Jonesboro Community Garden. The SCOPE program can be expanded by increasing individual enrollment and by partnering with existing hubs for senior activity including the Battle Creek Senior Center, Charles Griswell Senior Center, and HearthSide Jonesboro, a 55+ community.

Expansion of this program will require increased capacity from the Police Department staff and additional resources such as a refrigerated truck or produce holding space and new distribution partners and volunteers should be considered.



Community Garden Club President Mary Bruce, Jonesboro Community Garden

RECOMMENDATION B-2:

Expand partnerships to support senior nutrition and growing opportunities including the SCOPE program.

ADDRESSES

- » Increase Equitable Food Access
- » Promote Local Food System Opportunities
- » Build on City and County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- » UGA Clayton County Extension

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Make It Village

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify current growing capacity for donations including at the expanded SCOPE space at the Jonesboro Community Garden, through the home growers cooperative network, and other partners
- » Use capacity determinations to target expanded enrollment from individuals
- » Advertise program at senior centers to gauge additional needs for senior nutrition services
- » Consider adding gardens at senior centers and the new senior residence facility in Jonesboro

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » UGA Extension Cherokee County utilizes the expertise and volunteer commitment of their Master Gardeners program to help maintain a community garden at the Cherokee County Senior Center. The space hosts over 30 accessible raised beds that rent for \$20 per year to allow for two season warm and cold growing. This could be a model for expanding senior gardening and produce accessibility by adding growing spaces with dedicated service from UGA Extension and knowledgeable gardeners to Jonesboro area senior centers.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION B-3:

Expand partnerships with faith-based organizations and pantries for food distribution.

A variety of organizations in Jonesboro distribute food for those who need it, including local food pantries and religious organizations. During the community engagement process, stakeholders indicated the need for a centralized location to list the organizations that distribute meals or provide mobile markets, and when these services are available. For example, Eat Rite Atlanta offers a mobile farmers market with wholesale foods periodically at Kaiser Permanente Southwood Comprehensive Medical Center. This is a way for local residents to buy fresh vegetables at a discounted cost. The county also operates the Clayton Community Garden behind the Clayton Community Center. The Salvation Army and Diving Faith Ministries International both operate food pastries in the greater Jonesboro area. A first step is to identify all area organizations who serve and distribute meals, and then to create and maintain these resources in a centralized location. Information should be hosted by the City of Jonesboro for residents and community members to access.



Food distribution facility, FWA

RECOMMENDATION B-3:

Expand partnerships with faith-based organizations and pantries for food distribution.

ADDRESSES

- » **Increase Equitable Food Access**

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Make It Village
- » Jonesboro First United Methodist Church
- » First Baptist Jonesboro

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify local food pantries and faith-based organizations who lead food and meal distributions
- » Create listing of resources for food access webpage on City of Jonesboro site to increase community awareness

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » Clayton State University offers a list of food pantries on its website: [Family Resources Food Pantries - Clayton State University](#). [FoodPantries.Org](#) set up a directory of Food Banks, Soup Kitchens, and non-profit organizations committed to fighting hunger. Information is collected through form submissions on the website.
- » [Jonesboro GA Food Pantries](#) | [Jonesboro Georgia Food Pantries, Food Banks, Soup Kitchens.](#)

RECOMMENDATION B-4:

Support a fleet of mobile markets.

Current food distribution and access points in Jonesboro are place-based and time-bound, making it difficult for some residents without access to reliable transportation or flexible schedules to utilize them. Mobile markets would be a flexible solution that could bring fresh, healthy food options to locations best positioned to serve the Jonesboro community at optimal times. Enabling mobile markets to distribute food in Jonesboro will help food access throughout the city. The City of Jonesboro will need to identify spaces where mobile markets can travel and be stationed. Jonesboro currently allows food trucks in limited locations, and a zoning review will be needed to ensure mobile markets are allowed increased location and time access to distribute.

Make It Village plans to distribute food in the community through a fleet of mobile markets in the next 3 years, making them a key infrastructure partner in increasing flexible food access points. Local food sourcing and farmer partnerships should be a key element of this program development to make the local mobile markets an additional entrepreneurial opportunity and support for Jonesboro area growers.



Food Share mobile market

RECOMMENDATION B-4:

Support a fleet of mobile markets.

ADDRESSES

- » **Increase Equitable Food Access**
- » Build on City and County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Make It Village

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » UGA Extension Clayton County
- » Atlanta Harvest

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify lead infrastructure partner for use of mobile market vehicles
- » Identify key spaces for mobile markets that best reach the community and confirm zoning variance needs
- » Reach out to grower partners for hyper-local sourcing from Jonesboro area gardens and farms
- » Design a marketing campaign to ensure community awareness
- » Pilot one mobile market route and document learnings

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » UGA Extension Fulton County runs the Fulton Fresh program that incorporates nutrition education programming with a Mobile Market. The Market runs seasonally and makes multiple coordinated stops throughout the county on a weekly basis. Attendees have the option to participate in nutrition education classes and cooking demonstrations as well as get a free bag of in-season produce. Jonesboro should look to this model as a way to incorporate community engagement into a mobile market model and offer free as well as for-sale food options.

RECOMMENDATION B-5:

Create a free / take-what-you-need community stand at the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market.

Community members and the steering committee emphasized the need for the City Agriculture Plan to increase equitable access to fresh, healthy foods for all residents of Jonesboro. In Jonesboro, 38.3% of residents had an income below the poverty level in 2021, which was 63.4% greater than the poverty level of 14.0% across the entire state of Georgia according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Barriers to food access for those experiencing poverty and many more residents that aren't captured in these statistics are structural, physical, and financial. Community-based solutions outside of traditional food system structures or charity models are an important component of meeting food access needs in the long term. A free/take-what-you-need community food stand at the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market and/or Jonesboro Community Garden can be an additional local food access resource and community building effort. As growing efforts increase within the city through new and expanded gardens and increasing number of home growers, excess food can be coordinated for distribution at this stand to support residents in need.



Farmers Market Image, FWA

RECOMMENDATION B-5:

Create a free / take-what-you-need community stand at the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market.

ADDRESSES

- » Increase Equitable Food Access
- » Build on City and County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market
- » City of Jonesboro; Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Local faith-based organizations, local food pantries
- » Future Jonesboro home growers cooperative

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify organizations already participating in food distribution in Jonesboro
- » Embed community provision in the tenants of the proposed home growers cooperative
- » Identify organizational lead or volunteer team to staff weekly stand
- » Coordinate distribution of excess food through a weekly stand

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » Community Farmers Markets, a local farmers market management non-profit, partners with Atlanta-based food cooperative, Urban Recipe to provide free, shelf-stable food at five MARTA Market locations each week. Customers have the opportunity to take additional pantry items to supplement their market purchases. Management of this free/take-what-you-need component of these five markets should be examined as a model for incorporating something similar at Jonesboro locations.



PRIORITY C: PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM OPPORTUNITIES

Jonesboro community members expressed the desire to promote new local food system opportunities and to increase communications for existing programs. Over 47% of community engagement participants expressed the need for better marketing when it comes to highlighting the local food system opportunities that Jonesboro has to offer. Public participation at Hand, Heart, and Soul Project's 6th Annual Clayton County Block Party revealed the desire for more cooking classes, opportunities to learn how to grow food, and healthier grocery options. Currently, the city operates a Community Garden, a seasonal Farmer and Makers Market, and classes led by the University of Georgia Clayton County Extension office to educate residents about procuring, storing, and preparing fresh produce. This is in addition to other events, educational opportunities, and food distributions held by local organizations that residents could better participate in with increased marketing and awareness. There is a pressing need for comprehensive communication channels within the community and opportunities to enhance and expand upon current programming.

The subsequent recommendations aim to address the identified gaps and highlight opportunities outlined during the community engagement phase. Education opportunities, events, and resources discussed in this recommendation leverage existing programming in the area. Ultimately, these recommendations aim to create a more vibrant, connected, and informed community in Jonesboro, where the local food system is celebrated and accessible to all.



Food education, FWA

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION C-1:

Increase gardening education opportunities.

The Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan can build upon existing gardening education opportunities and create new ones by leveraging partnerships. The UGA Clayton County Extension's Master Gardener Volunteer Program offers garden education for adults and for youth via the Extension's 4-H Program. For example, the Master Gardener program recently offered a gardening education program at Stately Oaks in Jonesboro and created signage to identify plants. Extension is working to expand the number of Master Gardeners in Clayton County as the annual volunteer requirements for the program can support expanded plantings and community education opportunities throughout the year. Extension could provide guest lecturers to programs such as the Jonesboro Community Garden "Learn & Grow" gardening education classes which they aim to make into a monthly series.

The Jonesboro Community Garden has identified classroom space needs to expand education opportunities. They currently have seed funding from the City of Jonesboro for a gazebo that could serve to create a small classroom space, or could be leveraged to create a larger pavilion space. Existing underutilized buildings or local churches, such as First Baptist and First United Methodist, may offer other classroom options. Potential partners, such as the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project and Make It Village, already include education as key offerings for their programming. Collaboration will be key to increasing gardening education opportunities.



Outdoor classes, FWA

RECOMMENDATION C-1:

Increase gardening education opportunities.

ADDRESSES

- » **Promote Local Food System Opportunities**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Build on City & County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- » Jonesboro Community Garden

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » Make It Village
- » Local religious organizations, Schools, senior centers

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify spaces for classroom and outdoor education
- » Collaboratively develop curriculum and class schedule
- » Identify community outreach strategies to promote participation

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [UGA Extension Office Cooking Classes](#)
- » The Atlanta Botanical Garden offers continuing education that changes according to seasons and includes all age groups and abilities. [Atlanta Botanical Garden | Classes & Education \(atlantabg.org\)](https://atlantabg.org/classes-education/)

RECOMMENDATION C-2:

Offer classes on cooking and preserving food.

At a back-to-school block party event hosted by the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project, Jonesboro families indicated that they know how to purchase healthy foods, but would like further instruction on how to prepare fresh produce. The Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan aims to expand access to fresh, local produce as well as increasing knowledge of how to prepare and preserve that food. This will support Jonesboro residents' ability to enjoy what they have grown or obtained from local growers and increase community control of production and distribution of foods.

Cooking classes can be held in a variety of places. This plan provides the basis for a feasibility study for a community kitchen (see Recommendation A-4). Until such space is built in Jonesboro, the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market and kitchens identified in schools or faith based partner spaces could be utilized. Food preservation requires extra care and must be preserved in a certified or inspected kitchen if being sold as a commercial product. The cooking classes described here would be solely for education purposes, rather than preserving or processing food for sale.

The University of Georgia Extension Office in Clayton County hosts a "Produce Powerhouse Party" series which focuses on preparation of produce and produce education. The series operates during the summer growing season via the Family and Consumer Sciences Department. In addition, the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project and the Jonesboro Community Garden have both expressed interest in creating a cooking class series. Partners should work together to identify spaces for hosting cooking classes and collaborate on curriculum development.



Jarred preserves, FWA

RECOMMENDATION C-2:

Offer classes on cooking and preserving food.

ADDRESSES

- » **Promote Local Food System Opportunities**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Build on City & County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Make It Village
- » Jonesboro Farmers Market

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » First United Methodist Church
- » First Baptist Church
- » Local schools

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Increase partnership between the Jonesboro Community Garden and UGA Clayton County Extension Office to include food preparation and preservation classes
- » Identify a location for expanded community classes
- » Identify course instructors and schedule
- » Coordinate Farmers Market cooking demonstrations to promote class offerings

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION C-3:

Improve communications on current and future local food system assets and opportunities.

There are several local messaging approaches that the City of Jonesboro and partners could pursue to increase communications on current and new food systems assets. A few of them include:

- » Adding signage
- » Creating a dedicated webpage hosted by the City of Jonesboro
- » Social media
- » Branding for flyers and posters in the community

The City of Jonesboro has existing and proposed assets that will benefit from branding and signage including the Jonesboro Community Garden, the Jonesboro Farmers Market, and proposed sites for new community gardens, plantings, and beautification. Larger signs will raise awareness to those passing by, and smaller signs might identify the plants or the groups who assisted in creating or beautifying the spaces.

Communication in the city about food system activities is one area identified for improvement, and a dedicated webpage on the City of Jonesboro website will help residents with a centralized location to learn about offerings throughout the city. Collaboration with the County to link the City of Jonesboro webpage to Clayton County and UGA Clayton County Extension activities will help increase intergovernmental efforts. The Master Gardener Volunteer Program spreads information on food and agriculture events through their network by word of mouth, and has an email distribution list for county residents who have requested soil testing services. The site can also link to partner activities and programs to increase community awareness. The City of Jonesboro and partners can elevate programs and activities through a coordinated social media campaign and regular postings.

Branding developed for the Jonesboro Farmers Market and Community Garden signs can be expanded to print for display throughout the community and to local partner organizations. This will help reach those who do not have access to social media and to raise general awareness of these programs in Jonesboro.



Garden signage, FWA

RECOMMENDATION C-3:

Improve communications on current and future local food system assets and opportunities.

ADDRESSES

- » **Promote Local Food System Opportunities**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Build on City & County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market
- » Jonesboro Community Garden

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Arts Clayton
- » Make It Village
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » UGA Clayton County Extension

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Create a web page at City of Jonesboro dedicated to food and agriculture communications
- » Develop branding and signage for current City agriculture assets

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » **East Point Grown:** Under their City Agriculture Plan, the City of East Point created an umbrella marketing brand for local food and agriculture activity: East Point Grown. This built on the recognizable larger state and regional brands of Georgia Grown and AgLanta Grown. While Jonesboro does not need to create an independent branding scheme for their food system work, they can look to East Point Grown's website, www.eastpointgrown.org, as an example of a centralized community resource. This website includes a calendar of related events, a directory of local food and agriculture organizations, resources on where to access food distributions and gardens in the city, and a sign up service for a new compost drop off program. A similar page could be hosted on the City's website to inform the community of local offerings and highlight the work of partner organizations.

RECOMMENDATION C-4:

Increase local food and agriculture events in Jonesboro.

Elevating existing local food events and working with partners to increase the number and types of event offerings is a useful strategy to build community identity and pride around local food and agriculture, while showcasing and supporting the efforts of local growers, partners, the Jonesboro Community Garden, and the Jonesboro Farmers Market. One-off or recurring events can build upon existing programming such as having pop-up farmers markets at alternative times, increasing gardening education classes currently offered monthly at the Community Garden, and increasing the Jonesboro-based work of UGA Clayton County Extension through the Master Gardeners and 4-H programs. As new growing spaces are created or expanded, events can celebrate these successes and highlight new resources for the community.

Larger annual events can also bring together collaborative partners and serve as a means of community connection. An annual harvest event held at the Jonesboro City Center, as proposed by the Hand, Heart, and Soul Project can help build networks and raise awareness of County offerings. An annual kickoff event for the Community Garden season and SCOPE program can help build enthusiasm and coordinate growing efforts and ideas.



Community Group, Jonesboro Community Garden

RECOMMENDATION C-4:

Increase local food and agriculture events in Jonesboro.

ADDRESSES

- » **Promote Local Food System Opportunities**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Build on City & County Resources

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- » 4-H Youth Development Program

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Make It Village
- » Arts Clayton

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify current events, both one-off and recurring to populate the events calendar on the City's webpage.
- » Work with partners to collaborate on new events to reach more community members and connect them to opportunities to access and grow local food.
- » Incorporate food and agriculture promotion into related events such as those focused on health and wellness, sustainability, and general community building.
- » Form a project team and begin a plan for an annual harvest event at the Jonesboro City Center to highlight the City Agriculture Plan, local partners' work, and serve as a community celebration of local food.

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » Groundwork Atlanta and AgLanta Grown co-produce AgLanta Eats, an annual hyper local food festival at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. This event celebrates, educates, and unites the local food system while raising funds to support Atlanta food producers. The event annually attracts hundreds of community members and local leaders for the opportunity to interact with area farmers and food producers and build community within the local food system. Funds raised by the event support the expansion of local food production in the city of Atlanta. Jonesboro should consider this model when establishing a project plan for a large annual food and agriculture celebration.



PRIORITY D: BUILD ON CITY AND COUNTY RESOURCES

The City of Jonesboro recognizes the need for local food and agriculture to become more of an integral part of the community. Currently, their main investments are in the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market and Jonesboro Community Garden. Both assets seek to increase residents' access to fresh, local food options and build community connections.

The UGA Clayton County Extension, in conjunction with the city, started the Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market in 2018 on a vacant city lot. As the market grew in popularity and size, it was moved to the marketplace area of the newly constructed Lee Street park. Today, over 50 vendors are on the market roster which has grown to be a staple in the city as it runs weekly from the first Saturday in May through the last Saturday in September. There is a city budget of \$1,000 allocated for the operation of the farmers market annually.

The vision for the community garden grew out of the COVID-19 pandemic need to increase contact with vulnerable populations in the city, including senior citizens. The Jonesboro Community Garden opened in April 2021 and received enthusiastic support from the community. The garden hosts 42 raised beds, a newly installed orchard with 38 plantings, a native plant garden, and a 1/8 acre devoted to growing vegetables for the police department's SCOPE (Senior Citizens' Outreach Plus Engagement) initiative. The garden's budget is included in the police department's community outreach funds and totals \$10,000 annually.

Building on these and other existing resources will enhance the connection with the community and give residents an opportunity to shape the city landscape while expanding education and healthy food access.



John Burden, Director of Public Works, Jonesboro Community Garden

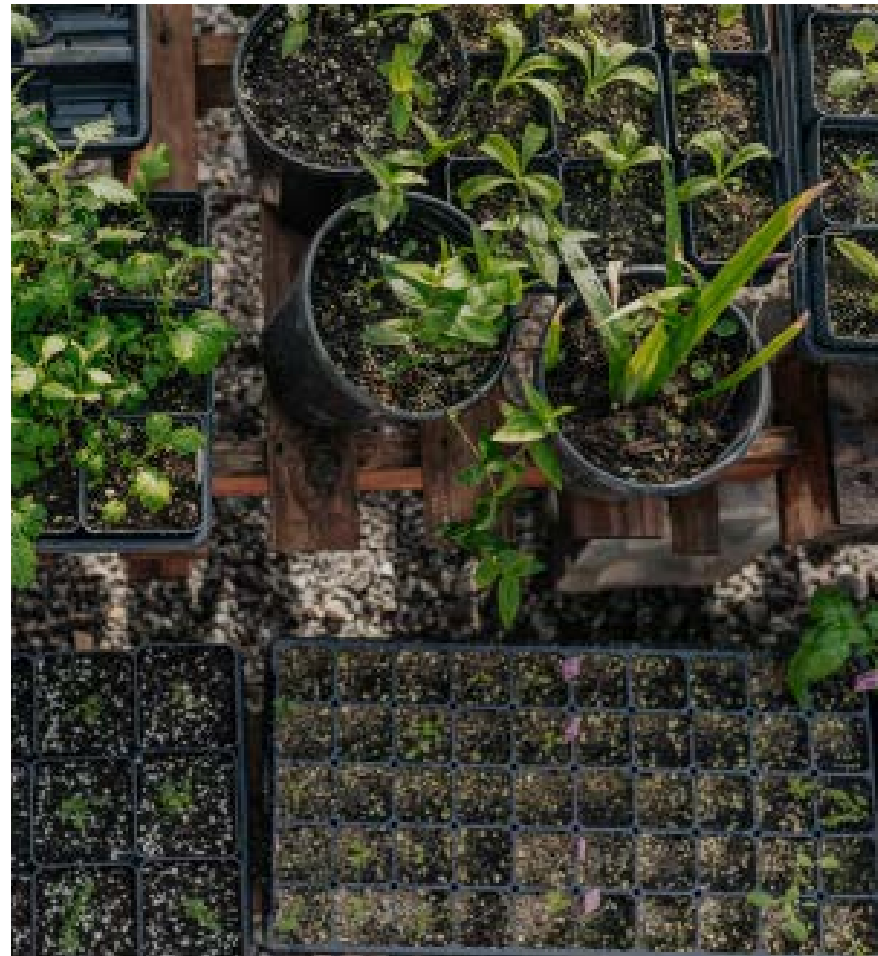
SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION D-1:

Host a seedling sale at the Community Garden to boost revenue and provide a resource for growers.

An annual plant sale at the Jonesboro Community Garden will help kick off the growing season and provide a variety of plants to help growers as they plan their warm-weather gardens. This event, timed in the spring to align with the first planting date, can include summer vegetable starts, herbs, perennials, and fruit bearing plants. Native plant education and resources at the sale can help new and current growers learn about the different varieties, and the sale of plants can boost revenue for the garden. The sale will enable both community garden growers and local home growers to start their summer gardens. The garden sale could grow to include partners; Swints Feed & Garden sells many garden products and a variety of bulk vegetable seeds, and ARC previously managed a greenhouse on Clayton County-owned land that could be studied for feasibility of use and partnership. Residents could also have the opportunity to partner by subdividing and donating perennials.

Seeds are typically started in a controlled environment such as a greenhouse or hoop house. A structure and location should be identified, as well as staff or volunteers to tend to the new seedlings. Signs to identify plants are a great way to educate, and seedlings can be grouped together in themes such as herb garden basics and flower cutting gardens. The seedling sale can grow into a spring festival with youth activities, music, and more.



Community garden seedlings (right)

RECOMMENDATION D-1:

Host a seedling sale at the Community Garden to boost revenue and provide a resource for growers.

ADDRESSES

- » **Build on City & County Resources**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » City of Jonesboro
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » UGA Clayton County Extension

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify a controlled environment and seasonal support for seed starting
- » Identify staff and volunteers to facilitate the event from the community garden club, home-growers cooperative, and other partners
- » Source supplies and signage
- » Develop marketing materials to promote the event to the community

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [Trees Atlanta Native Plant Sale](#)
- » [Georgia Audubon Seasonal Plant Sales](#)

RECOMMENDATION D-2:

Enhance the farmers market offerings by attracting more produce and food vendors with improved outreach and incentive for growers.

Fresh produce is a key ingredient to the success of a farmers market, along with fresh eggs, dairy, and preserved foods. Increasing local food production and sale at the market not only boosts the local economy, but increases healthy food options and grows community. Although the Jonesboro Farmers Market hosts over 50 vendors, community engagement and the steering committee indicated a need for more produce and fresh food vendors and to ensure that the market reflects the food needs and preferences of the Jonesboro community. The Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan recommends pursuing strategies and incentives to increase the number of new growers and assisting current growers, and taking steps to ensure the market reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Jonesboro.

To help grow the Jonesboro Farmers Market in an inclusive and equitable way, the plan recommends incorporating the recommendations of The Anti-Racist Farmers Market Toolkit developed by the Farmers Market Coalition. The Farmers Market Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to working with market operators to strengthen farmers markets across the United States so that they can serve as community assets while providing real income opportunities for farmers. The organization created The Anti-Racist Farmers Market Toolkit in 2020 to help bridge the gap in applying and tailoring anti-racist, inclusive tools to the farmers market context. The toolkit includes four categories: Management, Mission, Messaging, and Measurement that provide a roadmap for establishing a baseline of existing food culture, reflecting the community in the market vendors, creating inclusive market management, and developing culturally-relevant messaging about the market and its programs.



East Point Farmers Market, FWA

RECOMMENDATION D-2:

Enhance the farmers market offerings by attracting more produce and food vendors with improved outreach and incentive for growers.

A first step to increase the amount of produce and fresh foods sold at the market is to create a strategy that builds local grower capacity and connects them to the community and market opportunities. This strategy should increase equity, access, and expand market leadership to reflect the diversity of the community, potential recommendations include:

- » Expand the number of raised beds at the Community Garden and dedicate this space for food sold at the Farmers Market.
- » Enable home growers to form a cooperative to manage a table at the Farmers Market to sell produce and preserved foods and to earn an alternate stream of income.
- » Encourage partners with community gardens including senior centers, religious organizations, home growing networks, social organizations, and schools to contribute to existing market stands or to create a new stand for the organization.
- » If the ARC greenhouse reopens, encourage partnership to sell plants and produce grown there.
- » Identify investment partners who grow food and have available resources to contribute for example Make It Village, with their mobile market initiative
- » Identify space, including city and county-owned land, for new gardens in the City of Jonesboro with a potential to partner with the Farmers Market.
- » Consider waiving market fees for vendors selling a majority locally-grown produce, preserved foods, locally produced eggs.
- » Consider a purchase program from market vendors for the take-what-you-need stand, mobile markets, or SCOPE program to ensure weekly market participation is attractive

Supportive policy at the city and county levels can help to increase the number of growers, farmers, and food related businesses in Jonesboro and the surrounding area. Partnerships between public, non-profit, and private entities can help seek supportive funding, land access, and educational resources for growers to ensure business support is equitable and reflects the racial makeup of the community. Programs through the State of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Georgia Grown program support agriculture producers, manufacturers and retailers in the state. Intentional work to build a network of new growers using anti-racist strategies will increase opportunities to grow the local food system including local markets.

RECOMMENDATION D-2:

Enhance the farmers market offerings by attracting more produce and food vendors with improved outreach and incentive for growers.

ADDRESSES

- » **Build on City & County Resources**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Promote Local Food System Opportunities

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Jonesboro Farmers and Makers Market
- » UGA Clayton County Extension

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » U.S. Department of Agriculture
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » Make It Village

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Ensure diversity of leadership when developing and implementing strategy
- » Identify growing space in the Community Garden dedicated to food for free/take-what-you-need market stand
- » Encourage local growers to participate in Farmers Market using economic incentives i.e. waived fees or purchase programs
- » Build a growers network in Clayton County by first connecting with established programs to help build strategy for outreach and resources

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [The Anti-Racist Farmers Market Toolkit](#)
- » [Georgia Grown](#)

EAV Farmers Market, FWA



RECOMMENDATION D-4:

Install a food forest on city-owned land and promote other edible landscaping.

A food forest is an edible garden modeled after natural ecosystems that includes trees, shrubs, herbs, and other plants that work together to create a self-sustaining system of multiple plant species. Food forests attract beneficial insects and pollinators and beautify spaces in a community. Food forests are also ecosystem builders that gather and store rain and runoff water, capture carbon and nitrogen, and build healthy soils⁵. Food forests are places for exploration, education, and community projects as well as quiet spaces for reflection.

Input from the Jonesboro community and the steering committee recommended the City of Jonesboro explore vacant and underutilized land for a food forest. Creating a food forest also aligns with planning elements of the 2017 Blueprint Jonesboro:

- » **Existing City Facilities:** Once the proposed Municipal Complex is constructed, and City Hall / Police Department are moved into the space, the existing facilities will become empty. The parcels these facilities occupy, as well as nearby parcels, are already owned by the City. It is highly recommended that the City issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to study long-term uses for these properties.

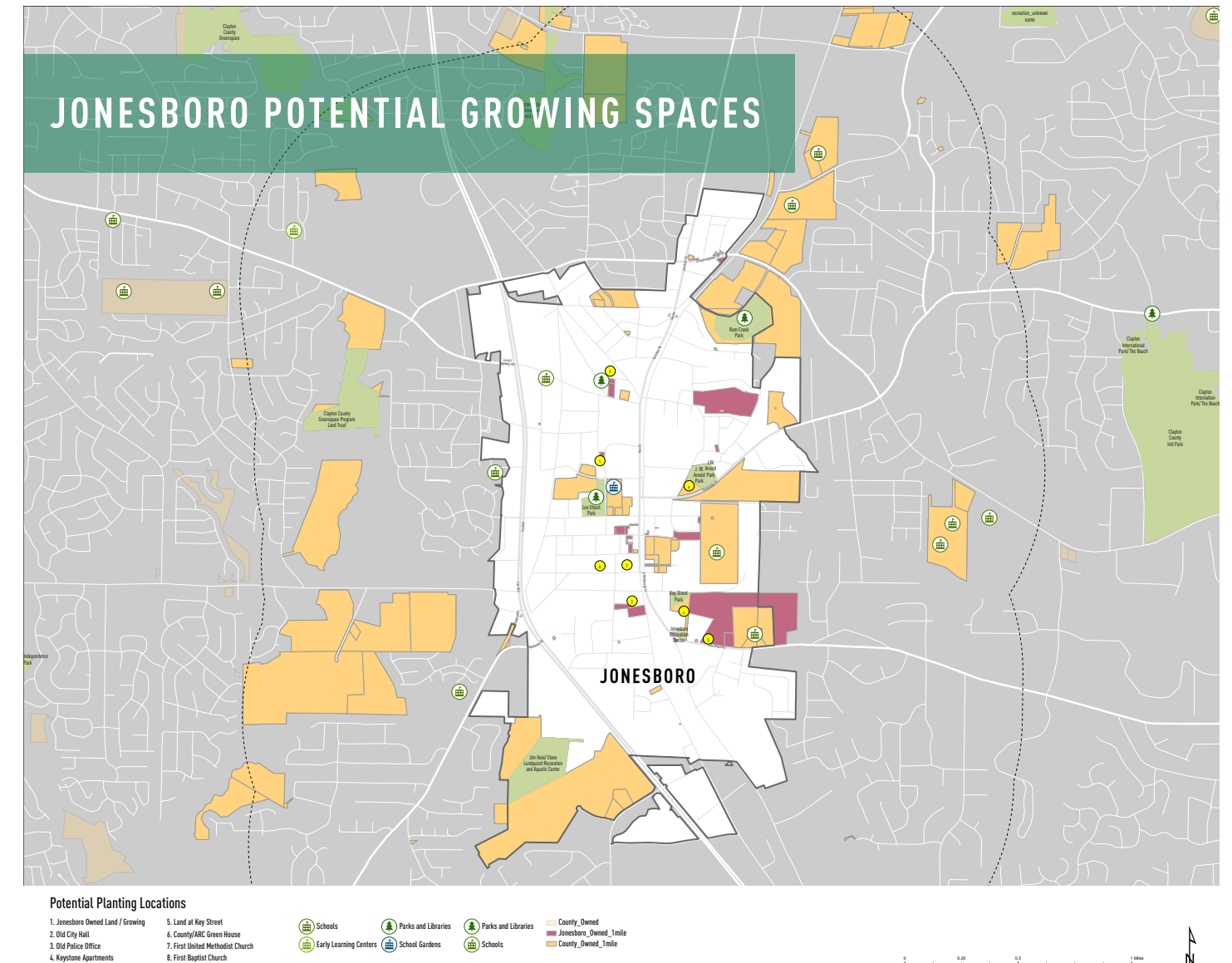
This recommendation to study feasibility of utilizing public land was echoed by the steering committee. The steering committee developed a map of potential public and private land that could incorporate a food forest as a resource for implementation.



5. <https://borealbloomhomestead.com/what-is-a-food-forest/>

During the Jonesboro City Agriculture Plan process, the Steering Committee identified potential spaces in the city that might be feasible for gardens or growing opportunities.

Areas identified by the Steering Committee include city-owned land, the old Police offices, land adjacent to the Keystone Apartments and in the Key Street area, a county-owned greenhouse that is not currently operational, and church-owned land at the First United Methodist Church and the First Baptist Church.



RECOMMENDATION D-4:

Install a food forest on city-owned land and promote other edible landscaping.

This recommendation can be expanded to include a variety of native and edible plantings on city property that increase beautification and further align with the 2017 and 2020 Blueprint Jonesboro documents.

- » **Improvements to Lee Street Elementary School:** Lee Street Elementary School serves as an important community resource: it is not only a center of education for children, but it serves as a polling place during elections and is a source of pride for the local community. During the planning process, stakeholders noted that the school could use some exterior improvements to better match the character of the growing community. Some ideas presented included improved landscaping and murals. It was suggested that students of Lee Street Elementary could participate in whatever improvements may occur. The City could collaborate with Clayton County Schools and other local organizations to advance this opportunity.
- » **Small Beautification Efforts:** Small projects can add up to make a huge difference in the way people see Jonesboro... and could be implemented by the Downtown Development Authority.

Incorporating plantings on city-owned, county-owned, public or private vacant land, as well as intensional plantings for beautification in the community can increase agricultural options and meet city goals.



Muscadines, FWA

RECOMMENDATION D-4:

Install a food forest on city-owned land and promote other edible landscaping.

ADDRESSES

- » **Build on City and County Resources**
- » Increase Equitable Food Access

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Jonesboro Downtown Development Authority
- » Clayton County Schools

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify vacant land and beautification areas for potential growing spaces
- » Identify and allocate city and partner funding to beautification
- » Plan a variety of plants, set planting stages and recruit knowledgeable leadership and volunteer support for installation
- » Identify assistance for long-term maintenance including County arborists
- » Identify resources for community gathering spaces such as benches and signage to incorporate into food fores

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [Boreal Bloom: "What is a Food Forest?"](#)
- » [Boston Food Forest Coalition](#)
- » [AgLanta Grows-a-Lot Program](#)

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION D-3:

Invest in infrastructure at the Jonesboro Community Garden to expand resource offerings.

Expanding the infrastructure at the Jonesboro Community Garden can increase the community benefit and reach of the garden. Garden activities can be expanded by building new structures for classes, storage, and activities as well as creating more growing space and raised garden beds. The garden recently received funding for a gazebo or other structure, which could be leveraged to fund construction of a covered classroom pavilion. Pavilions can be constructed to include solar panels to provide electricity, indoor storage space and benches for class participants. Structures for new growing activities such as hoop houses or a greenhouse can expand the growing season and provide additional educational opportunities. New initiatives such as an apiary or chicken coop could add additional food system elements and educational resources to the garden, but would need safety and maintenance plans in place. Picnic tables and bench seating will enable the garden to provide a place for community connection and enjoyment. The steering committee also identified signage for the Community Garden as a top priority promotional strategy.



Jonesboro Community Garden

RECOMMENDATION D-3:

Invest in infrastructure at the Jonesboro Community Garden to expand resource offerings.

ADDRESSES

- » **Build on City & County Resources**
- » Equip Current & Beginning Growers
- » Promote Local Food System Opportunities

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Clayton County and ARC
- » Swints Feed & Garden Supply

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Develop garden infrastructure plan including resource, labor, and funding needs
- » Solicit design for new structures, signs, and other initiatives
- » Implement community workdays and celebrations to install new resources

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [City of Boulder, Colorado: "Pollinator Gardens and Pathways"](#)
- » [Muncie Public Library: "Gateway to Gardening Pavilions at Maring-Hunt Library"](#)

RECOMMENDATION D-5:

Identify and expand community gardens in the City of Jonesboro.

Community gardens are a direct investment in the physical and mental health of the community and should be available to all. Expanding Jonesboro's community garden spaces across the city would help ensure more equitable access and increase opportunities for resident participation. Given the success and engagement at the current Jonesboro Community Garden and community engagement feedback, there is clear interest in additional local growing opportunities. Identifying existing or former gardens is a first step in understanding a full range of garden resources in Jonesboro and developing a strategy to expand or reinvigorate gardens throughout the city in partnership with local organizations. As a first step, the UGA Clayton County Extension offers soil and water testing as well as access to agricultural planning experts through the University of Georgia and Master Gardener volunteer support for garden installation and maintenance.



Gardeners planting, Jonesboro Community Garden

RECOMMENDATION D-5:

Identify and expand community gardens in the City of Jonesboro.

ADDRESSES

- » **Build on City and County Resources**
- » Promote Local Food System Opportunities

POTENTIAL LEAD PARTNERS

- » City of Jonesboro
- » UGA Clayton County Extension
- » Jonesboro Community Garden
- » Master Gardener Volunteer Program

POTENTIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- » Clayton County
- » Hand, Heart, and Soul Project

KEY INITIAL STEPS

- » Identify and map local gardens and former gardens at all locations
- » Identify partners to help expand or create new gardens
- » Partner with UGA Clayton County Extension for resource testing and education
- » Partner with Master Gardeners and other partners for garden installation and maintenance planning

RESOURCES/CASE STUDIES

- » [Garden Pals: "Community Garden Statistics in 2023"](#)



NEXT STEPS

This plan will be submitted to the City of Jonesboro’s City Council for their review, approval, and adoption. Upon adoption of the City Agriculture Plan, the implementation phase will begin. FWA will award a \$75,000 implementation grant to fund the process, while the City is providing matching in-kind support. FWA will remain a partner during the implementation phase, as the steering committee and relevant City departments work to prioritize and take key initial steps towards the recommendations in this plan.

This plan’s recommendations are categorized within each priority area by their status as a short-term or long-term prospect for implementation. At the end of the planning process, the steering committee indicated their priorities for initial funding or action below. This should be a factor as the City develops their implementation strategy.

» Top Identified Short-Term Priorities

- » **A-1:** Expand partnerships for youth engagement through gardening education
- » **D-3:** Install a food forest on city-owned land and promote other edible landscaping
- » **D-2:** Enhance the Farmers Market offerings by attracting more produce and food vendors with improved outreach and incentives
- » **C-1:** Increase gardening education opportunities

» Top Identified Long-Term Priorities

- » **B-3:** Expand partnerships with faith-based organizations and pantries for food distribution
- » **D-4:** Invest in infrastructure at the Jonesboro Community Garden to expand resource offerings
- » **B-4:** Support a fleet of mobile markets

The recommendations for implementation range from expansion of current food and agriculture work to substantial new projects serving the community. New programmatic activity will require additional administrative capacity. Key considerations for furthering implementation include:

- » Hiring a part-time or full-time “Community Food Projects Manager” or equivalent within the City staff or as a contractor to manage day-to-day operations and coordinate multiple implementation projects.
- » Identifying additional funding opportunities for implementation projects including local and national foundations and state and federal government grants.



APPENDIX

Why are City Agriculture Plans important?

City Agriculture Plans aim to look holistically at a city's local food system. When we talk about the "local food and system," we're talking about the process that food follows as it moves from the farm to table and all the ways that community can participate along the way. This process includes farmers, manufacturers and processors, distributors, and all residents as consumers. It also includes the inputs and outputs of each step — right down to the food waste we generate. The journey our food takes through the food system is influenced by ecosystems, education, funding, community culture and values, and our national, state, and local policies.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- Profitable farms, market gardens, and food businesses
- Support local entrepreneurs
- Good jobs and career opportunities

WELLNESS

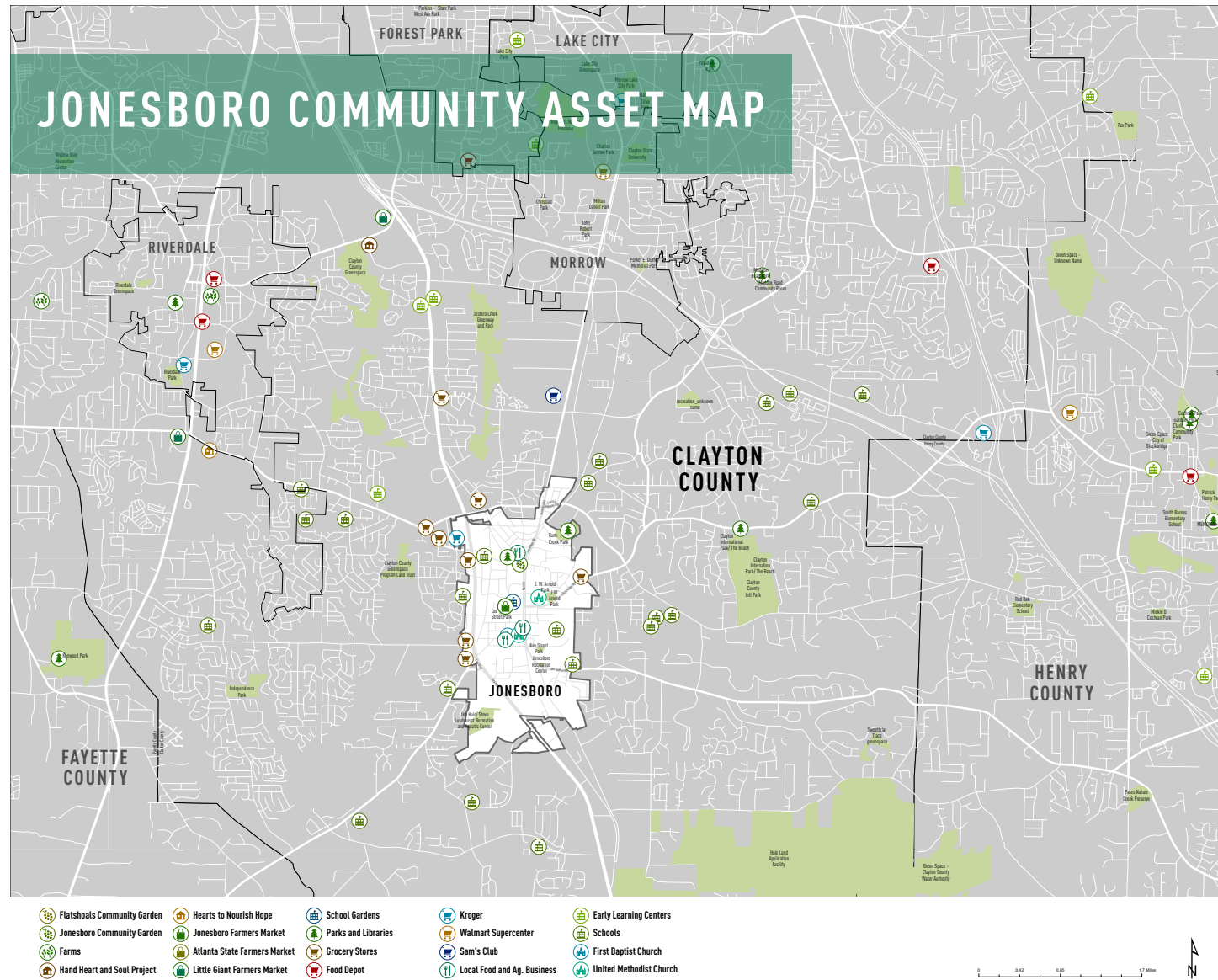
- Access to fresh, healthy foods
- Gardening, cooking, and preserving skills
- Great tasting local produce!

ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

- Conserve and utilize green spaces
- Food waste reduction and diversion
- Healthy soil and water resources
- Pollinator support

EQUITY

- Access to good food for all
- Honoring cultural diversity and traditions
- Empowerment and belonging



JONESBORO COMMUNITY ASSET LIST

GROCERY STORES

- Wayfield Food Inc
- Lidi
- ALDI
- Lucky Food Mart
- Jonesboro Food Mart
- Fast Lane Drive Through Grocery Store
- Lucky Grocery
- Select Farmers Market
- Food Depot [792 Morrow Rd, Forest Park, GA 30297]
- Food Depot [6642 GA-85, Riverdale, GA 30274]
- Food Depot [6459 GA-42, Rex, GA 30273]
- Food Depot [Riverdale, GA 30274]
- Food Depot [4709 N Henry Blvd, Stockbridge, GA]
- Food Depot [200 Bank Station Rd, Fayetteville, GA]
- Kroger [7125 GA-85, Riverdale, GA 30274]
- Kroger [8059 Tara Blvd, Jonesboro, GA 30236]
- Kroger [5664 Jonesboro Rd, Lake City, GA 30260]
- Kroger [3618 Hwy 138 SE, Stockbridge, GA 30281]
- Walmart [7050 GA-85, Riverdale, GA 30274]
- Walmart [6065 Jonesboro Rd, Morrow, GA 30260]
- Walmart [5600 N Henry Blvd, Stockbridge, GA 30281]
- Sam's Club [7325 Jonesboro Rd, Morrow, GA 30260]

FARMS

- Green Island Farm
- Green Acres Farm
- Culture Farms
- Acres Away Angus Farm
- Swanson Family Farm
- Prather's Farm
- Decimal Place Farm

SCHOOLS

- Pointe South Middle School
- Jonesboro High School
- Jonesboro Middle School
- Future Leaders Christian Academy Jonesboro
- HOPE Christian Academy
- Sunrise Christian Academy
- James H Brown Elementary School
- Phylis Academy Preparatory School
- Little E. Suder Elementary School
- Mount Zion High School
- Mt Zion Elementary School
- Jackson Elementary School
- Mundy's Mill Middle School
- Mundy's Mill High School
- Callaway Elementary School
- M.D. Roberts Middle School of the Performing Arts
- Kay R. Pace Elementary School of the Arts
- Kendrick Middle School
- Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts
- Anointed Minds Preparatory School
- JW Arnold Elementary School
- Cedars Preschool at Rex
- Small Voices Early Learning Center & Preschool
- Carousel Kids Early Learning Center
- M.E.L.C Child Care Agency
- Ty-Lexine Early Development Center
- Our Mission Early Learning Center
- ABC Early Learning Academy & Eagle's Landing
- A New Beginning Early Learning Center
- New Faith Early Learning Center

SCHOOL GARDENS

- Lee Street Elementary School

FOOD AND AG. ORGANIZATIONS

- Hand Heart and Soul Project
- Hearths to Nourish Hope

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Community Garden of Jonesboro
- Flatshoals Community Garden

PARKS AND LIBRARIES

- Massengale City Park
- Lee Street Park
- Rum Creek Park
- Clayton County International Park
- Maddox Road Park
- Riverdale Regional Park
- Gardner Park
- Memorial Park
- Cochran Park
- Paradise Park
- Kenwood Park
- Newman Wetlands Center

FARMERS MARKET

- Jonesboro Farmers Market
- Atlanta State Farmers Market
- Little Giant Farmers Market

LOCAL FOOD AND AG BUSINESSES

- Fig Tree Café
- Swint's Feed and Garden
- Magnolia House and Garden

CHURCHES

- Jonesboro First Baptist Church
- Jonesboro United Methodist Church
- Andrews United Methodist Church



City Demographics

Population	4,492 Total		
	Age & Sex		
	<18 years old	18%	
	18-64 years old	71%	
	>65 years old	11%	
Median Age	32		
Male/Female	56%/44%		
Veteran	4.2%		
Geography & Mobility	Square miles	3	
	Population per sq. mi.	1,508.6	
	Moved since previous year	34.7%	vs. 13.9% metro ATL, 14% GA
	From same county	17%	
	From other county	15%	
From other state	2%		
Education	High school grad or higher	69.6%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	4.5%	
Economy	Median household income	\$31,033	vs. \$75,267 metro ATL, \$65,030 GA
	Persons in poverty	38.3%	vs. 11.1% metro ATL, 13.9% GA
	Children	59%	
	Seniors	11%	
	Households enrolled in SNAP benefits	1,173	
Housing	Total housing units	1,309	
	Owner occupied units	31%	
	Renter occupied units	69%	
	Avg. persons/household	2.6	
	Single unit structures	58%	
	Multi unit structures	42%	
	Median value of owner occupied unit	\$94,600	vs. \$252,100 metro ATL, \$206,700 GA

Race & Ethnicity

White	17%
Black	61%
Asian	4%
> Two Races	2%
Hispanic/Latino	15%

Language Spoken at Home

English Only	82%
Spanish	13%
Asian/Islander	5%

JONESBORO CITY AGRICULTURE PLAN

Source: ACS 2021 5-Year Census Data
<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1342604-jonesboro-ga/> Accessed 5/23/23