

# INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Promoting sustainable, low-carbon, conservationist agricultural practices.

## Facilitators:

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# Benefits of Increasing Access to Healthy and Sustainable Food Systems

- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reduces smog and particulate air pollution.

## Environmental Benefit



- Positive impact on air quality and public health
- Improving diet and health outcomes

## Human Health Benefit



- Boost economic and community vitality by bringing new food outlets into underserved areas can provide an economic stimulus in communities that may need it most.
- Can increase property values in the immediate vicinity
- Buying local food = money stays in the local economy

## Economic Benefit





Sources Cliff/Flickr and City of College Park



# Snapshot of Efforts in the County

- Prince George's County launched a Food Equity Council in 2013.
- County received Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation (MALPF) certification in 2014.
- County passed legislation in 2015 allowing retail food trucks back into the county.
- County passed urban farm legislation in 2016 allowing farming on 73% of land in the county.
- County passed an urban agricultural property tax credit in 2015 and launched Bloomin' PGC to support urban farming in 2016.
- A 2017 M-NCPPC survey revealed overwhelming interest from residents wanting access to land for urban agriculture. This desire has led to new hydroponic and aquaponics facilities. There is also tremendous interest in raising backyard chickens among residents.
- County funded a permanent full-time Urban Soil & Water Conservationist to provide technical assistance to urban farms in 2018.
- County established its first wine trail (Legacy Wine Trail) in 2018.



# Change is Happening

- Acres of farmland in the County have reduced from >62K acres in 1987 to <32K acres in 2012.
- There are 6,165 acres of preserved farmland.
- There are >350 farms in the County producing \$17.5 million in AG sales in 2017.
- There are 24 community gardens, 23 school gardens, and 9 urban farms in the County.
- There are 16 farmers markets and 7 CSAs - Community Supported Agriculture - in the County.
- More farmers markets are accepting SNAP (food stamps) and offering matching programs. The County has been funding the Maryland Money Market program to increase food access.
- There are 3 breweries, 4 wineries, and 1 distillery in the County.
- There are a growing number of agricultural education programs, farm venues, and farm stays in the County.



## Prince George's County Food Composting Program

Prince George's County is engaging communities in the County on food scrap separation and composting. Food waste constitutes about 23 percent of the waste stream in the County, and it is expected to increase. The County Organic Composting Facility is the largest municipal installation of its kind on the East Coast. Over 50,000 tons of material is processed annually at the facility. The facility produces a nutrient-rich amendment product called Leafgro Gold® that is great for flower gardens, vegetable gardens, perennials, bulbs, planting trees and shrubs.



# Preliminary Healthy Food System Action Recommendation

- Promote a healthy food system supported by low-carbon, conservationist agricultural practices.





# What does a successful Prince George's County Healthy Food System look like?

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- WHO?
- WHAT?
- WHEN?
- WHERE?
- HOW?





# What could healthy food program in Prince George's County look like?

- Local education programs
- Deliver fresh food to seniors, those with disabilities
- Donate food & partner with food banks, social service agencies
- Food forests; community gardens in parks and schools
- Support beekeepers
- Support for Brandywine; provide clean soil or decontaminate soil; provide raised beds.
- Education that most insects are harmless or beneficial, understanding impacts of pesticide use, Integrated Pest Management training
- Expand PGCPs Environmental, Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee (EANR) programs (e.g. Homegrown Heroes) and loop in food equity advocates.
- Schools with their own victory gardens
- Sync / coordinate County and municipal urban farming / gardening programs with healthy food access and security programs, food equity council.
- Shifting diets, leveraging County/ PGCPs procurement to lower-carbon food and to support Black farmers. Countering push to unhealthy food. Involve High School culinary programs.



## Challenges

- Problem of homelessness, other folks who can't get affordable healthy food; convenience food is cheaper.
- Prices going up, and climate change is already impacting food supply chain.
- There is a lot going on and a lot of good resources (e.g., UMD extension, Master Gardeners, EANR, the Urban Soil & Water Conservationist) but we need to publicize and leverage those resources. keep group energy going Urban
- Many people can't afford to take time off to give input; need to pay participants for interviews or focus groups as marketing research firms do.

## Opportunities

- People can be trained and helped over initial fear that they can't grow their own food. They can learn it's not that hard.
- Community garden summit is coming up (when?) that's an opportunity to connect groups with resources.
- Investing in local food infrastructure including food storage and processing facilities would provide jobs as well as increasing resilience.
- Continued discussion among this group; participants sign up as resident experts.



## Who benefits?

- Ideally, everyone!

## Who is burdened or left out?

- Not effectively connecting with communities of need; that needs to change

## How do we ensure equitable outcomes?

- *County should proactively make tools & supplies for growing food available. Tool co-op.*
- *Using already-defined healthy food priority areas based on GIS analysis to make sure there is adequate investment in these areas.*
- Affordability and access are key

# What does success in the County look like in the next 3-5 years?

- Research and Data Needs
- Policy/Ordinance Changes
- Residential Outreach Efforts
- Monitoring and Evaluation

- Grants and funding are available to support healthy local food initiatives
- A robust residential outreach program
- Less food waste
- A functioning local supply / distribution chain for locally produced foods
- Monitoring shows good soil health
- Adequate support for Ag education
- Continued discussion and action from this group



Apply to be a County Climate Action Resident Expert

- <https://forms.gle/z92cx7LLrYTmNLN17>

Visit the DMV Climate Partners Website

- <https://climatepartners.org>

Learn More About Upcoming Meetings

- [mypgc.us/climateactionplan](http://mypgc.us/climateactionplan)

Explore the County CAP Virtual House

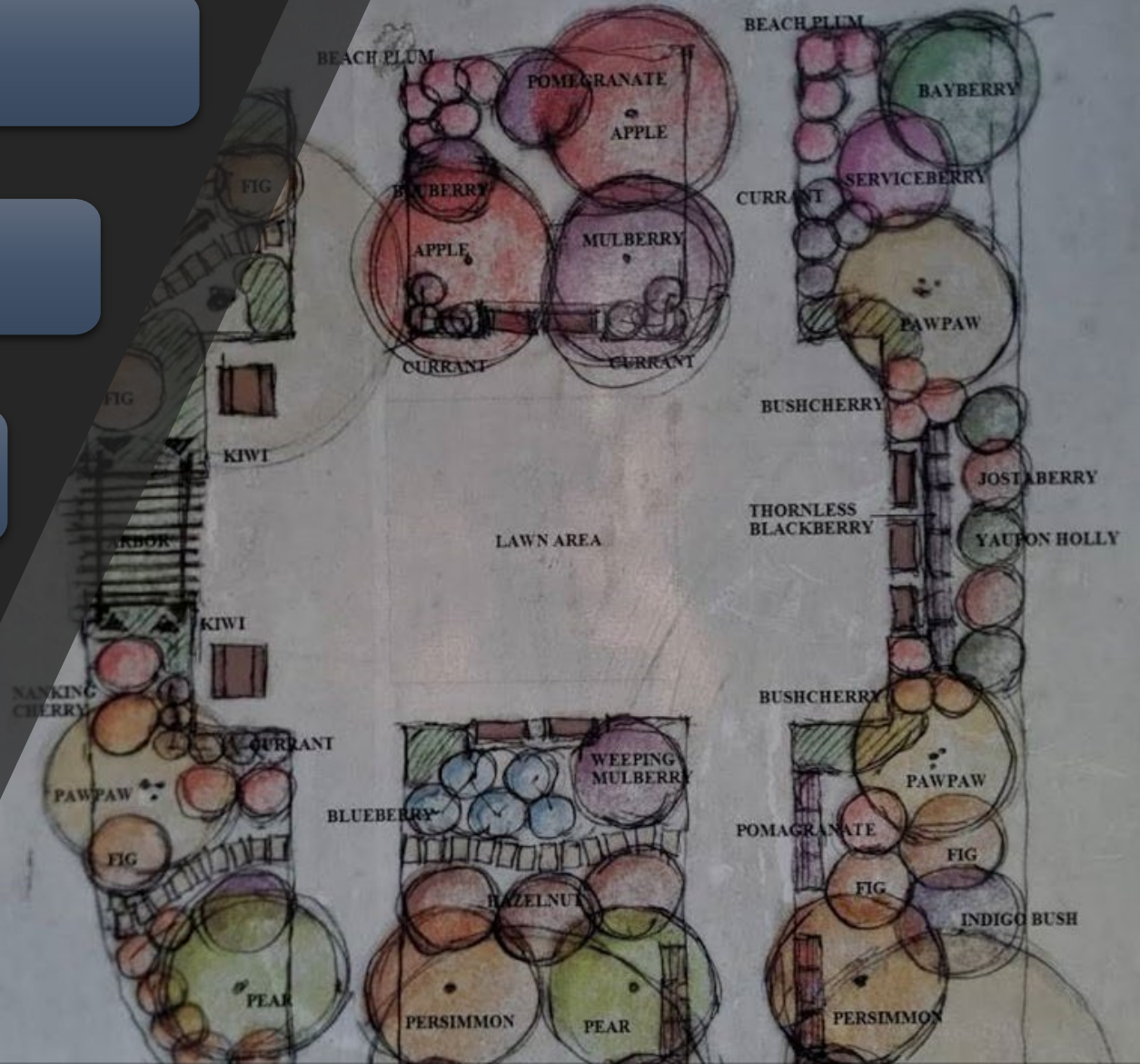
- <https://bit.ly/2S7PgEQ>

Provide Comments and Feedback

- <https://bit.ly/3vBKqNJ>

# Stay Engaged

## EMERSON STREET FOOD FOREST HYATTSVILLE, MARYLAND



## 9. SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS AND INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

### CHAT TEXT

19:54:25	From Linda : Diabetes and Heart Disease are such scourges in County, and food seems more and more clearly to have a major role. More access to good locally grown foods could have a vast impact beyond environmental
19:55:15	From Abigail Reznek : Make fresh food more affordable and accessible in rural areas
19:55:40	From Linda : Make farm land accessible to small local farms
19:58:12	From Vijay Parameshwaran (Food Systems) : I would support having local education programs on gardening, sustainable agriculture techniques, and incorporating a lot of fruit trees/shrubs in public spaces. I can speak for myself that for many years, I was intimidated by doing any gardening/planting myself just because I didn't know how to do it
19:58:47	From 🗣️ Asia Gray-9 Food Systems : I support having community gardens at parks and schools
19:59:36	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : So many people haven't grown up with vegetable gardens and don't know where to start. What kind of county resources will help people grow their own
19:59:55	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Capital Food Bank Food Distribution, Nutritional Education, and Social Service Partnerships   Capital Area Food Bank
19:59:58	From Linda : Offer competitive supports to beekeepers, small farms, to compete with Mosquito Joe and such exterminations. Insects are very key to agriculture but we're killing them here.
20:00:24	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Decreasing food waste by diverting good food that might be wasted to people who need it
20:01:17	From Vijay Parameshwaran (Food Systems) : A powerful aspect of local education programs is that it empowers people to not be dependent on charity-based donations for food security. They would have the tools to control the food production themselves
20:01:58	From Linda : Encourage those who have long histories in agriculture here in Maryland to share their knowledge with younger people and others
20:02:38	From Linda : Revive the Master Gardener approach?
20:02:57	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : So true. Empowering people through training in local food production would be a key. Do schools encourage agriculture as a career path?
20:03:08	From Linda food : Can UMD and Beltsville agricultural relate to the county concerns here
20:04:03	From 📄 Food Co-Facilitator: Carole Barth, DoE : for Food forest cabarth@co.pg.md.us
20:04:11	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Outdoor workers' jobs will become more difficult as temperatures rise. How can county ensure agricultural workers fair pay and safety?
20:04:25	From Linda : I suspect Black Farmers played an enormous role in the county in the past; I'd like to know more about that and see a revival in that area too.
20:04:54	From Vijay Parameshwaran (Food Systems) : For Staci's question, we need to petition a large-scale effort (like National Guard level) for environmental cleanup and remediation. Chemicals are not easily removed, and advanced technology is required
20:05:23	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : We need to ask the people of Brandywine how the county can help with this
20:05:32	From foods robin roberts : I am the chair of my sorority chapter's Eco Friendly Committee. We generally have a community forum where we invite local community organizations, utility companies, fire department, etc to speak on how the community can reduce utility bills, how to reduce waste, etc. I'd like to expand that and have someone to discuss the things we are talking in this subject.
20:05:56	From Linda : Great idea, robin Roberts!!
20:06:41	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Great example of an existing program that can help address these issues



20:08:09	From Staci Hartwell : Staci Hartwell, NAACP Prince George's County Branch, , SRHConsulting@gmail.com, 617 257 8893
20:09:09	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Victory gardens at schools are a great idea for getting young people involved
20:09:20	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Food Equity Council <a href="http://pgcfec.org">http://pgcfec.org</a>
20:09:25	From Linda : This is kind of exciting, isn't it? I think so.
20:09:47	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Healthy Food Policy Project <a href="https://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/case-studies/prince-georges-county-md">https://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/case-studies/prince-georges-county-md</a>
20:10:19	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : So important to leverage existing programs
20:11:56	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : So many of the things that are good for our bodies are also good for the planet,
20:12:03	From  Food Co-Facilitator: Carole Barth, DoE : We can also help through the Master Gardener program to start community or school gardens;
20:12:38	From Nithin Gudderra, PGCPs Student : with school gardens in mind, reaching out to Culinary programs at high schools could be useful as well
20:14:20	From foods robin roberts : Robin Roberts: rbnroberts@yahoo.com
20:16:38	From Sustainable Food Systems : or if they don't have a place to deliver to!
20:16:41	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : So many inequalities and health disparities in our county.
20:17:00	From  Food Co-Facilitator: Carole Barth, DoE : Several municipalities with community gardens have beds that residents can freely pick from
20:17:06	From Linda : Almost everyone can sprout seeds. Simple but highly nutritious
20:17:47	From Linda : Can we work to help people to be self-sufficient to the fullest extent possible? Not delivering food only, but mentoring to grow our own food?
20:17:56	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Right guidance is so important--school gardens and master gardeners can be very helpful
20:18:00	From Chloe Waterman : Yes @janet goals should be framed around reducing diet related health disparities
20:18:44	From Linda : Yes.
20:19:00	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Food availability might become a bigger problem with heat waves and variable precipitation
20:19:10	From foods robin roberts : You can also reach me through the Eco Friendly Committee email: <a href="mailto:ecofriendly@pgcacadst.org">ecofriendly@pgcacadst.org</a>
20:19:10	From Chloe Waterman : Yes we need to look at mitigation and resilience - that includes investing in food infrastructure like cold storage and processing capacity locally too
20:19:46	From Linda : My kids taught me sooo much!
20:19:48	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Does the county have an extension service
20:20:28	From Vijay Parameshwaran (Food Systems) : Chloe makes a good point, having a strong system of food banks and reserves is important
20:21:11	From Linda : 4-H used to be in the County, also
20:21:31	From Nithin Gudderra, PGCPs Student : ^ Still is
20:21:38	From Beth Gingold- Food : Remember that our recent immigrant communities and our elderly residents have a lot of knowledge about agriculture and farming.
20:21:43	From  Food Co-Facilitator: Carole Barth, DoE : Home and Garden Information Center at UMD Cooperative Extension
20:21:44	From Linda : Ty Nithin, good to know!
20:21:48	From Food-  Andrea Crooms (DoE) : I spoke at a 4H club a few weeks ago- they are still here!
20:21:53	From Chloe Waterman : So many great ideas from this group around food systems! I encourage interested folks to join the Food Equity Council as this is exactly our mission! You can email me <a href="mailto:cwaterman@foe.org">cwaterman@foe.org</a> for more info/to join our next meeting. And shout out to Ben and other FEC members here!

20:22:07	From Linda : Bookmarked the link Chloe, ty
20:22:30	From Food--Benjamin Fischler : <a href="https://agrn.umd.edu/extension">https://agrn.umd.edu/extension</a>
20:22:35	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : What about CSAs
20:23:31	From Linda : TY Staci.
20:23:52	From Linda : Lots of people are NOT online in County
20:24:06	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Good point, Staci
20:24:40	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : County needs to be a clearing house for information
20:25:07	From Food- 🌱 Andrea Crooms (DoE) : Staci- absolutely- I can't speak for the past (it is my third week)- but I certainly would love to be a conduit for now and the future- I've already sent you an email for us to connect.
20:25:23	From Beth Gingold- Food : Crossroads Community Food Network is building more inclusive food system in Takoma/Langley Crossroads <a href="https://www.crossroadscommunityfoodnetwork.org/">https://www.crossroadscommunityfoodnetwork.org/</a>
20:25:25	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Lots of apartment dwellers might want to growth things but don't have space.
20:26:03	From Linda : Sprouting seeds takes very little space but is nutritious and fairly easy, inexpensive. perfect in apartments
20:26:08	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : How can county establish more community gardens and promote their availability
20:26:32	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : How do we get smaller markets to stock more fresh fruits and vegetables
20:26:39	From Staci Hartwell : Yes! TY Chloe Waterman!
20:27:03	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : How far do people have to go to get groceries? This affects GHG emissions
20:27:33	From Commissioner: Donald Belle, PGCPs : We would love to have someone talk to our senior capstone students about projects they could work on related to food equity/health disparities
20:27:53	From Beth Gingold- Food : If you are serious about wanting to hear from all county residents then you should consider paying people to participate in focus groups / interviews
20:28:27	From Beth Gingold- Food : It is not feasible for everyone to volunteer, especially working parents, especially working parents facing food insecurity
20:28:31	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Less food waste
20:28:37	From Vijay Parameshwaran (Food Systems) : Residential Outreach for sure, but with significant financial investment behind it
20:28:41	From Linda : More universal voting in elections, to encourage climate-friendly Council and elected officers
20:29:03	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : So true, Linda
20:29:07	From Chloe Waterman : Diet related racial health disparities are measurably reduced
20:29:23	From foods robin roberts : In my area of Temple Hills, actually Hillcrest Heights there are no WHole Food markets or Harris Teeter, or MOM's supermarkets. It would be nice if those businesses would consider coming to this part of the county.
20:29:36	From Chloe Waterman : The county is purchasing x% if it's food from sustainable sources, BIPOC farmers etc
20:29:45	From Linda : I grew up in Temple Hills totally agree robin
20:29:56	From Chloe Waterman : Good point Beth
20:30:08	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : More healthy food options in fast food settings
20:30:13	From Vijay Parameshwaran (Food Systems) : Monitoring and evaluation is important for keeping the health of land at a high level for growing food, especially in more urban areas and places like Brandywine, where the land can get polluted easily
20:30:21	From Linda : Virtually also keeps some people OUT of the convo
20:30:35	From Staci Hartwell : My mother is in Temple Hills. I am at the Harbor. We have to go across the bridge to get organic veggies.



20:31:24	From foods robin roberts : Yes Staci. We have an affluent area. Don't underestimate us
20:31:31	From James Roberson: PGCS : Support for agriculture education in K-12.
20:32:18	From Nithin Gudderra, PGCS Student : ^^Increased awareness and understanding among youth
20:32:33	From Commissioner: Donald Belle, PGCS : 10 seconds
20:32:36	From Food Commissioner: Janet Gingold, Sierra Club : Regenerative Agriculture <a href="https://drawdown.org/solutions/regenerative-annual-cropping">https://drawdown.org/solutions/regenerative-annual-cropping</a>