

# Kinsman Farm: A Case Study of an Urban Incubator Farm



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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# Cleveland of the Past.....



# Cleveland of Today.....



The logo for "ALL IN 2016" is displayed. It features a large, stylized maroon letter "C" at the top. Below it, the words "ALL IN" are written in large, bold, yellow letters with a black outline. Underneath "ALL IN", the year "2016" is written in a smaller, yellow font with a black outline. The entire logo is set against a white background with a yellow swoosh at the bottom.



# Background

- 2007 Formation of Cuyahoga-Cleveland Food Policy Coalition
- Community needs assessment
- Zoning to allow for agriculture practices

# Working Groups

- Community Food Assessment
- Food & Waste Recovery
- Health & Nutrition
- Land Use & Planning\*\*\*\*\*
- Local Purchasing

# Outcomes

## Concerns with:

- Land tenure
- Insurance
- Site readiness

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## Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone

Property Inventory in Project Area



# Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program

- USDA-NIFA
- Applied in 2009
- Awarded in 2010
- Total Funding \$750,000
- Farm site initiated in 2010



# Beginning Entrepreneurial Agriculture Networks



- Decrease the average age of farmers in Cuyahoga County
- Increase land in agricultural production
- Increase number of farmers from historically underserved audiences

# Other partners

- City of Cleveland-\$100,000 cash
- Ohio Department of Agriculture -\$100,000 cash
- Cleveland Crops – In kind (Sub grantee)
- ASIA, Inc. - Sub grantee
- Burten, Bell, Carr – Community Development Corp (helped find land)

# Now and Then

(image credit: Cleveland PD)

## Disappearing Kinsman

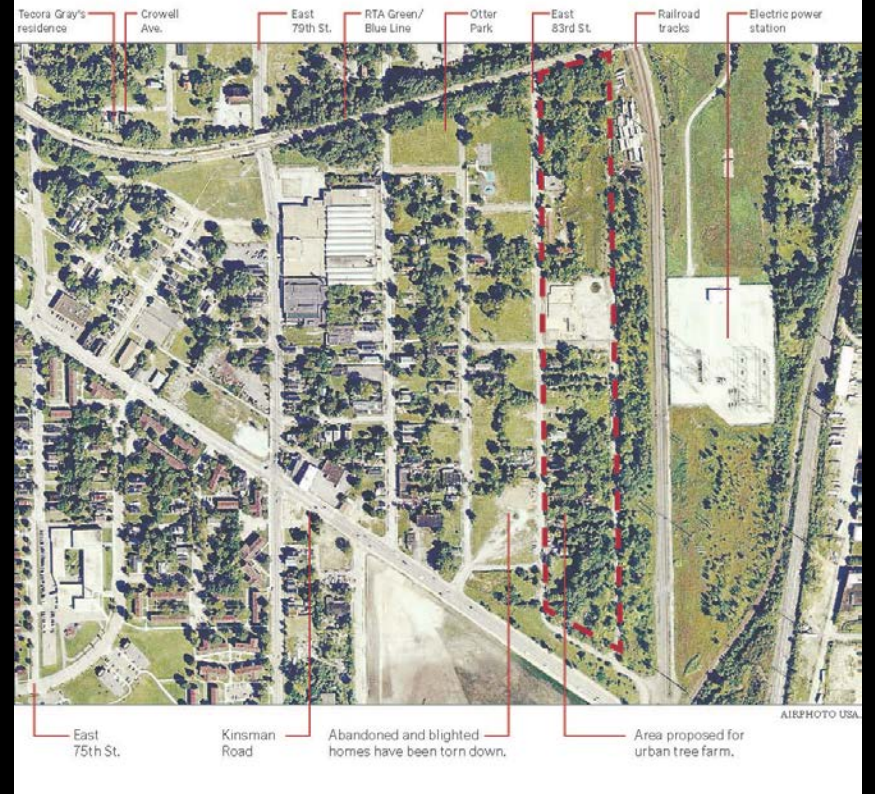
Kinsman lost three-quarters of its residents from 1950 to 2000. These aerial photographs show the neighborhood around East 83rd Street and Kinsman Road in 1949 and 2005.

**Then** In 1949, the neighborhood was bustling with people, who lived in its working-class homes on tree-lined streets. Jobs were plentiful in the post-World War II years at nearby factories and the railyards.



## Today

As the factories closed and residents moved to the suburbs, Kinsman fell on hard times. The railyard is gone. Houses have been abandoned and many have been torn down as the city moved in to combat neighborhood blight. Only four homes remain in the area of Tecora Gray's residence on Crowell Avenue. So, how should the city deal with a neighborhood built to serve three times the residents it now has?



# Leaseholder

- Holds the lease from the City
- Collects fees from Farmers





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## Welcome to Kinsman Farm

### Our Story

Kinsman Farm, established in 2010 as a part of the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant, is a 6-acre, market incubator farm for new and beginning farmers interested in agricultural enterprises that contribute to Greater Cleveland's local food economy. The land on which the farm now occupies was once known as the "forgotten triangle," having suffered from business and population loss and severe disinvestment for over 40 years. Despite many challenges with the redevelopment of this former residential site in the Kinsman neighborhood, continuous efforts are undertaken to remove debris, improve soil quality, manage invasive plants and insects, and restore this land to productive use.

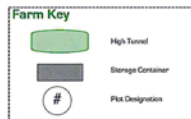
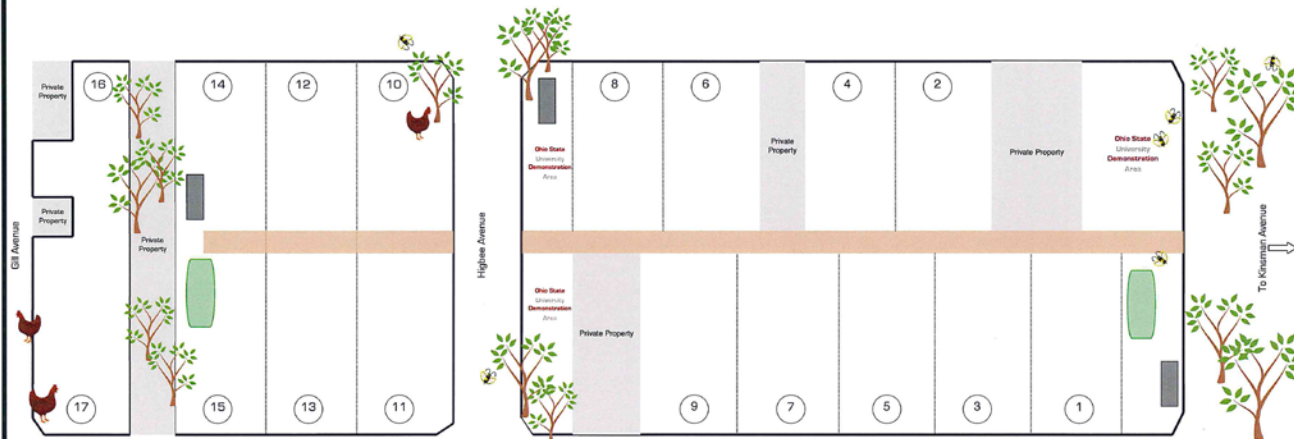
Unlike other urban farms, this "incubator" farm provides farmers with both infrastructure support and research-based education to reduce the risks related to starting new farming businesses. All participating farmers must complete Ohio State University Extension's Market Gardener Training Program and present a formal business plan to be considered for a plot on the farm. Upon acceptance, farmers lease approximately 250 acres of land from West Creek Conservancy, a nonprofit land conservancy agency vested in sustainability of urban land. Farmers are also allotted growing areas in the high tunnels and storage space within the repurposed shipping containers. In exchange for the benefits of this incubator type of farm, each farmer has a responsibility to assist with overall farm maintenance and operations. Ohio State University Extension oversees two demonstration areas on the farm to showcase growing techniques and specialty crops as well as provide for hands-on learning opportunities. All produce grown from these demonstration areas is donated to nearby assisted housing communities.

### Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone

Kinsman Farm is proud to be a part of Cleveland's 26.5 acre Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone- one of the largest of its kind in the nation. Under the leadership of Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation, a master plan for the Kinsman neighborhood was crafted that reflected the residents' desires to reinvigorate the use of vacant land in this area with urban agriculture as a viable means for productive reuse. The resulting vision entailed large-scale urban agriculture that included evolutionary practices and techniques for cultivating food while restoring neighborhood prosperity. With strong support from the City of Cleveland which owns most of the land, partnerships developed that turned this vision into reality and continue to support multiple entrepreneurial endeavors within the Zone.

### Growing Together

Kinsman Farm is a unique partnership among Ohio State University Extension- Cuyahoga County, West Creek Conservancy, City of Cleveland, Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation and our many urban farmers and other stakeholders committed to a healthier and more sustainable urban environment. Additional financial support for the farm's infrastructure was provided by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture.



### Come Grow With Us

Kinsman Farm provides many opportunities for learning, sharing and volunteering. If you are interested in bringing a group of students out to explore the farm, donating your time to assist with farm needs [administrative and agricultural], or learning how you can become a Kinsman farmer, please contact us:

Ohio State University Extension: 216-429-6200  
 cuyahoga.osu.edu  
 West Creek Conservancy: 216-749-3720  
 westcreek.org

### Our Partners



# Infrastructure

- Extensive soil testing
- Waterlines to all sites
- Two high tunnels
- Storage containers
- Property completely fenced in
- Lots aggregated in three large lots





# Site prep



# Requirements

- Market Gardener Training Program or equivalent
- Business plan presentation
- Interview by Land Committee

# Lease includes

- \$250.00 year
- Water
- $\frac{1}{4}$  acre
- Hand tools
- Equipment rentals



# Occupancy

- 2011 6 Farm Enterprises \$0
- 2012 3 new, 2 left \$5000
- 2013 1 new, 2 left \$10000
- 2014 3 new, 1 left \$15000
- 2015 3 new, 2 left ??
- 2016 3 new, 1 left ??

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# Extension's Role

- Site management
- Coop development
- Technical support
- Business development support

# Challenges

- Maintenance of plots
- Maintenance of community areas
- Recognized financial and time capacity of farmers
- End of funding without a sustainability succession plan
- Water issues
- Issues with Community Development Corporation and Northeast Sewer District
- The unexpected





# If I could do it all over again

- Rethink site (was it the right site)
- Start smaller
- Spend more time preparing the site
- Institute apprenticeship program

# Recommendations

- Consider institutional capacity
- Consider long-term commitment
- Think carefully through long term partnerships
- Make expectations clear from beginning
- Everything in writing

Questions???