

Urban Agriculture as a Catalyst for Place Based Community Development

NORTHWEST AREA INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Client:

City of Indianapolis, Indiana
KERAMIDA Inc. (WBE)
United North West Area (UNWA) Development Corporation
Riverside Neighborhood Association

Project Description:

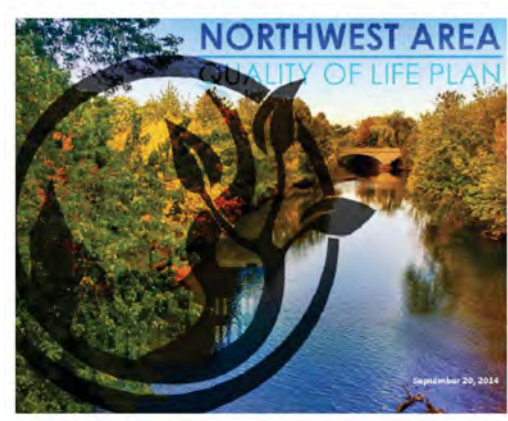
The Carrier Bryant manufacturing site in Indianapolis Riverside Neighborhood was once a thriving industrial complex providing jobs to a surrounding community. Once the site was abandoned, serious contamination levels were discovered after years of environmental abuse. Through efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency, The State of Indiana and the City of Indianapolis Brownfield's Office, the 19-acre site was cleaned. Keramida Engineering was hired to develop a master plan for the site and lead a community engagement process.

We were asked to lead a community visioning process around the development of a "food hub" for the area. The Riverside Neighborhood is a challenged community as employment centers; anchor businesses and community investment have left the area. Faced with an aging population, underemployment, health issues such as diabetes and chronic obesity, the Northwest Quality of Life Plan called for the development of a food hub as a catalyst for community and economic redevelopment.

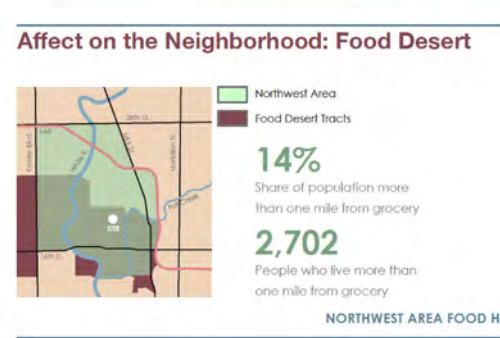
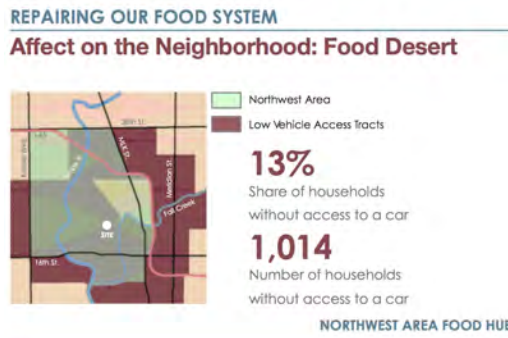
We were asked to partner with Keramida by the Department of Metropolitan Development and the existing steering committee to develop a vision forward based on the recommendations of the Quality of Life Plan. Through a series of community workshops and input sessions, we developed three scenarios for redevelopment based on urban agriculture as a catalyst for place based community development.

We proposed urban ag/food as the trigger to provide jobs, produce healthy food, and enhancement of community. This includes the goal, creating a new town (neighborhood) square that maximizes all the potentials food systems can provide to create a human scaled, compact urban center that would transform the community.

The development will provide opportunities for all ages, youth to elderly to engage and interact through place making. The new neighborhood center also serves the purpose of generating jobs, highlight cultural diversity, fostering entrepreneurship, transferring wealth to the community, and regenerating civic pride of place.



Food is central to the Northwest Area Quality of Life Plan.



North West Area



Carrier Bryant Site



The Process:

We had the North West Area Quality of Life Plan as the starting point for the re-design of the site. Adding targeted research around urban agriculture and food systems, we reinforced the recommendations of the plan while expanding these ideas through the visioning process. To highlight the potentials of urban agriculture and food systems as catalyst for change, we developed a food hub game. This game focused on the generating discussion and identifying critical priorities of the steering committee charged with guiding the plan.

We began by reinforcing the existing quality of life plan and added information on the food system. We created file-based game that introduced the components of the food system we were proposing and assigned value to these elements around food, jobs and community. Breaking the group up into four teams, each team developed a concept for these uses and identified critical relationships between these uses and an existing context.

A tally score sheet helped players see results of their decision around the original priorities – food, jobs, and community.

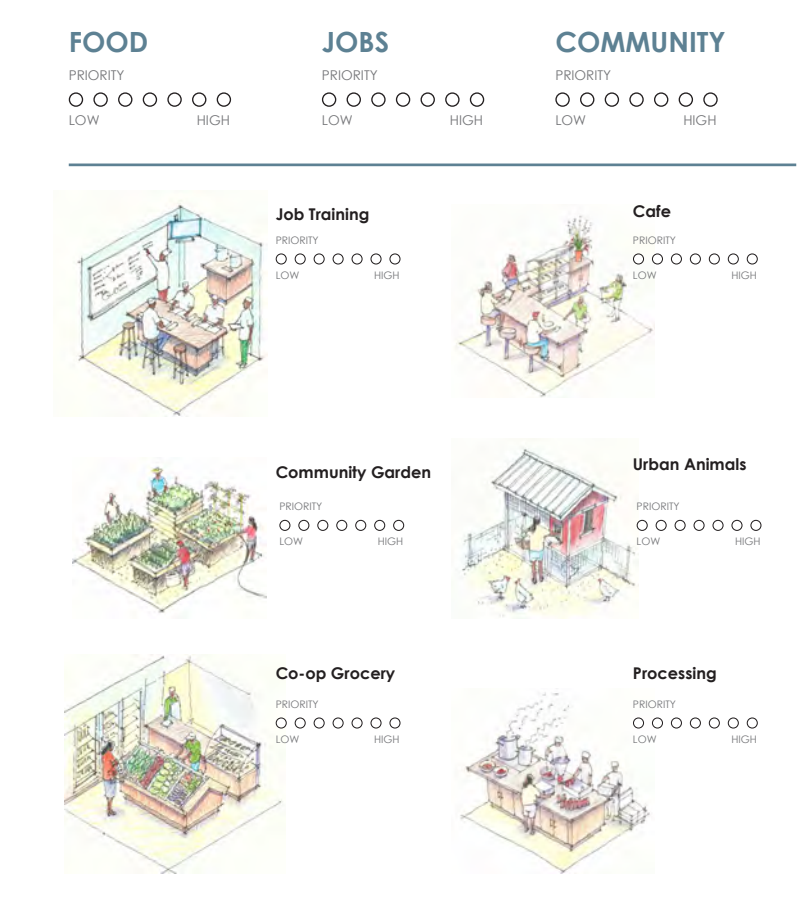
We developed a collection of vignettes, images to represent these activities to help people visualize place and activities represented by these uses. This added scale and personality to components of that would be integrated into the final plan.

A community survey introduced neighborhood residents to the components that would be part of the strategy. The vignettes helped everyone visualize the activities and places that were being proposed.



FOOD	JOB	COMMUNITY
Community Garden	100%	100%
Commercial Farming	100%	100%
Mobile Markets	100%	100%
Specialty Housing	100%	100%
Urban Animals	100%	100%
Community Center	100%	100%
Community Kitchen	100%	100%
Child Care	100%	100%
Playground	100%	100%
Co-op Grocery	100%	100%
Processing	100%	100%
Street & Specialty Market	100%	100%
Community Support Agriculture (CSA)	100%	100%
Urban Farming	100%	100%
Community Garden	100%	100%
Urban Animals	100%	100%
Mobile Markets	100%	100%
Specialty Housing	100%	100%
Community Center	100%	100%
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Community Support Agriculture (CSA)	100%	100%
Urban Farming	100%	100%

What is most important to you?

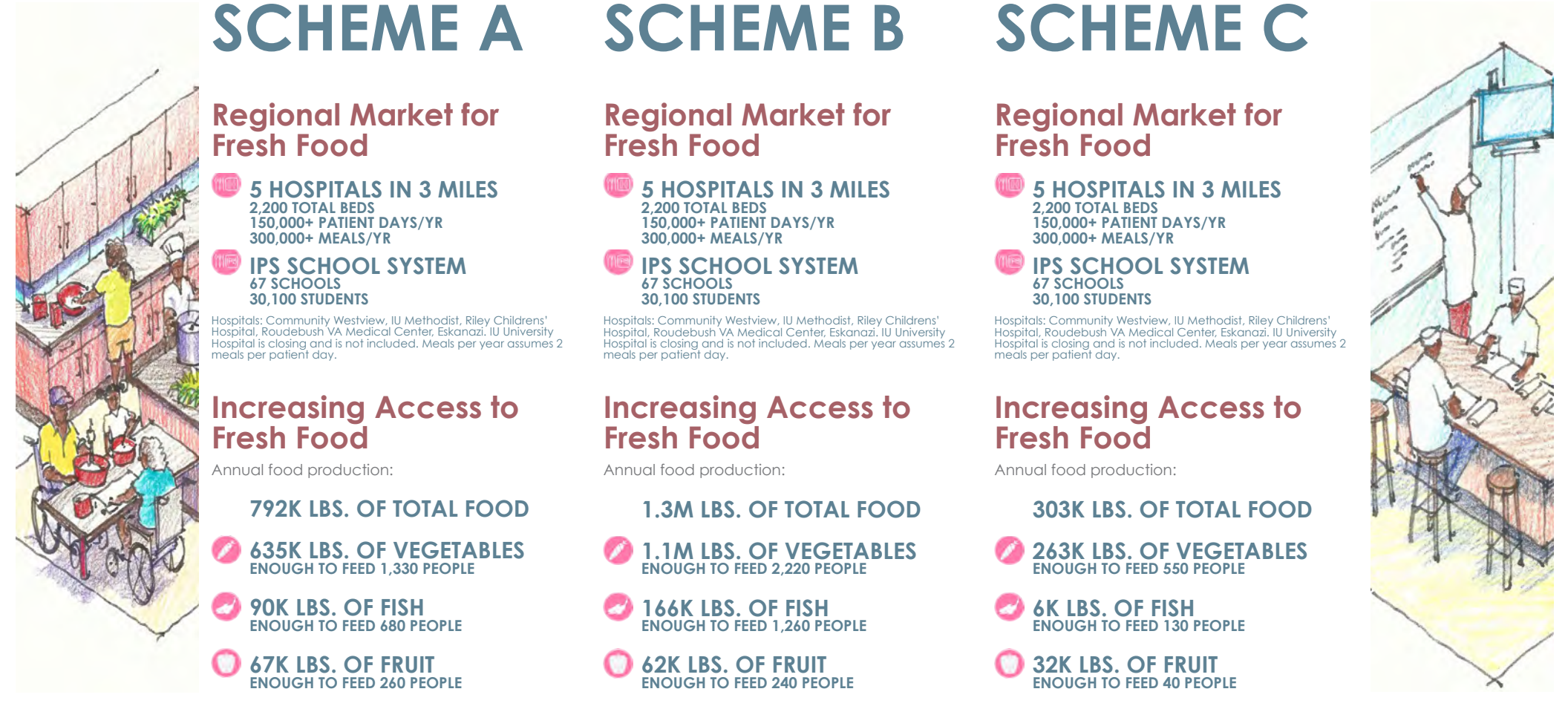
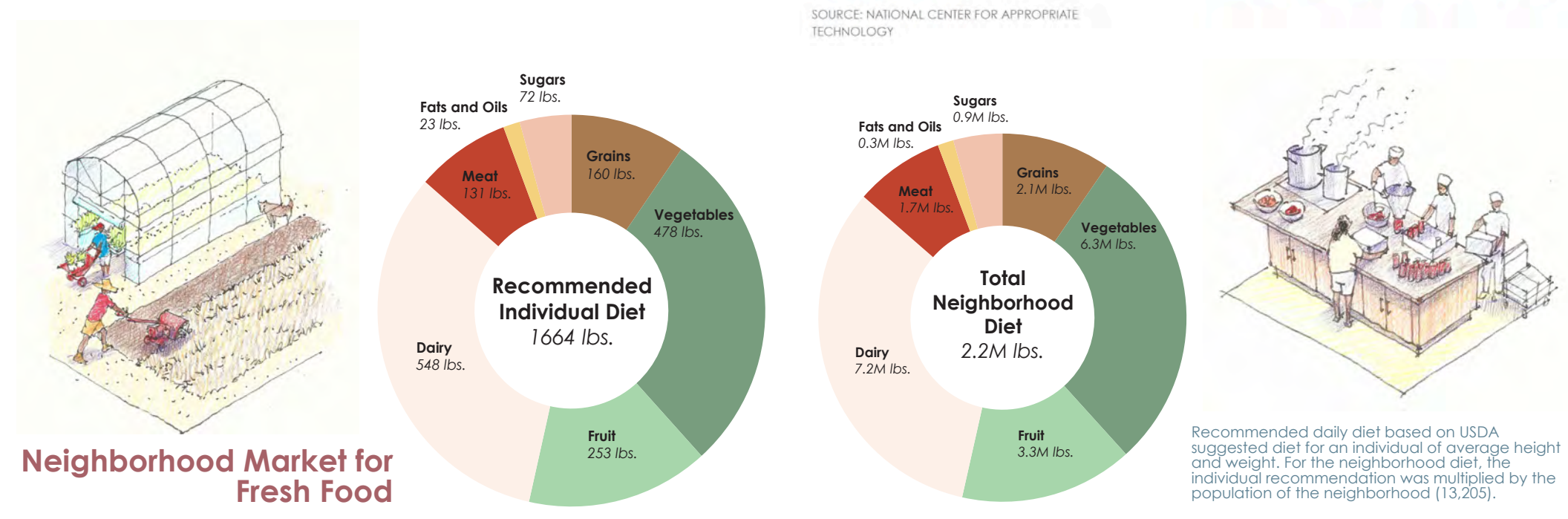
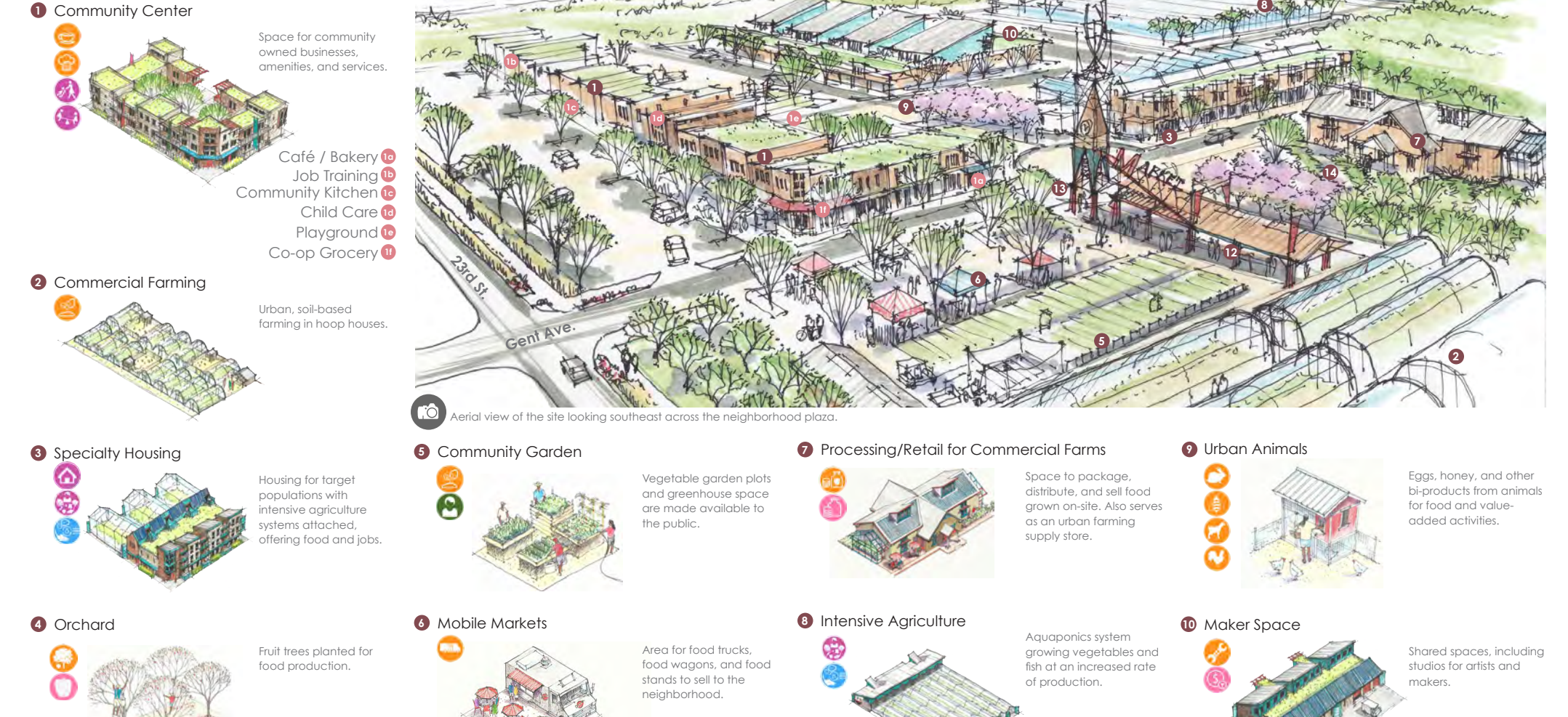


NORTHWEST AREA FOOD DISTRICT

Site Land Allocation	Scheme A	Scheme B	Scheme C
Food Production			
Urban Farming	6.4 33.7%	5.4 28.4%	12.7 66.5%
Intensive Agriculture	4.1 21.6%	5.7 30.0%	0 0.0%
Community Gardens	0.2 1.1%	2.0 10.5%	1.2 6.3%
Community Center	2.4 12.6%	2.1 11.1%	1.1 5.8%
Value-Adding/Processing	2.7 14.2%	1.4 7.4%	0 0.0%
Specialty Housing	0.7 3.7%	1.2 6.3%	2.4 12.6%
Roads/Infrastructure	2.5 13.2%	1.2 6.3%	1.6 8.4%
Totals	19 100.0%	19 100.0%	19 100.0%

Buildings (Value/Construction Cost)	Job Estimates
Community Center	100
Commercial Farming	100
Specialty Housing	100
Community Gardens	100
Mobile Markets	100
Intensive Agriculture	100
Urban Animals	100
Maker Space	100

NORTHWEST AREA FOOD DISTRICT



Dash Board - summary of three schemes

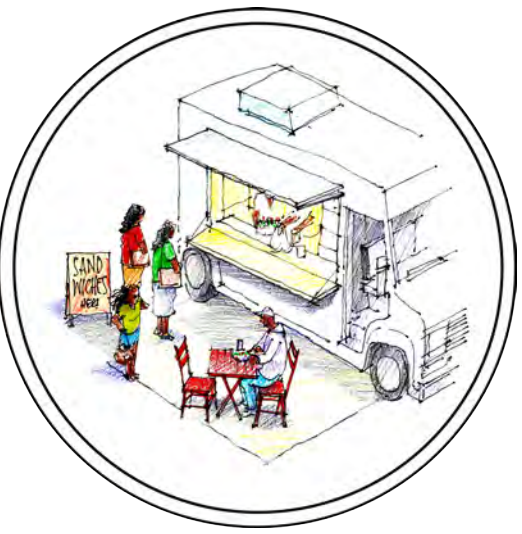
Scheme A

Urban Agriculture as a Catalyst for Place Based Community Development

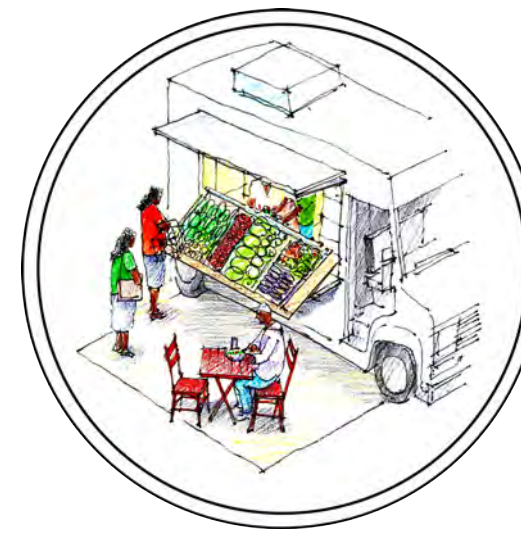
Components of the Food System Creating Place



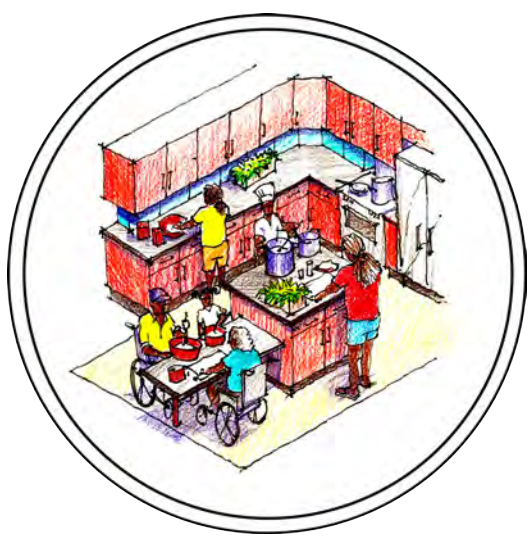
Food Co-op Grocery Store – proposed as an integral part of the town square and owned as a cooperative by the residents, this local business has great social and economic value.



Food & Produce Trucks - have become a great asset to public spaces and community celebrations. Just like a restaurant they can celebrate the ethnicity and cultural influences of the neighborhood, and expand that understanding around the city. Food trucks are great micro-business ventures, cultivating local entrepreneurs.



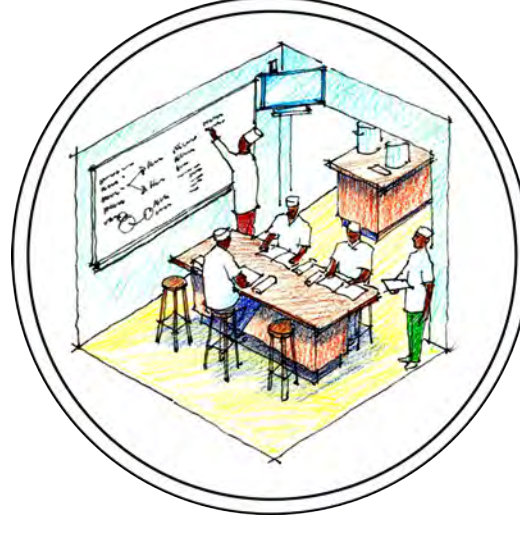
Training Centers – education venues are very important to bridge individuals to employment, foster entrepreneurship and educate the public on critical issues. These centers and serve as community centers teaching nutrition, experimenting with value adding ideas and prepare people for jobs.



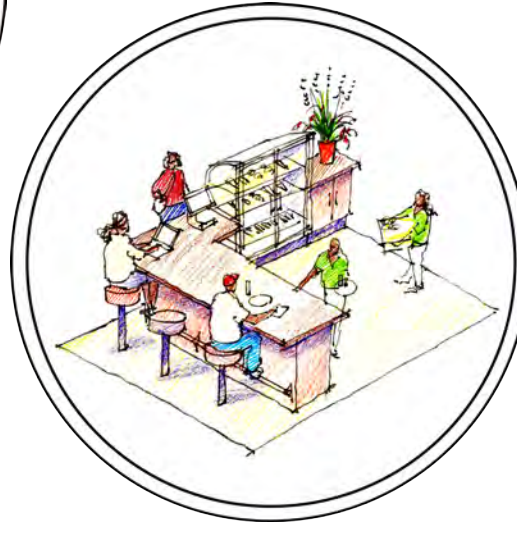
Community Kitchens - are a very important component of a local food system. They provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs to develop their products and skills. These products are important to the value-adding portion of the food system. They can be turned into social and cultural events. They are the link between individual and family history to community.



Community Supported Agriculture – CSA's provide an important connect of food to people by delivering directly to residents. This is an important service to the elderly or those with mobility challenges. When food is grown locally it becomes more personal as relationships are built between the growers and the consumers, another important step in localizing the economy.



Coffee Shops/Cafes/Bakeries – all of these food value-adding activities not only create direct markets for food production, but they can celebrate the ethnicity and cultural influences of the neighborhood.



Community Gardens – are valuable for the social places, the food production is secondary to their importance as a community-gathering place. Community gardens create conversations, build relationships and become multi-generational hubs.



Scheme A places high value on a public plaza that would celebrate the neighborhood's diversity through music and food, two important cultural expressions.

This scheme creates a compact urban environment with the concentration of uses around a public plaza.



Scheme B integrated senior housing as part of the overall development. It includes public spaces to celebrate family and friends through food and the many value-adding options.

This scheme added orchards and other environmentally focused design elements to create a strong sustainability theme.



Scheme C focused on specialized housing that integrates residents directly with the growing and processing of foods.

It focuses on creating jobs and building community for groups like veterans or ex-offenders.

NORTHWEST AREA FOOD DISTRICT

Community Center
Space for community owned businesses, amenities, and services.

Café / Bakery
Job Training
Community Kitchen
Child Care
Playground
Co-op Grocery

Commercial Farming
Urban, soil-based farming in hoop houses.

Specialty Housing
Housing for target populations with intensive agriculture systems attached, offering food and jobs.

Orchard
Fruit trees planted for food production.

Community Garden
Vegetable garden plots and greenhouse space are made available to the public.

Processing/Retail for Commercial Farms
Space to package, distribute, and sell food grown on-site. Also serves as an urban farming supply store.

Urban Animals
Eggs, honey, and other byproducts from animals for food and value-added activities.

Mobile Markets
Area for food trucks, food wagons, and food stands to sell to the neighborhood.

Intensive Agriculture
Aeroponics system growing vegetables and fish at an increased rate of production.

Processing / Retail for Intensive Agriculture
Preparation and sales of byproducts of intensive agriculture processes.

Icon Legend
System (blue circle), Process (orange circle), Product (pink circle), Support Services (purple circle), Social / Environmental / Economic Sustainability (green circle).

NORTHWEST AREA FOOD DISTRICT

Community Center
Space for community owned businesses, amenities, and services.

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Specialty Housing
Housing for target populations with intensive agriculture systems attached, offering food and jobs.

Orchard
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Community Garden
Vegetable garden plots and greenhouse space are made available to the public.

Processing / Retail for Commercial Farm
Preparation and sales of byproducts of agriculture processes.

Urban Animals
Eggs, honey, and other byproducts from animals for food and value-added activities.

Mobile Markets
Area for food trucks, food wagons, and food stands to sell to the neighborhood.

Garden Center / Retail for Commercial Farm
Retail location to sell food grown on-site, plants, and garden supplies.

Eco Homesteads
Rowhouses with in-situ systems on the property.

Icon Legend
System (blue circle), Process (orange circle), Product (pink circle), Support Services (purple circle), Social / Environmental / Economic Sustainability (green circle).

SCHEME B

Neighborhood Square / Amphitheater
Community gathering space for performances, exhibitions, and celebrations.

Co-op Grocery Store
Extension of produced food into the retail market, employment opportunities, and access to healthy food.

Community Greenhouses
Opportunities for community members to grow food for consumption or market.

Senior Community Courtyard
Opportunities for community members to grow food in a socially active space for consumption or market.

SITE SUMMARY

- 133 Jobs
- 1.3M lbs. of Food/Yr.
- 28 Senior Housing Units

SCHEME B FOCUSES ON FOOD PRODUCTION BY DEVELOPING four large intensive agriculture areas (northeast corner of the site). These alone generate 1.16 million lbs. of food each year and 60 new jobs. More food production comes from commercial urban farming on the south portion of the site. Food from commercial and intensive growing facilities is processed, packaged, and distributed at the processing facility on the east end of the site.

The community center of Scheme B is a large neighborhood square, anchoring senior housing to the west, retail to the north, retail for the on-site farms to the east, and to the south a sheltered market and community gardens.

Scheme B

SITE SUMMARY

- 94 Jobs
- 303K lbs. of Food/Yr.
- 48 Housing Units
- 24 Eco Homesteads

SCHEME C FOCUSES MORE ON HOUSING THAN SCHEMES A AND B, while still balancing the need for job creation and food production. Eco homesteads on the west end of the site offer single-family rowhouses with small intensive agriculture systems on-site. Families can grow their own food and sell the surplus at the local market.

Housing east of the eco homesteads, offers multi-family apartment buildings with medium-scale intensive agriculture systems attached. These provide significant economic opportunity. A commercial core along Gent Avenue provides retail outlets for local growers and jobs for local residents. The majority of the site in this scheme is devoted to commercial farming. Leasing this land to commercial farms can generate significant revenue.

Scheme C

SCHEME C

Community Outreach and Education Center
An information center for the demonstration of agricultural processes and nutrition awareness.

Commercial Greenhouse
This portion of the commercial farm is housed in greenhouse conditions for specific outputs.

Commercial Composting
This portion of the commercial farm is dedicated to composting and soil production for on-site agriculture and for sale.



Designing Public Places for Community, Democratic Dialogue, Health & Equity