



Visions for a Healthier Community

Weinland Park Food Planning Group, Summer 2015
Report prepared by Local Matters



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PROJECT SUMMARY

Through a partnership led by the City of Columbus, Franklin County Commissioners and Local Matters, (a Columbus nonprofit organization committed to improving healthy food access and, education) two meetings were held in Weinland Park with community organizations, stakeholders and residents to explore neighborhood-specific solutions and define potential next steps for improving access to healthy food and nutrition education in the area.

The Weinland Park neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio is located between The Ohio State University and downtown Columbus. Through the collaborative work of partnerships, increased programming for children and youth, and resident leadership and engagement, the neighborhood has transformed from one of the highest crime areas in the city to an area of focus and opportunity for many community members and contributes to the city's continued economic development and revitalization. According to The Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, the Weinland Park neighborhood is unique given the fact that it is adjacent to neighborhoods of high and very high opportunity; a characteristic not shared by comparable neighborhoods. In addition, significant philanthropic investments in the area in recent years have and will continue to strengthen the community. There is great potential for continued revitalization that will benefit Weinland Park's 4,000+ residents, which will be further enhanced as a result of the community's vibrant mix of sociodemographic diversity. Food planning is a critical part of this neighborhood improvement process.

With that in mind, the primary goals of the two-meeting community engagement process were:

- *To collect, share, gather and organize information on food-related neighborhood assets - such as food education and food access - identified by participants.*
- *To map points of healthy food access and education that illustrate gaps and opportunities for improvement based on community need.*
- *To engage individuals in generating visions of what they want and need in their community relative to food access, food production, and food education.*
- *To make recommendations for next steps according to the priorities identified by the neighborhood food planning process participants*

This report provides information on the processes, data, and ideas for exploration shared during the community engagement process. It will assist participants in the development and implementation of local strategies for improving access that meets the specific needs of the Weinland Park neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. The information and planning gained in the Weinland Park neighborhood will be combined with that of the West Side, Near East Side, Near South Side, Northland, Clintonville, and Linden reports to help inform a Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Action Plan (expected completion Fall 2016). This plan will outline a comprehensive strategy to:

- *Improve access to nutritious and affordable food, and education about healthy food.*
- *Increase the role of food in economic development.*
- *Prevent food-related waste.*
- *Enhance communication and coordination among existing food resources and agencies.*

OUR PROCESS



Local Matters has facilitated and organized the development of a neighborhood food plans on the West Side, Near East Side, Near South Side, Northland, Clintonville, and Linden neighborhoods of Columbus, Ohio, and used similar strategies for community engagement and participation in Weinland Park. The first phase of the community engagement process for the *Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Action Plan* project in Weinland Park was to identify participants that represented a cross-section of the community. In addition to organizations and individuals who had previously been engaged in similar food planning efforts, outreach efforts for participation in the meetings were expanded to include residents, business owners, community leaders and community stakeholders. This approach provided a diverse mix of perspectives and ensured that the community's collective voices were represented during the process.

MEETING 1: MAY 14, 2015 AT GODMAN GUILD ASSOCIATION

The primary purpose of the first meeting was to engage community leaders, business owners, service providers and residents to identify ideas for improving the local food economy. The secondary purpose of the first meeting was to map food-based assets – food access, food production and food education – including providers and locations in Clintonville and to brainstorm ideas for collective vision for improving access in the area.

During Meeting 1, participants were encouraged to consider their opinions about the importance of food during a group exercise called “Food Is...”. Participants were split into three randomly assigned groups and asked to consider one of three topics: “food is life”, “food is love” and “food is money”. Groups then shared their perspectives in support of each statement, which allowed participants to explore the many different ways we view food and consider how differing individual opinions could be incorporated to support a collective idea. This activity brought everyone’s perspective into the room and encouraged a robust exchange of stories.

The next step in the community engagement process included participant mapping of food-based assets: food access, food production and food-education providers and locations most frequented or known to meeting participants. Participants then brainstormed ideas for improving healthy food access in their community, focusing on alleviating gaps in food access, education and resources. These ideas and opportunities were further refined in Meeting 2.

Lessons learned/Observations

- Weinland Park’s proximity to downtown and other neighborhoods of higher socioeconomic status presents a challenge and opportunity; many residents access food based resources outside of the neighborhood and may not view the need for neighborhood development as an urgent concern.
- Businesses are less likely to invest in the Weinland Park area because it is viewed as less viable than other neighborhoods in the area, such as Italian Village.
- Attempts at gentrification are also a concern of residents, who are concerned they will have to move out of the neighborhood.

Significant Successes

Project Success	Factors That Supported Success
Identification of neighborhood-specific issues and challenges	Open dialogue format, discussion of unique community challenges
Identification of how current community resources and assets can be used to build a stronger food community	Working Group Conversation (individuals sharing their roles and experiences), Small group mapping exercise

MEETING 2: JUNE 29, 2015 AT GODMAN GUILD ASSOCIATION

The second meeting provided participants an opportunity to continue to explore possibilities for improving food access as well as how the group could work together to develop community specific suggestions and solutions. The top five ideas for improving food access, education, resources and opportunities (discussed at length on Page 10) were then further revised and condensed to one actionable goal the group would like to explore for improving healthy food access and education in the Weinland Park neighborhood: **Local economic empowerment initiatives that improve food access.**

Lessons learned/Observations

- Weinland Park is a pass through neighborhood for traffic and the speed at which traffic moves poses a threat to residents. Of particular concern is the speed of traffic on 4th and Summit streets.
- Campus Partners currently owns some of the anchoring intersections on 5th Street which need development; these intersections could be developed to give visitors a sense of the neighborhood and its activities.
- There are currently no churches in Weinland Park that provide pantry services (St. Sophia Orthodox Cathedral only provides meals), and the concentration of churches overall has diminished in recent years. NNEMAP (Near Northside Emergency Material Assistance Program) and Mid-Ohio Food Bank provide services in the area, but there are no physical locations.
- The neighborhood only has one grocery store, most likely due to the collective lack of money in the area and the proximity of grocery stores in surrounding neighborhoods.
- The geographic area previously planned as a “Food District” is in the process of redesign. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has designated the area as a brownfield; therefore, food production businesses and enterprises (such as gardens and markets) cannot be built on the land. There is discussion of using the land for a food processing facility, housing or some other community development; however, the timeline and scale are unclear.

Significant Successes

Project Success	Factors That Supported Success
Streamlining of top 5 visions to 1 goals	Open dialogue format, discussion of unique community challenges and best use of existing resources
Identification of how current community resources and assets can be used to build a stronger food community	Working group conversation, small group visioning exercise provided participants with an opportunity to further explore the feasibility of their ideas

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS DURING THE MEETINGS

Food is love - "Memories of holidays, shared meals and generations of family".

"Food is a human and social right".

"We need a community garden startup center where people can come and learn how to begin the process [of gardening]".

"I envision a big part of improving food security as being economic empowerment [...]".

Food is money - "food has value, and is a commodity".

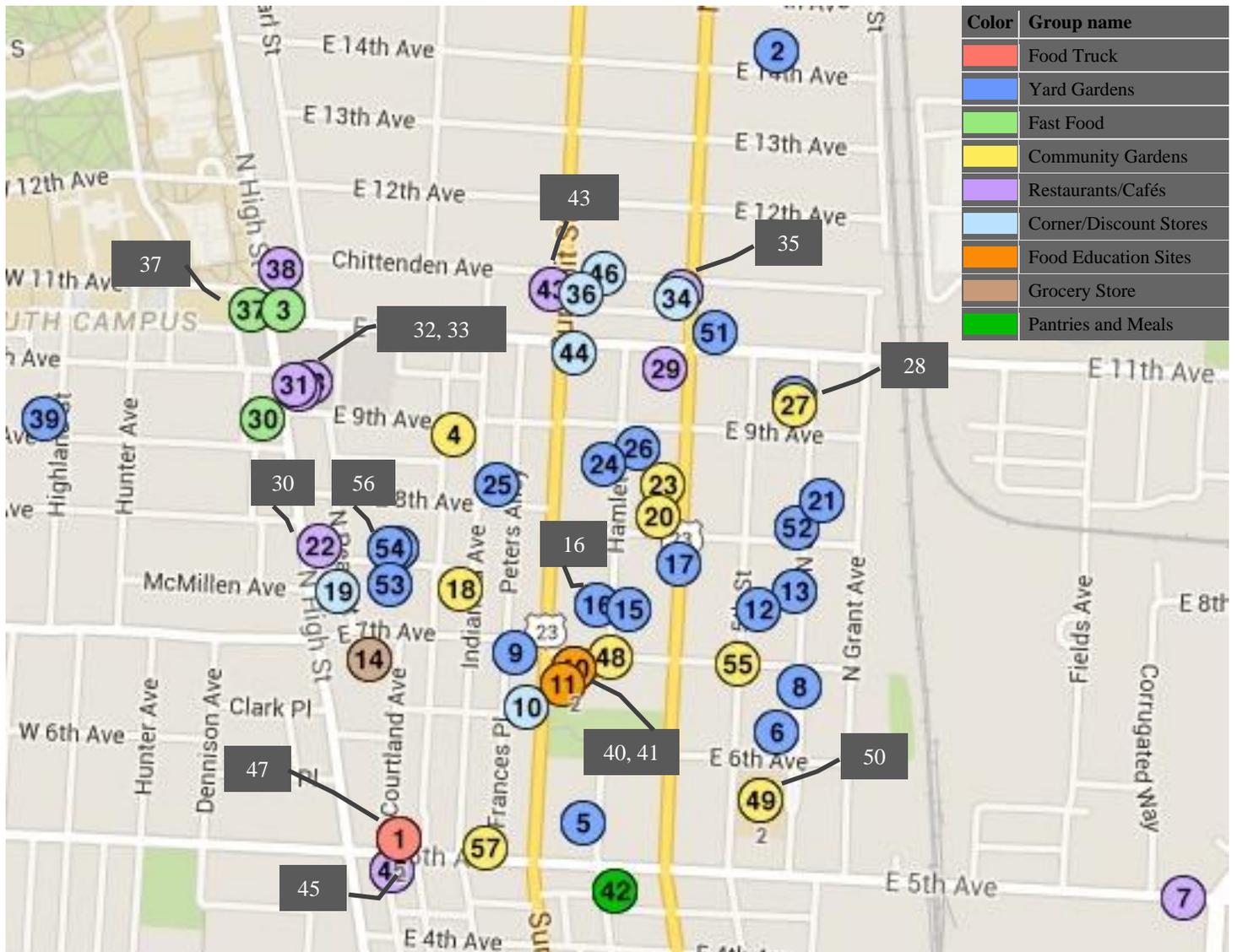
"Food is the great equalizer and has a communal aspect".

"[There is a] lack of knowledge and comfort zone using fresh food".

"We need a North Market style market near 4th and 11th".

Food is health - "we eat aimlessly, mindlessly - without understanding how food affects self".

WEINLAND PARK FOOD MAP



MAP LEGEND

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- 4. St. Sophia Orthodox Cathedral **also a pantries and meals site*
- 18. Indianola/Euclid Garden
- 20. 4th Street Farms **also a food education site*
- 23. Arawak

- 27. Bird Sanctuary Gardens
- 48. 7th Avenue Community Baptist Church
- 49. Godman Guild Association **also a food education and pantries and meals site*
- 55. Community Garden
- 57. Food Pantry Garden

CORNER/DISCOUNT STORES

- 10. Natalie's
- 19. Dollar Tree
- 34. Star Carryout

- 36. Marathon Gas
- 44. Marathon Gas and Gateway Mart
- 46. East Village Market

FAST FOOD

- 3. Potbelly's
- 30. Taco Bell

- 37. Five Guys Burgers and Fries

FOOD EDUCATION SITES

- 11. Weinland Park Elementary School
- 20. 4th Street Farms
- 40. Schoenbaum Family Center
- 41. OSU Extension Center

- 49. Godman Guild Association **also a community garden and pantries and meals site*

FOOD TRUCK

- 1. Tokyo Go Go

GROCERY STORES

- 39. Kroger

PANTRIES AND MEALS

- 4. St. Sophia Orthodox Cathedral **also a community garden*
- 43. Fruit of the Vine Food Pantry

- 49. Godman Guild Association **also a community garden and food education site*

RESTAURANTS/CAFÉS

- 7. Fonda Rosita
- 22. Hungry Howie's Pizza
- 29. Fried Food/Gyros
- 31. Mad Mex
- 32. Ugly Tuna Saloon
- 33. Gateway Film Center

- 34. Oldfield's North Fourth Tavern
- 38. Eddie George's Grille 27
- 43. Wings Xtreme
- 45. The Table
- 47. Brothers Drake Meadery & Bar
- 50. Blue Bowtie Bistro

YARD GARDENS

- 2. Yard Garden
- 5. Yard Garden
- 6. Yard Garden
- 8. Yard Garden
- 9. Yard Garden
- 12. Yard Garden
- 13. Yard Garden
- 15. Yard Garden
- 16. Yard Garden
- 17. Yard Garden
- 21. Yard Garden

- 24. Yard Garden
- 25. Yard Garden
- 26. Yard Garden
- 28. Yard Garden
- 39. Yard Garden
- 51. Yard Garden
- 52. Yard Garden
- 53. Yard Garden
- 54. Yard Garden
- 56. Yard Garden

Seven homes in the Weinland Park area were identified as places neighbors could get free meals. These sites were not included in the mapping to protect the privacy of those residents. The following nonprofit organizations are located outside of the neighborhood, but distribute food and provide emergency food assistance to Weinland Park residents:

- Lifecare Alliance
- NNEMAP
- Neighborhood Services
- Better Ways
- Mid-Ohio Food Bank

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS ON MAPPING

- The neighborhood has various points of interest for continued economic development.
 - Just south of the community border (5th Avenue) there is a lot of activity and development, which is heading toward Weinland Park. Functionally these locations are part of the neighborhood but are not officially designated as a part of the neighborhood.

- The following locations are considered to be a part of Weinland Park, but are not officially considered to be: 7th Son (a food truck is there as well), Fox In The Snow, The Market (run by the Crest Gastropub), and The Table.
 - There are potential development sites on the border between Weinland Park and Italian Village near Summit & 4th.
 - There is currently development on Grant and throughout the area (Timken site) will increase the local headcount and could lead to more development.
- Corner/Discount Stores (including traditional “Mom and Pop” stores) have decreased in the neighborhood.
 - 2 locations were recently purchased by Campus Partners.
 - The current cluster at Chittenden Avenue is interesting – could be a nexus for student activity and other neighborhood activity.
- Participants were not able to identify specific churches that provide meals or a pantry in WP except St. Sophia Orthodox Cathedral.
 - There is only one grocery store in the neighborhood, Kroger on High Street. There haven’t been any other grocery stores built in nearly 30 years. Many residents travel to the Aldi on Summit via the bus line or via a path made by cutting through a chain-link fence, across from the railroad, that borders the neighborhood.

PLACES RESIDENTS ACCESS FOOD OUTSIDE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

**Distance calculated from the meeting location – Godman Guild Association 303 East 6th Avenue Columbus, OH 43201*

GROCERY STORES

Giant Eagle 1.92 miles 777 Neil Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Lucky’s Market 2.9 miles 2770 North High Street Columbus, OH 43202

Kroger (Clintonville) 3.92 miles 3417 N. High Street, Columbus, OH 43214

Whole Foods (Upper Arlington) 4.01 miles 1555 W. Lane Avenue, Columbus, OH 43221

Kroger (Gahanna) 9.16 miles 300 S. Hamilton Road, Gahanna, OH 43230

Trader Joes (Easton) 10.02 miles 3888 Townsfair Way, Columbus, OH 43219

Kroger (Westerville) 14.84 miles 7345 State Route 3, Westerville, OH 43082

Costco 9.81 miles 3888 Stelzer Rd, Columbus, OH 43219

MARKETS

Pearl Alley Farmers’ Market 2.11 miles Pearl Street and Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215

400 Farmers and Makers Market 3.25 miles 400 W. Rich Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Clintonville Farmers’ Market 4.05 miles 3519 N High St, Columbus, OH 43214

VISIONS FOR A HEALTHIER FOOD COMMUNITY

Meetings 1 and 2 provided participants an opportunity to share ideas and develop a collective vision for improving food access, availability and education in their community. In Meeting 1, participants began the visioning process by individually preparing a list of ideas, which were then shared with the group. Of the ideas presented, several topics overlapped and revealed the key goals of the overall group. In Meeting 2, participants worked together to narrow their ideas down to three actionable goals for the future. The numbers in parentheses after each idea indicate the number of participants who shared related ideas during the group session. Sub-topics, which are featured below, represent specific, yet unique, supporting visions raised by participants. Visions appearing in **bold text** reflect the top 6 ideas based on participant responses.

Visions for Education

1. Health awareness seminars for the men to protect them from diabetes, high blood pressure and prostate cancer

2. A weekly CSA with education also provided that offers educational opportunities free of charge as an alternative to a paid subscription

Visions for Increased Access to Healthy Food

1. **More grocery stores and markets (2)**
 - a. Grocery Store near 4th and 8th
 - b. North Market style market near 4th and 11th
 - c. Partnership with Mid-Ohio Food Bank
2. **Local Co-op (2)**
 - a. “I envision a small, locally-owned fresh grocer or co-op on the east side – something driven from the inside community that can serve as a gathering place.”
3. Fresh produce distribution with discounted subscriptions available

Visions for Production/Gardening

1. **Food manufacturing facility (2)**
 - a. Plant or education facility “that would put the young men to work”
2. Community garden start up center – people can come and learn how to begin the process

Visions for Community Partnerships/Business Development

1. **Local economic empowerment initiatives (3)**
 - a. Youth run corner store educating young entrepreneurs to also provide for the neighborhood
 - b. “I envision a big part of improving food security as being economic empowerment since many businesses back out of Weinland Park since they don’t feel they are viable. Further, there are some attempts at gentrification so it’s important for the residents to have a place
 - c. Mom and pop stores on the corners of Weinland Park
2. **Local restaurant (2)**
 - a. Health food restaurant
 - b. Sit-down restaurant that can serve as a gathering place and give the community a sense of its own value
3. Fitness center that provides health resources
4. Food or Truck stands

TOP FIVE IDEAS FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY OF CHOICE

During Meeting 1, participants also explored the feasibility, affordability and popularity of the ideas presented. The top five ideas for exploration that emerged from Meeting 1 included:



FINAL PRIORITIES/GOALS FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

During Meeting 2, participants refined the top five visions list to one goal. Noting the similarities, complexities and longer timeline for achieving all five goals, the group chose to concentrate their efforts on a shorter term, actionable goal that reflected the top five ideas. The top five ideas were combined as follows:



Goal 1: Local economic empowerment initiatives that improve food access

- Establish and expand food-related businesses
 - Increase the number of food trucks
 - Establish co-ops
 - Provide resources for outreach, visibility and marketing
- Reduce barriers to small business creation
 - Provide a voucher or subsidy for new businesses
 - Provide charitable support
 - Work with ECDI (a local nonprofit organization)
 - Establish a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Weinland Park
 - Improve parking and other zoning/regulatory restrictions
- Improve the sustainability of food related businesses
 - Pop-up/temporary locations at produce and farmers' markets, and in corner stores
 - Weinland Park Elementary School and the Schoenbaum Center are other possible locations
 - Vouchers and subsidies for existing businesses

NEXT STEPS

As a result of the small group meetings, the participants expressed their desire to focus on one of the ideas presented - local economic empowerment initiatives that improve food access. Future exploration of these ideas will be continued by community members, who will lead the efforts to bring the plans brought forth in the community meetings to fruition with

continued engagement of food access working group members and other interested stakeholders.

The City of Columbus, Franklin County Commissioners and Local Matters will use the information contained in this report for continued engagement of participants in the development and implementation of local strategies that represent the meeting participants' collective vision for improving access that also meets the specific needs of the Weinland Park neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. The information and planning gained in the Weinland Park neighborhood will be combined with that of the Near East Side, Near South Side, West Side, Northland, Clintonville and Linden reports to help inform a Columbus-Franklin County Local Food Action Plan (expected completion Fall 2016). Additional information and updates will be provided online at www.local-matters.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION: CASE STUDIES AND TEMPLATES

GROWING HOME

<http://growinghomeinc.org/>

Mission and Vision: We have a vision of a world of healthy people and communities. Everyone deserves to have a good job, and everyone deserves to eat well.

That's why we've been helping people find meaningful careers through skills learned while farming since 2002. Growing Home is Chicago's leading expert in farm-based training for people with employment barriers.

LAND, CO-OPS, COMPOST: A LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY EMERGES

A Local Food Economy Emerges in Boston's Poorest Neighborhoods –

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/commonomics/boston-s-emerging-food-economy>

From kitchens that buy and sell locally grown food, to a waste co-op that will return compost to the land, new enterprises are building an integrated food network. It's about local people keeping the wealth of their land at home.

PROJECT PLANNING TOOL

Example - West Side (Franklinton & Hilltop)

<p>Vision</p> <p>We are a strongly connected and informed network of residents, organizations, places of worship, and businesses, strengthening access to healthy food and food education in Columbus' Westside Neighborhoods.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1st Project Goal</p> <p><i>Create safe and pleasant community gathering spaces around healthy food production, access and education.</i></p>
<p>Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explore bringing a large-scale community grocer, co-op, or food hub with opportunities for education and business incubation to Franklinton and Hilltop. <p>Task 2 - Develop a healthy food communication network for the West Side, which includes information and resources about healthy food access, education, and production.</p> <p>Planning your Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-
<p style="text-align: center;">Planning your Project</p>
<p><i>Identify the problem: What gap or barrier are you trying to address?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Problem- Barriers
<p><i>List some reasons that you think this problem might exist.</i></p>
<p><i>What approach will you take to solving or mitigating this problem?</i></p>
<p><i>Project Goal:</i></p> <p>Secondary goal:</p>

Project Strategy:

Desired outcome(s):

Key Players:

Projected timeline:

Resources needed:

How will you know if this project has been successful?