

Gainesville Local Food System

KEY PROJECT UPDATES & DISCUSSION

Item# 180257
Karissa Raskin – Civic Collaboration Supervisor
Dept. of Strategy, Planning and Innovation

Agenda

1. Updates on projects at / near completion:

- ▶ Edible Groves
- ▶ Community Garden Program
- ▶ Mobile Farm Stand Policy
- ▶ Urban Agriculture Ordinance

2. Updates on Joint City/County Local Food System Policy Board Projects:

- ▶ Healthy Corner Store Initiative
- ▶ Good Food Purchasing Program
- ▶ Food Shed Map
- ▶ Community Grocery Store

3. Discussion on Prospective Projects:

- ▶ Wasted Food Recovery Initiative
- ▶ Community Grocery Store

Project Update:

Edible Groves: Highlights

- ▶ 34 fruit/nut trees planted at Fred Cone Park (completed March 2021)
- ▶ 70 fruit/nut trees planted at Smokey Bear Park (completed March 2021)
- ▶ 71 fruit/nut trees planted at Bountiful Blvd location (SW 40th Blvd) (completed Dec 2021)*
- ▶ Signage is installed; Website is launched and updated
- ▶ Keep Alachua County Beautiful volunteers partnering to help with upkeep of the groves
- ▶ Tree Mitigation Fund and WSPF Funded this project
- ▶ *53 shade trees were also installed at Bountiful Blvd location



City of Gainesville
**Fred Cone Park
Edible Grove**

What is an Edible Grove?

This City of Gainesville's Edible Grove, is a food-filled treasure trove.

Where all neighbors are welcome to pick and eat, From native plants with fruits so sweet.

You may find some nuts... more than a few, Leave some for the squirrels, they're our neighbors too.

Everything in this space has a role to play, To keep the grove thriving day to day.

From the smallest flowers and buzzing bees, To the earthworms below the persimmon trees.

A harmonious space with fruit to bear, Nourishing the community, we love and share.

Helpful information for visitors:

- The Edible Groves project is one way to improve food access for all Gainesville neighbors.
- We invite everyone to enjoy the foods we are growing. Please do not take more than your fair share.
- Species name tags are attached to each plant.
- Items grown in the City's Edible Groves shall not be sold in any form.
- This project is funded by Tree Mitigation Funds and Wild Spaces & Public Places.

Grow your knowledge

Learn more about the species we are growing, how to tell if the fruit is ripe, what is in season and more by visiting <https://gofair.com/GNY-ediblegrove> or scanning the QR code with your smartphone camera.

Project Update:

City's Community Garden Program

- ▶ Site Coordinator and Garden Member Agreement documents have been updated by PRCA staff with the assistance of neighbors currently serving as site coordinators.
 - ▶ In Spring 2021 meetings were held with current site coordinators to review, discuss and refine proposed updates to the program.
 - ▶ The goal of this update is to enhance the experience of participants and improve communication channels with the City for support.
- ▶ Key Updates:
 - ▶ PRCA staff to provide additional weed management assistance during off-growing seasons
 - ▶ Permission to install drip irrigation
 - ▶ Mechanisms to increase communication between Site Coordinators and City staff regarding status of gardens
 - ▶ Increased coordination and management of waitlists across all gardens to ensure active use of gardens and equity in allocating plots to neighbors.
 - ▶ Implementation of changes anticipated for Spring 2022



Thelma Boltin Garden

Project Update:

City's Community Garden Program

Garden	Location
5th Avenue Community Garden	1007 NW 5th Ave, Gainesville, FL
Clarence R Kelly Community Garden	1701 NE 8th Ave, Gainesville, FL
Dreamers Community Garden	400 NW 10th Ave, Gainesville, FL
Duval Community Garden	520 NE 21st Street, Gainesville, FL
Fred Cone Park Community Garden	2841 E University Ave, Gainesville, FL
Green Acres Park Community Garden	643 SW 40th St, Gainesville, FL

Garden	Location
McRorie Community Garden	615 SE 4th Ave, Gainesville, FL
Possum Creek Community Garden	4009 NW 53rd Ave, Gainesville, FL
Reserve Park Community Garden	1125 NE 8th Ave, Gainesville, FL
Southwest Community Garden	2947 SW 40th Place, Gainesville, FL
Thelma Boltin Center Community Garden	516 NE 2nd Ave, Gainesville, FL
Unity Park Community Garden	1760 NE 31st Ave, Gainesville, FL

Project Update:

City's Community Garden Program



Fred Cone Park



Dreamers Garden



Green Acres Park



McRorie Garden



Thelma Boltin Garden

Project Update:

Mobile Farm Stand Policy

7

- ▶ City Commissioners requested staff to identify any barriers within Zoning / Planning policy related to operation of mobile farm stands / mobile farmers markets in City limits
- ▶ This item was reviewed by staff in the Department of of Sustainable Development as well as Public Works. The following was determined:
- ▶ Food Truck Ordinance permits mobile farm stand / mobile farmers market operations on all private and public properties
- ▶ Operations are also permitted in Right-of-Ways as long as
 - ▶ The vehicles are parked in a legal location where on-street parking is permitted,
 - ▶ The vehicle is street legal, and
 - ▶ The Operations do not impede the flow of traffic in the roadway or on sidewalks.

Project Update:

Urban Agriculture Ordinance

8

- ▶ May 20, 2020 the City Commission voted to approve a text change to the City's Land Development Code to allow agricultural uses within certain zoning districts of the City and applicable use standards.
- ▶ City Attorney's Office and staff from the Department of Sustainable Development and Strategic Initiatives have worked to updated the language of the ordinance to conform to official policy language.
- ▶ Public hearings are expected to be held on this item in early 2022. If approved through two public hearing the ordinance will go into effect.

Project Updates:

Joint City / County Local Food System Policy Board

- ▶ June 4, 2021 the City entered into an Interlocal Agreement with Alachua county to establish a Joint City / County Local Food System Policy Board to address specific projects related to our local food system.
- ▶ November 4, 2021 the an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement was approved to expand the seats on the board to include community representation and subject matter experts within the local food system
- ▶ Monthly meetings have occurred since August 2021 to discuss a specific list of projects, including:
 - ▶ Healthy Corner Stores Initiative
 - ▶ Good Food Purchasing Program
 - ▶ Food Shed Map
 - ▶ Community Grocery Store

Project Updates:

Joint City / County Local Food System Policy Board Projects

► **Healthy Corner Stores Initiative** - -

County staff are developing a project plan for engaging owners of local corner stores to design an initiative that brings healthier food options into corner stores in Gainesville / Alachua County in a way that benefits the stores and the community at large. The County is lead on this initiative. They have hired a local consultant – Leah Cohen, Ex. Director of the Agricultural Justice Project – to assist with this project.

Healthy Corner Stores Initiative

Timeline

- **November-January**
 - Visit other communities to recruit/identify corner stores
- **February**
 - Onboard Consultant, Background research and data
- **March**
 - Present draft plan for working group to Joint Board (March 9th) - get feedback/approval
 - Present revised plan for working group to Commissions
- **March-July**
 - Five (5) meetings with Collaborative Group
- **August**
 - Final Report to Joint Food Policy Council
- **September**
 - IMPLEMENT PILOT WITH GROCERY STORES

Project Updates:

Joint City / County Local Food System Policy Board Projects

- ▶ **Good Food Purchasing Program** - - City will enter into this program under the agreement between Alachua County's Sheriff's Office and GFPP. No funds from the City are required for participation. The County is lead on this initiative.
- ▶ **Food Shed Map** - - County staff have leveraged data shared by City staff and others to work with UF GEO Plan and Growth Management Dept. at the County to establish a software framework to map resources related to local food systems (i.e. farms, food pantries, retailers, etc.) The County is lead on this initiative. Currently working to make the map interactive so the public can have access to the information and update it as needed.
- ▶ **Community Grocery Store Initiative** - - This initiative was put on pause due to the unsolicited proposal for a grocery store brought to the City in 2021. No further direction has been provided to staff regarding whether to resume work on a community grocery store project. Interest by the Joint Board to stay engaged if this project should move forward at the will of the City Commission.

Wasted Food Recovery Initiative

▶ **Recap from presentation of Food Waste Ordinance on 2/3**

- ▶ Food Waste Ordinance is incorporated as a component of proposed Solid Waste Ordinance
- ▶ Draft policy was created under direction of the City's Zero Waste Subcommittee
- ▶ If passed, Food Waste Ordinance is set to roll out in June 2023 (grocery stores) and June 2024 (restaurants and other food-generating businesses) that will require these businesses to follow EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy to divert food from waste stream

▶ **Research conducted by Dept. Of Strategy, Planning and Innovation**

- ▶ SPI staff led two different surveys:
 - ▶ “Food Donation Recipient” survey - - to identify needs, challenges, and goals of nonprofits that receive food donations as related to food waste recovery
 - ▶ “Food Generating Business” survey - - to identify needs, challenges and goals of businesses that generate food waste (this was a collaborative effort with Public Works staff and many community partners including the Repurpose Project and Zero Waste Gainesville)
- ▶ Please see additional back up items for the survey instruments used, and more detailed summary of the data collected

Wasted Food Recovery Initiative:

First a big THANK YOU to our partners and volunteers!



Food Donation Recipient Survey Data

17 organizations completed the survey

- ▶ 8 have Food Pantries (6 offer perishable food)
- ▶ 7 host Food Distribution Events (6 offer perishable food)
- ▶ 5 provide Home Deliveries (4 offer perishable food)
- ▶ 6 serve Prepared Community Meals
- ▶ Most groups would like to increase clients served and/or amount of food offered
- ▶ Most rely on external volunteers for transportation

Barriers to increasing services include

- ▶ **Storage space**
- ▶ **Refrigeration**
- ▶ **More food donations**
- ▶ **Human Resources (Volunteers and Staff)**
- ▶ **Transportation**

Highlights on Bread of the Mighty Food Bank

▶ **Main Warehouse Donations**

- ▶ Receives donations 3-5x weekly from grocery stores in Gainesville and surrounding areas
- ▶ Occasional pickups from local restaurants when they have full, unopened refrigerated or frozen product in cases
- ▶ Able and interested in receiving more food donations

▶ **Gainesville Harvest Program**

- ▶ Food recovery direct from businesses to nonprofits
- ▶ Foods that are less shelf-stable and in smaller quantities (i.e. breads and bakery items)

▶ **Food Bank does not handle any prepared food**

Wasted Food Recovery Initiative:

Food Generating Business Survey Data

- ▶ 25 businesses completed the survey
(One grocery store included)
- ▶ 15 businesses – ordinance would NOT apply
(generate less than 1 cu/yard per week)
- ▶ 10 businesses – ordinance would apply
(generate more than 1 cu/yard per week)
 - ▶ 4 donate food for human consumption
(all donate prepared food)
 - ▶ 1 donates for animal feed
 - ▶ 2 compost food scraps

Top barriers to donating edible food:

- ▶ Storage / refrigeration
- ▶ Coordination of logistics (transportation, partnerships with recipient organizations)

Top barrier to composting:

- ▶ External party to pick-up food scraps from business

Additional Resources needed:

- ▶ Assistance repackaging leftover food into smaller portions
- ▶ Education around food safety for food donations
- ▶ Packaging materials for excess food
- ▶ Evidence that collecting food scraps for compost will not attract vermin
- ▶ Education on importance of composting and how to do it on-site
- ▶ Information on community composters

Wasted Food Recovery Initiative

- ▶ For consideration to coincide with policy implementation:
 - ▶ **1. Provide no programming or other support**
 - ▶ **2. Fund educational campaign to businesses**
 - ▶ Campaign may include: education on source reduction, best practices for food waste recovery (including food safety); composting, Good Samaritan Act, etc.
 - ▶ Option A: City staff develop and implement
 - ▶ Option B: RFP/RFQ for vendor to develop and implement
 - ▶ **3. Research & fund implementation of programs to mitigate identified barriers**
 - ▶ Incentive for refrigerators
 - ▶ Transportation for pick-up/drop-off of prepared foods
 - ▶ Pilot program for a shared facility to assist with prepared food donations
 - ▶ Partnership to support Bread of the Mighty Food Bank with current facility capacity issues

Prospective Projects:

Grocery Store

- ▶ Per 1/6/2022 decision by the City Commission, the grocery store project brought to the City via an unsolicited proposal is not moving forward
- ▶ Other models for community-driven grocery stores have been presented to the City Commission previously by the Policy Oversight Committee staff
- ▶ **Staff Recommendation:** Wait for policy on Unsolicited Proposals to be heard and approved by the City Commission. Then entertain new unsolicited proposals for a grocery store, should vendors choose to submit such proposals autonomously
- ▶ Other:
 - ▶ Leverage data collected by community partners to inform an RFQ for a community grocery store in East Gainesville
 - ▶ Conduct a new community engagement process to identify needs and visions neighbors have for an East Gainesville grocery store, followed by an RFQ