



Community Action Plan for Anchorage, Alaska

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

October 2018



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>

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COMMUNITY STORY

The Municipality of Anchorage, or Dena'ina in the Athabaskan language, is situated in the south-central portion of Alaska, at the terminus of the Cook Inlet. In the early 1900s, soon after Alaska became a United States territory, the city grew up around the headquarters of the Alaskan Engineering Commission, the federal agency created to construct the Alaskan railway system.

The economy of the city centered on the railroad until air transportation took hold in the 1940s and 1950s. The city became an important hub for air traffic and a military base for the Air Force. To this day, Anchorage remains a critical center of international commerce thanks to an advantageous geographical location that places it less than 10 hours from 90 percent of the industrialized world.

The 1960s in Anchorage were marked by two key events. The first happened on March 27, 1964, when a magnitude 9.2 earthquake hit the city, the second most powerful recorded in world history. Known as the Good Friday Earthquake, it devastated the natural and built environments and killed 139 people between its direct impact and resulting tsunamis. The second event happened four years later. While the city and surrounding areas were still rebuilding and recovering, oil was discovered on Prudhoe Bay on the Alaska North Slope. This set off an oil boom and economic shift that has endured to present day.

Today, Anchorage is home to almost 300,000 people or about 40 percent of the state's population. It is one of the most ethno-racially diverse cities in the United States as three of the most diverse census tracts in America lay within its boundaries. Anchorage is home to the top 26 most diverse public schools (100 languages spoken) and ranks in the top 15th percentile for diversity in the nation. Unfortunately, some of the most diverse neighborhoods struggle with poverty. For the municipality, median household income is ~\$73,000, while in a neighborhood like Mountain View, known as a landing community for recent immigrants, it is just ~\$38,000. Data pertaining to the homeless population are incomplete, but it is estimated that 20 percent are minors,



Figure 1 – A street in downtown Anchorage features colorful wildlife art. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 2 – In summer, Anchorage's Town Square Park is ablaze with flowers and plants. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures

60 percent identify as Alaska Native, and 60 percent identify economic and situational concerns as the primary reason for homelessness.¹

Besides homelessness, community challenges include competing development interests, violent and petty crime, and limited funding for social services. Average rates of food insecurity and overweight/obesity in Anchorage and the state mirror those of the nation, however, there are unique challenges in these statistics. Alaska imports 95 percent of its food (without similar rates of export) and ranks last in agricultural production (despite exceptional potential); and access to traditional Native subsistence foods is limited in the urban environment.

Numerous organizations and partners work with one another and the municipality to address these and other pressing issues on a daily basis. One of these groups is the Alaska Food Policy Council. Led by Liz Hodges Snyder, Co-Chair of the Alaska Food Policy Council, and colleagues, a group of stakeholders from the University of Alaska, the Mayor's office, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and Heritage Land Bank are rallying around the prospect of revitalizing downtown Anchorage and adjacent neighborhood with food system-based economic and social development.

Their strategy is a highly-visible working urban farm that serves as a site for food production, a job training center for the homeless and transitioning populations, a sustainable farming innovation and demonstration hub, and a community center that engages the wider Anchorage community around local food production. They believe urban agriculture is an ideal mode of local food production, job skill development, and neighborhood revitalization in Anchorage for several reasons: the persistence of food insecurity and high rates of import; the urban population concentration (for both those with and without permanent shelter); the "graying" of the farming community; the resultant

¹ Anchorage Local Foods, Local Places Application

Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

- **Elizabeth Hodges Snyder**, Co Chair, Alaska Food Policy Council (primary local point of contact)
- **Danny Conenstein**, Board Member, Alaska Food Policy Council
- **Rachael Miller**, Board Member, Alaska Food Policy Council
- **Micah Hahn**, Assistant Professor of Environmental Health, University of Alaska Anchorage
- **Katie Dougherty**, Communications Specialist, Mayor's Office
- **Joy Britt**, Senior Program Manager, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- **Jim Renkert**, Member, 3rd Avenue Radicals
- **Nicole Jones Vogel**, Land Management Officer, Heritage Land Bank

Figure 3 – Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee Members



Figure 4 – Location of the 15-acre site on 3rd Avenue, in north downtown Anchorage. Map credit: Google Earth

opportunities for the development of associated small businesses and education; the diversity of hard and soft skills in farming and their application beyond food production; and the aesthetics of sustainable agriculture techniques. On a larger scale, their hope is to support a broader, vibrant community interested in experimenting with high-density, closed-loop, sustainable food production that is designed specifically for the region's short growing season and cold climate.

To move forward this ambitious vision, the Alaska Food Policy Council requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program in 2017. The council's application highlighted the potential of the urban farm on 3rd Avenue to blend food access, education, and production at an important redevelopment site for the community. This initiative resonated closely with the goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program, which are to create:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- Revitalized downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods.

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Delta Regional Authority. Anchorage was one of 16 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2018, from more than 80 applicants.

ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 6 below. The plan phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the steering committee and technical assistance team to clarify goals and arrange workshop logistics. The convene phase includes the effort's capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The act phase includes three follow up conference calls to finalize a community

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- **Michelle Madeley**, Presidential Management Fellow, EPA Office of Community Revitalization
- **Vicky Salazar**, Senior Sustainability Policy Advisor, EPA Region 10
- **Running Grass**, Environmental Protection Specialist, EPA Region 10
- **Mary Goolie**, Brownfields Project Manager, EPA Region 10
- **Tami Fordham**, Deputy Director, EPA Region 10
- **Samantha Schaffstall**, Management & Program Analyst, USDA Agricultural Marketing Services
- **Tim O'Connell**, West Regional CED Coordinator, USDA Rural Development
- **Renee Johnson**, Director, Business Programs, USDA Rural Development
- **David Guthrie**, Public Health Analyst, CDC
- **Holly Fowler**, Co founder & CEO, Northbound Ventures (technical assistance consultant)
- **Jason Espie**, Principal Planner, EPR PC (technical assistance consultant)

Figure 5 – The Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team consists of federal agency representatives and consultants.

action plan and strategize on how to maintain momentum generated during the workshop. The community workshop was held over a two-day period from August 8-9, 2018 and the activities those days are described below. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**, a workshop photo album is provided in **Appendix C**, a data profile in **Appendix D**, funding resources in **Appendix E**, and general references in **Appendix F**.



Figure 6 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

COMMUNITY TOUR

In advance of the first community session on August 8th, the local Steering Committee conducted a driving and walking tour of community projects, gardens, assets, ending at the 3rd Avenue site. Visiting federal partners and the technical assistance team joined the tour.

The first destination on the tour was Government Hill, an old neighborhood with historic houses, where Government Hill Commons has transformed a two-acre overgrown lot into a multi-use gathering space and urban orchard for the community. Through the coordination and generous efforts of local residents, project sponsors, grant-makers, and volunteers, the Government Hill Commons now features rows of fruit trees, raised beds, reclaimed group seating that once graced the Anchorage downtown transit center, and a Quonset hut that serves as a workshop and storage



Figure 7 – Liz Hodges Snyder of the Alaska Food Policy Council provides the history of Government Hill Commons on the Local Foods, Local Places community tour. Photo credit: EPR

shed for gardeners. In early August, several different varieties of cherries, apples, and pears were dangling from trees. In September, the site can be the center of programming for young students at the nearby Government Hill Elementary School. Art work and vintage equipment dot the space, inviting visitors to explore, sit, listen, reflect, taste, and experience the neighborhood. Now established as a nonprofit organization, the visionaries behind Government Hill Commons plan to continue to cultivate what is growing on the site and expand the program and service offerings to make it a destination to be enjoyed by all at all times of the day, whether for a coffee in the morning or a family film on a Friday night. The local steering committee noted that much of their inspiration and vision for the downtown urban farm came from an early field trip to Government Hill Commons.



Figure 8 – Mr. Young, a community gardener at C Street Gardens, shares his experiences of growing food alongside neighbors. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures

From Government Hill, the group proceeded to the C Street Gardens, where the motto is, “Where we are growing community.” In existence for at least 15 years, gardeners can rent one or two of the 67 available 10-foot x 20-foot raised beds for \$25 each between April and September. There is a waitlist, and neglected plots are reallocated to other growers. The city of Anchorage’s Department of Parks and Recreation manages the community garden officially, but those who use the garden also help to look after plots for their neighbors. A 10-foot-high moose fence encloses the garden and helps to protect the raspberries, squash, cabbage, chives, kale, snap peas, edible flowers, and more from wildlife. Members of the local steering committee pointed out that there are homeless encampments in the woods adjacent to the C Street Gardens. There is also the abundant and invasive species, *prunus padus*, or Mayday Tree, a flowering plant that shades streams and threatens Alaska’s salmon population.

The next stop on the community tour took the group to Alaska Seeds of Change, a program of Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, Inc. that engages at-

Community Tour

The community tour of Anchorage included the following highlights:

- Urban orchard and community gathering space at Government Hill Commons
- Year round hydroponic growing by the Alaska Seeds of Change program
- Bountiful community gardens at C Street Gardens
- The welcome environment of the Gardens at Bragaw
- The lifeline that is the Bean’s Café and Brother Francis Parish adjacent to the Urban Farm Project on 3rd Avenue
- The proposed site of the Alaska Food Policy Council’s Anchorage Urban Farm Project on 3rd Avenue

Figure 9 – Key takeaways from the community tour and observations on the key community issues partners are working to address.



Figure 10 – A spectacular entrance awaits community gardeners and visitors at the Gardens at Bragaw in Anchorage’s Mountain View neighborhood. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 11 – A view from the northwest corner of the 3rd Avenue Anchorage Urban Farm Project site. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures

risk youth ages 16 to 24 in growing food hydroponically. Currently, the program focuses predominantly on greens and herbs, developing its expertise in year-round, indoor growing. Alaska Seeds of Change shares its space with Arctic Harvest, a small-scale aggregator for approximately 12 local farms. It operates a mini-food hub and community supported agriculture (CSA) that services about 30 restaurants in the area.

The group next visited the Gardens at Bragaw in the Mountain View neighborhood of Anchorage. Since 2010, this garden has evolved with different partners, first the Anchorage Community Land Trust and then the Municipality of Anchorage, and it has blossomed into a beautiful and inviting community asset. The gardens are a tangible representation of revitalization of one of the city’s lowest-income and most diverse neighborhoods. The garden is decorated with vibrant signs, many created by local students and artists, that brighten the whole area and welcome everyone. The garden supports the refugee resettlement process and connects the community in important ways. Its success has inspired the development of another urban farm and farmers market nearby.

The final destination of the tour was back downtown to 3rd Avenue, between Inga and Eagle Streets, which is the proposed location of the Anchorage Urban Farm Project.

Formerly federal land and the site of the Alaska Native Medical Hospital, the 15-acre lot has been vacant since the 1990s. The Heritage Land Bank manages the property on behalf of the municipality and is overseeing a strategic stakeholder engagement process that the Local Foods, Local Places workshop was timed to inform. The Alaska Department of Transportation owns a right of way to the property, which could pose complications for long term use, but hopeful parties, like the Alaska Food Policy Council, are pushing ahead to redevelop and reactivate the site.

While the property is technically in the Downtown District, the adjacent districts of Fairview, Mountain View, and South Addition have a high concentration of makeshift homeless camps, agency food pantries, meal centers, and shelters for the homeless and at-risk youth. Only about half of the property is level land, with the remainder sloping off to the three sides not bordered by 3rd Avenue. The property’s reputation suffers from misunderstanding about potential contamination. The lot was labeled a LUST site (“leaking underground storage tank”) in 1992 by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, but according to their site report, it was cleaned up in 1993. The underground storage tank was characterized in 1997, before the demolition of the medical center, and the closure was approved. There is a contaminated site across the street

at the location of a former dry cleaners. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation performed a characterization of the site in 2010 and found that tetrachloroethylene (PERC) exceeded safe levels in the groundwater and soil and was present in nearby residences from vapor intrusion. The characterization also found a groundwater plume moving into the former medical center site which exceeded EPA maximum contaminant levels. It is anticipated that the Municipality will be identifying the former dry cleaning site as a top priority for EPA brownfield contamination cleanup funding. The potential contamination issues are viewed as an opportunity to seek funds for land remediation, to educate citizens about the need to do site assessments before growing food on previously used land and how to adjust growing methods to suit environmental realities, and to experiment with novel bioremediation techniques.²

Appendix C has many more photos and additional details of the community tour.

VISION AND VALUES – DAY ONE

More than twenty residents and community stakeholders attended the first public session of the workshop on the evening of August 8th. Elizabeth Hodges, Co-Chair of the Alaska Food Policy Council and local point of contact, welcomed attendees and spoke about the history of the project and the steering committee’s objective in bringing the community together for this event. She focused on the opportunity to use urban

This I believe about my community...

...We’re engaged; culturally diverse; resilient; empowered; innovative; have so much opportunity; are very interconnected; healthy food conscious; connected to the land; able to create better places for all people; optimistic; stubborn enough to stay here; changing and transforming; forward thinking; creative; passionate; honest; made up of many good people; a story telling bunch; resourceful

Figure 12 – One of the exercises used to capture the community’s vision and values is called *This I Believe*. Participants were asked to complete the statement “This I believe about my community...” Above are some of the words that came from this exercise that reflect the positive aspects that framed the workshops action planning sessions on day two.

This I believe about local food...

...It tastes better; builds community; builds cooperation and trust; creates jobs; makes us stronger; connects us; can be leveraged for revitalization. It is everywhere; nutritious; easy to grow; diverse; healthier; in high demand; expensive; good for bringing families together; not accessible for low income individuals. We need more. With more education we can all do it. Not everyone knows about its benefits.

Figure 13 – The second visioning exercise was to complete the statement, “This I believe about local foods...” A sampling of responses is above.

² Anchorage Local Foods, Local Places Application

farming as an economic, social, and environmental gamechanger for Anchorage. Mayor Ethan Berkowitz was also present and shared his enthusiasm for the project and his appreciation for the role of food to nourish and support the community.

After initial remarks, the technical assistance team introduced the Local Foods, Local Places program with a short presentation. The team highlighted the elements and benefits of a local food system, as well as the importance of incorporating equity as a measure of the system's success. Additionally, the team shared demographic and regional data that provided baseline measurements of health and wealth. More publicly available data about Anchorage can be found in **Appendix D**.

The primary purpose of the community meeting was to hear from residents and other stakeholders about their hopes for the future of the downtown urban farm and Anchorage in general. The technical assistance team led attendees through an exercise called "This I believe..." designed to bring up core values of the community.

The technical team also asked workshop participants to write aspirational headlines for 5-10 years into the future to capture what they anticipate happening, what made it possible, and the potential impact for Anchorage. These are captured in Figure 14 at right.

The last group exercise was a plenary discussion to discuss what is working well in Anchorage and what ideas from other places might be successfully implemented at the 3rd Street location. Not surprisingly, some of what workshop participants identified would appear in the following day's design exercise described later in the report and presented in **Appendix A**.

Finally, Day 1 concluded with a review of the community's identified goals, which are described here:

- Goal 1: Further the community's mission and vision of the project by generating specific site planning, physical and design concepts to share in future community meetings for evaluation.

Headlines from the Future

- Alaska supplies mega veggies to seafood and wildfire stricken California
- Farming is the new oil as Anchorage invents the new farming typology that leads to a huge jobs boom.
- NYC chefs discover Alaskan carrots are sweet enough for dessert.
- Mixed use site open! Previously vacant land has been developed to house a variety of people and support local farming.
- Anchorage Demonstration Orchard opens on the site of the old Alaska Native Hospital and is open to the public, provides food to local food banks, and is a source of education on growing.
- Anchorage meets 2030 Food Security Goals in three years, and the urban farm site leads community adoption and training that made this possible.
- Anchorage is a globally recognized northern food space that demonstrates ingenuity of food.
- Anchorage downtown farm graduates food systems leaders cohort
- Aquaponics has grown roots into international markets to produce for underserved families.
- Dqheyay Kag Heights (aka Third Avenue site) has a clear vision, a strong Board of Directors, excellent and well paid staff with high morale, public and private funding, pick your own options; it is profitable and has reliable workers and numerous educational programs.

Figure 14 – A second visioning exercise asked participants to create a headline from the future and describe what happened, the impact, and what made it possible. Some headlines are above, and the full stories are in Appendix A.

- Goal 2: Foster communities founded on a shared appreciation of healthy food through communicating and generating enthusiasm for the benefits of urban food production in terms of community engagement, beautification, health, activity, and education.
- Goal 3: Use project programming to increase community capacity and collaboration through new and strengthened partnerships and empower champions to realize the success, vision, and mission of the project.

ACTION PLANNING – DAY TWO

Case Studies

The second day of the workshop began with examples of strategies used by other communities to advance their food system and place-making initiatives. Urban farming and farm incubator examples highlighted mobile strategies for growing food and grazing animals. Other case studies focused on food processing infrastructure and strategies for capturing the Alaskan harvest that happens in a very intense growing season in great volume. One example given was the Western Massachusetts Processing Center individual quick freeze (IQF) experience from Greenfield, Massachusetts. Around each of these case studies there were plenary discussions about lessons learned and takeaways for what Anchorage hopes to accomplish.

Design Exercise

Next on Day 2, workshop participants engaged in a group design exercise to brainstorm key programmatic and physical design elements of the Third Avenue Downtown Urban Farm. This exercise was undertaken with the understanding that the Heritage Land Bank is conducting a master planning process for the full 15-acre site, that the urban farm elements are going to be just one feature of a future multi-use place, and that the site's development will occur in phases over time. The activity asked first for people to brainstorm a list of possible uses, functions, features, or desired elements, and if they had questions that came up, to write those down too. Next they were asked to roughly sketch out on a schematic sheet of paper where some of these features might exist on the site. There were three groups, each of which generated robust



Figure 15 – Workshop participants sketch their hopes and dream for how to program and activate the 3rd Avenue space in the future.



Figure 16 – Participants at the Anchorage Local Foods, Local Places workshop vote on priority actions for the community's action plan.

concepts the site might host. Their brainstorming ideas are captured in **Appendix A** along with an image of each map.

ACTION PLAN

Mission and Vision

The goals developed for the workshop were designed primarily to further the work of a series of preceding meetings and efforts to create a downtown urban farm at the 3rd Avenue site. The early concepts for the urban farm began when Assembly Member Christopher Constant for District 1 – Downtown Anchorage approached the Alaska Food Policy Council to start conversations about an urban farm at the 3rd Avenue site. A timeline of prior planning events and actors is provided in Figure 4 and the vision and mission that the downtown farm working group drafted is below.

Vision

To advance urban agriculture in the circumpolar north as a model for resilience tied to social, economic, and human development.

Mission

To increase the availability and accessibility of local foods; promote economic and educational opportunities and empower the necessary workforce; develop strategic institutional partnerships; contribute to urban revitalization; and foster communities founded on a shared appreciation of healthy food.

The four workshop goals were specifically drafted with this vision and mission in mind and were designed to help the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) and partners think through different elements of the process, next steps, and specific actions to take.

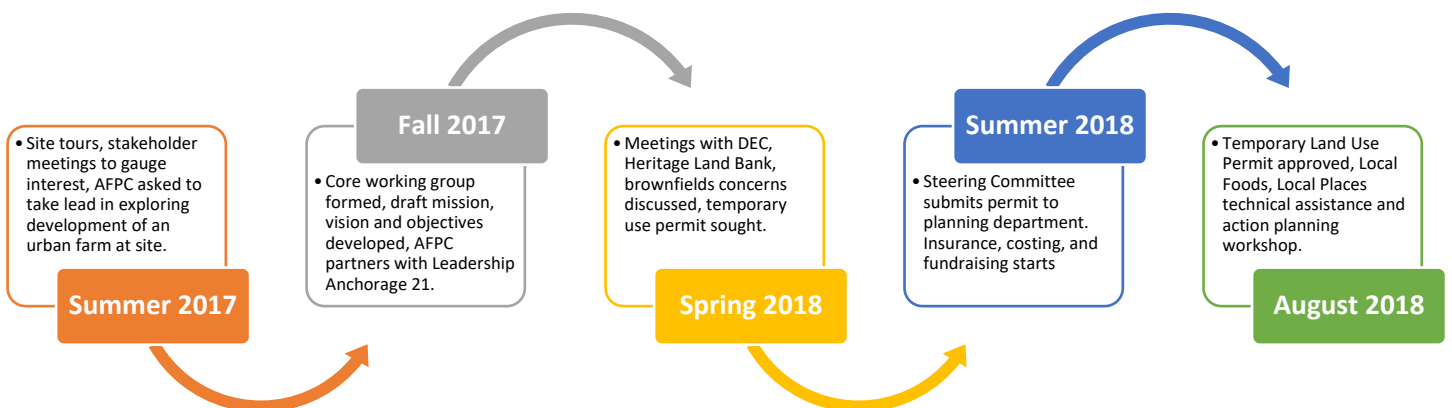


Figure 17 – Timeline of the Anchorage Urban Farm Project

Action Plan Process

The action planning process during the workshop consisted of a few phases of work. First was a brainstorming session, where participants were asked to write down on post-it notes an action for one or more goals. These post-it notes were then placed on posters with goal statements. As they were placed, the duplicate actions, or similar ones were clustered and/or merged. The next phase included a dot voting exercise where participants were given a set number of dots to place next to specific actions, or clusters of actions, to indicate which ones either were most important or needed immediate attention. The final phase included small working groups that assessed the prioritization voting and chose 2-5 actions for the action plan. The goals and supporting actions are listed below. The tables that follow provide additional detail for each action.

Goal 1: Further the community's mission and vision of the project by generating specific site planning, physical and design concepts to share in future community meetings for evaluation.

- Action 1.1 – Conduct an environmental assessment of the site.
- Action 1.2 – Plan and install 6-8 raised beds on the site, followed by a community event for planting day and sign unveiling.
- Action 1.3 – Develop a concept plan to (1) summarize the importance and details of the desired urban farm elements for the Heritage Land Bank Master Plan and (2) clearly communicate needs and wishes.
- Action 1.4 – Make a list of needed utilities, supplies, and storage for near-term programming and determine the process for getting them onto the site.
- Action 1.5 – Recruit a designer to mock up site.

Goal 2: Foster communities founded on a shared appreciation of healthy food through communicating and generating enthusiasm for the benefits of urban food production in terms of community engagement, beautification, health, activity, and education.

- Action 2.1 – Design and print a temporary sign.
- Action 2.2 – Develop branding for the urban farm.
- Action 2.3 – Create pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Alaska Food Policy Council Website to prompt communication with the community.
- Action 2.4 – Implement and add to an event calendar for the proposed 3rd Street site.

Goal 3: Use project programming to increase community capacity and collaboration through new and strengthened partnerships and empower champions to realize the success, vision, and mission of the project.

- Action 3.1 – Create a stakeholder map.
- Action 3.2 – Create a frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the proposed 3rd Street site.
- Action 3.3 – Invite stakeholders to advise on near-term projects under the temporary use permit.
- Action 3.4 – Establish a partnership network for collaboration with the Alaska Native Heritage Center and others to educate on Alaska and Arctic traditional foods through the proposed urban farm site.
- Action 3.5 – Develop a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement with Anchorage Community Land Trust and, or Catholic Social Services' Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services to work together on programming. Develop a template memorandum of understanding for partners who engage in the project.
- Action 3.6 – Research funding for an eventual program manager position for the urban farm.

GOAL 1: Further the community’s mission and vision of the project by generating specific site planning, physical and design concepts to share in future community meetings for evaluation

The workshop participants understood that the longer-term development of the 15-acre, 3rd Avenue site will be much larger in scale and design than just an urban farm. A parallel master planning process managed by the Heritage Land Bank and their consultant team of designers is already underway and will include charettes and design workshops. Concepts for space use are requested to be submitted in late September in advance of the next community meeting in mid- or late-October. The next public meeting of the Heritage Land Bank Advisory Committee will be December 13th. The primary purpose of Goal 1 was to focus in on the near-term plans for getting something started on the site and to capitalize on the recently acquired use permit to place some raised beds and signage. The actions for this goal were to brainstorm what needs to happen in terms of planning, as well as physical and design needs to take the first steps towards realizing an urban farm at this location in Anchorage.

Action 1.1: Conduct an environmental assessment of the site.	
What this is and why it is important	In order to build confidence in the safety of the site for future users, it is important to obtain a true understanding of the presence, or not, of contamination on the site. Any findings will inform design and location constraints of the site. The plan is to move forward with an initial single soil test and to apply for Targeted Brownfield Assessment funding for more comprehensive testing at a future date.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an application has been submitted • When the assessments have been done and a report on the state of the site has been delivered
Timeframe	6-8 months for assessment after the application is submitted
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Land Bank • Alaska Food Policy Council • Joy Britt (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium) • Lisa Griswold (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation), and Vicky Salazar (EPA) – a subcommittee to work on this assessment and coordinate with the Downtown Anchorage Urban Farm Working
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Goolie, EPA • Downtown Anchorage Urban Farm Working
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time from committee • Funding for assessment
Possible funding sources	EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment Grant

Action 1.2: Plan and install 6-8 raised beds on the site, followed by a community event for planting day and sign unveiling.

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>The importance of this action is to realize short-term, highly visible successes that establish an urban farm-related presence on the site. It takes advantage of the recently acquired municipal permit to allow raised beds. Since this is a new initiative, there was significant discussion by the working group on the process, and many of the details still need to be decided, such as location, number of beds, types of plants, soil, etc. The action was therefore divided into phases, where the first phase would be to hold a planning meeting (or more than one if necessary) for installing the beds. Proposed meeting topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Funding sources • Soil sources • What to plant and where they will come from • Date of installation • Advertising, communications, signage • Design of the beds • Planting scheme • Roles and responsibilities • Event and outreach planning <p>Following the meetings would be a second phase of implementation of the raised beds, culminating in a special community “unveiling” or celebratory event to commemorate the start of this effort.</p>
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the beds are installed, planted, alive, and not weedy (well maintained) • When a community celebration is held to commemorate the new gardens
<p>Timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First planning meeting to happen by September • Decide on logistics, procurement, plants, and planting schedule over the winter • Have a plan in place by February • New beds flowering and growing by Spring of 2019 • Commemoration event to be determined (Fall and/or Spring?)
<p>Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown farm group steering committee, sub-committee to be coordinated by Micah Hahn (Assistant Professor of Environmental Health, University of Alaska Anchorage) • With support from Kelly Ryan (Seeds of Change) in this organizing effort
<p>Supporting cast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association Sarah Miller: 277-6082, smiller.ret@gmail.com Debbie Hinchey: 278-2814, dhinchey@alaskan.com • Engage and invite Third Avenue Radicals in the bed building design and construction
<p>Costs and/or resources needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget for raised bed materials (\$3000 for 8 beds) • Seeds or seedlings • Time and labor • List of potential funders to ask for support

Action 1.2: Plan and install 6-8 raised beds on the site, followed by a community event for planting day and sign unveiling.

Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donated materials (e.g. soil, plants) • Sponsorships • Home improvement retailer grants • Crowdfsource funding • Alaska Mill and Feed
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Action 1.3: Develop a concept plan to (1) summarize the importance and details of the desired urban farm elements for the Heritage Land Bank Master Plan and (2) clearly communicate needs and wishes.

What this is and why it is important	The masterplan dictates the development of the property, so it's important to coordinate where and how the urban farm fits into that larger, longer-term master plan.
Measures of success	When a plan is drafted and is coordinated and integrated into the Heritage Land Bank process
Timeframe	Target: September 24 th meeting of Heritage Land Bank
Lead	Liz Hodges Snyder, Co-Chair, Alaska Food Policy Council and Associate Professor of Public Health, University of Alaska
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-committee of downtown farm group committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Katie Dougherty, Communications Specialist, Mayor's Office ○ Danny Consenstein, Board Member, Alaska Food Policy Council ○ Holly Spoth-Torres, PLA, Huddle (master planning consultants to Heritage Land Bank) • 3rd Avenue Radicals
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Use concept drafts of place • Executive summary of LFLP Action Plan
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 1.4: Make a list of needed utilities, supplies, and storage for near-term programming and determine the process for getting them onto the site.

What this is and why it is important	The Heritage Land Bank has an existing map of the utilities on the 3 rd Avenue site, but the utility requirements of all potential uses are not known and should be researched with stakeholder groups. It will be important to understand both the process (e.g. who to call) and cost for activating utilities on the site for when water and electricity or other supplies are needed to support programming.
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Action 1.4: Make a list of needed utilities, supplies, and storage for near-term programming and determine the process for getting them onto the site.

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list is created of potential users’ utility needs, ranging from growing food to hosting events that may feature pop-up food stands, food trucks, music, art, and more. • The explanation of existing utilities is available with corresponding information about connectivity and planned uses. • This information is included in the frequently asked questions (Action 4.2) and made available to the public.
Timeframe	3-6 months
Lead	James Glover, Sound Contracting, LLC, volunteered to do some initial investigations as he is familiar with design and construction projects in the municipality.
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality of Anchorage • Utility companies • Programming partners
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility map (Heritage Land Bank) • List of potential uses and requirements
Possible funding sources	N/A

Goal 2: Foster communities founded on a shared appreciation of healthy food through communicating and generating enthusiasm for the benefits of urban food production in terms of community engagement, beautification, health, activity, and education.

The impetus behind this goal was to broaden the message and community ownership over the downtown urban farm, generate excitement and enthusiasm for it, and convey the overall benefits and potential this site has for so many positive purposes related to health, physical activity, education and overall civic engagement. Meetings and a workshop have taken place, including the Local Foods, Local Places event, but more outreach and messaging is needed, especially as the first physical and visible elements of the farm will soon be realized with the installation of raised beds in late 2018 and early 2019. The actions below are the prioritized next steps to move this goal forward.

Action 2.1: Design and print a temporary sign.

What this is and why it is important	A sign at the Third Avenue location will serve to: increase visibility of the project, inform the public about what is planned and who is involved, and provide a link to more information about planning for the site.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an interim name has been determined • When the design is done, and the sign is hung
Timeframe	Fall 2018 (aligned with raised bed implementation)
Lead	Alaska Food Policy Council

Action 2.1: Design and print a temporary sign.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Tatham, Owner of Pip Printing & Anchorage Sign and Design • Third Avenue Radicals • Jerrad and Joe
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content • Design and printing
Possible funding sources	Pro bono

Action 2.2: Develop branding for the urban farm.

What this is and why it is important	Currently the urban farm concept does not have a firm, single name and identity. The process of naming the site could be an initial community engagement tool. A name and identity would make the concept of the urban farm more concrete or “official” in the minds of stakeholders and could be used to help communicate its function (e.g. farm, garden, learning center, civic space, etc.). Branding should be developed with the objective of supporting existing #growlocal and #eatlocal campaigns to promote the local food economy.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community has input on the eventual name and branding. • The branding is created. • The brand is implemented through communication channels. • The name and brand are recognized and used as hoped and designed. • The branding is portable.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1: 1-3 months (initial basic signage) • Phase 2: 6-9 months (more formal branding once project is solidified)
Lead	Rachael Miller
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBA students at Alaska Pacific University • Alaska Food Policy Council • Heritage Land Bank • Third Avenue Radicals and neighbors • Community councils • Assemblyman Christopher Constant • Department of Natural Resources (re: Alaska Grown)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and development: \$1,500 • Print materials • Legal fees • Local businesses
Possible funding sources	Pro bono

Action 2.3: Create pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Alaska Food Policy Council Website to prompt communication with the community.

What this is and why it is important	Using social media is a low-effort, high-impact way to spread the word about the potential benefits of urban farming in Anchorage. Social media enables strategic partnerships and easily and efficiently connects those interested in urban agriculture to one another to build momentum in the community. Using social media will diversify the channels of promotion about urban farming and establish two-way communications with the community that can help form a network of potential volunteers and inform future programming at the site.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the above-mentioned media page is created • The number of likes, followers, and shares generated by increased social media content • The level of engagement with the pages and posts • The number of hours required to administer and manage (e.g., Michelle needs help)
Timeframe	2-4 weeks
Lead	Michelle Hayworth, Alaska Design Forum
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Food Policy Council • Content creators • Content ambassadors • Katie Dougherty, Communications Specialist, Mayor's Office • Organizations and individuals that attended the workshop with social media accounts
Costs and/or resources needed	Volunteers
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 2.4: Implement and add to an event calendar for the proposed 3rd Street site.

What this is and why it is important	Beyond the initial step of installing the raised beds, the site needs regular events and opportunities to create buzz about what is “growing” there. A calendar provides structure, and having consistency creates expectations and a place for the community to go to for information so that they can learn more and/or participate in events. Planned programming should include demonstrating different agricultural techniques using the raised beds (action 1.2) with interpretive signs, maintenance and weeding instructions, growing seasons, etc. Maintaining the calendar would be a core responsibility of a future project/program manager.
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Action 2.4: Implement and add to an event calendar for the proposed 3rd Street site.

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of participation in events (# of participants) • Number of events happening, including at least one monthly • If events deliver on their objectives • Media coverage • Social media hits and RSVPs provide accurate forecasts • Numbers of additional ideas generated • Number of partnerships established through events
Timeframe	Now until the end of summer 2019 (October)
Lead	Liz Hodges Snyder and Danny Consenstein, Co-chairs, Alaska Food Policy Council Event specific
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Hayworth • Leadership Anchorage • Third Avenue Radicals • Anchorage Art Museum • Municipality of Anchorage • Anchorage Downtown Partnership • Community councils • Seeds of Change
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers • Time • Event fund
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsors • Donations • Event registrations • USDA’s Local Food Promotion Program • Alaska Director of Agriculture

Goal 3: Use project programming to increase community capacity and collaboration through new and strengthened partnerships and empower champions to realize the success, vision, and mission of the project.

To accomplish the vision and mission for the downtown urban farm, more community engagement and collaboration will be required. New partners and champions, yet to be identified, will need to be sought and brought into the process to help it succeed, get off the ground, and keep going. For example, participants on the workshop community tour met and talked with William Young at the C Street Community Garden. Mr. Young had been part of that garden for 15 years. He is the kind of long-term, invested stakeholder that will play a critical role in sustaining efforts. For the objective of developing the site as a demonstration facility for sub-arctic growing practices and workforce development resource, it will be important to identify

academic and organizational partners with a variety of subject matter expertise to gain recognition from afar and create opportunities for program participants close to home.

Action 3.1: Create a stakeholder map.

What this is and why it is important	Asking the question and documenting who's who can help bring voices to the table. Organizations and individuals may be identified by their interest in the project (e.g. user, beneficiary) and if they have relevant skills, resources, and energy to lend to the project.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A demonstration tool of diverse community support, especially for Heritage Land Bank plan • A comprehensive, shared understanding and knowledge and identification of gaps • Identification of gaps in stakeholder engagement and opportunities for broadening support for urban farm project
Timeframe	Within 90 days – few meetings
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Hodges Snyder, Co-Chair, Alaska Food Policy Council • Members of the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Food Policy Council • Workshop participants
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Meeting space • Google form to collect and document results
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 3.2: Create a frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the proposed 3rd Street site.

What this is and why it is important	There is a complex site history, and many people hold pieces of the whole story. For example, at the workshop, many people had questions about possible contamination, and collectively, the group could address many of the top questions, though there might not be one single person who knows all of the details of the site. By creating an FAQ, not only will the leadership group be able to reference this, but they will also be able to share with members of the public and provide a united message. Having an outline of the questions will illustrate the baseline of what the group collectively knows and demonstrate where there are gaps. This is envisioned to be an iterative document that can grow over time.
Measures of success	A FAQ resource is posted on the Alaska Food Policy Council website
Timeframe	0-3 months
Lead	Liz Hodges Snyder, Co-Chair, Alaska Food Policy Council
Supporting cast	Ryan Witten, Seeds of Change

Action 3.2: Create a frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the proposed 3rd Street site.

Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan will create a Google form and email Local Foods, Local Places list-serve to gather the “Q’s.” • Requires investment in time/possible meetings by lead and supporting cast to develop the document.
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 3.3: Invite stakeholders to advise on near-term projects under the temporary use permit.

What this is and why it is important	The temporary use permit presents an opportunity for simple (low-effort, high-impact) pilot projects to engage the community, including under-represented community members and organizations. Because this project is on a relatively short timeframe, the level of activity can be more immediate and more responsive to community input, building trust for future and longer-term projects and initiatives on the site and elsewhere. Finally, by engaging with new groups and residents, the Alaska Food Policy Council can also demonstrate the wide range of partnerships to the Heritage Land Bank as they complete the master-planning process and determine community priorities. Hosting a few activities will help build momentum and energy, increase project engagement, and provide an opportunity to ask for input and act on it quickly.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other groups are asked how they might use the site for a pop-up event. • The temporary use permit is utilized to activate the space beyond raised beds. • Information is collected about attendance/participation (can be provided to Heritage Land Bank and other decision-makers about the long-term use of the site).
Timeframe	2-6 months
Lead	Alaska Food Policy Council
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mauri Parks, Alaska Aquaponics (volunteer) • Parks and Recreation • Anchorage School District administrators, teachers, and students • Anchorage Museum • Alaska Museum of Science and Nature • Alaska Native Heritage Center • Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau DBA Visit Anchorage • Alaska Botanical Garden
Costs and/or resources needed	Staff and volunteer time
Possible funding sources	The Alaska Community Foundation

Action 3.4: Establish a partnership network for collaboration with the Alaska Native Heritage Center and others to educate on Alaska and Arctic traditional foods through the proposed urban farm site.

What this is and why it is important	As workshop participants discussed community engagement, there was an emphasis on honoring the Native history of the site, the community, and Native growing practices. There were several proposals for activating and opening up this conversation, including partnering with the Anchorage Museum on the “What Why How We Eat” exhibition. Ultimately, this action will help establish a critical connection with stakeholders to develop a more inclusive project and plan. Ideally this initiative could be a way to engage with other Arctic-based universities.
Measures of success	A list of ideas of collaborative projects with the role of each party defined and a plan for how they could be realized (aka Memorandum of Cooperation)
Timeframe	6 months
Lead	Joy Britt, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Ponurkina, AmeriCorps Vista, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium • Alaska Food Policy Council • Local Foods, Local Places committee • University of Alaska Anchorage • Alaska Pacific University • Other Arctic universities • Mauri Parks, Alaska Aquaponics
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteer time • Access to university library and resources
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 3.5: Develop a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement with Anchorage Community Land Trust and/or Catholic Social Services’ Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services to work together on programming. Develop a template memorandum of understanding for partners who engage in the project.

What this is and why it is important	Inviting partners in to guide and co-develop the programming is a great way to ensure that key community voices are included both in the planning and implementation of programming. Another key community group that emerged in the discussion was the refugee and immigrant community, and the site has great potential to be an opportunity for these community members, whether through job training, home-gardening, or providing social support. A memorandum of understanding shows potential funders the commitment of partners and standardizes and formalizes the structure and expectations. This also ensures everyone is ready to act after the Heritage Land Bank process to form new partnerships.
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Action 3.5: Develop a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement with Anchorage Community Land Trust and/or Catholic Social Services' Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services to work together on programming. Develop a template memorandum of understanding for partners who engage in the project.

Measures of success	When the template memorandum of understanding has been created and put to use
Timeframe	3 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danny Consenstein, Alaska Food Policy Council • Kelly Valentine, Seeds of Change
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchorage Outreach Center Cooperative Extension Services • Michelle Hayworth, Anchorage Museum (Seed Lab) • Mauri Parks, Alaska Aquaponics
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Shared capacity with other local farms
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchorage Outreach Center Cooperative Extension Services • Anchorage Museum • USDA Community Food Projects

Action 3.6: Research funding for an eventual program manager position for the urban farm.

What this is and why it is important	The level of programming anticipated will require dedicated capacity, so it will be important to research and apply for funding that could support a future recruitment and hiring process for a program manager for the site.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project manager position description is created. • Funding has been identified in support of a clearly defined program manager position.
Timeframe	Present-12 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micah Hahn, Assistant Professor of Environmental Health, University of Alaska Anchorage • Liz Hodges Snyder, Alaska Food Policy Council and Associate Professor of Public Health, University of Alaska
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Alaska students (graduate intern and food security class) • Anchorage Community Land Trust • Kelly Valentine, Seeds of Change
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Student coordination
Possible funding sources	N/A

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The steering committee held three calls in the weeks following the workshop to share progress updates, review the community action plan for relevancy and accuracy, and discuss outreach strategies for maintaining momentum and stakeholder engagement in the process. Early progress and planning include the following:

- The sub-committee of the Alaska Food Policy Council, identified in the community action plan, formed to execute getting raised beds on the site. The project has received some soil contributions from the municipality's compost program, and the Habitat for Humanity store may donate some lumber, perhaps enough for three boxes. There may be collaboration with Catholic Social Services which is working on a farm in the nearby Mountain View neighborhood.
- Another sub-committee formed to begin writing the vision/use proposal for the Heritage Land Bank site planning process will meet the week of September 3. Participants include Anna Ponurkina, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, AmeriCorps VISTA, two representatives from Sound Contracting, Catherine Kemp in the Mayor's Office, and Ryan Witten from Seeds of Change.
- The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee members continue to participate in the Heritage Land Bank's site planning process (late September). The next community meeting will be in mid- or late-October and the next public meeting of the Heritage Land Bank Advisory Committee will be December 13th, 2018.
- The Alaska Food Policy Council, Heritage Land Bank, and Municipality of Anchorage are discussing a joint application for a Targeted Brownfield Assessment grant from EPA.
- An initial sign design is complete with the name "Anchorage Urban Farm," a skyline logo, and the Alaska Food Policy Council and City of Anchorage logos.
- The Third Avenue Radicals held a party in late September that helped build awareness of the proposed urban farm site.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Workshop Exercise Results
- Appendix B – Workshop Sign-in Sheets
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Community Data Profile
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References