

# Municipal Strategies to Increase Food Access



Volume 2 of the Heathy Community Design Toolkit

# Acknowledgments

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The conclusions of this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of or endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

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# Introduction

This edition of the *Healthy Community Design Toolkit—Leveraging Positive Change* adds a focus on municipal strategies to facilitate food access in Massachusetts. Food access is increasingly being understood as playing a key role in people's health and well-being, especially for economically disadvantaged and otherwise marginalized families and individuals. Since 1994 when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) worked with the Census Bureau to create measures of food security at the household level to gauge food accessibility, practitioners in both the public and private sectors from all levels of government including but not limited to planners, public health advocates, food banks, and community supported agriculture proponents have been working to improve health outcomes of economically disadvantaged people by improving food access.

Food access includes (*but is certainly not limited to*):

- healthy fresh food that is reasonably-priced for people of diverse economic backgrounds,
- access to full-line grocery stores, small stores, farm stands, farmers markets, mobile markets, food delivery services, and CSA farm shares—access being defined to include not only proximity, but also convenient transportation options for people of all ages and abilities, and consideration of economic and cultural factors that drive food purchasing choices,
- universal access by eligible individuals and families to food assistance available from all levels of government as well as from the private and not-for-profit sectors, and the ability to use that assistance at all healthy food retail outlets including farmers markets,<sup>1</sup>
- the possibility to grow one's own food, including cultivating vegetables, fruits, berries, raising chickens and other small livestock,
- farmers' ability to make a decent living—to sell their products at a variety of outlets without undue regulatory burden, including farm stands, on-farm retail, farmers markets, mobile markets, and through CSAs. This applies to both “traditional” farmers and urban farmers who may operate on small plots of land with a low volume of sales,
- Long-term preservation of high quality farmland and transformation of underutilized land in urban areas to productive use,
- the ability of small food retailers to be able to make a reasonable profit selling reasonably priced healthy fresh food—which implies new approaches to distribution models, access to affordable refrigeration and support and technical

assistance to operators of these stores so they can run their businesses sustainably,

- limiting access to, and promotion of, unhealthy food to decrease its competitive advantage based on cost, and/or convenience ,
- assessing, and correcting as necessary, municipal plans, policies, regulations, programs, and systems to ensure that they facilitate—and certainly do not hinder—individuals', families', neighborhood's, and communities' ability to access healthy food

“Healthy food access is about improving economic and community health. It is about investing in the people and places that have been left behind. It is about providing access to community services and creating economic opportunity. Above all, it is about better health.”—PolicyLink & The Food Trust, *Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters* (2013)

In 2013 PolicyLink published an excellent Report, *Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters: A Review of the Research*, that documents the sad reality that "low-income communities and communities of color have less access to healthy food than higher-income and less diverse communities."<sup>2</sup> The PolicyLink report also documents the interconnectedness of food access and transportation access, citing numerous studies that scientifically support the statement that, "Lack of transportation is... a barrier to accessing a full-service supermarket or grocery store."<sup>3</sup> The majority of research studies examined support the association between healthy eating and positive health outcomes with access to healthy food. That is, research supports the utility of strategies such as placing full-line grocery stores in poor neighborhoods that lack grocery stores and improving corner stores/bodegas by adding refrigeration capacity and putting healthy food on display as customers walk in versus candy and 'junk food.' There is a small sub-set of research that questions the connection between these kinds of interventions and improvements in health outcomes of individuals, but deeper review of these studies reveals more the complexity of establishing correlations and the challenge of using uniform definitions than it does de-legitimize the need for these strategies.

Key findings from both the scientific literature and the work of practitioners in the field of improving food access are:

- The emphasis on households and individuals who lack access to a car—study after study suggests that households with cars are much more able to adapt to the challenges of limited food access than households without access to a car.
- The importance of the built environment—especially for households without access to a car! If there are full-line grocery stores and corner stores in walkable

neighborhoods, then households without access to a car are still able to access healthy food.

- The emphasis on cost of healthy food and the need to supplement poor people's incomes to enable them to access healthy food.
- The power of advertising and the emphasis in stores that cater to poor people on junk food versus healthy food, with the reverse true in stores that cater to wealthy people.<sup>4</sup>
- The complexity of food shopping choices that include not only geographical location of retail food outlets, but also social and cultural factors.<sup>5</sup>

A very important finding is that “strong and consistent” scientific evidence supports SNAP, WIC and other safety net initiatives because they “can improve children’s health and education outcomes and help them achieve higher earnings in adulthood”.<sup>6</sup> Assuring that all eligible consumers use 100% of their benefits should be a top priority for all organizations and individuals working to improve their local food system.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, our research shows that strategies that improve access to healthy food often have numerous co-benefits, in particular environmental benefits, economic benefits, and increased social cohesion. Co-benefits were especially prominent in the literature related to urban agriculture.<sup>8</sup> For example:

The interactions in urban gardens and farms often involve decision-making and planning processes that require consensus, making community gardens important places for encouraging democratic values and citizen engagement. For urban

“Fruits/vegetables dominated the view from the main entrance in 14% of low-price and 71% of high-price stores. By contrast, junk foods dominated the view from the main entrance in 67% of low-price stores and 33% of high price stores. On average, low price stores had 7.7 displays to promote healthy foods while high-price stores had 20.2 displays of healthy foods”--Ghosh-Dastidar et al.

farms and businesses, the development of self-determination, self-reliance and activism are major impacts. Studies find that participants expressed improved self-esteem and pride.<sup>9</sup>

Additional highlights from our research review affirm and clarify what most practitioners in the field have learned by doing:

- Design programs with community including integrating individual and family definitions of ‘proximity to healthy food’, and assuring use of (and/or modifying as

necessary) government (or other funder) criteria for food deserts to assure maximum eligibility for funding/resources/technical assistance etc.

- Think (and work) comprehensively to understand and address the food insecurity causes and consequences in your specific community and tailor interventions to your population, with resident guidance and active participation—forming a food policy council with resident involvement is an effective way to ensure a long-term community-wide commitment to improving food access.
- Simply making healthy food available may not be adequate to change consumption patterns for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to: lack of awareness, cost, and the difficulty of changing patterns of behavior. It may be necessary to enhance placement of healthy food with public information and education efforts, including culturally appropriate recipes, cooking demonstrations, community-generated cookbooks, and other community events to introduce and reinforce healthy eating behaviors.
- Municipalities have a very important role to play in facilitating food access at the local level, as part of a Food Policy Council (listed above) but also performing technical and supportive roles for residents, such as pre-identifying lots appropriate for community gardens, and assuring access to water.<sup>10,11</sup>
- The evidence-base for most municipal strategies to facilitate food access is insufficient to establish causality. However, this should not be used as an excuse to not take action on strategies that appear to have some support. This is especially true because many community-based food access interventions have numerous co-benefits:

... examples abound describing how a new grocery store serves as the lifeblood for a struggling rural town, or offers a fresh start in employment for a previously incarcerated person; how a farmer’s market is fostering social cohesion in a neighborhood where racial tensions used to prevail; or how a new full-scale grocery store is bringing new economic vitality to a low-income, urban community of color that had lacked access for decades.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sherman, BA, Arloc, Brandon DeBot, BA, Chye-Chinf Huang, LLM. “Boosting Low-Income Children’s Opportunities to Succeed through Direct Income Support.” *Academic Pediatrics*, April 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Bell, Judith, MPA, Gabriella Mora MPH, Erin Hagan MBA, PhD, Victor Rubin MCP, PhD, Allison Karpyn, PhD, ~~James N. P. Calverton, and MPH, Erin Hagan MBA, PhD, Victor Rubin MCP, PhD, Allison Karpyn, PhD.~~ “Access to Health Food and Why it Matters: A Review of the Research.” *Policy Link and The Food Trust*, 2013. < [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf) >

<sup>3</sup> Baek, Deokrye. “The Effect of Public Transportation Accessibility on Food Insecurity.” *Eastern Economic Journal*, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Ghosh-Dastidar, PhD, Bonnie, Deborah Cohen, MD, MPH, Gerald Hunter, MCP, Shannon N. Zenk, PhD, Christina Huang, MPH, Robin Beckman, MPH, Tamara Dubowitz, ScD. *“Distance to Store, Food Prices and Obesity in Urban Food Deserts.”* American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Broad Leib, Emily M. *“All (Food) Politics is Local: Increasing Food Access through Local Government Action.”* Harvard Law and Policy Review, 2013. A very useful summary article is offered by Leib et al. in their 2013 paper, *“All (Food) Politics is Local: Increasing Food Access Through Local Government Action,”* which not only does a nice job summarizing the state of the practice (in 2012), but also articulates a way of factoring in the human dimension to food choice. Historically, planners and public health workers have defined food access by geographic distance from food sources, resulting in a focus encouraging healthy food outlets to locate in underserved neighborhoods. Leib et al. introduce “social distance” into the traditionally geographically defined notion of “distance.”

Leib et al. explain social distance as integrating socio-demographic considerations and how people define their neighborhood, (p. 326) urging a “broader set of questions about the reasons for limited access or poor health outcomes.”<sup>5</sup> Tach and Amorim advance this idea in their study of 66 poor residents of three urban neighborhoods with limited food access.<sup>5</sup> They report, “We found that economic and geographic constraints strongly influenced where and how residents shopped, but within those constraints, residents developed a number of adaptive strategies to maximize the quality and variety of their groceries, even within the context of a food desert.”<sup>5</sup> Some of these adaptations include: shopping at multiple retailers to secure the lowest price, buying items on sale and/or in bulk, and buying store brands. Distance was only highlighted as a concern for people living in food deserts without access to a car. People living in food deserts without regular access to a car change their shopping habits. These people buy in bulk and buy less fresh food because they need it to last for several weeks.<sup>5</sup> Other research has shown “strategies that can impact nutritional status, such as meal skipping, food coupon use, and consumption of less expensive food items.”<sup>5</sup> Our research review revealed significant flaws in the way their relatively simple idea of geographic ‘distance’ has been defined. This has resulted in wildly different definitions of food deserts—definitions with far reaching impacts as they have been used to determine eligibility for federal and other government and privately funded food security initiatives. This small example shows how an overly simplistic understanding of human behavior can be encoded in governmental systems and end up having a profound impact on food access. It is a cautionary tale for use of the strategies contained in this report. We urge all practitioners to clearly define the population that is most in need, work closely with that population to identify their specific barriers to food access, and ensure that any municipal actions address those specific barriers.

<sup>6</sup> Sherman, BA, Arloc, Brandon DeBot, BA, Chye-Chinf Huang, LLM. *“Boosting Low-Income Children’s Opportunities to Succeed through Direct Income Support.”* Academic Pediatrics, April 2016; Mabli, James. 2014. “SNAP Participation, Food Security, and Geographic Access to Food.” US Department of Agriculture; Mabli, James and Jim Ohls. 2015. “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation is Associated with an Increase in Household Food Security in a National Evaluation.” *Journal of Nutrition* 145(2): 344-351; Mabli, James and Julie Worthington. 2014. “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Child Food Security.” *Pediatrics* 133(4): 1-10.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor, Lauren, Caitlin Coyle, Chima Ndumele, Erika Rogan, Maureen Canavan, Leslie Curry, and Elizabeth Bradley. *“Leveraging The Social Determinants of Health”* Yale Global Health Leadership, June 2015

<sup>8</sup> Surls, Rachel, Gail Feenstra, Sheila Golden, Ryan Galt, Shermain Hardesty, Clair Napawan and Cheryl Wilen. *“Gearing up to support urban farming in California: Preliminary results of a needs assessment.”* *Journal of Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, March 2014.

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<sup>9</sup> Surls, Rachel, Gail Feenstra, Sheila Golden, Ryan Galt, Shermain Hardesty, Clair Napawan and Cheryl Wilen. *“Gearing up to support urban farming in California: Preliminary results of a needs assessment.”* Journal of Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems, March 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Broad Leib, Emily M. *“All (Food) Politics is Local: Increasing Food Access through Local Government Action.”* Harvard Law and Policy Review, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Huang, Dilys and Michael Drescher. *“Urban crop and livestock: The experiences, challenges, and opportunities of planning for urban agriculture in two Canadian provinces.”* Journal of Land Use Policy, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Bell, Judith, MPA, Gabriella Mora MPH, Erin Hagan MBA, PhD, Victor Rubin MCP, PhD, Allison Karpyn, PhD. *“Access to Health Food and Why it Matters: A Review of the Research.”* Policy Link and The Food Trust, 2013. < [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/access-to-healthy-food.original.pdf)>



# Using this Resource

*Municipal Strategies to Increase Food Access* presents a range of approaches municipal staff and board members, Mass in Motion Coordinators, and community food advocates can utilize to improve food access in their towns and cities. Strategies that affect change in municipal systems are presented first, followed by food production and food retail strategies. Each section describes the strategy and the change sought through its implementation; presents the motivations for and challenges in pursuing them; and offers guidance for how municipalities might implement strategies. Case studies describe how strategies have been implemented; Massachusetts examples are highlighted where they exist to give the reader a sense of what is accomplishable in the context of Massachusetts state and local governments. Additional resources are linked or included in the appendix, and these include guidance documents and in some cases, model language for ordinances and bylaws.

Each of the strategy sections includes a four-part table meant for quickly learning more about the strategy.

In the table, “Strength of Evidence” refers to the degree to which strategies increase food access and improve related health outcomes. These evidence ratings come primarily from the County Health Rankings’ *What Works For Health* website, which is available at: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/what-works-for-health>. Where information is lacking, and where strategies have not been evaluated for their outcomes, this portion of the table is left blank. It should be noted that where tables are left blank, it does not suggest that the strategy does not improve food access or health outcomes, it means only that its outcomes have not been measured.

The table lists “Community Types,” developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, that categorize the various types of towns and cities in Massachusetts. Municipal food access strategies may be relevant to some, but not all types of municipalities, and this section allows communities to identify strategies most relevant to their communities. Readers can find the MAPC Community Types typology in the Appendix or online at: [http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Massachusetts\\_Community\\_Types\\_-\\_July\\_2008.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Massachusetts_Community_Types_-_July_2008.pdf), and should identify which type(s) best describe their community. This can facilitate identifying relevant food access strategies more quickly.

“Leverage Points” describe the municipal tools that can be used to implement strategies. These are described in greater detail in volume one of the Healthy Community Design Toolkit (<http://www.pvpc.org/projects/healthy-community-design-toolkit-leveraging-positive-change>), and include common municipal plans, regulations, policies, and

programs. This section of the tables indicates where in municipal systems the strategy can be encoded and/or implemented.

All strategies seek to improve food access, either directly or through increasing the capacity of farmers or community member to grow food. The “Co-Benefits” describe the additional benefits that may result from implementing strategies, and include the following categories: Physical Health, Mental Health, Social Benefits, Environmental Sustainability, Safety and Injury Prevention, and Economic Benefits.

Most strategies call for engaging diverse and representative groups from the community those that are affected by and those that are invested in food access issues – understanding that communities know what is best for them, and that systemic changes can be successful only with sustained engagement and action.

This resources is intended to be used a reference, not read through from start to finish. Communities newly engaged in food access efforts may review the strategies as a part of exploring how to get started and identifying strategies appropriate to their circumstances. Where municipalities are already implementing strategies, the case studies, resource guides, and model language may be helpful in refining their approach.

This document presents, to date, the most comprehensive range of strategies for Massachusetts cities and towns to consider in their efforts to improve food access. The field of food system planning still very young, and only in recent years have regions and states explicitly engaged in this field. As towns and cities increasingly engage in making their communities healthier through improving access to nutritious and affordable food, the range of strategies employed will grow.

To get started, the following summary table lists all strategies indicating their relevant leverage points, evidence ratings, co-benefits, and community types. We recommend you this table to identify strategies worthy of further exploration in the remainder of the document.

# Summary Table

Strategies	Leverage Points										Evidence/ Co-benefits						Community Type													
	Master Plan	OSRP	Housing Plans	Zoning	Site Plan/Special Permit	Subdivision Regulations	Road Design & Maintenance	Walk, Bike, Transit	Stormwater Regulations	Municipal Policies	Muni. Programs and Actions	Board of Health Regulations	Evidence Rating <sup>1</sup>	Physical Health	Mental Health	Social Benefits	Environmental Sustainability	Safety/Injury Prevention	Economic Benefits	Metro Core Communities	Streetcar Suburbs	Major Regional Urban Centers	Sub-Regional Urban Centers	Mature Suburbs	Estab. Suburbs & Cape Towns	Maturing New England Towns	Country Suburbs	Rural Towns		
<b>Municipal Plans, Policies, Programs &amp; Systems</b>																														
Key Strategies: Plans & Policies																														
Create Food Plans																														
Integrate food system planning in municipal planning documents	■	■											■				■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Establish joint use agreements to open municipal kitchens										■			■		■					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Key Strategies: Municipal Programs and Actions																														
Support Healthy Corner Stores Initiatives										■		5	■						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Increase healthy and local food purchasing by municipalities										■		5	■						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Provide healthy foods at catered events										■		4	■							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Implement competitive pricing in municipal cafeteria and vending machines to incentivize healthy food purchasing										■		6								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Support SNAP food stamp doubling										■		4								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Pursue Funding to Implement Food Strategies										■		6	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Key Strategies: Municipal Systems																														

<sup>1</sup> Evidence Ratings are from *What Works for Health*. 6=scientifically supported; 5=some evidence; 4=expert opinion; blank=strategy has not been rated. For more information including ratings methodology, citations, and implementation resources, see <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/what-works-for-health>.

Strategies	Leverage Points										Evidence/Co-benefits						Community Type												
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Establish a Municipal Food Policy Council										■	■	6			■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Consider the fundamental connections between economic opportunity and food access in municipal planning and development										■	■	6	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Additional Strategies																													
Adopt a Right-To-Farm Bylaw										■																■	■	■	■
Pre-identify locations where community groups can establish community gardens		■									■		■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Promote Agricultural Commissions											■														■	■	■	■	■
Land Use & Urban Design																													
Key Strategies																													
Plan complete neighborhoods with residences within walking distances of food sources and/or transit supportive densities	■			■	■	■		■					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ensure site designs for food retail allow safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists				■	■								■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Revise zoning to require that residential developments provide “gardening-appropriate” open spaces				■									■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Additional Strategies																													
Align state and local grants an incentives with projects that support food access	■										■									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
See other chapters of the Healthy Community Design Toolkit for additional recommendations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Strategies	Leverage Points										Evidence/Co-benefits						Community Type												
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<b>Food Business Infrastructure</b>																													
Key Strategies																													
Create Food Innovation Districts	■									■	■	4	■		■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Additional Strategies																													
Assess opportunities for shared use of commercial kitchens in municipal facilities																													
Support Food Hubs																													
<b>Transportation</b>																													
Key Strategies																													
Work with MPO to ensure that healthy community design standards are integrated into project review/funding decision process																													
Ensure food pantries are accessible by transit and active transportation								■					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Additional Strategies																													
Prioritize food access when planning and building Complete Streets	■						■	■					■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Prioritize food access when improving transit systems																				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Eliminate restrictions on grocery bags that can be carried on transit																				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Expand transit access across MA, especially in areas not served by the MBTA																				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
<b>Farmland Preservation &amp; Viability</b>																													

Strategies	Leverage Points										Evidence/ Co-benefits						Community Type												
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<b>Key Strategies</b>																													
Adopt Community Preservation Act; use funding to preserve farmland	■	■									■			■		■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Implement Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	■	■	■	■										■		■		■								■	■	■	■
Implement true large lot zoning	■			■												■												■	■
Use the state Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program	■	■		■										■		■			■							■	■	■	■
Adopt Open Space Design (OSD) / Natural Resource Protection (NRPZ) cluster zoning provisions	■	■	■	■											■	■			■									■	■
Allow farms to diversify accessory uses	■			■												■			■							■	■	■	■
Allow farm stands/farm retail via zoning	■			■									■			■			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Identify opportunities for food production on publicly controlled land	■	■								■			■		■						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Effectively use a community's right of first refusal to acquire agricultural land that is coming out of Chapter 61A program											■								■							■	■	■	■
Support Community Land Trusts or other property owners (community farms) that offer farm-friendly leases on land											■		■		■	■			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Urban Agriculture</b>																													
<b>Key Strategies</b>																													
Support urban agriculture on municipal sites										■		4	■		■				■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Encourage Community Gardens	■			■							■	5	■	■	■	■			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Strategies	Leverage Points										Evidence/Co-benefits						Community Type											
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Establish school gardens										■		6	■	■	■					■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Enact Regulation/Ordinances to Encourage the Keeping of Animals				■							■	4								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Enact Zoning Ordinances/By-Laws to Permit Retail Sales on Urban Farms				■												■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Encourage Farmers Markets through Local Board of Health Variances											■	5			■			■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mobile Vending Strategies				■								4	■		■	■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Food Retail</b>																												
Key Strategies: Identify the need and market opportunity																												
Identify Need											■																	
Identify Market Opportunity											■																	
Key Strategies: Remove barriers to food retail																												
Include Food Retail as an explicitly permitted use				■																								
Prohibit “Negative Use Restrictions” for food retail				■																								
Key Strategies: Encourage Development and Redevelopment																												
Negotiate healthy food retail in community benefit agreements				■																								
Establish Zoning Incentives: Density Bonuses				■																								
Create Tax Incentives											■																	
Streamline Food Retail Permitting				■				■	■	■	■																	

Strategies	Leverage Points										Evidence/ Co-benefits						Community Type													
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Use licensing as mechanism for getting healthy food into small retailers										■																				
Support Food Cooperatives									■	■		4	■		■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Key Strategies: Limit access to unhealthy food																														
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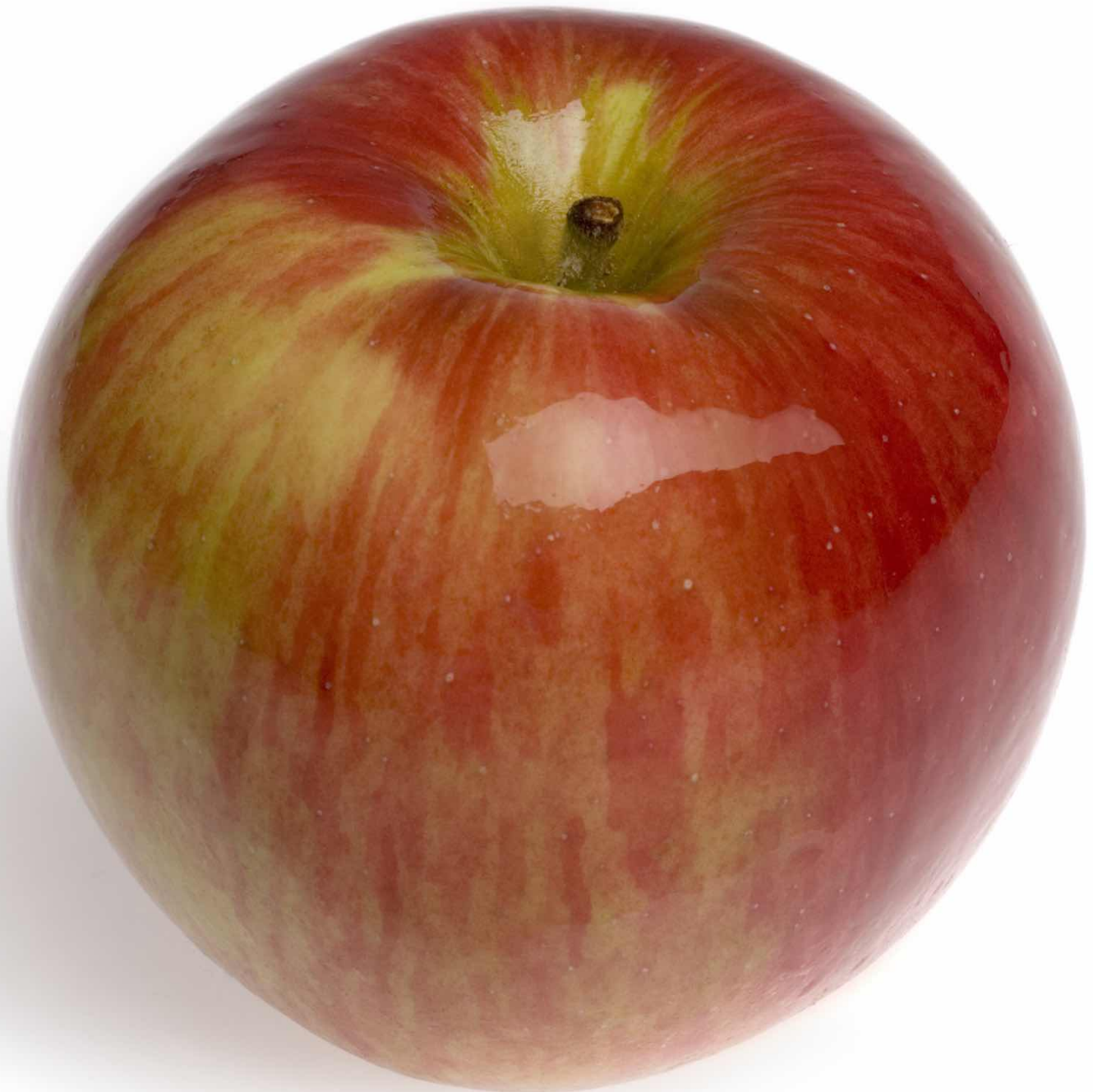
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# Municipal Plans, Policies, Programs & Systems



# Municipal Plans, Policies, Programs & Systems

This category includes strategies that influence the “systems” of local government so that local governments act more consistently and effectively to facilitate healthy food access by their citizens. An array of plans, policies and structures can be harnessed to guide the workings of government toward ensuring food access for all. Where municipal plans generally describe *what* changes should occur, policies specify to *how* desired changes should happen. Where a plan might identify a goal to improve healthy food availability, for example, a policy that supports this goal could specify nutrition standards for food purchased or served by municipalities. This section also includes food access programs that either can benefit from the support of cities and towns, or can be undertaken directly by cities and towns—for example providing support for incentives programs for purchasing fruits and vegetables. Our research support the connection between government infrastructure committed to improving food access and improved health outcomes of affected residents.

Developing food systems in which people can reliably and affordably choose and eat a variety of healthy food options requires strategies that identify opportunities for immediate and long term change to occur. Working together, municipalities and advocates should develop long range plans and policies that guide food system changes that are integral to municipalities’ broader goals for community development.

See page 89-94 of the HCDTK for an overview of municipal government leverage points.

# Key Strategies: Plans & Policies

Create Food Plans			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Community Plans, Comprehensive food plans	Economic Environmental
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>A food plan synthesizes a community’s shared vision for their food system and serves as a guide for advocates and municipal officials to make strategic changes. Since the early 2000s, a heightened awareness of issues of food supply chains – food insecurity, accelerating loss of farmland, persistent threats to the livelihoods of farmers and fishermen - have motivated increasingly more communities to make systemic changes through food planning. The recommended policies and programmatic changes in food plans provide a framework for action. Actions can include developing farmland preservation policies; supporting business development for markets selling healthy food; or developing avenues for healthy food distribution to schools, senior housing or other institutions. Recognizing that food system improvements support healthy community development broadly, food plans often also adopt overarching goals to enhance equity, public health, the economy, and ecological sustainability through food system changes. APA’s Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning<sup>2</sup> recommends adopting the following overarching goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help build stronger, sustainable, and more self-reliant community and regional food systems, and,</li> <li>2. Suggest ways the industrial food system may interact with communities and regions to enhance benefits such as economic vitality, public health, ecological sustainability, social equity, and cultural diversity.</li> </ol> <p>Whereas some food plans are comprehensive in scope, others have a narrower focus. The particular interests, needs and purpose, considered alongside resources and time available for the planning process influence what a food plan includes. If comprehensive, a food plan typically examines the conditions and needs of agriculture and seafood industries; food</p>			

<sup>2</sup> APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning. (2007) American Planning Association. Retrieved from: <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm>

processing and shared-use kitchen facilities; food distribution systems; the food retail environment and economy; and communities experiencing food insecurity and food access issues. Some plans focus primarily on addressing issues of food insecurity and food access; such a focus is typical for urban communities. Rural or suburban communities contending with development pressures may focus on agricultural production and farmland preservation. While the focus of food plans differ and are particular to certain communities, most include similar components, including an assessment of current conditions informed by a combination of local knowledge and existing data sources, and recommended goals and actions that align with the food system vision, and seek to resolve identified issues, and leverage existing assets.<sup>3 4</sup>

Several Massachusetts communities have completed food plans that can serve as examples for communities interested in doing the same. Those highlighted below offer examples of food plans completed at various scales, including a three-county region, a city, a town, and an urban neighborhood. Food planning processes require considerable preparation and ongoing effort, from the early stages through coordinating and measuring change. Select guidance documents below provide frameworks and additional considerations for food planning.

Worth emphasis, extensive community engagement in developing and executing food plans is essential. Improving the food system requires the action of a range of stakeholders, including residents, local organizations and businesses, and municipal officials. Because of this, it is imperative that these stakeholders endorse the recommended actions. Such investment should be cultivated by engaging stakeholders throughout the planning process in learning about the food system needs, and identifying the best methods for addressing those needs.

### Resources:

#### Resource Guides:

*APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning:*

<https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Are We Planning for Sustainable Food Systems? An Evaluation of the Goals and Vision of Food System Assessments and their Usefulness to Planning. (2012) Mari Pierce-Quinonez, Tufts University. Retrieved from:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/3053277/Food%20System%20Assessments%20and%20their%20Usefulness%20to%20Planning.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Food System Assessments. (2013) Cultivate your Food Economy, Tufts University. Retrieved from:

<http://sites.tufts.edu/foodeconomyfinalreport/practical-visionaries-history/theoretical-framework/food-systems-assessment/>

This guide is intended for planners, and describes food system planning as an emerging field that supports advancements across conventional planning areas, including land use, economic development, and transportation planning. The guide promotes comprehensive food planning and roles planners can play in advancing the following food policies:

1. Support comprehensive food planning process at the community and regional levels;
2. Support strengthening the local and regional economy by promoting local and regional food systems;
3. Support food systems that improve the health of the region's residents;
4. Support food systems that are ecologically sustainable;
5. Support food systems that are equitable and just;
6. Support food systems that preserve and sustain diverse traditional food cultures of Native American and other ethnic minority communities;
7. Support the development of state and federal legislation to facilitate community and regional food planning discussed in general policies #1 through #6.

*Municipal Food System Planning Toolkit for MAPC Communities*

[http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food\\_system\\_guide\\_3-18-14.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food_system_guide_3-18-14.pdf)

Developed for MAPC communities, this toolkit is generally useful to municipal officials and community leaders across Massachusetts. It is intended to guide communities through the food planning process, and includes several additional tools and resources.

*The Collective Impact Framework:*

<http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>

The Collective Impact framework offers an approach for addressing complex social problems and effect lasting change through a collaborative process. This approach has been applied to several food planning processes, promotes sound planning practices, and is intended for use by those coordinating planning processes.

**Examples:**

**Regional** – Bristol, Norfolk, Plymouth Counties

The Southeastern Massachusetts Food System Assessment:

<http://semafoodsecurity.com/food-system-assessment/>

The Southeastern Massachusetts Food System Assessment is a comprehensive food system assessment for Bristol, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties, and was completed in 2014 by the Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network. It offers a thorough assessment of the food system, using available data and limited community input, and identifies specific gaps, barriers and needs. In a region with nationally significant shellfish and cranberry industries, the assessment identifies the region's existing food system infrastructure as unique assets that could aid in increasing local production for local consumption. The food assessment is intended to inform the development of an implementation plan that will lie out goals that



address identified food system opportunities.

#### **City – Lowell**

Lowell Community Food Assessment: Creating Capacity for a Healthy Food System:

[https://lowellfoodsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/lcfa\\_final-draft-minimized.pdf](https://lowellfoodsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/lcfa_final-draft-minimized.pdf)

The Lowell Community Food Assessment is a comprehensive food system assessment for Lowell, a former mill city with an ethnically diverse population of over 106,000. The assessment was completed in 2013 by the Lowell Community Food Security Coalition, a coalition with an advisory board representing city officials, community organizations, and a university. It assesses three primary areas: food production, distribution, and consumption. The report recommends local and regional food production support; improved food access to healthy foods; cooking and nutrition education; and strengthened emergency food services.

Completed in the same year, *Setting the Table: Towards Greater Food Security In Lowell, Massachusetts* examines food security in the city through the following aspects that enable or impede food security: stability, affordability, proximity, choice, and preparation. Unique to most food plans, issues are explored and recommendations presented through a combination of data and storytelling.

[https://issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/settingthetable13.5.25final\\_issuu\\_f/2?e=1127520/4262584](https://issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/settingthetable13.5.25final_issuu_f/2?e=1127520/4262584)

#### **Town – Concord**

Building Local Food Connections: A Community Food System Assessment:

<https://issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/concordfood2012>

Concord is a suburban town of about 18,000 residents, just northwest of Boston. The town has a history of agriculture, and while today it values agricultural preservation, it has been losing farmland consistently for the past 20 years. The town's comprehensive food system assessment was conducted in 2012 by students from The Conway School, and evaluates this, and a range of other food system areas. Among its recommendations, the following are identified as critical:

- a) Establish a local food policy council
- b) Implement farm-to-institution programs
- c) Promote a town-wide gardening movement
- d) Revitalize animal husbandry in Concord
- e) Match farmers and growers with suitable land in Concord
- f) Permanently protect farmland for agricultural use.

The Concord Food Collaborative is the open network of stakeholders invested in food system changes.

#### **Neighborhood – Dorchester**

### Dudley Grows:

[http://thefoodproject.org/sites/default/files/Dudley\\_Grows\\_Case\\_Study\\_\(Tufts\\_UEP\).pdf](http://thefoodproject.org/sites/default/files/Dudley_Grows_Case_Study_(Tufts_UEP).pdf)

Residents of Boston's Dudley neighborhood are asserting their right to build the community and food system they want, organizing their efforts through the Dudley Grows network. This community has a deep expertise of growing food, a vibrant network of locally owned stores and a long tradition of community activism. The community also shows classic indicators of a dysfunctional food system, with high rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. Over half the neighborhood households have incomes of under \$25,000 a year. It is in this context that residents, businesses, and community organizations worked together over a nine month period (2014-2015) to define a vision for their food system through a planning process co-facilitated by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), The Food Project, and Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE). Drawing on DSNI's community organizing model, residents led the process to define values, goals, and strategies for achieving their vision for the neighborhood food system, which the Dudley Grows network is now acting on together.

#### Vision

Dudley Grows envisions *a local, resident-led food system that provides access to nutritious, affordable healthy food to all our neighbors, brings economic opportunities to residents, and protects the environment.*

#### Goals and Achievements:

Goal 1: A resident-owned supply chain for great food, growing businesses that build neighborhood wealth. *Achievement Highlights:* resident-owned businesses Davey's Market and Nos Casa Café piloted selling locally-grown produce and prepared fruit cups and salads in 2015, to test the market for a newly revived and expanded resident-owned wholesaling enterprise, Fidalgo's Wholesale, that will supply neighborhood stores and restaurants; Fidalgo's Wholesale has installed infrastructure and will begin distributing a range of healthy foods to neighborhood stores in summer 2016.

Goal 2: Permanently secured vacant land for growing, so any resident who wishes to produce food can do so. *Achievement Highlights:* Two new community growing spaces were installed in spring 2016 on the community's land trust, and the neighborhood is considering proposals for an additional urban farm site on the land trust.

Goal 3: Improved food in local schools, ensuring that youth are nourished with healthy

food they enjoy. *Achievement Highlights:* School food focus groups conducted by 8<sup>th</sup> graders, as part of a larger research and exploration effort by the Dudley Grows network; taste testing neighborhood-grown produce with elementary school students.

Goal 4: Physical development that supports the food system vision with infrastructure and planning. *Achievement Highlights:* RFP for a new commercial development on the land trust calls for a café space that will allow expansion of resident-owned businesses; neighbors are organizing to ensure that a new mixed-use development aligns with neighborhood interests, including food system interests.

Figure 1: Dudley Grows Quarterly Network Meeting, June 2016, Credit: The Food Project



## Include food system considerations in master plans and other municipal plans

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Master Plan OSRP Other Plans	Economic Environmental Physical Health,

### Description:

Municipal plans establish a vision for a community’s future. Integrating food goals and policies into municipal planning documents reinforces the connections of food system in

conventionally addressed topics such as land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and environmental and human health elements. Where food policies are woven throughout such documents, these policies and a vision for improved food systems can be advanced as part of long term strategic community development plans. Master (or comprehensive) plans cover a wide range of topics that cut across many government functions and departments; including food system goals in a master plan, as well as supportive language in the plan's overarching vision and objectives can help to ensure consideration of and action on food related goals and policies. Food goals and policies may also be integrated into other plans such as open space and recreation plans, transportation plans, or neighborhood development plans.<sup>5</sup> As communities develop plans on emergent topics, such as climate plans, they should integrate food security and related goals. Food goals can be included in several areas within municipal plans including the following:<sup>6</sup>

- Vision Statement: Language on improving access to healthy foods or other overarching food goals can be included here.
- Land Use Component: Land use strategies, particularly in urban areas should promote density and walkability, and thereby increase access to community services and features, such as food retail locations.
- Circulation and Transportation Component: This component should accommodate multimodal transportation that enables ease of movement and accessing community services and features, such as food pantries.
- Housing Component: This component should support affordable housing, and can promote affordable food access goals.
- Parks and Recreation Component: Community gardens and urban farm goals can be included in this component.
- Public Facilities and Services Component: This component can promote joint use agreements for kitchens in schools or other municipal buildings.

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<sup>5</sup> Food Access Policy and Planning Guide. (2011) Eva Ringstrom and Branden Born, Northwest Center for Livable Communities. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/downloads/pdf/ActiveDesignWebinar/King%20County%20Food%20Access%20Guide.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> How to Create and Implement General Healthy Plans: A toolkit for building healthy, vibrant communities. (2012) Peter Stair, Heather Wooten, and Matt Raimi, ChangeLab Solutions. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Healthy\\_General\\_Plans\\_Toolkit\\_Updated\\_20120517\\_0.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Healthy_General_Plans_Toolkit_Updated_20120517_0.pdf)

Including food goals and policies into municipal plans should also include a review of current municipal policies to identify where existing policies can more explicitly align with a food system vision, and remove unintended impediments.<sup>7</sup>

### Resources:

#### Resource Guides:

Food Access Policy and Planning Guide:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/downloads/pdf/ActiveDesignWebinar/King%20County%20Food%20Access%20Guide.pdf>

Planning to Eat? Innovative Local Government Plans and Policies to Build Healthy Food Systems in the United States:

[http://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/Planning\\_to\\_eat\\_SUNYBuffalo\\_1.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/Planning_to_eat_SUNYBuffalo_1.pdf)

Municipal Food Systems Planning Toolkit for MAPC Communities:

[http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food\\_system\\_guide\\_3-18-14.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food_system_guide_3-18-14.pdf)

#### Examples:

Master Plan - Boxborough

Boxborough 2030, A Rural, Engaged Community for All

<http://www.boxborough-ma.gov/boxborough2030>

Boxborough's master plan, adopted in January 2016 lays out a long term vision for the town that reads: "Boxborough shall maintain its traditional values of rural open space, a first-rate educational system, agricultural and conservation lands, and historical roots while fostering a balanced economic environment and enhancing a close knit sense of community for all generations." The vision statement explicitly identifies agriculture as a community value, and the plan lays out aspirations, goals, strategies, and action steps for ensuring agricultural preservation. Specific town entities are identified as responsible for leading efforts on these actions. Following are the food related elements in the plan:

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<sup>7</sup> Integrating Food Policy in Comprehensive Planning: Strategies and Resources for the City of Seattle. (2012) Puget Sound Regional Council. Retrieved from: [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OSE/Seattle\\_food\\_comp\\_plan\\_FINAL\\_082012.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OSE/Seattle_food_comp_plan_FINAL_082012.pdf)

Aspiration: Is thoughtfully developed: ...The community's agricultural assets will be leveraged for economic development and to enhance quality of life...

Goal: 3.2. Attract and retain business in key existing and emerging industries.

Strategy 3.2.2. Foster Boxborough's participation in a sustainable regional agricultural economy.

Action 3.2.2.1. Develop a community food plan to create a vision, identify issues, barriers, challenges, and opportunities in the agricultural economy.

Action 3.2.2.2. Ensure that Town policies and regulations are supportive of agriculture.

Action 3.2.2.3. Recruit existing local farmers and work with non-profit organizations to cultivate workforce development, training, and educational programs.

Action 3.2.2.4. Expand land lease programs for local farms and farmers using town-owned lands to increase agricultural viability.

Action 3.2.2.5. Periodically review the Boxborough Right to Farm Bylaw and make amendments as necessary.

Action 3.2.2.6. Review Town policies and regulations and amend as necessary to ensure clarity and consistency of agricultural use definitions.

Action 3.2.2.7. Consider adding "Agricultural Business" in the Zoning Bylaw's Use Regulations as a permitted use in residential and business districts to allow farm stands and similar agricultural business operations at existing and future farms.

Strategy 3.2.3. Preserve farmland and areas with soils favorable for agriculture.

Action 3.2.3.1. Identify and index opportunity sites for farmland preservation in accordance with the 2015-2022 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

Action 3.2.3.2. Identify federal and state incentives or supplemental revenue streams to support viability for working farms.

Action 3.2.3.3. Consider using CPA funds to acquire and preserve farmlands, giving priority to properties under Chapter 61A and 61B.

**Master Plan – Hudson**

Hudson Master Plan, 2014

[https://www.vhb.com/Documents/Hudson%20Master%20Plan\\_final\\_November%202014.pdf](https://www.vhb.com/Documents/Hudson%20Master%20Plan_final_November%202014.pdf)

In its recently completed master plan, Hudson includes a section on public health, with an assessment and recommendations for food access in the community.

**Plan excerpt: Public Health Needs: Healthy Food Access:**

Hudson is well-served by five supermarkets in Hudson, including BJ's Wholesale Club, Hannaford Supermarket, Super Stop & Shop, Wal-Mart Supercenter, and Market Basket. These grocery stores provide affordable and healthy food options to the community. Supplementing these stores at the neighborhood level with additional smaller scale food entities that also sell local, affordable, and healthy food products would improve the Town's food access. The community garden and food pantry provides an additional resource. Neighborhood level stores within walking distance of most Hudson residents would fill in any future food system holes. Access to local, healthy, and affordable food for everyone is key in developing a sustainable food system and addressing public health concerns related to food access. Currently, there are no farmers markets in Hudson. Establishing community supported agriculture (CSA) programs and weekly farmers markets during the growing season are another step Hudson can take towards improving the community's food system.

**Plan excerpt: Goals and Strategies:**

Goal 3: Improve pedestrian amenities to encourage walking, running, bicycling, and public transit.

SSPH-14. Incorporate healthy community design into Hudson's planning process in order to make healthy choices easier for the Town's residents. The concept of healthy community design links the traditional planning concepts including land use, transportation, community facilities, parks, and open space with health themes such as physical activity, public safety, healthy food access, mental health, air and water quality, and social equity issues.

*Responsible parties: Town Planning Board, Board of Health*

Goal 4: Develop additional programming and tasks related to public health and social services.

SSPH-16. Educate Hudson residents of the importance of public health and its issues related to food access, transportation, and tobacco use through school

programs, informational brochures, community workshops, mailing flyers, and through electronic media.

*Responsible Party: Board of Health*

<b>Establish joint use agreements to open municipal kitchens</b>			
<b>Strength of Evidence:</b>	<b>Community Types:</b>	<b>Leverage Points:</b>	<b>Co-benefits:</b>
Expert Opinion	All	Municipal Policies	Physical Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Joint (or Community) Use Agreements are formal agreements that allow for shared use of property or facilities. These are typically between government entities, such as cities and school districts, but joint use agreements may also be between government entities and non-profit organizations or private firms. The agreement sets out the terms and responsibilities for shared use of the space. These agreements are particularly useful for neighborhoods that have limited access to community recreational or other facilities as they increase the number of facilities that are available to be physically active. This shared use of facilities can also strengthen social relationships within community as they provide safe and accessible gathering spaces for residents to engage in recreational activities.</p> <p>Joint use agreements are typically used to open playgrounds or gyms that focus on physical activity however other spaces in buildings can also be considered for shared use. Many schools across the Commonwealth have full service kitchens that sit idly on weekends, during the summer months, and on other days when schools are not in session. These spaces can be repurposed as community kitchens and used for cooking demonstrations and nutrition education to promote and support healthy food behaviors. Municipal officials seeking opportunities to increase healthy eating can consider developing a joint use agreement with their schools for use of their kitchens.</p> <p><b>Case Study: Walpole Community Test Kitchen</b></p> <p>Determined to help residents in the town develop healthier lifestyles, the Board of Health in partnership with the School Nutrition Director collaborated on the joint-use of Walpole School District’s kitchen facilities for the purpose of developing community youth and family</p>			



culinary and nutrition education programming. The team first examined concept feasibility by writing lesson plans, testing recipes and gauging the interest of elementary and middle school student and the general community. The focus group reviewed the lessons, length of classes, obstacles in reaching out to people, fees, and publicity. After the kitchen program concept was positively received by the community, the team developed the joint use agreement with School Administration. Once the agreement was approved by the school’s legal counsel, the kitchen programming began in September 2015 and has operated successfully.

**Resources:**

*Massachusetts Joint Use Toolkit*

[http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/MA-Community-Use-Toolkit-March\\_2016.pdf](http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/MA-Community-Use-Toolkit-March_2016.pdf)

The Massachusetts Community Use Toolkit is a how-to guide for community members seeking to access public buildings and spaces after hours and includes information about how to develop and implement a community use initiative

*Walpole Joint Use Agreement*

A copy of this document is included in the Appendix

## Key Strategies: Municipal Programs and Actions

Support Healthy Food Initiatives with Small Retailers			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Some Evidence	All	Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Physical Health
Description:			
<p>Small retail stores in low-income communities have long been a central conundrum in efforts to improve healthy food access. They often stock the non-perishable, processed, convenience foods that characterize our broken food system, and contribute to negative health outcomes. They’re also often owned by residents, employ local residents, buy from other local businesses and are patronized by their neighbors, all enormously positive features of a</p>			

healthy community.

Across the county and in Massachusetts, “cornerstore conversion” efforts have had mixed results. Where one study on economic impact of the Philadelphia Healthy Corner Store Network estimated that it supported 38 jobs, \$1.1 million in earnings and \$140,000 in additional tax revenue in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania during one 30-month period,<sup>8</sup> several efforts have not been so successful. Frequently the case, store owners who want to respond to customer demand for healthier products come up against a wide variety of obstacles in doing so: sourcing, infrastructure, marketing, and others. Even when they surmount those, small retailers don’t always find stocking healthy food to be good business.

The most successful efforts engage the talents and support of community and business development experts. Municipal partners, including boards of health, and economic and community development departments are important actors in successful efforts to improve the food environment through healthy food efforts in small retail settings. Where municipal partners can help deliver technical assistance, connect stores to needed resources, and provide oversight, these efforts can be a win for businesses and the community.

#### Resources:

##### *Mass in Motion Healthy Market Toolkit*

Includes step-by step instructions on establishing and managing a healthy market initiative including community engagement and engaging and supporting store owners. A copy of this document is included in the Appendix.

##### *Healthy on the Block Toolkit, Boston Public Health Commission*

[http://www.bphc.org/whatwedo/healthy-eating-active-living/healthy-on-the-block/Documents/Healthy\\_On\\_The\\_Block\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.bphc.org/whatwedo/healthy-eating-active-living/healthy-on-the-block/Documents/Healthy_On_The_Block_Toolkit.pdf)

Includes step-by step instructions on establishing and managing a healthy market initiative including community engagement, developing store partnerships, strategies to increase healthy food supply, product placement, and produce handling.

##### *Market Makeover*

<http://www.marketmakeovers.org/>

Comprehensive tool that provides information on implementing a healthy market initiative with an emphasis on implementing market makeovers for interested corners stores.

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<sup>8</sup> Almaguer Sandoval B., Law Y., and Young C., *Healthier Corner Stores: Positive Impacts and Profitable Changes* Philadelphia, PA: The Food Trust. (2014).

*Healthy Corner Store Network, The Food Trust*  
<http://thefoodtrust.org/what-we-do/administrative/healthy-corner-stores-network>  
 A comprehensive site that includes a number of toolkits, guides, and other materials that can help with successful implementation and management of healthy market initiatives.

<b>Increase healthy and local food purchasing by municipalities</b>			
<b>Strength of Evidence:</b>	<b>Community Types:</b>	<b>Leverage Points:</b>	<b>Co-benefits:</b>
Some Evidence	All	Municipal Policies	Economic Physical Health
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Municipal food procurement policies that encourage healthy and local food purchases by public institutions, such as schools, councils on aging, and municipal offices can ensure meals offered to students, elder residents, city staff and others are nutritious, and can also support local agriculture. Communities can focus on two policy areas that establish standards for healthy food procurement: establishing nutrition standards and increasing local food purchases.</p> <p><b>Healthy food procurement policy:</b>                      Municipalities can support community healthy by establishing nutrition standards in their procurement policies. Implementing policies that restrict calories, fat, trans fat, sugar or sodium can facilitate building healthier food environments, drive the reformulation of foods, and improve diets for diverse settings.<sup>9</sup> On a municipal level, these settings could include schools, senior centers, community centers, and other places meals are served through local programs and funding. As a part of developing health food procurement policies, municipalities can support a culture of health by ensuring nutritious foods are served at municipally-sponsored meetings, conferences, and community events.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p>			

<sup>9</sup> Improving the Food Environment Through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement. (2011). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from: [https://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp\\_procurement\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp_procurement_guide.pdf)

The City of Boston's executive order sets beverage nutrition standards, and prevents the sale of high sugar beverages for cafeterias, vending machines, concession stands, meetings, programs, and events where these purchases are made with City funds. See below for the language of the executive order.

**Local food procurement policy:**

Schools, hospitals, universities and other large food purchasers are leading the way in Massachusetts in purchasing food from local farmers, fishermen, and other food producers.<sup>10</sup> Municipalities have the opportunity to follow on these successes in their communities. Where policies support purchasing local foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, they also support more communities in eating more nutritious diets. Local food purchasing also benefits the local economy, and where money goes to local farms, it is also circulated locally.<sup>11</sup>

Efforts to develop municipal food procurement policies must take the funding source into consideration, as the guidelines and requirements vary depending on whether the funds are from federal or state sources. Programs like the federally-funded National School Lunch Program, are authorized under federal law to specify a preference for local food purchasing.<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts law (Mass. Gen. Laws, ch. 7, § 23B) asserts that State institutions 'shall' purchase local foods, allowing them to spend up to ten percent more for local foods.<sup>13</sup> On a local level, municipalities have the flexibility to apply the state's price preference for in-state products,<sup>14</sup> or develop their own food purchasing policies that use local funds. In all procurement efforts, municipalities may also partner with others on collective purchasing initiatives to leverage economies of scale of larger food purchases. Municipalities should also consider how and whether to ensure compliance with local food procurement policies.

<sup>10</sup> Distribution Goals, Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan. (2015) Massachusetts Food Policy Council. Retrieved from: <http://mafoodsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/MLFAPDistributionMarketing.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Tools for Advocates: Increasing Local Food Procurement by State Agencies, Colleges, and Universities. (2013) Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic. Retrieved from: [http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Local-Procurement-Handout\\_FINAL\\_FOR-PRINTING.pdf](http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Local-Procurement-Handout_FINAL_FOR-PRINTING.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Good Laws, Good Food: Putting Local Food Policy to Work for our Communities. (2012) Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic. Retrieved from: <http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/FINAL-LOCAL-TOOLKIT2.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan. (2015) Massachusetts Food Policy Council. Retrieved from: <http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>

<sup>14</sup> New England Food Policy: Building a Sustainable Food System. (2014) AFT, CLF, and NESAWG. Retrieved from: [https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New\\_England\\_Food\\_Policy\\_FULL2.pdf](https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New_England_Food_Policy_FULL2.pdf)

**Procurement models:**

The following models can be applied by municipalities and advocates to encourage local or healthy food procurement by municipalities. These come from the PolicyLink toolkit, linked below:

- *The Contract Model: In this scenario, a public agency, institution, or set of institutions contract out to external suppliers. This process usually takes on the form of a request for proposal (RFP) or invitation for bid (IFB) that is reliant upon a guiding set of principles for proposals and for the review process.*
- *The Permit Model: In this scenario, a healthy food retailer serving in official public spaces (municipal buildings, public parks, recreation centers) requires a permit.*
- *The Grant Model: Here, a public agency or institution providing financial support or resources to a non-governmental organization (NGO) or non-profit entity stipulates in the contract what types of food purchases can be made with these financial resources. Advocates and stakeholders should identify the large institutional purchasers in their city, state, or region and determine the types of procurement models used by those institutions.*

**Example:**

The exemplary Los Angeles' Good Food Purchasing Pledge is a model municipal food resolution that establishes guidelines and criteria for food procurement. This resolution specifies standards for institutional food purchases including local food purchasing, nutrition, and the workforce. Participating public institutions in LA serve nearly 660,000 meals combined, and directing over \$12 million in produce purchases into the local economy.<sup>15</sup>

**Resources:****Resource Guides****Healthy Food Procurement:**

Massachusetts Executive Order 509:

EO 509 requires certain state agencies within the Executive Department (see "Mandated Agencies" below) to follow nutrition standards developed by the

<sup>15</sup> The Good Food Purchasing Pledge: A Case Study Evaluation and Year One Progress Update. (2014) Los Angeles Food Policy Council. Retrieved from: [http://goodfoodla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Good-Food-Purchasing-Policy\\_Final\\_0614.pdf](http://goodfoodla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Good-Food-Purchasing-Policy_Final_0614.pdf)

Department of Public Health when purchasing and providing food and beverages, whether directly or through contract, to agency clients/patients.

E0509 Tools and Resources:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/mass-in-motion/about-mim/components/tools-and-resources-for-executive-order-509.html>

Includes more detailed information about the order, the specific nutrition standards, fact sheet for buying and preparing healthy foods, online healthy eating and nutrition resources, and success stories.

Massachusetts Make Every Meeting Healthy Guide:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/nutrition-phys-activity/healthy-meeting-event-guide.pdf>

Includes suggested foods and beverages for any meeting or any event where refreshments are offered. The guide can be used when discussing refreshment options with caterers, choosing restaurants or conference sites to hold events, or asking colleagues to prepare or purchase food and beverages for meetings. Recommendations for activity breaks are also included.

#### **Healthy Food Procurement Guide:**

Improving the Food Environment Through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement, by the CDC:

[https://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp\\_procurement\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp_procurement_guide.pdf)

Healthy Meeting Toolkit

<https://cspinet.org/resource/healthy-meeting-toolkit>

#### **Local Food Procurement:**

Massachusetts Food Procurement:

Chapter 30B Manual: Procuring Supplies, Services, and Real Property, by MA Office of Inspector General: <http://www.mass.gov/ig/publications/manuals/30bmanl.pdf>

Massachusetts General Law, "Preference for products grown in or produced from products grown in the commonwealth"

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter7/Section23B>

New England Food Policy: Building a Sustainable Food System, by American Farmland Trust, Conservation Law Foundation, and Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working

Group: [https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New\\_England\\_Food\\_Policy\\_FULL2.pdf](https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New_England_Food_Policy_FULL2.pdf)

**Local Food Procurement Guides:**

Tools for Advocates: Increasing Local Food Procurement by State Agencies, Colleges, and Universities, by Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic: [http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Local-Procurement-Handout\\_FINAL\\_FOR-PRINTING.pdf](http://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Local-Procurement-Handout_FINAL_FOR-PRINTING.pdf)

Equitable Development Toolkit: Local Food Procurement, by PolicyLink: [https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/edtk\\_local-food-procurement.pdf](https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/edtk_local-food-procurement.pdf)

Local Food For Local Government: Considerations for Giving Preference to Locally Grown Food, by ChangeLab Solutions: <http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Local-Foods-for-Local-Gov-FINAL-Rebranded.pdf>

**Model Language:**

Good Food Purchasing Policy, from Los Angeles Food Policy Council website: <http://goodfoodla.org/policymaking/good-food-procurement/>

The Good Food Purchasing Pledge: A Case Study Evaluation and Year One Progress Update, by Los Angeles Food Policy Council: [http://goodfoodla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Good-Food-Purchasing-Policy\\_Final\\_0614.pdf](http://goodfoodla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Good-Food-Purchasing-Policy_Final_0614.pdf)

Boston: An Order Relative to Healthy Beverage Options: [http://www.cityofboston.gov/news/uploads/14552\\_36\\_9\\_3.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/news/uploads/14552_36_9_3.pdf)

**Implement competitive pricing in municipal cafeteria and vending machines to incentivize healthy food purchasing**

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Scientifically Supported	All	Municipal Programs and Actions	

<b>Description:</b>
<p>Competitive pricing is a strategy, which aims to make healthier foods more enticing to purchase through monetary incentivizes. This competitive pricing can be done by lowering the cost of the healthy food and drink options or raising the cost of the unhealthy food and drink options. In some instances, places will raise the unhealthy food prices and use that profit margin to lower the healthier options, with the desired outcome of stabilizing profits. The goal of this strategy and the real benefit is the increased consumption of healthy foods.</p> <p>This strategy has been studied and has been found to be quite effective. Researchers found that teens and adults were more likely to buy the lower priced item no matter its nutritional contents<sup>16</sup>. There is also evidence that in some cases the healthy behaviors incentivized by these pricing schemes can have a sustained impact even when the pricing of the healthy food returns to its pre-study pricing<sup>17</sup>.</p>
<b>Resources:</b>
<p>City of Kansas City, MO Health Department and Mid-America Coalition on Health Care. <i>“Healthy Vending in the Workplace: An Employer Toolkit”</i> 2012. &lt;<a href="http://www.marc.org/Community/Public-Health/Assets/HealthyVendingResourceGuide.aspx">http://www.marc.org/Community/Public-Health/Assets/HealthyVendingResourceGuide.aspx</a>&gt;</p> <p>Michigan Department of Community Health. <i>“Michigan’s Healthy Workplaces Resource Guide: A Worksite Wellness Resource for Michigan Worksites—Large and Small.”</i> June 2008. &lt;<a href="https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/WorksiteWellnessWeb4_281713_7.pdf">https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/WorksiteWellnessWeb4_281713_7.pdf</a>&gt;</p>

<b>Support incentives for purchasing healthy food</b>			
<b>Strength of Evidence:</b>	<b>Community Types:</b>	<b>Leverage Points:</b>	<b>Co-benefits:</b>
Expert Opinion	All	Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Physical Health

<sup>16</sup> French, Simone, Mary Story and Robert Jeffery. *“Environmental Influences on Eating and Physical Activity.”* Annual Review of Public Health. May 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Mozaffarian, Dariush MD, DrPH, FAHA et al. *“Population Approached to Improve Diet, Physical Activity, and Smoking Habits: A Scientific State From the American Heart Association.”* American Heart Association, 2012.



**Description:**

Financial incentives for purchasing fruits and vegetables encourage healthier eating, and increase the purchasing power of customers with otherwise restricted incomes. Program are typically intended to increase the buying power of low income individuals who are likelier to experience food insecurity. A common model applies incentives when SNAP benefits are redeemed, and customers receive either an additional \$.30 to \$1.00 for every SNAP dollar spent.

Massachusetts has several examples of successful incentives programs for purchasing healthy foods. Recognized nationally as one of the most successful programs, the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) was completed in 2013 in Hampden County. HIP offered SNAP recipients an incentive of \$.30 for every \$1.00 of SNAP benefits spent on fruits and vegetables at participating grocery and convenience stores, farmers markets and farm stands. Evaluation of the project found that “HIP participants consumed almost one-quarter cup (26%) more targeted fruits and vegetables each day than did non-HIP respondents”. This finding was both statistically significant and nutritionally relevant. Participants also shared that the program enabled them to buy a wider variety of produce than they may have otherwise and found the produce to be more affordable.

Building on the success of the Pilot, Massachusetts is now expanding the incentives model statewide. In leveraging a \$3.4 million USDA Food insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant, and matching state and community partner funds, the Healthy Incentives Program (FINI-HIP) will provide \$1.00 for every \$1.00 of SNAP benefits spent on fruits and vegetables at four retail types: farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, CSAs, as well as the Boston Public Market. The five-year program is in its planning stages now, and beginning in April 2017 through March 2020 SNAP customers will receive the incentive match when purchasing fruits and vegetables from participating and eligible retailers.

Started in 2007, Boston Bounty Bucks (BBB) was one of the first farmers market incentive programs in the country. Funded through a combination of FINI grants and Boston’s annual BostonCANshare campaign, the BBB program doubles purchases of fruit and vegetable with SNAP benefits up to \$10. Since its inception the program has increased 74-fold, and in 2014 nearly \$200,000 were distributed.

The Pittsfield Farmers Market Double Value Program<sup>18</sup> started in 2015 and extends 100% purchasing incentives for customers using SNAP, WIC, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition

<sup>18</sup> Pittsfield Farmers Market. “Double Value Program.” <<http://farmersmarketpittsfield.org/double-value-program/>>

Program benefits. Incentives can be applied weekly up to \$20 of purchases that comply with benefit restrictions. In the first program year, the farmer’s market was able to double \$10,000 in SNAP purchases, benefitting customers and local farmers. The Double Value program is funded through local business sponsorships and small grants. In exchange for the monetary sponsorships, local businesses are recognized online, at the farmer’s market and in marketing materials.

Beginning in April 2017 the FINI-HIP incentives will be available statewide for SNAP recipients at participating farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, CSAs and the Boston Public Market. Municipalities may consider ways in which they can develop complementary incentives programs that extend to customers receiving a range of benefits, and to retailers that are currently not eligible for FINI-HIP incentives.

**Resources:**

Evaluation of the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) FINAL REPORT  
 Bartlett, Susan, Jacob Klerman, Lauren Olsho, et al. *Evaluation of the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP): Final Report*. Prepared by Abt Associates for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, September 2014.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HIP-Final.pdf>

Owens, Nora and Kelly Verel. *“SNAP/EBT at your Farmers Market: Seven Steps to Success.”* Project for Public Spaces and Wholesome Wave. July, 2010.  
[http://www.pps.org/pdf/SNAP\\_EBT\\_Book.pdf](http://www.pps.org/pdf/SNAP_EBT_Book.pdf)

Kramer, Mattea and Michael Zakaras. *“Improving Nutrition for SNAP Recipients: A Roadmap for the Double Value Coupon Program.”* Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Prepared for Wholesome Wave. March 2011.  
<https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/1714473.pdf>

**Pursue Funding to Implement Food Strategies.  
 Align State and Local funding to support Food Access  
 targeted at Marginalized Populations to improve Equitable  
 Access to Opportunity**

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Municipal Programs	Economic

		and Actions	Environmental Physical Health Mental Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>We assume readers will interpret this topic as securing funding for your work, which is accurate, but we also understand this topic to include the need to identify, lift up, and facilitate access to, direct funding assistance available to families and individuals, such as SNAP, WIC, EITC, etc<sup>21</sup> Across the country, 17% of eligible families are not receiving their benefits and nearly six out of ten elderly persons are not receiving their SNAP benefits.<sup>22</sup> (try to get MA #)</p> <p>President Obama, supported by First Lady Michelle Obama’s signature Let’s Move campaign, launched the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) in 2011 with funding awards administered through the US DHHS, Community Economic Development HFFI, website: <a href="https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/view/HHS-2014-ACF-OCS-EE-0819">https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/view/HHS-2014-ACF-OCS-EE-0819</a></p> <p>PolicyLink and the Food Trust (based out of Philadelphia) created this website resource center: <a href="http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/funding/available-funding">http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/funding/available-funding</a> in 2013 to publicize funding opportunities to promote healthy food access. The website includes an inventory of funding available at all levels of government as well as the private sector.</p> <p>The proposed Massachusetts Food Trust has recently advanced out of the Senate-- amendment #666 by Senator Moore for dedicated funding at \$500,000 to spur economic development, create jobs, and increase access to healthy, affordable foods in low and moderate income communities.</p> <p>A number of foundations are funding local food access work in MA including but not limited to: the Barr Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kraft Foods, and the Kresge Foundation. (need to make live links)</p> <p>The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Mass in Motion initiative is funding food access work in 65 municipalities across the Commonwealth (link to MiM map), including enhanced efforts in four initiatives in Fall River, Springfield, Franklin County and a subset of communities in Hampshire County. Many of these initiatives receive supplemental funding from local foundations, chambers of commerce, local hospitals community benefit funds, and</p>			

<sup>21</sup> <http://frac.org/reports-and-resources/snapfood-stamp-monthly-participation-data/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ops/Trends2010-2014.pdf>

other sources to advance food access work.

The Massachusetts Community Compact elevates the Administration’s partnerships with cities and towns, and allows the Governor’s Office to work more closely with leaders from all municipalities. The Cabinet champions municipal interests across all executive secretariats and agencies, and develops, in consultation with cities and towns, mutual standards and best practices for both the state and municipalities. The creation of Community Compacts creates clear standards, expectations and accountability for both partners. As Governor Baker said when signing the Executive Order, the Community Compact Cabinet “gives cities and towns a real seat at the table” in the Baker-Polito Administration. It includes the option to work to promote local land protection and to promote local agriculture.

<http://www.mass.gov/governor/administration/groups/communitycompactcabinet/>

### Resources:

There are many resources available to identify and support healthy food financing opportunities. In addition to the many resources listed below, MA communities can also take advantage of Community Compact funding and other technical assistance to advance community initiatives,

<http://www.mass.gov/governor/administration/groups/communitycompactcabinet/>

### Other resources

<http://thefoodtrust.org/Massachusetts>

[http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/mabifold-final.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/mabifold-final.original.pdf)

<http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/policy-efforts-and-impacts/federal>

<http://www.usda.gov/documents/7-Healthyfoodaccess.pdf>

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/community-economic-development/healthy-food-financing>

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/2014-farmbill-local-rd-organic/>

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/local-food-systems-rural-development/community-food-project-grants/>

<http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/book/export/html/1829>

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/food-and-hunger/funding>

**Resources to assist with 100% usage of government benefits (SNAP, WIC, EITC, etc.)**

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta/program-eligibility-charts-and-tables.html>

<http://frac.org/reports-and-resources/snapfood-stamp-monthly-participation-data/>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities <http://www.cbpp.org/topics/food-assistance>

**Additional Strategies**

- Ensure those eligible for SNAP and other benefits can access screening and enrollment services. Municipalities can offer in-person screening and application assistance at senior centers and other municipal facilities.
- Massachusetts has several models that subsidize the cost of CSA shares for customers. This model reduces the price of fruits and vegetables (different from incentives programs that increase the money available to customers for these purchases). Typically coordinated by farms and community organizations, municipalities could look to existing subsidy models to develop their own. Grow Food Northampton offers ½ price CSA shares to SNAP recipients. Groundwork Lawrence's Share-a-Share™ program subsidizes CSA shares, incentivizes farmers market purchases, and funds donations to food pantries.

# Key Strategies: Municipal Systems

## Establish a Municipal Food Policy Council

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Metropolitan Core Communities Streetcar Suburbs Major Regional Urban Centers Sub-Regional Urban Centers Mature Suburbs Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns	Municipal Policies Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Social

**Description:**

**Food Policy Councils<sup>24</sup>** (FPCs) are comprised of individuals from all aspects of a local food system. They are often officially sanctioned through a government action such as a SelectBoard or City Council motion or they can also be a grassroots effort. A Food Policy Council is an inter-disciplinary collaboration between citizens, advocacy organizations and community based groups and government officials. The goal is to assess and understand the food issues and goals of the community and to provide a forum for advocacy and policy development that works towards the creation of a food system that is ecologically sustainable, economically viable and socially just, seeking to assure equitable food access and promote public health.

A food policy is any decision, regulation, program or project that is endorsed by a government agency, business, or organization which effects how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased, protected and disposed. Food policy operates at the global, national, provincial, regional, local and institutional levels. World Trade Organization

<sup>24</sup> Vancouver Food Policy Council guidance [www.vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca/what-is-food-policy/](http://www.vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca/what-is-food-policy/)

regulations, welfare policies, farm subsidies and labeling standards are some examples of higher level policies that influence the food system.

At the local and municipal level, examples of food policies include:

- The regulatory requirements placed on someone planning to open a food-based business;
- Food purchasing decisions of institutional buyers and how they relate to the use of locally produced items;
- A decision by school officials on whether or not to allow junk food and soft drinks in the vending machines;
- The child nutrition requirements placed on daycares that receive municipal funding.

#### Resources:

Many municipalities in MA have food policy councils. A sampling of municipal websites is included below. You are encouraged to contact (email or call) the people identified on these websites for guidance as you move forward with your work. You can also always contact your regional planning agency (RPA-link to contact map website) for direction on any topic including food policy, as well as Halley Reeves and Kim Etingoff at MA DPH (contact info). The staff to the MA Food Policy Council is also an excellent resource in starting a local FPC, as are any of the members of the MAFPC steering committee (link to website)

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council.html>

<http://www.springfieldfoodpolicycouncil.org/>

<https://worcesterfoodandactiveliving.org/>

<https://www.cityofboston.gov/food/council.asp>

<http://concordfood.ning.com/page/about-collaborative>

Toronto Food Policy Council Report: Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: <  
<http://tfpc.to/canadian-food-policy-initiatives/municipal-food-policy-report>>

John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. *"Food Policy Councils."* <  
<http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/>>

## Consider the fundamental connections between economic opportunity and food access in municipal planning and development

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Municipal Policies Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Physical Health Mental Health Social

**Description:**

The strong connection between economic insecurity and food insecurity has been well established. Our recent review of scientific literature on the relationship between economic opportunity and food access documents increased negative health outcomes in food insecure households, including among children. At the same time, the research shows that neighborhoods with disproportionately high levels of poverty and food insecurity, that do house a range of food retail options, including full-line grocery stores and corner stores, and that are also walkable for the residents, and are well served by public transportation show higher rates of healthy food consumption.<sup>25</sup>

Municipalities can address economic insecurity by bringing healthy food retail to under-served areas; by improving the range of healthy food available in existing retail outlets, by enabling individuals and groups to supplement their food resources by growing their own food, and by creating opportunities for income generation, as possible, and also by assuring that 100% of eligible families, especially older adults, are using their SNAP and other benefits.

Municipalities can play a significant role by pre-permitting land for grocery stores in under-served areas, providing tax incentives, waiving associated fees, and requiring developers to ensure walkability and transit accessibility. Many municipalities have programs to work with corner stores to include healthy food in their offerings.

Additional research focusing on interventions to support poor people in addressing their own food insecurity suggests the utility of community gardens. Municipalities can play a significant role in facilitating community gardens. The City of Springfield has a zoning ordinance enabling community groups to establish gardens on un-used available land. Municipalities can also

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<sup>25</sup> Tach AMorim



foster urban agriculture by setting aside larger plots of city land for urban farms.

Cities and Towns across the country (Chicago, Madison, Cleveland, San Diego) and in MA (Northampton, Holyoke, and others) have changed their zoning regulations to remove barriers and/or facilitate urban agriculture, including in some case raising chickens and bees and other small livestock. Chicago requires rooftop gardens on some developments and Portland incentivizes rooftop gardens with a 'bonus floor'.

Municipalities can also assure that farmer's markets accept SNAP and WIC.

### Resources:

Note: see the appendix for relevant documents

## Additional Strategies

### Plans and Policies

- Adopt a Right to Farm Bylaw
  - Right to Farm Bylaws protect and encourage agriculture by allowing for agricultural activities and uses and protect against nuisance lawsuits with abutters and town agencies. These are non-binding bylaws that specify allowed agricultural activities, and are also useful in raising public awareness relative to local farming needs and values.
  - Fact Sheet: <http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/PVPC-Right%20to%20Farm%20Bylaws.pdf>
  - Model Bylaw (copy and paste link into browser): [http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/Right%20to%20Farm%20Model%20Bylaw\(1\).docx](http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/Right%20to%20Farm%20Model%20Bylaw(1).docx)

### Systems

- Promote Agricultural Commissions

- For more information see a fact sheet at:  
<http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/PVPC-Agricultural%20Commissions.pdf>

# Land Use & Urban Design



# Land Use & Urban Design

Community design (otherwise known as land use and urban design), affects food access in multiple ways.<sup>26</sup> Not only can community design facilitate (and in certain circumstance even require) food access by affecting where grocery stores and other retail food outlets—farmer’s markets, corner stores, mobile markets, community gardens, urban farms, food stands, etc. are located, but it can also create the physical environment in and around the stores which impacts the ability of marginalized populations to access these food retail outlets. The work of Tach and Amorim investigating three different neighborhoods with relative food access problems and a variety of mitigating community design characteristics, shows the importance of walkability and the need for multiple and varied retail food outlets in marginalized neighborhoods. Poor land use patterns and urban design have created the food deserts many poor people now live in. Better land use and urban design can retrofit these places into into complete neighborhoods in which all populations have access to healthy food.

## Key Strategies

**Plan complete neighborhoods with residences within walking distances of food sources and/or transit supportive densities.**

<b>Strength of Evidence:</b>	<b>Community Types:</b>	<b>Leverage Points:</b>	<b>Co-benefits:</b>
Scientifically Supported	All	Master Plan Site Plan Walk/Bike/Transit Network Subdivision Regulations Zoning	Economic Environmental Injury Prevention Mental Health Physical Health Social

<sup>26</sup> Tach, Laura and Mariana Amorim. "Constrained, Convenient and Symbolic Consumption: Neighborhood Food Environments and Economic Coping Strategies among the Urban Poor." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 2015

**Description:**

When planning new communities, there are a number of things that should be considered to ensure that future residents will have access to food. In the planning phase, land should be set aside for community gardens and retail options. It is also important to make sure the zoning for the area does not prohibit these uses. Planning for a mix of residential uses at a density that creates the demand necessary to sustain a store should also be carefully considered.

The development of a walkable neighborhood is also key. Streets in a neighborhood should be laid out in a connected way that allows people to take the shortest route possible to destinations if they choose to. Sidewalks and bike lanes (where applicable) should also be considered. Streets that have added bike lanes have seen a 23% increase in bicycle traffic<sup>27</sup> and residents are up to 65% more likely to walk if their neighborhood has sidewalks<sup>28</sup>. These improvements could make it more likely that people will walk or ride their bicycle to the store to buy food, especially if it is located within their neighborhood.

When a planned community will also have transit running throughout, siting of transit stops and the inclusion of transit supportive features are key. People are usually willing to walk ¼ mile to a bus stop and ½ mile to a light rail or streetcar stop. Ensuring that stops are no more than these distances from concentrated populations and food retail options along the route will make it more likely that people will be able and willing to take transit in order to gain access to food. Ensuring that the wait for transit is pleasant by including shelters to protect riders from the sun and rain, benches to sit and wait on, lighting to increase the perception of safety and trashcans to ensure that the area is well kept is also important. These small improvements paired with well planned routes and frequencies can make possible for people to use transit as a means for accessing food. These improvements can be planned in new communities and added into existing ones.

Many communities in Massachusetts are already developed and will not be creating entirely new neighborhoods. This, however, does not mean that actions can't be taken to ensure that the design of the current neighborhood cannot be modified to increase access to healthy foods. Underused or vacant parcels can be turned into community gardens or a staging area for a weekly farmer's market. Active transportation infrastructure investments can be prioritized on streets that provide direct connections to food retailers or community farms. Existing neighborhoods could also be upzoned or accessory dwelling units could be

<sup>27</sup> Macbeth, A.G. "Bicycle Lanes in Toronto." Institute of Transportation Engineers Journal. (1999)

<sup>28</sup> Giles-Corti, B., & Donovan, R.J. "The relative influence of individual, social, and physical environment determinants of physical activity." Journal of Social Science & Medicine, (2002).

permitted, and even incentivized, to help get the population density that is necessary to support transit investments or a full-sized grocery store.

**Resources:**

A majority of the strategies in the first volume of the Healthy Community Design Toolkit apply to planning complete neighborhoods. Download the document at:

<http://www.pvpc.org/projects/healthy-community-design-toolkit-leveraging-positive-change>

Hodgson, Kimberley. *“Planning for food access and Community-Based Food Systems: A National Scan and Evaluation of Local Comprehensive and Sustainability Plans.”* American Planning Association. November 2012. < [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy\\_resources/research/foodaccess/pdf/foodaccessreport.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy_resources/research/foodaccess/pdf/foodaccessreport.pdf) >

Minnesota Food Charter Network. *“Food Access Planning Guide: A resource for planning and community food advocates to ensure all Minnesota communities have reliable access to health, safe, affordable food.”* 2016. < [http://mnfoodcharter.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FAPG\\_PlanGuide.pdf](http://mnfoodcharter.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FAPG_PlanGuide.pdf) >

## Ensure site designs for food retail allow safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Scientifically Supported (streetscape design in general)	All	Zoning Site Plan/Special Permit	Economic Environmental Injury Prevention Physical Health

**Description:**

Poor site design can make it difficult or unsafe to access a food retail destination. This problem affects pedestrians and cyclists, in particular. Site circulation is especially a concern for sites with large parking lots—for example typical full-line grocery stores.

**Resources:**

The following model zoning language is applicable to commercial districts in general, and thus

covers food retail uses:

**1. Pedestrian Access** [this section should be located in a general requirements, access, or parking section.]

1.1. General – Promoting an interconnected network of pedestrian routes within neighborhoods is an important goal within [community]. Pedestrian access between buildings and rights-of-way, between uses on the subject property, and between properties helps ensure pedestrian safety, promotes healthy transportation, and reduces reliance on vehicles. This section establishes regulations for pedestrian access that primarily serves users of the subject property.

1.2. Pedestrian Access Location. All new development [*and substantially expanded or remodeled sites/buildings/uses*] shall comply with the following pedestrian access requirements:

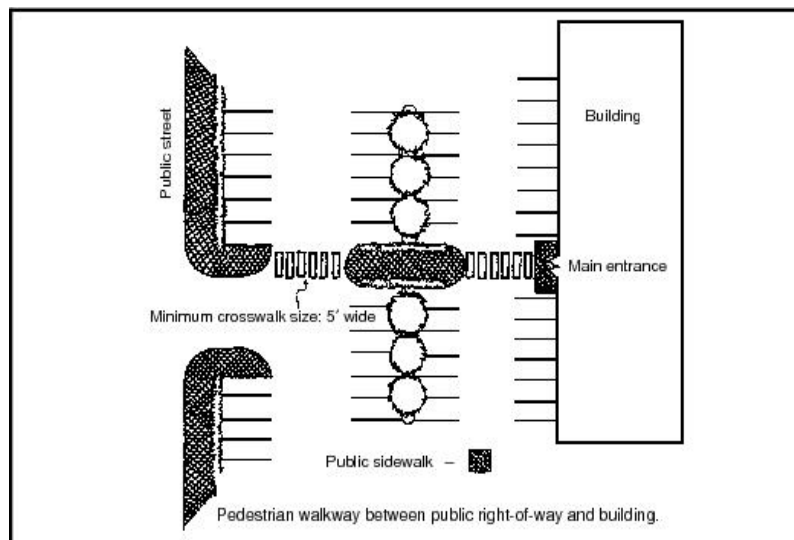
- a. Along the Right-of-Way. The [Planning Board] may require the applicant to install pedestrian walkways for use by the general public within the public right-of-way on which the subject property fronts. [*This shall be required where a pedestrian connection is indicated in the Master Plan / Pedestrian Connectivity Plan*].
- b. From Buildings to Sidewalks and Transit Facilities. Pedestrian walkways designed to minimize walking distance from the primary entrances of all buildings to the abutting rights-of-way, public sidewalks, and transit facilities shall be provided.
- c. Between Uses on Subject Property. Pedestrian walkways between the primary entrances to all businesses, uses, and/or buildings on the subject property shall be provided.
- d. Between Properties. Provide pedestrian walkways connecting to adjacent properties of similar uses. The location for the access points at property edges and to adjacent lots shall be coordinated to provide convenient pedestrian links between developments. Walkways in the public right-of-way may satisfy this requirement if they provide a convenient link.
- e. Through Parking Areas. All parking lots which contain more than [25] stalls must include pedestrian walkways through the parking lot to the main building entrance or a central location.
- f. Through Parking Garages. Provide marked pedestrian routes through parking garages from the [parking area](#) to the abutting public [right-of-way](#) and to the pedestrian entrance of the building.

1.3. Pedestrian Access Design Standards.

- a. General.

- 1) Walkways shall be a minimum of five (5) feet wide;
  - 2) Walkways shall be distinguishable from traffic lanes by painted markings, pavement material, texture, or raised in elevation;
  - 3) Walkways shall have adequate lighting for security and safety. Lights must be non-glare and mounted no more than 20 feet above the ground;
  - 4) Walkways shall be accessible
- b. Overhead Weather Protection. Protection in the form of awnings, marquees, canopies, building overhangs, covered porches, recessed entries or other features shall be provided over primary exterior entrances. Weather protection must cover at least three (3) feet of the width of the adjacent walkway and must be at least eight (8) feet above walkway immediately below it. *[May need to match this section with any design guidelines or other façade controls.]*
- c. Pedestrian Walkways Through Parking Areas and Parking Garage Standards
- 1) Walkways shall not be within vehicle driveways from the parking area to a public right-of-way;
  - 2) Walkways shall connect from the parking spaces to the pedestrian entrance of the building served by the parking. (See Figure A.)

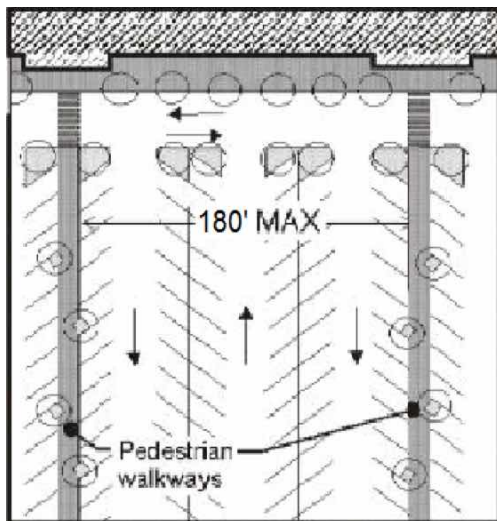
Figure A: Pedestrian Access From Street or Walkway to Building Entrance



- 3) Parking lots containing more than 25,000 square feet of paved area, including access lanes and driveways, shall include clearly identified pedestrian routes from the parking stalls to the main building entrance or central location (see Figure B). At a minimum, walkways shall be provided for every three (3) driving aisles or 180 feet, whichever is less.



Figure B: Pathways must be provided through large parking areas.



**2. Bicycle Access** *[this section should be located in the parking section]*

2.1 In any development required to provide twelve (12) or more vehicle parking spaces, bicycle parking shall also be provided. Bicycle parking spaces shall be provided at a ratio of one bicycle space for each 12 required vehicle parking spaces. U-shaped bicycle racks shall count as two bicycle spaces.

2.2 Bicycle parking shall be conveniently located, generally within 50 feet of exterior entrances. Bicycle racks shall be located in a visible and well lit area. Overhead weather sheltering of bicycle parking by eaves, awnings, or other similar is encouraged.

**Revise zoning to require that residential developments provide “gardening-appropriate” open spaces**

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Zoning	Economic Environmental Mental Health

			Physical Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Housing developers often do not consider the food growing needs of future building occupants. Open space requirements, particularly for multi-family housing, often result in fragmented remainders of space with little utility or unproductive ornamental landscaping. To maximize peoples' ability to grow their own food, new residential development can require that site designs provide appropriate spaces for gardens. Requirements can specify a minimal required gardening space for each unit that receives adequate light, water and has appropriate soil conditions and establish mechanisms through which future residents will be guaranteed access and use of these spaces.</p>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<p>Model zoning language for home garden requirements:</p> <p><b>Definitions</b>  <i>Home Garden:</i> an area of a single-family or multi-family residence used for the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, plants, flowers, or herbs by the residents of the property, guests of the property owner, or a gardening business hired by the property owner. Produce is grown [primarily] for personal consumption or donation.</p> <p><b>Use Table</b>  <i>Home Garden:</i> permitted by right as an accessory use to all residential uses in [all] zoning districts.</p> <p><b>Home Garden Requirements:</b>  [linked to the use table or bulk requirements, or included as a stand-alone general requirement, or within open space, landscaping or other suitable section.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All residential uses shall be provided with a minimum of 100 continuous square feet per dwelling unit available for use as a home garden. For multi-family uses, this area shall be marked and information on its use shall be provided to residents.</li> <li>• Home garden space may be counted as part of required open space.</li> <li>• Home gardens may be located in [any] required setback.</li> <li>• Fences and structures are permitted as regulated in underlying zoning districts.</li> <li>• Home garden space shall be have soil, water supply, and sunlight access conditions sufficient to support cultivation of typical home garden crops between typical frost-free periods. Garden space shall be of an appropriate slope.</li> </ul>			

- Home gardens shall be located, designed, and maintained so that water and fertilizer will not drain onto adjacent property.
- An area for composting of organic material produced in home gardens shall be designated. Compost materials shall be kept at least [\_\_\_\_ feet] from inhabited structures and in a manner that controls odor, prevents infestation, and minimizes runoff into waterways and onto adjacent properties.

[Some communities may wish to explicitly enable home gardeners in certain districts to sell homegrown produce from their homes, perhaps limited to certain times or overall dollar amounts to ensure the activity is compatible with neighboring uses.]

**Further Reading**

[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban\\_Ag\\_SeedingTheCity\\_FINAL\\_\(CLS\\_20120530\)\\_20111021\\_0.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban_Ag_SeedingTheCity_FINAL_(CLS_20120530)_20111021_0.pdf)

## Additional Strategies

- Plan complete neighborhoods with residences within walking distance of food sources and/or transit supportive densities
- Align state and local grants and incentives with projects that support food access. For example, Smart Growth Districts, Priority Development Areas, MassWorks grants
- For additional Land Use & Urban Design strategies, see the other chapters of the Healthy Community Design Toolkit

# Food Business Infrastructure



# Food Business Infrastructure

Massachusetts communities are increasingly investing in food business infrastructure that supports business development and increases the healthy food options available to residents. Food business infrastructure includes facilities for food processing and storage and equipment and mechanisms for getting food to consumers. Through business incubation in shared kitchen facilities, Massachusetts' Commonwealth Kitchen, the Western Massachusetts Processing Center, and Stockpot Malden are spurring food business development and workforce training initiatives that are improving healthy food options. Statewide recommendations of the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan<sup>29</sup> identify the opportunity to utilize empty facilities for expanded food processing, and it calls for inventorying infrastructure and encouraging food business activities.

Municipalities can facilitate developing food business infrastructure development, and particularly with larger initiatives, they should do so in coordination with regional and statewide efforts. Projects that would warrant regional coordination would include development or redevelopment projects for aggregation, storage and distribution facilities that would serve multiple municipalities. Small-scale projects, like opening kitchens in municipal facilities to residents interested in starting a food business, or hunger relief organizations, could extend valuable and underutilized resources that would have local economic and health benefits.

## Key Strategies

Create Food Innovation Districts			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Expert Opinion	Metropolitan Core Communities Streetcar Suburbs Major Regional Urban Centers	Master Plan Municipal Policies Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Physical Health Social

<sup>29</sup> Processing Goals, Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan. (2015) Massachusetts Food Policy Council, Retrieved from: <http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>

	Sub-Regional Urban Centers Mature Suburbs Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs		
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Food Innovation Districts are clusters of food-oriented businesses and related activities that leverage the collaborative benefits that come with being located near one another. These business districts often include markets, food business incubators, common storage, packaging facilities, and distribution services. In addition to hosting food production-oriented businesses, they also include community elements such as harvesting and gleaning programs and community kitchens. They foster business collaboration, sharing knowledge, resources and services, marketing and promotional efforts, and as a result improve opportunities for startup firms to grow and thrive. Beyond this, Food Innovation Districts also enable communities to redevelop underutilized facilities and infrastructure; increase the demand for local farm products; increase the potential for regional availability and distribution of healthy foods, and thereby support resident health; and can become distinguishing features of communities and can attract additional community investments.</p> <p>Food Innovation Districts are a major development or redevelopment undertaking, and can be realized with the significant commitment and planning by a broad range of stakeholders, including elected municipal officials, planners, economic development specialists, and community champions. Especially where Food Innovation Districts facilitate food entrepreneurship and distribution across municipal boundaries, regional planning agencies should be engaged. The toolkit, Food Innovation Districts: An Economic Gardening Tool<sup>30</sup> offers guidance on the development process. Food Innovation District development requires a coordinated effort that includes developing a common vision, identifying potential sites and existing community assets, determining demand and opportunities for types of food business, and addressing zoning, financing, and overall feasibility. The multiple economic, public health, and placemaking benefits of Food Innovation Districts are the primary motivations for</p>			

<sup>30</sup> Food Innovation Districts: An Economic Gardening Tool. (2013) Patty Cantrell, Kathryn Colasanti, Laura Goddeeris, Sarah Lucas, and Matt McCauley, Michigan State University Urban Planning Practicum. Retrieved from: <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/uploads/files/fid-guide.pdf>

developing these in communities.

### Resources:

#### Resource Guide:

Food Innovation Districts: An Economic Gardening Tool (2013)

<http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/fid-guide>

#### Example:

Greenfield, Massachusetts

<http://www.fccdc.org/about-the-center>

The Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC), and its food business incubator, the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center (WMFPC) are the anchor entities of the Greenfield's food innovation district. They are accompanied by a range of other businesses. Real Pickles and Katalyst Kombucha got their start as tenants of the WMFPC; Lefty's Brewery joined as a neighbor; and Our Family Farms, and Equal Exchange became office tenants of the FCCDC Venture Center. Franklin County Community Meals, a food access organization is also located here. And, within the WMFPC over 45 food businesses are tenants of the processing center and business incubator. FCCDC and the WMFPC partners with Greenfield Community College, the Regional Employment Board and local prison on food system-related workforce training and education. Important regional partnerships with Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture and the PV Grows Investment Fund support business development, financing and technical assistance for businesses of the food innovation district.

## Additional Strategies

- Assess opportunities for shared use of commercial kitchens in community facilities:
  - Across the Commonwealth, enterprising residents have established processing and distribution facilities that transform raw ingredients into other forms of food. These facilities tend to have large commercial kitchens that could be opened up for shared use by community members for cooking and nutrition training as well as incubators to support new food

entrepreneurs who lack kitchen space to create their food products. Municipalities could support shared use commercial kitchens by providing business development technical assistance; conducting regulatory reviews to identify and address regulations that pose barriers to opening the facilities for shared use; and addressing other barriers, such as obtaining insurance.

- Leverage Points: Municipal Programs and Actions, Municipal Policies
- Food Hubs:
  - A food hub is an entity that aggregates, processes, and markets food from small to mid-size farms providing larger scale distribution and wider access to food markets than what these farms could do individually. Food hubs can potentially increase availability of healthy, local foods for community institutions such as schools as well as enhance the local economy of municipalities as they provide additional jobs for residents and bolster local farms. Municipalities can support these hubs by providing business development technical assistance, economic development grants, and low cost lots or buildings for use.
  - Pioneer Valley Commission Understanding of Food Hubs Fact Sheet: <http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/PVPC-Food%20Hubs.pdf>
  - National Good Food Network Food Hubs: <http://www.ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs>
  - Leverage Points: Municipal Programs and Actions, Municipal Policies



# Transportation



# Transportation

Transportation plays a significant role affecting families' ability to access healthy food. It is the whole transportation system that matters, but especially whether or not there is regular, reliable, affordable public transportation (especially in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and households living without access to a car), how many people lack access to a car (and whether or not there is access to car-sharing services such as zip car), and whether or not the built environment is safe and comfortable for walking and/or bicycling to food retail outlets (and whether or not there is a bike share system made affordable to economically disadvantaged households).<sup>31</sup>

A study<sup>32</sup> by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that 2.2 % of all households or approximately 2.3 million households in the U.S. live more than a mile from a supermarket and do not have access to a car. An additional 3.2% of households (3.4 million) live between one-half and one-mile from a grocery store and do not have access to a car. It is likely that these same households also do not have access to a community garden or farmer's market.

Developing new food outlets in communities with poor access to food is often difficult because that often relies on action from the private sector. Municipalities can, however, take action to strengthen the transportation system leading to and from existing food infrastructure.

Many supermarkets are currently sited on major arterial roads that large numbers of cars at fast speeds. These roads can be both unpleasant and dangerous to walk alongside or ride a bicycle on. A range of built environment strategies to enhance active transportation will also improve food access.<sup>33</sup> Complete Street improvements—that help to slow traffic on these roads, while also providing space for bicyclists and pedestrians—should be prioritized in locations with significant gaps or barriers between residential neighborhoods and shopping outlets that have healthy food. Car-sharing and bike-share systems should also be encouraged.

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<sup>31</sup> Baek et al and NARC report

<sup>32</sup> United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service. "Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences." June 2009. [http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/242675/ap036\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/242675/ap036_1_.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Tach Amorim

The average grocery shopping trip takes place at supermarket approximately 3 miles from where the shopper lives<sup>34</sup> and the average transit trip for bus, light rail and street car is under five miles.<sup>35</sup> Additionally 30% of those that are food-insecure do not own their own vehicle. Prioritizing new transit routes and improvements in frequencies along routes that connect residential areas to food outlets is crucial to ensuring that these food-insecure populations can obtain fresh foods. Reevaluating on-board transit policies that restrict the number of bags or the use of a small folding cart, should also be evaluated to ensure that they are not prohibiting transit as a mode of travel to get food. In Massachusetts, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) develop the annual budgets for transportation expenditures in each region of the Commonwealth.<sup>36</sup> Communities are represented by the MPO in a variety of formats.

Ensuring that people do not have to rely on a private vehicles to get to a grocery store, by making the pedestrian and bicycle environment more friendly and by ensuring that transit is both convenient and affordable can have positive impacts beyond increasing access to fresh food by also increasing levels of active transportation which has been linked with positive health outcomes.

An MPO is a regional transportation policy-making organization consisting of representatives from local government, regional transit operators, and state transportation agencies. Federal legislation passed in the early 1970s required the formation of an MPO for any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000.

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<sup>34</sup> Ver Ploeg, Michele, Lisa Mancino, Jessica E. Todd, Dawn Marie Clay and Benjamin Scharadin. *“Where Do Americans Usually Shop for Food and How Do They Travel To Get There? Initial Findings from the National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Study.”* United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service. March 2015.

<sup>35</sup> American Public Transportation Association “2013 Public Transportation Fact Book.” <  
<http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Documents/FactBook/2013-APTA-Fact-Book.pdf>>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/planning/Main/PlanningProcess/RegionalPlanning.aspx>

## Key Strategies

### Work with MPO to ensure that healthy community design standards are integrated into project review/funding decision process

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	RPA Policies	Economic Environmental Injury Prevention Physical Health Social

#### Description:

As noted above, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a regional transportation policy-making organization consisting of representatives from local government, regional transit operators, and state transportation agencies. Federal legislation passed in the early 1970s required the formation of an MPO for any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000. In Massachusetts, the 13 MPOs are staffed by the 13 Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) in the Commonwealth (<http://www.apa-ma.org/resources/massachusetts-regional-planning-agencies>). Each MPO is empowered by federal legislation, rules and guidance to establish a system for ranking proposed transportation projects in the region. These 'ranking systems' can include consideration of food access. The Nashville MPO was recognized in 2012 as a leader integrating public health into their MPO decision-making process. From 2014-2016 the Kresge Foundation funded a 2-year initiative, "Planning for a Healthier Future Collaborative", including the Nashville MPO and Seattle WA, Portland OR and San Diego CA (as well as some examples from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) (<http://t4america.org/2016/06/22/introducing-planning-for-a-healthier-future/>) to "summarize best practices in the development of health, equity and environmental measures that can be used to evaluate the performance of transportation investments at a regional scale."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Planning for a Healthier Future, Transportation for America June 2016

Food access is not a major focus of this work, but it does come up in the category of "Access to opportunities" as well as in the emphasis on preserving agricultural lands. The integration of health considerations is more about balancing walking and bicycling with motorized modes and with respect to food access, the work factors in agricultural land lost or potentially lost in transportation development projects. There is a focus on "Access to Opportunities", which emphasizes access to jobs, and does include a category "Access to Other Opportunities" which is defined as: "Household access to grocery stores, healthcare facilities, and parks/recreation facilities by each mode within a set amount of time."<sup>38</sup> The report identifies the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and SEMCOG as resources for more information on factoring food access into MPO work.

In MA, both the PVPC and MAPC are factoring health into their ranking procedure. In the Pioneer Valley, food access is not specifically called out, but it could be 'written in'. MAPC emphasizes the importance of a variety of transportation options, including active transportation options like walking and biking, and the potential for transportation modes to improve access to services, jobs, and other opportunities.

**Resources:**

PVPC [www.pvpc.org](http://www.pvpc.org), contact Andrew McCaul, 413/781-6045

SEMCOG--Access to Core Services in Southeast Michigan Jan 2016

file:///C:/Users/cratte/Downloads/AccessToCoreServicesInSoutheastMichiganJanuary2016.pdf

PSRC <http://www.psrc.org/about/>

<http://t4america.org/2016/06/22/introducing-planning-for-a-healthier-future/>

## Ensure food pantries are accessible by transit and active transportation

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Walking, Biking and	Environmental

<sup>38</sup> ibid p. 16

		Transit Networks Municipal Programs and Actions	Injury Prevention Mental Health Physical Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Food pantries are one important source of emergency food for residents experiencing food shortages. In many municipalities, particularly rural or suburban areas with limited transit options, pantries may be located in areas that are not easily accessible for residents. Food systems advocates and municipal officials can consider working with their regional transit authorities to add transit stops or bus lines to difficult to access food pantries. They can also work with organizations considering establishing food pantries and use GIS and mapping tools to strategically site pantries in locations that are more easily accessible for residents. Municipalities can also assess conditions around current pantries and prioritize changes to the built environment such as the addition or repair of sidewalks or the feasibility of adding bike lanes to the area. Food system advocates and municipalities can also consider working with entities to establish mobile food pantries including addressing any regulatory barriers that permit the establishment and use of mobile food trucks.</p>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<p><i>Food Bank of Western Massachusetts Web Maps</i></p> <p>These online maps, produced by PVPC, are an example of the kind of GIS support that a municipality or a regional planning agency can provide to food pantry organization. The maps show food sites in Western MA overlaid with food security information and transit stops:  <a href="http://pvpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicGallery/index.html?appid=86db957e68484aa5896919d939acf2e2&amp;group=e4beca537fff4769bb874574f545e3d6">http://pvpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicGallery/index.html?appid=86db957e68484aa5896919d939acf2e2&amp;group=e4beca537fff4769bb874574f545e3d6</a></p>			

## Additional Strategies

- Prioritize food access when planning and building Complete Streets. Streets that link dense neighborhoods to daily essentials like grocery stores should be prioritized for multi-modal improvements.
- Prioritize food access when making improvements to transit systems

- Eliminate restrictions on number of grocery bags that can be carried on transit
- Expand transit access across Massachusetts, especially in areas not served by the MBTA

# Farmland Preservation & Viability





# Farmland Preservation & Viability

“No Farms, No Food.” This bumper sticker slogan provides a frank statement on why preserving local farmland is so important in creating healthy communities. Massachusetts is fortunate to have some of the most productive farmland in New England and a rich history of food production for local markets. Unfortunately, this finite resource continues to be converted to development – a permanent loss that compromises our ability to feed ourselves with healthy and locally grown food. Instead, we increasingly send food money far outside Massachusetts and receive industrialized products that have traveled thousands of miles, with accompanying loss of nutrition and flavor.

Local food production may impact food access in several ways. First, local food production often increases the diversity of local food availability—local farms often grow a greater diversity of crops than are available in supermarkets. Second, local food production often increases the number and spatial distribution of opportunities to purchase healthy food in a community. For example, farms often sell direct through farm stands, farmers markets, mobile markets, food deliveries, and community supported agriculture (CSA). Where they are in convenient to access, these markets can reduce transportation and shopping time. Third, some local farms directly support food access for those most in need. They donate excess produce to food pantries, or providing reduced cost CSA shares. Finally, local food production strengthens local economies and creates jobs. The economic impacts may increase the ability to purchase food for would-be farm workers and those who benefit from their spending. Visit the *Local Food Impact Calculator* recently developed by CISA to see how your food spending may impact local jobs (<http://www.buylocalfood.org/buy-local/local-food-calculator/>).

Several factors contribute to our farmland loss – agricultural competition from outside the region, tax policy, high land prices, and the aging of New England’s farm families are among them. But the biggest culprit that we can control is wasteful land use, encouraged (and often required) by outdated zoning and subdivision laws. This section presents strategies for improving local land use laws and taking advantage of state programs that provide funding for farmland preservation.

Preserving farmland has many benefits beyond providing access to healthy food. Farmland is green space, contributing to community character. Farms contribute to environmental systems, and provide food and cover for wildlife. Farmland is a fiscal benefit to local government, and money earned by local farms from local sources stays in the community. And farmland provides jobs on the farm and in support services or businesses, including Massachusetts’s robust tourism sector. Along with food security, these reasons and more make preserving local farmland of the greatest importance.

# Key Strategies

## Adopt Community Preservation Act; use funding to preserve farmland

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Master Plan OSRP	Environmental Mental Health

**Description:**

The Community Preservation Act (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) allows municipalities that accept its provisions to create a Community Preservation Fund by assessing a surcharge of up to 3% on annual real estate taxes and to appropriate monies in that fund for open space/recreation, historic resource and affordable housing purposes. Communities that impose the surcharge also receive additional monies for their special fund from a state trust fund created by imposing a surcharge on documents recorded at the Registry of Deeds or Land Court.

**Use of Funds**

Funds raised by CPA are administered by a locally-created [Community Preservation Committee](#), which reviews and makes recommendations on CPA projects to the community’s legislative body. A minimum of 10% of the funds must be spent on each of the three following categories: open space/recreation, historic preservation, and community housing. The remaining 70% of the funds are undesignated, and can be used for any allowable project in these CPA categories.

Specifically, for purposes of healthy communities and food access, CPA funds may be spent on the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, including farmland, and for the rehabilitation or restoration of any open space that has been acquired or created using CPA funds. CPA funds may be also used for the acquisition of land to be used for outdoor recreation, the rehabilitation of existing, outdoor recreational facilities or for the creation of new recreational facilities on land a community already owns. A permanent deed restriction is required for all real property interests acquired under CPA.

Often, communities will use CPA funds as local match money, used to acquire state and federal grants, allowing more expensive projects to be funded. Seekonk permanently

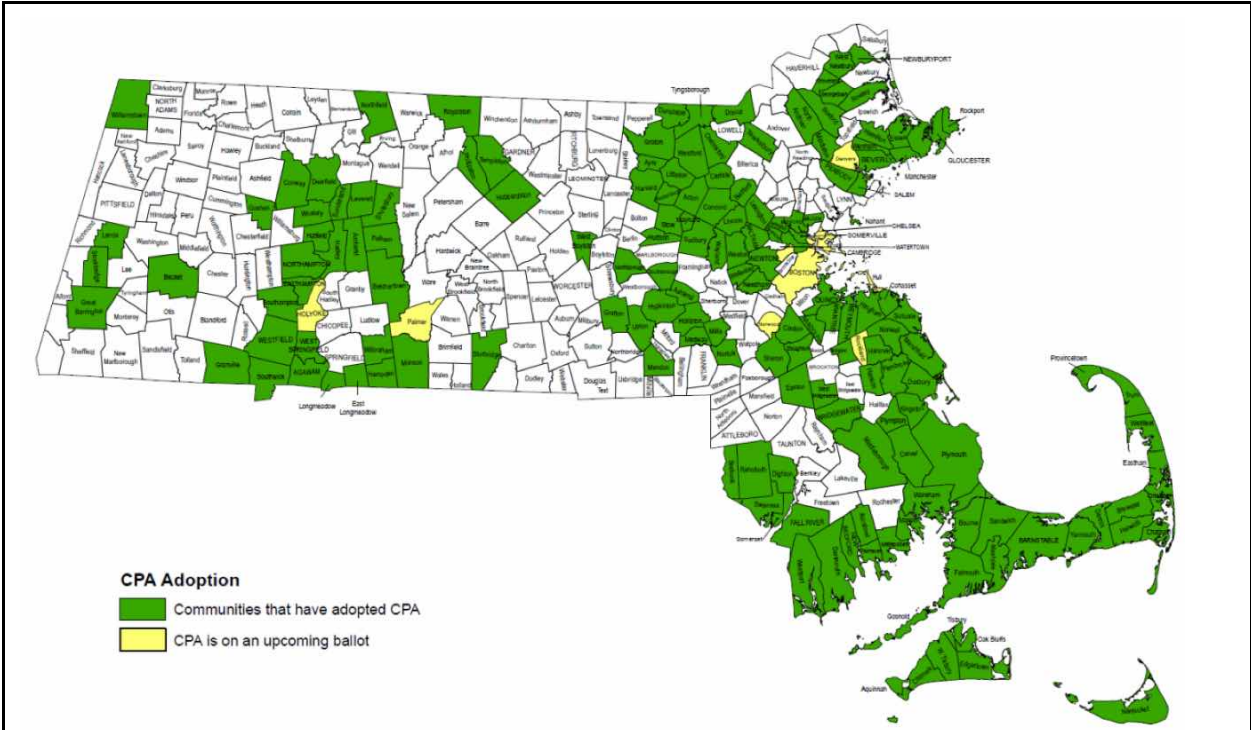
preserved 68 acres of farmland for agricultural purposes using \$147,000 of CPA funds to leverage \$588K from the state's Agricultural Preservation Restrictions program to meet the property value appraisal. Communities also find it helpful sometimes to partner with land trusts or other experienced third-party conservation organizations to manage negotiations and hold easements. To negotiate a complex deal to acquire development rights of two parcels comprising the 60-acre Murray Farm in Bridgewater that was under threat of development, the Town turned to the Trust for Public Land. The Trust paid for appraisals, putting together a funding packet, and other project-related costs, while the Town provided \$1.3 million to purchase the development rights - \$882,000 in CPA funds, and \$400,000 from a Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grant provided by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Since the Act's passage in 2000, over \$542.12 million has been distributed from the statewide trust fund to participating communities, helping preserve over 23,000 acres of open space and fund almost 1500 recreation projects. The conservation of historic Elmwood Farm in Hopkinton, 242-acre Cole Property in Carver, and 60-acre Murray Farm in Bridgewater are examples of CPA projects that permanently protect local agricultural land. Hanover's Forge Pond Park, Newburyport's Clipper City Rail Trail, and Hamilton's Patton Park Playground are successful examples of recreation projects.

CPA funds can also be used to build affordable housing. Some CPA housing projects include buildings with non-housing uses on the ground floor. This square footage could be set aside as a small healthy food retail location, providing fresh, healthy options in neighborhoods.

**Adoption**

To date 161 municipalities have adopted the act:



Municipalities must adopt CPA by referendum, placed on the ballot by one of two methods:

*1. Local legislative action.*

The legislative body must pass a resolution accepting G. L. c. 44B, §§ 3 through 7 and approve the amount of the surcharge, which cannot exceed 3%, and spell out any exemptions. A ballot question to approve the acceptance must be placed before the voters at the next regularly scheduled municipal or state election. If the next regularly scheduled election is a municipal election, the legislative body must act in sufficient time to give the city or town clerk at least 35 days advance notice to place the question on the ballot. If the next election is a state election, the secretary of state must receive at least 60 days written notice to place the question on the ballot for that municipality.

The form of the ballot question is set forth in the Act and must read as follows: "Shall the (city or town) accept sections 3 to 7, inclusive of chapter 44B of the General Laws, as approved by its legislative body, a summary of which appears below?" A fair and concise summary of the Community Preservation Act provisions must appear on the ballot underneath the question, prepared by the city solicitor or town counsel. It must include the surcharge percentage approved by the legislative body, and any exemptions. A sample summary appears on the Secretary's website: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elecpcp/cpaidx.htm>

*2. A ballot question petition.*

Voters of the city or town may file a ballot question petition to have a question seeking

acceptance of the act, approval of a specific surcharge percentage and approval of any allowable exemptions to be placed on the ballot. The petition form itself must include the surcharge percentage and any exemptions, if any, proposed for approval. See <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elecpcpa/cpaidx.htm> for sample petition language.

The petition must be signed by at least 5% of the registered voters of the city or town and submitted to the local board of registrars of voters, board of election commissioners or election commission for certification of signatures. The board or commission must certify the signatures within 7 days of filing. If the petition is signed by the required number of voters, the city or town clerk or secretary of state must then place the question on the ballot at the next regular municipal or state election held after certain minimum time periods.

If the question is to appear on a municipal election ballot, petitions must be submitted to the board or commission for certification at least 42 days before the municipal election so that certification can be completed at least 35 days before the election. If the question is to appear on a state election ballot, the petitions must be submitted to the board or commission at least 67 days before the state election so that certification can be completed and notice given to the Secretary of the Commonwealth at least 60 days certification of the signatures. It is advisable for petitioners to submit a petition for certification as early as possible so that there is sufficient time to gather additional signatures should any problems with the signatures be identified in the certification process.

A ballot question proposed by petition should be placed on the ballot in the same form as described under (1) above. Additionally, the city solicitor or town counsel should prepare a fair and concise summary (see link under (1) above), to be printed below the question and includes the surcharge percentage and any exemptions.

### **Surcharge and Exemptions**

The surcharge may not exceed 3%, though this amount is often a big ask for many communities. Those needing to rally public support for CPA often chose amounts of 1% or 1.5%. Adding exemptions also helps encourage support. Any or all of the following exceptions may be included, per Section 2 of the Act:

- Property owned and occupied by a person who would qualify for low income housing (income = or < 80% area mean), or low or moderate income senior housing (60+, income = or < 100% area median);
- Commercial and industrial property in cities or towns with classified tax rates;
- The first \$100,000 of the value of residential property;
- The first \$100,000 of the value of commercial and industrial property.

**Resources:**

**CPA language:**  
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter44B>

**Overview of Community Preservation Act:**  
<http://communitypreservation.org/content/cpa-overview>

**How to accept the CPA:**  
<http://www.communitypreservation.org/content/adoption-overview>  
<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elecpcpa/cpaidx.htm>

**CPA example projects:**  
<http://communitypreservation.org/projectsdatabaseaccess>

Implement Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs Rural Towns	Zoning Master Plan OSRP Housing Plans	Economic Environmental Mental Health
Description:			
<p>A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program consists of separating the right to develop from other property rights, allowing developers to purchase these rights from “sending” areas (those with conservation value) to use for increased development in “receiving” areas (those with development value). Development rights can either be purchased directly from a property in the sending area or through an in-lieu mechanism, which allows applicants to pay a contribution, equal in value to the required development rights, to the Town to be used for future purchases of agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs).</p> <p>TRD helps farms remain viable. Farms get a cash-infusion without losing the right to continue</p>			

to occupy and work the land. The community benefits from additional preserved farmland without having to pay for it. The developer enjoys the right to develop their site more intensely.

In order to be effective, a TDR program requires “receiving” areas with significant development potential, as well as underlying zoning that sufficiently incentivizes use of the TDR provisions. In other words the cost-benefit of using the TRD program needs to work out financially for the developer.

### Resources:

One of the state’s most successful examples of TDR is the “Farmland Preservation Bylaw” subsection of Hadley’s zoning bylaw, where development in the receiving commercial/industrial districts along Route 9 in Hadley often requires the purchase of development rights from landowners within the farmland preservation district in order to meet parking and bulk requirements. The zoning bylaw’s Table of Exchange Standards defines the value of developable farmland rights in terms of bonuses:

*1 acre of developable farmland equals 2,000 square feet of additional commercial or industrial floor area plus a reduction in parking of 20 spaces; 2 additional bedrooms in senior housing developments.*

Local planners cite Hadley’s stringent minimum parking and coverage requirements as driving the TDR mechanism and ensuring its success. Also helpful are the community’s large tracts of high quality farmland in the sending area, coupled with farmers who are interested in providing purchasable development rights. The payment-in-lieu mechanism has been used more often than direct purchase of development rights. It has enabled the Town of Hadley to place APRs on several hundred acres of farmland.

It is worth noting that both of the zoning mechanisms that make the Hadley example viable—the underlying zoning’s high number of required parking spaces and its low lot coverage allowance—are in conflict with strategies outlined elsewhere in the HCDTK to improve walkability.

Hadley’s Farmland Preservation Bylaw is available at:

<http://ecode360.com/13511544>

## Implement true large lot zoning

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Rural Towns Developing Suburbs	Zoning Master Plan	Environmental

### Description:

True large lot zoning, with a minimum lot size of 15 to 25 acres or more, is the most straightforward method of using zoning regulation to protect open tracts of land. Preserving lots of this size can help to ensure that farming on this land is possible in the future. Generally this method is best suited for communities with large areas of existing farm and forest land. Depending on development pressure and existing zoning, there may be political pushback from owners who foresee a depreciation of land values. We are not aware of any communities in Massachusetts that have established minimum lot sizes larger than 5 acres. Rather than focusing on minimum lot size, it may be useful to think about overall density per dwelling unit. Use of Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ) or another form of cluster zoning can increase the functional minimum density in some areas to 5-10 acres per dwelling unit. For example, Shutesbury, MA, which has adopted NRPZ requires a minimum 10 acre lot size if the dwelling is greater than 500 from the roadway. For more information, see the strategy, “Adopt Open Space Design (OSD) / Natural Resource Protection (NRPZ) cluster zoning provisions”

### Resources:

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## Use the state Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs Rural Towns	Zoning Master Plan OSRP	Economic Environmental Mental Health



<b>Description:</b>
<p>The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program, which is intended to offer a non-development alternative to farmers and other owners of "prime" and "state important" agricultural land who are faced with a decision regarding future use and disposition of their farms. The program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction that precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability.</p>
<b>Resources:</b>
<p><i>Massachusetts APR program information:</i>  <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/land-use/agricultural-preservation-restriction-program-apr.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/land-use/agricultural-preservation-restriction-program-apr.html</a></p> <p><i>Online GIS map layer for "prime" farmland</i>          Use the MassGIS Oliver viewer available at:  <a href="http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/oliver.php">http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/oliver.php</a>          Open the Physical Resources folder, then open the Soils folder, then select the "Prime Farmland Soils" layer.</p>

Adopt Open Space Design (OSD) / Natural Resource Protection (NRPZ) cluster zoning provisions			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs Rural Towns	Zoning Master Plan OSRP Housing Plans	Economic Environmental Social
<b>Description:</b>			
A primary benefit of Open Space Design (OSD) and Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ) is permanent preservation of open space at no cost to the municipality while			

providing housing and ensuring an adequate return for the landowner. OSD is thus most often useful where there are remaining large lots with development potential and significant natural resources such as farmland warrant conservation. For landowners and developers it has the benefit of predictable permitting, and reduced costs of construction and maintenance of roads, utilities, and stormwater runoff while maintaining sales prices.

OSD / NRPZ is similar to traditional cluster zoning in that projects use reduced dimensional requirements to cluster development and preserve remaining land. However, OSD/NRPZ seeks to prevent the often unsatisfactory outcome of traditional cluster zoning, where underlying zoning remains a determinant factor, built portions consist of sprawling detached single-use houses, and preserved lands are chosen to suit development convenience rather than for conservation value, functional open space use, or cultural/historic value at the peripheries of subdivisions or meandering in filaments through the site.

Several key features of NRPZ:

- There is no “underlying zoning;” NRPZ is the zoning for the selected area. Subdivisions must comply with NRPZ requirements in order to be a by-right use.
- NRPZ may allow non-subdivision development (i.e., ANR and condominiums). It can also work for non-residential or mixed-use development.
- The number of allowed dwelling units or non-residential floor area is calculated up-front by formula, usually based on the net acreage (that is left after sloped, wetlands, and other restricted land is subtracted), multiplied by a density factor.
- Bonus units may be added for TDR purchases, affordable housing, and other public goods. To further food access, bonus units could be awarded for providing community gardens, food processing facilities, or similar. In addition, bonus units could be provided in return for providing publicly accessible facilities that facilitate physical activity including recreation facilities or access to trails.
- The minimum portion of land to be permanently preserved is set by the ordinance. This might be as high as 60% in farmed or forested areas, but in developed areas suitable for growth because of existing infrastructure and a lack of natural resources, preserved land might be limited to enough to provide neighborhood parks and trails.
- A conservation analysis is used to identify significant natural, cultural, and historic features of the land to be preserved, including viable farmland.
- Development is concentrated using Open Space Design: flexible and reduced dimensional requirements. Duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family buildings may be allowed, while roadway and other infrastructure requirements may be varied within the development.

The diagrams show a rural landscape with various features. The first diagram highlights primary conservation areas with labels: wetlands, hydric and floodprone soils, pond, and steep slopes. The second diagram highlights secondary conservation areas with labels: tall oaks on small knoll, stone wall, field, hemlock grove, grassy glade, woodlands, farmhouse, barn, and views from road. The third diagram shows potential development areas with a dashed red line and a conservation area with a solid red line. The fourth diagram is a 3D perspective view of the site with conservation design.

**Identifying primary conservation areas.**

**Identifying secondary conservation areas.**

**Identifying potential development areas.**

**Site with conservation design.**

**Resources:**

**Model language**  
MA NRPZ model: [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/bylaws/model-osd-nrpz-zoning-final.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/model-osd-nrpz-zoning-final.pdf)  
PVPC OSRD model:  
<http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/Open%20Space%20Residential%20Development%20Model%20Bylaw.docx>

PVPC Conservation Development model:  
<http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/Conservation%20Development%20Model%20Bylaw.docx>

**Example projects**  
[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/SG-CS-osrd.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/SG-CS-osrd.html)

**More information**  
[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/bylaws/green\\_side\\_smart\\_growth\\_nprz.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/green_side_smart_growth_nprz.pdf)  
[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/pages/mod-osrd.html](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-osrd.html)

Allow farms to diversify accessory uses			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs Rural Towns	Zoning Master Plan	Economic Environmental
Description:			
<p>Farms need to be adaptable to exploit new sources of revenue. This helps agricultural uses remain viable and thus competitive with other uses, helping prevent ANR carving of farmland or conversion of farmland to development. Accessory uses to consider allowing by-right or through a special permit process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forestry</li> <li>• Processing of agricultural products and other value-added activities.</li> <li>• Direct marketing of farm products, such as pick your own, farmers’ markets, farm stands, direct sales to outlets such as schools and restaurants, produce auctions, etc.</li> <li>• Farm-based alternative energies and commercial power generation, such as solar farms, windmills, and ethanol production.</li> <li>• Accessory apartments and housing for farm labor.</li> <li>• Bed and breakfasts, farm-based recreational or educational activities, and other agri-tourism uses.</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary or repeating festivals, shows, events, auctions, camps, flea markets.</li> <li>• Rental of land or buildings for businesses not related to farm production: e.g. equipment storage, parking, cold storage, small office uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources:</b>

Allow farm stands & farm retail as by-right uses			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Zoning Master Plan	Economic Physical Health
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Farmers can have difficulty getting a foot into stores selling local products, particularly for new farmers in farm-rich areas. Farmers’ markets are a great way to connect directly with local consumers, but these have limited days and hours, rules about the need for products to originate on the seller’s land and frequently cap the number of vendor spots for products. A roadside stand has none of these restrictions, can provide an important source of income for farmers and local employment if business is steady, and might offer discounted prices for blemished produce.</p> <p>M.G.L. 40A Section 3 exempts the sale of produce, wine, and dairy products on commercial farms, provided that 25% of the products have been produced by the landowner or lessee. The exemption is limited to parcels of 5 acres, or 2 acres if the gross sales generated are at least \$1000 per acre annually.</p> <p>We recommend zoning by-laws make this exemption explicit, allowing farm stands as by-right uses in districts which permit commercial agriculture. To address concerns about farm stands becoming <i>de facto</i> convenience stores and large markets, a special permit might be required for the sale of products not raised in the town. Additionally, zoning regulations regarding parking or signage could be relaxed for farm stand uses. Applying the signage and parking regulations that would be used for a small store could be particularly onerous for a small farm with a stand on the property.</p>			

**Resources:**

Hadley’s zoning bylaw provides example language in its Right to Farm by-law and zoning Use Table:

75-2 Definitions

B. "Farming" shall encompass activities including but not limited to the following:

(4) Conducting agriculture-related educational and farm-based recreational activities, including agri-tourism, provided that the activities are related to marketing the agricultural output or services of the farm;

(5) Processing and packaging of the agricultural output of the farm and the operation of a farmer's market or farm stand;

(6) Maintenance, repair, or storage of seasonal equipment or apparatus owned or leased by the farm owner or manager used expressly for the purpose of propagation, processing, management, or sale of agricultural products, insofar as not in conflict with Town bylaws;

Use	District			Standards
	Agriculture - Residential	Residential	Business	
Farm or nursery, including the display and sale of natural products raised in the Town and the raising of stock.	P	N	P	Except as limited by uses permitted by SZBA.
Farm stand for the display and sale of natural products not raised in the Town.	SPB	N	P	

Hadley’s Right to Farm zoning bylaw:

<http://ecode360.com/14396249>

Hadley’s Use Table:

<http://ecode360.com/attachment/HA2892/HA2892-ZBa%20Table%20of%20Uses.pdf>

## Identify opportunities for food production on publicly controlled land

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	OSRP Master Plan Land management plans	Physical Health Social

### Description:

Placing food production close to resident populations helps promote healthy food alternatives. In many communities, especially those in urban and developed areas, there is limited land available for food production. Communities should identify under-used public and private non-profit land that could be used for community food production, institutions that could undertake and oversee production, and any ways to recuperate associated costs. Sites for food production might include portions of parkland, cemeteries, school yards, rights of way, government buildings, libraries, community centers and publicly controlled vacant land, open space, or woodlands. Schools, neighborhood groups, community garden organizations, cooperatives, and small-scale farmers might be given access to the land, with costs recuperated thru produce sales, rental fees, or other means. Efforts could be encoded in Open Space and Recreation Plans and land management plans.

### Resources:

*Help Yourself!, Pioneer Valley, MA*  
 “Help Yourself! is a non-profit that plants orchards and gardens in public places in the Pioneer Valley of western MA. Maintained by volunteers from the community, all the food is free for anyone to harvest. We work to inspire interest and excitement about perennial agriculture, food access and land use, while forging connections between our communities and the land we are a part of.” The group has planted food producing plants in numerous public spaces including along rail trails, on the lawns of public buildings, and at public housing.  
<http://commongreen.weebly.com/>

## Effectively use a community’s right of first refusal to acquire agricultural land that is coming out of Chapter 61A program

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs Rural Towns	Municipal Programs and Actions	Environmental Economic

### Description:

By enrolling land into the Chapter 61A program, property owners are taxed at a substantially lower rate in exchange for keeping their land in agricultural production. In exchange, the farmer is subject to fees and back taxes if the land is converted to non-agricultural uses within a ten-year time period or within one year after the land is removed from the Chapter 61A program. This program makes farming more economically viable as the value of land and corresponding property taxes continue to rise.

We did not find evidence that Chapter 61A directly contributes to increased food access at the population level. However, this program supports continued agriculture in communities across the state, with associated environmental and economic co-benefits, including:

- The preservation of open spaces
- Less food being shipped from other places, thus, lowering carbon emissions from the food sector
- A more resilient community
- More money circulated in the local economy
- The preservation of local jobs

### Challenges with the Chapter 61A Program

Land in the Chapter 61A program that is being sold or converted to residential, commercial or industrial uses triggers a right of first refusal (ROFR) that benefits the municipality. The municipality is given 120 days to determine if they would like to acquire the land. If the land is being converted without sale, the municipality can purchase the land at full and fair market value—as determined by an independent appraiser. If the land is being sold, the municipality can make a bona fide offer based off an executed purchase and sale agreement that is included in the notification packet. In most instances, municipalities are not able to take



advantage of this first right of refusal. The most common barriers include a lack of funding to buy the parcels and the inability to take action within the short time frame outlined in Chapter 61's language.

**Potential Solutions to the barriers limiting municipalities' execution of their right of first refusal**

- Evaluate Chapter 61A lands in the municipality and prioritize which would be of greatest importance to the town. The parcels should be identified and ranked based on agreed-upon criteria and food access should be prioritized. For example, a community may prioritize productive and economically viable farmland, or land that is in close proximity to populations of need. The resulting prioritized list of potential 61A acquisitions can help the community respond more quickly to the right of first refusal notice when received. The prioritized list can also be used to initiate outreach to selected landowners to better understand their future intentions and timeline. Some municipalities decide to incorporate this ranking and process into their Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).
- Formalize a process for responding to Chapter 61A notifications. This process should identify a point-person who will shepherd the notification through the process and map out which town committees are required to take action in what order. The formalized process should ensure that the community is able to respond to the notification within the 120 day time period. See the resources section for an example of how Stow, MA has formalized their process.
- Create a Conservation Fund for the express purpose of acquiring land that becomes available through the Chapter 61A right of first refusal. Conveyance and roll back taxes collected from Chapter 61A land that is converted could be directed to this fund instead of the general fund to be used for future acquisitions.
- Explore the feasibility of using Community Preservation Act funding to acquire lands that trigger the right of first refusal.
- Develop relationships with local conservation organizations before land becomes available. This partnership can be valuable as the municipality can formally assign the right of first refusal to the organization if the municipality does not have the means or desire to acquire the land.
- Given the challenges communities face in acquiring land that is coming out of Chapter 61A, some people question whether the program is actually effective at preserving farmland over the long-term. Municipalities could work together to advocate for revisions to Chapter 61A in order to make it a more effective program.

**Case Study:****Mainstone Farm- Wayland, MA<sup>39, 40</sup>**

The preservation of the Mainstone Farm is a good example of a proactive partnership between the municipality, local land trust and owners of the property. The Hamlen Family in Wayland, MA has owned and actively farmed over 200 acres of land since the 1870s. This land is currently part of the Chapter 61A program and was of value to the Town of Wayland and the Sudbury Valley Trustees. The Town and SVT were able to work collaboratively with the land owners to ensure that the land stays as an agricultural use well into the future. The land owners were willing to sell the town a perpetual conservation restriction on the land, which was assessed for \$17 million, for \$15 million.

In order to cover the costs, voters in the town of Wayland voted to commit \$12 million in CPA funds towards the conservation restriction and the Sudbury Valley Trustees were responsible for raising the remaining \$3.3 million--\$3 million of which would go towards paying for the purchase of the conservation restriction and \$300,000 to pay for the compliance monitoring of the restriction. By working with the trust and the land owners long before they opted to take their land out of the Chapter 61A program, the town was able to preserve the 200 acres of land. Additionally, because the land is still privately owned, the town avoids the ongoing costs associated with maintaining the land and will still receive the taxes that they would normally receive under the Chapter 61A program.

**Resources:**

Stow, Massachusetts. *"Town of Stow Chapter 61 Review Process Guidelines"*. November 2008.  
< [http://www.stow-ma.gov/pages/StowMA\\_Conservation/Chapter61Procedure.pdf](http://www.stow-ma.gov/pages/StowMA_Conservation/Chapter61Procedure.pdf) >

Sudbury Valley Trust. *"What's Next? Protecting Land After Chapter 61 Withdrawal Presentation."* March 2016.  
<<http://sudburyvalleytrustees.org/sites/default/files/imce/20/ch61.pdf> >

University of Massachusetts at Amherst Outreach and Highland Communities Initiative.  
*"Connecting People and Partners: A Town's Guide to Land Conservation."*  
<<https://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/pdf-doc->

<sup>39</sup> Sudbury Valley Trustees. "Mainstone Farm: Frequently Asked Questions."  
<<http://www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org/land-protection/mainstone-farm/mainstone-farm-frequently-asked-questions>>

<sup>40</sup> Sudbury Valley Trustees "Projects: Mainstone Farm." <<http://www.svtweb.org/land-protection/projects/mainstone-farm-0>>

[ppt/connecting\\_people\\_partners\\_1.pdf](#) >

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. *“Conservation and Land Use planning under Massachusetts’ Chapter 61 Laws: A Primer for Cities, Towns & Conservation Organizations.”* November 2007. <[https://masswoods.net/sites/masswoods.net/files/pdf-doc-ppt/Mount\\_Grace\\_Ch61\\_Info.pdf](https://masswoods.net/sites/masswoods.net/files/pdf-doc-ppt/Mount_Grace_Ch61_Info.pdf) >

## Support Community Land Trusts or other property owners (community farms) that offer farm-friendly leases on land

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A. Some Evidence for effectiveness of use of CLTs for housing	All	Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Environmental Physical Health Social

### Description:

As outlined in the *Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan*, “community land trusts are nonprofit, community-based corporations with a place-based membership and commitment to the use and stewardship of land on behalf of the local population.” Traditionally, community land trusts were used to ensure that affordable housing remained in the neighborhood even as market values increased. Today, many community land trusts (CLTs) are expanding into activities related to food access, including providing commercial spaces for local food businesses and land for urban agriculture, community gardens and community farms. This use of CLT land for community gardens has the ability to provide land for farming in environments where the parcels are not big enough to qualify for protection under Chapter 61A or the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program or where those wishing to garden or farm do not have the resources to secure a parcel of land themselves.

Because gardening can be out of the scope of what CLTs traditionally do, there are a number of challenges that can arise. These include:

- Reasonable ground lease rates may not be enough to cover CLT operating costs, which can be higher than housing-related operating costs, due to the additional time it takes to organize and operate the agricultural uses.
- There may be potential gaps in the CLT’s core competencies. Many CLTs are knowledgeable in the arena of housing, but do not have technical expertise related to agricultural production.

- Hesitation from the board to step out of the CLT's traditional scope of work.

Municipalities may be able to help CLTs overcome some of these common challenges by:

- Providing administrative and financial support to new CLTs or CLTs that are broadening their mission to include agriculture ventures
- Donating or selling excess city land at a discount to CLTs

Using Community Land Trusts for agriculture shares many of the same benefits as other urban agriculture efforts including improved access to nutritious food, ecological restoration, the creation or maintenance of open spaces, and potential opportunities for education and job training. CLTs can also bring together diverse populations, build social capital, and promote empowerment through community building. The unique benefit of the CLT model for small-scale community agriculture is its ability to preserve land for agriculture which may not be eligible for other state agricultural preservations, (e.g. an APR or Chapter 61A).

#### Resources:

- Emmeus Davis, John and Rick Jacobus. *"The City-CLT Partnership: Municipal Support for Community Land Trusts."* Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. 2008. [http://www.burlingtonassociates.com/files/5513/4463/2126/2-City-CLT\\_Partnership\\_-\\_Municipal\\_Support\\_for\\_CLTs.pdf](http://www.burlingtonassociates.com/files/5513/4463/2126/2-City-CLT_Partnership_-_Municipal_Support_for_CLTs.pdf) >
- Rosenberg, Greg and Jeffrey Yuen. *"Beyond Housing: Urban Agriculture and Commercial Development by Community Land Trusts."* Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. 2012. <http://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/paper-rosenberg-yuen.pdf> >
- National Community Land Trust Network. *"Agricultural Resources."* <http://cltnetwork.org/topics/agriculture-non-residential-projects/> >
- National Community Land Trust Network. *"Beyond Housing: National CLT Network Non-Residential Project Directory."* April 2013. <http://cltnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/FINAL-Non-residential-project-directory-4-26-13-1.pdf> >

# Community Gardening & Urban Agriculture



# Community Gardening & Urban Agriculture

Community gardening and urban agriculture include small scale crop cultivation and livestock raising in a variety of settings – from rural to urban. Community gardening takes place in shared plots or at schools, and supports growing food for personal consumption, educational purposes, and fosters community interactions. Urban agriculture typically describes commercial food production within more densely populated communities. Seeking to maximize efficient production in smaller spaces, urban farmers grow on ground-level farms, as well as vertical surfaces, rooftops, and even shipping containers; they employ techniques for growing intensively and in managed microclimates, mitigating soil contamination, and harvesting rainwater.<sup>41</sup> Urban agriculture is integrated in individual urban communities and neighborhoods as well as in the ways that cities function and are managed, including municipal policies, plans, and budgets.<sup>42</sup> In Massachusetts and across the country, support for community gardening and urban agriculture has steadily increased, evident in the growing network of community gardens, schoolyard gardening and culinary programs, innovative urban agriculture enterprises, and backyard gardens.

Those involved in community gardening and urban farming are realizing their community revitalization benefits of growing local food, building community relationships, spurring business and job development, and improving soil quality. Many efforts focus on low-income neighborhoods, and are explicit in improving the local food environment, increasing community quality of life, supporting entrepreneurship, bringing local job opportunities to those that face employment barriers.

Although urban farming has many benefits it also faces many challenges. In more densely populated areas land is scarce and expensive; remediating contaminated soil is costly; zoning and regulations can be difficult to navigate; and limited or no water supplies can prevent or impede agriculture efforts. Given the many benefits of community gardening and urban farming, municipalities can help to address these challenges and find opportunities to support and expand urban agriculture initiatives within their

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<sup>41</sup> Massachusetts Foods System Collaborative. “*Massachusetts Food System Plan*. <http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>. Accessed June 22, 2016

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.fiveboroughfarm.org/what-is-urban-agriculture/>

communities. This section highlights key strategies to support urban farming that municipalities can utilize.

## Key Strategies

### Support agriculture on municipal sites

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Expert Opinion	All	Municipal Policies	Economic Physical Health Social

#### Description:

The community revitalization benefits of community gardening and urban agriculture are motivating increasingly more municipalities to consider how they can support community gardening and agricultural enterprise. These benefits are realized when residents can grow food that is both healthy and represents their diverse cultures; when communities grow strong through shared work; and when urban farmers are able to contribute to increasing local food access and be a part a vibrant network of local entrepreneurs.<sup>43</sup> Massachusetts is one of the main players, setting the stage for innovative urban agriculture solutions and policies – with several cities developing and implementing their own policies.

Municipalities can facilitate community gardening and urban agriculture in a number of ways, including amending zoning, or developing urban agriculture overlay districts when zoning changes are not feasible; including goals for urban agriculture in planning efforts; removing ambiguous regulatory language that could impede urban agriculture; and fostering community dialogue around related public health, soil quality and racial equity issues. Because urban land is mostly built out and vacant areas are expensive, cities should

<sup>43</sup> Growing Urban Agriculture: Equitable Strategies and Policies for Improving Access to Healthy Food and Revitalizing Communities. (2012) PolicyLink. Retrieved from: [http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/URBAN\\_AG\\_FULLREPORT.PDF](http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/URBAN_AG_FULLREPORT.PDF)

proactively identify and connect growers to available municipal spaces for growing and raising food.<sup>44</sup> Experience of other Massachusetts communities should inform new municipal agriculture efforts.

Following are key strategies, part of a comprehensive approach to promote agriculture on municipal sites:

- Develop an urban agriculture ordinance (or an overlay district, where zoning changes are not feasible).<sup>45 46</sup> (see Boston and Springfield examples)
- Inventory and identify municipal sites that can be used for agriculture, and in addition to land, assess where rooftops and underutilized buildings can be used for growing food.<sup>47</sup> (see Boston example)
- Enable permanent use of municipal sites for agriculture through easements, or long-term leases.<sup>48</sup>
- Once identified and dedicated, advertise municipal growing sites to growers.
- Provide services like soil testing, remediation and compost for growing sites, and technical assistance for sites that will require extensive engineering, such a rooftops and buildings.

### Resources:

#### Resource Guides:

Growing Urban Agriculture: Equitable Strategies and Policies for Improving Access to Healthy Food and Revitalizing Communities, PolicyLink

[http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/URBAN\\_AG\\_FULLREPORT.PDF](http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/URBAN_AG_FULLREPORT.PDF)

<sup>44</sup> New England Food Policy: Building a Sustainable Food System. (2014) AFT, CLF, and NESAWG. Retrieved from: [https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New\\_England\\_Food\\_Policy\\_FULL2.pdf](https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New_England_Food_Policy_FULL2.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Municipal Food System Planning Toolkit for MAPC Communities. (2014) CLF, MAPC. Retrieved from: [http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food\\_system\\_guide\\_3-18-14.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food_system_guide_3-18-14.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> New England Food Policy: Building a Sustainable Food System. (2014) AFT, CLF, and NESAWG. Retrieved from: [https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New\\_England\\_Food\\_Policy\\_FULL2.pdf](https://4aa2dc132bb150caf1aa-7bb737f4349b47aa42dce777a72d5264.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/1.New_England_Food_Policy_FULL2.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Urban Farming In Boston: A Survey of Opportunities. (2013) Tufts University. Retrieved from: [http://as.tufts.edu/upep/sites/all/themes/asbase/assets/documents/fieldProjectReports/2013/Team\\_8\\_Final\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://as.tufts.edu/upep/sites/all/themes/asbase/assets/documents/fieldProjectReports/2013/Team_8_Final_Report_2013.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Seeding the City: Land Use Policies to Promote Urban Agriculture. (2011) ChangeLab Solutions. Retrieved from: [http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban\\_Ag\\_SeedingTheCity\\_FINAL\\_\(CLS\\_20120530\)\\_20111021\\_0.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban_Ag_SeedingTheCity_FINAL_(CLS_20120530)_20111021_0.pdf)



Seeding the City: Land Use Policies to Promote Urban Agriculture. ChangeLab Solutions  
[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban\\_Ag\\_SeedingTheCity\\_FINAL\\_\(CLS\\_20120530\)\\_20111021\\_0.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Urban_Ag_SeedingTheCity_FINAL_(CLS_20120530)_20111021_0.pdf)

**Examples:**

Boston – Urban Agriculture Land Inventory  
 Urban Farming In Boston: A Survey of Opportunities. (2013) Tufts University. Retrieved from:  
[http://as.tufts.edu/uep/sites/all/themes/asbase/assets/documents/fieldProjectReports/2013/Team\\_8\\_Final\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://as.tufts.edu/uep/sites/all/themes/asbase/assets/documents/fieldProjectReports/2013/Team_8_Final_Report_2013.pdf)

**Model Language:**

See the Appendix for an example of a Community Gardening Bylaw

Boston – Urban Agriculture Ordinance, Article 89  
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/planning-initiatives/urban-agriculture-rezoning>  
 This links to two resources, Article 89, (the legal document for urban agriculture zoning changes) and a user’s guide, “Article 89 Made Easy: Demystifying the City’s New Zoning Article for Urban Agriculture”

<b>Encourage Community Gardens</b>			
<b>Strength of Evidence:</b>	<b>Community Types:</b>	<b>Leverage Points:</b>	<b>Co-benefits:</b>
Some Evidence	All	Municipal Programs & Actions Zoning Master Plan	Economic Environmental Physical Health Mental Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
Community gardens provide opportunities for members of the community to come together to use land to grow food. Community gardens can take many shapes and sizes—ranging from a small parcel to hundreds of acres. Community gardens can have immense benefits,			

including providing food access to those that may not otherwise have access to healthy fresh food. A study<sup>49</sup> out of Hood River, Oregon found that before introducing community gardens and resources to 42 low-income families, 31.2% had reported sometimes or frequently worrying about food running out before there was money available to buy more. After two gardening seasons, only 3.1% of those families had reported potential food insecurity.

Community gardens also have the potential to give purpose to vacant lots. This provides the opportunity to increase safety in communities and boost the property values of those parcels around it. Community gardens can also function as a hub of the community boosting civic pride and social interactions among residents. There are numerous environmental benefits to community gardens including increased green space, greater ability to capture stormwater and runoff, reduced heat island effects and reduced emissions due to the reduction of food needing to be trucked in.

#### **Ways that municipalities can promote community gardens:<sup>50</sup>**

- Create a municipal community garden program that is funded by the municipality and managed by municipal staff.
- Use municipal open space funds to ensure the long term tenure of the land.
- Municipal employees can strengthen the success of the gardens by hosting educational programming and technical assistance with gardening.
- Create a municipally funded non-profit organization to manage and expand community garden program or partner with an existing non-profit to bolster ongoing efforts.
  - Non-profits can be instrumental in carrying out programmatic efforts that ensure that those most likely to be food insecure have the skills and resources necessary to successfully participate in a community garden. These efforts could include:
    - Reserving a set number of plots in the community for low-income families
    - Offering low-income families and the elderly discounted rates on plots of land

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<sup>49</sup> Patricia A. Carney, PhD, Janet L. Hamada, MSW, Rebecca Rdesinski, MSW, MPH, Lorena Sprager, Katelyn R. Nichols, BS, Betty T. Liu, Joel Pelayo, Maria Antonia Sanchez, and Jacklien Shannon, PhD. *“Impact of a Community Gardening Project on Vegetable Intake, Food Security and Family Relationships: A Community-Based Participatory Research Study.”* Journal of Community Health. August 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Local Government Commission. *“Cultivating Community Gardens: The Role of Local Government in Creating Healthy, Livable Neighborhoods.”*

- Offering information sessions on how to use your garden plot most effectively
- Creating a shared tool library that is available to all members of the garden
- Working with local business or organizations to get seeds or starts donated Include community gardens as a goal or strategy in the municipality’s comprehensive plan.
- Ensure that zoning does not prohibit the creation of community gardens by allowing community gardens as a by-right use in the all districts. Towns could also elect to adopt a Community Gardening Ordinance. See Resource Section for Springfield’s Community Gardening Ordinance.
- Create a community garden policy committee.
- Create an inventory of vacant land and open space within the community that could be used to identify parcels that may be worth pursuing for community garden expansions. See the Resource Section for a report that highlights how this process was done in the City of Springfield, MA.
  - The following should be considered when looking for locations to site community gardens<sup>51</sup>:
    - The site needs to get at least six hours of direct sunlight a day in the spring, summer and fall
    - Soil should be tested both to determine its nutrient levels and for possible contamination.
    - The site should have access to water
    - The site should be easily accessible for those that it is intended to be used by
    - The site should have a place to store tools and compost if those types of items are to be shared by the gardeners
    - The site should be visible in order to reduce the potential for theft or vandalism and to build community support for the garden

There should a management plan in place to ensure that the plots are being actively gardened and the community spaces within the garden are being maintained. Plant edible trees (fruit and nuts) instead of ornamental trees on municipally owned land and make the public aware that the food is available for any one. Examples include: Grow Food

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<sup>51</sup> Bill McKelvey. *Community Gardening Toolkit: A resource for planning, enhancing and sustaining your community gardening project*. University of Missouri Extension Program.

Northampton, Portland Fruit Tree Project and the Seattle Beacon Food Forest.

### Case Study:

#### Case Study:

##### **Springfield, MA Community Gardening Ordinance** *(Municipally-driven process)*

The City of Springfield adopted a Community Gardening Ordinance in 2012. It outlines the process for establishing community gardens within the city. The ordinance identifies a number of procedures that make starting a community garden in the city easier. These include the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission waiving sewer disposal fees for sites that are used for gardening and the City providing a truck load of compost at the beginning of the season, to community gardens that request it.

The ordinance also establishes a community gardening point person on the Springfield Food Policy Council (SFPC) that will act as a liaison between the community gardeners and the various city departments involved. Lastly, the ordinance outlines the process for temporarily securing city-owned land to establish a community garden. The SFPC representative works with City departments of Housing, Parks and Recreation and Planning to identify parcels that would be appropriate for community gardens. Members of the public can then apply through the SFPC for access to garden on these sites. If the garden is maintained in compliance for a complete season, the City can elect to offer a five year agreement to the gardening entity, allowing that land to remain a garden. There are currently fifteen community gardens in the city, a 400% increase since 2014, when three community gardens were identified in “Food in the City”-- a report prepared for the Springfield Food Policy Council Urban Agriculture Committee.

##### **Grown Food Northampton**<sup>54</sup> *(Partnership between Municipality and Non-profit)*

Grow Food Northampton is a non-profit organization in Northampton, Massachusetts that is responsible for operating the state’s largest community farm. The 121 acre farm provides affordable land for farmers and over 250 community garden plots for community members. Programming offered through the farm ensures that children learn about the possibility and value of gardening and eating local food. Additionally, Grow Food Northampton has worked

<sup>54</sup> Grow Food Northampton. < <http://www.growfoodnorthampton.com> > <sup>55</sup> Food For Every Child: The Need For More Supermarkets in Massachusetts. (2010) The Food Trust. Retrieved from: [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/foodforeverychild-ma.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/foodforeverychild-ma.original.pdf)

to ensure that those who are most likely to be food-insecure can take advantage of this community amenity. There are affordable community garden plots, reduced CSA shares and a portion of the crops that are harvested go to local assistance providers.

The Grown Food Northampton movement started when a group of citizen's banded together to advocate for local food production opportunities in the city. When the group found out that the city was pursuing the purchase of the Bean Farm to create recreation sports fields, the group sprang into action to show that this was prime farmland that needed to be preserved. The group was able to engage and collaborate with the city and the Trust for Public Land. They then worked to form a non-profit in order to raise money for the purpose of purchasing the land to create a community farm. After a successful fundraising campaign (raising over \$600,000) Grow Food Northampton was able to purchase the land. The City of Northampton became the largest contributor by prepaying their 198-year lease on the land that would house the community garden plots. GFN also received \$104,500 in Community Preservation Funds to develop the garden. Since then, GFN has strengthened its place in the community by expanding the community garden, offering produce at reduce rates to those most in need, donating tons of produce annually to service organization and offering farms shares, all while preserving this pristine farmland in the heart of the city.

#### Resources:

Local Government Commission. *"Cultivating Community Gardens The Role of Local Government in Creating Healthy, Livable Neighborhoods."*

[http://www.lgc.org/wordpress/docs/freepub/community\\_design/fact\\_sheets/community\\_gardens\\_cs.pdf](http://www.lgc.org/wordpress/docs/freepub/community_design/fact_sheets/community_gardens_cs.pdf)

Bill McKelvey. *"Community Gardening Toolkit: A resource for planning, enhancing and sustaining your community gardening project."* University of Missouri Extension Program < <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/miscpubs/mp0906.pdf>>

Conway School of Design. *"Food in the City: an old way in a new town. A process to assess land suitable for urban agriculture."* Prepared for the Springfield Food Policy Council Urban Agriculture Committee.

<[https://issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/springfield\\_final\\_report\\_issuu\\_ers](https://issuu.com/conwaydesign/docs/springfield_final_report_issuu_ers)>

City of Springfield, MA. *"Chapter 7.70 Community Gardens."* [https://www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/fileadmin/Planning\\_files/Community\\_Gardens2-FINAL\\_2\\_x.pdf](https://www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/fileadmin/Planning_files/Community_Gardens2-FINAL_2_x.pdf)

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. *"Sustainability Toolkit: Understanding Community Gardens."* <<http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/files/PVPC-Community%20Gardens.pdf>>

<b>Establish school gardens</b>			
<b>Strength of Evidence:</b>	<b>Community Types:</b>	<b>Leverage Points:</b>	<b>Co-benefits:</b>
Scientifically Supported	All	Municipal Programs and Actions	Physical Health Mental Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Establishing fruit and vegetable gardens at schools can be another avenue to increase access to healthy foods and educate youth on the importance of healthy eating. Municipalities can support these efforts by encouraging school health and wellness committees to establish school gardens, school committees to adopt food and nutrition curriculum changes that complement school garden programs, and providing sustainable sources of funding to schools for the garden programs.</p>			
<b>Case Study:</b>			
<p><b>Healthy Waltham and Waltham Public Schools</b></p> <p>Founded in 2004, Healthy Waltham is a nonprofit organization in Waltham that works to promote healthy, active lifestyles. The organization has partnered with several schools including McDevitt Middle School, Northeast Elementary School, and Stanley Elementary School to implement learning gardens. These gardens usually include raised beds in which the students plant a variety of veggies, fruits and herbs. The gardens are managed by volunteer, students and staff from the schools. At the Northeast School, the special education and science teachers incorporate lessons about the garden for their students.</p>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<p><i>Massachusetts Horticultural Society The Garden Classroom Program</i>  <a href="https://www.masshort.org/The-Garden-Classroom-Program">https://www.masshort.org/The-Garden-Classroom-Program</a>            Provides tools and guides that can assist schools in the design and installation of on-site gardens.</p> <p><i>Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom</i>  <a href="http://www.aginclassroom.org/#!ag-curriculum/c16ue">http://www.aginclassroom.org/#!ag-curriculum/c16ue</a></p>			

Provides lessons and manuals that educators can use to integrate school gardening into the curriculum.

*CitySprouts Garden-Based Learning*

<http://citysprouts.org/teacher-tools/garden-based-lessons/>

Provides lessons and manuals that educators can use to integrate school gardening into the curriculum. It also includes a teacher’s forum where educators can share and learn about garden based learning.

## Enact Regulation/Ordinances to Encourage the Keeping of Animals

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Expert Opinion	All	Zoning Board of Health Regulations	

### Description:

Local boards of health in Massachusetts have the legal authority and responsibility to protect public health in cities and towns. These boards often face complaints from community members, especially neighbors, relative to noise, odors and other issues surrounding the keeping of animals and the maintenance of farms. While the odor from the normal maintenance of animals or the spreading on manure upon agricultural land or noise from livestock or farm equipment used in normal, generally acceptable farming procedures are not legally considered a nuisance and, therefore permissible, this does not stop conflicts from arising.

As a result, many cities and towns are considering or have enacted local board of health regulations addressing smaller farms and the keeping of animals. Many existing, older Keeping of Animal regulations are challenging for small farms and for backyard farms. These regulations often arbitrarily set maximum numbers of animals allowed and unnecessarily regulate issues of animal health, which is already regulated by the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), the MA Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Rescue League of Massachusetts.

However, the Town of Reading adopted animal regulations that utilize the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR’s) “Best Management Practices” as guidelines. Reading’s

regulations permit applicants to demonstrate how they will meet these guidelines. The City of Cambridge has proposed ordinances that address the keeping of bees, hens and small animals through zoning and health ordinances. The City of Everett has also proposed an ordinance addressing the keeping on chickens with an emphasis on the culture of the community. About half of Massachusetts municipalities have established Agricultural Commissions. These commissions can provide guidance to Boards of Health on appropriate, community specific regulations. Reading’s regulation can be found in the Appendix to the Food Access Section of this document.

**Resources:**

See the Appendix for the file “Keeping of Animals\_Reading\_Regulations”

MDAR’s Best Management Practices (BMP’s)  
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/massachusetts-ag-bmps.html>

MDAR’s Urban Agriculture Program  
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/urban-agriculture-program.html>

2012 Census of Agriculture  
<https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/index.php>

## Enact Zoning Ordinances/By-Laws to Permit Retail Sales on Urban Farms

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
N/A	All	Zoning	Economic Environmental

**Description:**

Urban farms can be a source of fresh local food for neighborhoods, restaurants and retailers, especially in underserved sections of a city. In 2013, Boston amended its zoning ordinance to facilitate the development of many diverse urban agriculture initiatives, including permitting retail sales through farm stands on urban farms. Farm stands include tables, stalls or tents operated by a farmer for the sale of agricultural and/or horticultural products. Farm stands and accessory stands (not exceeding 200 square feet in floor area) are allowed wherever



urban farms are allowed and wherever else retail is allowed. The ordinance also addresses ground-level farms, roof-level farms and freight container farming. Article 89 and Article 89 “Made Easy” can be found in this section’s Appendix.

**Resources:**

Boston’s Urban Agriculture Zoning Ordinance “made easy”  
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/5579e854-b3c5-49e6-b910-fedaa2dd6306>

Boston’s Urban Agriculture Zoning Ordinance Article 89  
<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/a573190c-9305-45a5-83b1-735c0801e73e>

See the Appendix for the file

## Mobile Vending Strategies


Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Expert Opinion	All	Zoning	Economic Environmental Physical Health Social

**Description:**

Mobile vending takes many forms and involves selling food out of any portable vehicle, including carts, kiosks and trucks. They are becoming more and more popular, and can increase access to healthy foods, especially in areas without access to large grocery stores. Like farmers markets, mobile vending is regulated by the food code. The same variance section applies and can be utilized by mobile vendors and board of health to promote mobile vending as a means for increasing the availability to healthy foods. New York City enacted a city ordinance that encourages access to fresh fruits and vegetables by committing to issue 1000 permits over the next 2 years to “green cart” vendors that only sell uncut produce.

The ordinance is included in the Appendix.

**Resources:**

See the Appendix for the file 

Mobile Vending Strategies

[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/MobileVending\\_FactSht\\_FINAL\\_20130425.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/MobileVending_FactSht_FINAL_20130425.pdf)

# Food Retail



# Food Retail

Food retail encompasses the major food access points where people purchase their food items and include grocery stores and supermarkets, convenience stores and bodegas, farmers markets, specialty food stores, and warehouse clubs and supercenters. In Massachusetts, there are approximately 9500 retailers and this sheer volume of stores illustrates the importance of food retail in the food system. As most communities have at least one type of food retailer, food retail is a space where municipalities have the opportunity to improve access to and availability of healthy foods for their residents.

Massachusetts has fewer healthy food retail stores per capita than almost any other state in the country. Residents in Boston, Springfield, Brockton, Lowell, Fitchburg and other Massachusetts cities, have even more limited options than the state generally.<sup>55</sup> Research shows that where communities have limited food options, people have higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related health issues, and these conditions are particularly pronounced in low-income communities of color.<sup>56</sup>

Research also shows that where people have access to nutritious fruits and vegetables through grocery stores or neighborhood markets, people eat better and are healthier.<sup>57</sup> Strategic expansion and development of healthy food retail in Massachusetts communities is an important strategy to improving the health of its residents. In addition to this core benefit, supporting expansion or development of food businesses also impact the economy, and can generate local employment, spur adjacent commercial activity, and contribute to the municipal tax base.<sup>58</sup>

Municipalities can facilitate healthy food retail in a number of ways, from encouraging new grocery store developments to supporting existing neighborhood markets in

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<sup>55</sup> Food For Every Child: The Need For More Supermarkets in Massachusetts. (2010) The Food Trust. Retrieved from: [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/foodforeverychild-ma.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/foodforeverychild-ma.original.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why it Matters. (2010) Sarah Treuhaft and Allison Karypn, The Food Trust. Retrieved from: [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/grocerygap.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/grocerygap.original.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why it Matters. (2010) Sarah Treuhaft and Allison Karypn, The Food Trust. Retrieved from: [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/grocerygap.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/grocerygap.original.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Grocery Store Development. (n.d.) The Food Trust. Retrieved from: <http://www.kintera.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/GROCERYSTOREDEVELOPMENT.PDF>

expanding or stocking healthier options. The following strategies present ways in which municipalities and their partners can identify the communities' healthy food retail needs and opportunities, remove impediments that could deter food retail development, and incentivize healthy food retail development, redevelopment and expansion. In all instances, improving healthy food retail requires a significant investment of time and resources by a range of partners. To have the greatest impact, the following municipal-level strategies should be considered as a part of a comprehensive strategy that leverages state, federal and private resources, where possible and necessary.

### Resource Guides:

The following guides are useful in understanding what is entailed in a comprehensive strategy to encourage food retail development, in particular in areas with limited food retail:

Grocery Store Attraction Strategies: A Resource Guide for Community Activists and Local Government

[https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/groceryattraction\\_final.pdf](https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/groceryattraction_final.pdf)

Getting to Grocery: Tools for Attracting Healthy Food Retail to Underserved Neighborhoods <http://www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/getting-grocery>

**Funding:** The Massachusetts Food Trust will provide loans, grants, and technical assistance for new and expanding healthy food retailers and local food enterprises in low and moderate income communities. Operating funds were included in the FY2017 State budget; capital funds were authorized, and advocacy efforts by the Massachusetts Public Health Association and others are underway to ensure these are allocated. For more:

<https://mapublichealth.org/>

The following information applies to all Food Retail strategies, unless otherwise noted:

Food Retail			
Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Some Evidence	All	Municipal Policies Municipal Programs and Actions Master Plan Site Plan/Special Permit Smart Growth	Economic Physical Health

## Key Strategies: Identify the need and market opportunity

### Identify Need

#### Description:

Communities can perform a food retail assessment that identifies neighborhoods where healthy food retail options are limited, as a means to understand where food retail investments should be targeted. Such an assessment should inventory and map the full service food stores in the neighborhood, and may also include demographic data on income and health. Several analyses exist that identify communities in Massachusetts that have limited healthy food retail options; these are listed below.

#### Resources:

##### Food System Mapping Tools:

*Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts Food Access Index Score Draft:*

[http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Access%20Index%20Score%202016\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Access%20Index%20Score%202016_DRAFT.pdf)

*Policy Map:*

<https://www.policymap.com/maps>

*USDA's Food Access Research Atlas:*

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

### Identify Market Opportunity

#### Description:

Market analyses and residential surveys can provide communities with a better understanding of the food retail potential, inform strategies for improving the food environment, and communicate the opportunity to food retailers.

Residential surveys can provide information about the particular shopping habits, preferences and needs of a community, and can inform the market opportunity for particular types of food retail.

Retail market analyses evaluate the demand and supply for stores in specified trade areas, and estimate the opportunity for new or expanded retail. Demand for food retail can be estimated by collecting information on residents' grocery store spending; food retail supply can be measured by evaluating sales data of nearby food stores. Additional demographic data (income, homeownership, and educational attainment), real estate data (i.e. number planned or permitted developments) and access data (roads, transit, and car ownership) may be included in a more extensive market analysis.

Initially, communities may choose to conduct a basic market analysis that estimates the scale of food retail potential, to help communities understand whether their community can, for example, support expansion to a smaller, existing market, or a new supermarket. Once a community is in advanced stages of planning, they may hire specialists to conduct a more extensive market analysis.

#### Resources:

##### **Market Analysis Specialists:**

Reinvestment Fund, Market Value Analysis

<https://www.reinvestment.com/initiatives/market-value-analysis/Examples>:

##### **Examples:**

Natick:

The Natick Center Plan, Retail Market Analysis

[link]

The analysis estimates that \$1,750 sales per square foot is needed to support a grocery store that is 10,000 square feet. Estimating average household grocery spending at \$135 weekly, the area would need to be about 2,500 households. With 1,800 nearby households, the study concluded that a grocery store would not be viable in the Natick Center study area.

Boston and Mattapan:

Food Retail Opportunities in Boston's Underserved Neighborhoods

[https://sites.tufts.edu/gis/files/2014/11/Stucker\\_Heidi1.pdf](https://sites.tufts.edu/gis/files/2014/11/Stucker_Heidi1.pdf)

This analysis estimates the purchasing capacity of an area by calculating 7 percent of household income in the study area, estimated to be the percentage of income spent on groceries. It then calculates 60 percent of this total as the percentage of food spending that

could be captured locally. Grocery store demand is derived by translating the purchasing power into the number of square feet of food retail that could be supported. The study estimates grocery store demand in Mattapan and makes recommendations for a range of possible food retail improvements.

## Key Strategies: Remove barriers to food retail

### Include Food Retail as an explicitly permitted use

#### Description:

Ensure municipal zoning ordinance allows for business and mixed-use (commercial and residential) development, and that it explicitly names grocery stores as a permitted use. Including permitted uses in local ordinances removes administrative barriers to establishing their use and protects their existence.<sup>59</sup> Somerville, Massachusetts is currently in the process of overhauling its zoning code, which includes provisions for improving access to fresh food and by permitting adaptive reuse of commercial buildings in Neighborhood Residence districts for food stores. In its draft form the zoning code explicitly permits Fresh Food and/or Grocery Stores in city districts. This use is permitted by right with limitations in neighborhood residences and urban residences, permitted by right in 3-10 Story Mixed-Use buildings, and permitted by special permit in Commercial Industrial districts.<sup>60</sup>

#### Resources:

#### Examples:

Somerville: Draft Somerville Zoning Ordinance

The following excerpt from Somerville's draft zoning code names grocery stores as an allowable building use in most district types. Full draft zoning ordinance:

<http://www.somervillema.gov/zoning/resources/2015-01-22-BOA-Submittal.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Zoning for Healthy Food Access Varies by Community Income. (2012). Bridging the Gap. Retrieved from: [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2012/rwjf404395](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2012/rwjf404395)

<sup>60</sup> Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Draft. (January 2015) City of Somerville, Massachusetts. Retrieved from: <http://www.somervillema.gov/zoning/resources/2015-01-22-BOA-Submittal.pdf>



## Prohibit “Negative Use Restrictions” for food retail

### Description:

Private owners may restrict uses of their property in private agreements, including in deeds, covenants, or leases. Such a restriction is deemed a Negative Use Restriction. Where municipalities are interested in encouraging uses that benefit the public, and where these uses are in line with zoning, they can prohibit private owners from disallowing the use of their property for such uses. To encourage grocery store development, municipalities can include in their zoning code prohibitions of Negative Use Restrictions that would disallow the development of grocery stores.. Madison, Wisconsin (28.147) and Chicago, Illinois (17-1-1004) prohibit negative use restrictions of grocery stores in their zoning code.

### Resources:

#### Examples:

*Madison, Wisconsin: Zoning Code Ordinance*

Chapter 28, 28.147 Negative Use Restriction Prohibited as Against Public Policy prohibits restricting grocery stores. Full ordinance language:

[https://www2.municode.com/library/wi/madison/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://www2.municode.com/library/wi/madison/codes/code_of_ordinances)

*Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Zoning Ordinance*

Chapter 17, 17-1-1004 Negative Use Restriction Prohibited As Against Public Policy prohibits restricting grocery stores. Full ordinance language:

<http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/?f=templates&fn=default.htm>

## Update BOH practices to support reasonable and safe food sampling and handling at farmers markets

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Some Evidence (for Farmers Markets in general)	Metropolitan Core Communities Streetcar Suburbs Major Regional Urban Centers Sub-Regional Urban Centers Mature Suburbs	Board of Health Regulations	Economic Social

	Established Suburbs and Cape Cod Towns Maturing New England Towns Country Suburbs		
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Although there is no regulatory definition for a farmers market, MDAR defines them as “a public market for the primary purpose of connecting and mutually benefiting Massachusetts farmers, communities, and shoppers while promoting and selling products grown and raised by participating farmers.”<sup>61</sup> Originally, farmers markets sold locally-grown, uncut fruits and vegetables. These types of farmers markets are exempt from any board of health regulation or permit requirement. Farmers markets that sell fresh uncut produce and unprocessed honey, maple syrup and/or fresh eggs are also not required to have a local board of health permit. However, farmers markets that sell processed foods (blueberries vs. blueberry pies) and food products other than those mentioned above are considered food establishments and must be licensed by the local board of health pursuant to 105 CMR 590.00.</p> <p>The challenge is that 105 CMR 590.00 (the code) is based on the 1999 U. S. Food Code. Farmers markets have evolved over the years and unfortunately the Massachusetts food code has not. As a result, many of the activities at farmers markets are not adequately addressed in the Massachusetts food code. Food demonstrations and food sampling can present challenges for local boards of health and some boards simply refuse to permit these activities. This practice does not promote selling locally grown products. Instead, local boards should work with local farmers to permit these activities by assuring that they are done safely. The local board of health has the authority to prohibit any food-handling operation that cannot be safely performed and may prohibit the sale of certain food items if the items cannot be handled and maintained in accordance with the code requirements. However, determining whether food-handling operations can be safely performed, and whether food products can be safely sold can prove difficult.</p> <p>Section 8-103 of the food code permits local boards of health to grant a variance to the code requirements by modifying or waiving the requirements of the code if, in the opinion of the board, a health hazard or nuisance will not result from the variance. In other words, the food-handling operation or the sale of certain food items can be done safely. For instance, the code requires that produce be stored off the ground. However, there are different</p>			

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/>

interpretations about what this means. If the farmer can demonstrate that his or her means of storage is safe and therefore meets the spirit of the code, the board has the ability to grant that farmer a variance from this requirement.

A template for requesting a variance is included in the Appendix.

#### Resources:

See the Appendix for the file [\[redacted\]](#)

Massachusetts Merged Food Code

<http://www.mehaonline.net/resources/MEHA2011MFC.pdf>

DPH's Food Protection Program's Guidance for Farmers Markets

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/environmental/foodsafety/farmer-market-guidelines.pdf>

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) Understanding Food Safety Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines for Farmers Markets

<http://www.buylocalfood.org/>

## Key Strategies: Encourage Development and Redevelopment

In addition to removing barriers to developing or redeveloping food retail, municipalities can also actively encourage food retail development by implementing the following:

### Negotiate healthy food retail in community benefit agreements

#### Description:

A Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) is an agreement between a developer and a municipality or community groups that states the range of benefits the developer agrees to

provide for the community as part of the development project. The benefits included should reflect the needs of the community and can include parks, wage requirements, community, or child care centers. Municipalities can use CBAs as a way to add healthy retail to the communities, for example, by negotiating for the provision of a full service grocery store or other healthy retail by these developers.

Leverage Point: Site Plan/Special Permit

### Resources:

#### Resource Guide:

Community Benefits Agreements: Making Development Projects Accountable, Good Jobs First  
<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/cba2005final.pdf>

## Establish Zoning Incentives: Density Bonuses

### Case Study:

#### Framingham: Southeast Framingham Neighborhood Action Plan

A density bonus is a zoning tool that enables developers to build more units or taller buildings, in exchange for defined community benefits. The Southeast Framingham Neighborhood Action Plan recommends offering prospective developers a density bonus that would allow an increased building height and increase floor-to-area ratio in exchange for two of the specified community benefits. One of these community benefits is a full service supermarket.

The need for a convenient local grocery store was expressed in the planning process when Framingham residents described a lack of grocery stores nearby and challenges in getting to the grocery store with public transportation and an informal shuttle service. As a result, planners and community members worked together to include a supermarket in the list of community benefits. By incentivizing developers through this approach, future developments in Southeast Framingham neighborhood are more likely to meet specified community needs, and potentially full-service grocery store development.

### Resources:

Framingham: Southeast Framingham Neighborhood Action Plan  
 Learn more about the Southeast Framingham Neighborhood Action Plan:

<http://www.mapc.org/southeastframinghamplan>

<http://www.framinghamma.gov/1912/Southeast-Framingham-Neighborhood-Plan>

Also see appendix for draft language on density bonuses.

## Create Tax Incentives Packages

### Description:

With assistance from experts familiar with available city, state and federal incentives, the development process and the grocery industry, municipalities and partners can develop and communicate a tax incentive package to encourage prospective grocery store developers. Incentives packages alone will not make a grocery store viable, but they can reduce the costs associated with development. Because most tax incentives are not designed for grocery stores, and the process requires expert knowledge of several industry and development facets, grocery store advocates should expect assembling an effective tax incentive package to take a significant amount of effort.

### Resources:

Massachusetts Tax Incentives for businesses:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/bd/econ-development/>

The Massachusetts Office of Business Development, manages the Economic Development Incentives Program (EDIP), a tax incentive program that seeks to foster job creation and stimulate business growth. Through this program, businesses that meet specified criteria may qualify to receive EDIP Investment Tax Credits. Learn more about the available program:

Federal Tax Credits:

[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/documents/Getting\\_to\\_Grocery\\_FINAL\\_20120514.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/documents/Getting_to_Grocery_FINAL_20120514.pdf)

The publication “Getting to Grocery: Tools for Attracting Healthy Food Retail to Underserved Neighborhoods,” describes federal tax credits available in areas designated as Empowerment Zones.

## Streamline Food Retail Permitting

### Description:

Municipalities may seek expedited permitting processes to increase the efficiency of the review of and decision-making process for economic or housing development project proposals. Where municipalities have identified a need for additional grocery stores, it may be appropriate for municipalities to pursue an expedited permitting process in grocery store development. This can be done by designating those areas with limited food retail as 'priority development sites,' on a State inventory map to raise the level of awareness to prospective developers that a community is promoting expedited permitting as a means to encourage this type of grocery store development.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 43D establishes rules for the Expedited Permitting Program that gives Massachusetts municipalities the ability to promote commercial or mixed-use development on pre-approved parcels, by offering expedited local permitting on those parcels. Qualifying parcels must meet a range of criteria, including being zoned for commercial, industrial or mixed-use zoning; being eligible for development that includes at least 50,000 square feet of gross floor area; and being designated by municipalities as 'priority development sites'. Municipalities must go through a process to identify and designate priority development sites in order to qualify for expedited permitting and related technical and financial assistance.<sup>62</sup>

### Resources:

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 43D:

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/lawlib/400-499cmr/400cmr2.pdf>

## Use licensing as mechanism for getting healthy food into small retailers

### Description:

A business license ordinance can be a powerful tool to help increase the availability of healthy

<sup>62</sup> Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 43D; Expedited Permitting. (n.d.) Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development. Retrieved from: <http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/lawlib/400-499cmr/400cmr2.pdf>

foods in communities. Small retailers such as convenience stores, dollar stores, and gas stations often carry food items but have limited healthy food options. In most municipalities, these retailers are required to apply for a business license in order to operate. A licensing ordinance or bylaw can require small retailers to include healthy food options as part of their product offerings. These ordinances or bylaws typically include a statement of purpose, definitions, requirements and prohibitions, and enforcement and penalties. Offering additional incentives such as tax breaks, business technical assistance, or marketing support can also help with ensuring compliance from retailers.

License ordinances or bylaws are an effective mechanism as they can help to ensure efforts to improve healthy food availability are sustainable and that these efforts have a broader reach as they can apply to all small retailers within the community. Successful implementation of this strategy needs strong municipal, community and business partnerships, outreach and education of small retailers, and resources for enforcement.

### Resources:

#### Resource Guide:

Licensing for Lettuce: A Guide to the Model Licensing Ordinance for Healthy Food Retailers, ChangeLab Solutions

[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Licensing\\_for\\_Lettuce\\_FINAL\\_20130212\\_0.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Licensing_for_Lettuce_FINAL_20130212_0.pdf)

A step-by-step guide to implementing a business license ordinance for healthy foods including real world examples and an ordinance template.

#### Example:

*Minneapolis Staple Food Requirement:*

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/living/eating/staple-foods>

Includes detailed information about the ordinance, brochure, handout, and other resources for store owners. Model ordinance language follows:

Minneapolis Code of Ordinances Chapter 203.20 (c): All grocery stores licensed under this chapter must offer for sale food for home preparation and consumption, on a continuous basis, at least three (3) varieties of qualifying, non - expired or spoiled, food in each of the following four (4) staple food groups, with at least five (5) varieties of perishable food in the first category and at least two (2) varieties of perishable food in all subsequent categories: Vegetables and/or fruits, meat, poultry, fish and/or

vegetable proteins, bread and/or cereal, and dairy products and/or substitutes.

## Support Food Cooperatives

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Expert Opinion	All	Municipal Policies Municipal Programs and Actions	Economic Physical Health Social
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>A food cooperative is a food business that is member owned and controlled and exists for the benefit of its members. Membership in a cooperative is open to anyone and completely voluntary. Food co-ops have been used as a way to provide full service grocery stores to lower income communities. These co-ops serve not only to increase access and availability of food but can also serve as important community institutions providing nutrition education, organizational events, and jobs for residents. While co-ops are one way to provide full service groceries for limited food access areas, they do require significant upfront capital and time to establish. Food systems advocates and municipalities can support these entities by providing funding to help establish the co-op, subsidizing ownership costs for residents, or providing discounted land or buildings.</p>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<p>For more information, visit <a href="http://www.cdi.coop">www.cdi.coop</a></p>			



## Key Strategies: Limit access to unhealthy food

### Eliminate Unhealthy Food through Zoning Ordinances/Bylaws and Health Regulations

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Expert Opinion	All	Zoning Board of Health Regulations	Economic Environmental Injury Prevention Physical Health
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Fast food is generally considered to be mass-produced, inexpensive food that is prepared and served quickly to consumers, often through drive-thru service, that tends to be high in fat and low in nutritional value. Fast food restaurants are captured in the definition of formula businesses, which have been defined as “ a type of retail sales establishment, restaurant, tavern, bar, or take-out food establishment which is under common ownership or control or is a franchise, and is one of ten or more other businesses or establishment worldwide maintaining two or more of the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardized menu or standardized array of merchandise with 50% or more of in-stock merchandise from a single distributor bearing uniform markings.</li> <li>• Trademark or service mark, defined as a word, phrase, symbol or design, or a combination or words, phrases, symbols or designs, that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods from one party from those off others, on products or as part of store design, such as cups, napkins, bags, boxes, wrappers, straws, store signs or advertising devices.</li> <li>• Standardized color scheme used throughout the interior or exterior of the establishment, including but not limited to, graphics, awnings, signage, and the like visible from the exterior of the structure.</li> <li>• Standardized interior décor, including, but not limited to, style of furniture, wall coverings, permanent fixtures, displays, window treatments.</li> <li>• Standardized uniform, including but not limited to aprons, pants, shirts, smocks or</li> </ul>			

dresses, hat, and pins (other than name tags).”<sup>63</sup>

Zoning restrictions on fast food restaurants have been enacted across the country and in Massachusetts not based on health, but rather based on the following.<sup>64</sup>

- To lessen traffic congestion
- To preserve walkability (by limiting or not allowing drive-thrus)
- To preserve the aesthetic qualities of the community
- To decrease potential to create a nuisance (e.g., litter, noise, odors, loitering)
- To protect vibrant small business sector
- To preserve the distinctive character of the district
- To maintain a unique retail and dining experience

Links to the zoning bylaws from Nantucket, MA and Concord, MA are included in the Resources section.

It is well known that easy access to low-nutrient, high-calorie food is one factor that contributes to the increase in obesity that we face today. Local zoning is enacted pursuant to the police powers of a municipality to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents. Since obesity is clearly a health risk, it falls within the police powers of a municipality to regulate through zoning ordinances and by-laws. Relevant sections of a proposed zoning ordinance based on the health effects of fast food are included in the Appendix.

#### Resources:

Concord Zoning Bylaw

[http://www.concordma.gov/pages/concordma\\_boa/zone/index](http://www.concordma.gov/pages/concordma_boa/zone/index)

Nantucket Zoning Bylaw

<http://ecode360.com/11471474>

The Use of Zoning to Restrict Fast Food Outlets: A Potential Strategy to Combat Obesity

<http://www.publichealthlaw.net/Zoning Fast Food Outlets.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Town of Nantucket By-Laws, Chapter 139. Zoning.

<sup>64</sup> Nantucket, MA bans formula restaurants in order to maintain a unique retail and dining experience. Concord, MA bans drive-thru restaurants to decrease traffic and preserve the aesthetic qualities.

See the Appendix for a model zoning ordinance for Eliminating Unhealthy Food

## Prohibit Self-Service Displays of Candy

Strength of Evidence:	Community Types:	Leverage Points:	Co-benefits:
Some Evidence	All	Board of Health Regulations	
<b>Description:</b>			
<p>Enacting restrictions in retail stores is commonplace in the world of tobacco control. A common restriction is to prohibit self-service displays of tobacco. The rationale behind this policy is to thwart the industry's intentional, strategic attempts to place its products where youth can see them and take them. The same rationale can hold true for candy and other junk foods. Supermarkets already have candy-free check-out lanes to help parents and others who don't want their kids grabbing a candy bar while in the shopping cart. This strategy can also discourage impulse purchases and the opportunity for shoplifting.</p> <p>This strategy can be accomplished by means of a local board of health regulation. A model regulation is included in the Appendix.</p>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
See the Appendix for a model zoning ordinance for Prohibiting Self-Service Displays of Candy			