



CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Justin M. Bibb

PUBLIC HEALTH

Food Systems Strategies

Health, Human Services, and the Arts Committee

April 13, 2025



Background



About Me

- Supply Chain Management & Food Studies Degree
- Cleveland transplant of 8 years
- Career in food systems development
 - Greater Cleveland Food Bank
 - Center for Good Food Purchasing
 - City of Cleveland
- Animal advocate & travel enthusiast



Listening Tour Overview

- *What are the greatest barriers to building an equitable, just, and transparent food system in Cleveland?*
- Input from farmers, gardeners, advocates, business owners, non-profit operators, etc.
- Identified 7 key insights:
 - Land and water access
 - Transparency in City processes
 - Institutional food purchasing
 - Alternative food retail models
 - Workforce development
 - Food rescue and composting
 - Coalition building

Written By: Zainab Pkier, Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator | Last Updated: December 2024

Cleveland's Food System: Listening Tour Report

This is a living document. Changes and updates will be made as the work evolves. To view this report online (recommended), visit cityurl.com/CLFoodSystemReport. Questions can be emailed to zpikier@clevelandohio.gov.

BACKGROUND

The Local Food Systems Strategies Coordinator (LFSSC) position was created as a result of advocacy efforts from food systems activists across the City of Cleveland. With equity as its foundation, the Coordinator is tasked with establishing a local food system plan and infrastructure recommendations to improve food access in the City of Cleveland.

To inform this local food system plan, the Coordinator first embarked on a Listening Tour to hear about the challenges and opportunities present in Cleveland's food system. This report synthesizes key insights from the Listening Tour.

? QUESTION

What are the greatest barriers to building an equitable, just, and transparent food system in Cleveland?

💡 KEY INSIGHT #1

LAND OWNERSHIP & WATER ACCESS IS CRUCIAL FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

As stated by the City of Cleveland's Land Bank application for agricultural use, "The City generally does not sell property for gardening purposes." Further, the City's Water Department only grants temporary water access for farms and gardens for five years. Most farmers are unwilling or unable to make the investment to install a permanent water connection when land ownership is not guaranteed.

Reliable access to land and water can give communities the valuable means of self-determination; however, holding land in leases and requiring permanent water connections for lessees prevents communities from achieving that self-determination.

THE CITY LAND BANK CAN REFORM THEIR POLICIES TO SUPPORT PURCHASE OF LAND FOR AGRICULTURAL USE AND THE WATER DEPARTMENT CAN ENSURE EQUITABLE AND AFFORDABLE WATER ACCESS

Recommendation: Given this provision is not an established ordinance, promote food sovereignty by lifting the policy that states land generally is not sold for agricultural use. Continue to reform Land Bank policies in alignment with the CLEVELOT initiative. Implement equitable and affordable water access policies.

LFSSC Role: Work with the City Land Bank to reform policies, expand urban agriculture and green spaces in accordance with the City's zoning codes, and communicate progress to key stakeholders. Work with the Cleveland Water Department to explore alternative water policies.

Metrics of Change: (1) updated City Land Bank policy; (2) # of vacant lots sold for agricultural use; (3) updated water access policy

[Click here for latest update.](#)

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Major Projects



Major Projects

- Land Access
 - Sale of land for urban agriculture
- Food Retail
 - Central Kinsman Wellness Collective
 - Farmers' Markets
- Workforce Development
 - Cultivating Cleveland's Next Generation
 - Food Access Navigators



Cleveland Farmers' Markets, Farm Stands, & Fresh Stops
This guide offers a list of farmers markets, farm stands, and fresh stops in Cleveland, OH, providing residents and visitors with convenient access to fresh, locally grown produce, animal products, community resources, and more.

Market/Farm Stand/Fresh Stop Name	Address	Neighborhood	Operating Days	Hours
City Fresh - Buckeye-Shaker Fresh Stop	Adun Spice Company 12721 Larchmere Blvd. Cleveland, OH 44120	Buckeye-Shaker	Fridays	3:30 PM - 5:00 PM
City Fresh - Collinwood Fresh Stop	15901 Lakeshore Blvd. Cleveland, OH 44110	Collinwood	Fridays	5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
City Fresh - Coventry Fresh Stop	1925 Coventry Rd. Cleveland, OH 44118	Coventry Village	Tuesdays	5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
City Fresh - Kamm's Fresh Stop	Bethany English Church 15460 Triskett Rd. Cleveland,	Kamm's Corners	Wednesdays	5:00 PM - 6:00 PM



Summer Sprout

- Cleveland's community gardening program
- Administered by the Ohio State University Extension of Cuyahoga County (OSUE)
- Recent challenges:
 - Management capacity
 - Funding source
- Plans for the present & future:
 - Continue to work with the OSUE to implement the program
 - With increased investment, reform and grow



New Eastside Market

- Food rescue operation
- Request for Qualified Contractors development
 - Input from Council & community
 - Search for operator(s) for the food retail, commercial kitchen, demonstration kitchen, and clinic spaces
- Interim activation
 - Work with local organizations to activate the space between operators



Photo credit: Hunger Network



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