REIMAGINE HOW CITIES GROW

How urban farms and gardens build healthier communities in metro Atlanta
As the metro Atlanta region continues to grow, our cities are rapidly becoming more dense and developed. This has a direct impact on the long-term viability of community farms and gardens. Urban growers are working harder than ever to provide healthy soil, healthy food and healthy spaces for their communities.

Food Well Alliance is a collaborative network of local leaders who believe that urban farms and gardens strengthen the heart of thriving cities. We equip growers, local governments and residents with the tools they need to build healthier communities and create the cities we all want to live in.

In partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission, we are embarking on a City Agriculture Planning initiative, which seeks to engage 52 cities across our five-county service area.

Our vision? Bring local governments together with growers and their communities to ensure that urban agriculture is incorporated into the next phase of cities’ development. It will take time, collaboration, and investment.

Join us. One alliance for all well being.
TO BUILD THRIVING FARMS & GARDENS, METRO ATLANTA CITIES MUST PRIORITIZE URBAN AGRICULTURE AND INVITE COMMUNITY LEADERS & MEMBERS TO THE PLANNING TABLE.
Cities that prioritize urban agriculture will:

- Cultivate the health of residents
- Build resilient and equitable communities
- Promote the vitality of cities
Growers at urban farms and gardens provide close proximity to locally grown foods in areas with low access to grocery stores. They also invite community members to get involved by teaching them to grow their own produce, as well as marketing and preparing the harvest.

Urban agriculture allows for more culturally diverse varieties of food to enter the local food system. Diverse cultures are welcomed and celebrated through the common language of food.

New farming companies and operations contribute to small business development, socioeconomic diversity, and self-sufficiency among a rising class of new business owners, especially among minorities and women.

AgLanta Grows-A-Lot sites are located in USDA designated Atlanta food deserts.
CULTIVATE THE HEALTH OF RESIDENTS

**BETTER NUTRITION**
Locally grown food improves health outcomes by offering more nutrient-dense varietals than supermarkets can provide, thus contributing to the reduction of poor chronic health outcomes.

**SOCIAL INTERACTION**
People who participate in urban agriculture receive physical and mental health benefits from being active and getting outdoors. They also create connections with their neighbors and feel a sense of pride in their growing spaces.

**STRONGER KIDS**
Young people who are given opportunities to grow their own food at a community farm or garden learn first-hand where their food comes from. They begin to value local food and are more likely to make healthier choices.

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**City of Alpharetta**

The Farm at Old Rucker Park

The Recreation & Parks Department oversees this community farm in a city park with assets donated from Whole Kids Foundation. Local high school students, children, and the greater community experience hands-on education.

“They’re getting a business piece, a marketing piece, a sales piece. You can’t replicate that in the classroom.”

- Sarah Nerswick, Cambridge High School Agriculture Teacher

187 Cambridge High School agriculture education students experience hands-on learning at The Farm at Old Rucker Park in Alpharetta.
Promote the Vitality of Cities

Safe Spaces
Cities with urban farms not only create beautiful spaces for families and kids to gather, they generate a sense of pride and belonging. Communities are safer when neighbors get to know each other. Some studies have shown a decrease in crime rates, which in turn relieves policing costs.

Greater Value
Taxable properties near urban farms and gardens often increase in value. Homes that are located near food producing areas and walkable community activities, such as farmers’ markets, often sell for more than similar homes in other areas.

Sustainability
When cities provide places for community members to grow healthy fruits and vegetables, they demonstrate their value of local food and environmental practices. These towns are more likely to be recognized as “Green Communities.”

City of Decatur
Decatur’s Kitchen Garden
The city and nonprofit Global Growers worked closely together to establish this lush 2-acre garden located at the City of Decatur Legacy Park. The garden provides plots for 30 families and serves hundreds of people annually through volunteer and educational activities.

“When my food grows, I really love seeing it come up!”
- Dimno Zamsuan, Decatur’s Kitchen Garden Grower

600 square feet are provided for each member family to grow crops at Decatur’s Kitchen Garden.
The mayor founded the garden in 2010 to help seniors facing hunger and health issues. Lovejoy’s 12-acre garden now produces 400,000 pounds of fresh vegetables annually. All Lovejoy households are eligible to receive $20 in free produce monthly from the garden’s General Store. “... seniors with limited incomes were having to decide between medication and food.” - Lovejoy Mayor Bobby Cartwright

households currently receive $20 in free produce each month from Lovejoy Garden General Store.

WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY:

URBAN GROWERS
Get equipped with the resources you need to succeed. Make your voices heard by reaching out to your local government officials.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS
Visit a farm or community garden in or near your city, and ask how you can support them. Attend an event or workshop.

CITY OFFICIALS
Learn more about City Agriculture Planning and get to know the growers in your community. Create regular opportunities for dialogue.

Visit FoodWellAlliance.org
According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau report, metro Atlanta saw the third fastest growth of any metro region in the country, with nearly 90,000 new residents arriving between 2016 and 2017. The population is expected to jump by 25 percent from 2015 to 2030, according to projections from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget.

As density of living, working, and playing space increases in metro Atlanta, there has never been a greater threat to our green spaces and the connections that metro residents have with nature. We are now making choices for the future, ones that involve rapid development, infill, and potential gentrification.

And, as the metropolitan area grows, so does its diversity and the challenges of achieving equity among metropolitan communities. In the coming years, there will be significant shifts in the concentrations of cultural and ethnic communities.

When urban agriculture is at the heart of a community, there is an opportunity to preserve green space that supports gardens and farms, learn more about our food choices, and connect to the earth and soil that provides healthy nourishment. An urban food landscape can provide opportunities to value our cultural differences around food, providing an expanded vision of a multicultural and inclusive landscape.

The City Agriculture Planning program connects cities and their community leaders in a collaborative planning process with the Atlanta Regional Commission and Food Well Alliance. This united commitment supports an ecosystem where inclusive urban agricultural activities can thrive and be sustained.

Cities and communities that engage in the City Agriculture Planning program are making a commitment with great rewards.

WHY HERE? WHY NOW?

PLAN FOR IT.
We believe successful City Agriculture Plans are possible when cities and communities are equally engaged in the process. When municipal leaders and diverse community leaders plan together, everyone stands to benefit.

**Here’s How It Works:**

1. Community Food Forums are hosted in cities to engage and inform communities and residents.
2. Community Asset Mapping is conducted to help identify leaders and determine needs.
3. Community members are selected to join City Planning Steering Committee.
4. City Agriculture Planning begins with the Atlanta Regional Commission.
5. City Agriculture Plan is funded and launched!
The creation of Food Well Alliance was made possible through funding from our founding benefactor, the James M. Cox Foundation and through the vision of Jim Kennedy and Bill Bolling. Together, they saw an opportunity to connect members of Atlanta’s local food movement to collectively build a healthier community. Food Well Alliance exists to bring this vision to life.