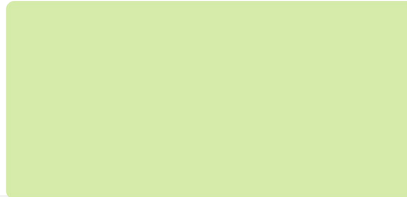
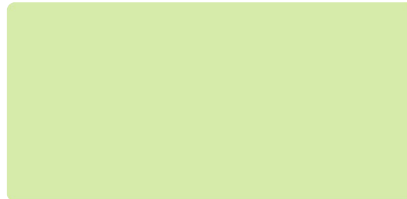
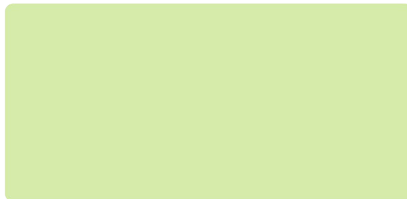




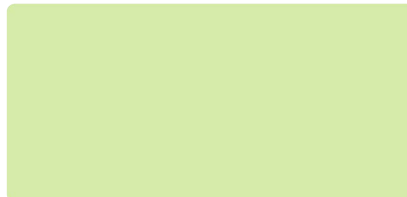
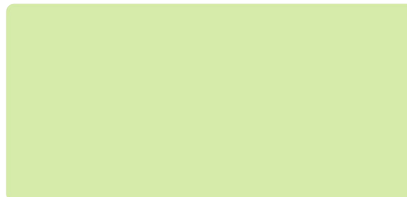
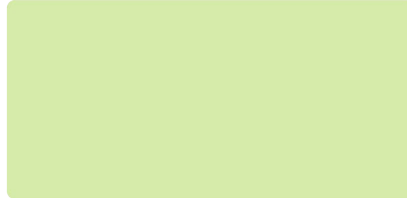
# LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

## Technical Assistance Program



## Local Foods, Local Places Community Action Plan for Bridgeport, Connecticut

November 2017



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

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

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## Community Story

The Paugussett Indian Tribe originally inhabited the region now known as Bridgeport, Connecticut. Situated along the eastern seaboard, where the Pequonnock River meets the Atlantic Ocean, a deep natural harbor was attractive to English settlers arriving in the early seventeenth century. These first colonists took full advantage of the surrounding fertile land and ocean to expand farming, fishing, whaling, and shipbuilding activities, and the area grew rapidly throughout the eighteenth century.

Bridgeport was formally incorporated in 1836 in a bid to attract the Housatonic Railroad and continue the city's competitive commercial position along the coast. After Bridgeport gained the Housatonic, other railroad lines also began operating into and through the city, boosting its transition to industrialization. Between the Civil War and World War I, manufacturing was supported by several iron foundries, and factories produced firearms, ammunition, sewing machines, and later automobiles among other goods. A growing labor demand was answered by increasing European immigration, and the city's population quickly rose from 25,000 in 1870 to over 100,000 in 1910.

Bridgeport's base of industry was important for efforts during World War II and helped the city to recover from the Great Depression, but this post-war boom eventually subsided as European and Asian manufacturing centers rebuilt and developed. The 1970s and '80s in Bridgeport were marked by deindustrialization, job loss, suburban migration by those who could afford to leave the city, and municipal mismanagement, resulting in overall economic decline and a rise in crime. The community has been working hard to redevelop over the past decades but still faces a range of challenges including rebuilding trust in local government, dealing with vacant properties and blight, and high rates of crime in certain sections of the city.

Located 60 miles from Manhattan and just 40 miles from the Bronx, modern Bridgeport is considered part of the New York metropolitan area. It is home to almost 145,000 people, making it the largest and most densely populated city in Connecticut. It is also the poorest city in the state and one of the ten poorest cities in the nation, despite being located in one of the wealthiest counties—Fairfield. This discrepancy in geography and economic prosperity makes it the most unequal region in America according to 2010 U.S. Census. Sixty-three percent of the total population is represented by minorities.<sup>1</sup>

This disparity is reflected in other parts of the community's socio-economic fabric. More than 16,000 Bridgeport parents have no health insurance, and the high rate of free and/or reduced school lunch participants means the school district qualifies as a universal free school lunch program. As of July 2014, Bridgeport's unemployment rate was 10.2 percent compared to the state's 6.6 percent. Supplemental

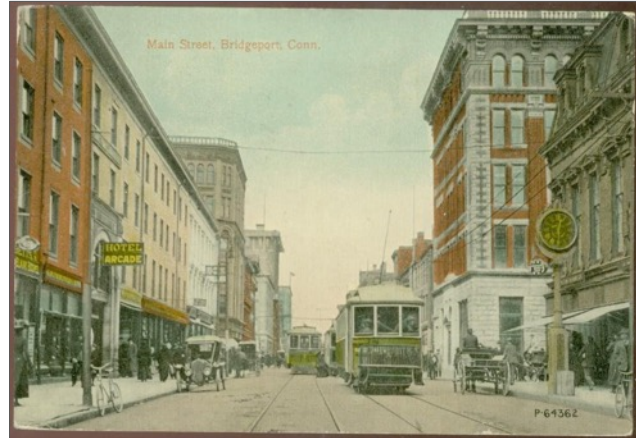


Figure 1 – Postcard picture of Main Street in Bridgeport, Connecticut; 1912 postmark; published by Danzinger and Berman, New Haven, Conn.

<sup>1</sup> City of Bridgeport Office of Planning and Economic Development and U.S. Census ACS 1-Year Estimates 2014.

## Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Workshop

Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) usage in the city is also well above state average with a ratio of 306 per 1,000 people, compared to Connecticut's 117 per 1,000.<sup>2</sup>

Bridgeport has designated seven Neighborhood Revitalization Zones to expand and improve business and housing in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods. Local food has recently become an important component in revitalizing city neighborhoods, and the Food Policy Council (created by a city ordinance in 2012) convenes community organizations, city agencies, businesses, and residents working across the city to improve the availability of safe and nutritious foods at reasonable prices (with a priority on local food) for all residents, particularly those in need. Areas of focus include supporting urban agriculture by protecting access to growing spaces for local growers and promoting healthy food retail by increasing business opportunities for food entrepreneurs, especially those who want to purchase Bridgeport-Grown produce.

Farmers markets were one of the first initiatives on the ground offering both access to affordable, local food and a welcoming space for all community members reflecting the host neighborhood's cultural identity. In some neighborhoods, two-thirds of residents are food insecure. In 2009, Bridgeport farmers markets began accepting SNAP EBT and offering a matching incentive to SNAP customers to address this food access gap in under-resourced neighborhoods. In 2014, the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative was established to convene and encourage collaboration among numerous local farmers and market operators. Members include a local church, community-based organizations, a network of over 30 Bridgeport food pantries and soup kitchens, urban farmers, a local chef, and Bridgeport's Department of Health and Social Services.



*Figure 2 - The downtown area of the city of Bridgeport today. A banner advertising the farmers market hangs over the street near McLevy Green. Photo credit: Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures)*

The Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative currently represents seven mission-driven markets selling healthy, affordable, local food in seven neighborhoods on five days of the week. Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative members meet monthly to support joint programming, fundraising, policy, and marketing/outreach campaigns. In addition to implementing the matching incentive program, all Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative markets also accept the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) coupons and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program checks. The markets see high rates of redemption for these checks, but rates of SNAP usage at the markets remains very low considering the high rate of enrollment in Bridgeport and despite annual efforts at programming, marketing, and outreach directed specifically to these recipients.

In 2016, the Bridgeport Food Policy Council requested assistance through the **Local Foods, Local Places** technical assistance program to develop an action plan for the community. A community workshop would provide more robust feedback to inform new branding, programming, marketing, and outreach

<sup>2</sup> Community Health Assessment 2013

strategies that would raise awareness of the farmers markets among low-income residents, especially those enrolled in SNAP. The city's goals are compatible with the program, which aims to create:

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

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority.

Bridgeport was one of 24 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2017. A Local Foods, Local Places steering committee was formed to help the technical assistance team and federal partners prepare for a workshop in Bridgeport. The steering committee members listed in *Figure 3* helped the technical assistance team hone in on a set of four goals for the workshop that are the framework for this action plan. The four goals are:

- Expand the role of farmers markets as inclusive, safe places for community-building and sustainable (e.g. non-exploitive, transparent) commerce.
- Increase awareness of fresh food outlets (e.g. farmers markets, retail pop-ups, super pantries) and participation among Bridgeport's low-income residents, especially those enrolled in SNAP.
- Build partnerships and strategic collaboration between Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative and the wider community of organizations concerned with fostering a socially just and equitable food system, health, and livability in Bridgeport.
- Lower the barriers to entry in Bridgeport for people who want to grow food or food businesses.

## LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES STEERING COMMITTEE

- **Margot Gotterer**, Chair, Bridgeport Food Policy Council
- **Cristina Sandolo**, Executive Director, Green Village Initiative
- **Raquel Rivera-Pablo**, Founder & Chef, A Pinch of Salt
- **Landon Horan**, Program Manager, The Center for Food Equity & Economic Development at the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport
- **Jacob Robison**, Planner, Office of Economic Development and Planning, City of Bridgeport

*Figure 3 – Local Foods, Local Places steering committee in Bridgeport, Connecticut*



The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee aims to formalize its continued collaboration and involve many other local leaders and organizations as it implements this action plan. The remainder of this report and appendices document the engagement process, the workshop activities, and most importantly, the action plan and next steps for achieving the community’s goals.

## Engagement

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in *Figure 4* below. The assessment phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the steering committee to establish the workshop goals, agenda, logistics, and stakeholder invitation lists. The convening phase includes the effort’s capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The next steps phase includes three follow up conference calls as well as process reporting and documentation.

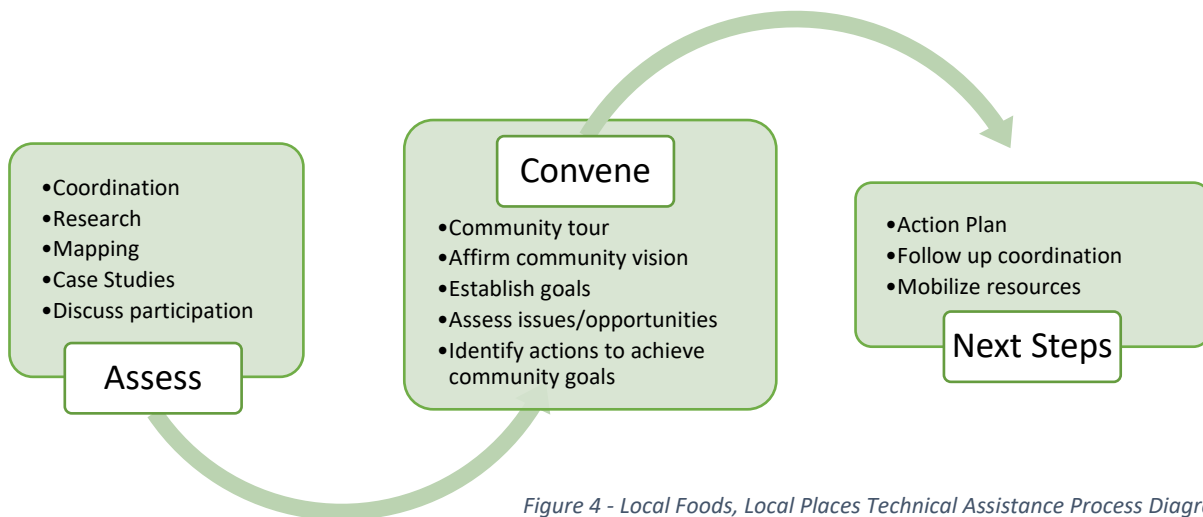


Figure 4 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

The Bridgeport workshop occurred on September 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. It began with a welcome lunch with the steering committee members, technical assistance team, and regional, state, and federal partners. Lunch featured locally grown produce from Ccarelli Farms and was prepared and served by three culinary students of the A Pinch of Salt program. Lunch was followed by a tour of the community described in greater detail below. The first formal session of the workshop—the community meeting—was held at the B:Hive, a co-working space in downtown Bridgeport. The second day of events was held at the Burroughs Community Center and entailed in-depth discussions with participants representing a wide range of perspectives from across the community and an action-planning session. The community meeting and all-day working session were well attended by key stakeholder groups, residents, local leaders, and potential funders. The list of workshop participants is provided in **Appendix B**.

## Community Tour

The steering committee led a tour of key places and projects in Bridgeport to help establish the context for future workshop discussions. The first stop was **Cook and Grow**, located at Read’s Artspace on Broad Street in the heart of downtown. Cook and Grow is a Junior Chef program for children 8-13 years old provided through weekend and summer classes. This program was founded by Chef Mona Jackson four years ago and teaches kitchen safety, food preparation, cooking, nutrition, and how to be informed

consumers. Mona welcomed the participants of the Local Food, Local Places community tour into the Cook and Grow space and explained how students learn about growing food, preparing healthier meals, and developing healthy eating behaviors to address the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and childhood obesity. Sponsorships and donations help to support the organization as demand for its programs grows. Later in the tour, we visited the Cook and Grow garden, which is located nearby at the Bridgeport Public Library. It consists of several raised beds full of eggplants, peppers, tomatoes, and more. It is maintained with help from the Green Village Initiative.

The next stop was the **Downtown Farmers Market**, which is held on the McLevy Green on Thursdays from 10am – 2pm. The market is managed by the Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District with the aim of providing downtown’s growing residential population and 8,000+ office workers access to fresh, locally grown foods and to offer a viable retail market for local farmers, food producers, and artisans. Banners, sidewalk signs, and marketing graffiti encourage pedestrians and drivers alike to visit the green, where produce is sold alongside craft vendors. Ample seating, live music entertainment, games, and the promotion of SNAP benefits are also used to attract customers. The Downtown Market is the central feature of the district’s Creative Placemaking initiative to transform open spaces and parks in downtown Bridgeport into centers of civic and cultural programming. While there, the tour group also had the chance to meet the two market managers for the Black Rock Farmers Market, Michelle Margo and Karyn Leito. This meeting was an opportunity to understand some of the differences between Bridgeport’s markets and gaps in resources to keep in mind for the action planning process.



Figure 5 – Sidewalk signage points the way to the weekly farmers market in downtown Bridgeport. Photo Credit: Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures)

After the market, the tour continued by car to the **Bishop Jean Williams Food Pantry**, where the group was greeted by Pastor Mary Green and Michelle McCabe of Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport. The pantry was first started by Pastor Mary’s mother out of their house and has grown with the community’s needs. It is open every week on Thursdays between 12:30 and 2:30 PM, but clients routinely arrive as early as 5:30 AM to secure their place in line. The Connecticut Food Bank delivers more than 300,000 pounds of food to the pantry annually, which supports an average of 1,100 people each month. Volunteers help clients to track their spending and to understand food nutrition and budgeting. The Council of Churches is also studying how much time people spend using pantries and plans to pilot an “all you want to take” model in the near future.

The tour then proceeded to **St. John’s Church**, where food entrepreneurs and enterprises will soon have access to commercial kitchen space. Landon Horan, Program Manager for The Center for Food Equity & Economic Development at the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, explained the process of identifying underutilized kitchen spaces within church facilities and the ambition of St. John’s Father Jeff, to provide an opportunity for current food businesses operating out of their homes to professionalize and scale production. The process has been an experience of learning and evolving with the city’s

Planning and Zoning Department as there was no existing ordinance for shared commercial kitchen spaces. Once open, renters will have access to the kitchen for \$15-20/hour, and there are already 12 applicants for food production ranging from baked goods to barbeque.

From St. John's Church, the tour went to **LifeBridge Community Services** to see its **FreshConnections** social enterprise. LifeBridge is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that supports people living in the greater Bridgeport area to strengthen personal capability, develop skills, and build a pathway to economic self-sufficiency. The FreshConnections program brings affordable, fresh fruit and vegetables to food desert areas, where many of Bridgeport's poorest people live and work. It is supported by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and led by director Susan Tabachnick. Anyone can participate at any of the five delivery locations, and customers have the options of a pre-paid produce box in two sizes and a pop-up retail stand featuring seasonal produce. Participants can use their SNAP benefit for purchases or other form of payment. Produce featured in the program comes from FreshPoint, a regional food distributor, and two local farms. The program is actively seeking funding to secure these services for the community in advance of the current grant's expiration in 2018.

The last two stops on the community tour were the **Charles Street Community Garden** and **Reservoir Community Farm**, both managed by Green Village Initiative, a non-profit with the mission to grow food, knowledge, leadership and community, using urban gardening and farming to create a more just food system in Bridgeport. Charles Street Community Garden is one of 13 across the city where aspiring gardeners can apply to rent a 4' x 10' raised bed. Green Village Initiative provides hands-on workshops, growing guides, crop plans, seeds and seedlings, soil, and other resources to its community growers to help place fresh, pesticide-free vegetables on family tables. **Reservoir Community Farm** is Bridgeport's only outdoor urban farm. At 1.7 acres, it is a demonstration farm for growers across the city, a welcoming gathering and learning space for the community, and home to a biweekly farm stand from June to October. One of Bridgeport's seven farmers market locations, the farm stand accepts SNAP, WIC, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program checks, and Bridgeport Bucks in exchange for some of the 5,000 pounds of fresh produce grown on-site each year. Hundreds of students, teachers, community gardeners, and visitors participate in farming and food justice workshops and experiential field trips on-site. Youth are the primary growing force at the farm during the summer and participate in regular workshops in food justice, leadership development, community building, and job skills. Youth complete over 1,300 hours of farming and food justice skills building every year, becoming the future leaders of social justice in Bridgeport and beyond.



Figure 6 – The Greenhouse at Reservoir Community Farm (left) and Farm Stand (right) managed by Green Village Initiative. Photo Credit: Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures)



More photos of the locations visited during the community tour are presented in **Appendix C**.

## Vision and Values

Close to forty residents and stakeholders attended the first public session of the workshop on the evening of September 7<sup>th</sup> at the B:Hive co-working space. Margot “Maggie” Gotterer of the Bridgeport Food Policy Council and Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative, welcomed attendees to the event and spoke about the collective efforts of various local and regional organizations to advance food-based initiatives and other programming throughout the city. She specifically outlined three focus areas of the Bridgeport Food Policy Council—urban agriculture, school wellness, and local food economy development.

The technical assistance team introduced the Local Foods, Local Places program with a short presentation, connecting its objectives to Bridgeport’s workshop goals. To provide additional context for the community conversation, the team prepared slides specifically related to food and health in Bridgeport covering poverty, unemployment, SNAP eligibility, food insecurity rates, public school student meal programs, health indicators, grocery demand, and farm access. A full community profile based on widely-referenced, publicly available data sets is in **Appendix A**.

The main purpose of the community meeting was to hear from residents and other stakeholders about their hopes for the future of food and the role of farmers markets in Bridgeport. The facilitator led attendees through an exercise called “*This I believe...*” designed to capture the vision and values of Bridgeport. Responses from this exercise are included in Figure 7 and more can be reviewed in **Appendix D**. The visioning exercises also highlighted challenges and opportunities like those in Figure 8 that influence and shape the action plan.

Sharing ideas affirmed participants’ belief in the value of farmers markets as a social and economic platform. At the same time, attendees had questions about *who* is currently participating and benefitting from the markets. The meeting concluded with a review of proposed workshop goals, which participants revised to reflect perspectives from participants. Changes included further definition of words like “safe” and “sustainable” used to describe the vision for the role of farmers markets.

## THIS I BELIEVE ...

### ...ABOUT LOCAL FOOD IN BRIDGEPORT

- It is a source of health.
- It is a vehicle for change, hope, and pride.
- There is lots of momentum.
- It has room to grow – to increase production and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Some places have more access than others.
- It is not meeting consumers where they are.
- Is it local?

### ... ABOUT BRIDGEPORT FARMERS MARKETS

- Bridgeport has a rich history and natural beauty.
- They are more than just food.
- They are vibrant, gathering places for the community.
- They help build social capital and pride.
- They support entrepreneurship and are a platform for artisans.
- They highlight nutrition, farming, cooking.
- They are an alternative retail environment that increases access to food.
- They are different by neighborhood.

Figure 7 - Select responses to the “*This I believe*” exercise

<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES/ASSETS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Economic development:</b> Entrepreneurship, platform for artisans, sustainable, local, support farmers</li> <li>• <b>Community development:</b> Gathering place, vibrancy, build social capital, pride, activate open space</li> <li>• <b>Education:</b> Nutrition, farming, cooking, integration with existing curriculums</li> <li>• <b>Build Capacity:</b> Skills/job training, expand opportunities for youth, people of color/ women</li> </ul>
<p><b>CHALLENGES/BARRIERS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access (physical, financial, cultural, psychological)</li> <li>• Seasonality of locally grown produce</li> <li>• Meeting needs of farmers and consumers equally</li> <li>• Need more choices, growers, money, partners, etc.</li> <li>• Underutilized markets</li> <li>• Increase public education</li> <li>• Establish sustainable pathways for food related businesses</li> </ul>
<p><b>VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New businesses/incubation</li> <li>• Markets = more than food</li> <li>• Expanded use of SNAP benefits at market</li> <li>• Deeper understanding and consideration</li> <li>• Connected community</li> <li>• Eat "real" food</li> <li>• Take advantage of forward momentum and community food champions</li> <li>• Demonstrate financial benefits of markets to City of Bridgeport</li> <li>• More local foods in local restaurants</li> <li>• Bring local food to those who need it</li> </ul>

Figure 8 – Slides from the workshop capturing perspectives from the community meeting

The positive, forward-thinking discussion of the evening carried on after the formal agenda ended and continued into Day 2. The second day of the workshop began with fresh local peaches and pastries to augment examples of strategies used by other communities to move forward food system and place-based initiatives. Among the mini-case studies presented for consideration and inspiration were:

- Mobile markets (Mill City Grows, Fresh Truck, and Shape Up Somerville).
- Online grocery shopping and delivery service (Baltimarket) .
- Open collaboration platforms (Somerville Food Security Coalition).
- Healthy corner stores/bodegas (Passaic, New Jersey healthy food ordinance).
- Controlled environment agriculture and enterprise center (Plant Chicago).

Workshop attendees then participated in a brainstorming exercise, working individually and then as a group to generate specific actions to support each of the community's goals.

For the entirety of the afternoon, groups of workshop attendees self-selected into smaller groups to attend to the important task of filling in the details of actions prioritized for each goal. After several hours of intense collaboration, each group presented its results to everyone. Because not everyone can be at each table for every goal, this is an important part of the workshop for filling in gaps in information and sets the stage for the final exercise of the workshop, which begins the eventual transition from planning to doing.

In a final exercise, participants stood up one by one and provided an “offer” and an “ask.” Offers capture the one or two things that each person is committed to doing to help move the Local Foods, Local Places process forward and help Bridgeport achieve the goals outlined in the action plan. Community members offer whatever they have the time, capacity, and skills to provide. “Asks” capture what it is that participants need or want from the rest of the group to help move the process forward. This can include help on specific tasks, technical assistance, financial support, or simply continued communication and cooperation from others. The full list of offers and asks is available in **Appendix D**.



*Figure 9 – Workshop participants fuel for the afternoon action planning session with the help of lunch provided by a local food truck. Photo Credit: Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures)*



## Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop was a community action plan. The plan is organized around five community goals and includes actions the participants brainstormed at the workshop and during follow-up calls. The following action plan summary and matrix helps to identify needed actions, prioritize next steps, and define roles and responsibilities for moving forward. A list of funding resources (**Appendix E**) and references (**Appendix F**) are provided to aid the community in implementing the action plan.

### Action Plan Summary

#### **GOAL 1: Expand the role of farmers markets as inclusive, safe places for community-building and sustainable (e.g. non-exploitive, transparent) commerce.**

- Action 1.1: Create a Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative Guide.
- Action 1.2: Develop a program/service to match farmers/vendors with customer service and sales support during farmers markets.
- Action 1.3: Develop a multi-lingual messaging campaign focused on consumer education (e.g. “Welcome to Your Market”).
- Action 1.4: Increase the capacity of the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative to have a more consistent level of marketing across Bridgeport Farmers Markets.
- Action 1.5: Conduct a gap analysis of product offering and services across all markets to identify areas for improvement.

#### **GOAL 2: Increase awareness of fresh food outlets (e.g. farmers markets, retail pop-ups, super pantries) and participation among Bridgeport’s low-income residents, especially those enrolled in SNAP.**

- Action 2.1: Create paid opportunities for local leaders, entrepreneurs, and customers to become decision-makers in food programming.
- Action 2.2: Host community events in neighborhoods to provide information to residents about fresh food options and to better understand the needs of residents.
- Action 2.3: Create a comprehensive guide to accessing fresh food in Bridgeport.
- Action 2.4: Develop and launch real time marketing and communications for Bridgeport fresh food outlets, both citywide and targeted by neighborhood.

#### **GOAL 3: Build partnerships and strategic collaboration among the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative and the wider community of organizations concerned with fostering a socially just and equitable food system, health, and livability in Bridgeport.**

- Action 3.1: Create a comprehensive food system asset and needs map of the community of food system organizations in Bridgeport.
- Action 3.2: Host a semi-annual convening of food system and other related groups (food justice, anti-racism, etc.).
- Action 3.3: Produce an annual report assessing local food priority areas (determined at semi-annual convenings) and assessing progress.
- Action 3.4: Build political capital with the city of Bridgeport by working with Bridgeport Generation Now (and other organizations).



- Action 3.5: Identify models or best practices for integrating anti-racism into the Bridgeport food space.

**GOAL 4: Lower the barriers to entry in Bridgeport for people who want to grow food or food businesses.**

- Action 4.1: Develop and adopt an urban ag master plan.
- Action 4.2: Create a consistent and fair permit and licensing process that specifically offers support to Bridgeport residents.
- Action 4.3: Create a resource that indexes community assets related to starting a food-business (e.g. land, technical assistance, funding, process guides for permits/licenses).
- Action 4.4: Provide food-industry entrepreneurship training.

**GOAL 1: Expand the role of farmers markets as inclusive, safe places for community-building and sustainable (e.g. non-exploitive, transparent) commerce.**

In order for the farmers markets in Bridgeport to be sustainable, they must offer sufficient product and experiences to attract a diverse audience consistently. For consumers, this includes seeing the farmers market as a place where they are welcome (e.g., diverse languages spoken), where there is something specifically for them (e.g., intergenerational activities, Bridgeport culture), and where it is clear how to engage with the offering of goods and/or services and the impact of their participation (e.g. supporting the local economy). For supply chain partners/vendors, this will require growing food in a way that is sustainable for the land, with labor that is adequately compensated, and a presentation that reflects quality, safety, and authenticity. At the same time, participating in farmers markets must not place undue burden on growers in terms of time, cost, or liability. Likewise, for market managers, this means having processes and systems in place (e.g., equipment, volunteers, technology, partners, etc.) that are reliable, efficient, and affordable to use week after week. It is important that all food at the market be accurately labeled for origin and production method(s), reflect community preferences, and be available for purchase using a variety of payment options, including federal/state benefits.

**Action 1.1: Create a Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative Guide.**

<p><b>What this is and why it is important</b></p>	<p>Currently, there is no documented standard or guide for operations across the Bridgeport farmers markets. Studying best practices from other successful markets and documenting the policies and practices for those in Bridgeport will help to calibrate expectations for all involved in sustaining positive outcomes of the market—vendors, managers, volunteers, city officials, supporting organizations, host neighborhoods, and customers. Topics addressed by the guide may include, but are not limited to: pricing and payment systems, location, presentation, sourcing origin requirements, labeling, marketing, how to obtain permits from the city, licensing, customer service, data collection, insurance, liability, and continuous improvement processes (e.g. receiving and responding to feedback).</p>
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<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guide is created with input from farmers, market managers, city officials, customers, and host organizations/neighborhoods.</li> <li>• The guide is made available electronically and in print form.</li> <li>• All market vendors acknowledge receipt of the guide.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	November 2017 – February 2018
<b>Lead</b>	Maggie Gotterer (Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative)
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative members</li> <li>• Vendors</li> <li>• City officials (health department, police department, Planning &amp; Economic Development)</li> <li>• Bridgeport Food Policy Council</li> <li>• Supporting organizations</li> <li>• Host neighborhoods</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models of guides from other farmers markets</li> <li>• Printing</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA grants (Farmers Market Promotion Program)</li> <li>• Connecticut Department of Agriculture Viability Grant</li> <li>• Advertising/sponsorship</li> <li>• Donations</li> </ul>

**Action 1.2: Develop a program/service to match farmers/vendors with customer service and sales support during farmers markets.**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	Part of making the market feel like a welcoming place for all is to see others there that reflect the community’s full demographic profile. One way to enhance representation would be to pair farmers/vendors with volunteers/paid trained personnel interested in offering customer service and sales support. This program would create ambassadors/champions for the markets; bring new voices into how the market is run; lend an extra set of hands to vendors; provide training, skills development, and volunteer hours to individuals; and increase diversity representation in the marketplace.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased traffic of expanded demographic clientele (proxy for customer satisfaction).</li> <li>• Have at least one match-making (vendor/support person).</li> <li>• Satisfaction and learning from perspective of farmer and support person.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop: October 2017 – April 2018</li> <li>• Pilot: May – October 2018</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cristina Sandolo, Green Village Initiative</li> <li>• Raquel Rivera-Pablo, A Pinch of Salt</li> <li>• Luke Cecarelli, Cecarelli Farm</li> </ul>

<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bree Natale, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• Deb Caviness, Opportunities for Industrialized Communities</li> <li>• Heidi Vanderwal, Chair of Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• Juniper Blakeman, VISTA, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative/FPC</li> <li>• Cristina Sandolo, Green Village Initiative</li> <li>• Groundwork Bridgeport</li> <li>• YouthWorks</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Students/individuals</li> <li>• Training materials (“How it Works”)</li> <li>• Transportation assistance</li> <li>• Compensation (financial or compelling value proposition)</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA grants</li> <li>• Corporate sponsorships</li> <li>• People’s Bank</li> <li>• Private foundations</li> </ul>

**Action 1.3: Develop a multi-lingual messaging campaign focused on consumer education (e.g. “Welcome to Your Market”).**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	An education/orientation piece in key languages will help to calibrate expectations of target customers across their market experiences. The material might include what to expect in terms of product, terminology, what payments are accepted, how to use them, etc. This might be integrated with a statewide SNAP match marketing campaign led by Wholesome Wave. Possible formats: social media, flyers, etc. (cross-cutting platforms).
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups held to solicit feedback on content and distribution strategy</li> <li>• Customer education/orientation document created, posted, and distributed</li> <li>• Positive feedback from market customers</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	October 2017 - May 2018
<b>Lead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bree Natale, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• Raquel Rivera-Pablo, A Pinch of Salt</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants</li> <li>• Juniper Blakeman, VISTA, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative/FPC</li> <li>• Taylor Edelmann (Outreach Sub-group)</li> <li>• Bridgeport Food Policy Council</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation (Spanish, French/Creole, Swahili)</li> <li>• Printing</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers (market greeters/ambassadors) for distributing flyers</li> <li>• Wholesome Wave (marketing materials/funding)</li> </ul>

<b>Action 1.4: Increase the capacity of the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative to have a more consistent level of marketing across Bridgeport Farmers Markets.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	Effective marketing is critical to attracting and retaining vendors and customers to farmers markets. Currently, some fundamental branding elements (e.g. logo) developed by the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative unite the seven Bridgeport farmers markets, but there is still a noticeable difference between them. Market managers know this and residents highlighted it during the community meeting. The disparity is the result of some markets and managers having greater capacity and resources to dedicate to marketing efforts. The Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative is striving for less disparity and greater consistency across the markets.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps/needs for each market identified and a solution developed that may also service other markets at the same time</li> <li>• Stabilized budget/funding of each market</li> <li>• Increased awareness of all seven markets</li> <li>• Recognition and sharing of successes at each market</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	Before 2018 season (April/May)
<b>Lead</b>	Maggie Gotterer, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market managers</li> <li>• Bree Natale, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• The Bananaland (our marketing agency)</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	Build out marketing budget across print, digital, and social media platforms
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program</li> <li>• Connecticut Department of Agriculture Farm Viability Grant</li> </ul>

<b>Action 1.5: Conduct a gap analysis of product offering and services across all markets to identify areas for improvement.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	Using the newly developed farmers market guide (Action 1.1.) as a checklist, the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative could conduct an initial assessment of all markets to determine where the best opportunities are for improvement or to pilot new initiatives.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist completed for each market (7 total)</li> <li>• Implementation of at least one improvement practice per market during the 2018 season</li> <li>• Ongoing use</li> <li>• Higher participation</li> <li>• High satisfaction (vendor, customer, managers) as measured by feedback via a survey or other method</li> <li>• All markets brought up to standards set by the Collaborative and/or strategy set to do so over 2 years</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	Timed to bring all up to standard within two (2) years



<b>Lead</b>	Margot Gotterer, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bree Natale, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• Juniper Blakeman, VISTA, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative/FPC</li> <li>• Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative Members</li> <li>• Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative Vendors</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Other (as gaps are identified)</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	

**GOAL 2: Increase awareness of fresh food outlets (e.g. farmers markets, retail pop-ups, super pantries) and participation among Bridgeport’s low-income residents, especially those enrolled in SNAP.**

Fresh food advocates in Bridgeport are concerned that information about healthy and fresh food options are not reaching all residents, particularly the city’s low-income residents. The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee is concerned about a low redemption rate of SNAP benefits among those that qualify at the city’s markets. There are several ways that action may help to overcome these challenges. First, Bridgeport food programming decision-makers can place a greater emphasis on planning *with* the community, rather than planning *for* the community. Increasing participation by a broad cross-section of Bridgeport residents is one way to achieve this outcome. However, all residents might not be able to give away their time without some form of compensation. Meeting the community where they are at, and listening to their needs is a good start. A trusted two-way exchange of information and education can be established with residents and community leaders. To further increase fresh food awareness, it may be useful to develop a one-stop resource where residents can get all the information they need. This information might include where fresh, healthy food is available in Bridgeport (including farmers markets, food pantries, soup kitchens, and more); SNAP benefits information; and a list of community organizations/city departments that can help individuals access fresh food. Finally, citywide and targeted direct messaging can remind residents about local fresh food options as they are happening. If people don’t know about it, they won’t use it, and they won’t show up. All the actions for this goal are focused on spreading information in a variety of ways and engaging a wider group of community participants to drive critical food-related policy decisions.

**Action 2.1: Create paid opportunities for local leaders, entrepreneurs, and customers to become decision-makers in food programming.**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	Ensuring representation of all Bridgeport community members introduces equity to the community decision-making table. And solving problems collectively—planning <i>with</i> , not <i>for</i> —builds a more efficient process. Currently, most leadership and supportive positions in food programming and advocacy are volunteer only. This arrangement inherently excludes anyone who is not able to give their time for free. Providing financial support for decision-makers could help attract a broader range of community voices, particularly lower-income individuals who need to be compensated for their time.
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Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding is available to support food programming leaders and decision-makers</li> <li>• Levels of civic participation increase and new individuals are participating, representing a broader section of the community</li> <li>• Decision-making around food-related issues in the city involves representation of those who will be impacted by the decisions</li> </ul>
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-12 months: Research funding opportunities and apply for grants</li> <li>• 1 year +: Plan to secure funding by October 2018 (Food Policy Council gives the mayor recommendations)</li> <li>• 2 years +: Individuals hired and in place by June/July 2019</li> </ul>
Lead	Bridgeport Food Policy Council
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committee of Food Policy Council</li> <li>• New London Group (doing similar work)</li> <li>• Other leadership development organizations</li> </ul>
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time (planning and grant writing stages)</li> <li>• Salaries and benefits</li> </ul>
Possible funding sources	TBD

**Action 2.2: Host community events in neighborhoods to provide information to residents about fresh food options and to better understand the needs of residents.**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	<p>Creating a two-way exchange of information and education is a key to introducing more people to Bridgeport’s fresh food options and the benefits of healthy food. Hosting small events and/or participating in community events that other groups have organized—intentionally reaching a broad cultural cross-section of residents in neighborhoods across the city—can help to bring information directly to those who need it most. These events can also be an excellent opportunity to listen closely to residents to understand their needs and challenges. For instance, asking why people use or don’t use benefits at markets can help address any issues of stigma or access. Parks, schools, community centers, and parking lots are all potential spaces that can be used for this type of event. Food or kids’ entertainment can be provided as well. As the fresh food guide is developed (Action 2.3) these events can help test the info to see if it is useful and relevant and identify further information gaps. Once the guide is created it can be distributed and promoted through the events.</p>
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent and frequent presence of information and listening opportunities at popular community events</li> <li>• Increased turnout from more diverse resident groups at fresh food outlets because of informational events</li> <li>• Residents sharing information they learned with their friends and neighbors, further increasing turnout and healthy eating</li> <li>• A really clear process/method for running these kinds of events is established such that anyone can do it on behalf of all participating organizations.</li> </ul>

<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-6 months: Compile list of potential events for information exchange</li> <li>• 6-12 months: Share list with all Food Policy Council members, including advisory council</li> <li>• 6-12 months: Information exchange begins at community events</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juniper Blakeman, VISTA, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative/FPC</li> <li>• Taylor Edelman, Bridgeport Food Policy Council, Outreach Sub-group</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridgeport Food Policy Council Advisory Board Member Organizations</li> <li>• Outreach volunteers from community organizations</li> <li>• Bridgeport Mayor’s office (city events)</li> <li>• Federally Qualified Health Centers’ events</li> <li>• Faith-based groups</li> <li>• Neighborhood associations</li> <li>• Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust</li> <li>• Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>• Park City Communities</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time (to compile list of existing community events and organize information-sharing events)</li> <li>• Design and printing for informational/outreach materials</li> <li>• Supplies for table set up (table, chair, tent, tablecloth, clipboard, pens, etc.)</li> <li>• \$500 for incentives for providing feedback (e.g. market coupons, \$5-10 gift certificate, food at events)</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	New England Grassroots Environmental Fund

**Action 2.3: Create a comprehensive guide to accessing fresh food in Bridgeport.**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	<p>Access to fresh, healthy food involves many factors. A comprehensive guide can provide residents with information about where they can find fresh food (e.g., farmers markets, food pantries, Fresh Connections), how they can get to that fresh food (transit and paratransit information), and how they can acquire fresh food (SNAP, income requirements, cash/debit, etc.). Information about organizations and city/county departments that help families and individuals access food can be included. Other content can provide information on the types of fresh food that can be expected at market (or this information can be updated weekly online), what’s in season, recipes, and more. In Bridgeport, it will be important to make sure that a resource guide is made available in multiple languages. This one-stop resources should be developed to be easily updated (at least once a year) and available in one or more formats (e.g. hard copy, electronic) so as to maximize accessibility for those that can benefit from its information.</p>
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<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased diversity and number of fresh food outlet customers</li> <li>• Popularity of guide (measured by website hits, app downloads, or number of hardcopies distributed)</li> <li>• Residents report having an easier time accessing fresh food</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>12 months:</b> Launch/distribute by June 2018
<b>Lead</b>	Landon Horan, Greater Bridgeport Council of Churches
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Way’s 211</li> <li>• Bridgeport Prospers</li> <li>• App developers (maybe university student partners)</li> <li>• City of Bridgeport (help disseminate guide)</li> <li>• Get Healthy CT</li> <li>• Bridgeport Food Policy Council Advisory Board</li> <li>• Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County</li> <li>• Juniper Blakeman, VISTA, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative/FPC</li> <li>• Green Village Initiative Interns</li> <li>• Husky Health and other organizations doing community outreach that could share information from the guide</li> <li>• Health clinics</li> <li>• WIC clinics</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Other groups already speaking with food-insecure residents about available resources</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and aggregation of resources</li> <li>• Layout and design</li> <li>• Printing and materials and/or app or website development</li> <li>• Translation</li> <li>• Staff time/salary for maintenance of resource</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	In-kind

**Action 2.4: Develop and launch real time marketing and communications for Bridgeport fresh food outlets, both citywide and targeted by neighborhood.**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	<p>Citywide or targeted real-time information can direct residents to fresh food quickly and efficiently. Information is typically sent via text message or email and informs residents about where fresh food is now, what is available, and whether there are any promotions occurring (e.g., SNAP matching program). Real-time information can promote seasonal produce, recipes, concurrent entertainment/events, and more. Messages help increase attendance by reminding people about markets (especially locally oriented markets, like mobile markets) and can also support increased SNAP participation by reminding customers that all of the markets in Bridgeport accept SNAP. Green Village Initiative farm staff have already developed a simple text messaging system for their customers that with funding could be extended to a pilot for other farmers markets.</p>
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<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of text message/email subscribers</li> <li>• Increased attendance at markets</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>6-9 months:</b> Launch/distribute by June 2018
<b>Lead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bree Natale, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• Cristina Sandolo, Green Village Initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Village Initiative farm staff</li> <li>• City of Bridgeport (Angel DePara)</li> <li>• United Way’s 211</li> <li>• Food Policy Council Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscription to newsletter/text service</li> <li>• System management and message crafting (City of Somerville, MA can provide a model)</li> <li>• Coordination with fresh food outlets (daily/weekly) to inform communications</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	TBD

**GOAL 3: Build partnerships and strategic collaboration among the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative and the wider community of organizations concerned with fostering a socially just and equitable food system, health, and livability in Bridgeport.**

The first step in building stronger collaboration among organizations in Bridgeport is to understand who is out there, what groups are doing, what resources are available, and what needs aren’t being met. From there, it would be advantageous to bring all food-related organizations together on a regular basis to network, communicate, and agree on six-month priority actions based on unmet needs. This type of coordination would also present an opportunity to integrate food justice and social equity across organizations and improve decision-making transparency. The group could develop a report each year to assess progress on identified priorities and collect data and documentation for grant applications that is hard to get now. Working together would help to build political capital and increase buy in, demonstrate benefits of food systems investment and constituent support of local food, consider the whole community, advance social justice and equity, and provide organizational checks and balances.

<b>Action 3.1: Create a comprehensive food system asset and needs map of the community of food system organizations in Bridgeport.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	<p>Many individuals, agencies, and organizations are working within Bridgeport’s food system, but lack of a communication channel means that these groups don’t typically work together to serve the city’s residents. An asset and needs inventory can help identify key players and food system resources, forming the foundation of a Bridgeport food systems directory. It can also help identify areas where there are still unmet needs and areas where there is overprovision of service. Knowing what each organization or department can provide best could inform the creation of a strategic plan to maximize scarce resources, building organizational efficiency and reducing duplication of effort.</p>

<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive directory of food-related needs, assets, and food system “players” is available, shared, and being used to make connections.</li> <li>• Directory is updated on a regular basis.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	1 -2 year +: Largely dependent on scope of project—who is included, what assets and needs are mapped; aim for end of summer 2018
<b>Lead</b>	Maggie Gotterer, Bridgeport Food Policy Council
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University partners/students</li> <li>• VISTA Corps</li> <li>• Food Policy Council Advisory Board</li> <li>• Local Foods, Local Places steering committee</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect and analyze data (leverage research for resource guide in Action 2.3)</li> <li>• Staff time – project manager/point person</li> <li>• Development of online data portal</li> <li>• Marketing and communications</li> <li>• Maintenance and updating</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	TBD

<b>Action 3.2: Host a semi-annual convening of food system and other related groups (food justice, anti-racism, etc.).</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	To ensure that a communication pathway remains open between the food systems organizations in Bridgeport (without creating yet another organization), a twice-yearly event can be held to bring together all the groups working in this arena, in the city. A key outcome of these gatherings will be to identify the most pressing local food-related priorities and develop a multi-organization six-month plan of action to address them. These convenings can also be an opportunity to integrate local food-adjacent organizations (such as those with a focus on social equity and/or food justice) and to make local food decision-making more transparent. Convenings can help bring in new stakeholders and serve as a platform for celebrating local food achievements and recognizing community accomplishments.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased attendance at semi-annual events (number of organizations or individuals)</li> <li>• New faces/recruitment</li> <li>• Year-to-year progress/ movement on priority issues</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 months: Local Foods, Local Places steering committee to hold first follow up meeting to the technical assistance</li> <li>• 1 year: First full convening of citywide organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	Local Foods, Local Places steering committee (first meeting) and rotating thereafter

<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Policy Council</li> <li>• Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> <li>• CT CORE</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Venue</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Supplies/materials</li> <li>• Outreach</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly could charge a small annual membership fee to meeting attendees</li> <li>• Local business sponsorships</li> </ul>

<b>Action 3.3: Produce an annual report assessing local food priority areas (determined at semi-annual convenings) and assessing progress.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	At the end of each year, a report can be compiled to assess the food community's progress towards addressing priority local foods issues (as identified at semi-yearly convenings). This type of report can help to identify continuing needs gaps and can be used to assess the usefulness of the convenings and action planning. Additionally, the collection and publication of relevant, food-related data may assist organizations with efforts like grant applications. Currently, not much data is available and sources are scattered. Reporting can also help to add more transparency to food systems planning and decision-making.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual reports are being used by organizations.</li> <li>• Amount of grant funding received by community organizations is increasing due to enhanced applications.</li> <li>• Measurable changes in local food priorities are being observed.</li> <li>• New partners and organizations are helping to bring new data to the annual reports.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 year: Preparation and planning</li> <li>• 2 years: Publish first report (September 2019)</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	Food Access Resource Consortium (Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative, Green Village Initiative, UCONN Extension, Sacred Heart, and Fairfield University)
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairfield County Community Foundation</li> <li>• City Health Department</li> <li>• Primary Care Action Group (Community Health Needs Assessment)</li> <li>• State Department of Social Services</li> <li>• City of Bridgeport (GIS and host/publish annual report)</li> <li>• Bridgeport Prospers</li> <li>• University students</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection and analysis</li> <li>• Marketing and production</li> <li>• Digital or physical report preparation (writing)</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	TBD

<b>Action 3.4: Build political capital with the city of Bridgeport by working with Bridgeport Generation Now (and other organizations).</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	Local food organizations in Bridgeport currently feel that they are not taken seriously by decision-makers in city government. Demonstrating organizational commitment and working to gain foundational support across the political spectrum can have several long-term benefits. First, it helps to insulate against political turnover. Having allies on all sides means that organizations do not have to start building new relationships with each election cycle. Organizations can increase the buy-in of city staff through political support, and political support can help demonstrate the benefits of investment in the local food system. Lastly, part of building political capital is gaining constituent support. Bridgeport’s food system community can influence decision-makers by demonstrating that the community supports local food efforts.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local food has vocal champions on all sides of the political spectrum in Bridgeport.</li> <li>• Local food organizations are taken seriously and are invited to participate in policy making.</li> <li>• Recommendations of local food organizations are being adopted.</li> <li>• There is a recognized liaison between local food organizations and Bridgeport elected officials.</li> <li>• There is shared messaging between elected officials, city staff, and local organizations.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	Immediate and ongoing
<b>Lead</b>	Margot Gotterer and sub-group chairs, Bridgeport Food Policy Council
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridgeport Generation Now</li> <li>• Neighborhood Revitalization Zones</li> <li>• League of Women Voters</li> <li>• Young Democrats</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	Time and energy
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	N/A

<b>Action 3.5: Identify models or best practices for integrating anti-racism into the Bridgeport food space.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	Anti-racism is key tenet of many of Bridgeport’s local food organizations. Continuing and growing peer-to-peer sharing of anti-racism training in group settings can help spread these principles beyond this core group of organizations. Unfortunately, formal anti-racism training can be extremely expensive and time intensive (tens of thousands of dollars for multi-day events). Identifying how other organizations/places have successfully integrated anti-racism into their community spaces may reduce barriers, ensuring that local food is socially equitable and just. Additionally, viewing projects and planning through the lens of anti-racism can help make sure that the whole community is represented in decisions and that organizations are planning WITH people and not planning FOR people.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Policy Council goals are adopted by/into other organization's policy platforms.</li> <li>• Increased diversity and a change in the voices at the planning table.</li> <li>• A new pipeline of diverse leaders.</li> <li>• New customers at farmers markets.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	1+ and ongoing
<b>Lead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Policy Council</li> <li>• Bridgeport Farmers Market</li> <li>• VISTA Corps</li> <li>• CT CORE</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting cast</b>	Undoing Racism in Bridgeport Coalition
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	Time
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	N/A

**GOAL 4: Lower the barriers to entry in Bridgeport for people who want to grow food or food businesses.**

Currently there is no clear single point of contact or portal with information for people who want to start a food business or grow food in Bridgeport. This can make the process unnecessarily frustrating for individuals or groups and result in unfair outcomes. Current zoning and local ordinances are not updated to include emerging trends in food (e.g. food trucks), nor is there a clear process for continuing to update and to consider new concepts and enterprises as the food system movement and industry advances. An overall review of urban farming and permitting and licensing processes related to food businesses is needed to ensure the local economy can accommodate new food opportunities. Other important ways to help lower the barriers to entry for aspiring entrepreneurs would be training programs and a central resource of information about what steps to take to get started depending on where an individual wants to engage in the system (e.g. grower, distributor, manufacturer, recovery, etc.).



<b>Action 4.1: Develop and adopt an urban ag master plan.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	This action entails having a land access plan designed for the community by the community that addresses secure tenure.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master plan is approved with inclusion of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gardeners</li> <li>• Residents in food deserts</li> <li>• Racial representation of city</li> <li>• People who want to grow and sell and buy food</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Master plan is referenced in city’s Master Plan of Economic Development and Conservation</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin: soon as possible</li> <li>• Completion: 6-8 months (city master plan by April 2018)</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	Cristina Sandolo, Bridgeport Food Policy Council, Urban Ag Sub-group
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tanner Burgdorf, Groundwork Bridgeport</li> <li>• Nature Conservancy</li> <li>• Jacob Robison and Lynn Haig, City of Bridgeport Office of Planning and Economic Development</li> <li>• Aspetuck Land Trust</li> <li>• Gardeners</li> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Food businesses</li> <li>• Farmers market managers</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review other cities’ master plans (e.g. Austin) for examples</li> <li>• Hire a planning consultant</li> <li>• Green Village Initiative concept paper</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Conservancy</li> <li>• Citibank/People’s United/TDI</li> <li>• City of Bridgeport Grant Department</li> <li>• Fundraising/donors</li> <li>• Fairfield County Community Foundation</li> </ul>

<b>Action 4.2: Create a consistent and fair permit and licensing process that specifically offers support to Bridgeport residents.</b>	
<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	A consistent and fair permit and licensing process is needed to make Bridgeport a business-friendly city. The licensing schedule and language does not currently account for other models of business including farmers markets, shared use kitchen, Fresh Connections, small food vendors. In addition, current language leaves too much to individual interpretation, and there is no one to help.

<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written process/standard ordinance available easily (online, at city hall) and consistently referenced</li> <li>• Process for addressing continued developments</li> <li>• Taxes from food establishments and HD permitting revenue increase</li> <li>• Satisfaction of new food businesses</li> <li>• Number of new businesses permitted/licensed increases</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	Before next farmers market season (March 2018)
<b>Lead</b>	Food Policy Council's Food-Based Economic Development subgroup (Landon Horan)
<b>Supporting cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of Planning and Economic Development</li> <li>• Health department</li> <li>• Fresh Connections</li> <li>• State Department of Consumer Protections</li> <li>• USDA</li> <li>• Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and/or resources needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Attorney (pro bono?)</li> </ul>
<b>Possible funding sources</b>	N/A

**Action 4.3: Create a resource that indexes community assets related to starting a food-business (e.g. land, technical assistance, funding, process guides for permits/licenses).**

<b>What this is and why it is important</b>	In order to facilitate equitable entry to entrepreneurial opportunities, it is important to have a written document that is accessible to all and clearly explains the steps required to start or operate a food venture (e.g. food production, manufacturing, service) in Bridgeport. Having a public resource brings transparency to the process and makes success less reliant on “who you know.” The experience of building this resource would reveal yet untapped expertise and capacity within the community.
<b>Measures of success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living/working document that outlines resources</li> <li>• Includes residents of every neighborhood</li> <li>• Listserv to contact/update that is used</li> <li>• Testimony of success</li> <li>• Consistent data collection mechanism</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	2 winters with milestones
<b>Lead</b>	Landon Horan, Food Policy Council, Food-based Economic Development Sub-group

<p><b>Supporting cast</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FPC, Outreach Sub-group</li> <li>• Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (formerly ICONN)</li> <li>• Make the Road</li> <li>• Green Village Initiative</li> <li>• Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport</li> <li>• Juniper Blakeman, VISTA, Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative/FPC</li> <li>• Groundwork Bridgeport</li> <li>• City of Bridgeport (Jacob)</li> <li>• Neighborhood Revitalization Zone</li> <li>• Faith-based community</li> <li>• Community garden captains</li> <li>• Food entrepreneurs</li> <li>• CTNext</li> <li>• Bridgeport Innovation Place</li> </ul>
<p><b>Costs and/or resources needed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Design costs</li> <li>• Data collection tools</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Print materials</li> <li>• Translation services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible funding sources</b></p>	<p>CTNext is a funding source and technical resource for a city-wide food entrepreneurship proposal. Although they're more focused on higher-growth ventures, they're currently the main source of funding for SEEK and have shown interest in food entrepreneurship initiatives</p>

<p><b>Action 4.4: Provide food-industry entrepreneurship training.</b></p>	
<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>Bridgeport wants to host a cluster of food businesses and to use the success of the food industry to attract people and other economic development to the city. Diverse services and amenities promote the livability and attractiveness (for living, work, play) of a place. Entrepreneurship training will help those who want to be part of Bridgeport's economic development to identify business opportunities.</p>
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Bridgeport-based vendors at most farmers markets</li> <li>• Increased business registrations and tax licenses for small food-based businesses in Bridgeport</li> <li>• Positive feedback from attendees</li> <li>• Attendees/students are represented in farmers markets and new local businesses</li> </ul>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>2 years</p>

## Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Workshop

Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport (food entrepreneurs)</li> <li>• Green Village Initiative (farmers)</li> <li>• Pinch of Salt (food entrepreneurs)</li> </ul>
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groundwork Bridgeport (Christina Smith)</li> <li>• WBDC</li> <li>• Score</li> <li>• Bridgeport Opportunities for Industrialized Communities</li> <li>• Bridgeport Innovation Place</li> <li>• Small and Minority Business Enterprise</li> <li>• WIBO (LifeBridge’s program)</li> <li>• UConn Ag. Extension</li> <li>• CTNext</li> </ul>
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors</li> <li>• Curriculum development</li> <li>• Classroom space</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBA</li> <li>• HCC (tech skills)</li> <li>• UCONN</li> <li>• U Bridgeport</li> <li>• Sacred Heart</li> <li>• Fairfield University</li> </ul>

## Appendices

- Appendix A – Community Data Profile
- Appendix B – Workshop Participants
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Workshop Feedback
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References