



New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

February 8, 2013

New Opportunities in Growing Resilient Communities
Through Local & Regional Food Systems

Cultivate Kansas City is a 501c3 organization established in 2005 to act as a catalyst for the production and consumption of locally grown food in Kansas City neighborhoods.



Vision

Cultivate Kansas City works to create

a Kansas City where:

- ✿ Sustainable, community- engaged farms are scattered throughout the metro, providing an abundance of fresh and healthy food to city residents
- ✿ There are opportunities for people to earn income through farming
- ✿ Unused spaces are turned to food producing farms and gardens, and
- ✿ Appropriately scaled agriculture is understood and practiced as an integral part of a beautiful, lively, and healthy neighborhood.

Programs Gibbs Road Community Farm

- ✿ We feed Kansas Citizens! 2 acres in production, certified organic
- ✿ Train future farmers and food activists: 40% of crew go on to run their own farm or work on others; another 20% go onto policy and other food related work
- ✿ Demonstration and learning site- more than 200 volunteers and +2000 hours



Programs Juniper Gardens Training Farm

- Partnership with Catholic Charities of NE KS, New Roots for Refugees
- 17 new farm businesses; 4 year program, 4.25 acres in production
- 9 graduates to date- 6 with new farms, 3 in process
- ½ acre of community gardens
- Farmers Market with KCK Greenmarket
- Healthy Food Team, a partnership with Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids program



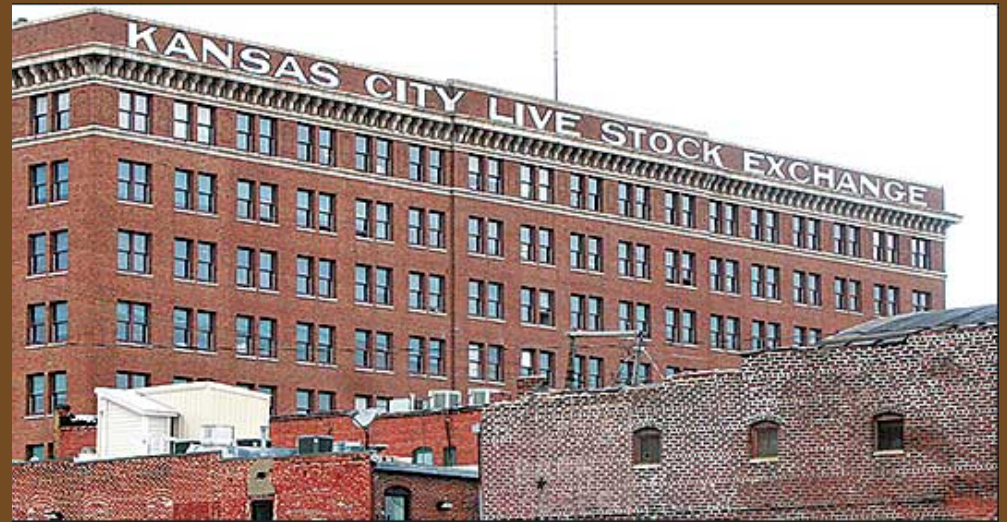
Programs Urban Farmer Development &

Get Growing! Kansas City

- ✿ One:One Technical Assistance
- ✿ Non-profit partnerships
- ✿ Farmer Education & Networking
- ✿ Public Education
- ✿ Policy work
- ✿ Food systems work



Kansas City Local Food System



Kansas City metro

- Population 2 million plus
- 119 municipalities, 9 counties
- 8,000 square miles
- Consistently ranked amongst “best cities to live”



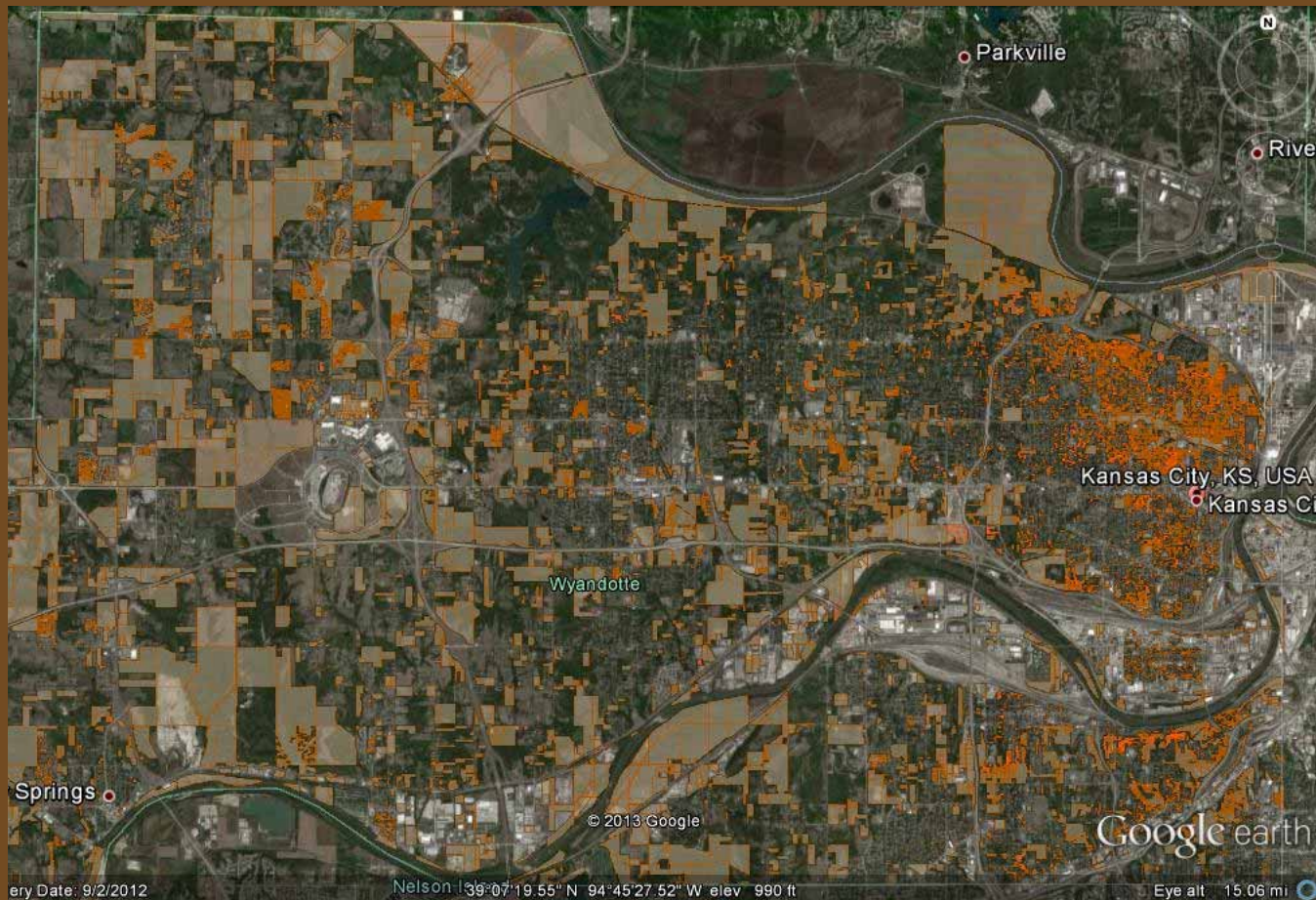
Kansas City metro

- ✿ We are the middle of the country!
- ✿ Business- strong entrepreneurial mind-set
- ✿ Conservative, not generally a city of innovation
- ✿ Meaningful frame of reference for most cities interested in urban agriculture and urban food systems.



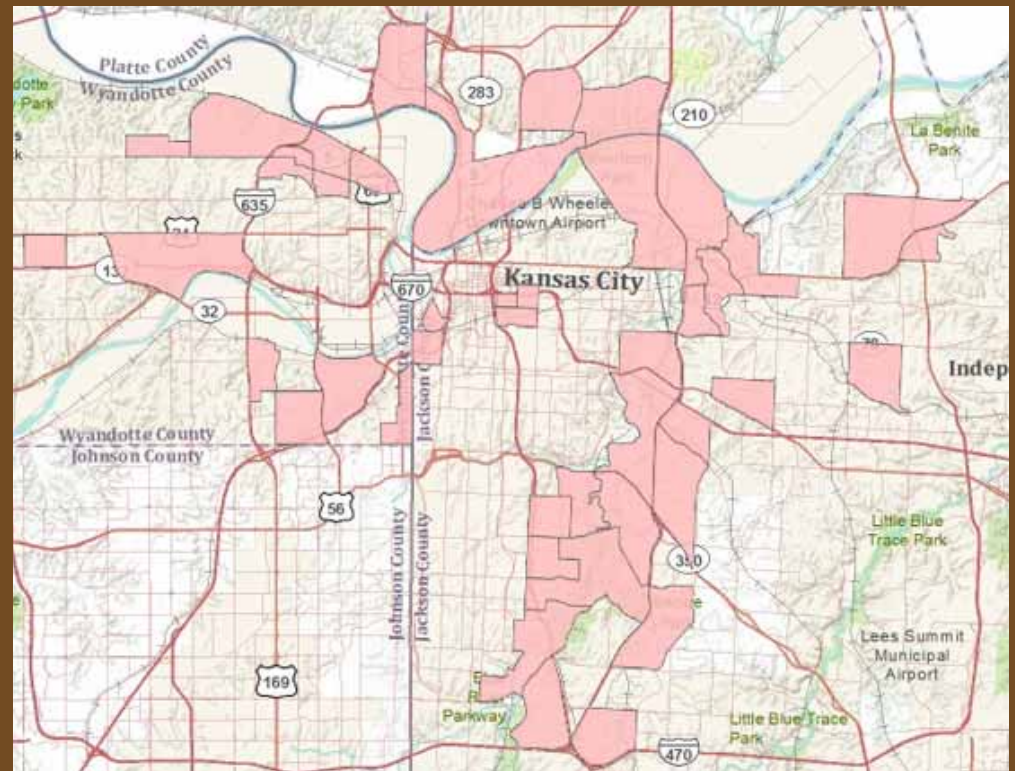
Kansas City metro challenges

- ✿ Wyandotte County out of 67,000 properties, 12,000 are land bank land or vacant buildings
- ✿ Kansas City, MO 7,000 vacant, nuisance properties



Kansas City metro challenges

- 40,000 residents live in food deserts
- Closing down of neighborhood grocery stores
- Loss of backyard gardening as a food source
- Proliferation of fast food outlets
- Missouri 12th most obese state; Kansas 16th



Urban relationships to agriculture

- ✿ Strong identification of agriculture as row crops & livestock operations, large family farms supplying industrial agriculture system.
- ✿ Average farm size in Kansas 700 acres; Missouri 270 acres (US average is 446 acres).
- ✿ Kansas is the fifth biggest producer of agricultural products in the country.



Urban relationships to agriculture

- Kansas Citians have personal and family connections to agriculture: African American communities from deep south, Arkansas; Latino (mostly Mexican) from small family farms and migrant labor; white midwesterners from conventional farms in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska.
- Since 1950s, urban sprawl in Kansas City metro has led to the loss of some of the nation's best farm land and to the loss of fruit, vegetable, and local food industry.
- The farm crises of the 1980s and since then led to families losing their farms, their identities, their livelihoods.



Urban relationships to agriculture

These agricultural connections create strong emotional and cultural dynamics around food production in the city.

- Do farms and gardens belong in a high quality city neighborhood?
- Is farming a good way of life?
- Do we want to experience the emotional baggage that agriculture brings with it?

Local Agriculture Developments

- Fifteen years ago, 2 food organizations: Kansas City Community Gardens and Kansas City Food Circle
- **Today:** Beans&Greens, Boys Grow, Food Policy Coalition, Green Acres, Urban Farming Guys, many others



Local Agriculture Developments

- University Extension programs investing in urban food production: Lincoln University Innovative Small Farm Outreach Program, MU and Kstate Master Gardeners
- K-State Masters Program in Horticulture, concentration in urban food systems opening up in Olathe



Local Agriculture Developments

- Twelve farmers markets in 2005, 49 in 2013
- Urban farm businesses and rural farm businesses actively engaging with urban community: Blue Door Farm, City Bitty Farm, Good Natured Family Farms, Huns Garden, Root Deep Urban Farm, Urbavore, many others (over 100 urban growers report selling produce)



Local Agriculture Developments

- More than 200 community and non-profit gardens based in churches, non-profits, neighborhood associations, private land
- More than 130 school gardens



Upcoming Initiatives

- Food planning in Johnson County, KS, Kansas City, MO, Wyandotte County, KS including local food and local food production
- The Giving Grove
- Culinary program to train school food service staff in local and healthy food sourcing and processing (KC Healthy Kids)
- Food Hub feasibility to aggregate produce from small- mid sized farms
- New farms and gardens continuing to start up



Policy Developments

- City of Kansas City, MO: May be movement towards a second round of urban ag codes changes, including building codes for high tunnels
- Water access and use costs campaigns in Wyandotte County & Kansas City, MO
- Urban chickens laws being proposed in a number of municipalities
- Interest in use of land bank land for urban agriculture



Parcel #	094524
State ID:	1050183403013015000
Owner:	WYANDOTTE COUNTY LANDBANK
Address:	116 QUINDARO BLVD
City:	KANSAS CITY
State:	KS
Zip:	66101
Acres:	0.42492388
Landbank Property	



How has this all happened?

• Key hub organizations- Cultivate, Food Policy Coalition, KC Healthy Kids in particular- facilitate conversation, provide education, linkages, vision, national exposure, creating a framework for other, more focused organizations working in particular neighborhoods or constituencies.

How has this all happened?

- Federal funding the first investment in many cases (USDA, RAPP).
- Health care foundations also early adopters. (Health Care Foundation of Greater KC, Menorah Legacy)
- Local foundations & corporations starting to pay attention. (banks, DST, others)

How has this all happened?

- The original grassroots movement was broadened/deepened when obesity became recognized as a public health issue. New leaders emerged in new sectors. Some integration issues between “old” leadership and “new” leadership.

How has this all happened?

- Policy makers began to pay attention in response to obesity and to vacant land/ neighborhood depopulation issues.
- Political and government staff leadership has been variable across governmental entities.

How has this all happened?

- In general, urban agriculture and urban food system movement has undergone a shift from being an alternative movement to heading into the mainstream.
- As funds have been invested, the level of non-profit, community, political, and business professionalism has increased.
- There is still a strong movement energy, passion is still the driving force, but the culture has become much more diversified and complex and sturdy/ resilient as a result.

Challenges to smart growth of urban food production

- ✿Lack of understanding on part of planners, funders, decision makers about what organizations, movements, networks are in existence
- ✿Overpromising urban agriculture and local agriculture: small scale agriculture is, in many ways, expensive, particularly when combined with challenges of growing in an urban environment
- ✿Desire for quick returns and low initial investments (It is easier to plant a garden than it is to grow, weed, harvest, and sustain one!)
- ✿Lack of patience with learning curve of gardens, farms, local food access points like farmers markets, on-site stands, CSA distribution

Opportunities for smart growth of urban food production

- Include local food production & local food access as part of any geographic/ neighborhood based planning process. Put food production/ access alongside transportation, economic development, infrastructure, etc.
- Include food production as part of green space planning (farms, gardens, orchards)
- Promote housing and mixed used developments that are built with food producing gardens or farms as an amenity. (From fruit trees to small raised beds to community gardens to an anchor farmer selling on site.)

Opportunities for smart growth of urban food production

- ✿Address the aesthetic questions around urban gardens and farms: train landscape architects in food crops, train urban growers in landscape architecture principles.
- ✿Experiment with use of productive green space for stormwater catchment.
- ✿Address the start-up costs of soil, water, neighbor friendly infrastructure (fencing, sheds, hardscaping)
- ✿Invest in technical assistance and hub organizations.
- ✿Find and create opportunities to help communities question, broaden, re-envision what a good quality neighborhood looks like.