

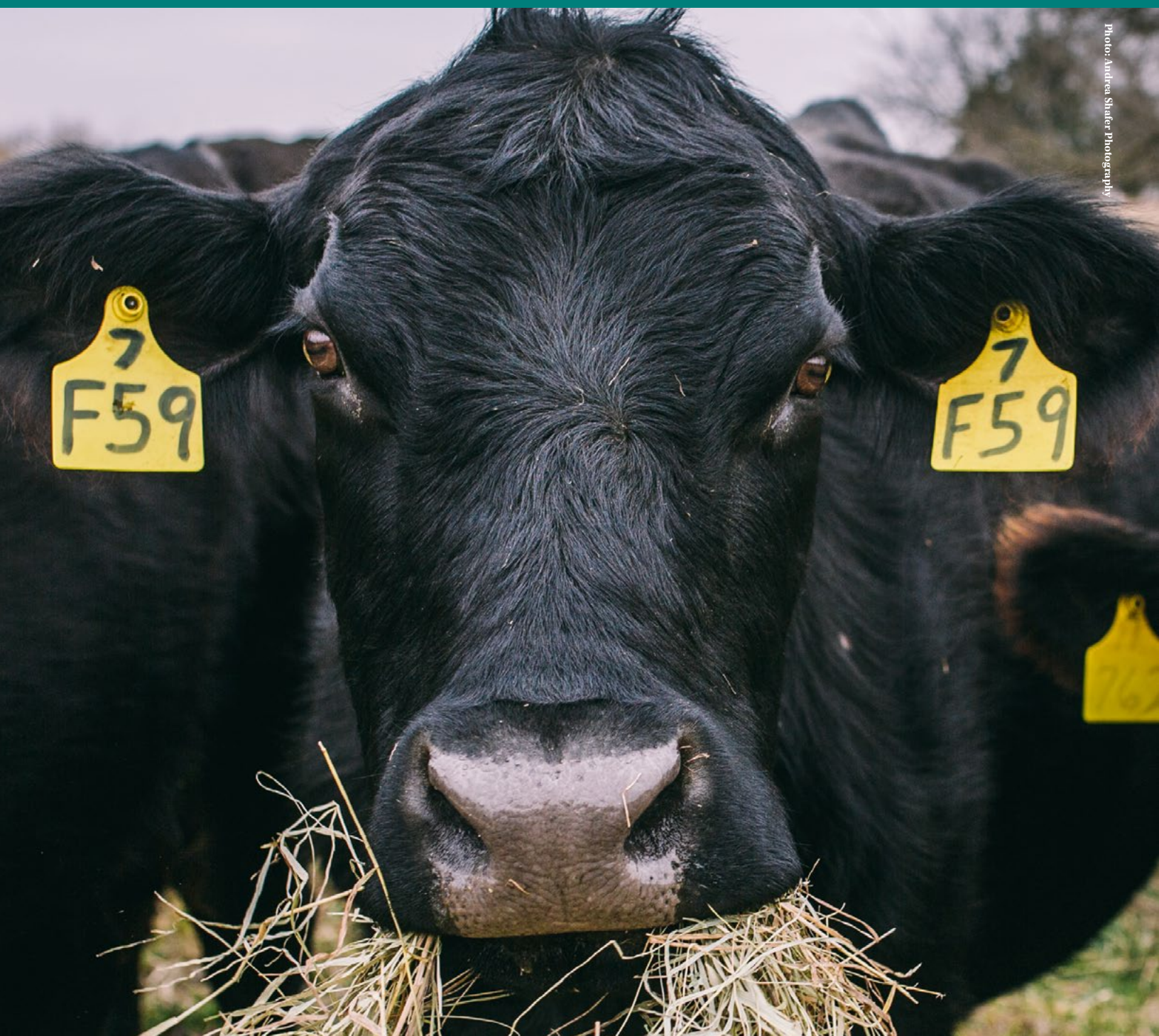


DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM PLAN



DEVELOPED BY





Cover photos: (top) Andrea Shafer Photography, www.ashaferphotography.com
(bottom left and bottom right) Earl Richardson, www.earlrichardson.com
(bottom center) John Doe

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PURPOSE

Communities engage in planning activities to help guide future decisions. Planning can include land use, housing, transportation, economic development, and other key areas that shape a community. Local food system development is a new area of focus in planning—both nationally and in Douglas County.

This community plan, for the first time, provides strategic recommendations to help guide the development of the local food system in Douglas County, Kansas. Several themes emerged from the community in creating this plan:

Build relationships and understanding across the urban-rural divide

Find balance across the goals

Respect individual rights while upholding the common good

Implement actions and policies based upon community context

The plan was created as part of the process to update the Lawrence-Douglas County Comprehensive Plan (see insert box below). This plan **sets a framework for the next 10 years** to guide policy changes by our local governments, to shape the work of the Douglas County Food Policy Council (DCFPC), and to inspire community actions and partnerships.

We hope you find something in this plan that excites and inspires you! If you do, please join us in building a more robust local food system. See [Moving the Plan Forward, page 39](#), for how you can get involved.

Follow progress at  www.douglascountyks.org/fpc  [LawrenceandDouglasCountySustainability](#)

To learn more, contact: dcfpc@douglascountyks.org | 785-832-5157

Comprehensive plans, such as [Horizon 2020](#), establish policies and guidelines for how a community will change over time. While updating the Lawrence-Douglas County Comprehensive Plan, nineteen topics were identified as important to include in the revision. These were summarized in an [Issue Action Report](#).¹ Two issues directed the creation of the Douglas County Food System Plan:

Issue 13: Enhance Agricultural Uses & Rural Character in Douglas County
Issue 14: Encourage/Support Local Food System Development

Based on these issues, the DCFPC was asked to develop a set of goals, objectives, and policies. The Report directed the DCFPC to “ensure the master plan is fitting the true needs of the community.” This Food System Plan will be incorporated by reference into the comprehensive plan. This means that although composed separately, the Food System Plan also functions as part of the comprehensive plan.

WHAT IS THE FOOD SYSTEM?

Our local food system includes how we produce, buy, eat, and dispose of food in Douglas County. The journey our food takes from field to plate is influenced by ecosystems, education, culture, funding, research, and public policies. Working together can lead to many benefits in our community. This work includes strengthening connections between area producers and consumers to keep food dollars local.



Throughout this plan, you'll find key data points about our local food system. For a more comprehensive look at our food system, review the [2017 Douglas County Food System Assessment](#) [forthcoming].

What does local mean?

This report does not explicitly define “local.” It is important to remember that developing our local food system is not a choice between 100% locally-produced food or 100% imported food. The Douglas County Food Policy Council (DCFPC) has decided to not set a working definition of “local” for the Council’s work (such as grown only in Douglas County, or grown within 200 miles of Lawrence). Nationally, we see a trend towards letting institutions, like a school district, set their own local definition — not public policymakers.² Regardless, the DCFPC serves as an entity to reduce barriers and support local food connections to benefit Douglas County residents.

What benefits can come from a strong local food system?

Economic vitality

- Profitable agricultural businesses
- Successful food entrepreneurs
- Good jobs and career opportunities

Wellness

- Access to nourishing foods
- Food and gardening skills
- Great tasting local produce

Ecological resilience

- Healthy and abundant soils and waters
- Ability to endure extreme weather events
- Waste reduction and reuse

Equity

- Good food for all
- Celebration of diversity
- Empowerment and inclusion

WHAT IS THE DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL?

Formed in 2010, the Douglas County Food Policy Council (DCFPC) is a body of 23 stakeholders from across the local food system, appointed by the Douglas County and City of Lawrence Commissioners. The Council advises these elected officials on food-related policy issues and provides a community forum for local food system development.

Learn more at www.douglascountyks.org/fpc

Douglas County Food Policy Council Member Representation (as required in Council bylaws)

At-Large, Appointed by County Commissioner, 1st District
At-Large, Appointed by County Commissioner, 2nd District
At-Large, Appointed by County Commissioner, 3rd District
Animal protein producer
Douglas County Farm Bureau
Specialty crop producer
Retail food outlet (restaurant)
Institutional Food Purchaser
Educational institution
Douglas County Extension
NGO (Health/Nutrition/MD)
NGO (Local Food/Sustainable Ag.)
Youth Representative
Senior Food & Nutrition Programs
At-Large, Appointed by City of Lawrence
At-Large, Appointed by City of Lawrence
Direct marketing producer
Retail food outlet (grocery store)
Retail food outlet (grocery store)
City of Lawrence Sustainability Advisory Board
Food Security organization
Established Farmers Market in Douglas County
Lawrence/Douglas County Chamber of Commerce



Photo: Helen Schnoes

“I learned more about Douglas County agriculture serving on the Food Policy Council. I have a greater respect for those who are raising vegetables, or running their own business or restaurant. I have a whole greater appreciation and understanding—it takes all of us”

—Brenna Wulfschuhle,
Agricultural Producer

DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS

CURRENT MEMBERS

Marlin Bates
 Lee Broyles
 Elizabeth Burger
 Kim Criner
 Christine Ebert
 Jill Elmers
 Joshua Falleaf
 Connie Fitzpatrick
 Inti Hirt
 Jan Hornberger
 Jen Humphrey
 Pattie Johnston
 Ashley Jones-Wisner
 Jennifer Kongs
 Larry McElwain
 John Pendleton
 T.K. Peterson
 Aundrea Shafer
 Michael Showalter
 Michael Steinle
 Scotty Thellman
 William Vesecky

PAST MEMBERS

Scott Allegrucci	Bob Lominska
Ken Baker	Frank Male
Michael Beard	Rick Martin
Tom Buller	Lori McMinn
Hugh Carter	Debbie Miers
Barbara Clark	Russell Mullin
Jeanette Collier	Paula Murrish
Cole Cottin	Dan Nagengast
Jim Fischer	George Paley
Diane Fishburn	Brady Pollington
Sharla Flakus	Daniel Poull
Ellie Garrett	Trudy Rice
Carol Gilmore	Kim Scherman
Crystal Hammerschmidt	Pep Selvan
Emily Hampton	Greg Shipe
Julie Henry	Nicole Tichenor
Jason Hering	John Wilson
Dennis "Boog" Highberger	Constance Wolfe
Clint Hornberger	Bill Wood
Sean Johnson	Brenna Wulfkuhle
Tyra Kalman-Crouch	Carolyn Wulfkuhle
Sandra Lawson	Rita York-Hennecke



Photo: Jane Doe

HOW WAS THIS PLAN CREATED?

Nearly a year's worth of community effort led to the creation of this plan. The DCFPC oversaw a robust community engagement process and conducted a secondary data review of our food system — from agricultural production to health to economic impact. (See the 2017 [Douglas County Food System Assessment](#) and [executive summary](#) online [forthcoming]). The DCFPC collaborated closely with the Sunrise Project Community Coordinators, who assisted with targeted story collection within Lawrence. DCFPC staff also researched food systems planning examples in other communities.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2016, a wide range of community members helped identify needs, barriers, and topics of interest to address with this plan. The public engagement efforts included:

- 13 focus groups with community organizations
- 7 Community Coordinators reaching over more than 200 residents
- 480 respondents to a Lawrence Listens survey
- 5 public forums throughout Douglas County

Based upon community input and background data, the DCFPC and Community Coordinators came to consensus around five working goals, using the criteria framework described at right. From there, a draft plan was released to the public in January 2017, open for comments. Over the next five months, the groups worked with staff to review and refine the plan, including sharing it with elected officials and community partners. Technical assistance was provided during this review stage from PolicyLink and Public Health Law Center. Each step along the way informed the final plan before you today.

How were the Plan's policies chosen?

A set of 5 criteria was used to select the objectives and policies included in this draft.

Need

Does this approach address an existing community barrier, resource gap, etc?

Community Interest

Have we heard about this topic from the community?

Impact

Do best practices suggest this approach could help us reach a goal?

Feasibility & Funding

Could this really get done?

Influence

Does this approach fall within the Plan's jurisdiction?

SUNRISE PROJECT COMMUNITY COORDINATORS

Sunrise Project is a Lawrence-based nonprofit that collaborated with the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department and Douglas County to hire 9 Community Coordinators to collect stories, particularly from traditionally underrepresented and unreached members of our community, about their food-related experiences. Sunrise Project oversaw trainings, attendance at community meetings, reflective discussions on food systems readings, field trips for the Community Coordinators to further engage them with our local food system. The Coordinators' involvement continued into drafting, revising, and adopting the plan.

Community coordinators collectively convened 80 listening sessions among friends, colleagues, formal groups, acquaintances, and neighbors. Sessions consisted of 1-15 people and, in total, over 200 community members were reached. The structure of the sessions varied widely. Some Coordinators utilized connections with employers to engage clients and customers, for instance, at the Workforce Center and Sonic Drive-through. Other Coor-

dinators invited friends and acquaintances join them for a meal and discussion, at home or at an area restaurant. Some sessions took place in restaurants or other venues where groups were already meeting, such as on campus for the KU-Haskell Women of Color Collective or a faith-based senior group.

Each Community Coordinator had the autonomy to choose which questions to ask and how to structure their listening sessions. Some coordinators used creative processes to start group sessions, for example, drawing a spider web of words that connect to food. This helped people begin thinking of the many ways food plays a role in their everyday lives. Coordinators took notes at their sessions and shared the stories with the Douglas County Food Systems Coordinator and Sunrise leadership through written documentation and in-person conversations. Community Coordinators drew upon these experiences and stories when reviewing and revising the Food System Plan drafts with the Douglas County Food Policy Council.



From left to right: Emily Hampton (Sunrise Project Executive Director), Eric Ogwangi, Melissa Freiburger (Sunrise Project Programs Director), Cyara Le, Owie Tsotsi, Connie Fitzpatrick, Rachael Lackey, Betty Pickerel, Robin St. James"

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

This plan lays out a wide array of potential actions to guide the development of the local food system in Douglas County. The plan is organized from broad goals to specific recommendations.

Example: 5.3.2 = Goal 5, Objective 3, Policy 2

Goals are general statements of desired outcomes for our community. These represent a future vision for Lawrence and Douglas County. The goal number is the first in each action statement.

Objectives are more specific statements providing strategies to guide local work to reach each goal. Objectives should help direct actions towards measurable outcomes. Each goal has multiple objectives that support it. Objectives within each goal are represented by the second number in each action statement.

Policies are specific activities and initiatives prioritized to meet goals and objectives. These are the action steps of the plan. Policies are uniquely identified by the third number in each action statement.

Potential Partners: The Food System Plan **implementation** will be overseen by the Douglas County Food Policy Council and its staff within the Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office, with general application to the City of Lawrence and Douglas County governments. However, a strong local food system depends upon collaboration. Each Objective references possible community partners, but does not include every possible partner. Partnerships for implementing the plan will draw both on current efforts and look ahead to building new relationships.

Connecting to Other Community Plans: A local food system connects to a wide array of local issues, including sustainability, transportation, public health, and arts & culture. See **Connecting to Other Community Plans** Appendix.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

GOAL #1: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS, FOOD ENTREPRENEURS, AND FOOD SECTOR WORKERS THRIVE IN OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY

Agriculture and food-related sectors have long held important roles in the Douglas County economy and the quality of life of its residents. Douglas County agricultural products value nearly \$44 million, with an estimated economic impact of \$361 million.³ Of 945 farms in Douglas County, 86 sell products directly to area consumers.⁴ Local agricultural producers tend land that has been in families for generations, while new producers look to join our agricultural community. Entrepreneurs, restaurateurs, and innovators launch and grow new businesses that shape our community's culture. Many more community members work on farms, in grocery stores, and at food service outlets and restaurants to secure seasonal work and build careers.

In Douglas County, the average net farm income in 2012 was \$11,315 with 56% of farms reporting net losses. Supermarkets and restaurants employ over 6,000 workers in Douglas County, with sector annual average wage per employee below \$20,000. Given such challenges, it is crucial to identify and encourage opportunities for growth in local employment, the county's tax base, and citizens' income. This can be achieved by a number of community actions. Economic development leaders can support and promote agricultural and food businesses. Tourism and community activities can celebrate local

foods and share the story of area agricultural producers. Local residents and institutions can buy more local foods, directing their food dollars back into the local economy. Area organizations can help train workers and identify good jobs in agriculture and food sectors.

Each of these components helps ensure that all thrive in our local food system and regional economy.

This plan focuses on opportunities for agricultural producers to sell into local and regional markets, including direct-to-consumer sales. Local food sales can play a role in diversifying a producer's markets, which may also include national or international sales, and production of non-edible products like ornamentals and industrial commodities. Producers who buy from area suppliers further deepen the connections in our local food system. In addition to building markets, this plan recognizes that technologies continually shape the face of agriculture, including closed-system growing practices like hydroponics and aquaponics.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

OBJECTIVE #1: DEVELOP LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES

Economic development encompasses a variety of activities that seek to improve the quality of the local economy and meet community goals. The strong partnership of the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce has identified value-added agriculture and regional food system infrastructure, such as processing facilities, as targeted industries to support. In fact, Douglas County currently has no commercial animal processing facilities. These existing priorities provide an example of how developing local food and agriculture businesses can strengthen the local food system.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

City of Lawrence Economic Development
The Chamber of Lawrence, Kansas
Douglas County Zoning & Codes
e-communities
Eudora and Baldwin City Chambers
KU Small Business Development Center
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
Kansas Department of Agriculture

Policy 1.1.1

Maintain currently adopted policies for food systems economic development.

This includes (a) Strategic regional food system infrastructure development (e.g., processing and aggregation, such as a food hub), as in [Economic Development Council of Lawrence & Douglas County Strategic Plan](#) and (b) targeted industry assistance for Value-Added Agricultural Business [City of Lawrence Economic Development Policy, 1.3.3.d](#)

Policy 1.1.2

Create a local food system low-interest revolving loan fund.

Conduct a needs assessment and research structures and funding streams to support the development of a local food system low-interest revolving loan fund. This fund could support beginning farm and food businesses to stabilize and grow, leveraging existing e-communities resources.

Policy 1.1.3

Create a staff liaison to help local food producers navigate Douglas County policies and permits.

This could include guidance concerning zoning, codes, enforcement, and permits to understand the best opportunities to grow their operations. Position could be new or existing staff.

Policy 1.1.4

Review existing resources to support food-based entrepreneurs and develop tools to address gaps.

Tools could include a Food Business Startup Resource Guide to help new entrepreneurs understand existing policies, needed permits, and available support agencies.

Value-added agriculture refers to a production operation that enhances the value of its raw products. A producer can do this in one of two ways. First, he can change the state of his raw products through food manufacturing or processing, such as making wine from grapes or milling wheat. Second, a producer can distinguish and separate her goods from the commodity market, such as selling her products with her farm identified or producing according to particular standards, such as grass-fed and finished beef. Value-added agriculture allows producers to diversify their markets and launch new enterprises to increase income.



In recent years, Douglas County has revised the policies for its commercial kitchen on the Fairgrounds, and established a marketing campaign under its new branding as Culinary Commons, www.culinarycommons.org.

Policy 1.1.5

Invest in shared-use facilities for food-business production and retail.

For example, this could be community kitchens and public market spaces.

Policy 1.1.6

Target small business supports to benefit immigrants, low-income residents, and peoples of color.

Support should focus on the development and launch of food businesses.

Policy 1.1.7

Apply economic development tools to support businesses addressing critical community food needs.

Support could benefit retailers in food deserts or utilize of Healthy Food Financing funds.

Healthy Food Financing represents a variety of new financing options and strategies that have emerged in recent years to help direct investment into areas of critical need and promote healthy food access. From the national level to state and local contexts, these funds often offer businesses low- and no-interest loans.

Policy 1.1.8

Conduct periodic farm tours with local officials, agency staff, and economic development leaders.

Visits to area farms and food sector businesses can share with policymakers about operations and challenges.

Policy 1.1.9

Ensure producers can develop skills in agricultural best practices for urban and rural settings.

This includes soil health, food safety, and accessing regional markets.

OBJECTIVE #2: PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD, FARMS, AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Specific events and tours focusing on area farms and local food experiences can draw visitors to Douglas County. Thirty local farms have registered as agritourism sites with the State of Kansas, and an estimated 3,500 people participated in the 2016 Kaw Valley Farm Tour. Targeted marketing can encourage new spending at area restaurants, markets, and agricultural heritage sites. Local residents have an important role in telling their story to visitors and neighbors. They can also benefit from initiatives that support unique local food and agriculture experiences by building a sense of place and pride in one's home community.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

City of Lawrence Arts & Culture
City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation
Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council
Douglas County Zoning & Codes
e-communities
eExplore Lawrence
Eudora and Baldwin City Chambers of Commerce
K-State Research & Extension—Douglas County
Lawrence-Douglas County Planning
Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability



Photo: Andrea Slater Photography

Our largest celebration of agricultural heritage, the Douglas County Fair, has recently begun showcasing local chefs using local farm products at the Chefs Challenge event.

Policy 1.2.1

Review the impact of Douglas County agritourism policies (Douglas County Codes 12-319-7) and implement changes as needed.

Changes should support rural economic development and viability of area farms. Identify opportunities to better support rural lodging, including farm stays and bed and breakfasts.

Policy 1.2.2

Execute educational campaigns about agritourism policies and business opportunities.

Target potential enterprise operators and the general public.

Policy 1.2.3

Create a regional agricultural and heritage district.

Consider opportunities to link with the Unmistakably Lawrence brand. Coordinate and amplify local food and agriculture business and organization promotion. Target marketing to attract overnight visits and spur rural economic development.

Policy 1.2.4

Promote and attract events that celebrate and enhance area agriculture and local food activities.

Support events through financial investments or in-kind donations. Look to feature the Douglas County Fairgrounds, City of Lawrence parks, and other public sites, including those in Lecompton, Eudora, and Baldwin City.

Policy 1.2.5

Utilize the Transient Guest Tax program and Natural Heritage Conservation Council Grants to support local food, farms, and agricultural heritage tourism activities.

This could include the preservation of land and open space to maintain local assets.

OBJECTIVE #3: INCREASE LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING



Photo: Andrea Slater Photography

A local food system depends on consumers who regularly buy locally-produced products, including families, individuals, businesses, and institutions. Building local food awareness and creating consumer demand supports producers and the local economy. For example, a **2016 analysis** estimated that area consumers spend around \$800,000 each year at county farmers markets. The Lawrence Public Schools have been increasing their local purchasing in recent years, too. In the 2016-2017 school year, the district bought 22,000 lbs. of watermelon, 2248 lbs. of cantaloupe, 1055 lbs. of tomatoes, 2431 heads of romaine lettuce, and 1320 lbs. of pears from local farmers.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area institutional food service buyers (universities, health care and long-term living facilities, schools) and other food buyers (restaurants, caterers, etc.)

Farmers Markets of Kaw Valley

Growing Lawrence

K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County

Lawrence Area Chef Farmer Alliance

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

LiveWell Lawrence

Policy 1.3.1

Invest in signage, shared infrastructure, and coordinated marketing to support Douglas County farmers markets.

Identify opportunities to utilize public land for market locations.

Policy 1.3.2

Develop partnerships to support the adoption of local food purchasing guidelines and policies.

*Pursue opportunities to connect local food to the **FuelGood** healthy food initiative with local food entrepreneurs, retailers, and institutions.*

Policy 1.3.3

Maintain an up-to-date Douglas County local food directory and associated efforts.

Focus on facilitating purchasing relationships between area producers and wholesale food buyers.

Policy 1.3.4

Create a sustainable “buy local” consumer campaign with community partners.

Campaign could target percentage purchasing goals (buy 10% local), a time-based local promotion (a week, a month), etc.



Photo: Jane Doe

OBJECTIVE #4: EXPAND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND READINESS TO PREPARE COMMUNITY MEMBERS FOR SUCCESSFUL FOOD SYSTEM EMPLOYMENT

For individuals to find jobs and build careers, they need skills, knowledge, and support. Each sector in the local food system presents a unique set of challenges. Farmers need land and labor to enable production. Chefs require specialized training to advance in the vibrant local restaurant scene. Working in food and agriculture sectors is difficult but can be rewarding to those involved. Community economic development and job training partners should strive to create high-quality jobs, with a living wage, allowing workers to build long-term financial security.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area school districts, including technical education programs

Baker University

City of Lawrence

Douglas County

Haskell Indian Nations University

Johnson County Community College

Kansas State University

K-State Research & Extension—Douglas County

Peaslee Technical Training Center

The University of Kansas



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

Policy 1.4.1

Create skill and technical training opportunities for jobs and careers in food manufacturing, culinary arts, and agricultural sectors.

Work with universities, community colleges, and high schools. Efforts could include re-training initiatives.

Policy 1.4.2

Develop a local initiative to help agricultural producers find farm workers.

Efforts could include recruitment of immigrants utilizing H-2A visas, collaboration with regional organizations working with specific populations (e.g., veterans and refugee communities), and promotion of local opportunities for seasonal or temporary work.

Policy 1.4.3

Support establishment of high-quality jobs in food-related sectors.

Efforts could include campaigns that work toward a living wage for all workers, provision of benefits, and workplace initiatives to promote worker voices, dignity, and flexible/predictable schedules.

Policy 1.4.4

Educate local businesses, residents, and policymakers about the importance of safe, affordable housing and reliable transportation for food sector worker success.

Policy 1.4.5

Support youth educational opportunities to develop food sector job skills, including food production and preparation.

GOAL #2: AS OUR CITIES GROW, WE PRIORITIZE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND MAINTAIN WORKING LANDS TO PROMOTE SOIL HEALTH

Enhancing agricultural uses and rural character in Douglas County have been identified as important community issues. A community needs to ensure the presence of important resources supporting its local food system. These include nutrient-rich soils, clean and abundant water, and farmers on the land. To benefit local producers in the regional economy, a community must balance preservation with considerations of urban growth and development due to increasing population size, and the private property rights of landowners.

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County have established planning goals and support ongoing programs to preserve high quality agricultural lands and conserve resources. These lands require less intervention to produce high yields of crops, especially nutritionally-dense fruits and vegetables. Concentrations of High Quality Soils exist along river valleys and uplands throughout Douglas County. The following objectives build upon existing policy priorities to advance protection for food production in the future.

High Quality Soils are locations that have been graded as being the best land for agricultural production. This includes 2 classes:

Class I: Soils in this class are best suited for cultivated crops, pasture, range, woodland, and wildlife. They are deep, generally well drained, easily worked, and less prone to erosion.

Class II: They require careful management to prevent deterioration or to improve air and water relations when cultivated. The limitations are few and the necessary management is easy to apply. The soils may be used for cultivated crops, pasture, range, woodland, or wildlife food and cover. Class 2 provide farmers less latitude in crop selection or more management practices.

See a [map](#) of Douglas County prime agricultural soils



Photos: Jen Humphrey

OBJECTIVE #1: PROTECT HIGH QUALITY AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Agricultural land represents an important asset to our regional economy and local food system, and a key investment by land owners. Given variability in soil type and topography, not all lands equally support all types of agriculture. Landowners may not pursue on-farm investment if the future of their property is uncertain. Of over 209,000 acres currently in crops, irrigation, hay production, and pasture, high quality agricultural soils cover over 8,000 acres of land in Douglas County, and 450 acres of agricultural land have been permanently preserved in conservation easements. The first three policies below build upon previously adopted policies.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Douglas County and Lawrence Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Offices

Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council

Douglas County Zoning & Codes

Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Office

Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability

Impact fees are costs a local government can apply to a new development that generates revenue for related public investment, such as infrastructure construction to serve the development.

Transfer of Development Rights is a zoning strategy to divert growth to appropriate areas. TDRs create sending zones in rural, environmentally sensitive, and other areas inappropriate for significant new growth. Property owners can sell the development rights to a developer in a receiving zone where growth is desirable. The sending zone property is placed into permanent conservation status, while the developer is able to incorporate additional density in the receiving zone project.

Policy 2.1.1

Utilize the protection of High Quality Agricultural Land as a key assumption in the sector planning process.

Policy 2.1.2

Develop a method to monitor High Quality Agricultural Land protection efforts.

Track and report changes to land use, such as building permits or zoning changes, to inform future protection efforts.

Policy 2.1.3

Establish tools to protect High Quality Agricultural Land for farming that are economically feasible for the land owner.

Policy 2.1.3.a

Create a dedicated fund for conservation easements.

Build upon opportunities to utilize the Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council grants for protection of high quality agricultural soils."

Policy 2.1.3.b

Identify local uses for Impact Fees, Transfer of Development Rights, public-private partnerships, or other funding mechanisms.



Policy 2.1.4

Develop incentives, regulatory tools, and zoning standards that direct high density residential and commercial development in incorporated cities and their Urban Growth Areas.

Implement this policy to encourage protection of agricultural land and support local food production.

Policy 2.1.4

Seek input of local agricultural producers in planning and zoning matters.

Engagement should include the establishment of agricultural preservation programs.

Policy 2.1.5

Assess feasibility of an agricultural reserve overlay district to encourage agricultural land preservation.

OBJECTIVE #2: CONSERVE SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES

How a community uses its finite soil and water resources impacts quantity and availability. Conserving these resources influences the production capacity of the local food system for future generations. Supporting landowners and residents to implement innovative practices can create a lasting impact. Within Douglas County, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Douglas County Conservation District work to help landowners implement conservation practices to maintain topsoil. The State of Kansas has created a [Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas](#) and the watershed-based [Regional Advisory Committees](#) have set responsible goals to protect water resources. The majority of Douglas County is within the Kansas Watershed, although the southern end of the county is within the Marais des Cygnes Watershed. The City of Lawrence and Douglas County can take leadership roles by guiding their operations to meet best management practices promoting conservation in the region.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

[City of Lawrence Development Services](#)
[City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation](#)
[City of Lawrence and Douglas County Public Works](#)
[City of Lawrence Utilities Department](#)
[Douglas County Conservation District](#)
[Douglas County Zoning & Codes](#)
[K-State Research & Extension—Douglas County](#)
[Rural Water Districts](#)
[Sustainability Advisory Board](#)

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are sector-based standards that guide specific practices to meet shared sustainability outcomes, such as pollution reduction. BMPs vary by industry and are often stipulated by state or federal agencies or outside conservation organizations.

Integrated Pest Management is a pest control approach that seeks to reduce plant or crop damage by understanding pest life cycles to emphasize prevention and guide judicious use of synthetic chemical control methods to minimize adverse environmental impact.

Policy 2.2.1

Maintain and increase financial support for soil and water conservation organizations.

Utilize funds to ensure effectiveness and promote continued adoption of innovative conservation techniques.

Policy 2.2.2

Identify alternative vegetation management policies for public roadsides to guide strategic weed control and establish native plants.

Policy 2.2.3

Ensure public landscape maintenance adheres to best management practices, including integrated pest management, and does not negatively affect food production and water sources.

Policy 2.2.4

Support the realization of the Governor's Vision for Water and the goals of the Kansas and Marais des Cygnes Watershed Regional Advisory Committees.

Policy 2.2.5

Implement water rate policies that promote conservation and prioritize food production.

Policy 2.2.6

Adopt policies to allow safe use of graywater and rainwater for irrigation.

Investigate best practices to inform policies. This could include laundry to landscape promotions and rain barrel workshops.

Policy 2.2.7

Study local water use patterns to identify potential areas for policy change to promote water conservation.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

OBJECTIVE #3: IMPROVE SOIL AND WATER QUALITY

The *quality* of local soil and water is also important. For most Douglas County residents, drinking water comes from the Kansas River and Upper Wakarusa Watershed (which includes Clinton Lake). Clinton Lake also provides important recreation activities that rely on clean and safe water. Local and state agencies help improve and ensure water quality, including the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS). Soil health influences agricultural production, including what inputs a farmer needs to buy, how much will grow on a farmer's land, and how weather events impact crops. Unlike soil type, soil health can be built or lost based on management practices. Land use practices, both urban and rural, impact the surrounding environment and watershed.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area land, water, and agriculture non-profits
City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation
City of Lawrence and Douglas County Public Works
Douglas County Conservation District
Kansas Department of Transportation
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability
Public partners in Baldwin City, Eudora, and Lecompton
Sustainability Advisory Board
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Policy 2.3.1

Provide financial and in-kind support for implementation of practices that improve soil health and water quality.

Policy 2.3.2

Engage in public restoration projects for critical water bodies and protective buffer zones.

Policy 2.3.3

Utilize the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) framework and Kansas Watershed Regional Advisory Committee goals to inform local efforts and secure funding for high-priority projects.

Policy 2.3.4

Conduct an analysis of local impacts from pesticide drift.

Analysis should include economic impacts and review of the current spray crop registry (process for claims, investigations, and tracking) for commercial and non-commercial growers.

Policy 2.3.5

Strengthen communication between specialty crop growers and agricultural chemical applicators.

This effort could include a working group with specialty crop growers and applicators to identify local solutions.

Policy 2.3.6

Minimize use of volatile chemicals on public land and review practices surrounding the sale of these products.

Policy change could include no-spray times, use trainings, and consideration of liability.



Photo: Andrea Stafer Photography

OBJECTIVE #4: SUPPORT INTERGENERATIONAL LAND TRANSITION AND BEGINNING FARMER LAND ACCESS



Photo: Andrea Shuler Photography

In Douglas County, the average age of farm operators in 2012 was 59.2 years old — a slight increase from 2007. Nearly 80% of principal farm operators in Douglas County have been operating for over 10 years. The long-term success of preserving agricultural lands in Douglas County relies on an enduring presence of agricultural producers and farming families on working lands. The continued development of our local food system also depends on attracting and supporting beginning farmers.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area agriculture non-profits
Douglas County Zoning & Codes
Lawrence-Douglas County Planning
Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
e-communities

Policy 2.4.1

Develop policy tools and programs to help directly link farmers with lands for production.

Policy 2.4.2

Execute a communication campaign about changes to Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations.

Campaign could feature opportunities for farm worker housing.

Policy 2.4.3

Expand the availability of business finance and technical assistance to support new food producers.

Consider including expansion of the City of Lawrence Common Ground program into Douglas County.

OBJECTIVE #5: BUILD THE RESILIENCE OF AGRICULTURAL ECOSYSTEMS

Disturbances such as intense weather events and drought are anticipated to be more common as the climate changes. This harms the productivity of Douglas County agriculture and proves disastrous to a seasonal harvest. Helping producers and landowners reduce these risks and prepare for unpredictable events can build resilience and better equip producers and private landowners to recover.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area agriculture non-profits
Douglas County Conservation District
Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
Sustainability Advisory Board
The University of Kansas

Resilience refers to the ability of a human or ecological system to respond and recover. In addition to the inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with the event, resilience also includes post-event adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the system to reorganize, change, and learn in response to the event.

Policy 2.5.1

Align City and County land use planning with findings from the Douglas County Natural Resources Inventory to advance protection of ecologically sensitive areas.

Ecologically sensitive areas include native plants and prairies.

Policy 2.5.2

Utilize the [Climate in the Heartland](#) report and similar research to identify adaptation actions to support local food production.

Policy 2.5.3

Support programming to help agricultural producers and land owners adopt practices and technologies to enhance resilience.

Efforts could include building soil health, water retention/holding, implementing and enhancing food safety practices, and promoting carbon sequestration on landscapes.

Policy 2.5.4

Encourage partners to share the importance of soil health and its economic benefits to support agricultural risk mitigation.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

The [Climate in the Heartland](#) report provides historical climate data and future climate projections for Lawrence and other Midwestern communities, to inform municipal staff and elected officials of weather conditions that are anticipated to exceed historical bounds.

GOAL #3: WE BUILD AND DESIGN OUR COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE FOOD ACCESS, FOSTER HEALTH, AND ELIMINATE FOOD DESERTS

The physical environment that creates our communities is often called the built environment. The way we develop our community influences how we get food. Food deserts are areas where a significant portion of residents likely experience low-incomes and limited grocery store access. Recently, Lawrence and Douglas County have begun developing better walking and biking paths, expanding transit services and urban agriculture practices, and purchasing of healthy food items for sale in public spaces. Ensuring healthy food access is essential to creating a vibrant local food system that benefits all Douglas County residents.

Food insecurity has remained fairly consistent in Douglas County since 2010, with 2015 annual estimates suggesting 16.6% of the population is food insecure. Between 2012 and 2016, Douglas County SNAP enrollment decreased by 19%, or 1,628 individuals. During the same time, however, eligibility rates for Free and Reduced

Price Lunch among Douglas County school rose 9.6%, from 34.4% to 37.7% of students. Given such need, our community can work to ensure healthy food access by taking a number of approaches. An important first step includes understanding possible challenges residents may face in their physical environment — including traditionally marginalized populations, such as low-income residents and peoples of color. Compared to all Kansas households, 15.2% of whom face food insecurity, Black and Hispanic residents in Kansas are nearly twice as likely to face food insecurity (about 27%), while nearly half of single mothers in Kansas face food insecurity (45%). **The 2013 Community Health Plan** highlighted healthy food access as one of five community priority areas.

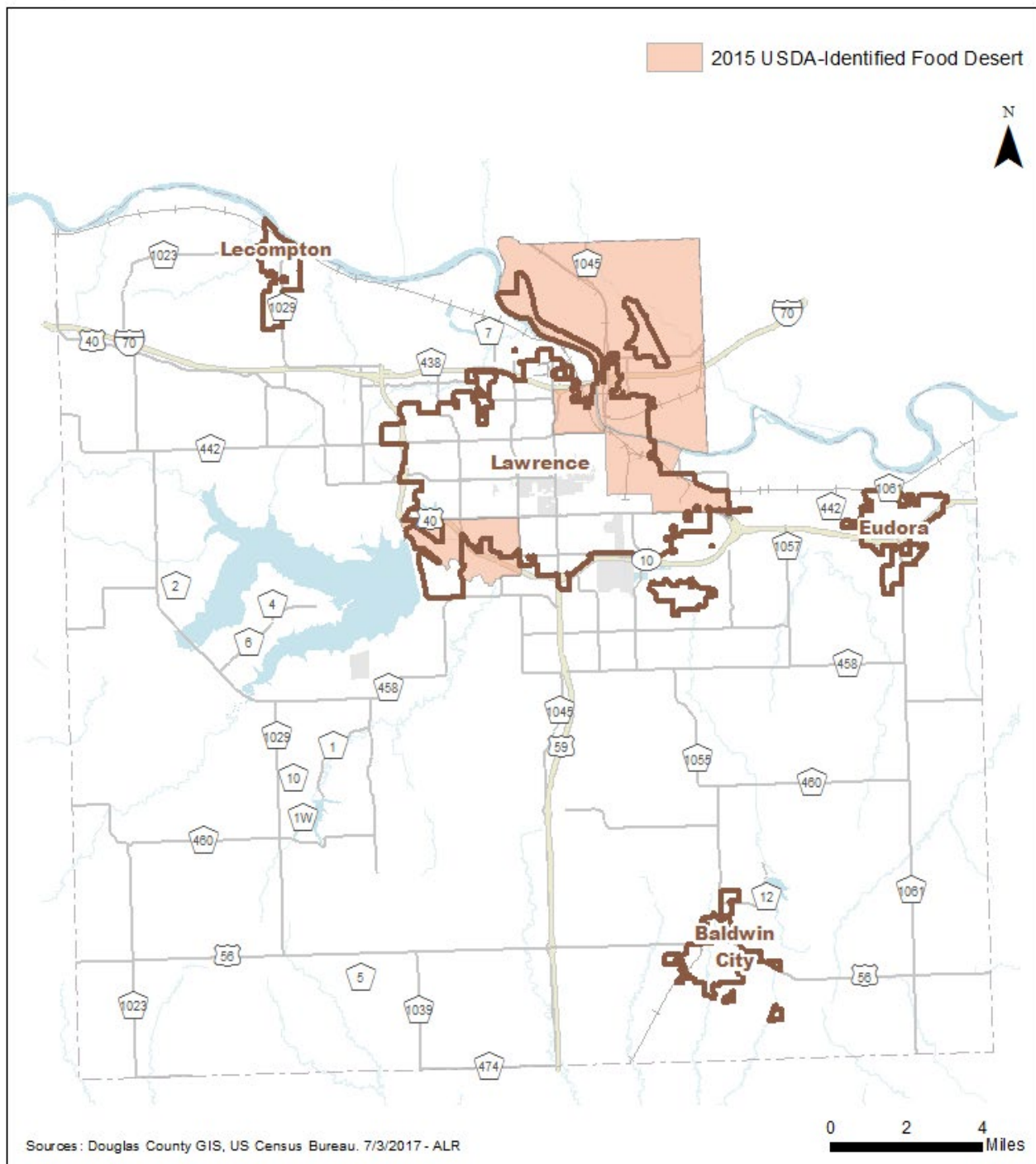
The built environment includes the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for activity, ranging from buildings and parks to neighborhood streets and transportation systems.

Food insecurity refers to the level of uncertainty or anxiety that individuals and families experience concerning their ability to obtain enough food including reduced quality and variety, due to a lack of resources.

Supporting **Healthy Food Access** does not lead to a one-size-fits-all community solution. Reducing barriers that individuals and families face to reliably acquire nourishing foods is a common goal. The diversity of our cultural backgrounds and food traditions, biological needs, lifestyles, and personal preferences means that a lot of different personal food choices can lead to wellness and quality of life. This plan does not adhere to a set definition of healthy foods, and does not take particular focus on specific foods as inherently healthy or unhealthy. We believe in eating our fruits and veggies regularly and celebrating with a sweet every now and then.

USDA-Identified Food Deserts in Douglas County

Low income and low access tract measured at 1 mile for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas.
Flag for food desert when considering low accessibility at 1 and 10 miles.



WHAT IS A FOOD DESERT? **Food Deserts** are geographic areas in which a substantial portion of the population is low-income (a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher), and one-third or more of households is low-access (live further than one mile in urban areas or ten miles in rural areas from the closest full-service grocery stores) are designated as 'food deserts' to denote challenges with getting to a grocery store that offers a variety of healthy food options. The USDA offers multiple ways to assess food desert areas.

OBJECTIVE #1: REDUCE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS THAT LIMIT FOOD ACCESS

Where someone lives, where food businesses locate, and what transportation options exist can create barriers to food access. Challenges include travel distance, travel time, incomplete sidewalk and bikeway networks, and poor condition of sidewalks and bikeways. Some destinations may not be accessible by a variety of transportation options. Public input about transportation planning has identified grocery stores as important community destinations, but also locations that some residents struggle to reach.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area food banks and pantries
Area school districts
Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department
Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Office
Lawrence Transit
LiveWell Lawrence
Public partners in Baldwin City, Eudora, and Lecompton

Mixed use development allows for residential, commercial, and service operations (among others) to locate within the same structure or development, with particular focus on designing for pedestrian and transit access.

Public rights-of-way are land owned by the local government, such as sidewalks, alleyways, streets, and at times parts of yards near sidewalks and streets.

Multimodal transportation planning facilitates access to transportation for all residents of the community and has been shown to be an effective tool in reducing energy dependency and traffic congestion.

Parking requirements set rules about the number of parking spaces needed, based upon the type of development and land use.

Policy 3.1.1

Assess the policy barriers that may prevent grocery store locations in recognized food deserts.

This effort could include local zoning, building regulations, parking requirements, and other development standards. Assessment should identify specific built environment and transit barriers for rural residents and identify policy solutions.

Policy 3.1.2

Ensure adequate mixed use neighborhood development in Lawrence.

Consider affordable housing, well maintained sidewalks, and regulations that support neighborhood retail.

Policy 3.1.3

Design and build streets and public right-of-ways to include safe and convenient multimodal transit connections between residential areas and food access points.

Policy 3.1.4

Locate publically-supported food access programs along bus routes, bike routes, and connected pedestrian paths.

Conduct geographic mapping analysis to identify opportunities for expansion into underserved neighborhoods. Programs include summer meal and senior meal sites.

Policy 3.1.5

Operate Lawrence transit routes to include access to grocery stores, food pantries, and established farmers' markets.

Policy 3.1.6

Identify and address policy barriers that limit mobile food distribution options.

OBJECTIVE #2: EXPAND URBAN AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD PRODUCTION

Production in the local food system is not limited to rural Douglas County or commercial agricultural operations. Lawrence now boasts over 25 community and school-based gardens, in addition to countless backyards producing food. Allowing these urban agriculture activities gives all residents options for local food access, physical activity, and building community relationships. Some current policies and programs support this objective already. Resilience, water conservation, and soil health are equally important for urban food production.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area non-profits and agencies
Douglas County Public Works & Facilities
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
Lawrence Parks and Recreation
Lawrence-Douglas County Planning
Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability

Policy 3.2.1

Expand food production on public land.

Expansion may include new and future open space, where appropriate (i.e., gardens and orchards in the Common Ground program and school-based gardens).

Policy 3.2.2

Integrate fruit tree plantings and harvest programming as part of Parks and Recreation operations.

Efforts should be pursued as needed resources are available to support maintenance. Public education opportunities could be passive (informational signs) or active (classes).

Policy 3.2.3

Promote urban agriculture policy outreach through accessible publications and community events.

Outreach should include digital and print media and community events with neighborhood associations and community groups.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

Policy 3.2.4

Create a future vision and action plan for the City of Lawrence Common Ground program, targeting expansion to engage underserved communities.

Consider opportunities for garden manager technical assistance, development of Incubator Farm program, and collaboration with other Douglas County communities.

Policy 3.2.5

Collaborate with community partners providing food production education to build residents' skills.

Collaboration could include joint-initiatives and events, grant letters of support or shared applications, and public funding.

Policy 3.2.6

Encourage private developers to incorporate food production in their projects and landscapes.

*Actions could include **Fleet Farming**, facilitating relationships with local technical experts, example language for amending Home Owners Association covenants, and collaboration on community-based demand analysis.*

Policy 3.2.7

Develop resources about policies that support agriculture-based cluster subdivision developments.

Target development in the Urban Growth Areas to maintain parcels of working lands and connections to food production as a component of residential developments.

Agriculture-based cluster subdivisions concentrate residential developments within a subdivision, allowing for more contiguous land that is preserved for agricultural use.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

OBJECTIVE #3: MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES MORE CONVENIENT

Convenience plays an influential role in the food choices people make. The location of food access points can influence food choices. Results from 2015 show that approximately 18% of Douglas County adults eat vegetables less often than one time per day, and nearly 40% do not eat fruit at least once a day. Intentional food purchasing by public entities can provide options that nourish and build good habits. The City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department was an early adopter of such nutrition standards at Sports Pavilion Lawrence.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area school districts

Chambers of Commerce

K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

LiveWell Lawrence

Policy 3.3.1

Maintain support for strategies and actions identified in the Lawrence-Douglas County Community Health Plan.

Policy 3.3.2

Establish policies that support healthier food environments.

Policies could include Healthy Food Zones, targeting walking distances around schools and public institutions to promote wellness.

Policy 3.3.3

Establish supports for neighborhood retailers to stock and promote nutritionally-dense food options, including fruits and vegetables.

Smaller, neighborhood retailers could include convenience stores. Policy examples are a Staple Food Ordinance or Healthy Corner Store Initiative.

Policy 3.3.4

Adopt procurement guidelines for public spaces that ensure the availability of nutritious food options.

Purchasing may include vending, concessions, public contracts, events, and facilities.

The food environment describes how the mix of food retail outlets impacts the lives of residents. This can include what foods are available, how close a person is to food stores, the distribution of food outlets throughout a community, and the local transportation options.

Healthy Food Zones are a new policy intervention that seeks to proactively shape the food environment around schools, limiting opportunities for specific populations, such as students, to access less nourishing outlets like fast food.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

GOAL #4: OUR COMMUNITY FOSTERS AN EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Strengthening our local food system should not be a privilege to some and leave others behind. A community must confront the disparities that exist. A first step in fostering a more equitable food system, one in which all residents can benefit and prosper, includes looking at the “business as usual” processes within local government. Identifying and pursuing new partnerships and priorities can put the empowerment of traditionally marginalized populations at the forefront of local food system initiatives.

Building equitable access to healthy food in our local food system includes affordability, and how food options relate to diverse cultural traditions. Public policies — among many other complex factors — influence affordability. At the state and local level, this includes the level of sales tax applied to groceries, and programs that help specific populations. Kansas has one of the highest rates of sales tax on groceries in the nation (see [sidebar on page 31](#)).

Many residents struggle to secure enough food. More than one in five children (20.3 percent, or 4,380 children) in Douglas County lived in food insecure households.⁵ During 2013, more than two-thirds (68 percent) of food-insecure households in Kansas included at

least one full-time worker.⁶ Emergency food providers, like pantries and food banks, help residents put needed food on tables when in challenging situations. Collaboration among agencies and organizations can help close gaps and strengthen local efforts.

The type of food one can access is also important, sometimes discussed as culturally-appropriate food. What may appear as “regular” food in one cultural tradition is foreign, and perhaps even inedible, to another. Ethnicity, heritage, religion, personal beliefs, and unique needs all influence how one culturally relates to food. As a community, the local food system can celebrate diversity and honor cultural traditions to meet a variety of food needs. Sharing food traditions helps build a welcoming community and establish bridges across differences. Learning to appreciate cultural needs can lead to new questions about policy barriers and opportunities. Such inclusive strategies can build the local food system by empowering residents and linking cultural celebrations to local foods.

Equity means a just and fair food system, where all residents can participate fully and access healthy food, regardless of socioeconomic status, geography, race, ethnicity, gender, or immigration status. Equally applying universal interventions may not address the specific needs of some populations facing systemic barriers and disadvantage.



Photo: Emily Hampton

OBJECTIVE #1: APPLY EQUITY PRINCIPLES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOOD SYSTEM EFFORTS

Local food system development and healthy food campaigns can inadvertently marginalize or leave out community members, including low-income residents and peoples of color. Our local food system should be built upon mutual respect, inclusion, and communication. The work of the Sunrise Project Community Coordinators in creating this plan laid a foundation that can inform future efforts to empower and follow the needs of local residents who often are not involved in policy processes. Local government can play a leading role by integrating an equity approach into its efforts.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area non-profits, agencies, and faith communities
Area public schools
Baker University
City of Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission
Douglas County Emergency Management
Haskell Indian Nations University
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
Lawrence Alliance
Public program partners (e.g., summer meals)
The University of Kansas
UnitedWay

Policy 4.1.1

Develop new relationships with community groups and businesses working with underserved and traditionally marginalized residents to identify collaborations to address community needs.

For example, this could include partnerships with culturally specific grocery stores and markets.

Policy 4.1.2

Engage underserved and traditionally marginalized residents in public local food programs.

Policy 4.1.3

Utilize community partner funding to encourage programming that empowers underserved and underrepresented residents.

Consider community partner food activities that include growing, preserving, cooking, meal planning, leadership development, and self-sufficiency.



Policy 4.1.4

Develop strategies to ensure public communications are accessible to all.

Communications should consider design, words, language, format, and modes of distribution.

Policy 4.1.5

Adopt a policy to encourage diversity in local government appointments to advisory boards and commissions.

Use Douglas County Food Policy Council as an early implementation example for such a policy.

Policy 4.1.6

Identify opportunities to build community food security preparedness.

Community food security preparedness may include emergency management planning for disasters, drought, heat waves, and increasing food prices resulting from disturbances in global production centers. This also includes increased local resources to sustain the food needs of county residents during unplanned events that impact food transportation and distribution networks.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

OBJECTIVE #2: EXPAND CITY- AND COUNTY-LED INITIATIVES TO MAKE FOOD MORE AFFORDABLE

Many Douglas County residents are concerned about the affordability of food, including those grown and produced locally. Local farmers also need to make a profit and face many cost challenges and market competition. Addressing affordability of food — and how other basic necessities, like housing or medical care that can impact food budgets — strengthens the local food system.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area agencies and non-profits
City of Lawrence and Douglas County Budget Offices and Legal Departments
Haskell Indian Nations University
Jayhawk Agency on Aging
K-State Research & Extension—Douglas County
Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department
Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability
Lawrence Community Shelter
LiveWell Lawrence
Senior Resource Center

Policy 4.2.1

Reduce and eliminate the sales tax on groceries.

Refer to sidebar for background and guidance.

State and local tax laws are complicated, and changes often impact many different areas of revenue and expenses. The State of Kansas sales tax on groceries is 6.5%. Douglas County collects 1% in sales tax, and City of Lawrence collects another 1.55%. Since food is a basic necessity, collecting sales tax on these purchases can add a significant amount to grocery expenses.

Any local action to remove or reduce sales tax on food must identify an alternative revenue stream to replace any potential loss to local governments in order to ensure continued execution of essential services and existing financial commitments.

Policy 4.2.2

Support public food assistance programs for families with children.

For example, this could include collaborating on policies and public communications that increase enrollment in school meal and snack programs, or providing funding for community partners doing this work.

Policy 4.2.3

Support public food assistance programs for seniors.

For example, continued funding and in-kind support of the CHAMPPS program, Meals on Wheels, and other senior meal programs. Work with county farmers' markets to expand use of Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons.

Policy 4.2.4

Support the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks program.

For example, in-kind staff time, collaborative program fundraising, public outreach, funds for local matching dollars, and statewide network and program development.

Policy 4.2.5

Expand reach and awareness of public programs and educational opportunities that increase food access and build food preparation skills.

Identify opportunities to cross promote and target outreach to frequented locations.

Policy 4.2.6

Maintain and develop policies and programs to reduce poverty.

Efforts should support attracting and retaining high-quality jobs, transportation, and affordable housing. Reducing poverty will help reduce food insecurity and difficult tradeoffs between housing, transportation, and grocery budgets.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

Double Up Food Bucks is a SNAP (food stamps) matching program where low-income shoppers can receive a \$1:\$1 match (up to \$25) on fresh, local produce at area farmers markets.

OBJECTIVE #3: STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO ENSURE ALL RESIDENTS HAVE ENOUGH FOOD

When families struggle to have enough food, it is not always because of a lack of availability in our community, but, often, inequitable distribution. Coordinated and collaborative efforts among emergency food providers in Douglas County help ensure good food gets to families and individuals in need. In 2016, over 11,000 individuals visited Just Food, the Douglas County food bank, at least once; Just Food distributed over 887,000 pounds of food. In addition, Harvesters distributed nearly 959,000 pounds of food in Douglas County through a network of 25 partnering agencies, which operate 47 programs. For twenty years, partners in Lawrence have operated a summer meals program, now called Fuel Up 4 Summer, with community-driven programs launching in Lecompton, Eudora, and Baldwin City. The LiveWell Lawrence Healthy Food For All Work Group has supported pantries in offering nutritionally-balanced options. Lawrence and Douglas County can continue their leadership in supporting these innovative initiatives.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area pantries and faith communities

Area school districts

City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation

Harvesters

Just Food

K-State Research & Extension—Douglas County

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

LiveWell Lawrence

The University of Kansas

Policy 4.3.1

Analyze the current demand for emergency food assistance with community partners to identify gaps and pursue needed change.

Analysis could include programming, service guidelines, geographic coverage, transportation accessibility, hours of operation, and outreach efforts.

Policy 4.3.2

Prioritize City and County funding for community partners providing healthy food to residents in need.

Partners include pantries, food banks, and social service organizations.

Policy 4.3.3

Engage in inter-organizational collaboration among emergency food providers.

Build upon existing efforts, including establishing healthy choices within pantries and enhancing community outreach efforts.

Policy 4.3.4

Expand summer meal participation and feeding sites throughout Douglas County.



OBJECTIVE #4: CELEBRATE DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AS PART OF LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION



Photo: Andrea Slater Photography

Chef Rafael Gonzalez of Global Cafe in Lawrence serves up one of his signature Venezuelan dishes at the Chefs Challenge at the County Fair.

The community level offers important spaces to learn from neighbors of different backgrounds and find commonality to inform local policy. Food itself plays a fundamental social role, as individuals break bread and build friendships. Lawrence and Douglas County boast a rich tradition of local cultural celebrations, with food central to the festivities. Opportunities exist to pursue local food system development through intentional engagement with diverse cultural organizations. Actions can include building new markets and directing community economic development efforts to benefit entrepreneurs from traditionally marginalized populations.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area cultural and agricultural groups
City of Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission
Haskell Indian Nations University
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County
KU Small Business Development Center
Lawrence Alliance
Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department
The University of Kansas

Policy 4.4.1

Target entrepreneurship support to help minority-owned and ethnic food businesses.

Policy 4.4.2

Expand food service offerings in public spaces to include foods from diverse cultural traditions.

Policy 4.4.3

Facilitate connections between area agricultural producers and ethnic food retail outlets.

Connections could include mobile food vendors, specialty grocery owners, and restaurateurs. Consider using the [Douglas County Local Food Wholesale Directory](#), hosting gatherings, and identifying target crops area farmers can grow.

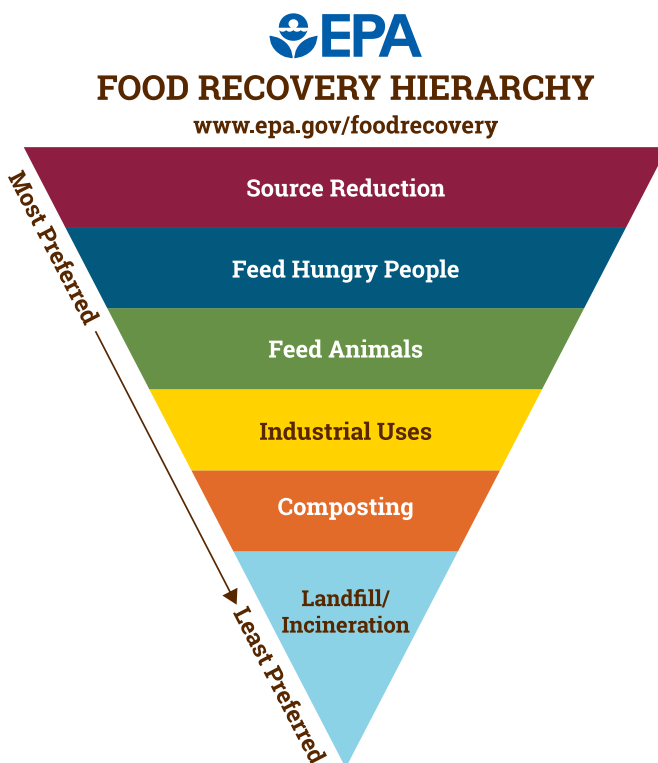
Policy 4.4.4

Promote diverse food traditions held by Douglas County residents as part of public health campaigns.

GOAL #5: OUR COMMUNITY ELIMINATES WASTE IN OUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

Food that is still safe and appealing to eat, whether at stores or on farms, too often gets thrown away — an estimated 40% nationally.⁸ Food scraps that aren't eaten often end up in landfills, adding costs and producing harmful greenhouse gases. Waste in our food system also comes through the packaging and containers that help us transport and carry our food. Commercial operations are the largest generators of food waste. Yet, Douglas County sees an estimated \$41.8 million just in consumer-level food waste.⁹

Our priority should be to generate less food waste at all levels. Each stage down the Food Recovery Hierarchy (below), developed by the Environmental Protection Agency, represents the next best option for diverting food waste from landfills. Composting, though second to last, turns food scraps into a soil amendment that benefits gardeners, farmers, and their crops.



Reducing food waste ensures that the time, energy, and resources that produce food — not to mention families' grocery budgets — don't end up wasted. The City of Lawrence and Douglas County have made important strides in recent years to increase waste diversion and recycling rates. A similar approach of determining appropriate and financially feasible options for urban and rural residents can support food waste reduction.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

OBJECTIVE #1: FOSTER A COMMUNITY CULTURE OF WASTE REDUCTION

Reducing food waste depends in large part on creating less waste in the first place. Individuals, families, businesses, and organizations can all take steps to learn new skills, institute new practices, and shift habits to generate less waste. As a community, collaboration can help raise awareness and provide support ensuring new practices become lifelong behaviors. City and County activities can provide leadership to support waste reduction throughout the local food system.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area food service businesses and institutions

Area non-profits

City of Lawrence Solid Waste

City of Lawrence Utilities

EPA Region 7

K-State Pollution Prevention Institute

K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County

KU Center for Sustainability

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability

Public partners in Baldwin City, Eudora, and Leocompton

Sustainability Advisory Board

Policy 5.1.1

Research and identify local policy opportunities to discourage waste generation and encourage diversion as appropriate.

Edible food waste should be diverted to those in need and inedible food waste should be diverted to feed farm animals and utilize in industrial processes.

Policy 5.1.2

Support organizations, institutions, and businesses to conduct food waste audits and implement best practices.

Support could include technical assistance or collaborative grants. Best practices for food service operations include staff training to ensure efficient handling, preparation, and storage of food, and using recyclable and compostable containers.

Policy 5.1.3

Encourage consumer educational programs about meal planning, cooking, and food preservation.

Policy 5.1.4

Adopt public procurement policies that guide waste reduction.

Policy could prioritize the purchase of recyclable and compostable food service items with City of Lawrence and Douglas County funds. Identify area composting facilities that accept compostable food service items.

Policy 5.1.5

Develop a strategy to target public events as “Zero Waste Events.”

Strategy should include collaboration with community partners to ensure community education and proper financial and evaluation resources are available for successful execution.

Policy 5.1.6

Develop a communications campaign with community partners to promote waste reduction and encourage behavior change.



Photo: Andrea Slater Photography

OBJECTIVE #2: ENCOURAGE FOOD RECOVERY PRACTICES AND POLICIES TO SUPPLY SAFE, NOURISHING FOOD TO FAMILIES IN NEED

Food recovery means connecting those with excess food they won't use with those in need. Some restaurants and grocery stores in Douglas County, including HyVee and Wheatfields, already donate excess food to our food banks and pantries. Just Food, the Douglas County food bank, increased its annual food rescue from 128,390 pounds in 2014 to 650,306 pounds in 2016. Also in 2016, the regional gleaning organization After the Harvest received a total of 19,687 pounds of produce from Douglas County growers.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area pantries and meal programs, institutional food service operations, and food retail outlets
Farmers Markets of Kaw Valley
Growing Lawrence
Harvesters
Just Food
K-State Research & Extension—Douglas County
Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department
Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability
LiveWell Lawrence

Policy 5.2.1

Prioritize community partner funding to support food recovery.

Policy 5.2.2

Support the coordination and collaboration of pantries and emergency food providers to increase the scale, efficiency, and efficacy of recovering safe, healthy food from area retail food outlets.

Policy 5.2.3

Develop an outreach strategy to promote food donation and recovery with local businesses and food service operations.

Consider highlighting the liability protections of the federal Good Samaritan Law allowing legal food donations and an up-to-date list of local food pantries and soup kitchens accepting safe, healthy food donations.

Policy 5.2.4

Promote donations to emergency food providers from home and community gardens.

This effort could build upon the “Plant a Row for the Hungry” initiative.

Policy 5.2.5

Encourage and enable on-farm gleaning programs with area growers.

Work with farmers to collect baseline data about gleaning and on-farm waste.

Photo: Andrea Shafter Photography



OBJECTIVE #3: CREATE COMPOSTING PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FOR COMMERCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

A number of local restaurants and institutions, including the Douglas County Jail, work with private waste-hauler Missouri Organics to collect food scraps for composting. During 2016, Missouri Organics collected 1020 tons of food waste from Lawrence food service operations. Some community members and organizations oversee their own composting in gardens and backyards. The City of Lawrence has sold over 750 discounted backyard compost bins between 2008 and 2017. These early leaders show how food waste minimization can expand to other composting opportunities.

► POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Area non-profits and food service operations
City of Lawrence Solid Waste
Douglas County Public Works and Zoning & Codes
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
K-State Research and Extension—Douglas County

Policy 5.3.1

Maintain implementation of the 2012 Solid Waste Task Force report and implementation of Douglas and Jefferson Counties Regional Solid Waste Management Plan.

Policy 5.3.2

Analyze the feasibility of expanding City of Lawrence Solid Waste composting operations to include food waste and compostable food service items.

Include a comparison of collection models (e.g., drop-off locations, curbside collection, etc.).

Policy 5.3.3

Encourage Douglas County communities to work with private waste haulers to expand commercial and residential services to collect food waste.

Policy 5.3.4

Maintain and expand public outreach, funding, and trainings to support backyard composting.

Continue the subsidization of compost bins by the City of Lawrence and consider the creation of a Master Composter course for Douglas County residents.

Policy 5.3.5

Support business and institutional participation in commercial and site-based food waste composting programs.



Photo: Andrea Shafer Photography

MOVING THE PLAN FORWARD

The Food System Plan will serve as a guidance document for City of Lawrence and Douglas County for the next 10 years. Success in implementing the objectives and policies depends upon the work of many different actors throughout our local food system. *See Implementation Framework Appendix for a full description of how the DCFPC plans to move forward.*

ROLE OF THE DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

As an advisory body, the Douglas County Food Policy Council (DCFPC) will serve as the principle implementation body. Staff members from Lawrence and Douglas County will support the DCFPC to accomplish its work. Once adopted, the DCFPC and staff will oversee an on-going process to:

- **Prioritize initiatives**, including creating work timelines and identifying available resources.
- **Clarify responsibility** for working on specific actions.
- **Assess progress** and identify indicators to track progress.
- **Maintain community engagement**, identifying community partners to collaborate with for specific initiatives — with particular attention to health equity and the sustainability of adopted policies, practices, and programs.
- **Ensure accountability** in meeting goals and objectives.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Do your interests connect to something in the plan? There are multiple ways you can build upon the connections between your priorities and our community's local food system goals. Throughout this document, the importance of collaborations to further policy change and create community impact is a common theme. Community organizations, institutions, businesses, and residents all play a role in helping transform this plan from a vision to reality.

Connect with the DCFPC!

- Attend a meeting and share your ideas
- Host a meeting of the DCFPC and share about your work
- Invite the Council to give a presentation
- Join the Council as a member or work on an initiative with a subcommittee

All DCFPC meetings are open to the public

Take Action with the Plan!

- See what inspires you and aligns with your current work
- Spearhead a new effort or build new collaborations
- Enhance fundraising
 - Ask the Council for a letter of support for a grant you're writing
 - Invest in Plan objectives and policies

To further connect:  www.douglascountyks.org/fpc

 dcfpc@douglas-county.com

 [LawrenceandDouglasCountySustainability](#)

 785-832-5157

REFERENCES

¹ **Issue Action Report**

² **The USDA ERS report**

³ **2012 USDA Census of Agriculture and Kansas Department of Agriculture Economic Impact report**

⁴ **Douglas County Food System Assessment (2017)**
[forthcoming]

⁵ **Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap**

⁶ LaClair B, Boden J, Chapman S and Hinton A. **Food Insecurity in Kansas: Technical Report. (2015)**

⁷ *Hungry and Homeless in College* report

⁸ *Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill* article

⁹ Estimation based on USDA Economic Research Service per-person average and Douglas County 2012 population.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

This implementation framework will guide the work of the Douglas County Food Policy Council (DCFPC), its staff, partner agencies, and community members to realize the goals, objectives, and policies within the Douglas County Food System Plan. It provides a process for the DCFPC and its staff to:

- **Prioritize initiatives**, including creating work timelines and identifying available resources.
- **Clarify responsibility** for working on specific actions.
- **Assess progress** and identify indicators to track progress.
- **Maintain community engagement**, identifying community partners to collaborate with for specific initiatives — with particular attention to health equity and the sustainability of adopted policies, practices, and programs.
- **Ensure accountability** in meeting goals and objectives.

This framework has four sections:

1: Administration of the Plan 2

2: Douglas County Food Policy Council Oversight of the Plan 3

3: Community Engagement and Network Building..... 4

4: Regional and Statewide Engagement 5

1: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN

Action 1.1: Have the Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office serve as staff liaison for the DCFPC. Staff should provide regular updates to the DCFPC about latest developments and trends in of food planning theory and practice through organizations like the American Planning Association, its Food Interest Group, Food Policy Network hosted by Johns Hopkins, etc.

Action 1.2: Have the Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office dedicate 0.5 FTE to serve as principal administrative contact for management and tracking of the plan, including oversight of work plans, budgets, grant writing and management, and contracting with and oversight of consultants.

Action 1.3: Douglas County and City of Lawrence will maintain the DCFPC as a joint advisory board and consider input of the DCFPC and other local stakeholders when appointing new members to include diverse food systems stakeholders from the community on the DCFPC when openings arise.

Action 1.4: Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Department will incorporate the Food System Plan by reference into the updated Comprehensive Plan, as directed in the Issue Action Report (2015).

Action 1.5: Maintain a budget line from Douglas County to support the work of the DCFPC and plan implementation of at least \$6,800 to support this work. Assess the need for additional funds as part of periodic progress updates.

Action 1.6: The Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office will track grant and other funding opportunities and pursue as

appropriate to support the Plan's annual priorities as part of implementation.

Action 1.7: The Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office will collaborate with DCFPC members to provide an Annual Report to the City of Lawrence and Douglas County Commissions to share progress and current priorities, and invite Commissioner input and questions.

2: DOUGLAS COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL OVERSIGHT OF THE PLAN

The Douglas County Food Policy Council intends to:

Action 2.1: Upon adoption of the plan, review its bylaws to ensure they properly relate to the needs of the DCFPC to implement the plan, with particular attention to priorities, governance, and community representation.

Action 2.2: Review structure and composition of subcommittees to best support successful implementation and effective use of the time of DCFPC members. Maintain regular meetings and consistent leadership with each subcommittee consisting of a DCFPC member.

Action 2.3: Identify existing and potential connections to other boards, coalitions, etc., in the community to establish formal connections to the DCFPC and the plan's goals, objectives, policies, and identified priorities.

Action 2.4: Hold a Plan Kickoff Retreat in July 2017 to identify initial priorities, mid- and long-term goals. Develop a preliminary work plan for DCFPC and community partners, as appropriate.

Action 2.5: Establish specific strategies or activities to guide implementation, benchmarks or outcomes to evaluate progress (quantitative and qualitative), the entities responsible, and a timeline. Utilize a consistent format to track implementation priorities.

Action 2.6: Hold periodic retreats to review priorities, assess implementation progress, and update the DCFPC work plan.

Action 2.7: Identify and pursue opportunities to invite community members and partners to participate on specific initiatives or within subcommittees.

Action 2.8: Take lead or identify entities to take on projects/initiatives proposed in the plan, with a focus on reducing duplication, supporting collaboration, leveraging existing coalitions/groups, and prioritizing efforts that would not happen without the work of the Council. Uphold the incubation and facilitative roles of the DCFPC to launch innovative community initiatives, while maintaining a focus on policy.

Action 2.9: Identify the appropriate partners to develop and disseminate additional needed research and data analysis to advance the plan and support the local food system.

Action 2.10: Hold monthly DCFPC meetings at different organizations, businesses, farms, and other relevant sites in the local food system to build relationships within the community, promote member learning, and create an inviting environment for diverse community members.

Action 2.11: Identify and pursue a periodic process for producing recommendations and reviewing the plan based upon feedback and evaluation results from members, community, and/or external evaluation results.

3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND NETWORK BUILDING

The Douglas County Food Policy Council and Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office intend to:

Action 3.1: Build public and political support for the plan's goals, objectives, and policies. Develop briefings and hold workshops around aspects of the Plan as appropriate.

Action 3.2: Develop and execute a media strategy around the plan and its initiatives, building upon the DCPFC Communications Plan. Update the Communications Plan as appropriate to support plan implementation and coordinate with local municipal public relations offices.

Action 3.3: Welcome and identify agency, stakeholder, and grassroots champions of specific plan elements. Determine the most appropriate approach to integrate a health equity approach to plan implementation.

Action 3.4: Develop strategic communications tools to keep community members informed and engaged in plan implementation activities. Emphasize "translation" of plan language and concepts into visually-engaging, widely-accessible formats suited to multi-media distribution.

Action 3.5: Develop relationships with businesses, organizations, and municipal stakeholders not yet engaged in the plan's development or implementation to identify and pursue opportunities for collaboration and shared progress.

Action 3.6: Represent the plan as appropriate in other community action, strategy, and planning efforts. Identify existing alignment and opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and coordination.

Action 3.7: Identify and secure resources needed to support engagement of community organizations and other key community members involved in implementation of the plan, especially those who do not have organizational or other support to participate in plan implementation. (For example, resources may be needed to provide stipends, child care, transportation, food, and other resources to allow under represented members of the community experiencing health inequities to participate.)

Action 3.8: Promote best practices and inclusionary processes in food planning.

Action 3.9: Identify and pursue an on-going and periodic process for obtaining feedback from community on plan implementation, priorities, and amendments.

4: REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE ENGAGEMENT

The Douglas County Food Policy Council and Lawrence-Douglas County Sustainability Office intend to:

Action 4.1: Actively engage with other food policy councils throughout the state, with particular attention to regional opportunities in Northeast Kansas.

Action 4.2: Support actions within state agencies and the legislature to support plan goals and the advancement of local food system development, including subsequent work with the Local Food Task Force 2017 Report and related efforts.

Action 4.3: Periodically update Douglas County state legislators concerning the plan's goals, objectives, and policies, and how their work connects to annual priorities.

Action 4.4: Collaborate with Kansas institutions of higher education, K-State Research and Extension, and other regional and statewide organizations to support work towards plan goals.

Action 4.5: Serve as a local forum to share educational information about state policies. Work with local stakeholders to address state-level barriers to the plan's implementation.

CONNECTING TO OTHER COMMUNITY PLANS

Action 4.6: Assist other Kansas or Midwestern communities in the development of their own food system plans, or efforts to integrate food systems issues into comprehensive plans.

Lawrence and Douglas County are active communities, with exciting work underway on a range of specific fronts. The Food System Plan connects with the various goals and actions previously identified in the planning and policy initiatives listed below.

• Sustainability

- **STAR:** Lawrence is the first community in Kansas to receive a 4-STAR rating for national excellence in sustainability. The **STAR** Communities framework evaluates local governments on economic, environmental and social factors to measure progress towards community sustainability.
- **City of Lawrence Climate Protection Plan:** In 2008, the Mayor's Task Force on Climate Protection developed goals and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It prioritized **seven strategies** to guide future efforts.
- **Solid Waste:** Both City of Lawrence and Douglas County (in collaboration with Jefferson County) maintain and update **solid waste management plans**.
- **Community Health Plan:** The **Community Health Plan** addresses community priorities and promote the health of residents across Douglas County. This plan references the 2013 CHP; a new plan is in development and will be released in 2018.
- **Cultural Arts Plan:** The Cultural Arts Commission identified **Community Outcomes and Areas of Activity** to make Lawrence and Douglas County a place where creativity thrives, sustainability is a way of life, and community pride is contagious.

• Transportation

- **Transportation 2040:** **Transportation 2040**, updated every 5 years, represents the best attempts by citizens, governing bodies, planners and transportation experts to develop a vision for a healthy, safe, and efficient transportation system which will adequately serve Lawrence and Douglas County to the year 2040 and beyond.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Taskforce Report:** This **2016 report** provides findings and recommends ways for Lawrence to invest in a transportation system that works for everyone by making investments in better walking, wheeling and bicycling facilities a priority.
- **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan:** This Plan (**CPT-HSTP**) seeks to collect and analyze meaningful organizational and consumer information to create a plan for future coordination and improvement of transportation services in Douglas County.
- **Lawrence Parks & Rec Master Plan:** This **2017 plan** prioritizes the needs and desires for upgrading existing and potentially creating new facilities and services for years to come.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** The **comprehensive plan** guides future land use planning and other growth and development policies to ensure changes align with the community's values and vision.
- **Economic Development:** The Economic Development Council of Lawrence & Douglas County identified Regional Food System Infrastructure as a part of its **strategic plan in 2015**:
 - City of Lawrence identified **Value-Added Agricultural Business** as a targeted industry for assistance:



WWW.DOUGLASCOUNTYKS.ORG/FPC