

Food System Master Plan

Riley County & the City of Manhattan, Kansas

June 2022



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Acknowledging the Land

Members of the Food and Farm Council of Riley County and the City of Manhattan, Kansas, recognize that the food system starts with the land. We cannot explore the present or plan for the future of our food system without recognizing the past. We want to honor and make visible the indigenous peoples that have lived on and worked these lands on which we now reside.

The Food and Farm Council acknowledges, honors, and offers our gratitude to the iikaapoi (Kickapoo), Washtáge Moⁿzháⁿ (Kaw/Kansa), ᄎᄎᄎᄎᄎᄎᄎᄎ ᄎᄎᄎᄎ ᄎᄎᄎᄎᄎᄎ (Osage) and Ochéthi Šakówin peoples and land.

We recognize that this acknowledgment does not replace action. As current custodians of this territory, we commit to building meaningful relationships with historical stewards of this land and to deepening our understanding of how this history impacts our food system today.



Photo provided by Manhattan Community Development

Acknowledging People

This Food System Master Plan for Riley County and the City of Manhattan, Kansas, was supported by the energy and input of residents and community partners alike. Particular thanks are extended to the 2,000+ residents who took the time to complete the community-wide survey. A special thanks to our 75+ partner organizations who helped guide the process by engaging the community and attending the Food System Master Plan Summit. This plan would not exist but for the efforts of the Food and Farm Council of Riley County and the City of Manhattan, Kansas, who had the vision to initiate the process, and the 12-member Food System Master Plan Leadership Team, who stewarded its completion.

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Funding

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Local Food System Partners

4K Ranch
A & H Farm
Ascension Via Christi Hospital
aTa Bus
Be Able
Britt's Farm
Brothers Coffee Company
Cats' Cupboard
City of Manhattan
Common Table
Downtown Farmers Market of Manhattan
First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry
Flint Hills Breadbasket
Flint Hills Transit
Flint Hills Wellness Coalition
Harvesters
Howie's Recycling
Kansas Department of Education
Kansas House of Representatives
Kansas Rural Center
Kansas Senate
Killer Produce
Kitchen Restore
Konza Student Table
Konza United Way
KSU Food Security Scholars
KSU Foundation Board of Trustees
KSU Housing & Dining Services
KSU Lafene Health Center
KSU Master of Public Health
KSU Recycling Center
KSU Research & Extension
KSU Research & Extension - Riley County
KSU Retail Operations

KSU Rural Grocery Initiative
KSU Staley School of Leadership Studies
KSU Student Life
KSU Willow Lake Student Farm
LABCO Restaurant & Market
Manhattan Emergency Shelter
Manhattan Housing Authority
Manhattan Nutrition Clinic
Manhattan Soup Kitchen
Mr. K's and associated restaurants
National Ag Bio-security Ctr
Nico's Little Italy
Ogden Friendship House of Hope
One Egg Group restaurants
Pawnee Mental Health Services
Peace Lutheran Peace-Full Pantry
Piccalilli Farm
Riley County
Riley County Farm Bureau
Riley County Health Department
Riley County Seniors' Service Center
Riley County WIC
Salvation Army
Shepherd's Crossing, Inc.
St. Croix Hospice
Staley School of Leadership Studies
Thrive!
UFM Community Learning Center
United Methodist Churches of N Riley County
USD 383
USD 383 Child Nutrition
USD 383 FIT Closet
Wine Dive + Kitchen

Who is New Venture Advisors LLC (NVA)?

NVA is a strategy consulting firm specializing in food system planning and food enterprise development. Our team is committed to environmental sustainability, social impact, equity, diversity, and inclusion as we help our clients realize their vision for a more just and sustainable food system.

Our clients are nonprofit organizations and municipal planning agencies launching new programs, policies, and social enterprises that benefit their communities by promoting sustainable agriculture, economic development, food access, hunger relief, and health equity, as well as entrepreneurs and investors capitalizing on the extraordinary growth of the good food sector.

Over the last decade we have helped more than 150 clients develop food systems through strategic investments and creative planning and programming.

newventureadvisors.net



I. Who is the Food and Farm Council of Riley County and City of Manhattan, Kansas?

History

In March 2017, the Flint Hills Wellness Coalition Nutrition Work group formed the Riley County and City of Manhattan Food and Farm Task Force. This group of 24 community stakeholders was created to identify a mission, vision, and goals for a local food and farm council. To guide their work, the task force commissioned a food system assessment to bring together data and information from numerous secondary data sources to create a description of the current food system in the region. The food system assessment identified food insecurity, access to food, and food waste and related solid waste as issues to be addressed.

In the summer of 2018, the task force moved forward with the formation of bylaws and resolution development with a request for the city and county commissions to enter an interlocal agreement to form a joint advisory council. The first members of the Food and Farm Council of Riley County and City of Manhattan, Kansas, were appointed in August 2018. Through an open application process, candidates are selected to represent the various sectors of the food system. The city appoints six members, the county nine, with each member serving a three-year term, with the opportunity to be reappointed for a second term.

Purpose, Vision, and Mission

The purpose of the Food and Farm Council is to advocate for and sustain an accessible, healthy, and local food system that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of Riley County and the City of Manhattan, Kansas. The council envisions a local food system that supports healthy living in our community.

Our mission is to provide a forum for local food issues and a platform for coordinated actions to create a more healthful food system.

Council Goals

The Food and Farm Council pursues the following goals:

- To serve as a city/county commission–appointed education and advisory council of community members to strengthen communication, education, and policy within the local food system
- To make safe, local, and healthy food options more available, accessible, and affordable
- To support education of growing, buying, preparing, and consuming healthy foods
- To improve health outcomes through the reduction of diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and obesity

We have four food system priority issues that inform our areas of focus and council goals (“Circle of Concern”):

- A local food system network
- Food waste and related solid waste
- Food insecurity
- Food skills, food safety, and nutrition education

We have over 50 partners involved on our four Circle of Concern Community Action Teams (CATs). Together we work to create food system solutions that would be too hard to accomplish independently.



Connect with us at: nourishtogether.org

II. What is the Food System?

The “food system” is the process food follows as it moves from the farm to your table. This process includes farmers, manufacturers and processors, distributors, retailers, and all residents as consumers. It also includes the inputs and outputs of each step — right down to the food waste we generate. The journey our food takes through the food system is influenced by ecosystems, research, education, funding, our culture, and our policies.

In the past, our local food system was mostly self-sufficient: food was grown, processed, sold, consumed, and disposed of in one place, and food choices were restricted to what could be grown in the local climate and ecosystem. Today, our food system is global.

This global food system has significant impacts on the health of people and the planet. Food production activities impact rural and urban landscapes and are often important parts of regional economies. Lack of access to affordable, healthy food can exacerbate both hunger and obesity. The environmental impacts of industrial farming practices and food waste as well as the energy and resources consumed by growing, harvesting, processing, and transporting our food are also significant.

Therefore, many communities have looked to food systems as an opportunity to tackle issues like food insecurity, obesity, and climate change through the design of our food systems.

A note about the word “local”

Developing our local food system does not mean solely relying on what can grow in our own county. Riley County, like many counties in the U.S., imports a significant amount of food – and enjoys the diversity that a globalized food system can bring to our community (Bananas! Avocados!).

Strengthening the local food system will always be a balance between what can be grown here and how to provide nutritious, healthy food for our population.

Manhattan and Riley County are well served by local growers and those from the surrounding counties. Local and regional producers provide quality fruits, vegetables, meat, honey and more, making nutritious and sustainable foods available to residents and visitors. This approach also positively impacts the local and regional economy in providing jobs and keeping local dollars in the communities they serve.



III. What is a Food System Plan?

A food system plan is defined by the American Planning Association as “a set of interconnected, forward-thinking activities that strengthen a community and regional food system through the creation and implementation of plans and policies.”

A food system plan is a long-range planning document that lays out a community’s vision for what it wants its food system to be and how it will accomplish that growth or change. This is akin to master planning documents that cities and counties use to do long-range municipal planning for a variety of sectors – land use, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, and so on.

Food system planning has traditionally been left out, often because there is no one “Department of Food.” However, the food system overlaps with many of the structural and systemic issues that require attention in other areas of a community—land use, water use, transportation, and infrastructure. Cities and counties across the country are bringing this community planning lens to food systems to bring focus and intention to their food system development.

Food system plans often focus on improving core components of the food system and the supply chains that feed into it. They do this by defining goals for these food system improvements and proposing policy and community action.



Potential Benefits of Food System Planning

Well-designed food system plans can help communities

- Foster profitable agriculture and food business
- Support entrepreneurs in agriculture and food
- Create new jobs and opportunities
- Increase access to healthy, nutritious foods for all
- Support skills in gardening and food preparation
- Protect soil, water, and air quality
- Reduce food waste
- Celebrate diversity of food and agriculture in the community
- Empower all to participate in the food system

IV. How Was This Plan Created?

More than a year of community engagement and effort led to the creation of the Food System Master Plan. An 12-member leadership team was formed to guide this process with support from city and county staff members and elected officials. Leadership team members represent key sectors of the food system and the community such as agricultural production, emergency food assistance, waste management, food retail, and at-risk populations.

In addition to the leadership team, the Food and Farm Council Community Action Teams (CATs) provided valuable input, leadership, and participation in all steps of data collection and plan creation. New Venture Advisors (NVA) were hired to assist with process facilitation and provide technical assistance throughout.

The leadership team began by creating an updated food system assessment. [The Riley County Food System Assessment](#) includes a review of secondary data about food system components – food production, food access, food businesses, and food waste—with a focus on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the regional food system. In addition to the secondary analysis, the team reviewed case studies of food system plans in other communities.



The leadership team used the secondary data and peer community food plans to draft nine potential goals for the Food System Master Plan:

1. Invest in a thriving local food and farm economy
2. Increase the production, sales, and consumption of locally grown foods
3. Promote conservation practices to protect soil and water health
4. Ensure access to healthier food for all
5. Reduce hunger and food insecurity in our community
6. Increase opportunities for food and agricultural education (cooking, gardening, food safety)
7. Reduce food waste and related solid wastes
8. Support community health and wellness
9. Recognize and celebrate our community's diverse food culture

From there, the leadership team began a robust six-month community-driven engagement process to identify key barriers and needs from residents and to understand what food system goals resonated most with residents.

Food and Farm Council of Rjley County & Manhattan
MASTER FOOD PLAN SURVEY- TAKE 10!



Please take this 10 minute survey to help us make a local food system plan that is YOUR plan! For more info: Visit nourishtogether.org or scan the QR Code to begin.



English: Start Survey



Español: Empezar Encuesta



中文: 开始调查



Food and Farm Council of Rjley County and City of Manhattan



The community engagement efforts included:

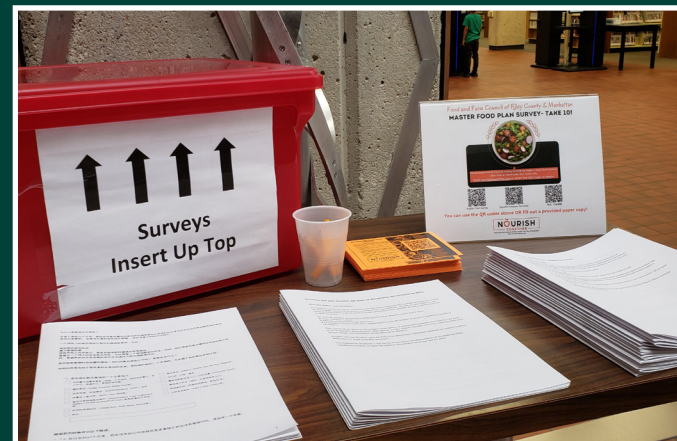
- A **community-wide survey**, open from August to October 2021 that gathered lived experience and insights from 2,030 respondents from the five cities within Riley County and from neighboring counties. The survey was provided in three languages (Mandarin, Spanish, English). Respondents were asked questions about their experiences in the food system and were asked to rank the initial nine goals drafted by the leadership team.

Extensive outreach was conducted during this time period, with particular focus on vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities and communities traditionally left out of government planning conversations. In particular, the Leadership Team sought to engage Populations of Focus, defined as populations that are at a higher risk for poor health as a result of the barriers they experience to social, economic, political, and environmental resources, as well as limitations due to illness or disability; communities and stakeholders who may be most affected by potential policies and practices to ensure that decisions incorporate their knowledge and perspectives.

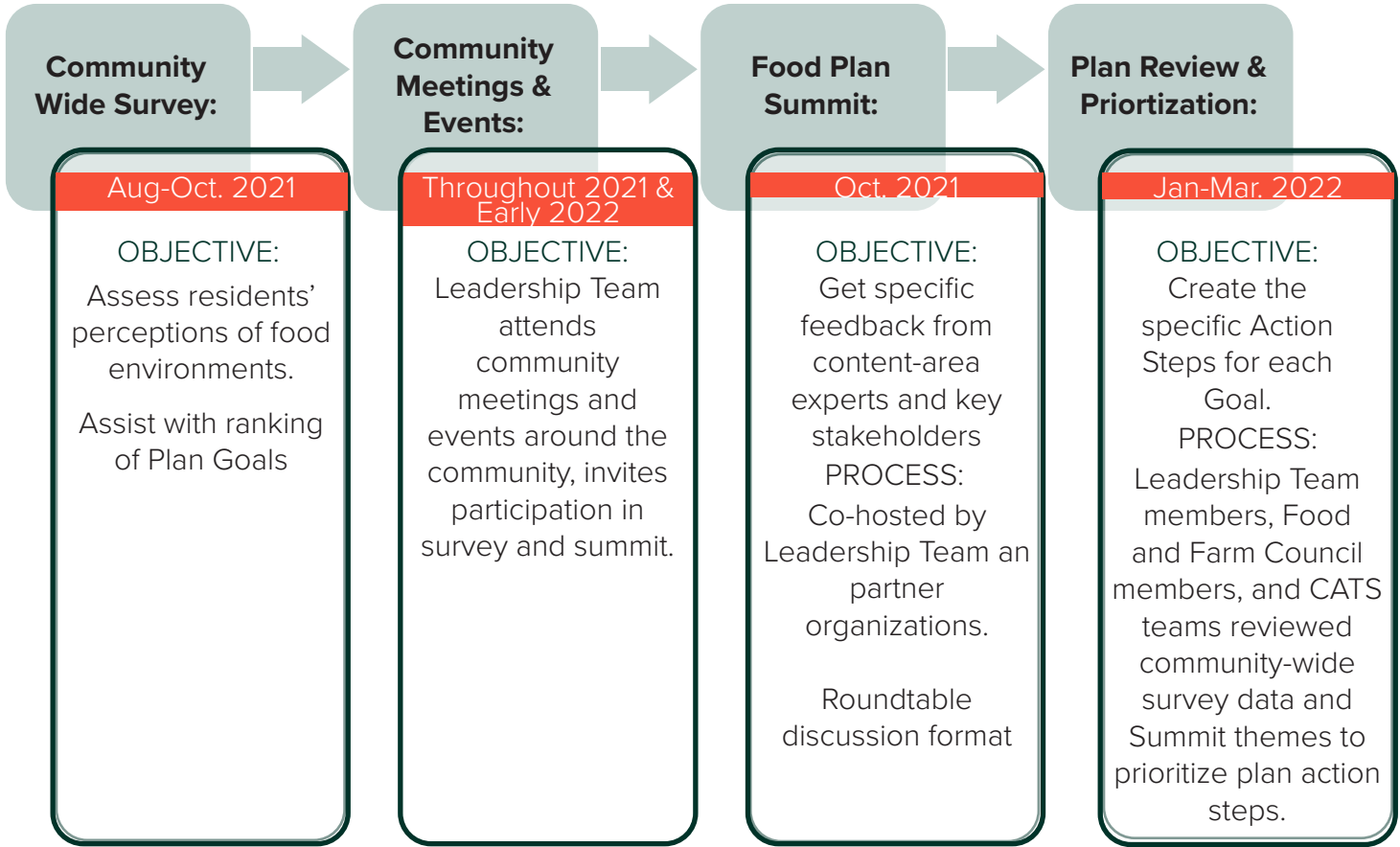
Leadership team members distributed surveys at a variety of community locations: communal meal sites, area libraries, ATA bus routes, healthcare clinic waiting rooms, community events and festivals, Harvester mobile distribution car lines, KSU classes, faith-based groups, local coffee shops, and many more.

- A daylong **Community Food Plan Summit** in October 2021 in which 75 leaders from organizations across the food system participated in facilitated discussions around key policy barriers and opportunities in key food system sectors: local food production, food insecurity, access to healthy food, food waste, and economic development.
- **Community meetings and events** throughout the process that provided leadership team and Food and Farm Council members with the opportunity to interact with existing groups in the community and engage them in the food system plan process.
- **Plan review and prioritization sessions** in early 2022 with the leadership team and the Food and Farm Council CATs that provided an opportunity to review goals and action steps, align on priorities, and finalize language of the food plan content.

This community engagement process assisted the leadership team with two main tasks: 1) focusing the original nine draft goals on the needs expressed by the community, and 2) creating the specific recommendations and action steps in the plan.



Community Engagement Process



V. How to Read This Plan

This plan lays out action steps to guide and foster the development of the local food system in the City of Manhattan and Riley County, KS. The timeline for the plan is 10 years, with adaptations and updates built in on an ongoing basis.

The plan begins with goals and then recommends specific action steps to achieve each of those goals.

- **Goals** state the desired outcomes for our community’s food system. These represent a future vision for the City of Manhattan and Riley County.
- **Action Steps** are the specific policies, programs, and initiatives prioritized to meet these goals.

The Food System Master Plan is a plan for community collaboration to improve the food system. It will take the efforts of the governing bodies of the City of Manhattan and Riley County, along with community partners to see it through. **The particular action steps that follow are focused upon the City of Manhattan and Riley County as policymaking entities with potential to profoundly shape the food system.**

The **Action Steps** are organized into four key categories:



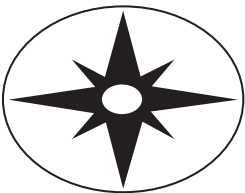
Infrastructure: These are the physical assets of the local food system in the region which includes the facilities and transportation networks needed to move food from farm to fork.



Policy Solutions: These are policies (ordinances, resolutions, economic development (incentives) that local governments could enact to strengthen the food system.



Education: Community education about the food system builds awareness of and support for healthy eating, local food purchasing, and food waste reduction.



City/County Leadership: These are opportunities for the City of Manhattan and Riley County to create innovative partnerships or initiatives to advance the local food system and lead by example within their own operations and internal policies.

VI. Food System Master Plan Goals

Through the process, the leadership team often discussed the purpose that drives their food system work: to improve health and advance equity in the community.

This purpose drives the specific recommendations in the plan, and will be achieved through food system work that focuses on three goals:

Goal 1: Reduce hunger and food insecurity in the community and ensure access to healthier food for all

This goal rose to the top in the community-wide survey. “Reduce hunger and food insecurity in our community” was listed as the top priority by 64 percent of respondents, and 55 percent prioritized “Ensure access to healthier food for all” as top community goals for the food plan to address. Of the nine goals provided to the community for ranking, these two goals were the most highly prioritized. The Food System Master Plan Leadership Team combined them into one goal in recognition of the fact that the action steps to address hunger and improve access to food are often complementary.

Goal 2: Invest in the production, sales, and consumption of locally grown food

This goal was prioritized by community members for inclusion in the Food System Master Plan. Among survey respondents, 28 percent thought that the community should “Invest in a thriving local food and farm economy,” and 32 percent thought a community goal should be to “Increase the production, sale, and consumption of locally-grown food.” The Food System Master Plan Leadership Team combined these goals into one that encompasses the need for strategic investment in the food system, with the outcome of increasing the amount of local food available to the community.

Goal 3: Reduce food waste and related solid wastes

This goal was prioritized by community members for inclusion in the Food System Master Plan. Survey respondents identified reducing food waste as an important goal for themselves and their family (32%) and as an important community food system goal (23%).

Goal 1:

Reduce hunger and food insecurity in the community and ensure access to healthier food for all



The Need

The need to reduce hunger and improve access to healthy food in Riley County is clear:

- 23.4 percent of Riley County residents live in poverty, which is significantly higher than the state average (11.4%)¹
- Food insecurity in Riley County increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic - from 13.5% in 2019 to 14.8% in 2021²
- Like the rest of the nation, Riley County is experiencing the obesity epidemic: 31.9 percent of residents are overweight, and many struggle to eat the number of fruits and vegetables recommended to maintain a healthy diet³

The Community Health Needs Assessment conducted in 2020 revealed that:

- 16.1% of community members are experiencing food insecurity
- 7.3% had to skip meals in the last week because they couldn't afford food
- 14.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "It is easy for me to access healthy food"
- 7.3% had to skip meals in the last week because they couldn't afford food
- "Access to healthy food options" was one of the top 6 physical health needs that community members thought should be addressed
- 22.6% of respondents answered "no" to the statement "there are multiple transportation options in the community"

Survey Results

In the community-wide survey⁴:

- 31 percent of respondents were "often" or "sometimes" worried that food would run out before they had money to buy more; of those respondents, 67 percent agreed that the pandemic made it more difficult for them to be able to buy food
- Non-white residents of Riley County reported a higher likelihood of worrying about food running out or having food run out than their White counterparts
- Black/African American, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander groups reported less availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in their community than their White counterparts

Survey respondents identified key barriers to accessing healthy food. Barriers included not having enough money for food (67%), not having the time to shop for or cook healthy foods (29%), and the types of food they want/need not being available in stores or pantries (28%).

Aligned Community Plans

Previously adopted community plans have also highlighted the importance of improving access to healthy food for all:

The [Manhattan Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems Plan](#) adopted in 2020 calls for leaders to:

- Reduce disparities in access to safe walking and biking environments
- Increase access to employment, education, social and public services, shopping, and parks and recreation facilities

The [Manhattan Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force report](#) from 2021 highlights the need to:

- Increase food pantries/banks in areas accessible to all communities
- Consider the impact of neighborhood zoning decisions to eliminate “food deserts” (low-income census tracts with low access to food resources)
- Create food policies that include funding for food resources
- Create mobile food banks/pantries, possibly utilizing ATA transportation
- Utilize volunteer organizations to assist with pantry staffing needs
- Prioritize crafting a local Food System Master Plan

Food Access Challenges

The action steps for Goal 1 are recommendations to reduce food insecurity and improve access to healthy food **by addressing key barriers identified throughout the food plan community engagement process.**

Participants in the Food Plan Summit identified key challenges:

- The significant “SNAP gap” (the difference between the number of Riley County residents who are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) vs. those that actually receive the SNAP benefits) ; this gap is especially significant for students and seniors
- The challenges in accessing benefit programs such as SNAP and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (i.e., confusing forms, time-consuming application process, and lack of awareness of these programs)
- The “hidden” food insecurity that exists in the county, especially among college students
- The limited hours, differing policies, and offerings at area pantries that make it difficult for food insecure individuals to access the foods they need and want
- The limited options for self-provision, as few residents grow their own food or participate in community gardens
- The majority of Riley County residents depend upon personal vehicles to access food, and residents without access to a personal vehicle face limited public transit options
- The lack of education about what “healthy” food means
- Limited healthy food options and large portion sizes at restaurants in the community

Goal 1 Action Steps:



Infrastructure

Public Transit:

- 1.1** Partner with the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (ATA Bus) to:
 - 1.1.1** Assess the current ATA bus system and identify and implement changes to routes, including additional stops at grocery stores and the farmers market location
 - 1.1.2** Review the ATA bus hours of operation to ensure that bus service is available when residents need access to food resources
 - 1.1.3** Explore options to eliminate the policy that limits the number of bags riders can carry on busses, as this makes it more difficult for system users to utilize the bus for grocery shopping trips
 - 1.1.4** Provide free bus passes to social service agencies that serve food insecure residents
 - 1.1.5** Increase funding for public transportation to enable these potential transit improvements

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access:

- 1.2** Identify neighborhoods that lack pedestrian and bicycle access to food outlets and prioritize these neighborhoods for investments in sidewalk and bike lane infrastructure
- 1.3** Ensure that new grocery store developments include adequate pedestrian and bicycle access (i.e., sidewalks, bike lanes, bicycle parking)

Gardening Infrastructure:

- 1.4** Identify city and county-owned vacant lots that could be leased or donated to community partners for garden spaces and/or locate community gardens on city-owned properties
- 1.5** Ensure that community gardens are distributed equitably throughout the community and focus on the four census tracts in Manhattan identified as low income and low access
- 1.6** Facilitate access to resources to assist community gardening efforts, especially in low-income communities (i.e., free or subsidized plot rental fees, work share programs that allow gardeners to trade time for free plot usage, etc.)
- 1.7** Encourage community gardeners, home gardeners, and farmers market vendors to partner with the Flint Hills Food Recovery initiative to donate fresh produce

WiFi Access and Online Resources:

- 1.8** Ensure that WiFi access is available across the community to improve access to community food resources online, including online grocery delivery and schedules of communal meals
- 1.9** Fund the Food and Farm Council's Nourish Together website, which serves as a clearing house for food access and educational resources available to the community



Policy Solutions

- 1.10** Adopt a “Health in All Policies” framework to ensure all decisions incorporate access to healthy, local food
- 1.11** Encourage new food related retailers wanting to open in low income/low access neighborhoods
- 1.12** Explore economic development incentives to attract grocery stores to neighborhoods that lack access to fresh food
- 1.13** Advocate that the state of Kansas should eliminate the state sales tax on food (currently at 6.5%)
- 1.14** Pending potential state statute changes, research the feasibility of eliminating city and county sales tax collection from small businesses at the farmers market
- 1.15** Research the feasibility of dedicating a portion of revenues from the city and county food sales tax toward food access services and programs



Education

- 1.16** Support access to public food assistance programs like SNAP and WIC through marketing and promotion
- 1.17** Promote the use of SNAP, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and Double Up Food Bucks at area farmers markets
- 1.18** Expand partnership with school districts and nonprofits to promote the Summer Meals Program, and offer city and county sites (i.e., community parks) for the program
- 1.19** Support farm-to-school efforts in K-12 schools in the county—agriculture and nutrition education in classrooms, school gardens, and outdoor classrooms
- 1.20** Expand KSU extension education programs, especially nutrition, cooking, and gardening education programs
- 1.21** Utilize city and county communication tools (i.e., bill inserts, social media, etc.) to promote awareness of community food resources; translate these into multiple languages

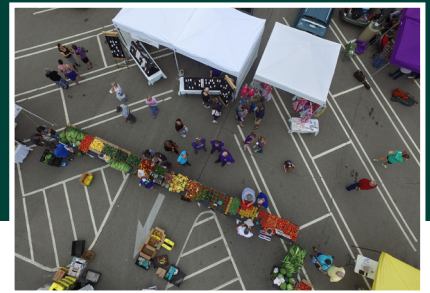


City/County Leadership

- 1.22** Encourage food pantries to eliminate restrictive policies that may turn away residents (i.e., requiring a driver’s license); consider tying funding of food pantry operations to the adoption of more inclusive policies
- 1.23** Collaborate with the Food and Farm Council Food Insecurity Community Action Team to convene a food insecurity task force that would be charged with facilitating communication between food access resources/providers to increase collaboration and efficiency of service delivery
- 1.24** Participate in community conversations about a centralized location for food access programming (i.e., Common Table communal meals)
- 1.25** Survey city and county staff about their ability to access food and use this survey to identify food access challenges among public employees and identify opportunities to address the challenges in workplaces
- 1.26** Facilitate the adoption and implementation of workplace wellness policies within city and county buildings that include support for healthy eating behaviors and access to healthy foods
- 1.27** Adopt a catering policy for city and county meetings and events that prioritizes healthy, locally grown foods

Goal 2:

Invest in the production, sales, and consumption of locally grown food



The Need

While Manhattan and Riley County have some level of local food activity (a farmers market, restaurants serving local food, etc.), there are significant opportunities to grow this sector of the economy:

- Of the 214,000 acres in production in the county, only 352 acres (0.16%) are utilized to produce fruits and vegetables for human consumption⁵
- There is an estimated \$13 million in unmet demand for locally produced fruits and vegetables in Riley County, which represents a significant opportunity to increase local production and purchasing⁶
- 211 livestock operations exist in Riley County, and if just a portion of those ranchers sold to local markets, Riley County could provide much of its meat needs locally⁷

Survey Results

The action steps for Goal 2 are recommendations to invest in the production, sales, and consumption of locally grown food by addressing key barriers identified throughout the food plan community engagement process.

Survey respondents shared their top food sources, which can help the community target outlets for increasing local food availability:

1. Grocery store
2. Restaurant or diner
3. Fast food restaurants
4. Farmers market, farm stand, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program
5. Cafeteria or dining service

Survey respondents also expressed interest in increasing their consumption of local food through self-provisioning. Survey respondents had some knowledge of gardening (37%), but fewer raised animals in their yards (7%) or hunted/fished for food (12%). Respondents did express interest in learning more about these self-provisioning activities (40%).

Aligned Community Plans

Previous community plans have highlighted the importance of the local foods economy, including the [Manhattan Urban Area Comprehensive Plan](#) adopted in 2015, which included the following policy recommendations:

- Support existing agricultural operations and the development of personal gardening and local food systems (such as community gardens, farmers markets, shared commercial kitchens, and food cooperatives/retailers) to expand access to healthy food options — encourage public and private schools to allow community gardens and demonstration projects on school property and continue to support opportunities for farmers markets in downtown and other activity centers
- Encourage home occupations and cottage industries—encourage home-based, information technology based, entrepreneurial, and other non-traditional business models, such as “pop up” vendors, business incubators for start-ups, and other “cottage” industries

Local Food Economy Challenges

Participants in the Food Plan Summit identified key challenges to increasing local food production, sales, and consumption:

- The “scalability” of the current local food system: many small local producers can’t meet the large volumes needed by institutions and grocery stores
- The seasonality of the farmers market: the indoor winter market is small and the location is not easily accessible
- The lack of incentives for restaurants and grocery stores to do the extra work that it takes to procure directly from a local grower rather than just ordering from their existing suppliers
- Lack of leadership on the part of the city, county, and school district with regards to local food purchasing
- The lack of commercial kitchen space available for rent by food business entrepreneurs

Goal 2 Action Steps:



Infrastructure

Year-Round Farmers Market:

- 2.1** Consider investing in infrastructure improvements to support the existing year-round farmers market, which could include investments in storage for vendors' supplies, a covered structure to protect vendors' goods from inclement weather, and so on
- 2.2** Consider investing in signage, sidewalk infrastructure, and transit service to help community members access the market
- 2.3** Consider investing in marketing and promotion of the current farmers market to expand the customer base for the market
- 2.4** Collaborate with ATA on route optimization and scheduling to ensuring access to the farmers market

Community Kitchen:

- 2.5** Conduct a feasibility study to determine community interest in a commercial kitchen that would serve as a small business incubation space for food system entrepreneurs and community organizations; consider how the commercial kitchen may complement the efforts of Common Table and other community food service providers
 - 2.5.i** Consider subsidizing the cost of commercial kitchen space rental to allow food system entrepreneurs to develop their food business concepts affordably

Food Hub:

- 2.6** Collaborate with neighboring counties to survey regional producers about their local food aggregation and distribution needs
- 2.7** If there is interest among producers, conduct a feasibility study for a "food hub" that could aggregate and efficiently distribute locally grown food across the region, helping producers access larger markets



Policy Solutions

- 2.8** Advocate that the State of Kansas should eliminate the state sales tax on food (currently at 6.5%)
- 2.9** Pending potential state statute changes, research the feasibility of eliminating city and county sales tax collection from small businesses at the farmers market
- 2.10** Consider economic development programs to support small food and farm businesses, including a low-interest revolving loan fund for local food businesses
 - 2.10.i** Ensure that these small business local food economic development programs are accessible to and benefit Populations of Focus.

Education

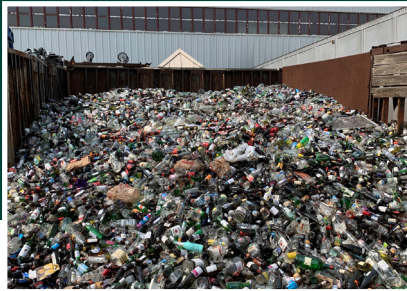
- 2.11** Collaborate with K-State University, K-State Extension, and area school districts to identify gaps and support skill and technical training opportunities for jobs and careers in food, culinary, and agricultural sectors
- 2.12** Connect food businesses to the Kansas Healthy Food Financing Initiative, Network Kansas, and other opportunities to fund food system startups
- 2.13** Provide assistance and resources to new food enterprises and entrepreneurs, including food-focused training and consulting, business plan development, and so on
- 2.14** Help maintain an up-to-date local food directory that connects producers with buyers
- 2.15** Support a sustainable “buy local” food campaign with community partners and consider declaring a “buy local” month during the summer to highlight locally grown produce.
- 2.16** Encourage food businesses to join the From the Land of Kansas program to market their products statewide
- 2.17** Educate community members about allowed urban agriculture practices and recent updates to allowed urban agriculture uses
- 2.18** Increase usage of and funding for cohort-based training, mentorships, and other forms of farmer-to-farmer/business-to-business education
- 2.19** Utilize the Riley County Fair to showcase locally produced food and food system entrepreneurs

City/County Leadership

- 2.20** Assess the feasibility of a local food purchasing policy in the City of Manhattan and Riley County that seeks to purchase a target percent of food from local and regional suppliers
 - 2.20.i** Once a feasible goal is determined, set a target percent of food procured locally
- 2.21** Assist other institutional purchasers (KSU, schools, hospitals, etc.) to adopt local food purchasing percentage targets; create a model policy for the preferential purchasing of local healthy food by public and private institutions
- 2.22** Support CSA programs as part of employee wellness offerings for city and county employees

Goal 3:

Reduce food waste and related solid wastes



The Need

National estimates suggest that up to 40 percent of all food produced is wasted, and that the average family wastes 338 pounds of food per year. Plus, food packaging takes up 45 percent of the space in U.S. landfills. Reducing food waste and packaging can save consumers money, save space in landfills, and reduce landfill methane emissions that contribute to climate change.⁸

Survey Results

Survey respondents shared their food waste and recycling behaviors and challenges:

- Over half of respondents reported recycling at home—top barriers to recycling included not knowing where to go to recycle, not being able to afford it, and being unsure of what can be recycled
- Only 21 percent of respondents currently compost food waste, but a majority (64%) of respondents indicated interest in participating in a composting program if it were available—with the caveat that they are interested in paying nothing (63%) or less than \$10 per month for the service (31%)

Aligned Community Plans

The [Riley County Solid Waste Management Plan](#) adopted in 2019 set the following goals for the community:

- To recycle as much of our solid waste as possible—achieving a recycling rate of at least 22 percent of the entire waste stream by December 31, 2025
- To divert all yard waste and food waste from the Riley County Transfer Station municipal solid waste stream to an appropriate beneficial use or location

Specific food waste reduction action steps in the Riley County Solid Waste Management Plan included:

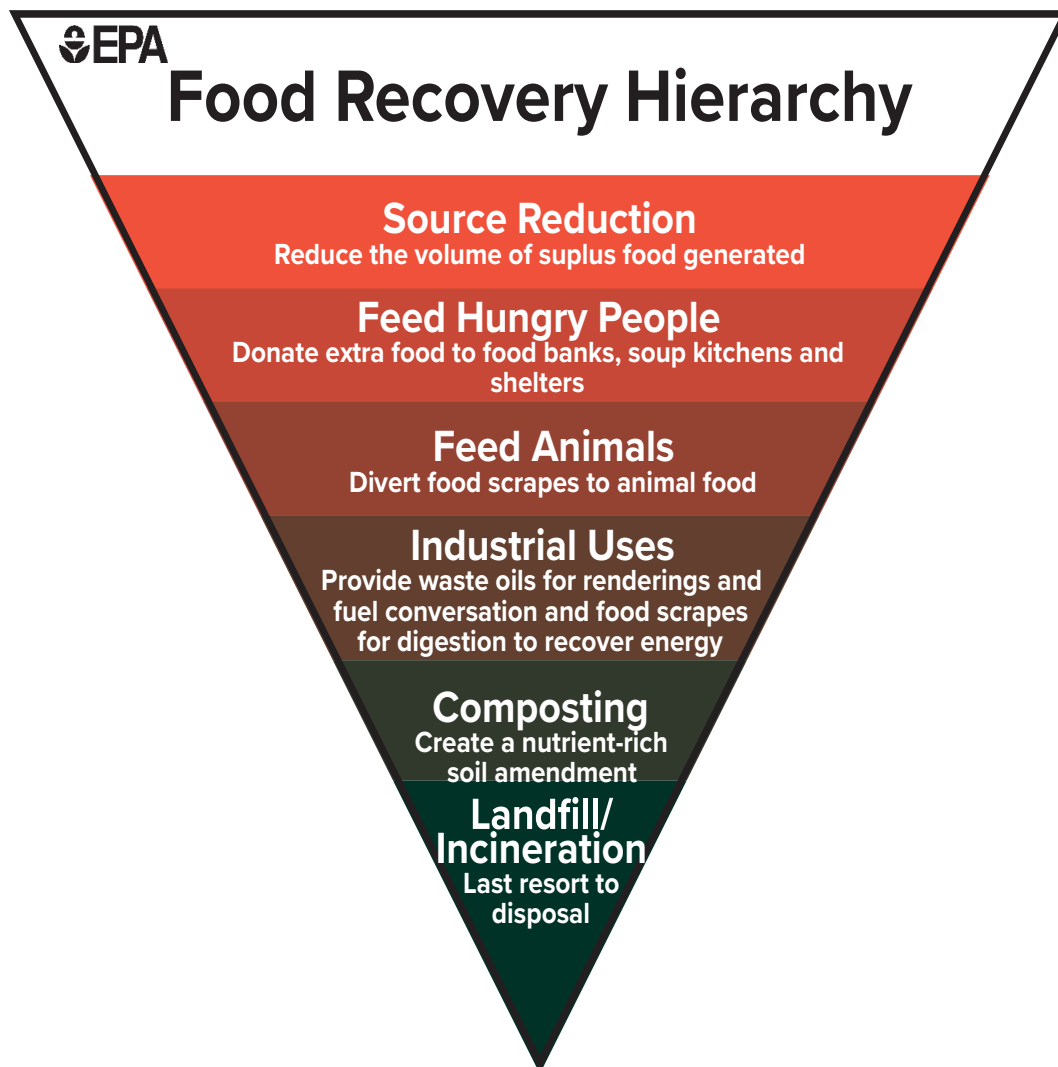
- Reduce food waste by improving product development, storage, shopping/ordering, marketing, labeling, and cooking methods
- Recover food waste by connecting potential food donors to hunger relief organizations like food banks, pantries, and feeding programs
- Recycle food waste to feed animals or to create compost, bioenergy, and natural fertilizers

Food Waste Challenges

The action steps for Goal 3 are recommendations to reduce food waste and related solid wastes by addressing key barriers identified throughout the food plan community engagement process.

Participants in the Food Plan Summit identified key challenges to reducing food waste:

- Lack of local interest in reducing food waste
- Lack of education around food waste and recycling
- Lack of centralized coordination/leadership from the city/county on solid waste, recycling, and composting services
- Challenges getting restaurants and other retailers involved in food waste reduction initiatives
- Challenging profit margins in the recycling industry create a disincentive for solid waste haulers to push recycling services



Recommended action steps in this section follow the [EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy](#). This hierarchy prioritizes actions that organizations can take to prevent and divert wasted food. Each tier of the Food Recovery Hierarchy focuses on different management strategies, with the levels at the top of the hierarchy representing the best ways to prevent and divert wasted food.

Goal 3 Action Steps:



Infrastructure

- 3.1** Assess the feasibility of a city or county-sponsored composting facility to provide the infrastructure needed to implement residential, commercial, and industrial composting programming
- 3.2** Identify equipment or infrastructure solutions to facilitate glass recycling, with a focus on the Aggieville business district for a potential pilot project



Policy Solutions

- 3.3** Prioritize community partner funding to support food recovery programs (i.e., Flint Hills Food Recovery) to ensure that food first goes to feed hungry people in the community
- 3.4** Consider expanding the Riley County solid waste ordinance to include a recycling requirement for residential, commercial, and industrial customers; include common food packaging materials (i.e., glass, cardboard, chipboard, and plastic) in the list of recyclable items
- 3.5** Analyze the feasibility of expanding the Riley County solid waste ordinance to include food waste composting for residential, commercial, and industrial customers



Education

- 3.6** Support the coordination of pantries and emergency food providers to improve recovery of safe, healthy food from area retail food outlets
- 3.7** Create opportunities for managers of grocery stores, restaurants, hospitals, large businesses, schools, universities, and hospitality providers to learn from innovators in the industry and to share best practices and barriers to reduce food waste
- 3.8** Promote donations to emergency food providers from home and community gardens
- 3.9** Encourage and enable on-farm gleaning programs with area food producers
- 3.10** Support organizations, institutions, and businesses to conduct food waste audits and implement best practices
- 3.11** Partner with KSU Research and Extension to provide public outreach, funding, and trainings to support backyard composting programs
- 3.12** Partner with KSU Research and Extension to expand educational programs that reduce food waste (i.e., proper food handling and storage, how to navigate “best by” date labels, etc.)
- 3.13** Promote recycling education for households and businesses, including information about types of materials that can be recycled and area locations where they can be recycled



City/County Leadership

- 3.14** Compile information on existing food recovery, gleaning, and composting programs in the county and encourage all agencies with points of contact in the food system (such as waste management departments, etc.) to cross-promote these efforts
- 3.15** Commit to hosting “zero waste” events for all city and county-sponsored events

VII. Moving the Food System Master Plan Forward

The Food System Master Plan will serve as a guiding document for the City of Manhattan and Riley County for the next ten years (2022–32). It is a plan that will require community collaboration between a variety of partners—local governments, institutions, nonprofit organizations, residents, and businesses—all working together to improve the local food system.

What we will work on:

The Food and Farm Council of Riley County and the City of Manhattan, Kansas, will take the lead on implementing the Food System Master Plan. Once the plan is adopted by the City of Manhattan and Riley County, the Food and Farm Council will:

- Work with elected officials to create work timelines and identify potential funding for implementing the plan action steps
- Engage community partners to accomplish action steps
- Assess progress and evaluate the success of the plan over time
- Maintain community engagement and communicate with residents about progress made



Is there something in this Food System Master Plan that inspires you?
Do you have ideas for how to achieve these action steps?

There are multiple ways you can plug into these efforts!

1. Learn more about our Riley County food system at nourishtogether.org.
2. Engage with the Food and Farm Council: Our meetings are open to the public. We always welcome community members to come share their ideas and discuss with us.
3. Apply to be appointed to serve on the Food and Farm Council. Complete an interest form on the [city](#) or [county](#) web page.
4. Volunteer with one of our Community Action Teams or volunteer to support our partner organizations. Learn more here: nourishtogether.org.
5. Take the lead on some of these action steps: Many of the action steps will require collaboration across entities. You can spearhead one of these efforts and share how it's going with the Food and Farm Council.

Connect to Your Riley County & Manhattan Food System



Impact Trackers ^

NOURISH
TOGETHER

Contact
rileycountyfoodandfarmcouncil@gmail.com

Project Supported by the Greater
Manhattan Community Foundation

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Connect with us:
www.nourishtogether.org
rileycountyfoodandfarmcouncil@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/NourishTogetherMHK>

VIII. Glossary

Some helpful definitions:

- Food insecurity:** A household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.
- Food recovery:** Food recovery is the practice of gleaning edible food that would otherwise go to waste from places such as restaurants, grocery stores, produce markets, or dining facilities and distributing it to local emergency food programs.
- Food Waste Audit:** An assessment of what food is uneaten, wasted, or discarded in a commercial setting (e.g., school cafeteria). By identifying what is wasted, organizations can change the food they provide to reduce waste.
- Gleaning:** Gleaning is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest.
- Health in all Policies (HiAP)**
An approach that considers health and health equity in decision and policymaking to improve health outcomes, lessen health disparities, and achieve optimal health for all.
- Hunger:** An individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.
- Low-income and low-access tract measured at 1 mile and 10 miles:**
A low-income tract with at least 500 people, or 33 percent of the population, living more than 1 mile (urban areas) or more than 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.
- Zero Waste Event:** A Zero Waste Event is one in which event organizers plan ahead to reduce solid waste from the event. This includes providing stations for recycling and composting.

IX. Sources

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau (census.gov). Profiles for Riley County, Kansas, can be found at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US20161> (accessed March 9, 2022) and <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rileycountykansas> (accessed March 9, 2022).
- ² Feeding America, “State-by-State Resource: The Impact of Coronavirus on Food Insecurity,” accessed March 9, 2022, feedingamericaaction.org/resources/state-by-state-resource-the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/.
- ³ Kansas Health Matters, County Dashboard, Riley County, Kansas, accessed March 9, 2022, www.kansashealthmatters.org/index.php?module=indicators&controller=index&action=dashboard&id=83319366815456082&card=0&localeId=1020.
- ⁴ Full Food System Master Plan Community Survey results can be found at www.nourishtogether.org.
- ⁵ USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service 2017 Census of Agriculture, “County Summary Highlights” for Kansas can be found at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Kansas/st20_2_0001_0001.pdf (accessed March 9, 2022).
- ⁶ This estimate comes from the NVA MarketSizer tool, which can be accessed at www.newventureadvisors.net/tools/.
- ⁷ USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture, “County Summary Highlights.”
- ⁸ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “2018 Wasted Food Report,” November 2020, https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/documents/2018_wasted_food_report-11-9-20_final_.pdf.

