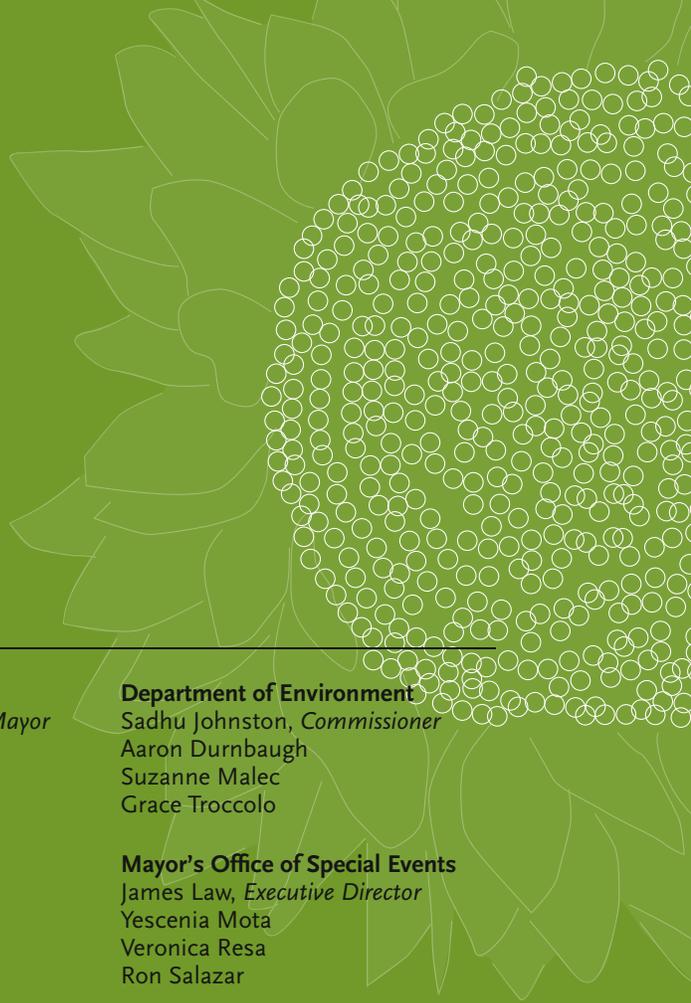


CHICAGO:
EAT LOCAL & LIVE HEALTHY



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City of Chicago

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Middle: Louise and Paul Maki of Home Grown at Green City Market, 2005; Courtesy of Green City Market

Terry Crandall, Chef Peninsula Hotel with sunflowers at Green City Market, 2005; Courtesy of Green City Market

Left, Bottom: Images courtesy of Getty Images

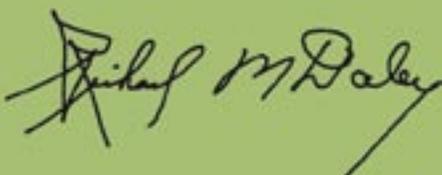
FROM 2004 TO 2005, the City of Chicago sponsored a working group to study relationships within the entire food system. In this booklet, we're offering the results of our work so far — a strategy to provide food that can help all Chicagoans *Eat Local • Live Healthy*.

Local and fresh food would be most beneficial to our health, environment and economy. But much of the produce we buy comes from places like California, Chile or New Zealand. There are global environmental costs of shipping produce so far. And, the farther it is shipped, the less fresh it can be. Today, soy and corn bolster the economy of Chicago and Illinois. Encouraging Illinois farmers to also raise table-food would benefit Illinois urban and rural communities alike. Local food would keep food dollars within the borders of our state. By satisfying growing consumer demand with Illinois grown food, we would enhance public health, generate jobs, expand economic opportunity, and revitalize Illinois' declining rural communities, while increasing the security of Illinois' 12,000,000 food consumers.

A northern climate city like Chicago can't expect to supply all of its food from the surrounding region. Though we can get apples, blueberries, peaches and strawberries from the region, we can't get oranges and bananas. We want and should import some foods.

But importing some food is different from importing most of it. For Chicago, the food issues are about access to healthy food and a healthy local and regional economy.

We need to refocus our food system to provide healthy, local food and local jobs related to the growing and processing of that food. It is a regional, state and national issue. There are a number of steps the City of Chicago could take immediately to help set the process of refocusing the food system in motion. The City is ready and willing to take these steps, and more, to assume a leadership role in this critical initiative.



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Chicago: Eat Local ♣ Live Healthy is a City of Chicago strategy to coordinate aspects of the local and regional food industry in ways that enhance public health and create food-related business opportunities.

The strategy identifies food issues that, if restructured locally, could improve food quality, lower its cost and increase its availability for consumers. It also presents examples of public- and private-sector cooperation that could provide new employment and sustainable development opportunities.



A PLAN EMERGES

EAT LOCAL ♣ LIVE HEALTHY EVOLVED FROM several environmental and health initiatives involving area food growers, advocates, providers, processors, distributors and retailers. These initiatives coalesced in 2004 with the formation of a City of Chicago-sponsored working group that studied relationships within the entire food system.

To address the initiatives, the City first established the following six categories for study based on recommendations from Advocates for Urban Agriculture,¹ a new coalition promoting urban agriculture in the Chicago area.

- *land use*
- *soil, water, compost*
- *training, education, schools*
- *marketing and distribution*
- *government food procurement policies*
- *entrepreneurial opportunities*

The group determined that all categories are interdependent and resolved to formulate a strategy that examines issues on a regional and local basis. The strategy has the City as its focus and collaboration as its cornerstone. The group developed a vision for building a healthier and more sustainable food system and made recommendations to achieve tangible benefits.

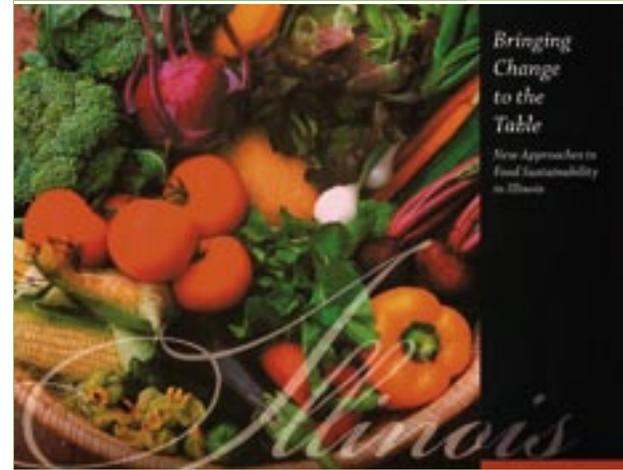


Genesis Growers from St. Anne, Illinois stir your appetite with bright red radishes and luscious greens – all fresh organic produce at the 2006 FamilyFarmed.org EXPO. Photo by Dan Merlo, courtesy of Sustain.

Before *Eat Local • Live Healthy* was formed, many public and private agencies studied food supply and demand. Some agencies focused on “food security,” the availability of nutritionally adequate and culturally acceptable food for consumers. The availability issue reflects incongruities in the area’s food industry. For example, Illinois is the country’s number two state in agricultural exports, but one in 10 Illinois households has trouble finding food from day to day. Furthermore, almost no Illinois farmland produces crops sold directly for human consumption.² In 1998, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a national foundation focused on food systems, funded what was perhaps the first food security workshop in the Chicago area.³ This was followed by the Illinois Food Security Summits in 2001 and 2002, sponsored by the Chicago Community Trust. These events increased participants’ interest in relationships between food sources, production, economic development and public health. After the summits, local philanthropic organizations and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched a formal dialogue to foster collaboration among food growers and community projects.⁴

Meanwhile, Sustain, a Chicago-based public advocacy group specializing in sustainable development, proposed that government agencies, philanthropists, and civic and community groups focus on a variety of improvements, from farmer training and land protection to organic farmers markets and links to food pantries.⁵

In early 2003, philanthropic organizations and the City of Chicago formed the Illinois Funders Group. Members agreed on goals of “increasing the demand for healthy food among all populations in Chicago and Illinois and promoting its local or regional production and widespread accessibility and affordability.”



Bringing Change to the Table
New Approaches to Food Sustainability in Illinois



“The issue of food security is essential to the health and well being of everyone. I applaud the efforts of all those who have made this book possible.”

The Honorable Richard M. Daley,
Mayor, City of Chicago

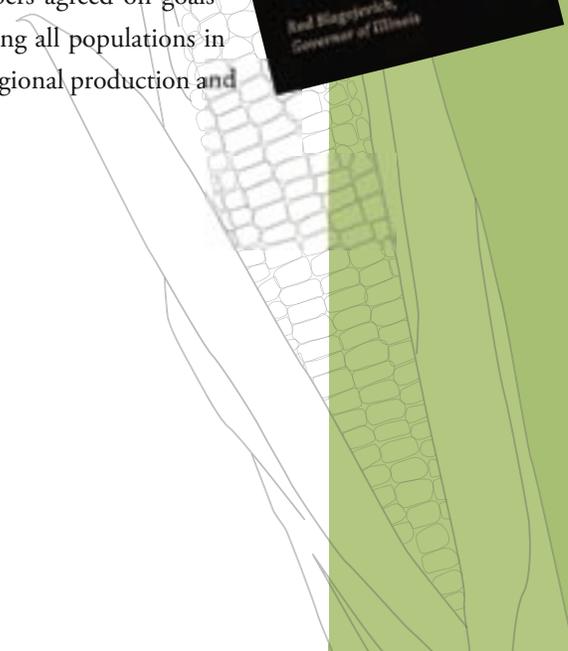
Front and back cover of *Bringing Change to the Table—New Approaches to Food Sustainability in Illinois*, a publication devoted to discovering new ways to make nutritious and appropriate food available to all consumers.

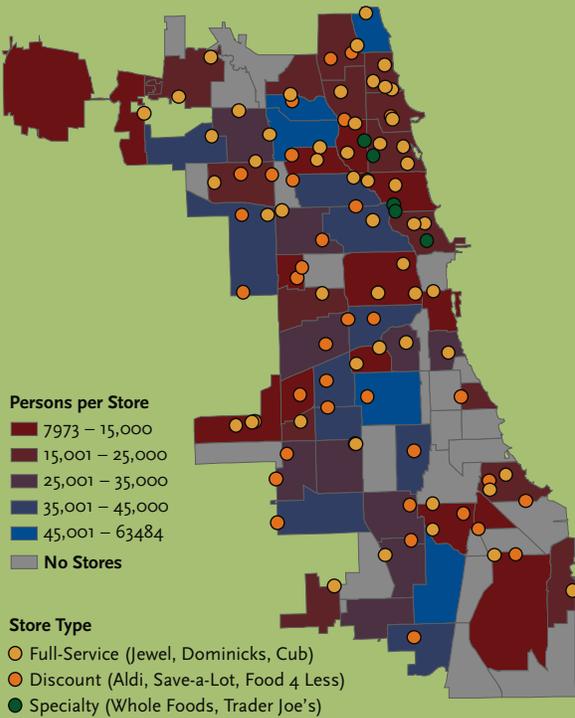
2003 by Sharon Meyers and the Institute for Community Resource Development.



“Illinoisans benefit from all those who are involved and dedicated to the issue of food security throughout our state. This book marks their progress; we can all learn from this initiative.”

Rod Blagojevich,
Governor of Illinois



CHAIN SUPERMARKETS: CHICAGO
COMMUNITIES, JUNE 2005

The uneven distribution of supermarkets among Chicago communities underscores the need for a fresh approach to food security.

ROOT ISSUES

The initial categories established for study by the *Eat Local ♣ Live Healthy* group did not adequately capture the issues of food access in inner city neighborhoods or regional farming. These issues, when combined with the ones gleaned from Advocates for Urban Agriculture were consolidated into four food issues for the City. These are: retailing, farming, processing, and urban growing. Each has a unique impact on the type, quality and availability of the food Chicago-area residents eat.

Following is a brief overview of the group's discoveries.

Retailing

Stores are an essential part of the food supply system, however not all Chicago-area residents enjoy convenient access to quality, affordable products.

A survey of 178 stores in five city neighborhoods underscores the problem. More than half carried neither fruits nor vegetables. Many families have to travel over half a mile to find fresh produce. This presents a challenge for the 21% to 38% of these families without vehicles.

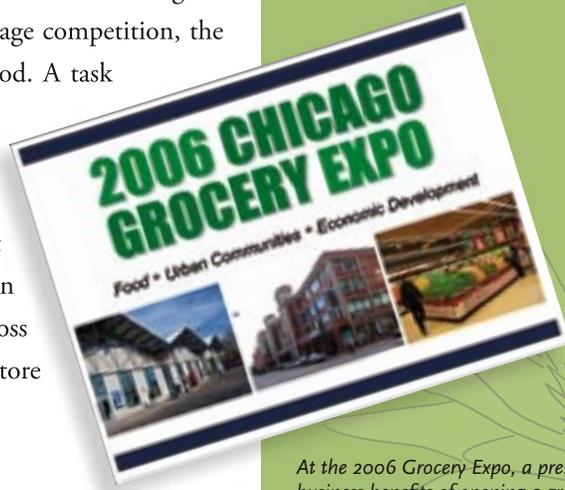
After the survey, stakeholders in three of the five communities made recommendations for addressing the availability of healthy food products. Their ideas include community-owned supermarkets, public cooking demonstrations, and vegetable gardens on city lots.⁶

Neighborhood groceries were cited as one of 10 top challenges to neighborhood planning by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC),⁷ which had funded 10 neighborhood plans in Chicago.



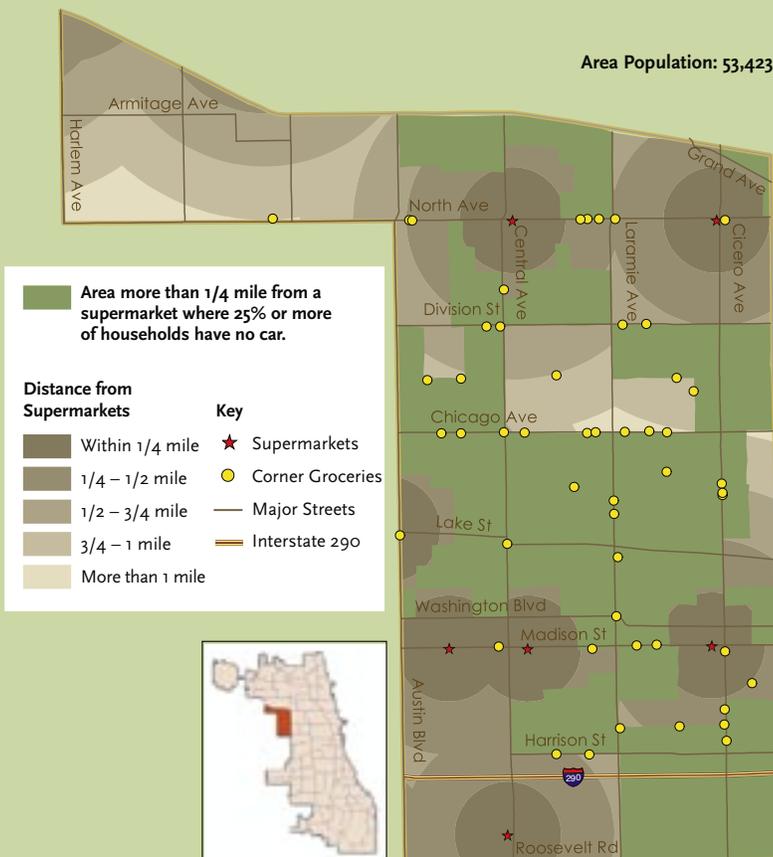
The Chicago City Council held hearings in late 2005 to examine restrictive covenants that prevent new groceries from opening where others have gone out of business. Used by major chain stores to discourage competition, the covenants deprive residents of convenient access to food. A task force continues to explore the issue.

To encourage the establishment of more groceries in under-served neighborhoods, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development held a Grocery Expo in February 2006. The Expo introduced grocers from across the country to urban sites and city incentives for new store development.



At the 2006 Grocery Expo, a presentation highlighted the business benefits of opening a grocery store in Chicago's inner city.

Presentation excerpt courtesy of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.



AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD

In this neighborhood, most people must walk or take public transportation. Supermarkets are few and far between. This means they depend on corner groceries, which often have an inadequate selection of healthy foods.



Small, local farms, such as this one in Winnebago County, Illinois, can benefit from financial services provided by the Illinois Finance Authority.

Photo courtesy of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.

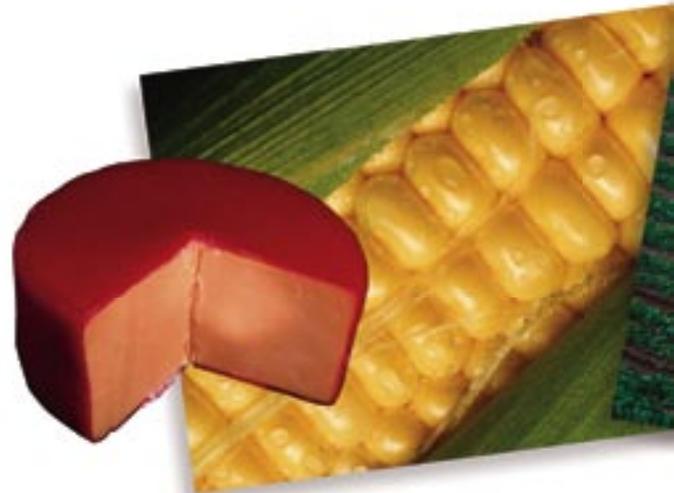
ILLINOIS AGRICULTURE FACTS⁸

- Illinois rank among states for agricultural exports (2002): 2
- Portion of Illinois agricultural receipts from corn and soy (2002): 71.6%
- Portion of Illinois agricultural receipts from vegetable crops: 0.8%
- Portion of Illinois farm sales from agricultural products sold directly for human consumption (1997): 0.14%
- Location of Illinois farmers markets: 108 Downstate, 29 in Chicago
- Number of Illinois farms (2002): 73,027
- Portion of Illinois land used for farming: 76.8%
- Portion of Illinois farms with gross annual sales over \$500,000 (2002): 3.9%
- Portion of total Illinois farm sales from farms in the above category: 37.6%
- Number of Illinois farms with **more** than 1,000 acres – 1997: 6,775 | 2002: 7,665
- Number of Illinois farms with **fewer** than 1,000 acres – 1997: 72,337 | 2002: 65,372

Farming

In Illinois, farming is currently dominated by “two extremes with a disappearing middle.” A report prepared for local funders⁹ identified Illinois food consumption trends through interviews with farmers, academic institutions, funding sources, food industry activists and government staff. The report determined that the state’s agricultural producers exist in a bipolar environment. On one end are small, innovative, diversified farms that market directly to consumers, often through farmers markets or community-supported agriculture (CSA). At the other end are mega-farms that produce commodities for export markets, manufacturing, and livestock. Neither extreme could feed the state, since small farms cannot produce enough food for everyone, and the mega-farms produce mainly corn and soybeans not meant for direct human consumption.

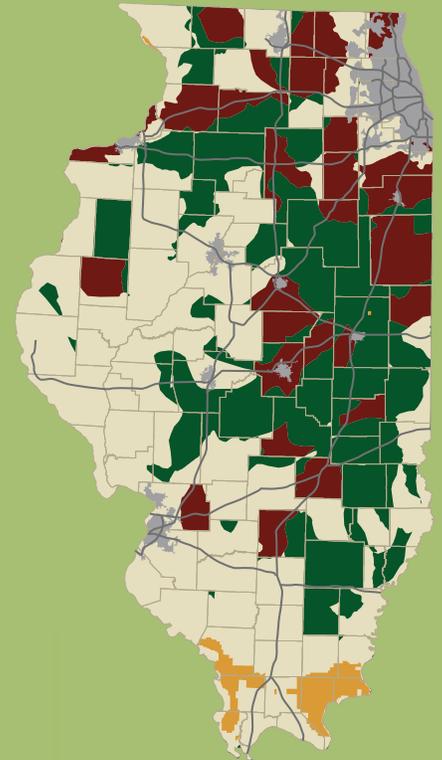
Since smaller farms are responsible for most locally grown and consumed produce, their presence around metropolitan Chicago is essential to the viability of a restructured food system, and vice versa. But small farms are being squeezed by sprawl, which has caused Illinois to lose farmland at an alarming rate. According to a 2002 report from the American Farmland Trust, Illinois lost 160,900 acres of prime farmland between 1992 and 1997—a 137% increase in loss over the previous five years.¹⁰



Farm preservation efforts vary widely across the region. In 2006, Boone and McHenry counties joined the northeastern Illinois counties of Kane and Kendall in passing farmland protection ordinances.

Land is an essential component in a local food system – farmers are another. Farmers generally come from four groups: young people who want to farm, adults making a mid-career change, conventional farmers, and immigrants. To succeed, new farmers require access to land. Steadily shrinking resources make start-up operations increasingly difficult.

FARMING ON THE EDGE: SPRAWLING DEVELOPMENT THREATENS AMERICA'S BEST FARMLAND



- High-Quality Farmland & High Development
- High-Quality Farmland & Low Development
- Federal & Indian Lands
- Urban Areas
- Other Lands





The Union Stockyards dominated the country's meatpacking industry for decades and made meat packing synonymous with Chicago.

Historic postcards courtesy of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.

Processing

Food processing has been a primary component of Chicago's manufacturing industry since the 1840s, when local growing became secondary to the production, distribution and marketing of value-added agricultural products. Meat processing in particular became synonymous with Chicago's role in continental trade, primarily at the Union Stockyards, which dominated the country's meatpacking industry for decades.

As the country's rail center, Chicago also evolved as a hub for the distribution, processing and sale of agricultural products. Food processing remains the largest segment of Chicago's manufacturing base, employing 22,865 workers in 2002.¹¹

Today, high-growth products within the processing industry include natural and organic foods and meats, and products made with soy.

With that in mind, the *Eat Local ♣ Live Healthy* group and the Chicago Department of Planning and Development engaged a consulting firm to explore opportunities for small and mid-size natural and organic food-related businesses (revenues from \$1 to \$20 million) to help create jobs in Chicago. The consultant prepared studies of:

- *The soy market in Illinois and the United States*¹²
- *Economic engines around organics*¹³
- *Traditional and organic farming in Illinois, the five state region (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa) and the United States*¹⁴
- *Processing plants in Chicago and the United States*¹⁵

Summaries of those studies follow.

Though still a relatively small market, the \$50 million U.S. organic meat market is expected to grow at more than 30% through 2008. Growth is being driven by a number of factors, including increased consumer demand for high-protein foods; concern over meat-borne diseases, and interest in meat

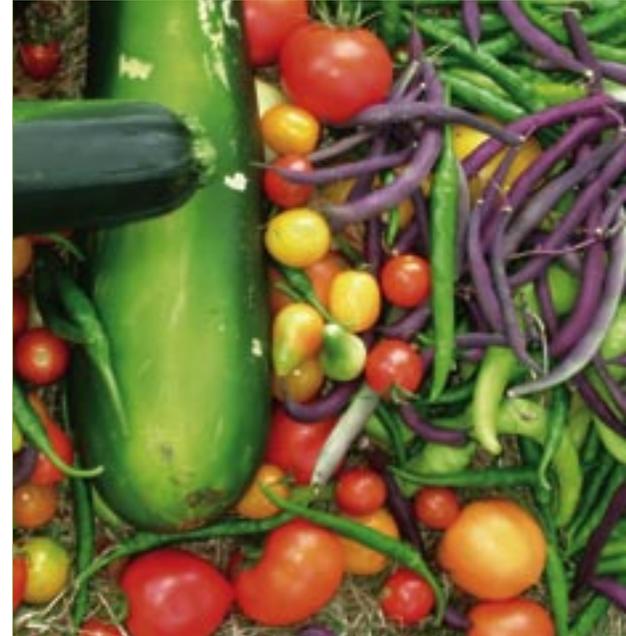
sources. The \$547 million “all-natural” meat market, which involves products that are not certified as organic, is expected to increase due to similar factors.

The United States is the world leader in soy-based foods. Illinois ranks as the second state in terms of soy production, and the three largest soy processing companies in the U.S., representing 70% of the market, are based in Illinois.

As a “functional food”, soy is today an essential value-added component in numerous food categories. In 2002 alone, 800 new soyfood products such as energy bars, cereals and meat alternatives were launched, a 40% increase over the previous year.

While the majority of U.S. soy crops are used for cattle feed, the 9% of soy crops intended for human consumption represents a nearly \$4 billion market, up from \$300 million in 1992.

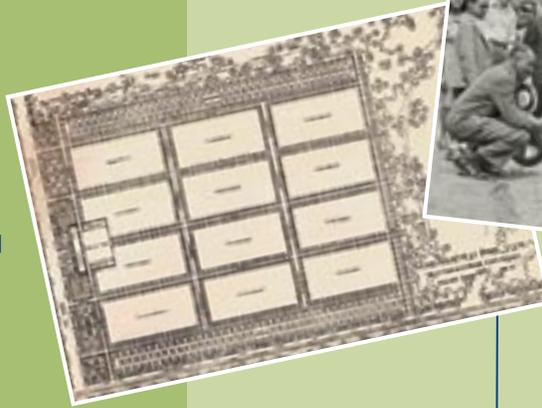
The growth in these markets means increased, profitable opportunities for regional and local producers, processors and distributors. As businesses in the food system take advantage of these opportunities, this translates into greater availability of healthy meats and soy-enhanced foods for Chicago-area consumers.



Small farms can produce an amazing variety of crops, as these colorful vegetables attest. With fresh, attractive food to put on the table, consumers are more likely to eat a healthy diet.

Photo by Erika Allen, courtesy of Growing Power

A BRIEF HISTORY OF URBAN GARDENING IN CHICAGO



American
Community
Gardening
Association

Why Grow Here?

“The glaciers left the region west of the Great Lakes unusually well suited to the organisms and farming techniques that American and European migrants brought with them. Considering the favorable climate as well, it would be hard to imagine a landscape better suited to agriculture.”¹⁶

– William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*

1920s

Jens Jensen’s “A Greater West Park System” plan introduces concepts for growing food in urban areas. The plan targets land adjacent to parks, schools and agricultural colleges for use as municipal gardens. The gardens supply nearby kitchens.

1940s

World War II generates increased demand for food. Chicago Mayor Edward J. Kelly creates an ambitious and extensive initiative to grow food on city lots. By 1942 there are 12,601 registered gardeners in Chicago using 508 public plots totaling about 290 acres.¹⁷

1970s

Organizations start looking at vacant city land as opportunities to feed and improve nutrition for urban poor. The University of Illinois Extension established the Master Gardener program and the Chicago Botanic Garden became the first host to the American Community Gardening Association.

1970’s - American Community Gardening Association logo

1980’s - Chicago Agricultural High School. Aerial map courtesy Chicago Department of Planning and Development.

1990’s - Howard Area Community Garden. Courtesy of NeighborSpace.

2000’s - Green Youth Farm/North Lawndale – before and after. Courtesy of NeighborSpace.

Urban Growing

Like other urban areas, Chicago’s association with gardening for personal consumption has existed since its settlement. The activity remains viable for many residents in yards, community plots, and other public and privately owned areas across the city.

Urban agriculture provides healthy food, aesthetic improvements, and increased interactions among neighbors in cities across the country. Recently, Chicago organizations have begun to use urban agriculture for training the hard-to-employ and as opportunities for small businesses. For all these reasons, urban agriculture should continue. But urban agriculture will not feed large numbers of people or produce significant employment benefits.

Chicago-based organizations that train urban growers to produce food for household tables are seeing more groups interested in preserving land for



1980s

Openlands Project assesses open space and gardening opportunities. The Chicago Botanic Garden inaugurates the Green Chicago program to support community gardeners. The Chicago Board of Education converts the city's last farm, into the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences.



1990s

The Chicago Department of Environment initiates Greencorps Chicago to provide technical help and materials to local gardeners. The Chicago land trust NeighborSpace provides permanent protection for the Howard Area Garden, a food production site.



2000

The North Lawndale and West Town communities implement green youth gardens. As working vegetable gardens, the sites provide food to area residents, promote healthy eating habits and offer horticulture training to local high school students.

food growing. In 2006, the Chicago City Council approved the transfer of land for two youth farms to NeighborSpace, a city-wide land trust. Operated by local community service organizations, the sites will provide food to area residents, promote healthy eating habits and offer horticulture training to local high school students.

Suitable soil is essential for growers' success. Soil resources could be made available through improved composting in Chicago neighborhoods. Two programs sponsored by local organizations are working to expand the activity, including the Chicago Master Composter, which provides instruction about composting, and the Chicago Home Composting Program, which is specifically for homeowners. Composting offers an economic development opportunity that, at the appropriate scale, could support viable businesses.

*"I believe the city should own tracts of land for the growing of vegetables and fruits, where the citizens can see and understand that their real existence comes out of Mother Earth, and that the merchant or peddler is only a means of delivery."*¹⁸

– Jens Jensen, A Greater West Park System

The Vision



*Top: Farm near the border of Wisconsin in Winnebago County, Illinois
Courtesy of Chicago Department of Planning.*

*Right: Vivian C., a Growing Home graduate and staff member picking spinach in a hoophouse at Su Casa, Chicago, Illinois, April 2004.
Courtesy of Growing Home.*

The Vision. Create a climate where the production, distribution, and marketing of locally grown, healthy food and value-added products are available, accessible, and affordable year-round to all city residents and are produced in an environmentally sound manner.



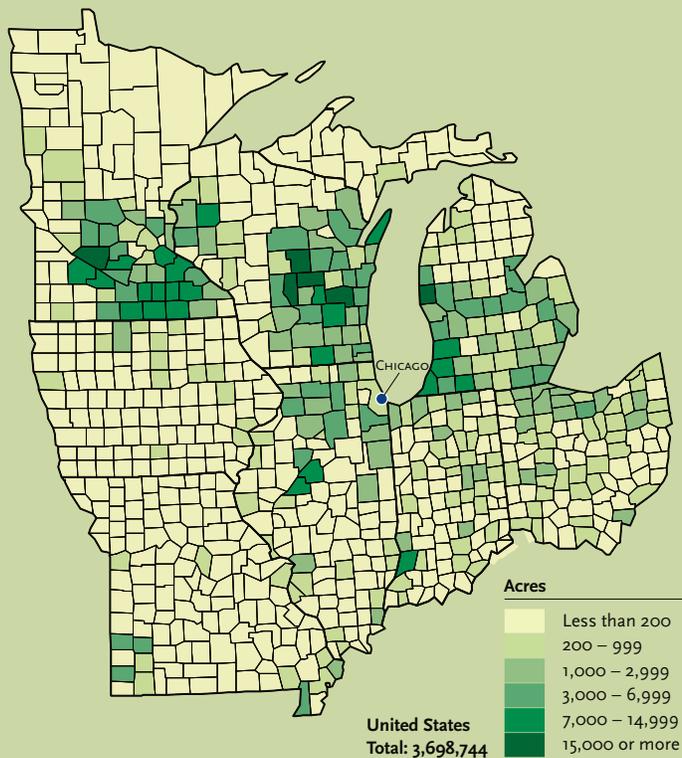
EARLY ON, THE EAT LOCAL • LIVE HEALTHY GROUP agreed upon a vision for Chicago's food system that generated five ambitious goals. Achieving these goals would establish the foundation for making its vision a reality.

WHERE OUR FOOD COMES FROM

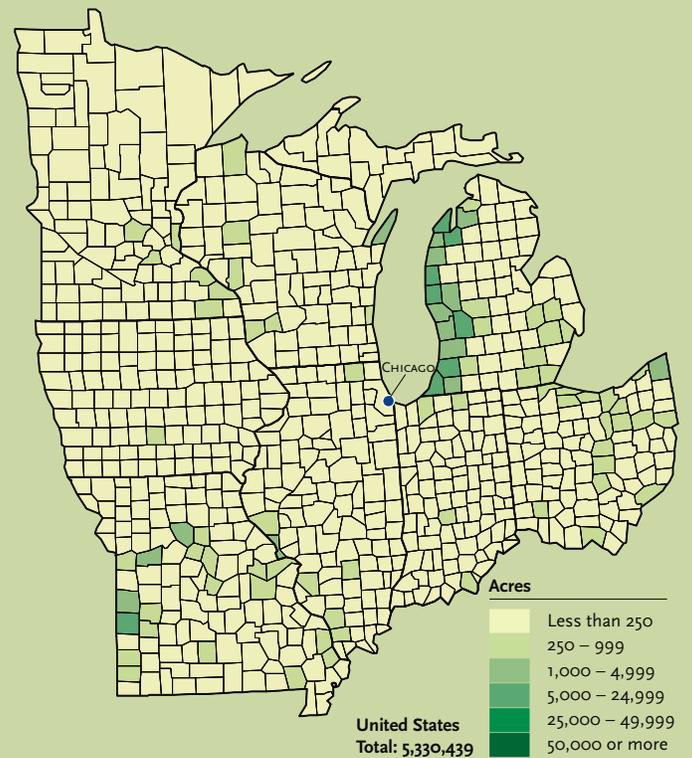
“(It) is hard to believe that more than half the food produced in this country – including three quarters of the fruits, vegetables and dairy products – comes from farms near cities”¹⁹

Edward Thompson, Jr.
Saving the Farms in Our Own Backyards

VEGETABLES, ACRES HARVESTED FOR SALE, 2002



TOTAL ACRES OF LAND IN ORCHARDS, 2002





Top: A 2005 workshop explored ways to prevent the loss of organic farmland near the City, like this beautiful acreage in northeast Illinois.

Cover of *Wanted: Organic Acres, A Workshop to Secure Metropolitan Farmland* photo courtesy of Terry Evans for Revealing Chicago.

Bottom: Successful new farmers keep the land productive. Here, they learn some key paths to success from experienced farmers.

Cover of *Stateline Farm Beginnings – a Farmer-led Mentorship/Educational Program* offered by CSA Learning Center and the Land Connection

1. INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE AND VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS.

Improved supplies and distribution of healthy foods are critical for meeting the increasing needs of local middle-market suppliers and consumers.

Preserve farmland in northeastern Illinois. Area governments and officials must assess their commitment to farmland preservation. This includes Cook County, the five collar counties of Lake, Kane, DuPage, McHenry and Will, as well as Grundy and Kendall, counties which are still largely rural but are starting to experience population and development pressures. The assessment should include the potential for farmers to replace a portion of corn and soybean production with fruits, vegetables, livestock and poultry.

Leverage Chicago's demand to stimulate regional supply. Chicago and its suburbs represent a growing market for local and regional food that is healthy, natural, organic and/or transitional (the move from conventional to organically grown). This demand has the potential to increase the local supply. The demand needs to be understood and articulated to growers and used to leverage federal and state agricultural dollars and programs for the region.





**NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS PLANNING
COMMISSION 2040 REGIONAL PLAN**

“Northeastern Illinois has some of the best farming soil in the world. While much of the Chicago metropolitan area is highly urbanized, three counties still have significant percentages of their land in agricultural production: Kane County (62%), McHenry County (61%), and Will County (54%). In 1997, the market value of farm products from these three counties was \$339 million.”²⁰

Develop training and support programs for existing and new farmers. Expand farmer training programs across the region based on agricultural incubator models in Minnesota, Vermont, and elsewhere. The incubator-type initiative provides subsidized access to land and equipment, and technical support. Lake County’s incubator, “Growing Organic Farmers,” already exists. Future locations are planned in central Illinois and Chicago.

Connect local farmers to local markets. Farmers need connections with city markets. Knowing they have sales outlets for healthy meats and produce, and a way to get it to market will encourage farmers to cater to consumers’ needs. A city-sponsored “forager,” such as the one piloted by the City and Chicago’s Green City Market, is one model. Foragers visit farms and network with farmers, providing information and building confidence in Chicago’s farmers markets.



ILLINOIS HUNGER FACTS²¹

- Growth in Illinois food stamp recipients (1996 to 2000): 25%
- Portion of Chicago public school children between ages 3 and 7 who are overweight: 23%.
- Portion of Illinois households that don't always know where their next meal will come from: 8.2%.
- Illinois' rank among states with schools that offer school lunch and breakfast programs: 45th.

2. INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION AND COMPOSTING IN CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS.

Vacant lots and other city properties will help support small-scale growing operations while providing economic opportunities and job training.

Increase the number of city residents who know how to grow food in an urban setting. With encouragement from government and private funders, organizations that provide technical assistance in growing food can build upon 20 years of progress.

Transitional job programs provide training in urban agriculture, landscaping, food and nutrition, sales and marketing, and general job readiness skills. These programs work well for low-income groups, homeless people, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Increase the number of city residents who know how to compost. Composting is critical both for the production of good soil and the reduction of

Young people learn to make compost that will nourish their urban gardens.



Photo by Erika Allen, courtesy of Growing Power.

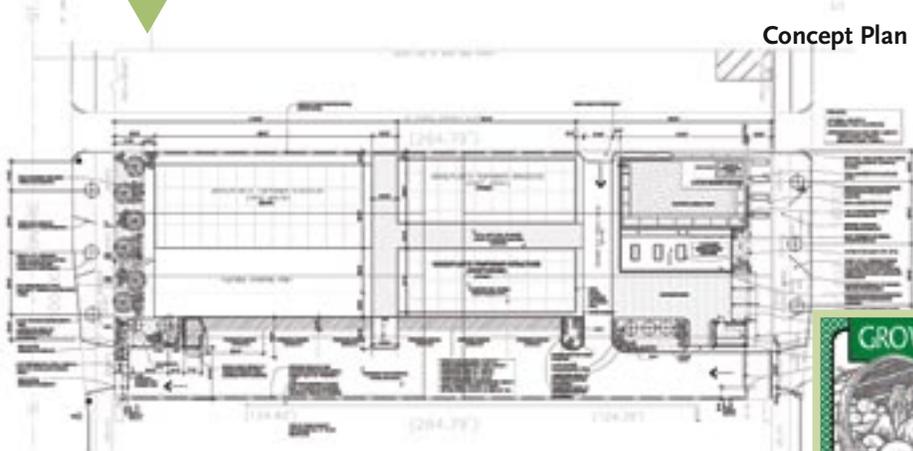
municipal waste. Efforts are planned to expand this activity on suitable land citywide. Composting proponents will need to work with local governments on regulatory issues and community acceptance.

Help children grow their gardening skills. With more than 100 “campus parks” surrounding Chicago Public Schools, there are ample opportunities to connect students with the soil. In addition, various agencies are looking at ways to include gardening in school curricula to teach students about growing food and eating healthy.



GROWING HOME WOOD STREET FARM

Growing Home is a not-for-profit organization that serves homeless and low-income persons through a transitional employment program in the organic farming business. The City of Chicago and Growing Home are entering into a redevelopment agreement to convert a vacant lot into an urban farm with hoophouses, a green house and a training facility with a green roof and rainwater collection cisterns.



Concept Plan



Location Plan



FOOD PROCESSING PLANTS IN CHICAGO

Existing food processing plants in Chicago with an overlay of existing tax increment financing (TIF) districts, the City of Chicago's most effective economic development tool. 2006.

Goodness Greeness is the Midwest's leading supplier of fresh, organic food and the largest privately held organic distributor in the country, employing over 60 people at their warehouse in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

Photo courtesy of Chicago Department of Planning and Development.

- ★ Fruit / Vegetable Processing
- Commercial Bakeries
- Dairy Processing
- Fish Processing
- Meat & Poultry Packing
- Soybean & Oilseed Processing
- Meat Byproduct
- ▲ Misc. Food
- TIF Districts
- Streets
- Rivers



3. MAKE CHICAGO THE HUB

Chicago can become the hub of a local and regional healthy food system that includes production, processing, and distribution. A 300% growth in the organic and all-natural sector of the food economy in the last 10 years alone offers numerous new opportunities for the city's existing processing and distribution infrastructure. Expanding upon and bringing new businesses of this type to Chicago can generate significant benefits in terms of jobs and taxes.

Grow the Food Business. The City of Chicago and the State of Illinois can help existing food businesses grow and attract new food businesses by marketing interest in local and organic food and providing subsidies for job creation. In July, 2006, the organic distributor Goodness Greeness received



HEART DISEASE: The American Heart Association recommends soy protein, which is naturally low in fat and cholesterol, to help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

MENOPAUSE: Women are turning to soy isoflavones to reduce hot flashes and other menopausal symptoms as a growing number of studies link hormone-replacement therapy to an increased risk for breast cancer, heart attacks and strokes.

OSTEOPOROSIS: Scientists at Purdue University are using a \$1.5 million grant to research the role of soy in preventing osteoporosis.

BREAST AND PROSTATE CANCER: The National Institutes of Health has provided \$4 million in research grants to study soy consumption and its impact on the prevention of breast cancer and prostate cancer as well as osteoporosis. Data suggest that eating soy reduces the risk of prostate cancer and that eating soy as a child or teen can reduce the risk of breast cancer.

KIDNEY PROBLEMS: Digesting protein from soy seems to be easier on the kidneys than animal protein, a finding of interest for diabetics and others who are susceptible to kidney problems.²²

THE VERSATILE AND EXTREMELY HEALTHY SOY BEAN



a \$45,000 AgriFIRST grant through the Illinois Department of Agriculture to fund a feasibility study to substantially expand their operation. The Chicago Department of Planning and Development has provided potential site locations within tax increment financing districts that may fit the company's expansion plans.

Convert existing facilities to all-natural and organic processing. Current facilities in Chicago could be used for all-natural and organic processing if separated in time and methods from traditional processing in the same facility. Surveys of existing processors would determine interest in such processing.





Linda and Vivian show off the organic produce they learned to grow and sell through the Chicago-based Growing Home program.

Photo courtesy of Growing Home.

4. IMPROVE ACCESS TO LOCALLY GROWN, HEALTHY FOOD AND VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS.

Identifying barriers to the distribution and sale of healthy food will help find ways to tear them down before they become an issue.

Increase the delivery of local and/or healthy food to Chicago's oldest residents. Meals provided to elderly Chicago residents offer opportunities for local and regional food producers. For example, the Chicago Department of Aging (DOA) serves 850,000 meals a year through congregant dining at 75 sites and 2.8 million "Meals on Wheels" a year. Locally grown, healthy meat and vegetables should definitely be on the menu. These and other urban programs that supply food to the needy are major markets for regional producers.

Place healthy, locally grown food in schools. Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) effort to improve the nutritional content of beverages and snacks at school vending machines already includes the creation of a CPS taskforce to Promote Healthy Eating and Smart Choices. Taskforce principles acknowledge that good nutrition is important to academic achievement and to overall health. With similar goals, *Eat Local ♣ Live Healthy* and the CPS taskforce are natural partners in the effort to increase the consumption of healthy food by the city's 425,000 public school students.

Historic and current Chicago markets.

Historic postcard images courtesy of David K. O'Neil Market Collection.



Improve the City of Chicago's Farmers Market System. The City of Chicago Departments of Planning and Development and Special Events are completing their analysis of the existing locations and structure of city farmers markets and the feasibility of an indoor, permanent market. The emerging concept is a "City of Markets" that would include a prominent downtown location to highlight the local food movement and Chicago's system of neighborhood markets stocked with local food for residents and managed by community and business associations.



Continue to attract new grocers. Recently the Department of Planning and Development provided financial assistance (TIF) and public land (former Chicago Transit Authority property) for the development of a 63,000 square-foot Food 4 Less grocery store in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood. The department continues to work with interested grocers to open food stores in the city through various programs including a grocery store expo.

AS PART OF A Chicago Public Schools (CPS) initiative, foods offered in more than 1,000 vending machines are being replaced with healthier alternatives. Rather than chips and donuts, students are finding fruits and healthy snacks. And instead of sugary drinks, students are being offered more fruit juices, sports drinks and water.

- Good nutrition is important to learning and academic achievement.
- Learning healthy eating habits is important to a student's quality of life and disease prevention.
- Schools and the school community play an important role in teaching healthy eating habits.
- Healthy eating is influenced by family, community and culture.

Meanwhile, the CPS taskforce to "Promote Healthy Eating and Smart Choices" is aiming for additional nutritional changes. Working with the Chicago-based Healthy Schools Campaign, the taskforce recognizes the following principles:

In addition, the taskforce is promoting "Coordinated School Health" as an important strategy for addressing a range of other issues, including increased physical and health education.²³

Students from Nettelhorst Elementary School sing the praises of fresh fruits and vegetables to their community. Cover of *Healthy Schools* – a publication of the Healthy Schools Campaign. Summer 2006: Student Wellness.





Through their FamilyFarmed.org website, EXPO, and label, Sustain encourages consumers and trade buyers to purchase food produced by local family farmers and processors. EXPO 2007 brought in over 3,000 attendees, double the amount of 2006, looking to connect with 120 farmer, food artisan, and sustainable business exhibitors from the Midwest. The FamilyFarmed.org website has been recognized nationally as a model for connecting regional farmers with markets.

Photo by Paul Natkin, courtesy of Sustain.



5. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public awareness of the availability and value of locally grown, healthy food is a critical ingredient for the success of *Eat Local ♣ Live Healthy's* vision. Public school students are learning healthy eating habits, but the greater city population needs more education. Only if large numbers of residents change their eating and buying habits can the Chicago area sustain a viable, for-profit food-growing community.

Coordinate messaging from the City of Chicago that encourages healthy eating through the consumption of fresh, local products.

The Chicago Department of Public Health is one agency that can improve the reach and effectiveness of marketing on behalf of local growers of healthy foods. Such efforts can deliver excellent results.

In 2005, Sustain created the FamilyFarmed.org website and label to encourage consumers to buy food produced by local family farmers and processors. Two thousand people also attended a Sustain exposition where 45 farmers exhibited products. As a result, 12 Chicago area supermarket chains and retailers announced their commitment to stock and sell food with the FamilyFarmed.org label.

CONCLUSION

Eat Local ♣ Live Healthy has concluded its planning and recommendation phase. The seeds for change have been sown. The group is ready to move toward implementation, with collaboration still its cornerstone. The City of Chicago will be one among many organizations that will take this effort forward. There are several models for collaborative work on regional issues in northeastern Illinois. Chicago Wilderness and Clean Air Counts are two examples. Growing healthy food and delivering it to consumers is another challenge for all of us to work on – for the health of each individual and for the health of the region.

ENDNOTES

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- 2 *Red Tomato Report to the Illinois Food and Community Funders Group – July 15, 2004*. The report was commissioned by the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, the Lumpkin Family Foundation, Liberty Prairie Foundation, the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, the Kraft Foods Foundation, and the Chicago Community Trust.
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- 22 *The Soy Overview for the City of Chicago*. Social Venture Consulting, LLC, Prepared for the Chicago Department of Planning and Development. 2005
- 23 *School Health Watch – The Newsletter of the Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign*. “Taking the Junk Out of Schools.” Healthy Schools Campaign. Summer 2004

Surrounded by concrete and steel, a fruitful garden plot in Grant Park proves that urban agriculture works.
Photo by Erika Allen, courtesy of Growing Power.



Resources

Chicago Botanic Garden. A public horticulture, education and science organization operated under the Forest Preserve District of Cook County that sponsors youth apprenticeship and school and community gardening projects.
<http://www.chicago-botanic.org/>

Delta Institute. A Chicago-based organization working in the Great Lakes Region to promote a healthy environment and sustainable community and economic development.
<http://www.delta-institute.org/>

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT). A consumer advocacy group promoting humane and sustainable on-farm management practices and broader economic opportunities for family farmers.
<http://204.200.206.238/>

The Land Connection. Cultivates healthy farms, food and communities by saving farmland, transitioning to organic production, training new farmers, and facilitating rural-urban links.
<http://www.thelandconnection.org/>

Greencorps. A Chicago Department of Environment program that provides horticultural instruction, training, materials and employment.
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/environment>

Growing Power. A Milwaukee-based organization that provides hands-on training for urban agriculture and related services such as food distribution networks for small farmers.
<http://www.growingpower.org/>

Growing Home. Provides job training and creates employment opportunities for homeless and low-income Chicagoans within the context of its organic agriculture business.
<http://www.growinghomeinc.org/>

Healthy Schools Campaign. Launched in 2002, the organization advocates for policies and model programs that allow students and staff to learn and work in a healthy school environment.
<http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/>

Openlands. A regional, Chicago-based open space organization that provides urban food growing assistance including testing soil for lead and analysis of regional farmland policy as it relates to farmland preservation.
<http://www.openlands.org/>

Sustain. Encourages environmentally sound economic development that creates jobs and revitalizes communities. A leader in efforts to build a regional food growing and distribution system in the Midwest.
<http://www.sustainusa.org>

University of Illinois Cooperative Extension. Supports urban farming through consultation with specialists in the fields of agriculture, community development, business management and marketing.
<http://www.extension.uiuc.edu>



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Map Notes and Sources

Page 4 - Map completed March 2005, by Jennifer Hampton, under the direction of Daniel Block, Associate Professor of Geography, Fred Blum Neighborhood Assistance Center, Department of Geography, Sociology, Economics and Anthropology, Chicago State University, for the Northeastern Illinois Food Security Assessment, funded by Searle Funds of the Chicago Community Trust.

Source: NIPC, Info USA & Company Websites, fall 2004

Page 5 - Version of a map prepared for the report, The Challenge to an Apple a Day: The Availability of Fresh Produce in Chicago Communities, prepared by the Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Food Systems Collaborative, Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security Assessment, Daniel Block, Associate Professor of Geography, Fred Blum Neighborhood Assistance Center, Department of Geography, Sociology, Economics and Anthropology, Chicago State University.

Page 7 - Farming on the Edge: Illinois State Map. American Farmland Trust.

Page 13 - United States Department of Agriculture National Agriculture Statistics Service. 2002 Census of Agriculture; Maps and Cartographic Resources; Agricultural Atlas of the United States: Maps Index. 02-M242 Vegetables, Acres Harvested for Sale: 2002 (choropleth map) and 02-M259 Total Acres of Land in Orchards: 2002 (choropleth map).

Page 15 - Figure 1: Regional Vision for 2040 This illustration shows how major centers, corridors, and green areas generally fit into the regional context.

Source: 2040 Regional Plan. Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, September 2005.

Page 18 - Chicago Department of Planning and Development

