



### 52<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

January 8, 2025 10:30 am – 12:00 pm  
Location: Fargo City Commission Chambers

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|----------|---|
| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome  |
|          | a. Welcome to New Food Commission Member Tim Flakoll, Cass County   |
|          | b. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda   |
|          | c. Review & Action on Minutes from November 13, 2024<br><b>(Attachment 1)</b>   |
|          | d. Approve Appointments of At-Large Members <b>(Attachment 2)</b>   |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Introductions – Chair Nesemeier   |
| 10:40 am | 3. Steering Committee Updates – Janice Tweet  |
| 10:50 am | 4. Urban Agriculture Framework – Anna Johnson <b>(Attachment 3)</b>   |
| 11:00 am | 5. Backyard Chickens Review – Adam Altenburg  |
| 11:10 am | 6. Great Plains Greens Presentation – Dylan Kallman   |
| 11:25 am | 7. Kudos & Community Recognition – Erika Franck <b>(Attachment 4)</b>   |
| 11:35 am | 8. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Nesemeier <b>(Attachment 5)</b>   |
| 11:40 am | 9. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates & Meeting Reflections – Chair Nesemeier                      |
| 11:45 am | 10. Future Meetings & Commission Action Steps   |
|          | a. Next Steering Committee Meeting – January 20, 2025, 1:00 pm<br>Metro COG – 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street N Suite 232, Fargo     |
|          | b. Next Action Network Newsletter – January 10, 2025  |
|          | c. Commission Meeting Schedule for 2025 <b>(Attachment 6)</b>   |
|          | d. Next Commission Meeting – March 12, 2025, 10:30 am<br>Fargo City Commission Chambers – 225 4 <sup>th</sup> Street N, Fargo |
| 11:50 am | 11. Adjournment   |

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Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Angela Brumbaugh at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at [www.cassclayfoodpartners.org](http://www.cassclayfoodpartners.org) and Metro COG's website at [www.fmmetrocog.org](http://www.fmmetrocog.org).

# Attachment 1

**51<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
November 13, 2024  
Fargo Commission Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair  
Jim Kapitan, Cass County Commission  
Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission  
Dave Steichen, Dilworth City Council  
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member  
Carin Engler, At-Large Member  
Jeff York, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission  
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)  
John Strand, Fargo City Commission  
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member  
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

**Others Present:**

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health  
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank  
Erika Franck, Clay County Planning and Zoning  
Eric Hegg, Global Refuge  
Anna Sather, Farm in the Dell  
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

**1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda**

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Zundel and seconded by Ms. Engler. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1b. Review and Action on Minutes from September 11, 2024**

A motion to approve the minutes for September 2024 was made by Mr. Kapitan and seconded by Mr. York. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**2. Commission Introductions**

Chair Nesemeier led the Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions.

**3. Zoning for Urban Agriculture Draft Blueprint**

Anna Johnson presented a draft blueprint on urban agriculture, with information related to zoning codes and their impact on the food system. She noted that, since zoning controls land use, many elements of the food system are impacted by zoning codes in one way or another. She noted ways communities can increase consumers' abilities to grow, process, and distribute their food locally including clearly defined agricultural terms, clarifying zones permitting urban

agriculture, allowing on-site sales, allowing small-animal husbandry, and allowing non-commercial production and accessory structures. She also noted the importance of community input processes that promote equity and access.

#### **4. Farm in the Dell**

Anna Sather, Executive Director of Farm in the Dell of the Red River Valley, presented information on the Farm in the Dell organization. She explained that the organization, located on a 25-acre plot north of Moorhead, serves people with developmental disabilities and works closely with local families and agencies to connect individuals with purposeful work. She stated that Garden Engineers, those who work at Farm in the Dell, are given fair wages in a non-competitive setting and tasks include planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, and packing CSA boxes. She also stated that Farm in the Dell hosts Table to Farm dinners, where community members come together to enjoy food and fellowship.

#### **5. Cass Clay Food Partners Strategic Plan**

Janice Tweet presented the final Cass Clay Food Partners Strategic Plan. She explained that, since May 2024, members of the Cass Clay Food Commission, the steering committee, and the new Food Action Network have been working on a new strategic plan. She stated that the plan aims to identify priorities and goals for the CCFP, how best to accomplish them, responsible parties, progress monitoring, and a timeline to measure success. She noted three overarching strategic priorities identified in the plan including: connections and governance, communication and education, and policies and practices. She also noted that the strategic plan includes a revised mission, vision, and new values to better reflect the current and future work of the CCFP.

A motion to approve the Cass Clay Food Partners Strategic Plan was made by Mr. Kapitan and seconded by Ms. Zundel. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

#### **6. Steering Committee Updates**

Chair Nesemeier asked if the steering committee had any updates. Ms. Tweet responded that she had no additional updates at this time

#### **7. Kudos and Community Recognition**

Mr. Beil recognized the work of the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition (CCHC), which represents over 30 agencies working collaboratively to support equitable access to food and end hunger in the region. He noted that the network works closely with a diverse network of hunger fighters working within schools, nutrition programs, businesses, healthcare partners, charitable feeding programs, community-led organizations, and other non-profits. He explained that the coalition also works to promote existing food resources and identify gaps in services, and its School Meal Repack Program reduces food waste by working with schools to repackage and distribute surplus meals to students and families in the community. He informed the Commission that nearly 100 people participated in CCHC's 7th Annual Hunger and Health Summit on October 17, an event which featured sessions from industry leaders on the social determinants of health, harm reduction, hunger on college campuses, and nutrition and public health.

Mr. Beil also recognized Folkways and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of the Red River Market. He noted that Folkways, a community-building and placemaking nonprofit, established the Red River Market in the spring of 2015 and that since its inception 10 years ago, the market has grown from 800 to 8,000 weekly attendees from early July to the end of October. He further noted that the Red River Market strives to support local farms and new and emerging food businesses, increase access to fresh, locally-grown produce, and create a sense of place where all are welcome.

### **8. Public Comment Opportunity**

Chair Nesemeier informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that members of the community may also submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

No additional public comments were made.

### **9. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates and Meeting Reflections**

Chair Nesemeier asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates or meeting reflections.

### **10. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps**

Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on January 8, 2025. She noted that the steering committee meetings in November and December would be moved up one week from their usual time, with the next one on November 18 rather than November 25. She also noted that the next Food Action Network monthly newsletter would be emailed on December 6 and that people could visit the Cass Clay Food Partners Facebook page to sign up to receive those.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 11:53 AM.



**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Adam Altenburg, Metro COG  
**Date:** January 3, 2025  
**Re:** *Approve Appointments of At-Large Commission Members*

In addition to members from each of the seven jurisdictions in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, there is provision for an additional five at-large members to serve on the Food Commission. It is the intent that at-large members bring additional and varied expertise to the Commission. At-large members are initially vetted by the Steering Committee before being brought to a voice vote by current sitting Commission members. Each at-large member serves a two-year term.

The Steering Committee recommends the reappointments of Carin Engler and Jeff York to additional two-year terms on the Commission.

**Requested Action:**

**Approve the reappointments of Carin Engler and Jeff York to the Food Commission.**



**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Anna Johnson, CAPLP  
**Date:** January 3, 2025  
**Re:** *Urban Agriculture Framework*

Since March 2015, the Cass Clay Food Partners has developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topics relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area. These documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of a local community issue.

Members of the CCFP have developed a new framework document with information regarding zoning practices, local ordinances, and urban agriculture. This framework is intended to be one of five historical pillar framework documents for the Cass Clay Food Partners to serve as a tool for evaluating existing documents.

Additional blueprints, snapshots, and issue briefs can be found at the links below:

<https://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/fargo-cass-public-health/health-promotion/cass-clay-food-partners/blueprints>

<https://www.fmmetrocog.org/resources/planning/food-commission>

**Requested Action:**  
**Approve the Urban Agriculture Framework.**



## Historical Pillar Framework: Urban Agriculture

Background information related to urban agriculture and its impact on the local food system

*Cass Clay Food Partners framework documents are not all-encompassing literature reviews but rather intended to provide education for Food Partners members on the historical pillars and serve as a tool for evaluating current documents. Appendices are included with resources and an overview of existing documents.*

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## Background

Local food is an expanding food system industry. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (2017), local food is food produced and transported less than 400 miles, or within the same state. According to the 2020 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), local food is a \$9 billion industry, up 3% from 2015 to 2020. North Dakota and Minnesota are in a region of seven Midwest states that contribute only 6% of the industry, indicating room for growth. Urban agriculture promotes local food by allowing city-dwellers to grow food within populated areas.

## Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is a growing aspect of local food in cities and communities across the United States. The USDA recently developed The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and defines urban agriculture as small-scale producers that use community farms and gardens, rooftop, indoor, and vertical farms, and hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities to grow, process, and sell agricultural products (Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production, n.d.). The Environmental Protection Agency (2024) is another organization committed to urban agriculture, defining it as including:

- community gardens,
- larger scale urban farms or orchards,
- growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, and spices for market,
- raising chickens or livestock,
- keeping bees, and
- growing flowers and non-food crops for landscaping and other uses.

In addition to urban agriculture, peri-urban agriculture is also defined as spaces around the boundaries of cities, but this topic is limited in this paper (Santo et al., 2016).

Despite the growth and excitement around urban agriculture, equal attention should be given to the limitations and benefits. Santo and colleagues (2016), completed a review of the pros and cons of urban agriculture, indicating the social, health, environmental, and economic benefits are often touted; however, these can be overstated as research is limited and typically focuses on a singular topic, with community gardens being a frequent source of attention (Santo et al., 2016). Inappropriate focus on the benefits can cause resources to be misallocated. Additionally, “if urban agriculture does not live up to its promises, it may lose the cultural and political support necessary to sustain the benefits it

can offer” (Santo et al., 2016). Using the review by Santo and colleagues (2016), the benefits and limitations of urban agriculture will be discussed next.

Urban agriculture benefits individuals and communities. Connection is a community and individual-level benefit, improving well-being and civic engagement while promoting links between diverse individuals and cultural sharing (Santo et al., 2016). Gardening increases physical activity, improves mental health, and supplements nutrition; access to produce and cost savings on groceries provide additional health benefits when considering the social determinants of health. Shared agricultural efforts increase property value by developing a visually appealing, intergenerational communal space for relationship-building and learning. Community spaces provide a sense of security with safe, alternative opportunities for young children. Urban agriculture provides learning and training in science, nutrition, culture, leadership, project management, marketing, job skills, personal responsibility, and more. Green spaces offer ecosystem benefits with downstream improvements for individuals such as filtering airborne pollutants, reducing emissions, sequestering carbon, temperature moderation, reducing stormwater runoff, and supporting biodiversity. It provides an opportunity for landfill reduction through composting and reuse of wastewater, heat, and other organic waste; however, much of this research is theoretical. Decreasing the need for food by air transport might be the largest environmental impact. Supporters also tout the potential to provide capital and jobs. The well-rounded list of benefits demonstrates the reasoning for the growing interest.

Co-existing limitations complicate urban agriculture efforts, especially in marginalized neighborhoods. Within the social realm, external organizations or people, frequently of majority backgrounds (white, young, middle class) differing from the community, lead urban agriculture efforts (Santo et al., 2016). When communities try to self-start efforts, they often have trouble accessing land, funding, and support with technical assistance and jobs adding costs. With this, some research suggests urban agriculture efforts “uphold rather than resist the political and economic system that created the structural inequities, racism, and other issues they seek to address” (Santo et al., 2016). Gaps in the literature exist on urban farms and their impact on sustainability and biodiversity. Fertilizer and composting use within the city could pollute surface water or storm-water runoff and the smaller-scale urban operations may be less efficient, creating increased emissions, with marginalized communities at the highest risk of health consequences. If urban agriculture continues to scale up, some experts argue that it will increase the sprawl of cities, leading to increased driving emissions; however, it is unlikely to result in less land and other inputs needed for rural production. Research does not show a significant overall effect on community-level food security or diet improvements with

growers often selling food to external high-end markets to turn a profit. Economically, increased property values may lead to the gentrification of neighborhoods, and provided jobs might not be of a livable wage. In addition, green spaces in cities are vulnerable to development and may not have long-term staying power. Efforts require political and financial support to gain and maintain traction, with the most successful efforts being non-profits with external donations and volunteer labor. Limitations, including research gaps, must be presented and considered when discussing urban agriculture, especially when allocating resources.

Despite the growing interest in urban agriculture, additional research is needed to fill gaps and create a more robust set of information on which to market the industry. Those looking to implement or improve access to urban agriculture should be prepared to discuss the limitations and the benefits to be realistic about potential outcomes and stressors. To overcome the limitations, one area jurisdictions can use to support urban agriculture efforts by increasing accessibility is through zoning.

## Zoning

Many cities have comprehensive land-use plans that guide long-term development; zoning is a tool used to carry them out (Phelps & Turner, 2024, as cited in Tess et al., 2020). Local government typically dictates zoning codes, with each community having a unique code as they provide order to city development and designate police powers (Millman Land, 2024; Santo et al., 2016). Zoning designates residential neighborhoods, commercial development, industrial use, agriculture, natural resources, and more (Millman Land, 2024). Zoning has permitted uses and conditional uses; all other uses not indicated are prohibited (Haines, 2018). Permitted uses are those that are allowed outright, without the need for approval (Phelps & Turner, 2024). Conditional uses require approval, often with additional compliance regulations such as permits, setbacks, or a documented plan. Zoning also indicates how the use can be carried out, such as specifying the size or number of buildings (Millman Land, 2024; Haines, 2018).

Zoning dates back to colonization; throughout history, zoning impacted safety, sanitation, and separation (Metzenbaum, 1957). An article by James Metzenbaum (1957) indicated the first zoning-type regulation was due to fires of settlers' wooden houses when England declared that houses of a certain size must be stone or brick. Once the United States declared its independence, traces of zoning can be seen in regulations on gunpowder storage and tenement housing. Sanitation, nuisance-related laws, and safety laws for manufacturing in cities followed with some leading to court cases arguing citizens loss of rights. In the 1920s, two acts, the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act and the

Standard City Planning Enabling Act, provided the structure and foundation of zoning (American Planning Association, n.d.).

Zoning can lead to inequities due to its broad impact and complexity. Following the end of slavery, county officials and professionals used zoning to segregate neighborhoods and can be connected to the suburban sprawl of car-dependent, single-family households, furthering inequities (Haines, 2018; Metzenbaum, 1957). The volume of local governments demonstrates zoning complexity; in a sample of Wisconsin communities, a seven-county area contained 211 local governments with independent zoning codes (Haines, 2018). The density of the zoning code can benefit developers whose responsibility it is to know and understand the codes rather than individuals in the community (Haines, 2018). Zoning codes are often changed without public hearing or little notice, limiting the opportunity for citizens to share their opinions (Metzenbaum, 1957).

## Urban Agriculture and Local Ordinances

According to Feldstein of the Maine Law Review, “everything that happens with our food system involves land use in some way” (Feldstein, 2013). Zoning controls the use of the land, therefore impacting the food that can be produced, processed, sold, distributed, and accessed on that land. Zoning ordinances on urban agriculture often include information on setbacks, hours of operation, structures, and nuisance controls (Feldstein, 2014; Haines, 2018). Table 1 indicates urban agricultural areas of the food system that zoning codes impact.

Table 1: Urban Agriculture, Food Systems, Zoning/Policy (Haines, 2018)

<b>Food System Element</b>	<b>Activity Permitted or Restricted by Zoning</b>
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Animal husbandry</li> <li>● Community Garden</li> <li>● Urban Farms</li> <li>● Farming on Vacant Lots</li> <li>● Gardening, including Front-Yard Gardening</li> <li>● Season Extenders, including Greenhouses</li> <li>● Hydroponics, Aquaculture, Aquaponics</li> <li>● Raising Chickens</li> <li>● Keeping of Goats</li> <li>● Beekeeping</li> <li>● Market Gardens</li> </ul>
Processing	None are directly related to urban agriculture, but processors may choose to grow products for a bakery, brewery, distillery, or winery.

Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSA Drop Sites</li> <li>• Distribution of local foods – trucks/traffic in urban areas</li> </ul>
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers Markets</li> <li>• Food and Related Goods Sales</li> <li>• Direct-to-Consumer Sales</li> <li>• CSA Drop Sites</li> <li>• Farm Stands</li> </ul>
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composting</li> </ul>

Haines (2018) stated that “zoning is one of many local policy tools and a recognized way to support or hinder the local food system.” Other local policies can also impact the food system, widening the system's support for urban agriculture, with some jurisdictions including city ordinances on various urban agriculture ventures. Just as each jurisdiction is unique in its policies on urban agriculture, each producer is unique in their efforts; however, many general resources exist for urban agriculture and local zoning or policies, which can be found in Appendix A.

Policy and zoning are ubiquitous across the food system and can affect the ability to create a sustainable, thriving, and inclusive food system for all. Policies limiting urban agriculture exist for many reasons, often unintentionally (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Education for policymakers and residents on ordinances impacting urban agriculture can create an environment where residents can easily grow, purchase, and distribute food locally. The following sections detail ways communities can increase consumer ability to participate in urban agriculture-related activities.

### Clarifying Urban Agriculture in Policy

Clarification begins with clearly defining terms to support knowledge of what is allowed and prevents fear of misinterpreting the code (Phelps & Turner, 2024). Defining words is common practice in zoning, municipal codes, and ordinances, but including agriculture-specific terms is less common.

Jurisdictions can work to include permitted or conditionally permitted urban agriculture activities in zoning codes in an easy-to-understand way (Phelps & Turner, 2024). As jurisdictions typically do not permit activity not included in zoning codes, this can increase consumer ability and confidence to grow, process, and distribute local food. Clarifying agricultural uses in policy can be done through a permitted use table, including clear section titles, development of an overlay zone, and creating urban agriculture districts. Urban agriculture districts (UADs) are a new zoning practice designating land in urban areas for agriculture, providing protection for land use (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). These



codes limit the ability of the land to be converted to other uses by limiting permissibility, which often happens when property values increase. To use UAD land for a different use would require changing the code. UAD land is designated for production; however, processing and other urban agricultural uses discussed in the next section can explicitly be stated as permitted if a community chooses. Resources for urban agriculture as a permitted activity in zoning are included in Appendix A.

## Allowing Activity Related to Urban Agriculture

Policy can be updated to promote urban agriculture in the areas of accessory structures, gardening, onsite sales, and animal husbandry. Historical codes typically limit these areas to promote aesthetics and safety and minimize nuisance concerns. As urban agriculture becomes more common and in demand by communities, jurisdictions can add or edit codes to increase accessibility, being mindful to address concerns. Resources on these topics can be found in Appendix A.

Accessory structures are frequently needed to support urban agriculture. Accessory structures needed for urban agriculture may include sheds, low tunnels, high tunnels, hoophouses, greenhouses, cold frames, farm stands, composting bins, and fencing (Phelps & Turner, 2024; Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Aesthetics, pests, and structure safety are cited as concerns (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). The Cass Clay Food Partners has an existing blueprint document on backyard season extenders addressing aspects of this topic, found in Appendix A, in addition to other resources.

Zoning often limits where food crops can be grown. Adding language into zoning codes increasing where food can be grown allows urban growers to take advantage of areas such as front or side yards, boulevards, or public lands with a community garden (Phelps & Turner, 2024; Vaage & Taylor, 2020). These areas may provide more space or be more suitable for growing. For example, front and side yards may be less shady than backyards (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Concerns over growing in less traditional areas include visibility for pedestrians and vehicle traffic, but more often relates to aesthetics (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Community plots provide another opportunity for gardening, especially for those without the ability to grow independently. Similarly, market gardens, often on community plots, have the added implication that produce is grown for the primary purpose of being sold (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Land used for these shared endeavors can be public or private. As community and market gardens are often larger and on different types of land than a personal garden, policy often addresses these activities independently. Additionally, urban farms fall into similar policy language, as an operation using more traditional farming methods (including equipment and pesticides) in an urban area. Policy

on gardening, often in the zoning code, typically addresses the amount of land used, the number of people participating, equipment and chemicals allowed, accessory structures, and on-site sales. It typically specifies where and how plants can be grown by including ordinances for setbacks, plant height, or type of plant. Some jurisdictions may allow edible plants as part of a landscaping policy and others have specific policies on gardening in less conventional locations. Additionally, some jurisdictions address gardening at home as a business, such as in Harrisburg, Virginia (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). The Cass Clay Food Partners blueprints on gardening and community gardens, in addition to other resources, are linked in Appendix A.

Jurisdictions looking to add on-site sale language may consider the type or amount of sales to allow, restrictions on sales, or if a permit will be required (Phelps & Turner, 2024). On-site sales promote urban agriculture activities; however, on-site sales cross into other historical pillars. On-site sales policies to promote urban agriculture activities is most often seen in allowance or conditional allowance of community-supported agriculture (CSA) distributions, farm stands, market gardens, and community gardens (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). CSA distributions typically occur at drop sites and pick-up locations but can be limited by ordinances about sales. Farm stands are often temporary structures selling produce or value-added products at the growing site. Community and market gardens may wish to sell produce directly onsite to offset production costs and decrease expenses for another space. While decreasing barriers for producers for onsite sales, concerns exist over traffic, noise, parking, and competition with food retailers.

Animal husbandry provides urban farmers and residents with local and affordable animal products such as milk, eggs, fish, and honey (Phelps & Turner, 2024; Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Zoning codes that address urban animal husbandry typically specify the number and type of animals, space required, and regulations to decrease nuisance issues. Each animal creates unique benefits and concerns, often leading to separate policy language for each.

Urban beekeeping provides the potential for pollination in cities, a critical need in urban green spaces (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Providing bees with shade, wind protection, water, and pollinator plants prevents many of the concerns of stinging and swarming. Policies often include regulations on the size of the lot, the number of hives, setbacks, water sources, and flyaway barriers or fences. Many cities address urban beekeeping in policy. The Cass Clay Food Partners has a blueprint document on backyard beekeeping referenced in Appendix A.



Keeping chickens in urban areas is another commonly addressed regulation in cities across the United States. Common concerns include noise, smell, sanitation, and pests, which can be minimized with proper care, and often addressed in policy (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Urban chickens require a structure for shelter, some space to roam, light (sunlight or artificial), food, water, and a method to remove waste. Regulations often include a permit process, the number of chickens, space required, setbacks, coop requirements, and fencing, with some policies allowing a certain number of birds without a permit. Additional information can be found in the Cass Clay Food Partners backyard chicken document linked in Appendix A.

A less common form of animal husbandry is keeping goats, which can provide milk, fiber, meat, and companionship (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Goats can also be brought in temporarily to remove vegetation. Goats require more space, and smaller breeds are best in urban areas. Odor, noise, and visual appeal are concerns with goats and should be addressed in policy.

Hydroponics, aquaculture, and aquaponics tie animal husbandry, crop growing, and accessory structures together. Hydroponics refers to growing plants in water, clay, gravel, or sand instead of soil (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Raising fish in a controlled environment is termed aquaculture and can be conducted indoors or outdoors. Aquaponics combines hydroponic and aquaculture efforts. A variety of systems and methods are used for these ventures. In cold weather climates, this is typically done by creating an indoor system, which may require an accessory structure.

When gardening or keeping animals, composting can help decrease landfill waste. Compost concerns relate to aesthetics, pests, and odor, which can often be managed with appropriate methods. The Cass Clay Food Partners has backyard and municipal composting blueprints, which are sourced in Appendix A.

## Promoting Equity in Urban Agriculture

With historical roots impacting marginalized populations, equity should be kept at the forefront of urban agriculture and policy efforts. When considering policy, some jurisdictions include a goal of equity in their land management plans or zoning policies (Phelps & Turner, 2024). Communication and land access are two areas that can impact equity in urban agriculture. Creating clear processes that all community members can understand and opportunities for everyone to access land makes these endeavors more accessible.



## Communication

Urban agriculture is a complex topic and communities can make it more accessible with clear information sharing and resources. In many communities, local Extension offices, area non-profit groups, or jurisdictions may share urban agriculture resources, including information on how to implement practices addressed in policy. Resources on urban agriculture policies are significant for increasing access when added barriers such as permits or extensive site plans are involved, which can create confusion and deter under-resourced efforts (Phelps & Turner, 2024). Information should be shared in an accessible way following low literacy guidelines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health, linked in Appendix A, have digital and written communication resources for low-literacy audiences.

Including diverse representation in conversations and decisions regarding urban agriculture is another way to support efforts equitably. As stated in the background, urban agriculture efforts are frequently led by people of majority demographics while minority groups struggle for support (Santo et al., 2016). Efforts to include diverse backgrounds may help support a variety of efforts in a community. A simple community engagement process can engage more people in decision-making (Phelps & Turner, 2024). This process should be easily accessible, following low-literacy guidelines, and translated to languages frequently spoken in the community.

## Access

Increasing access through zoning is one step in promoting equity, but additional considerations must be made to ensure diverse representation at all levels of urban agriculture efforts. With access to land as a barrier for many, communities have developed strategies to support under-resourced individuals and groups. Support could include “granting long-term leases, incorporating them into public park infrastructure, or supporting the use of land trusts to secure garden locations” (Santo et al., 2016). Some communities use tax incentives to promote access. This is often done at the state level and resources for some states with this program are noted in the resources in Appendix A.

Communities can promote access through vacant lot use. “Zoning acts as a barrier to gardening on vacant lots when agricultural activities are not allowed as principal permitted uses on lots in residential or commercial zones” (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). Zoning codes must first be written to increase gardening potential on vacant lots and then they can be used to promote access to urban agriculture. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania promotes equity and access through their work with vacant lot use (Phelps & Turner, 2024). To promote access, they have created an Adopt-A-Lot program, combining policy and

resources to provide residents with access to city-owned lots for gardens. The program, linked in Appendix A, begins with a simple intake and includes an application, soil testing, and pathways to long-term access and use. Accompanying the program, city staff developed a Vacant Lot Toolkit. The Vacant Lot Toolkit provides guidance for those wishing to participate in the Adopt-A-Lot program. The combined program and toolkit create an accessible and inclusive system.

Cleveland, Ohio has vibrant urban agriculture efforts on vacant lots through development of the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone (Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation, 2018). The Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone is an initiative supported by Ohio State Extension, the City of Cleveland, and other local organizations. The 26.5-acre area that various urban farms occupy aims to decrease local food waste through a composting program, increase access to food, reduce energy costs, improve health, and promote economic development. Supporting organizations provide land and technical support and promote agricultural practices.

Communities should consider access based on the requirements in the policy. Ordinances requiring large setbacks, such as those that often exist with chicken, honeybee, and front yard gardening, prevent those living on smaller lots from participating (Vaage & Taylor, 2020). When large lot sizes are required for policies such as chickens or honeybees, communities should evaluate how many lots permit the activity. Instead of requiring large lot sizes, other regulations, such as a source of water or flyaway barrier for honeybees, may make urban agriculture ventures more feasible and accessible for urban residents.

## Recommended Next Steps

This framework can be used to update, assess, and revise blueprints, snapshots, and issue brief documents relating to urban agriculture, with the promotion of equity and best practices at the core of this process. In addition to updating current documents, the framework can support the identification of gaps in current documents where additional documents can be developed. Table 1 can be used to assess documents under this pillar to update or gaps where new documents may be created, although this may not be an all-encompassing list. Using the topics from Table 1, a matrix of Cass Clay Food Partners documents and gaps was developed and included in Appendix B; however, some topics were excluded for better fit under other historical pillars. Existing documents to revise under the urban agriculture pillar include, backyard chicken keeping, backyard composting, backyard season extenders, backyard beekeeping/pollinator habitats,

community gardens, composting, and residential gardening, although additional documents may touch on aspects of urban agriculture. Using Table 1, potential remaining topics to address may include urban farms, farming on vacant lots, hydroponics, aquaculture, aquaponics, keeping of goats, CSA drop sites, and other onsite sale opportunities. The historical pillar framework on urban agriculture educates internal and external stakeholders on this aspect of the local food system. Through this education, additional support for document revision and creation can be garnered.

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Vaage & Taylor. (2020, March). Municipal zoning for local foods in Iowa: a guidebook for reducing local regulatory barriers to local foods. Retrieved December 5, 2024, from <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/Municipal-Zoning-for-Local-Foods-in-Iowa-A-Guidebook-for-Reducing-Local-Regulatory-Barriers-to-Local-Foods>

# Appendix A: Urban Agriculture Resources

## General Resources

American Planning Association, Urban Agriculture Knowledge Base Collection:

<https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/urbanagriculture/>

Cass Clay Food Partners, Food System Blueprints:

<https://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/fargo-cass-public-health/health-promotion/cass-clay-food-partners/blueprints>

Healthy Food Project, Zoning for Urban Agriculture: A Guide for Updating Your Community's Laws to Support Healthy Food Production and Access:

<https://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/key-issues/zoning-for-urban-agriculture>

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Municipal Zoning for Local Foods in Iowa: A Guidebook for Reducing Local Regulatory Barriers to Local Foods:

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/Municipal-Zoning-for-Local-Foods-in-Iowa-A-Guidebook-for-Reducing-Local-Regulatory-Barriers-to-Local-Foods>

University of Maryland Extension, What is Urban Agriculture? Examples from Maryland and Beyond: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/what-urban-agriculture-fs-1169/>

## Clarifying Urban Agriculture in Policy Resources

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Food Security Plan (Agricultural districts referenced in Appendix D, page 6): <https://www.pvpc.org/plans/pioneer-valley-food-security-plan>

Center for Land Use Education, Planning Implementation Tools Overlay Zoning:

<https://perma.cc/6KCN-SW8S>

Michigan State University MSU Extension, Overlay Zoning Districts can be a Valuable Tool:

<https://perma.cc/Q73H-7RCP>

Sustainable Development Code, Agricultural Overlay Zoning:

<https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/agricultural-overlay-zoning/>

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Understanding Agrihoods: An Exploration into the Growing Trend of Farm-to-Table Communities Across the United States by Benjamin

Breger: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/entities/publication/9c74b315-fc6e-443e-a418-e468c6b005ae>

## Urban Agriculture Activity Resources

American Planning Association, Knowledgebase Collection on Urban Livestock:

<https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/urbanlivestock/#:~:text=With%20interest%20in%20food%20security,various%20geographic%20and%20demographic%20characteristics>

City of Sioux Falls, Urban Livestock: [https://www.siouxfalls.gov/health-safety/animal-control/urban-](https://www.siouxfalls.gov/health-safety/animal-control/urban-livestock#:~:text=The%20City%20allows%20a%20person,are%20allowed%20in%20city%20limits)

[livestock#:~:text=The%20City%20allows%20a%20person,are%20allowed%20in%20city%20limits](https://www.siouxfalls.gov/health-safety/animal-control/urban-livestock#:~:text=The%20City%20allows%20a%20person,are%20allowed%20in%20city%20limits)

North Dakota Department of Agriculture, Information for Beekeepers:

<https://www.ndda.nd.gov/divisions/plant-industries/apiary-honey-bees/information-beekeepers>

Sustainable Development Code, Commercial Sales of Food Produced On Site in Urban and Suburban Areas: <https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/commercial-sales-of-food-produced-on-site-in-urban-and-suburban-areas/>

Sustainable Development Code, Edible Front Yard Gardening in Residential Districts:

<https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/front-yard-gardening-in-residential-districts/>

## Equity Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Literacy Guidance and Tools:

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/develop-materials/guidance-standards.html>

National Institutes of Health Office of Communications and Public Liaison, Clear Communication:

<https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/clear-simple>

City of Pittsburgh, Vacant Lot Toolkit and Adopt-A-Lot Program:

<https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Business-Development/Planning/Planning-Programs/Adopt-A-Lot/Vacant-Lot-Toolkit>

Arizona State University Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation, Cleveland, Ohio:

urban agriculture innovation zone: <https://sustainability-innovation.asu.edu/urbanresilience/2018/11/cleveland-ohio-urban-agriculture-innovation-zone/>

Urban Agriculture UCANR, San Francisco Establishes California's First Urban Agriculture

Incentive Zone: <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=15017>

Minnesota Department of Revenue, Agricultural Preserve Credit:

<https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/agricultural-preserve-credit>

Missouri Department of Agriculture, Urban Farm Investment Tax Credit Program:

<https://agriculture.mo.gov/abd/financial/urban-farm.php>

UCLA, Implementing the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act:

<https://sustainablela.ucla.edu/research-portal/project/implementing-urban-agriculture-incentive-zones-act>



## Appendix B: Urban Agriculture and Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Matrix

	<b>Blueprint</b>	<b>Issue Brief</b>	<b>Snapshot</b>	<b>Misc. Documents</b>
<b>Community &amp; Market Gardens</b>	Community Garden Blueprint developed in 2015	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Urban Farms</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Vacant Lot Agricultural Use</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Gardening, including Front Yard</b>	Residential Gardening Blueprint amended in 2020	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Accessory Structures/Season Extenders</b>	Blueprint on Backyard Season Extenders amended in June 2020, other accessory structures not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Hydroponics, Aquaculture, Aquaponics</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Raising Chickens</b>	Backyard Chickens Blueprint amended June 2020	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Keeping of Goats</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Beekeeping</b>	Backyard Beekeeping Blueprint amended November 2023	Not addressed	Pollinator Habitats Snapshot developed April 2019	Not addressed
<b>Urban Agriculture in Business Districts (Businesses growing their own food onsite)</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>CSA Drop Sites</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Onsite Sales</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Farm Stands</b>	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed
<b>Composting</b>	Backyard Composting Blueprint amended June 2020 & Municipal and Commercial Composting Blueprint developed January 2017	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not addressed



**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Erika Franck, Clay County Planning & Zoning  
**Date:** December 31, 2024  
**Re:** *Kudos and Community Recognition*

Since May 2022, the Cass Clay Food Commission has highlighted individuals and organizations for their work in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area and the broader community. This includes awards and recognitions as well as state and local initiatives that support food systems and the values of the Commission.

In January 2025, the Steering Committee would like to recognize the following:

1. Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton school's "share cart" program helps reduce food waste by allowing students to share unwanted or unfinished food with others. Students can place unopened, prepackaged, shelf-stable items, like granola bars and crackers, on the cart, as well as fruits with intact skins and temperature-controlled items like milk and string cheese. This initiative is part of a broader effort to combat food waste in Minnesota, where public schools generate nearly 500,000 pounds of waste daily. The program not only helps reduce waste but also provides food for students who may need it.

<https://www.inforum.com/news/minnesota/schools-share-cart-program-cuts-food-waste-helps-students>

**Requested Action:**  
**None.**



**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Heather Nesemeier, Chair  
**Date:** January 3, 2025  
**Re:** *Public Comment Opportunity*

The public comment opportunity is an open forum for the public to provide comments about specific items on this meeting's agenda, as well as any other issues that may pertain to food systems policies or programs. Members of the public may also submit comments online through the comment form link sent out with the meeting's agenda and packet. People may sign up to receive notices about the Cass Clay Food Commission at <http://fmmetrocog.org/get-involved>.

Comments to the Cass Clay Food Commission will be limited to two minutes per individual or at the discretion of the Commission Chair.

**Requested Action:**  
**None.**



**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Heather Nesemeier, Chair  
**Date:** January 3, 2025  
**Re:** *Commission Meeting Schedule for 2025*

The following is the bi-monthly meeting schedule for the Cass Clay Food Commission in 2025. Meetings occur on the second Wednesday from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM in the Fargo City Commission Chambers.

- **January 6**
- **March 12**
- **May 14**
- **\*Summer Break\***
- **September 10**
- **November 12**

**Requested Action:**  
**None.**