

September 2016

Local Foods, Local Places

A Community-Driven Action Plan for
Palmer, AK

A technical assistance program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation, Appalachian Regional Commission, Delta Regional Authority, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Local Foods, Local Places: Palmer

Community Story

Palmer is a community of approximately 7,000 people within the Matanuska-Susitna (“Mat-Su”) Borough of Alaska. Located less than an hour northeast from Anchorage, Palmer and the Mat-Su Valley are the most productive agricultural areas of Alaska, producing what is estimated to be \$32 million per year of commercial agricultural product. With a short but intense growing season, the Mat-Su area is famed for enormous vegetables such as huge cabbages, pumpkins, and zucchini. These vegetables are displayed annually at the Alaska State Fair held in Palmer and have won several state and world records. The soil composition and cool nights make carrots that are up to eight times sweeter than those grown elsewhere.



Grow Palmer has established edible garden beds and planters throughout downtown.¹

Palmer’s history is agricultural, established in the 1930s by the U.S. government as a Colony. Original Colony families were recruited from the Midwest of the continental U.S. to come homestead and farm the rich soils. The Class 2 soils in the valley can be as deep as 10 feet, owing to the confluence of water and glacial systems that has made this valley exceptionally fertile. It is also an area rich in wild local food resources including berries, moose and other

¹ Note: Credit for all photos goes to Erica Heller, Progressive Urban Management Associates, and Chris Freda, Sasaki.

Prominent commercial crops in the Mat-Su include potatoes, carrots, broccoli, cabbage and onions. Root crops, which travel and keep relatively well, are available in Alaska year-round. In season, many other vegetables are grown for the Alaska market including lettuces, zucchini, swiss chard, spinach, potatoes, kohlrabi, herbs, beets, fennel, raspberries and apples. Some farmers also grow tomatoes, basil, and other warmer weather vegetables in hoop houses. Other local farmed products include eggs, beef, lamb, pork, bison, elk, barley, wheat and dairy.





Assets

Palmer has a number of assets to build on for advancing placemaking, economy, and accessibility of local foods. Palmer has two weekly markets: The Monday Market and the Friday Fling. The Monday Market is primarily focused on food, while the Friday Fling has more of a craft, music, and entertainment focus, but does include some food vendors. Several of the Valley growers offer weekly farm stand hours where they sell to the local community, and many sell direct to local restaurant buyers at the farm.

Some of the downtown Palmer restaurants and vendors source foods locally and incorporate them in the menu, such as Turkey Red and The Palmer Alehouse. Some of them began doing this under a Restaurant Rewards state incentive program, and have continued to do so even since the funding for this program ceased. Generally, the restaurants may display a plaque in the lobby indicating they do some local sourcing, but do not indicate by menu item which foods are sourced locally. There are many reasons for this, including that while they may source locally during the growing season, they also use non-local foods for the same items during the balance of the year.



Grow Palmer has established edible garden beds and planters throughout downtown.

Grow Palmer is a local organization that has established garden beds and planters throughout downtown and filled them each year with edible plants that are free for anyone to harvest. This includes planters and other public garden beds. Most recently, Grow Palmer completed the first phase of an edible rail trail, placing 40 planters along the end of a regional bike trail that parallels an old rail bed. The project connects local food to active



living. Funding has been secured to double its size, which will be completed in 2017. The trail ends at the Palmer Depot, a community center where the Monday Market is hosted.



Historical and agricultural signage contributes to Palmer's tourism.

Palmer has agritourism assets. Within downtown are interpretive plaques telling the history of the Original Colony. The Alaska State Fairground is located in Palmer, and is widely cited in visitor materials as a reason to visit the Mat-Su Valley. Occurring for twelve days per year in late August through Labor Day weekend in September, it attracts people from all over Alaska as well as out of state visitors. Year-round, the Palmer Visitors Center highlights the productivity of the valley, with public art showing the astounding size of some of the prizewinning vegetables, and during the summer months, a demonstration garden. Anytime, visitors can self-drive through the beautiful countryside and see the rows of vegetables growing. There are no farms that host visitors on a daily or drop-in basis, but in 2016, a local Palmer resident began a business called Alaska Farm Tours that has begun to offer tours to farms in the Valley.

Challenges

Although a wide range of crops are grown in Mat-Su Valley, even in summer most of the produce that is readily available to residents is imported. Although two of the three local grocers regularly carry local milk, carrots, potatoes, lettuce, and kale, they carry few of the other products. There are a number of challenges that make this so. For one, the grocers look for steady, reliable, sources for each product such as their consolidated distributors.



With a short growing and harvest season for each local product, many local products - such as zucchini - are only harvested locally for a few weeks per year. Grocers do not typically switch their buying pattern for that short term.

In addition, many of the products grown locally are grown on a small scale, and thus are only available at farmers markets and farm stands or through pre-paid shares. Many local residents are not aware of where and when these venues are open or what products are available at them on a particular day, and do not regularly patronize the local venues. Also, local producers find it more profitable to take market goods to farmers markets in Anchorage, where the greater number of patrons increases sales per hour/day compared to Palmer venues. Locals state that the Palmer Monday Market, which features local foods, is not very visible or well attended. This discourages local producers from making the investment of time and resources in participating.

Finally, many small-scale producers are at maximum capacity, and there are a limited number of small-scale farms. While the production farms are shipping significant quantities of the main crops throughout the state, there is still not enough market produce being grown for local/Alaskan consumption. They would need evidence of demand in Palmer at prices equal or better to what other customers will pay in order to keep more of the product local, or to produce more than current levels. Additional infrastructure, such as cold storage, could potentially alleviate some of the risk of over-production, as farmers take on a substantial financial risk producing for an unpredictable market.

There are significant barriers to starting up more small-scale farms in the Mat-Su Valley. Some of the most fertile agricultural lands are being converted to subdivisions as growth in Anchorage pushes more residents to Palmer, and some aging farmers are seeking to “cash out” of farming through land sales. Designated Mat-Su Borough agricultural land sales are a minimum of 40 acres, more than most new farmers can afford. Identifying and addressing these barriers will be key to growing a small-scale farm community in the Mat-Su Borough. While there are local restaurants in Palmer that source foods locally, some of them need the produce prepared due to preference, labor availability, and space constraints. For example, local restaurateurs report they lack the space to wash and chop lettuce, preferring to have it delivered pre-prepared. Local producers state they also lack the labor or desire to be involved in the food preparation business, preferring to sell lettuce to wholesalers and



retailers of whole product, rather than take up the processing, which comes with food safety requirements and regulations.

There is a desire to grow awareness and make Palmer a destination for local foods. Palmer is well known in Alaska as a farming region, but is not necessarily understood as a place to go sample and enjoy local food. Local restaurants do not prominently display the use of local foods in their marketing or menus, and are not included in statewide dining guides. The area and its history is not especially well known outside of Alaska. Despite the fact that data shows agritourism as a growing area in the travel industry, Alaska visitor materials make little mention of Agritourism opportunities in Palmer other than the State Fair, which happens only twelve days per year.



Better connections are needed between producers, retailers, and restaurants.



In Downtown Palmer, connections among local foods assets and between local foods and other healthy living assets could be improved. Palmer has limited public transportation. Missing sidewalk segments, crosswalks, and a disconnect between the biking and walking trails and downtown hinder easy movement between residential areas, schools and businesses.

Project Assistance

In 2015, Grow Palmer, a local group organized to provide public food gardens in Palmer requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for achieving its vision. The program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA). Implementing the actions described later in this plan can bring several benefits to the community including:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- A revitalized downtown that is the economic anchor of the community.

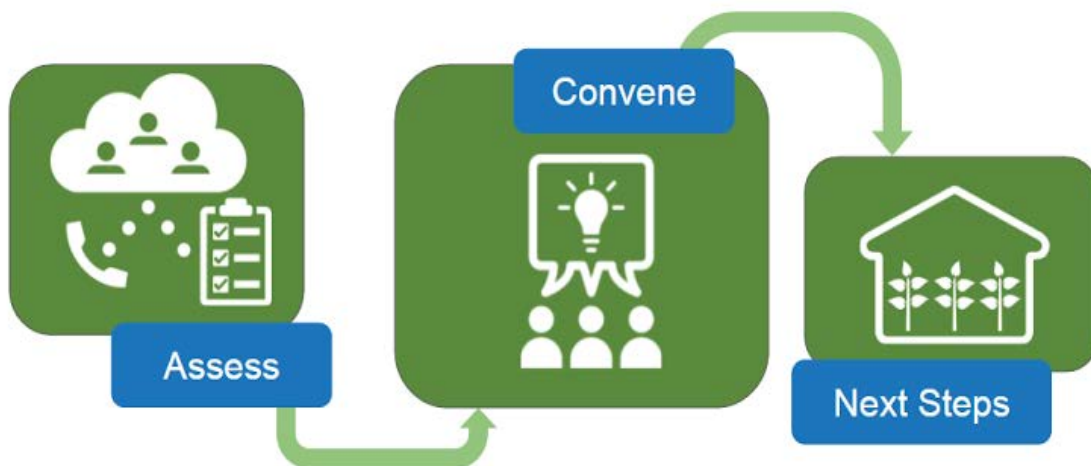


Figure 3. The diagram above lays out all of the steps leading to this action plan.



Engagement

Leading up to the workshop, a local steering committee and federal partners convened three times by conference call and webinar to discuss the community's goals and plan the event. The local steering committee was comprised of the following participants:

- Chair: Jan Newman, Grow Palmer
- Amy Pettit, Alaska Farmland Trust
- Frankie Barker, Mat-Su Borough
- Chantel Welch, NeighborWorks Alaska
- Terry Snyder, Alaska AARP
- Nate Wallace, Palmer City Manager

The main sessions of the Local Foods, Local Places workshop were held over two days in the Palmer Depot in Downtown Palmer on July 26 and 27, 2016. Prior to the workshop's first public session, the technical advisory team, local steering committee, and federal partners participated in an informal lunch.

Nearly five dozen people attended the workshop, with many participating both days. All sessions were open to the public. See *Appendix A: Workshop Participants* for details on attendees. A compilation of photos from the workshop and tour can be found in *Appendix B: Workshop Photo Album*.

The first day began with a walking and van tour of food-related sites in Palmer, starting with a visit to the VanderWeele's farm. Patriarch Ben and his daughter Michelle Keyes shared with participants their experience as large-scale commercial growers who supply both local grocers and wholesalers with production items such as potatoes, carrots, and lettuce, as well as specialty goods for farmers markets, and a small number of other local restaurants. The group also viewed the State fairgrounds and several agricultural tracts protected by the Alaska Farmland Trust. Next, Jan Newman led the group on a tour of Downtown food and healthy living assets including the rail trail edible gardens, placards that provide tribute to the original Colony families, the visitors center gardens and artworks commemorating the strength of Mat-Su agriculture, and several local restaurants offering local foods. She also pointed out deficiencies in walking and biking links between the downtown assets, such as disconnected sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, and a bike trail that terminates at the Palmer Depot. After a lunch at Turkey Red Café featuring local foods, the participants toured Arctic



Organics, a small family-owned farm that direct markets its produce through community supported agriculture (CSA) shares, farmers markets, and individual contracts with local vendors.

The workshop began in the afternoon with a welcome and commitment of support by the Palmer Mayor. In the initial session, participants were introduced to the program and the background leading up to the workshop. Exercises were then conducted to work through values, visioning, and tying vision to place. After the general session, a producers and vendors special session was held to get ideas and views from local producers. Attendees representing market farms, animal and egg processors, as well as representatives of the Alaska Farmland Trust, State Division of Agriculture and Mat-Su Borough were there. Attendees noted that wild harvested products, which are traditional in Alaska should also be considered in thinking about local foods.

On the second day, the workshop continued with exercises to learn about potential actions and mapping tools, brainstorm actions and select priorities, and develop specific action steps. The group completed actions in five goal areas to form the basis of the Action Plan. See *Appendix D: Workshop Exercises* for more details on the exercises. *Appendix E: Funding Resources* and *Appendix F: Additional Resources* are also included as comprehensive listings of federal, state, private, and local resources.

Two news articles were published locally, one leading up to the event and one reporting on it afterwards, and can be found in *Appendix G: Press Coverage*.

Vision

The community's vision encompasses many elements. Among these is to be a place where all residents have access to local food and awareness about its availability. The community also strives to leverage its agricultural identity to become a local foods destination. The community also envisions a region that protects farmland and expands the production, particularly of local market foods.



Opportunities and Challenges

Throughout Day One, participants had engaging conversations about their perceptions of opportunities/assets, and challenges in Palmer, as they relate to local foods goals.

Opportunities/Assets

- *Known for agriculture within Alaska*
- *Rich Class 2 soils - 10' deep topsoil*
- *Existing community serving producers*
- *Rail trail and community edible "u-pick" gardens*
- *Existing supply chain for 2 of 3 local grocers*
- *30 year Alaska Grown program*
- *Farmers Market SNAP grant dollars*
- *Startup small local distributor*
- *Existing farm stands and farmers market*
- *Mat-Su Borough Ag land sales*
- *Experimental farm structures and coolers*
- *AK Farmland Trust preservation tools*
- *Farm-to-School program*

Challenges

- *Lack of awareness about local foods availability*
- *Uncertainty, inconsistency in growing conditions*
- *Short season/limited year-round production*
- *Subdivisions built/platted on prime ag lands*
- *Large scale distributors discourage local buying*
- *Farmers and small vendors have limited time/staff/motivation for distribution*
- *Limited quantity of market vegetables*
- *Cost of local products is higher*
- *Anchorage farmers markets are more profitable; inconsistent food regulations*
- *Timely information about availability*
- *Lack of local policies/goals to promote*



Action Plan

The following five overarching goals and action items were finalized at the workshop with input from all participants. A detailed description of the goals and actions items can be found in the implementation matrices, below.

Goal 1: Support local growers & vendors, and processors.

- Action 1.1 Establish a Mat-Su/Palmer Local Food Policy Council
- Action 1.2 Promote the education of local/seasonal eating and food preparation
- Action 1.3 Make the Monday Market stronger and more visible
- Action 1.4 Replicate Kenai Food Hub model in Palmer
- Action 1.5 Establish a commercial kitchen production and processing space for small local producers

Goal 2: Promote farmland and wild food resources stewardship and preservation.

- Action 2.1 Gather data on farmland to create the case for ag preservation, mitigation, and ag subdivisions.
- Action 2.2 Showcase Mat-Su farmlands on wayfinding and visitor maps
- Action 2.3 Create an Agricultural Lands Mitigation Bank
- Action 2.4 Create an Agricultural Special Use designation and identify areas to include (potentially) Ag Subdivisions

Goal 3: Improve local food accessibility and food security by increasing availability of Mat-Su Valley food to local residents

- Action 3.1 Research and identify a model for the “Kitchen Garden Project” and establish regular stakeholder meetings
- Action 3.2 Survey local producers to identify quantity and makeup of surplus crops on a weekly basis
- Action 3.3 Improve real time information system for what local food is available
- Action 3.4 Compile a report to identify the needs of local institutions, local supply, and actual/perceived barriers to introduce local foods to institutions

Goal 4: Build on agricultural identity to become a local foods destination.

- Action 4.1 Year-round showcase market for local foods
- Action 4.2 Local foods wayfinding and placemaking through maps, signage, apps, and decals



- Action 4.3 Fund a position at an existing nonprofit to coordinate work
- Action 4.5 Agree on the brand for Palmer local food

Goal 5: Increase collaboration and integration with efforts for a healthy, vibrant, walkable community.

- Action 5.1 Edible Rail Trail Phase II
- Action 5.2 Improve Downtown walkability and bikeability
- Action 5.3 Improve crosswalk and sidewalk segments

Implementation Matrices

Implementation matrices, which include specific details for each action to aid in implementation, are found below.

Time Frame Key:

Short = 0-6 months

Medium = 6-12 months

Long = 1-2 years

Goal 1: Support local growers & vendors, and processors

| Action | 1.1 Establish a Mat-Su/Palmer Local Food Policy Council | 1.2 Promote education of local and seasonal eating and food preparation | 1.3 Make the Monday Market stronger and more visible | 1.4 Replicate the Kenai Food Hub model in Palmer | 1.5 Commercial kitchen production and processing space for small local producers |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Why is this action important? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for small producers' needs • Create a unified voice for local agricultural concerns to speak to Alaska agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address disconnect between consumers and growers • Better identify local foods • Utilize available local food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate a market that focuses on food • Create a single, well-known visible food focused market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates supply and demand • Strengthens market for growers • Ease of access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more small business growth based on local foods • Increase year-round availability • Utilize existing resources |
| How will we measure success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of committed LFLP group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales of local foods at local venues (restaurants, markets, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participating vendors • Number of consumers • Sales figures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a functional food hub • Number of participating growers and consumers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of use of commercial kitchens by secondary users |



| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| Time Frame | Short | Short: advocate Medium to Long: Make available | Short: signage Medium: market and build | Long: implement in Spring 2018 season | Medium |
| Lead Role | Local Food Policy Council | Local Food Policy Council | Monday Market managers | Alaska Pacific University's Spring Creek Farm | Local Food Policy Council |
| Potential Supporting Cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Food Policy Council Ag Commission Alaska Farmland Trust Alaska Food Coalition ARRC Mat-Su Health Alaska Pacific University AARP NeighborWorks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now Health Mat-Su Health Foundation Restaurants, esp. Turkey Red SNAP Educators Alaska Pacific University ARRC AmeriCorps Vista Health/Exercise, Active businesses Chef At The Market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday Fling Richelle Plumber Growers Grow Palmer Downtown Merchants Association PEDA Chamber of Commerce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growers, Customers University of Alaska Fairbanks City of Palmer NeighborWorks Cook Inletkeeper Arctic Harvest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Commerce Owners of commercial kitchens Chamber of Commerce Local Food Policy Council School District Producers |
| What will it cost, what will it take? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer coordinators Monthly meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create, Compile and distribute educational materials Educators conduct 1 on 1 meeting Press release Coordinate with Branding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing materials Signage Newsletter ads and press releases Recreate Chef At The Market Meet Me At The Market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform \$80/month Part time staff Distribution space Staff time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outreach campaign to identify potential users A system (an app or other) to match available space with users |
| Possible sources, contributions etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA Local foundations, e.g. Mat Su Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNAP programs and educational materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA Palmer Chamber and US Chamber of Commerce Vendor fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimental farm Bogard Logistics AmeriCorps or students Sponsors e.g. Lions Club ARRC Alaska Grown USDA grants Mat Su Health Foundation AARP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA Local foundations, e.g. Mat Su Health |



Goal 2: Promote farmland and wild food resources stewardship and preservation

| Action | 2.1 Gather data on farmland to create the case for ag preservation, mitigation, and ag subdivisions | 2.2 Showcase Mat-Su farmlands on wayfinding and visitor maps | 2.3 Create an Agricultural Lands Mitigation Bank | 2.4 Create an Agriculture Special Use designation and identify areas to include (potentially) Ag Subdivisions |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Why is this action important? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To tell the story To convince residents to preserve ag lands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports farmland preservation efforts Encourages interest in Farm Tours and other Agricultural tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds the protection of additional acreage Creates perception of value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy planning Food security Knowledge retention Protecting most valuable lands |
| How will we measure success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident awareness Information use If the data is used to set policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation & distribution of maps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of funding received Acres protected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of acres designated Percent of farmland designated |
| Time Frame | Short | Medium | Long | Long |
| Lead Role | Mat-Su 2050 and Alaska Farmland Trust | Mat-Su Borough , and New Local Food position (Action 4.3) | Alaska Farmland Trust | Local Community Councils |
| Potential Supporting Cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Alaska - Institute of Social and Economic Research Mat-Su Borough The Nature Conservancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Farmland Trust USDA Visitors Center Farm Tours Grow Palmer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag Advisory Council American Farmland Trust Great Land Trust Land Trust Alliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag Advisory Council Alaska Farmland Trust Mat Su Borough Developers Cities |
| What will it cost/take? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50,000 for data Unknown cost for storytelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping Printing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public education campaign | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public education campaign Focus groups |
| Possible sources, contributions etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Farmland Trust USDA Mat-Su Health Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Farmland Trust USDA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special event or fundraiser | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rasmuson Foundation Cook Inlet Tribal NeighborWorks |



Goal 3: Improve local food accessibility and food security by increasing availability of Mat-Su Valley food to local residents.

| Action | 3.1 Research and Identify a model for "Kitchen Garden Project" and establish regular stakeholder meetings | 3.2 Survey local producers to identify quantity and makeup of surplus crops on a weekly basis | 3.3 Improve real time information system for what local food is available | 3.4 Compile a report to identify needs of local institutions, local supply, and actual/perceived barriers to introduce local foods to institutions |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Why is this action important? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines Alaska Tilth, Yarducopia, and gardening support goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First step in understanding surplus and how it can be used Opens channels of communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate and increase demand for local growers' products Reduce waste Stronger local economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First step in building mutual understanding of existing and potential opportunities |
| How will we measure success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A model is identified for the framework At least one convening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catalog of surplus produce that can be salvaged | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and specificity of listings in local food information system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report is successfully completed |
| Time Frame | Short | Medium | Long | Long |
| Lead Role | Chantel Welch, NeighborWorks Alaska | Division of Agriculture | New Local Food position (see Action 4.3) | University of Alaska - Public Health, and Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) - Steve Colt |
| Potential Supporting Cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring Creek Farm Yarducopia CES Master Gardeners Alaska Cold Climate Permaculture Institute New Local Foods Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Churches Alaska Farmland Trust APU student Mat-Su College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow Palmer Food Policy Council Alaska Farmland Trust Growers Monday Market Local Businesses AARP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring Creek Farm Division of Agriculture and Mat-Su Borough put in joint request to ISER SPORK Consulting |
| What will it cost, what will it take? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time App or electronic system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time Improved bulletin board An app or similar University support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Student, intern, volunteer |
| Possible sources, contributions etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NeighborWorks and Local Food Group (staff time) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mat-Su Health Foundation Alaska Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA EPA Mat-Su Health Foundation AK Community Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time Division of Agriculture - Farm to Institution |



Goal 4: Build on agricultural identity to become a local foods destination.

| Action | 4.1 Year-round showcase market for local foods | 4.2 Local foods Wayfinding & placemaking through maps, signage, apps & decals | 4.3 Fund a position at an existing nonprofit to coordinate work | 4.4 Agree on the brand for Palmer local food |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Why is this action important? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entertainment Education Community Building Improve local food sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lets people know what is available Can promote what is important to the town Identifies areas for opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a means to apply for grants and funding opportunities Ensures coordination between efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branding helps people remember the produce and place Associate name with a location |
| How will we measure success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees (helps justify a larger permanent space) Amount of sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of maps, signage, apps, and decals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonprofit identified Funding and grants received | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of searches Number Facebook likes Increased local food sales |
| Time Frame | <p>Short: planning</p> <p>Medium: start activities in Spring of 2017</p> | <p>Medium: Wayfinding design plan</p> <p>Medium-to Long: Implementation</p> | Long | Long |
| Lead Role | Monday Market Coordinator | City of Palmer, and, Dept. of Agriculture | Jan Newman, Grow Palmer | Local Food Policy Group |
| Potential Supporting Cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ProStart - High School Grow Palmer Alaska Public Media Library Division of Agriculture - Farm to School Job Corp - food demos Career Tech | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Commerce Local organizations to implement and provide data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Food Policy Council AK Farm Trust NeighborWorks Local Foods Local Places attendees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New local food position Local Businesses USDA Rural Development AARP Mat-Su Borough City of Palmer Grow Palmer logo |
| What will it cost, what will it take? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination Pay stipends to chefs, musicians, and teachers Food and supplies Sponsorships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Printing Marketing Physical signage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time & effort to apply for grants or an intern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen input to agree on brand Design work Printing, production Distribution |
| Possible sources, contributions etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center USDA FMPP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Palmer - \$35K available USDA Rural Development Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNAP ED USDA Mat-Su Health Foundation EPA AmeriCorps VISTA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Palmer Local Businesses USDA Rural Development Grow Palmer |



Goal 5: Increase collaboration and integration with efforts for a healthy, vibrant, walkable community.

| Action | 5.1 Edible Rail Trail Phase II | 5.2. Improve Downtown walkability and bikeability | 5.3 Improve crosswalk and sidewalk segments downtown |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Why is this action important? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible fresh food anytime! • Agricultural identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and accessibility • Economic vitality • Growing senior population • Transportation options year-round, all ages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and accessibility • Economic vitality • Growing senior population • Transportation options year-round, all ages |
| How will we measure success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random harvesting happening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown walkability audit • Traffic accident data • Bikeability study • Maps/app | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and painting, downtown • Walking Map/app, and signage • Walk Score |
| Time Frame | <p>Short: construction by the end of 2016</p> <p>Medium-Long: Planting in 2017</p> | <p>Medium: Spring 2017 walkability and bikeability audits</p> | <p>Medium: 2016-2017 and Ongoing</p> |
| Lead Role | Grow Palmer | Mat-Su Borough | City of Palmer , Public Works and City Manager |
| Potential Supporting Cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Palmer, fiscal sponsor, water and power • SDG Sustainable Design Group • Mat-Su Health Foundation • Mat-Su Trails and Parks • Rasmuson Foundation • AARP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wasilla • City of Palmer • City of Houston • AARP • VMBAH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Wasilla • City of Houston • Mat-Su Borough • AARP • Active Soles |
| What will it cost, what will it take? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$34-\$26,000 - in place • Volunteers: admin, marketing, garden design, year-round | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25,000 • \$20,000 MSB • \$4,000 COW & COP • \$1,000 COH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint, Labor & Design • City of Palmer - budget for existing |
| Possible sources, contributions etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mat-Su Health Foundation • Mat-Su Trails and Parks • Need open funds for future years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City mill rate • AARP • People for Bikes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer assistance with map location input • Rec Trails program - Federal Highway Administration. |



Short-term Implementation Steps

The Action Plan identified many short-term action steps including several that did not require new funding sources. The project defines short-term action steps as those that can be completed within six months. Some of these Actions include:

- Action 1.1 Establish a Mat-Su/Palmer Local Food Policy Council
- Action 1.2 Promote the education of local/seasonal eating and food preparation - *begin to advocate*
- Action 1.3 Make the Monday Market stronger and more visibility - *signage*
- Action 2.1 Gather data on farmland to create the case for ag preservation, mitigation, and ag subdivisions
- Action 3.1 Research and identify a model for the “Kitchen Garden Project” and establish regular stakeholder meetings
- Action 4.1 Year-round showcase market for local foods - *planning*
- Action 5.1 Edible Rail Trail Phase II - *construction by end of 2016*

In the three months following the workshop, progress has been made on a number of implementation efforts.

- The Edible Rail Trail Phase II construction is underway in Palmer. Recent additions to the edible garden landscape include raspberry plantings.
- The local Mat-Su Borough Planning Department is submitting the LFLP Palmer Report to the Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association in late September for consideration for the Grassroots Initiative Award.
- The local and national AARP chapters have expressed enthusiasm for the LFLP Palmer plan, and are hopeful that food security will continue to be a major component of the organization’s work. The plan will be shared with folks at the AARP National Livable Communities Conference in Chicago in October.
- Steering committee members continue to meet and collaborate on local foods initiatives.



Appendices

- Appendix A - Workshop Participants
- Appendix B - Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix C - Workshop Exercises
- Appendix D - Community Asset Mapping Results
- Appendix E - Funding Resources
- Appendix F - Additional Resources
- Appendix G - Press Coverage



Appendix A:

Workshop Participants

LFLP Palmer Workshop Attendees

| Last | First | Affiliation |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| Adsit | Margaret | Alaska Farm Tours/Alaska Farmland Trust |
| Alexander | Geoff | US EPA |
| Allen | Kim | Division of Agriculture |
| Aube | Meggie | |
| Barker | Frankie | Mat-Su Borough, Environmental Planner |
| Barker | Allie | Chugach Farm |
| Bean | Sarah | Arctic Organics |
| Benz | Sue | USDA |
| Best | Richard W. | Palmer City Council |
| Brudahl | Derek | Spring Creek Farm - APU |
| Chang | Grace | |
| Davis | Michelle | US EPA - Anchorage |
| Dickman | K. | Spring Creek Farm - APU |
| Elamann | Jo | |
| Fletcher | Gordon | Humdingers Gourmet Pizza Co. |
| Frednberg | Connie | |
| Fuller | Zoe | Prescott College, Eco League, student |
| Fuller | Andrea | |
| Fuller | Willow | |
| Garley | Sandra | City of Palmer, Community Development |
| Hezik | Alex | US EPA - Boise (Intern) |
| Hoff | Corey | Spring Creek Farm - APU |
| Huff | Jessie | USDA - RD |
| Jansen | Sara | Mat-Su Borough |
| Johnson | DeLena | Mayor, City of Palmer |
| Jones | Marisa | Safe Routes to School National Partnership |
| Kenley | Carol | Kenley's Alaska Vegetables & Flowers |
| King | Ryan | Sustainable Design Group |
| LaFrance | Pete | Palmer City Council |
| McNeill | Saunders | Alaska State Council of the Arts |
| Meers | Pamela | |
| Nelson | Kerry | Spring Creek Farm - APU (Intern) |
| Newman | Jan | Grow Palmer |
| None provided | Chelsea | |
| None provided | James | |
| Olsen | Michelle | Tower Ranch Alaska |
| Pettit | Amy | |
| Plummer | Rochelle | AGR |
| Salazar | Viccy | US EPA - Seattle |
| Sawyer | Ilana | Spring Creek Farm - APU |
| Schoditsoh | Matt | Pioneer Pastured Poultry |
| Schroder | Robyn | |
| Smith | Mary | Edible Alaska |
| Smith | Glenda | Mat-Su Borough Ag Property Manager |
| Smith | Corinne | The Nature Conservancy |
| Snyder | Terry | AARP |
| Sollien | Kim | Great Land Trust |
| Stamey | Mackenzie | Spring Creek Farm - APU |
| Sunderland | Katie | Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation (ARRC) |
| Talley | Megan | Spring Creek Farm - APU |
| Valerius | Jill | Now Health |
| Visse | Ellen Vande | Good Earth Garden School |

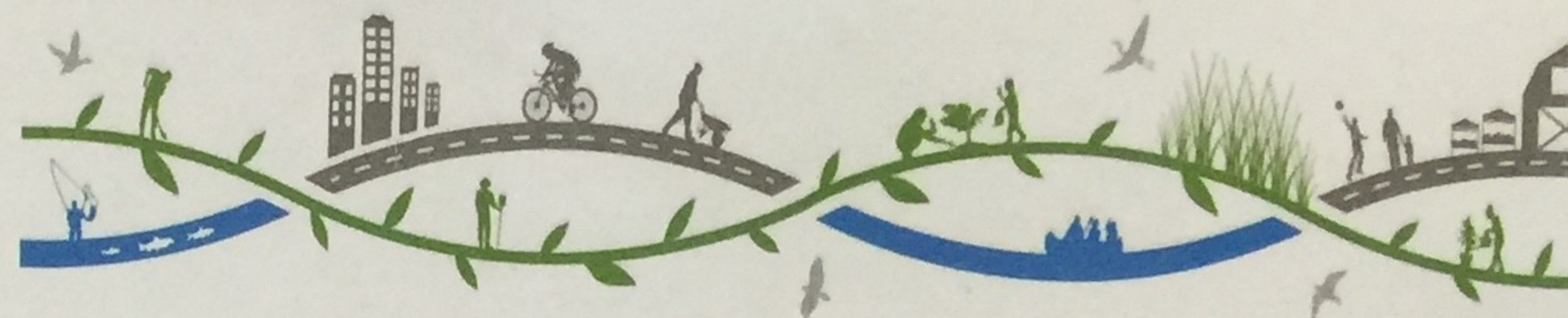
| | | |
|---------|---------|-------------------------|
| Welch | Chantel | NeighborhWorks Alaska |
| Whelan | Kelli | Division of Agriculture |
| Whipple | Andrew | Spring Creek Farm - APU |

| | | |
|----------------|---------|---|
| TA Team | | |
| Heller | Erica | Progressive Urban Management Associates |
| Freda | Chris | Sasaki Associates |
| Thompson | Critter | PlaceMatters |

Local Foods, Local Places

Palmer July 26 & 27 2016

Sign-In Sheet



| Name | Affiliation/Organization | Phone | Email |
|------------------------|---|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Terry Snyder | AARP | 907-355-1789 | terry +sneders@aarp.org |
| Zoe Fuller | Graduate Student, Prescott College | 907-355-8271 | zoe.olivia.fuller@gmail.com |
| Matt Schoditsch | PIONEER PASTURED POULTRY | 907-750-3434 | buttebruins@gmail.com |
| Chantel Welch | NeighborWorks | 907 982 6465 | cwelch@nwalaska.org |
| Pamela Meers | None | | |
| Andrea & Willow Fuller | None | 354-3569 | daveandrea90@gmail.com |
| Kelli Whelan | Division of Agriculture | 761-3854 | Kelli.whelan@alaska.gov |
| Frank & Barb | Mat-Su Borough | 861-8439 | frankw@mat-su.gov.us |
| Margaret Aasit | Alaska Farm Tours / Alaska Farmland Trust | 982-4387 | info@alaskafarmtours.com |
| Mackenzie Stamey | Spring Creek Farm - APV | 907-590-7493 | mrstamey@alaska.edu |
| Derek Brudahl | Spring Creek Farm - APV | 267-393-1612 | dbudahl@gmail.com |
| KERRY NELSON | Spring Creek Farm - Intern | 414-852 2516 | Kerry.designer@gmail.com |
| K DICKMAN | SPRING CREEK | 707-3533 | Kim.dickman@gmail.com |
| Sara Jansen | Mat Su Borough | 861-7865 | sjansen@mat-su.gov.us |
| Rehelle Pummer | AGR | 360-8718 | |
| Chelsea | none | | |
| James | none | | |
| Connie Fredenberg | none | 907-444-6220 | conniefredenberg@mtaonline.net |
| Richard W. Best | City of PALMER | 907-715 4317 | best_family@ci.net |
| Casey Hoff | Spring Creek Farm | | choff18@vt.edu |
| JAN NEWMAN | @ROW PALMER | 907 232 5016 | groupalmer@gmail.com |

Local Foods, Local Places

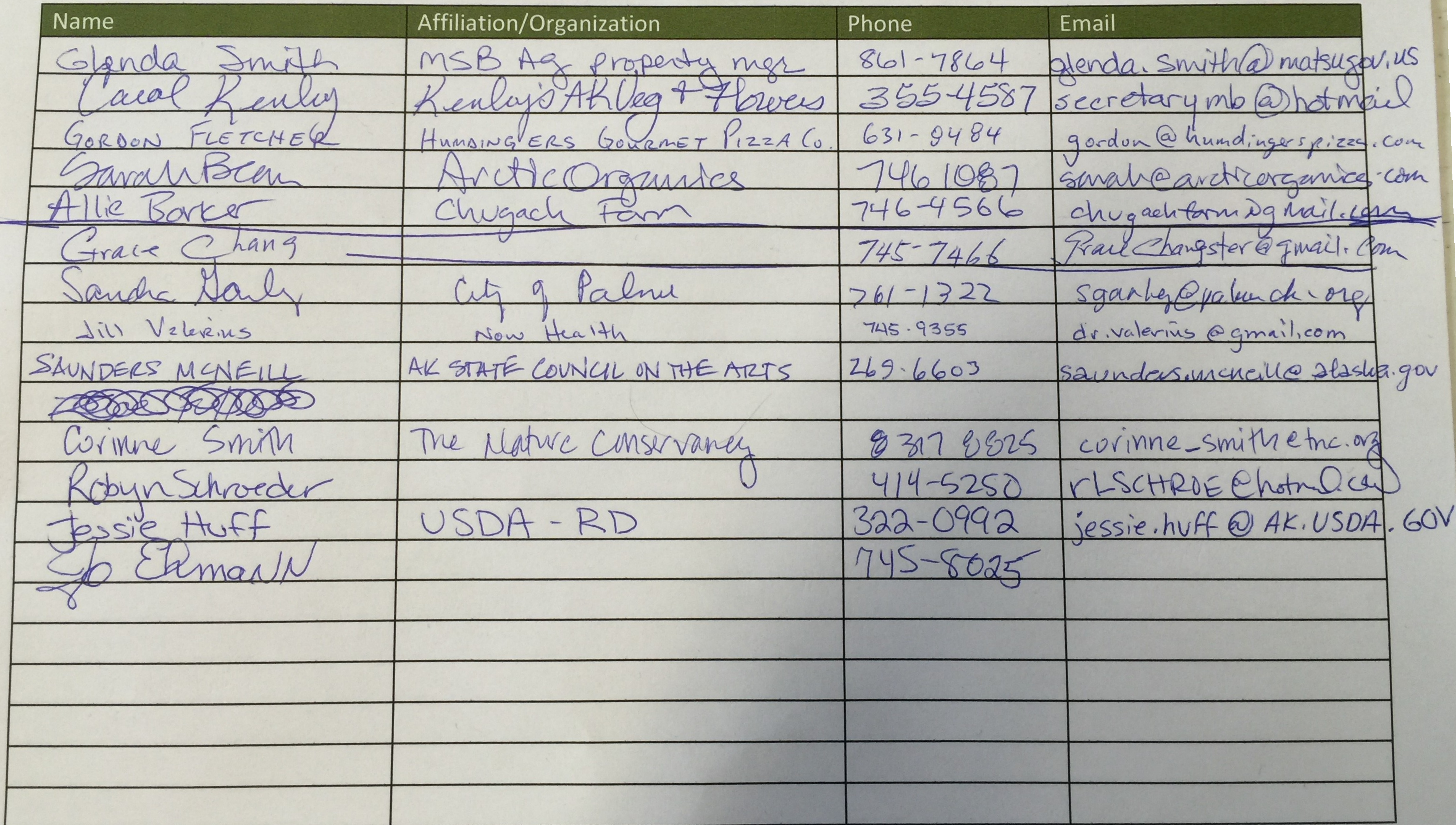
Palmer July 26 & 27 2016

Sign-In Sheet



| Name | Affiliation/Organization | Phone | Email |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| MARISA JONES | SRTS national Partnership | 215-510-2545 | marisa@safe routespartnership.org |
| Geoff Alexander | US EPA (DC) | 202-566-1959 | alexander.geoff@epa.gov |
| Michelle Davis | US EPA - Anchorage | 907-271-3434 | DAVIS.MichelleV@epa.gov |
| Vicary Salazar | US EPA - Seattle | 206-553-1060 | Salazar.vicary@epa.gov |
| MARY SMITH | Edible Alaska | 907-229-9608 | MARY@EdibleAK.com |
| Katie Sunderland | Alaska Rural Rehabilitation | 745-3390 | katie@arrrc.us |
| Alex Hezik | U.S. EPA - Boise (intern) | 270-469-8174 | hezik.alex@epa.gov |
| Kim Allen | Division of Agriculture | 907-761-3864 | Kim.allen@alaska.gov |
| Meggie Aube | none | 631-8079 | meggieaube@hotmail.com |
| WJ | CTA | 745-3520 | WJ@alaska.com |
| SUE BENL | USDA - WASS | 745-4272 | Susan.Benz@usda.gov |
| Megan Talley | APU - Spring Creek Farm | 405-612-6465 | mtalley@alaskapacific.edu |
| Andrew Whipple | APU Spring Creek Farm | 989-944-2987 | awhipple@umich.edu |
| Ellen Vande Visse | Good Earth Garden School | 745-0758 | evisse@gmail.com |
| Ilan Sawyer | APU - Spring Creek Farm | 510-944-9975 | SAWYERLIKEFROMSAWYER@GMAIL.COM |
| Pete LaFrane | City of Palmer | 775-7844 | pdafrane@hotmail.com |
| Kim Sollier | Greatland Trust | 746-6404 | |
| Ryan King | Sustainable Design Group | 745-3500 | ryank@sdg-ak.com |
| Michelle Olsen | Tower Ranch Alaska | 354-4184 | TowerRanchAlaska@gmail.com |
| Diana Johnson | City of Palmer | 355-8846 | djohnson@palmerak.org |

Sign-In Sheet





Appendix B:

Workshop Photo Album

Community Tour



Photos from scenic Palmer, Alaska.



Participants tour VanderWeele Farm.



Grow Palmer free harvest installations on city property.



Grow Palmer's edible rail trail.



Participants listen to Jan Newman describe downtown Palmer's recreation and food assets.

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Program - Palmer, AK



Participants visit the Mat-Valley Agricultural Showcase



Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Program - Palmer, AK



Workshop Days 1 and 2
City As Play Exercise





Action Plan Brainstorming



Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Program - Palmer, AK



Photo Credits:

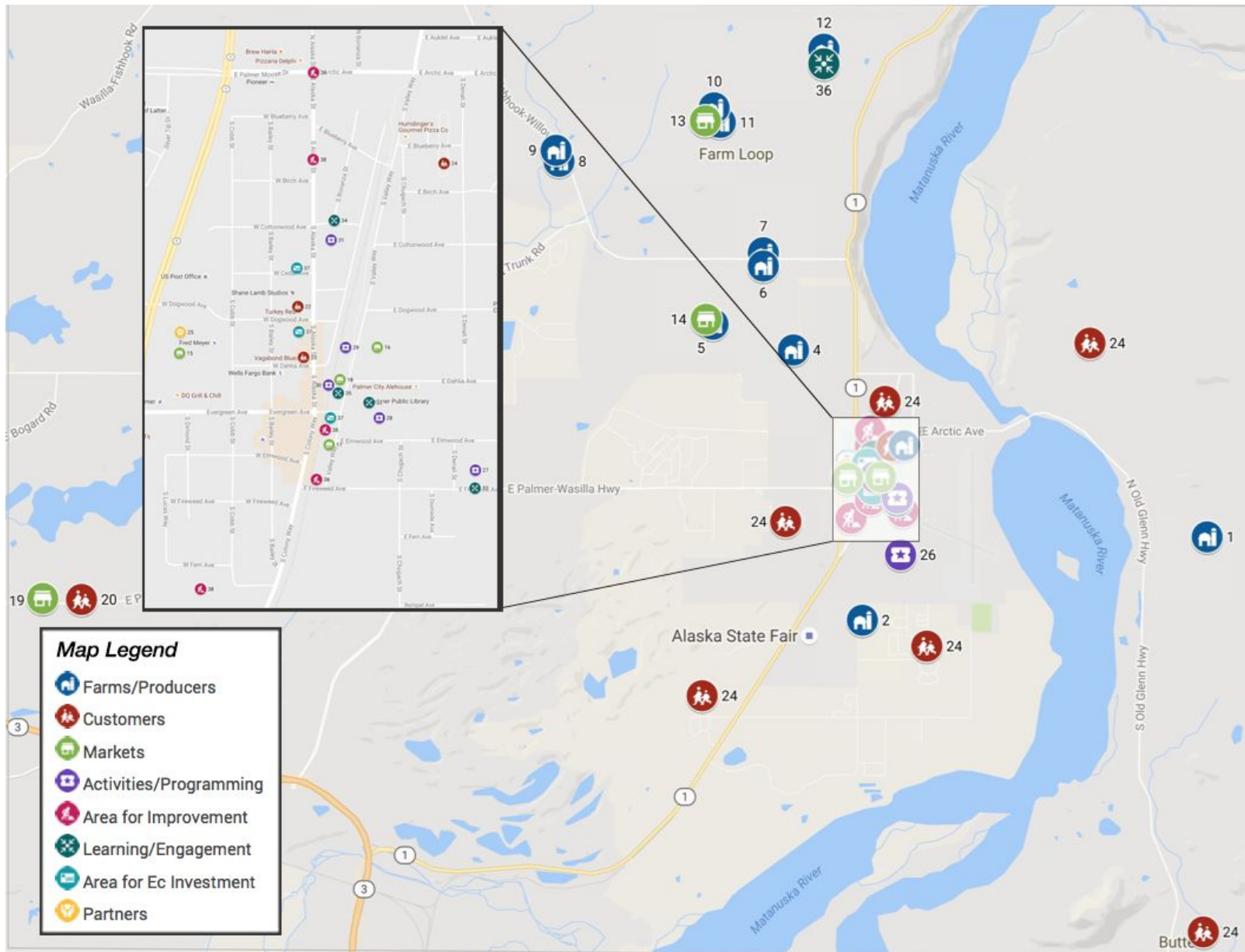
Technical Assistance Team members: Erica Heller, Progressive Urban Management Associates and Chris Freda, Sasaki



Appendix C:

Community Asset Mapping Results

Palmer Map of Local Food Assets and Opportunities







An interactive/editable version of this map can be viewed at bit.ly/Palmer-LFLP.

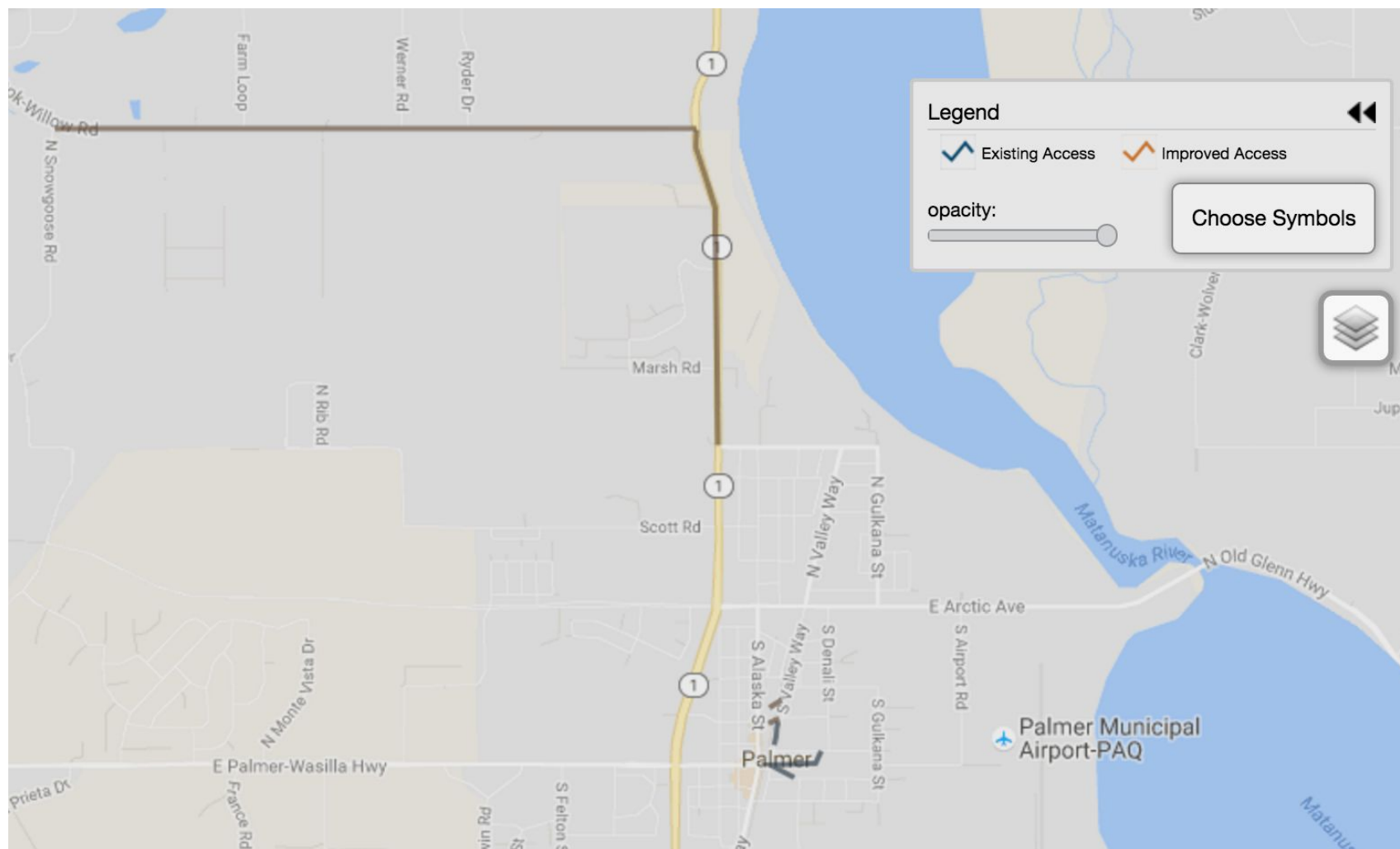
Citywide Assets - Comments

| Map ID | ID Icon | Name | Comments |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|---|
|  1 | Farms/Producers | Arctic Organics | Farm and Community Supported Agriculture program with weekly deliveries June - Sept |
| 2 | Farms/Producers | Hamilton Farms Inc | Hamilton Farms Inc |
| 3 | Farms/Producers | Farm of E Birch Ave | Farm of E Birch Ave |
| 4 | Farms/Producers | Greig Family Farm | Greig Family Farm - Sea-Ag Fertilizer |
| 5 | Farms/Producers | Mccormick Farm | Mccormick Farm |
| 6 | Farms/Producers | Lees Heritage Farm | Lees Heritage Farm |
| 7 | Farms/Producers | Aurora Nursery | Fruit tree sales |
| 8 | Farms/Producers | Oberg Farm | Oberg Farm |
| 9 | Farms/Producers | Kenley's Flowers & Vegetables | Kenley's Alaskan Flowers and Vegetables |
| 10 | Farms/Producers | Washburn Farm Nursery | Washburn Farm Nursery |
| 11 | Farms/Producers | Sun Circle Farm | Sun Circle Farm |
| 12 | Farms/Producers | Louise's Farm Sc/Kellogg Campus | Louise's Farm School/Kellogg Campus |
|  13 | Markets | Sun Circle Farm | Sun Circle Farm |
| 14 | Markets | Mccormick Farm Stand | Small farm stand |
| 15 | Markets | Fred Meyers | Local Fred Meyers carries some local produce |
| 16 | Markets | Local Market | Local market with some opportunity for producers |
| 17 | Markets | Alaska Railroad donated land | Covered shelter - market location |
| 18 | Markets | Palmer Community Center | Palmer Community Center |
| 19 | Markets | All about the Herbs | Some groceries and dried herbs |
|  20 | Customers | Bistro Red Beet | Likes to serve healthy fresh food |
| 21 | Customers | Coffee and Cream Cafe | Fruit Smoothies |
| 22 | Customers | Turkey Red Cafe/Dwtwn Deli | Mediterranean-Inspired Dishes and Sandwiches |
| 23 | Customers | Vagabond Blues | Soup, Salad, Paninis |
| 24 | Customers | Residents | General location identified with placement of icon |
|  25 | Partners | Fred Meyer | Partner for supporting local food |

Opportunities and Challenges - Comments

| Map ID | ID Icon | Name | Comments |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
|  26 | Area for Activities | MTA Events Center | MTA Events Center - Area for Activities |
| 27 | Area for Activities | Churches | Catholic, Presbyterian, and Lutheran Churches |
| 28 | Area for Activities | Park/Gathering Space | Park/Gathering Space |
| 29 | Area for Activities | Alaska Railroad donated land | Long lot with potential for markets etc. |
| 30 | Area for Activities | Community Center | Palmer Community Center |
| 31 | Area for Activities | Family First Services | Array of services for women, children & families. |
|  32 | Area for Engagement | Churches | Catholic, Presbyterian, and Lutheran Churches |
| 33 | Area for Engagement | Palmer Public Library | Palmer Public Library |
| 34 | Area for Engagement | Family First Services | Services for women, children & families in need |
| 35 | Area for Engagement | Palmer Community Center | Palmer Community Center |
| 36 | Area for Engagement | Louise's Farm Sc./Kellogg Campus | Louise's Farm School/Kellogg Campus |
|  37 | Economic Investment | Areas for Ec. Investment | General location identified with placement of icon |
|  38 | Areas for Improvement | Area for Improvement | General location identified with placement of icon |
| 39 | Area for Improvement | Community Center | Palmer Community Center |

Connections: Existing Access and Recommended Improved Access





Appendix D:

Workshop Exercises

Workshop Notes

Throughout the workshop, a range of exercises were used to explore community vision and values, explore place-making in context, identify areas for improvement, and identify and prioritize actions. Notes recorded for these exercises are included in this Appendix.

Future Vision Exercise, “This I Believe,” Day 1

Objective: Participants vocalize their values and beliefs about local and healthy food in Palmer. Some of the comments included:

- Palmer has some of the freshest and highest quality produce in the state.
- Palmer local foods may be some of the highest quality in the world.
- Local food tastes better than the alternative, and buying it is better for the local economy and community.
- Most food produced in Palmer moves to consumers elsewhere, particularly to the Anchorage area.
- Resources to more efficiently grow and promote local food products are available, but these resources need more exposure.
- Great food can be produced, but it needs to be more accessible to everyone.
- There is easy-to-access local food if you know where to buy it.
- As a middle class woman, local food in Palmer seems easy to access. I know where to find it and can afford to buy it. However, I don't know if it is that easy for everyone.
- There is a rich culture and plentiful resources in the area, but local healthy food needs to be more accessible to those with lower incomes.
- Local food is often expensive.
- Local, healthy food needs to be more accessible to those in need.
- Many people can't afford the higher price of local foods. The community should work to encourage products with longer shelf lives.
- Parents can't always get to markets. Access is an issue for many families.
- Many people are priced out of the local foods consumer market.
- Disadvantaged groups in Palmer's local food system include: students, Head Start, lower income households, and households without access to a car.
- Local foods aren't as well advertised as they could be.
- There are a lot more food products here than many know about.
- There is enough local food that could be used to feed students at lunches - which will in turn build awareness and get more people to shop local.
- The community needs more outlets to get products out to customers.
- There isn't year-round accessibility, which means local consumers can lose interest in local foods if they are not in front of them all year long.
- Fish, meat, wild berries as well as community gardens, Grow Palmer, and others, provide important sources of local food that don't cost much money, and are thereby more accessible.

- Local food can be inexpensive, but without complementary products, they're hard to use. Affordability needs more of a framework.
- Local food in Palmer is not well advertised, does not consist of many fruits, and is not very diversified.
- Availability for specialty crops is high, and demand is growing, but there is a huge need for more support for specialty crops.
- Producers do not feel like there is enough local demand to keep food in Palmer. There is some disconnect between producers and customers.
- Operations aren't as diversified as they could be, there are one or two fruits, but mostly vegetables.
- The local food system lacks support for foods other than vegetables.
- Stronger links between plant/animal production may be able to reduce waste/costs for producers.
- Palmer growers have a unique challenge of working in a short growing season.
- There are pockets/silos of awareness, but the dots need to be connected between producers and different users within a community.
- The desire for local and healthy products in Palmer is clear, but the path to get them needs improvements.
- There is a need to greater prioritize public commitment to local food.
- The local food community is somewhat unorganized, and niche, but has great potential.
- There is a small group of enthusiasts in the local food movement.
- The community is already engaged in local food projects, but it could use systems to further support local food systems.
- The local food movement in Palmer is sustainable and community based.
- Palmer has the support and interest to become a nation-wide example of sustainability, but currently lacks the infrastructure.
- A sustainable local food system is possible in Palmer.
- The local food system needs to be assessed in terms of climate impacts.
- The region has great farmland that could be lost to subdivisions, as the state currently does not allow any municipal money to be used for land conservation
- A number of areas that provide wild food need protection against development.

City as Play Exercise, Day 1

In the hands-on “City as Play” exercise, participants were asked to use ‘found objects’ in a creative way to represent their ideas and vision about how Palmer will be connected to and known for local food in the future. They had the option to work individually or in small groups. Prompts to spur the exercise included: What and who will be here? What will be different, and what will stay the same? What visual cues will help connect people to local foods? Each participant had a chance to share their work during the follow-up group discussion. See images of the resulting creations in pages 5 and 6 of *Appendix B: Workshop Photo Album*.

Producers Session, Day 1

Producers were invited to attend a special evening session to help identify unique challenges and opportunities that currently exist in the Palmer food system. Afterwards, participants were asked to identify potential actions that could improve the linkages between local healthy foods producers and local consumers (vendors, consumers, institutions, etc.). How do we get started? What comes next? How do we remove barriers? What would be a quick win or baby step? What could make a big difference? The results of the brainstorm were shared with the group prior to Day 2's prioritization of actions. Some of the comments from this session are outlined below.

Challenges

- There is not enough food. More needs to be done to encourage people to become farmers. There isn't the kind of support available to sustain more small farms.
- One of the problems for livestock is that local producers can't possibly keep up with the demand of distributors were they to supply them.
- Some products can't be supplied year-round, whereas others can be based on demand (e.g. potatoes).
 - More people need to demand local produce in grocery stores to sustain local farmers.
 - Grocery stores don't know/care about demand for local produce.
 - Even if customers aren't buying local produce, they should ask about it to communicate demand.
- On their own, growers cannot put all suppliers together to meet the demand of local markets. Producers are literally gone fishing sometimes which hurts the ability of raisers to process purchase orders.
- Customers and markets are looking for a diversity of products but the selection is often inconsistent from week to week based on season and where customers are.
- It is a shame there is no food co-op in the Valley.
- The Monday Market doesn't feel like a farmers' market:
 - It suffers from lack of advertising and visual/wayfinding support. It is available throughout the winter, however.
 - Friday Fling: people will come even just for vegetables, even when the weather is bad.
 - Palmer could use an outdoor farmers' market.
 - Bushes & Bunches: doesn't have everything someone may want to compose meals.
 - Saturday would be a great day for an outdoor farmers' market.
- Farmers are often processing, despite their inferior ability to do this.
 - Regulations at the state level are not clear, and regulators are not helpful.
- A lot of restaurants jumped onboard with the "Restaurant Reward" program, and there is residual interest, but it is harder without the incentive.

- Customers are asking for local foods
 - A restaurant's desire to work with local producers depends on the chef
 - Some difficulty with restaurants working with large suppliers (local, small-scale producers don't use suppliers).
 - It is difficult for restaurants because small-scale producers often can't guarantee the product to restaurants and large suppliers can.
- The meat processing facility is the only USDA certified one in the region, but it is in danger of closing soon.
- Palmer doesn't have enough capacity to build up demand for a larger scale farmers market.
- Climate change considerations - differences may affect what can be grown, when it is ready to be harvested.

Opportunities/Assets

- A food hub could help with this issue of pulling suppliers together to meet the demands of the local market. Poultry and egg producers have experience with this kind of collaboration using a co-op model.
- Retailers and producers both want a consistent supply.
- There is an experimental farm that was run by UAF and funded by USDA grants that is currently sitting vacant (near the highway, accessible to Wasilla and Palmer).
- More local markets would be an asset.
- Sometimes, communities have found that everyone benefits when there is a farmers' market in the parking lot of a grocery store.
 - Is it possible to approach the new Fred Meyer (being built) to see if it's possible to build space for a farmers' market?
 - Processing space and commercial kitchen
- There is strong demand for a commercial kitchen/processing center.
- There is some progress on an existing kitchen for local producers (working on a plan with the school nutrition director).
 - Facility overbuilt to accommodate local market
 - Are there opportunities to use less desirable produce to supply schools?
- Farmers are processing on farms often (despite their inferior ability to do this).
- We should have a food bulletin board where farmers can post products and locations where products are being sold. This could help producers sell excess products.
 - Being able to search for things (e.g. farm stands, products), could be helpful.
 - A temporal aspect would be helpful given the differences in years/months/weeks based on weather.
- Potential opportunities exist to share waste, in a trash-to-treasure style, but only if there's perfectly clear information about where the waste came from and what it contains.
- It may be possible to develop a local tax break (through the City of Palmer) for local businesses who buy local produce.

- Maybe there are opportunities to get markets such as Fred Meyer to buy local produce at a large scale.
- A number of restaurants jumped onboard with the “Restaurant Reward” program, and there is residual interest, but has become more difficult to sustain without the incentive.
- There needs to be an acknowledgement on the side of the producers of the needs of restaurants for reliability. This is most likely a small hurdle. The demand for fresh local food outweighs the need for predictability.
- Educate the public on the reality of this market system (e.g. variability of supply due to weather). This responsibility falls on the shoulders of every one piece of the system (including producers). Some small restaurants can work with a couple of days’ notice.
- In terms of food policy, how do we engage the city, state, borough governments to further encourage local food economy growth (subsidies to farmers, etc.). One way to start getting traction is through local policy to incentivize young farmers to grow and participate in this economy
- If we can permit 5AC/10AC parcels for agricultural use, that would be a huge boon to the growth of small-scale farming.
- The more tents that are set up at a market, the more people come. The bigger the better.
- The lack of infrastructure might not be the problem as much as underutilization of existing infrastructure.
- Even if customers aren’t buying local produce, they should ask about it to communicate the community’s overall demand.
- Saturday would be a great day for an outdoor farmers’ market.

Action Brainstorm, Day 2

During the actions brainstorm, participants were asked to come up with a variety of ideas for how to achieve each of the goals. The results are included below. Following the brainstorm, participants prioritized the actions using sticker-dot “voting”. The resulting priorities were used as the focus of the implementation matrices that were completed during the workshop.

Goal 1: Support local growers, vendors & processors

- Create a food hub/aggregation entity
- Create an information tool to help with understanding local food availability
- Monday market needs to be more visible
- Friday Fling can have more of a food focus
- There is a need for a commercial processing space that can be used by local producers
- Create a composting operation and/or another waste reuse program
- Tax incentives at the local level for local food purchasing
- We need more small-scale farmers
- More financing for small and startup operators
- Community should be working on advocacy with state and local policymakers

- There needs to be more education around seasonal eating (flexible restaurant menus)
- Take existing experimental farm and repurpose as a food hub
- Use the school's commercial kitchen as a shared space for local producers
- Save the meat plant
- Housing/correctional center
- Build a market building (non-profit) on vacant land next to the Depot (market with teaching/classes)
- Education about what grants/programs are available to local growers/producers
- Coordinate shared equipment

Goal 2: Promote farmland and wild food resources stewardship and preservation.

- Support the Alaska Farmland Trust
- Expand/promote farmland tours (not just for tourists)
- Advocate for school systems to take kids to learn about/work on active farms
- More schools that grow food as part of their curriculum
- Education about wild farm stewardship
- Create ag zones (policy level) in each community that prevent the conversion of ag lands to non-ag uses
- Mat-Su 2050: show the value of salmon, trails, open space generally. Cost of community services analysis (cost to community of how land is used). Localize the information.
- Aquifer (source water) protection education
- Promote the development of more indoor farming

Goal 3: Improve local food accessibility and food security by increasing availability of Mat-Su Valley food to local residents.

- Support food banks in buying local foods
- Program to help teach local residents how to cook donated foods (fundraiser for local foods cookbook)
- Programs to help startup gardeners/farmers get started learning how to do it
- Cooperative gardening
- Institutional/commercial purchasing could be improved (hospital, senior centers, and restaurants) - tax incentives/tariffs for food that doesn't come from Alaska
- Convince the local grocery stores to buy and sell local foods

Goal 4: Build on agricultural identity to become a local foods destination.

- Utilize social media to highlight aspects of Mat-Su's local food economy
- Transit connection between downtown Anchorage and downtown Palmer
- Year-round market for local products

Goal 5: Increase collaboration and integration with efforts for a healthy, vibrant, and walkable community

- Edible rail trail phase 2

- Downtown walkability assessment within Palmer and surrounding cities
- Crosswalk and sidewalk segments to connect downtown local food destinations
- Signage/wayfinding

100-Day Challenge & New Connections

The workshop wrapped up with an exercise that asked participants how they could contribute to advancing the goals of the workshop in the next 100 days. They were also asked to describe a new connection they made during the workshop or an “A-ha” moment they experienced.

100-Day Challenge Commitments:

- Buy more local food!
- Set up meetings to continue talking about the distribution hubs idea.
- Meet with organizations including: Cook Inletkeeper, Arctic Harvest, growers, and Business Department.
- Contribute examples of how local food systems have grown and/or progressed in Kentucky that could inspire efforts in Palmer.
- Share graduate research to interested parties.
- Stay in the loop as the project progresses.
- Work on and share the report with other planners.
- Champion LFLP Palmer to Planning Director and Ag Advisory Board.
- Initiate the Bikeability Survey.
- Engage residents in food-related conversations surrounding accessibility and availability, gardens, and utilization.
- Send Art/Agriculture national models, programs, organization initiative information to the group leaders to share with participants.
- Visit with local restaurants, retailers, and farmers to informally survey them as to how they feel that locally grown products are utilized here in Palmer. Share this information via word of mouth and on social media to bring more awareness to those who contribute. Volunteer to help promote the existing Monday Farmers Market in any way. Become an active volunteer with Grow Palmer to help them be even more successful.
- Create educational blog to talk about the benefits of local food, and to summarize experiences and current happenings.
- Reach out to FHWA and set up a call with City of Palmer or the most appropriate group.
- Establish stronger relationships within the agriculture industry. Find ways we can financially support the idea for ARRC. Look into the Food Hub and Food Council as a way to support local producers.

- Look for EPA programs and potential funding sources, and send findings to the Steering Committee. Send the web link to UAF Climate Change Group.
- Follow up with resources, materials, and information about transportation dollars the City and Borough can take advantage of to advance this work.
- Pitch the local foods decal idea to the Division of Agriculture marketing team.
- Introduce the branding project to City Council and ask for funding.

New Connections:

- This endeavor has so much potential and there is a wonderful, dynamic group of people that are committed to the growth of agriculture in Palmer. The round table discussions were valuable and I made new contacts.
- Farmers feel that there is a need for more farmers.
- I learned about the work being done by NeighborWorks. There is a wealth of assets and knowledge in Palmer around northern agriculture, and powerful potential for a collective impact. This community is really connected and grounded.
- I am amazed by the amount of USDA and EPA support and funding available, even locally. We have a great wealth of educated, inspiring people involved in this project and community.
- I met so many great people. I realized that a lot of what is important to me *needs* me.
- I realized again what a great place I get to live in (even though I'm in Wasilla, I still am in Palmer lots). People make the place, and people here are smart and committed to change.
- USDA funds may be available for some of these projects!
- I'm excited to share the work Palmer and Mat-Su Borough are doing to advance walkability and highlight/share the Edible Rail Trail as a food access/active transportation strategy.
- I made connections to organizations working in the Valley, as well nationally.
- I learned of the need for coordination and connections among food hub, distribution, growers, local markets, and consumers.
- There are many avenues available for funding many of these initiatives.
- New connections and advocates were discovered in the community.
- The workshop's repeated themes were: collaboration, hub, accessibility, and transportation.
- I got to connect with Grace, who is originally from Taiwan, and I had a chance to talk with her in Mandarin Chinese.
- Jan Newman is a superwoman.



Appendix E: Funding Resources

Local Food Systems Funding Programs - Federal/State

Cities and towns can strengthen their local food systems through a variety of federal projects and programs. The USDA and other federal agencies are committed to supporting local food systems - whether it's by working with producers, engaging with communities, financing local processing and distribution, or helping retailers develop local food connections. Below is a list of just some of the resources available. This information and more can be found on the USDA's *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* initiative website at www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program

This new program makes \$30 million available annually to farmers markets, other direct producer-to-consumer venues, and other businesses in the local food supply chain. Funding is evenly split between two components: Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) for direct consumer-to-producer marketing opportunities, and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) for local and regional food business enterprises. Both FMPP and LFPP have a maximum grant of \$100,000, and the LFPP applicants must have 25% matching funds or in-kind donations. By supporting development and marketing activities for farmers markets, food hubs, roadside stands, agritourism activities and other producer to consumer markets, the program can help small and mid-sized farmers access markets. For more information, visit ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/FMPP (FMPP) or ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/LFPP

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The purpose of USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, including locally grown crops. These investments strengthen rural American communities by supporting local and regional markets and improving access to fresh, high quality fruits and vegetables for millions of Americans. These grants also help growers make food safety enhancements, solve research needs, and make better informed decisions to increase profitability and sustainability. Organizations or individuals interested in the SCBGP should contact their state departments of agriculture - which administer the grant program - for more information. The 2014 Farm Bill significantly increased funding for the program. More information is available here: bit.ly/LFLP-SCBGP.

Organic Cost Share Programs

The 2014 Farm Bill also gave USDA new tools and resources to support the growing \$35 billion organic industry by more than doubling previous support through the organic cost-share programs, making certification more accessible than ever for even the smallest certified producers and handlers. Organic producers and handlers can now apply directly through their State contacts to get reimbursed for up to 75 percent of the costs of organic

certification, up to an annual maximum of \$750 per certificate. More information is available at bit.ly/LFLP-NOP.

Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

This grant program provides matching funds to state departments of agriculture, state agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate state agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system. FSMIP is designed to support research projects that improve the marketing, transportation, and distribution of U.S. agricultural products. FSMIP is a collaborative effort between Federal and State governments - matching funds go toward projects that bring new opportunities to farmers and ranchers. More information is available at www.ams.usda.gov/fsmip.

USDA Rural Development

Business and Industry Guarantee Loan Program

The purpose of USDA's Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program is to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. Through this program, USDA provides guarantees on loans made by private lenders to help new and existing businesses gain access to affordable capital by lowering the lender's risk and allowing for more favorable interest rates and terms. A recent change to the program allows projects that are physically located in urban areas if the project benefits underserved communities. The Business and Industry Loan Guarantee program is available on a rolling basis throughout the year. More information is available here: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees/

Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)

The primary objective of USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) is to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based value-added products. VAPG grants are available to producers or producer groups in urban and rural areas. Eligible projects include business plans to market value-added products, evaluating the feasibility of new marketing opportunities, expanding capacity for locally and regionally-grown products, or expanding processing capacity. More information is available here: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants.

Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

USDA's Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant program provides infrastructure support in rural communities under 20,000 people. Grants and loans have been used for commercial kitchens, farmers markets, food banks, cold storage facilities, food hubs and other local food infrastructure. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as nonprofits and tribal governments. Grant funds can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities and can include the purchase

of equipment required for a facility's operation. More information is available here: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program.

Rural Business Development Grants

This new USDA-RD program essentially combines the former Rural Business Enterprise Grant program (RBEG) and the Rural Business Opportunity Grant program (RBOG). The competitive grant program supports targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities. Towns, cities, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations are among the eligible applicants.

Enterprise type grant funds must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas as specified in the grant application. Uses may include:

- Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling/training, market research, feasibility studies, professional/technical reports, or product/service improvements.
- Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation, of buildings, plants, machinery, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utilities.
- Pollution control and abatement.
- Capitalization of revolving loan funds including funds that will make loans for start-ups and working capital.
- Distance adult learning for job training and advancement.
- Rural transportation improvement.
- Community economic development.
- Technology-based economic development.
- Feasibility studies and business plans.
- Leadership and entrepreneur training.
- Rural business incubators.
- Long-term business strategic planning.

Opportunity type grants must be used for projects in rural areas and can be used for:

- Community economic development.
- Technology-based economic development.
- Feasibility studies and business plans.
- Leadership and entrepreneur training.
- Rural business incubators.
- Long-term business strategic planning.

For more information: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants.

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides cost-share and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers in planning and implementing conservation practices that improve the natural resources (e.g. soil, water, wildlife) on their agricultural land and forestland. A practice supported through EQIP is the installation of seasonal high tunnels (also known as hoop houses), which are unheated greenhouses that can extend a producer's growing season while conserving resources. In addition, EQIP can help producers transition to organic production or help those growers already certified maintain their certification. More information is available here:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Community Food Projects

Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs. Grants are intended to help eligible private nonprofit entities in need of a one-time infusion of federal assistance to establish and carry out multi-purpose community food projects. For more information: nifa.usda.gov/funding/cfp/cfp_synopsis.html

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program

The 2014 Farm Bill created this program, which supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among people participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Applicants may propose small pilot projects (up to \$100,000 for 1 year), multi-year community-based projects (up to \$500,000 for up to 4 years), or larger-scale multi-year projects (more than \$500,000 for up to 4 years). USDA is looking to fund innovative projects that will test community based strategies for how to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP participants through incentives at the point of purchase. USDA will give priority to projects underserved communities and to projects that provide locally- or regionally-produced fruits and vegetables. For more information:

nifa.usda.gov/program/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program

This program provides grants to organizations that train, educate, and provide outreach and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers on production, marketing, business management, legal strategies and other topics critical to running a successful operation. The Agriculture Act of 2014 provided an additional \$20 million per year for 2014 through 2018. The reasons for the renewed interest in beginning farmer and rancher programs are: the rising average age of U.S. farmers, the 8% projected decrease in the number of farmers and ranchers between 2008 and 2018, and the growing recognition that new programs are

needed to address the needs of the next generation of beginning farmers and ranchers. For more information: <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program

SBIR grants help small businesses conduct high quality research related to important scientific problems and opportunities in agriculture. Research is intended to increase the commercialization of innovations and foster participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses in technological innovation. Grants can be applied towards many areas of research, including projects that manage the movement of products throughout a supply chain, develop processes that save energy, and capture and relay market data. nifa.usda.gov/program/small-business-innovation-research-program.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

The mission of the SARE program is to advance sustainable innovations in American agriculture. SARE is uniquely grassroots, administered by four regional offices guided by administrative councils of local experts. Non-profit organizations, researchers, and individuals producers are eligible to apply. For more information: www.sare.org/.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

AFRI is charged with funding research, education, and extension grants and integrated research, extension, and education grants that address key problems of National, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture, including farm efficiency and profitability, ranching, renewable energy, forestry (both urban and agroforestry), aquaculture, rural communities and entrepreneurship, human nutrition, food safety, biotechnology, and conventional breeding. Providing this support requires that AFRI advances fundamental sciences in support of agriculture and coordinates opportunities to build on these discoveries. This will necessitate efforts in education and extension that deliver science-based knowledge to people, allowing them to make informed practical decisions. For more information: nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri.html.

USDA Food Service Agency

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) microloan program is available to agricultural producers in rural and urban areas and provides loans of up to \$35,000 on a rolling basis. Streamlined paperwork and flexible eligibility requirements accommodate new farmers and small farm operations. Larger loans are also available through FSA. For more information: fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index

Farm Storage Facility Loans

These loans finance new construction or refurbishment of farm storage facilities. This includes cold storage and cooling, circulating, and monitoring equipment, which can be particularly important to those growing for local fresh markets. bit.ly/LFLP-FSFLP.

USDA Food and Nutrition Programs

Farm to School Grants

Farm to School Grants are available to help schools source more food locally, and to provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition. Schools, state and local agencies, tribal organizations, producers and producer groups, and nonprofits are eligible to apply. Planning, implementation, and support service grants are available from \$20,000 to \$100,000. More information and resources are available at fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

As of 2014, more than 2,500 farmers' markets nationwide are set up to accept SNAP's electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards. Benefits can be used to purchase many of the foods sold at farmers' markets, including fruits and vegetables, dairy products, breads and cereals, and meat and poultry. They can also purchase seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat. More information about SNAP benefits at farmers' markets is available from USDA here: fns.usda.gov/ebt/learn-about-snap-benefits-farmers-markets.

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

This program provides coupons for local food purchases to women, infants, and children that are eligible for WIC benefits. The coupons can be used to purchase eligible foods from farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands. Only farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands authorized by the State agency may accept and redeem FMNP coupons. Individuals who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else such as wholesale distributors, cannot be authorized to participate in the FMNP. For more information, visit: fns.usda.gov/fmnp/overview.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

This program, similar to FMNP, awards grants to States, United States Territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. For more information, visit: fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/overview.

Funding Programs in Support of Other Livable Community Projects

The programs listed below are popular resources that support a variety of livability projects. The publication "Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities" is a useful guide from the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnerships for Sustainable Communities that describes several additional resources: sustainablecommunities.gov/partnership-resources/federal-resources-sustainable-rural-communities-guide

National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants

The National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town grant program is the agency's primary creative placemaking grants program. Projects may include arts engagement, cultural planning, and design activities. The grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Our Town invests in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to:

- Improve their quality of life;
- Encourage greater creative activity;
- Foster stronger community identity and sense of place; and
- Revitalize economic development.

More information: arts.gov/grants/apply-grant/grants-organizations

EPA Brownfields Programs

- **Area-wide Planning Pilot Program:** Brownfields Area-Wide Planning is an EPA grant program which provides funding to recipients to conduct research, technical assistance and training that will result in an area-wide plan and implementation strategy for key brownfield sites, which will help inform the assessment, cleanup and reuse of brownfields properties and promote area-wide revitalization. Funding is directed to specific areas, such as a neighborhood, downtown district, local commercial corridor, or city block, affected by a single large or multiple brownfield sites. More information: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-5>.
- **Assessment Grants:** Assessment grants provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfields sites. Eligible entities may apply for \$200,000 and up to \$350,000 with a waiver. More information: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-1>.
- **Revolving Loan Fund Grants:** Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grants provide funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund and to provide subgrants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. More information is available here: [epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#](https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#)
- **Cleanup Grants:** Cleanup grants provide funding for a grant recipient to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 per site. More information is available here: [epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-3](https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-3)

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Federal Highway Administration's TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. In rural areas, these funds

are typically allocated by state departments of transportation. For more information, visit: fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm and fhwa.dot.gov/environment/safe_routes_to_school/.

Alaska Funding Sources

See also Mat-Su Health Foundation in the “Private Grant Funding” section below.

Alaska Community Foundation

The Alaska Community Foundation offers a diverse array of grants and scholarships, with most grants focused on specific regions depending on the funding round. Opportunities are published periodically at: <http://alaskacf.org/grants/>

Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Program (ARRC) Loan Program

The ARRC provides low-interest loan packages for a variety of agriculture-related projects. These projects include capital purchases of new and used farm equipment, loans for the purchase or improvement of land, loans for future farmers age 10 to 25 to gain a working knowledge of establishing a credit history, and lines of credit for any farming use.

Alaska Farmland Trust

The Alaska Farmland Trust supports a range of land conservation opportunities and could be used to support the action outlined in Goal 2. The Trust also works to improve access to ag land by encouraging landowners to lease productive farm or ranch land to a new or expanding agricultural business. www.farmlandinfo.org/landowner-options/lease-your-land.

The Trust is also an important resource for state, local, and federal policy research. For example, information about forming Agricultural Districts is available on the website at: farmlandinfo.org/policies-programs/enhance-agricultural-viability.

Private Grant Funding

Foundations have increasingly been funding projects that address the social determinants of health. While funding programs of individual foundations may change year-to-year, the portals and examples below offer potential suggestions.

Healthy Food Access Portal

The Healthy Food Access portal was created to better support communities seeking to launch healthy food retail projects. It offers a funding section including many direct links to current and ongoing granting opportunities healthyfoodaccess.org/funding.

American Community Garden Association

The American Community Garden Association has a list of funders that award grants for community garden projects. communitygarden.org/resources/funding-opportunities/.

Farmer's Market Coalition

The Farmer's Market Coalition website includes funding resources for Farmer's Markets and other community food projects. farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/funding-opportunities/

Mat-Su Health Foundation

Target Wellness and Healthy Impact Grants

Target Wellness Grant and Healthy impact grants are for projects up to and including \$15,000 which improve the health and wellness of people living in the Mat-Su Borough. Grant requests are accepted continuously throughout the year. Priority recipients are organizations or projects that are part of a local and statewide collaborative, and that demonstrate a commitment to diversity. www.healthymatsu.org/grants/grant-guidelines.

Healthy Schools Program

The Mat-Su Health Foundation's Healthy Schools grant program seeks to support schools by providing them with seed funds to implement and sustain a healthier schools environment. Schools that receive funding are required to convene a school wellness council, use the Healthy Schools Program Health index, and develop and implement an action plan and budget. <http://www.healthymatsu.org/grants/healthy-schools-program>.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson works to “support a Culture of Health” and has been a leader in philanthropy around active living grantmaking. Another area of giving focuses around health disparities. As such, projects that link local foods assets such as community gardens and farmer's markets with recreation and alternative transportation, and those that seek to narrow the gap in access to health amenities such as local foods, are potentially a fit with their giving. Rwjf.org

Kresge Foundation

Kresge's Developing Healthy Places focus area offers programs and grants to improve health in low income communities within American cities. In 2015, Kresge began the “Fresh, Local & Equitable” initiative which “seeks to foster economic vitality and cultural expression in low-income communities”. This program accepts grant proposals. One of the funded grants in 2016 explores development of a culinary corridor in Fresno, CA.

kresge.org/library/request-proposals-fresh-local-equitable-food-creative-platform-neighborhood-revitalization

Aetna Foundation

Through its focus on equitable health systems, Aetna Foundation funds “community groups that are advancing healthy eating and active living in homes, schools and neighborhoods. A

major part of this effort is connecting people of limited means with fresh fruits and vegetables...” For more information: aetna-foundation.org/grants-partnerships.html

W.K Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has a Food & Community giving area that supports “national and local partners to transform thinking about and approaches to early food and school food, to improve community access to good food and physical activity and to shape a national movement for healthy people, healthy farms, healthy communities and healthy economies.” For more information: wkkf.org/what-we-do/healthy-kids/food-and-community



Appendix F: Additional Resources and References

Local Food Systems Resources – National

USDA Know Your Farmer Know Your Food

The **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food** initiative is a USDA-wide effort to carry out the Department's commitment to strengthening local and regional food systems. The Know Your Farmer Know Your Food website provides a "one stop shop" for resources, from grants and loans to toolkits and guidebooks, from agencies and offices across the Department. The website also contains the Know Your Farmer Know Your Food Compass Map, which shows efforts supported by USDA and other federal partners as well as related information on local and regional food systems.

- <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/knownyourfarmer?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER>

Farmers' Markets General

USDA National Farmers Market Directory

Provides members of the public with convenient access to information about U.S. farmers' market locations, directions, operating times, product offerings, and accepted forms of payment.

- <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>

USDA's "National Farmers Market Manager Survey"

Nearly 1,300 farmers' market managers responded to this national survey conducted in 2006.

- <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/147043/2/Farmers%20Market%20Survey.pdf>

USDA's "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at Farmers Markets: A How-To Handbook"

This 2010 report from USDA describes how farmers' markets can accept SNAP benefits. SNAP is the federal government's nutritional assistance program. It was formerly known as food stamps.

- <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/SNAPat%20Farmers%20Markets%20Handbook.pdf>

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's "Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Bridging the Divide between Farmers Markets and Low-Income Shoppers."

This 2012 report from ASAP describes strategies for bridging the divide between farmers' markets and low income shoppers.

- <http://asapconnections.org/downloads/asap-farmers-market-access-guide.pdf>

Connecting Local Farmers with USDA Farmers Market Nutrition Program Participants

This 2010 report from USDA describes how providing transportation can help low-income individuals overcome barriers to accessing farmer's markets.

- <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Connecting%20Local%20Farmers%20with%20USDA%20Farmers%20Market%20Nutrition%20Program%20Participants.pdf>

Farmers' Markets Management

Oregon State University's "Understanding the Link Between Farmers' Market Size and Management Organization."

This report, supported by the USDA, explored internal management issues of farmers' markets and describes tools that can help make farmers' markets sustainable.

- <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/FMM/013APPJMarketSizeMgmtOrganization.pdf>

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's "25 Best Practices for Farmers' Markets."

This report describes 25 best practices in the areas of management, regulations, risk management, food safety, improving vendor sales, and marketing/outreach/promotion/social media.

- <http://asapconnections.org/downloads/market-makeover-25-best-practices-for-farmers-markets.pdf>

Food Hubs

USDA's "Moving Food Along the Value Chain: Innovations in Regional Food Distribution"

This 2012 report from USDA examined eight case studies of food value chains and provides some practical lessons about the challenges they face and lessons learned.

- <http://www.redtomato.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/USDA.pdf>

USDA's "Regional Food Hub Resource Guide"

USDA released this primer on food hubs and the resources available to support them in 2012.

- <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Regional%20Food%20Hub%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

Michigan State University's and Wallace Center's "State of the Food Hub – 2013 National Survey Results"

This survey of more than 100 food hubs across the United States quantifies the scope, scale, and impacts of local food hubs.

- <http://www.wallacecenter.org/resourcelibrary/state-of-the-food-hub-2013-national-survey-results>

Wholesome Wave's "Food Hub Business Assessment Toolkit"

The toolkit provides tools to assess a food hub businesses' readiness for investment.

- <http://www.wholesomewave.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/HFCI-Food-Hub-Business-Assessment-Toolkit.pdf>

Community Kitchens

Culinary Incubator's Community Kitchen Database

This site provides a description and interactive map of community kitchens across the United States.

- <http://www.culinaryincubator.com/maps.php>

Community Gardens

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Community Gardens Website

- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/community.htm>

Vermont Community Garden Network's Garden Organizer Toolkit

- <http://vcgn.org/garden-organizer-toolkit/>

Farm to School

USDA's Farm to School Website

USDA provides information on its website about Farm to School programs and how to get one started in your community.

- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/implementing-farm-school-activities>
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school>

Land Use

American Planning Association's (APA's) "Zoning for Urban Agriculture"

The APA in 2010 prepared an article on urban agriculture zoning in its March 2010 *Zoning Practice*.

- <https://urpl.wisc.edu/sites/urpl.wisc.edu/files/people/morales/Mukherji%20Morales%20ZP%20March%202010.pdf>

American Planning Association's (APA's) "Zoning for Public Markets and Street Vendors"

The APA also prepared an article on zoning for public markets in its February 2009 *Zoning Practice*.

- <https://urpl.wisc.edu/sites/urpl.wisc.edu/files/people/morales/ZPfeb09.pdf>

Other

CDC Report: Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States

Report documenting strategies to implement for obesity prevention.

- http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf

Food Value Chains: Creating Shared Value to Enhance Marketing Success

The report provides an overview of how food value chains are initiated, structured, how they function and the business advantages and challenges of this approach.

- <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Food%20Value%20Chains%20Creating%20Shared%20Value%20to%20Enhance%20Marketing%20Success.pdf>

Wholesale Markets and Facility Design

Provides technical assistance and support to customers regarding the construction of new structures or the remodeling of existing ones. These facilities include wholesale market, farmers markets, public markets, and food hubs.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=WFMWholesaleMarketsandFacilityDesign&description=Wholesale%20Markets%20and%20Facility%20Design&acct=facdsgn>

Organic Agriculture

USDA is committed to helping organic agriculture grow and thrive. This is a one-stop shop with information about organic certification and USDA-wide support for organic agriculture.

- www.usda.gov/organic

Fruit and Vegetable Audits

Audits for Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices can help producers access commercial markets by verifying that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&page=GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram>

USDA Certification for Small and Very Small Producers of Grass-fed Beef and Lamb

Allows small and very small-scale producers to certify that their animals meet the requirements of the grass-fed marketing claim standard, helping them differentiate themselves and communicate value to their customers.

- <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/grass-fed-SVS>

Local and Regional Market News

Provides reports on local and regional food outlets, providing producers and consumers with instant access to prices from farmers markets, farmers' auctions, food hubs, and direct-to-consumer sales, providing support to even the smallest farmers and producers.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/MarketNewsLocalRegional>

Food Co-op Resources

How to start a food co-op manual

- <http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop/library/start-a-food-coop>

State Resources

Alaska Grown

The annual Alaska Grown Source Book - a resource for local food and farm products.

- dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/sourcebookindex2014.html

Agricultural Land Sales

The Division of Agriculture sells state ag land for the purpose of enhancing and expanding the agricultural industry in the state.

- dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm

Alaska Plant Materials Center

The PMC develops and transfers plant science technology to support the industry.

- Plants.alaska.gov

Marketing Services

The marketing team provides a variety of resources including Alaska Grown certifications, On Farm Food Safety Workshops, and the Farm to School program.

On Farm Food Safety workshops

The Division of Agriculture offers periodic half-day workshops to educate produce growers about food safety practices in the field and after harvest to minimize risk of foodborne illnesses.

- dnr.alaska.gov/ag

Kenai Food Hub

The Kenai Peninsula Food Hub is an aggregator and online marketplace of locally grown, harvested, and produced foods and crafts. Farmers, fishers, craftsfolk, and more benefit from the marketing, selling, and delivering of their products. The marketplace brings fresh, healthy, locally grown and produced food and handmade crafts to you, the buyer, in a cost-effective manner on a weekly basis.

- <https://kenaipeninsula.localfoodmarketplace.com/>



Appendix G:

Press Coverage

http://www.frontiersman.com/news/epa-chooses-palmer-for-local-foods-local-places-with-good/article_b30349b0-5553-11e6-b450-63d720e951e4.html

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PREVIOUS

2016 primary: Last hacks

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NEXT UP

Jumping for Juneau: Municipal pols taking their shots at state office

TOP STORY

EPA chooses Palmer for ‘Local Foods, Local Places’ with good reason

By Matt Hickman Frontiersman.com Jul 28, 2016



Attendees at the “Local Foods, Local Places” event at the Palmer Train Depot discuss findings.

PALMER — As a state that imports as much as 90 percent of its food, Alaska would be a logical choice for one of the Environmental Protection Agency's "Local Foods, Local Places" 27 destinations.

And as to which Alaska city would be optimum, Palmer, with its thriving downtown farmers market scene — not to mention the world's largest cabbages — was a natural fit. On Tuesday and Wednesday, national, regional and local experts occupied the train depot brainstorming ideas to improve the area's food security and its residents' opportunities to make sound food choices.

"The people in Palmer are excited about agriculture and proud of their agricultural heritage and have done a good job building on strengths," said Geoff Alexander, representing the EPA's Washington D.C. office. "Surely, in Alaska, as far as food scarcity, it's really high. It really adds importance to food security and gives people more of a chip on their shoulder. They really want to maximize every opportunity they have... the consequences are right in front of you."

There were 340 cities nationwide that applied to be part of the program, and the individual most credited with throwing Palmer's hat in the ring was Grow Palmer director Jan Newman.

"We feel pretty blessed to have all these federal and private parties up here to help us build a coalition that, collaboratively, can come together to see happen what we want to happen with our food system," Newman said. "Palmer is definitely the breadbasket of Alaska. A majority of farmland is available and we have incredible tillage, but that farmland is slowly being gobbled up by (development)."

Nearing the end of day two of the workshop, which culminated in the harvesting of two days of brainstorming splayed along the walls on butcher paper coalesced into a tight, cohesive and workable strategy, Newman was encouraged by what she'd seen.

"(Tuesday) night we all agreed we need more farmers on smaller active parcels — we need more farmers in Alaska to produce more food in Alaska," Newman said. "We need to build the agricultural identity of Palmer in different arenas — getting more local food into restaurants and into households, particularly of low income households... Hospitals should have more local food; schools should have more local food. We need to create that identity of Palmer, and also in tourism, we can build a food identity."

Erica Heller came from Denver on invitation from the EPA, representing the Progressive Urban Management Associates, of which she's vice president.

"Food brings in so many people from the community on so many different levels, from the personal to the big picture," Heller said. "The community chooses what it's going to work on, who's going to do what, and start to really get an action plan to move the community forward and move forward with a shared vision. With a shared vision, they're more able to move forward and seek funding."

Newman sees the opportunity for a renaissance of agriculture in a state that just a few decades ago produced at least half of its own food.

“Palmer is the only town in the state that grew from agriculture,” Newman said. “Everything grows here. Maybe we don’t grow watermelon and only a small amount of corn, but we have a pretty diverse group of crops that can grow.”

As for Alexander, he’s in no rush to get back to the Beltway.

“The first thing you notice is how beautiful it is,” he said, noting he made sure to get his picture taken with Palmer’s giant cabbage sculpture. “In fact, I’m taking a few days to stay after this.”

The 27 partner communities for the EPA’s 2016 “Local Food, Local Places” are:

Baltimore, Maryland

Bessemer, Alabama

Christiansburg, Virginia

Connellsville, Pennsylvania

Crisfield, Maryland

Dallas, Texas

Denver, Colorado

Fresno, California

Gainesville, Missouri

Gary, Indiana

Gloucester, Massachusetts

Greeley, Colorado

Henderson, Nevada

High Point, North Carolina

Honolulu, Hawaii

Jackson, Tennessee

Keeseville, New York

Lake Village, Arkansas

Martin, Tennessee

Memphis, Tennessee

Middlesboro, Kentucky

Mission, South Dakota

Palmer, Alaska

Passaic, New Jersey

Rainelle, West Virginia

Walterboro, South Carolina

Winder, Georgia

http://www.frontiersman.com/news/grow-palmer-hosting-food-workshop-edible-rail-trail-in-place/article_c5af2048-514d-11e6-814b-1bdefec18905.html

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Grow Palmer hosting food workshop; edible rail trail in place

BY STEVEN MERRITT Frontiersman.com Jul 23, 2016



STEVEN MERRITT/Frontiersman

Phase I of Grow Palmer's edible rail trail along South Valley Way is complete, as seen in this photo taken Friday, July 22. The grc

PALMER — It has been a busy spring and summer for Grow Palmer, the grassroots, urban agriculture project that literally turns downtown Palmer into a “you pick” outlet every harvest season.

Along with unveiling its new “edible rail trail” along the South Valley Way bike path near the Palmer Depot, the group was selected as one of 27 civic organizations nationwide to host a “Local Foods, Local Places” public work session aimed at promoting local food access and economic opportunity in the city.

Grow Palmer director Jan Newman said in an email Thursday that the two-day workshop runs from 3-6 p.m. July 26 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 27 at the Palmer Depot. A special session for local growers has been set for 6:30-8 p.m. July 26, Newman added, for those producers busy with their harvests during the day. Anyone interested in any session is welcome to attend, Newman said.

The full-day session will be led by a consultant team from Progressive Urban Management Associates, a Colorado-based group which specializes in designing local food systems. The consultants will craft an action plan around the input and ideas generated during the community discussion, according to Newman.

“Our overall goals are to nurture a culture of food production that brings residents together to learn about growing, local agricultural history, gathering, preserving, preparing and savoring good food,” Newman wrote. “It is this basic awareness of, and connection to, food production, combined with a strong sense of community connection, that will do the most to promote economic growth and self-reliance.”

She said confirmed participants include representatives from the Division of Agriculture, the Alaska Farmland Trust, AARP, the City of Palmer, the Mat-Su Borough and NeighborWorks Alaska.

“We are also expecting landscape architects, land planners and designers, farmers and ranchers, restaurateurs, local business owners, gardeners and community members,” she said.

Palmer was selected from some 340 applicants to be one of the sites chosen for the nationwide workshops, Newman said. Progressive Urban Management Associates works with a broad range of cities and their needs, Newman said.

“I know some (cities) are interested in developing a farmers market and others, a community garden,” she said.

Anyone interested in attending any of the workshops is urged to RSVP Newman at growpalmer@gmail.com or 232-5016.

Grow Palmer’s hectic summer can be somewhat summed up visually these days. The barrels and other garden plots scattered around downtown Palmer that hold vegetables free for the picking are bursting with produce.

Newman said phase I of the edible rail trail was complete. The group was forced to move its edible park from a donated plot near the Salvation Army building this year after the land was sold. Fred Meyer donated many of the round, whale-themed concrete planters left over from the old Pioneer Square Mall property, which were installed along the rail trail by City of Palmer public works employees. An irrigation system was then installed which is fed by city water, Newman said.

“The planters were then filled with soil and in late June and were finally planted,” Newman said. “Volunteers participated in every step of the process from shoveling and compacting gravel for the site work, to hauling soil, designing planting areas and finally planting. ”

Newman said the group hoped to install the sign, which was retrieved from the edible park, along the rail trail within the next few days. Phase 2 of the rail trail is in the design stages, she added.

As for harvesting, Newman said the time is now, adding that

“The gardens are thriving,” she said. “The planting areas along South Alaska Street in front of the Depot and in all the barrel planters along the sidewalk are full of lettuce, kale, kohlrabi, squash, zucchini, edible flowers and herbs. Some items in the edible rail trail are also ready to sample.

“Anywhere you see the Grow Palmer logo means you are welcome to harvest and sample the food.”

Contact reporter Steven Merritt at 352-2269 or steven.merritt@frontiersman.com

Radio Free Palmer Interview

<http://www.radiofreepalmer.org/2016/07/29/local-foods-community-event-7-26-27-2016/>

July 29, 2016

Local Foods Community Event 7.26 -27 2016

Mike Chmielewski interviewed participants, organizers and facilitators of a two day gathering looking at how local foods production could be encouraged.

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Mike Chmielewski interviewed participants, organizers and facilitators of a two day gathering looking at how local foods production could be encouraged.

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JUST PLAYED

11:04am
Daniel Barenboim
"Mendelssohn: Song Without Words #1 In A Flat, Op. 53" from Mendelssohn: Songs Without Words [Disc 1]

10:59am
Wolfgang Kussmaul, Ernst Mayer-Schieming, Jurgen Kussmaul; Helmut Winscherman: German Bach Soloists "Bach: Concerto in D Minor For 3 Harpsichords, BWV 1063 - 3. Allegro" from *The Four Seasons & Other Baroque Treasures* [Disc 6]

10:54am
Herbert Kegel: Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra "Beethoven: Symphony #8 In F, Op. 93 - 2. Allegretto Scherzando" from *Beethoven: Symphonies* [Disc 4]