



Community Action Plan for Norfolk, Virginia

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

February 2022



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>

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COMMUNITY STORY

Located in Southeastern Virginia, the City of Norfolk covers 54 square miles with coastlines along the Chesapeake Bay and Elizabeth River.¹ Norfolk was established as a trade center in 1682 and served as a trade outlet for many years before shipbuilding became a major industry.² Norfolk was destroyed by colonial troops during the Revolutionary War to prevent occupation by the British; only St. Paul's church survived, and the rest of the city had to be rebuilt.³ Generations later, following the Civil War, Norfolk returned to prosperity in 1880 as a major railway hub and port city. World Wars I and II brought about the installation of the world's largest naval base, which still operates today.⁴

The Local Foods, Local Places effort focused on two areas within Norfolk: the St. Paul's neighborhood, and the Southside neighborhood. These communities are located on either side of the Elizabeth River and are connected by two bridges. The St. Paul's neighborhood of Norfolk has more than 1,600 public housing units and is home to over 5,000 residents. 95% of the residents in this area are minorities, and 75% live in poverty. Also, 60% of residents do not have access to a vehicle.⁵ The Southside neighborhood of Norfolk has more than 600 public housing units and is home to over 8,000 residents. 96% of these residents are minorities, and 37% live in poverty. About 28% of residents in this area do not have access to a vehicle.⁶

Both identified areas struggle with insufficient access to fresh and local foods. The Save-a-Lot grocery store located in the St. Paul's area closed in 2020. The Farm



Figure 1 – Skyline view of downtown Norfolk. Photo credit: City of Norfolk.



Figure 2 – Neighborhood residents and advocates celebrate the opening of a neighborhood market in the St. Paul's neighborhood. Photo Credit: St. Paul's Community Development Corporation.

¹ US Census population Quick Facts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/norfolkcityvirginia>. Accessed Nov. 30, 2021.

² Britannica. "Norfolk". <https://www.britannica.com/place/Norfolk-Virginia>. Accessed Nov. 30, 2021.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sharak, Robert, City of Norfolk, "Local Foods, Local Places 2020-2021 Application." Nov. 13, 2020.

⁶ Ibid.

Fresh grocery store located in the Southside area closed in 2018. Residents with limited vehicle access must often rely on walking long distances or taking public transportation to secure groceries. The only nearby food retail options are convenience stores and mini marts, which often do not stock fresh food or produce.

Several efforts are already underway to address food insecurity and food access in Norfolk. The Nutritional Equity Fund was started in August 2020, which provides grants to grocery store operators willing to open stores in affected areas.⁷ The Fund also provides money for training and incentives to encourage individuals to enter the grocery industry. Grants are available for smaller stores in need of equipment or renovations, as well as those looking to open a mobile market, farm stand, or co-op. Norfolk has also considered converting a Hampton Roads Transit bus into a mobile farmers' market, which would travel to local growers in the area to purchase fresh food and produce that would then be sold at weekend markets in high-need areas.

In 2020, Norfolk requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for promoting local food systems and healthy, walkable, economically vibrant communities. The goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program are to create:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- Revitalized downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods.

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Northern Border Regional Commission. Norfolk was one of 13 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2021.

A Local Foods, Local Places steering committee was formed in Norfolk in preparation for this technical assistance award and is comprised of a variety of community partners (see Figure 3). They were supported by a technical assistance team comprised of consultants and multiple federal partners (Figure 4). The Steering

Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

- **Robert Sharak**, City of Norfolk
- **Sean Washington**, City of Norfolk
- **Dr. Susan Perry**, City of Norfolk
- **Katie White**, City of Norfolk
- **Oneiceia Howard**, City of Norfolk
- **Robert Stephens**, St. Paul's Community Development Corporation
- **Leahmarie Gottlieb**, St. Paul's Community Development Corporation
- **Orlando Artze**, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- **Paula Kerr**, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore
- **Bob Latvis**, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore
- **Bev Sell**, FEAST Virginia
- **Jacqueline Glass**, Mayor's Commission on Social Equity

Figure 3 - Steering committee members.

⁷ Sharak, Robert, City of Norfolk, "Local Foods, Local Places 2020-2021 Application." Nov. 13. 2020.

Committee identified four primary goals for the process: to achieve equity and opportunity, to improve food access, to enhance the capacity of food-related initiatives, and to support health and wellness.

The remainder of this report and appendices document the engagement process, the workshop activities, and most importantly, the outcome: a community action plan to achieve Norfolk’s goals.

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- Samantha Beers, EPA Region 3
- Betty Barnes, EPA Region 3
- Sasha Pokrovskaya, USDA AMS
- Karl Hacker, USDA AMS
- Will Cockrell, EPR (consultant)
- Matthew Rehnberg, EPR (consultant)
- Ebony Walden, Ebony Walden Consulting (consultant)

Figure 4 - Technical assistance team.

ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 5 below. The “plan” phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the steering committee and technical assistance team to clarify goals and arrange workshop logistics. The “convene” phase includes the effort’s capstone event—a three-day workshop in the community. The “act” phase includes three follow up conference calls to finalize a community action plan and strategize on how to maintain momentum generated during the workshop. The community workshop was held over a three-day period from November 8, 2021, until November 10, 2021, and the activities those days are described below. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, workshop attendees sheets are provided in **Appendix B**, funding resources in **Appendix C**, and general references in **Appendix D**.

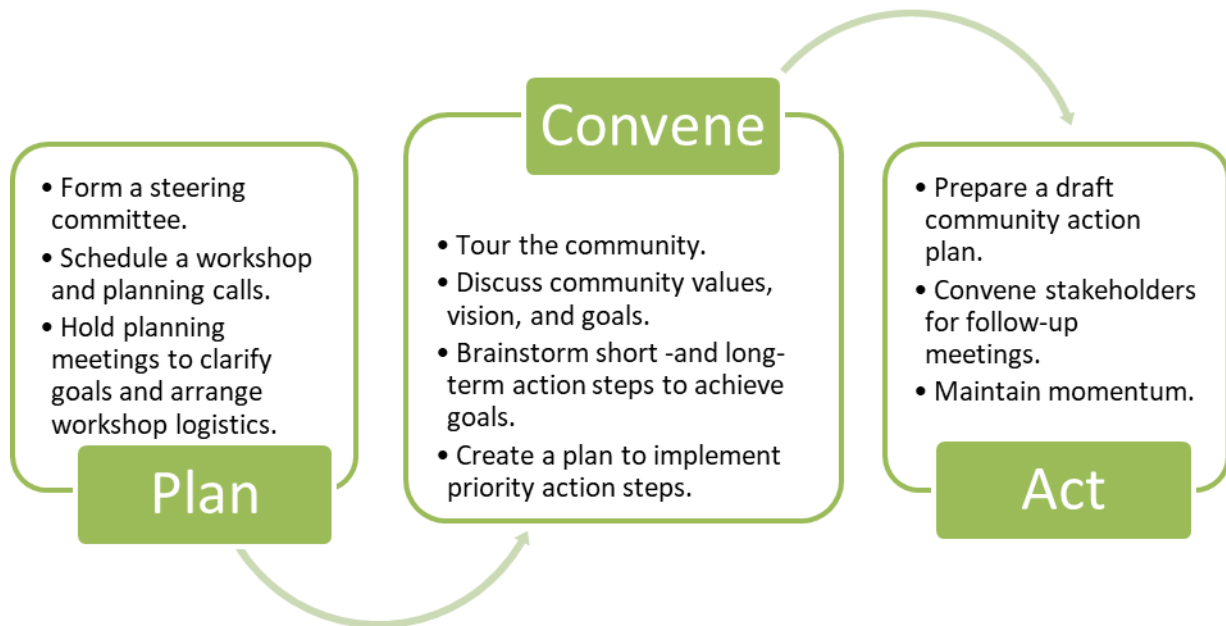


Figure 5 - Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance process diagram.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

Seven virtual working sessions were held from November 8 - November 10, 2021. The opening session began with introductions from each attendee, who expressed what most excited them about the process in one to three words. An overview of the Local Foods, Local Places program and process followed the introductions. After the program overview, the technical assistance team introduced the four workshop goals.

The local steering committee then offered an overview of what the city and local organizations have been working on, which centered around common goals (Figure 7). Some of the highlights of this discussion included the Department of Housing and Community Development describing their partnership with the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority and the Foodbank to distribute over 35,000 pounds of food in public housing communities. They also partnered with World Central Kitchen and local restaurants to provide meals to families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Economic Development identified a new grocery store operator for the Berkley Shopping Center and provided grant funding to bring the grocery store online. The Mayor's Commission on Social Equity and Economic Opportunity has been identifying where investments are needed for health and food security using data on health outcomes in the community.

The participating non-profit organizations also described their work. St. Paul's Community Development Corporation recently launched the Norfolk Food Ecosystem and Food Pharmacy Programs, as well as the Norfolk Empowerment Corps. The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore has been providing food to those in need; opened food hubs, which serve as small client-choice grocery stores; and started mobile

Virtual Workshop Agenda

- Session 1 – Vision and Values – Mon., November 8, 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM EST*
- Session 2 – Case Story Sharing – Mon., November 8, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM EST*
- Session 3 – Small Group Exercises – Mon., November 8, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM EST*
- Session 4 – Action Brainstorming – Tues., November 9, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM EST*
- Session 5 – Action Prioritization – Tues., November 9, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM EST*
- Session 6 – Action Detailing – Wed., November 10, 9:30 AM – 11:30 PM EST*
- Session 7 – Report Out/Next Steps – Wed., November 10, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM EST*

Figure 6 – Seven session virtual workshop format

Common Goals

- Community Engagement
- Eliminating Food Insecurity
- Healthy Food Access
- Community Business Development
- Nutritional Education
- Building Community Capacity

Figure 7 – Common goals identified by the city and local organizations

markets, which reach areas with food access issues. FEAST Virginia has provided a 12-week wellness program that combines food education, food access, and group support.

Opportunities

- Several organizations already working in the community
- Food Ecosystem Initiative could serve as a forum for local partners to work together
- Existing partnerships with schools and medical clinics could be leveraged to expand food distribution and education programming
- Demand analysis created a model for the food access space, provides support for funding
- Social enterprising models like Every Table

Figure 8 – A sampling of opportunities identified during the workshop exercises.

Challenges

- Limited communication or coordination of efforts between organizations working on these issues
- Limited capacity to measure or track health and equity outcomes
- Lack of strong business models for local farms and retail markets
- Rapidly losing local farmers
- Need coordination between healthcare and food access
- Lack of culturally inclusive programming
- Need regional community food assessment – identify where food is and will be coming from in the future

Figure 9 – A sampling of challenges identified during the workshop exercises.

Stories, Exercises, and Brainstorming

The first day sessions included case stories and small group exercises. Case stories were presented on mobile markets in Flint, Michigan and Somerville, Massachusetts, as well as for commercial or shared kitchens, including No More Empty Pots (Omaha, Nebraska) and Spice Bridge (Tukwila, Washington). The technical assistance team also overviewed two initiatives operating locally in Virginia. These included the Richmond Food Justice Alliance, a resident-led movement that trains food access advocates, and the Ginter Urban Gardener Program, which develops community garden managers and provides both gardening and life skills. Around each case story, questions were asked and fielded, often using the chat to share ideas or other examples.

Attendees then participated in a brainstorming exercise to identify and discuss assets and challenges related to the four goals. The assets included things working well in Norfolk to build on the food economy and revitalize the St. Paul's and Southside areas. The challenges included existing barriers to achieving the goals and what would be needed to overcome those barriers. The small group exercise helped the attendees to think about specific actions that could support the workshop goals within the next couple of years.

The technical assistance team asked attendees to brainstorm actions overnight for how to advance the community's goals. The second day's session started with participants reviewing and clarifying the brainstormed actions.

Visioning Headlines from the Future

- **Norfolk Has Eliminated Food Apartheid**
- **Norfolk Food Access Study Shows Health Improvements Across Zip Codes**
- **Norfolk Creates Food Ecosystem to Modernize Local Food System**
- **Longtime Residents of Southside Neighborhood Break Ground on Their Community Fresh Food Collective Market**
- **Urban Agriculture Brings Business Opportunities to Norfolk**
- **Obesity and Type II Diabetes Rate Lowered in Norfolk**
- **Norfolk Provides Large Scale Access to Fresh, Nutritious Affordable Food Through Landmark Organizational Collaboration**
- **Norfolk Becomes Leader in Food Social Entrepreneurship and Ends Food Apartheid**
- **Norfolk Makes Healthy Food as Accessible as Fast Food**
- **Norfolk Named Healthiest City in US: Improvements Made Across the City**
- **Nutritional improvements made in each neighborhood**
- **Expect life expectancy up and healthcare expenditures down**

Figure 10 – Visioning exercise where participants were asked to draft a headline of a positive future news story, 3-5 years from now.

Prioritization, Detailing, Wrap up

The second day session focused on prioritizing the actions proposed by the workshop participants. The technical assistance team categorized actions by goal. For each of the four goals, attendees could vote on three or four actions they were most excited about or thought needed to happen first.

The third day sessions included action detailing and a wrap up session. Attendees spent time working on each prioritized action to identify its purpose, role, timeframe, responsible parties, resources needed and measures of success. A wrap-up session concluded the workshop series.

POST-WORKSHOP

After the workshop, the steering and technical committee held three additional meetings to review, refine, and finalize the action tables started during the workshop. These calls occurred between November 23 and December 21, 2021. Several notable changes or developments happened during this period, including:

- The steering committee confirmed its intention to continue meeting as a group after the conclusion of the official Local Foods, Local Places process. The committee acknowledged, however, the need to extend invitations to other local food advocates and leaders who may have had no or limited participation in this initial program.
- Lisa Winter, the Senior Director of School Nutrition for Norfolk Public Schools, offered numerous insights and observations to improve the actions related to school meals programs. She and the School Nutrition staff support the effort, but have requested to be included in the steering committee and to hold lead or supportive roles in all efforts related to their work.
- Paula Kerr left her position at the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore in the weeks following the workshop. Steering committee members met with Kevin Heard from the Foodbank to discuss their organization’s continuing participation in this effort. The Foodbank has agreed to remain active in the effort but will continue to assess their roles in specific actions as time moves forward.
- Robert Stephens, the President and CEO of St. Paul’s Community Development Corporation and one of the leading voices of the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee, passed away unexpectedly after the final steering committee call. His passing is a significant loss for the steering committee and the Norfolk community. Leah Gottlieb stepped into his leadership role and reaffirmed the CDC’s commitment to the Local Foods, Local Places plan. This document is dedicated to Robert Stephens and his devotion to the region.

ACTION PLAN

The goals and supporting actions developed through the workshop are listed below. The tables that follow provide additional detail for each action.

- **Goal 1: Equity and Opportunity—** Support programs and policies that remove discriminatory barriers and promote equal access to health, affordable foods, economic prosperity, and entrepreneurial opportunities.
 - *Action 1.1* – Establish a Food Policy Council to offer guidance to Planning, Neighborhood Services, and other City of Norfolk departments.
 - *Action 1.2* – Complete a full Food Assessment to include Norfolk and neighboring localities.
 - *Action 1.3* – Map assets to identify existing resources and avoid duplication of efforts.
 - *Action 1.4* – Support small format stores that offer fresh perishable groceries, produce, and prepared foods that are sized, stocked, and staffed to meet the needs of the local community.

- Goal 2: Food Access— Improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods through partnerships with local farms and innovative distribution and retail models.
 - *Action 2.1* – Promote and expand participation in universal free school meals through advocacy and legislative efforts.
 - *Action 2.2* – Pursue partnerships with local medical practices to develop Neighborhood Food Clinics.
 - *Action 2.3* – Create or expand financial incentives that would encourage local farmers to increase their distribution and sales of fresh and healthy foods to local schools and markets.
 - *Action 2.4* – Work with farmers markets in the Tidewater region to expand acceptance of SNAP match programs.

- Goal 3: Enhanced Capacity— Promote partnerships among local organizations and with state and federal programs to increase the financial and operational capacity of food-related initiatives.
 - *Action 3.1* – Create opportunities for partnerships between School Nutrition and local businesses and organizations by educating potential partners about School Nutrition’s mission, vision, and federal requirements.
 - *Action 3.2* – Establish a collaborative space for local food vendors and farmers that can be used for education, vending, and engagement opportunities within the community.
 - *Action 3.3* – Maintain the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee to further develop and build partnerships.
 - *Action 3.4* – Develop a business plan for the Local Foods, Local Places Action Plan that provides a budget for all of the proposed activities.

- Goal 4: Health and Wellness— Improve health and wellness outcomes among area residents by improving dietary practices, enhancing health system access, and providing culturally relevant education and training programs.
 - *Action 4.1* – Clearly define health outcome goals for the community to establish standard measures of success that can be referenced by all health-related efforts.
 - *Action 4.2* – Start to change the “public palate” through food education activities such as cooking demonstrations, nutrition classes, and tasting events.
 - *Action 4.3* – Expand the capacity of the Food Pharmacy Program to target and track the health outcomes of participants with chronic illnesses.

GOAL 1: Equity and Opportunity— Support programs and policies that remove discriminatory barriers and promote equal access to health, affordable foods, economic prosperity, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Public health outcomes are largely determined by access to resources like quality foods and medical care. Consequently, any effort to improve health must also address the physical, political, economic, and social conditions that determine a community’s access to these resources. The actions included under Goal 1 seek to increase access through the combined work of removing barriers and creating new opportunities for the residents of the Southside and St. Paul’s neighborhoods. These actions build on the work and findings of efforts such as the Mayor’s Commission on Social Equity and Economic Opportunity, the Department of Economic Development’s Demand Analysis Report, and the Norfolk Food Ecosystem.

| Action 1.1: Establish a Food Policy Council to offer guidance to Planning, Neighborhood Services, and other City of Norfolk departments. | |
|---|---|
| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | A Food Policy Council is an officially recognized body that offers guidance and recommendations to city governments on food-related initiatives. It would include both residents and people working in the local food ecosystem. It would help create official policies that support the community’s food-related goals, encourage collaboration among local food advocates, and offer a greater voice to people who historically have not been involved or included in public policy formation. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the steering committee review Bailey Mennona’s research on Food Policy Councils to better understand their structure, process, responsibilities, goals, and funding sources. • Identify potential members and existing related efforts. • Identify key barriers and challenges. • Develop an appropriate council model for Norfolk, including council size, representation, recommended policies, regulations, and programs to move forward. (<u>By 3/31/22</u>) • Coordinate with the Mayor’s office and the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee to establish an official proposal and gain a City resolution to set up the council. (6-24 months) |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC/Norfolk Food Ecosystem • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey Mennona, Tidewater Food Alliance • Bev Sell, FEAST • Kip Poole, The Crop Foundation • Lisa Winter, Norfolk Public Schools School Nutrition • Libby Lyon, Roots and Rows • Karen Bailey, Youth Earn and Learn • Karen Munden, Virginia Cooperative Extension • City Government representative (TBD) |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood Service Representative, City of Norfolk (TBD) • Citizen Representatives (TBD) • Public Health Professional (TBD) |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Government liaison to report to the Food Policy Council. • Documentation of local food-supportive zoning strategies. • Partnership opportunities for leveraging resources. |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of Council Document prepared by St. Paul’s CDC (<u>By 3/31/22</u>) • Food Policy Council to be set up and actively meeting within 24 months |

| Action 1.2: Complete a full Food Assessment to include Norfolk and neighboring localities. | |
|---|---|
| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | A community food assessment (CFA) documents food needs and opportunities and identifies key elements contributing to social determinants of health. It identifies areas with limited access to fresh and healthy foods, and guides decision makers in efforts to aid and intervene. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Steering Committee Members engage and understand the existing efforts of a local group working on Food Assessments • Secure Healthy Places by Design as a 3rd party consultant (3 months) • Coordinate efforts with Tidewater Food Alliance and Old Dominion University • Complete food assessment (2 years) |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC • Bailey Mennona, Tidewater Food Alliance • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sean Washington, City of Norfolk • Dr. Leslie Hogle, Old Dominion University • Amy Drewry, Drewry Farms • Representative, United Way (TBD) • Group - Healthy Equity of Hampton Roads (Includes SPCDC, City Health, Dr. Hogle/ODU, and VDH) |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and volunteers through Old Dominion University • Food Assessment funding through Caleb Miller of Healthy Chesapeake/City of Chesapeake • Norfolk Demand Analysis (existing) • Food Assessment Overview: Link to Document |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term: Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee completes a Norfolk Food Assessment that serves as a pilot model that can be replicated in other jurisdictions • Mid-Term: Share pilot model with other participating localities • Long-Term: Support efforts to complete a food assessment for the 7 Cities/in other participating localities |

| Action 1.3: Map assets to identify existing resources and avoid duplication of efforts. | |
|--|--|
| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | Asset mapping identifies the locations of resources, information, and assistance programs that provide access to healthy foods. The resulting map can be used by residents to find stores or programs that offer healthy foods and can also be used by local food advocates to identify areas that lack resources and programs. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the steering committee complete an initial asset map (1 month) • Create a marketing schedule to communicate resources and information to the community using social media and other communication formats. (1 year) |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bev Sell, FEAST Virginia • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC • Bailey Mennona, Tidewater Food Alliance • Dr. Leslie Hogle, Old Dominion University • Dr. Sharon Alston, Norfolk State University • Lisa Jackson, Sentara Medical Group • Dr. Andrew Plunk, Eastern Virginia Medical School |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and volunteers from Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and Tidewater Community College. • In-kind time and resources of steering committee members. |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regularly updated food system map that provides a clear visual of the local food system. • An official communication plan/program used to inform the community of available resources. • A unified branding for the local food system. |

| Action 1.4: Support small format stores that offer fresh perishable groceries, produce, and prepared foods that are sized, stocked, and staffed to meet the needs of the local community. | |
|--|---|
| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | This action involves a business development initiative that would provide technical and financial assistance to people interested in establishing small format or mobile markets in low-income neighborhoods or communities of color. Prior studies in Norfolk have determined that these types of markets are more sustainable and efficient in these neighborhoods than large format, big-box grocery stores. By helping to establish these markets, the effort would increase the accessibility of healthy foods in underserved neighborhoods. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain support from the City of Norfolk and secure additional business development funding. • Coordinate business development efforts with the Food Pharmacy program to expand access to healthy foods. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC/Norfolk Food Ecosystem • Sean Washington, Economic Development Authority, City of Norfolk |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aleea Slappy Wilson, Chief Office of DEI, City of Norfolk• Bev Sell, FEAST Virginia (Food Education)• Ryan Payne, My Commissary Kitchen• Andrew Knezovich, My Commissary Kitchen |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listing of sites of existing brick-and-mortar stores that could be revitalized.• Richmond Case Study: The Corner Store Initiative |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase of program resources to fund and expand business assistance.• Increased numbers of food markets serving the St. Paul's and Southside neighborhoods. |

Goal 2: Food Access— Improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods through partnerships with local farms and innovative distribution and retail models.

A community’s access to fresh, healthy, and local foods depends not only the work of farmers, but on markets and programs that are able to effectively distribute the foods that they harvest. The actions listed under Goal 2 include efforts to both improve existing channels of distribution and create new opportunities to provide residents with access to these foods. They seek to address a wide variety of settings and distribution models, including school cafeterias, medical clinics, and farmers markets.

| Action 2.1: Promote and expand participation in universal free school meals through advocacy and legislative efforts. | |
|--|---|
| What this is, why it is, important, and who benefits | Support the efforts of Norfolk Public Schools’ (NPS) School Nutrition to increase awareness and participation of all students in federal meals programs. School meal programs are well established and can serve as an effective tool to increase access to healthy foods. Children receive the benefit of a consistent source of healthy food, and their families are relieved of some of the financial burden of food costs. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene representatives of Norfolk Public Schools, community organizations, and state agencies to identify opportunities for collaboration. • Support the promotion and marketing of child nutrition programs offered by NPS School Nutrition to increase participation. • Organize programming such as cooking demonstrations and food education at summer meal pick up sites. • Coordinate with the Foodbank to leverage existing programming. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Winter, Director of School Nutrition, Norfolk Public Schools • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeast Virginia and the Eastern Shore |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kip Poole, The Crop Foundation • Food Policy Council - Potential Food Policy Director (TBD) • Libby Lyon, Roots and Rows |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Farm to School program • Existing waiver programs • Funding through American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of students participating in school meal programs • Food education programming provided at summer pick up sites |

| Action 2.2: Pursue partnerships with local medical practices to develop Neighborhood Food Clinics. | |
|---|---|
| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | A neighborhood food clinic combines a food market and a health clinic in a single facility that is located directly within a neighborhood. This model offers a holistic approach to health that combines nutrition and medical care, and can also serve as a venue for classes on food preparation, exercise, and preventable disease care. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a conversation with Dr. Newby of Sentara to develop the concept. • Identify existing programs and resources that already exist in this space. • Clarify ideas, goals, and focus areas. • Identify partners and potential locations. • Identify funding sources and create a budget. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore • Bev Sell, FEAST Virginia • Jackie Glass, Mayor’s Commission on Social Equity and Economic Opportunity |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Keith Newby, Health Equity Director, Sentara Medical Group • Lara Zawacki, St. Paul’s CDC • Bobby Booker, St. Paul’s CDC • Libby Lyon, Roots and Rows • Karen Bailey, Youth Earn and Learn • Kip Poole, The Crop Foundation • Dr. Anna People’s, People’s Pharmacy • Jane Glasgo, Minus 9 to 5 |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of existing programs and assets in area of food and health. • List of farmer’s markets that are accessible to people that receive benefits. • People’s Pharmacy Diabetic Clinic Program • Resource: Elizabeth River Trail Foundation |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one pilot location or expansion of an existing location of a health clinic that has a food/nutrition focused element. • Reduction in preventable diseases like hypertension and diabetes. • Expansion of the food pharmacy program to medical clinics. |

Action 2.3: Create or expand financial incentives that would encourage local farmers to increase their distribution and sales of fresh and healthy foods to local schools and markets.

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| <p>What this is, why it is, important, and who benefits</p> | <p>This action would grow the Farm to School Network to increase the use of local foods in school cafeterias and meal programs. It would be used to help overcome some of the business and financial barriers that otherwise discourage local foods from being sold to school systems. Example strategies would include finding ways to incentivize and train farmers and local growers to sell their products to schools and/or distributors that are partnered with the school system. These partnerships would support local farms and also increase the access of children to fresh and healthy foods.</p> |
| <p>Initial steps and timeframe</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with NPS School Nutrition to identify challenges and opportunities related to the sale of local foods to public schools. • Support the creation of a food policy director and/or provide staff dedicated to the advancement of the local food system. • Conduct an assessment of infrastructure, transportation, and other barriers that limit access to healthy foods. |
| <p>Lead or catalytic role</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Winter, Norfolk Public Schools School Nutrition Director |
| <p>Supporting cast</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libby Lyon, Roots and Rows • Karen Munden, Virginia Cooperative Extension • Representative, AmeriCorps/FoodCorps (TBD) • Bee Thorp, MA, Virginia Farm to School Committee (TBD) • Tammy Moxey, VA Ag in the Classroom |
| <p>Potential needs and resources</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Farm to School Grant (Planning and Implementation) • Established relationships with local produce distributors |
| <p>Measures of success</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased quantities of local foods sold to Norfolk Public Schools • Increase in the number of local farms selling products to Norfolk Public Schools |

Action 2.4: Work with farmers markets in the Tidewater region to expand acceptance of SNAP match programs.

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| <p>What this is, why it is important, and who benefits</p> | <p>Provide technical and financial assistance to farmers and farmers market managers to increase the acceptance of SNAP/Fresh Match benefits in the Tidewater region. Currently, many farmers markets and vendors do not accept these benefits due to factors such as delayed payments and increased administrative paperwork. Expanding these programs would allow more low-income residents to have access to fresh and healthy foods, as well as expand the market demand for local foods.</p> |
| <p>Initial steps and timeframe</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange conversations with local farmers and market managers to identify the barriers and constraints that discourage them from accepting SNAP/related benefits. • Conduct a cost-benefit analysis for farmers to identify opportunities. • Begin fundraising for a “gap” fund that could provide financial support to farmers who accept SNAP benefits. |
| <p>Lead or catalytic role</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC/Norfolk Food Ecosystem • Bailey Mennona, Tidewater Food Alliance |
| <p>Supporting cast</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heidi Glass, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore • Shelley Barlow, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services • Volunteers/Nutrition Students |
| <p>Potential needs and resources</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Fresh Match: Program Webpage • Creation of a subsidy fund to make up revenue differences for farmers who accept SNAP and reduce costs. • Technical business support for farmers to expand their businesses and become more sustainable. |
| <p>Measures of success</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One completed pilot project of a local farmer’s market that accepts SNAP/Fresh Match |

Goal 3: Enhanced Capacity— Promote partnerships among local organizations and with state and federal programs to increase the financial and operational capacity of food-related initiatives.

Numerous programs and organizations are actively addressing food and health related issues in the St. Paul’s and Southside neighborhoods, including the St. Paul’s Community Development Corporation, the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, The Crop Foundation, FEAST, the Tidewater Food Alliance, and others. To make the work of these programs as effective as possible, it is important to establish clear channels of communication and cultivate opportunities for collaboration among these partner efforts. The actions listed under Goal 3 seek to establish physical and administrative spaces for this collaboration, as well as to identify projects that multiple agencies can simultaneously work on to leverage the full range of knowledge and resources that exist in the community.

Action 3.1: Create opportunities for partnerships between School Nutrition and local businesses and organizations by educating potential partners about School Nutrition’s mission, vision, and federal requirements.

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| What this is, why it is, important, and who benefits | Support School Nutrition’s efforts to grow partnerships with state agency representatives, community partners, business owners, and other stakeholders, to discuss common goals and explore ways they may be able to collaborate and support the community with increased access to healthy, nutritious foods and nutrition education. Local businesses who are interested in working with and/or selling to schools will receive guidance and technical assistance on the needs, requirements, and processes for doing so. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a meeting between steering committee representatives and Norfolk Public Schools to discuss the current status of school meals and to identify key improvement areas and next steps • Organize and promote information/education sessions for local businesses interested in working with Norfolk Public Schools |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Winter, Director of School Nutrition, Norfolk Public Schools • Steering Committee Representative (To be determined) |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kip Poole, The Crop Foundation • Libby Lyon, Roots and Rows |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal/Budget development • Secure grant and investment funding from outside sources (i.e., VA Food Investment Fund, Healthy Food Finance Initiative, Foundations, Private Corporations, etc.) • Experienced Management/Operators • Technical Assistance/Support • Community-based Leadership • Direct Resident Engagement • Industry Advocates |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Relations campaign support. |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of local farms and businesses participating in education sessions Increased numbers of local farms supplying food to public schools |

Action 3.2: Establish a collaborative space for local food vendors and farmers that can be used for education, vending, and engagement opportunities within the community.

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| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | This action will establish a shared space for food-related activities such as culinary and nutritional education, vending, and cooking demonstrations. The space would promote partnerships among members of the food ecosystem and offset some of the facility costs that may act as barriers to entry into food business and activities. As an event space, it could also host education initiatives such as the Norfolk Master Gardeners' Urban Agriculture program. It would provide important resources to local growers and food advocates and enhance the community's access to fresh and healthy foods. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the critical needs and priority opportunities that should be included and addressed in a food hub plan. Finalize current operations with The Crop Foundation and align their efforts with St. Paul's CDC/Norfolk Food Ecosystem. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul's CDC/Norfolk Food Ecosystem Kip Poole, The Crop Foundation |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will Redfern, Norfolk Master Gardeners Kevin Heard, The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public relations campaign Event Planner |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening a space/venue for meetings of food system operators and advocates ("Coffee shop for food talk") |

Action 3.3: Maintain the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee to further develop and build partnerships.

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| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | Use the Local Foods, Local Places Norfolk steering committee as the basis of a permanent steering committee that will implement the Local Foods, Local Places action plan and assume leadership of the Norfolk Food Ecosystem initiative. This will allow the community to maintain the partnerships and momentum that has come out of the Local Foods, Local Places workshop process, and will establish a forum for continued work and discussion among local food partners and advocates. Each participating organization will benefit from their collaboration with others working in the field, and the community itself will benefit from the continued improvements to its local food system. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request a formal commitment from all steering committee members who wish to continue serving in the role. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a list of other individuals or organizations who might serve on the committee (example: representatives from the farming community). • Draft an MOU after the completion of the Local Foods, Local Places Action Plan. • Establish a clear community engagement and outreach strategy for the Local Foods, Local Places Action Plan. • Empower the steering committee to assume leadership of the Norfolk Food Ecosystem. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC/Norfolk Food Ecosystem • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore • Bob Sharak Sr., City of Norfolk |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other members of the steering committee |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Local Foods, Local Places Norfolk Action Plan |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An MOU that solidifies and validates the Local Foods, Local Places Action Plan goals, purpose, leaders, and partners. • Incorporation of robust community engagement. |

Action 3.4: Develop a business plan for the Local Foods, Local Places Action Plan that provides a budget for all of the proposed activities.

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| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | A community food assessment (CFA) documents food needs and opportunities and identifies key elements contributing to social determinants of health. It identifies areas with limited access to fresh and healthy foods, and guides decision makers in efforts to provide assistance and intervention. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the business plan (2/28/22) |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul’s CDC |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Local Foods, Local Places Action Plan |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a budget that coincides with the action plan by the Steering Committee |

Goal 4: Health and Wellness— Improve health and wellness outcomes among area residents by improving dietary practices, enhancing health system access, and providing culturally relevant education and training programs.

Programs that expand access to fresh, healthy, and local foods in Norfolk are one part of a larger effort to improve the overall health and wellbeing of residents in the St. Paul’s and Southside neighborhoods. The activities listed under Goal 4 are meant to help align food-related efforts to this overall goal as effectively as possible by identifying desired outcomes, improving data collection efforts, and effectively engaging the unique cultural context of these communities.

| Action 4.1: Clearly define health outcome goals for the community to establish standard measures of success that can be referenced by all health-related efforts. | |
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| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | Before developing plans or actions that address health and wellness, it is important to identify what the efforts are seeking to improve, impact, or disrupt in order to effectively develop programs that can address those concerns. Without clearly defined goals, it will be difficult to develop targeted, coherent, and collaborative programming to improve public health. The goals established by this action will serve as guideposts to direct and measure the success of each participating program or action. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the overarching goals and desired outcomes of the steering committee in the MOU • Identify at least one desired outcome for each goal of the action plan. • Identify metrics and measurements that can be used to track progress towards each goal. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lara Zawacki, St. Paul’s CDC/Food Pharmacy Program • Bobby Booker, St. Paul’s CDC/Food Pharmacy Program • Dr. Keith Newby, Health Equity Directory, Sentara Medical Group |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health data |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of clearly defined health outcome goals for the community. |

| Action 4.2: Start to change the “public palate” through food education activities such as cooking demonstrations, nutrition classes, and tasting events. | |
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| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | To complement and support efforts to increase access to fresh and healthy foods, programming will be offered to community members to teach them the ways they can use these foods and to better understand the benefits of eating them. These activities are meant to increase local demand for fresh and healthy foods among |

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| | some residents who may have limited exposure to them in the past, or who may not understand how or why to incorporate them into their diets. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interviews or surveys with neighborhood residents to better understand interests and barriers related to cooking and eating healthy foods. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Heard, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lara Zawacki, St. Paul's CDC • Dr. Keith Newby, Health Equity Director, Sentara Medical Group • Bev Sell, FEAST • Kip Poole, The Crop Foundation • Representative, Tidewater Community College culinary arts program (TBD) |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers or staff members to engage local residents |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of food education or tasting events. • Sales and/or distribution of local, healthy foods. |

Action 4.3: Expand the capacity of the Food Pharmacy Program to target and track the health outcomes of participants with chronic illnesses.

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| What this is, why it is important, and who benefits | The Food Pharmacy program was designed to increase access to and consumption of healthy foods by patients who are experiencing chronic illnesses related to poor diets. The effort to expand the Food Pharmacy's capacity to track specific health related outcomes will enable it to better design dietary plans that target the needs of patients to achieve desired outcomes. |
| Initial steps and timeframe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key health indicators that can be tracked to measure the effectiveness of the Food Pharmacy Program. • Meet with local colleges and health organizations to discuss ways to expand the collection of health data. |
| Lead or catalytic role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leah Gottlieb, St. Paul's CDC |
| Supporting cast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative, Old Dominion University (TBD) • Representative, Tidewater Community College (TBD) |
| Potential needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to support the enhancement and expansion of data collection efforts. |
| Measures of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complete and reliable database of measured health outcomes for those participating in the Food Pharmacy program. |

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Workshop Exercise Results
- Appendix B – Workshop Participants
- Appendix C – Funding Resources
- Appendix D – Reference