

The Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo: A Community Food System Planning Process Report

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Executive Summary

The Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Community Food System Planning Report recounts the eighteen-month community planning process that four community-based organizations - Frogtown Farm, Urban Farm and Garden Alliance, Asian Economic Development Association and Public Art Saint Paul - led to better understand how to collectively support and build a stronger community food system. Frogtown and Rondo are both home to populations of predominantly people of color. The neighborhoods share a history of racist policies and disinvestment that continue to impact food and health conditions today. Fortunately, our neighborhoods also have a shared legacy of collective response and community-led organizing in the face of inequities, which has led to the creation of many of our core partner organizations. This project is a direct result of that history and our report outlines the social and historical context we work in, the tools we used to engage our communities, what we learned through that process and the resolution we have made to work together to invest in building a stronger community food system.

A Community Food Planning & Discovery Process

In 2015, with support from the Kresge Foundation's Fresh, Local & Equitable initiative and the Bush Foundation, we launched a community engagement process modeled after the CREATE Meal in 2014 and centered a community planning process around a series of artist-curated community meals and listening sessions. Engaging over 600 people, 200 volunteers, supporting 8 local businesses and enlisting more than 50 different artists, we designed unique and meaningful experiences using various forms of art to engage people in talking about food and sharing and learning from each other about our connections to food and our roles within the food system.

With the help of the Saint Paul Almanac's Storymobile and a Hamline University Environmental Studies class entitled *Youth and Elders Civil Rights Work in the Food Movement*, we recorded and archived hundreds of video and audio recordings of conversations, interviews, food stories and traditions, food preparation, event meal planning and organizing on an interactive web-based platform called SCALAR. (<http://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-art-of-food-in-frogtown-and-rondo/index>)

In 2017, in order to have a community-based process to synthesize the documentation, we hosted a series of listening sessions with community leaders, food and health advocates and organizers and artists to identify major themes and priorities to inform our plan for investing in a few key solution-based projects.

Our Findings

There were many themes and issues that were illuminated through our process, including:

Food is critical. The experience people have in sharing food cultures, stories, and identities help make food special and helps us remember and discover heritage and tradition. People have

worked hard to overcome political, economic and social injustices and built equity in a diversity of small food businesses, urban farms and gardens and cultural organizations in both communities and want to promote community asset building strategies to increase equity and financial independence.

Communities are fighting to reclaim food and their food system. Our connection with food culturally, economically and otherwise has been eroded by a conventional food system that does not respect or respond to our needs. Subsequently, our communities face rising health concerns, barriers to community food production and economic opportunities, gentrification and disinvestment. Despite these tremendous barriers, people are organizing in backyards, empty lots, in schools, small businesses and arts and cultural organizations.

Invest in art, economic equity, and organizing. Our role as organizations is to use art to think more broadly about community health and economic equity, to support models of community engagement in food planning and urban planning, and to use our privilege to bring resources that foster fair partnership and creativity.

Implementation and Next Steps

Through our community engagement process, our partners have coalesced around a vision for our neighborhoods: *a thriving local community that comes together across cultures and generations to celebrate, share and learn with art and food; food, and the people who grow it, being fully valued and everyone can afford to pay the full value; a food system that is resilient to the changing climate, and that adds value and meaning to residents experience of their neighborhoods as vibrant places to live, work, and eat together.*

With the major themes and priorities outlined from our community, and an account of the strengths and resources of our own organizations and allied partners clarified, we resolved to invest as partners in a two-part plan:

1. Build a Community Food Center, a hub at the center of a network of gardens, restaurants, and food based businesses;
2. Support Community-led Educational Programming and Organizing - strengthened community networks that continually gather and share ideas from residents and business people about how to grow community food assets.

Supplemental Materials to this Report

The partners worked together with additional partners to produce the *Art of Food Poster Board Series*, a visual companion piece to the report, *The Art of Food SCALAR* page of archived community stories and interviews, and the *Art of Food Short film*, that provide other ways to learn about what they heard and multi-media tools for community-engaged planning. Additionally, there are full length documents of key themes and notes from our Community Listening Sessions with community residents and artists.

For more information and updates about the Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Community Food Plan visit: <http://www.frogtownfarm.org/the-art-of-food/>

Introduction

Project Overview

The Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo began in 2015 when we, four community-based organizations -- Frogtown Farm, the Asian Economic Development Association, the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance, and Public Art Saint Paul -- came together to explore ways our organizations and communities could creatively cultivate a stronger community food system. Each organization brought significant experience in different aspects of community food work, including: community food production, food and environmental justice, land-use planning and access, community economic development, cultural preservation, and creative place-making.

With a commitment to building meaning and community around food, we centered a community food planning process around the creation of community meals and engaged artists and culture bearers as designers and place-makers. The community meals brought together farmers, gardeners, cooks and local business owners to grow and prepare the food with artists and organizers to create unique experiences. We cultivated in-depth conversations about food and our food system, shared our traditions, our challenges and our hopes. Through this process we heard key themes, priorities and supported micro-systems that helped illuminate and inspire a plan for investing in the future of food in our communities.

Description of Frogtown and Rondo Communities

As can be seen in the *Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Poster Series, page 1*, (available in the Appendix of this report), Frogtown and Rondo are adjacent neighborhoods, situated just west of downtown Saint Paul and the Minnesota State Capitol. Frogtown is bordered by University Avenue on the south, the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks to the north, Lexington Parkway on the west, and Rice Street on the east. The historic Rondo community shares its northern border with Frogtown at University Avenue, has its southern border at Marshall Avenue, and extends from Lexington Avenue to the west to Marion Street to the east.

The land that Frogtown and Rondo rests upon today was once the site of seasonal Native and Indigenous hunting settlements near the Mississippi River and was later settled by the Dakota people until it was ceded to the U.S. in the 1837 Treaty with the Sioux (Dakota).ⁱ

For most of its history “Frogtown has been a haven for immigrants due to its relatively inexpensive housing stock. In the 1900s large numbers of German, Irish and Scandinavian immigrants came to the area. Over the last 30+ years, many new immigrant groups of Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali and Latino heritage have established communities here. University Avenue is now dotted with Pho noodle shops and Halal meat markets. A Hmong-American farmer’s market operated in the parking lot of the UniDale Shopping Center on weekend. Photographer

Wing Young Huie's 1996 book, *Frogtown: Photographs and Conversations in an Urban Neighborhood*, documented the rapidly changing urban landscape.”ⁱⁱ

The Rondo community has been the center of the African American community in St. Paul since the Civil War and home to early black fur traders and abolitionists as early as the 1830's. A community where a critical mass of African Americans owned homes and businesses, Rondo swelled in size to become the largest black community in St. Paul by the 1930's, a vibrant, vital community that was in many ways independent of the white society around it.ⁱⁱⁱ Despite the community's gains in economic and social advancement, decades of racially biased planning and policy decisions worked to destroy and displace the successful community. Such decisions have significantly impacted the social and economic landscape of the neighborhood. However, Rondo persists as a community of people who grow around obstacles and celebrate their cultural legacy through art and food.

Today Frogtown and Rondo are two distinct, vibrant communities, each culturally and ethnically diverse, with rich arts and cultural scenes, and long legacies of grassroots organizing around economic and health inequities. The two neighborhoods share a majority of people of color, and accompanying disproportionate barriers to economic and political benefits that have fortified other communities -- characteristics that influence the food options and diet quality of residents. In his *University Avenue Project 2007-2010*, artist Huie portrays the colliding and evolving experience, complex social realities and incredible diversity of the two communities joined by the commercial corridor.^{iv}

While divided geographically and politically, Frogtown and Rondo share deep commitments to addressing the effects of economic disinvestment, food insecurity, gentrification and displacement and serious economic and health disparities. The Art of Food planning process supported more cooperative work between Frogtown and Rondo, to build on the community work already happening and to use food and art together to enhance the process.

History & Roots of Community Activism

In order to build a more equitable community food system it is important to have some historical context for what our communities experience today. Existing health and economic inequities faced by many residents in Frogtown and Rondo today, such as increasing rates of diet-related illnesses, the growing income gap, and increasing rates of hunger, are not merely the results of individual behaviors, nor are they isolated issues. The two neighborhoods share a majority of people of color and accompanying disproportionate barriers to homeownership, access to land, and other economic and political benefits that have fortified other communities -- characteristics that interact and influence food options and diet quality of residents at the community level.

As can be seen in the *Art of Food Poster Board Series* on page 2, a brief history of the Frogtown and Rondo communities reveals a pattern of racially and socially biased policies and planning decisions, including land seizure, discriminatory land and home ownership policies,

redlining and neighborhood disinvestment, among many others. The resulting lack of access to agricultural and economic resources and disinvestment have not only impacted people's ability to be economically self-reliant, but also has affected important cultural norms and behaviors. The intersection of many of the systemic and social issues around food calls us to work towards solutions in more comprehensive and cross-sector ways.

Despite repetitive oppressive policies and planning decisions, there have always been responses of resistance and resiliency from the community. Also referenced in the *Art of Food Poster Board Series* on page 2, from the organization of the Credjafawn Food Cooperative in the 1940's, organized by African Americans in the Rondo community to provide access to healthy foods, to the founding of Frogtown Farm in 2013, a thirteen-acre green space originally slated for a high-rise development that was fought for by local residents to become a model urban farm and park, local communities have come together to create pathways to access what we were denied and built systems to serve our needs. How our communities have grown around obstacles, created solutions and worked together is an incredible legacy of social justice work that we are carrying into the future.

Food, Community Planning, Art and Creative Placemaking

The importance of food cannot be overstated -- it sustains and heals our bodies and accompanies our cultural celebrations; it provides pathways for economic opportunity and financial independence, and connects us, as people, to the land, to a community, to a place. Food's central role transcends all social divisions and unites everyone in its fundamental necessity. The supply and quality of food reflects the social and economic health of communities and measures our most basic well-being. For these and many other reasons, food, like other important factors basic to quality of life, should be a subject of urban and regional community planning.

However, the critical nature of food and what it means to our communities is not reflected in how easily we can access it. There is an especially wide gap between the possibility of community members regularly accessing healthy fresh produce and healthy cooking and the resources required for everyone to afford to buy the food we need, or to produce it and benefit from it ourselves.

The information in the following table reflects selected demographics in the Frogtown and Rondo communities that indicate key factors for residents to access affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant food on a regular basis.^v

Demographic data	Frogtown	Rondo
Total population	15,500	6,829
Ethnicity/Race	Asian-35% Black-30% White-20% Latino-8% American Indian- 1% (80% of population are people of color)	Asian-14% Black-58% White-15% Latino-8% American Indian-not available (95% of population are people of color)
Age	33% under 18yrs 60% 18yrs-64yrs 6% 65+yrs	31% under 18yrs 60% 18yrs-64yrs 10% 65+yrs
Ownership and Rental Household status	Own home: 36% Renter: 63%	Own home: 27% Renter: 73%
Median Household Income	55% make less than \$35k/yr 36% living below poverty line	66% make less than \$35k/yr 42% living below poverty line
Unemployment	15.6% people of working age	19% people of working age
Transportation use	22% no access to a vehicle	36% no access to a vehicle
Emergency Food Assistance	78.4% SNAP eligible 40.2% Emergency Food Assistance 69% WIC eligible	51% SNAP eligible 30% Emergency Food Assistance 69% WIC eligible
Physical/Developmental Disability identifying	15% identify physical or developmental disability	19% identify physical or developmental disability

Economic instability, limited access to transportation and mobility, challenges to social and emergency food services, are characteristics that interact and influence food options and diet quality of residents at the community level. Underemployment, not reflected in unemployment rates, is often overlooked as a cause of poverty, where people with part-time or low paying full-time jobs don't make enough to cover basic needs, such as housing, medical, food and transportation. Additional factors --neighborhood investment, property values, area median income, among others -- can influence the scale and quality of food options in a community. Additional factors and more in-depth data on income and housing status, neighborhood walkability and pedestrian/vehicle accidents, can be seen in the *Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Poster Series* in the Appendices at the end of this report.

During this project we connected people to food using curated events that invited people to think about food and the food system. Engaging artists in exploring their thoughts about food through dance, poetry, theater, visual, and culinary arts added layers of depth and complexity for our conversations, as well as the experience of each event. Recognizing the value of food as an essential part of urban planning, we used this process of art exploration to invite public artists and creative place-makers to lift up the critical role of food, its meaning and usefulness in order to reconnect with food in our neighborhoods and delve into community food planning in meaningful ways. Throughout our discovery process, we heard from our community in various ways that the food system is not working for them.

Our communities are not the only ones being underserved by a failing mainstream food system. *Feed the Roots: A Community Food Listening Report* of the Phillips Community in Minneapolis^{vi}, the *Saint Paul and Ramsey County Health Equity Analysis Report 2017*^{vii}, the *Minnesota Food Charter*^{viii}, among many others, site ways the conventional food system is disproportionately failing communities of color, with respect to health and nutrition, economic opportunity and environmental sustainability.

Our current global food system, made up by the chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, is made up of many different processes, in which responsibilities are shared by a disconnected set of actors and large corporate interests. Such a food system often fails to serve people in local communities equitably because it was not created to do so. By creating a stronger community food system, where more parts of the food chain are locally controlled, we create systems that are more functional, beneficial, responsive and accountable to our communities.

Part of our process was exploring the work that's already going on in our communities to engage and repair food system failures in our neighborhoods. Witnessing the massive and under-supported work that goes on outside institutions, we sought to figure out what it would take to reinforce the capacity for people to feed each other and normalize eating together. This carried throughout our planning process as well.^{ix}

As Seitu Jones, one the original organizers, distilled in one of our early planning meetings while we were observing the challenge of eating and working, “no meetin’ without eatin.”

Community Discovery Process

The current Art of Food project emerged out of a rich history of food organizing in Rondo and Frogtown. Below, we outline how we engaged our communities to better understand food in our neighborhoods with the intention of showing how we have been working together so far and also of successfully connecting with many others that we know are doing parallel work. We first describe the large community meal that was a model for the collaborative meal-based planning process we explored, then discuss the values that emerged and guided our work together. As we were getting to know and trust each other as partners, we discussed these values that we saw in our communities to work by and to shape our own community engagement process. We see the sharing of these values as important to our approach to working in our communities together and to working with other partners in the future.

We decided to use a series of listening sessions with community residents, food and health leaders and artists to help identify themes from the many conversations and interviews we collected throughout our process. This was a way for us to engage a wider group of community members and representatives in interpreting the large amounts of video and audio footage we captured and converging on some major themes for action. We know it is always a difficult process to interpret the words of others but we tried to capture and honor the meaning and messages people provided, given our capacity and time constraints. Lastly, we discuss how we have documented our work so far, how we are continuing a cycle of listening and story sharing, and what the key lessons from our process so far have been.

CREATE Meal: Inspiration for the Art of Food Planning Process

On September 14th, 2014, 2000 people from around the region gathered for a community meal at a half-mile table set along Victoria Street, which bisects the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. In many ways, the CREATE meal was the impetus for the Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo collaboration. Artist Seitu Jones, co-founder of Frogtown Farm, worked with Public Art Saint Paul and collaborated with many local organizations, farms, and other artists to plan and execute this unprecedented community food event.

Jones's project was motivated by the goal of raising awareness about lack of access to healthy food in Frogtown. The meal culminated a three-year planning process that included community organizing and deep engagement with the people of Frogtown, where Jones and his family live. At the meal, people shared their food stories and hopes for the future of our food system. Local organic farmers

When we share organic, whole foods we share our origins and our humanity. We are in a state of grace and CREATE made a place on the street for 2000 people to do that. . . Food is our great common denominator and healer."--Cliff Garten at the CREATE Meal 2014

grew the produce; poets wrote the blessing; and dancers, volunteers, and even elected officials served the meal. Volunteers and guests ate together and asked each other to make resolutions to do their part in shaping the local food system. Each person participated in a work of art-- an example of how food and art can draw people together to create conversation, community, and connections, across geographic and cultural lines.^x

Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Partnership and Values

In 2015, we came together to intentionally learn about each other's organizations, our communities, and to create a plan for a more local and just community food system. While our organizations had worked together in the past, this was the first time we came together to create a collective strategy and establish a plan for working together in the future.

Asian Economic Development Association

AEDA has worked in Frogtown and Rondo since 2006 to advance the food businesses that are so important to the incomes of the Asian community. AEDA launched the "Little Mekong" business and cultural district as a creative placemaking strategy encompassing a five block stretch on University Avenue, which borders both Frogtown and the Rondo neighborhoods, the district is catalyzing revitalization, economic development, and create economic opportunities for significant numbers of low income residents in both communities.^{xi}

Frogtown Farm

Frogtown Farm was founded in 2013 by four neighborhood activists after over a decade of community organizing. The activists, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, the City of Saint Paul, and the Wilder Foundation, purchased 12.7 acres of land in the Frogtown neighborhood to create Frogtown Park & Farm. The farm is now a non-profit, 5.5 acre certified organic urban demonstration farm and is a destination for those seeking learning, innovation, reflection, celebration, and authentic community.^{xii}

Public Art Saint Paul

Public Art Saint Paul (PASP) wanted to build on the momentum of the CREATE Meal by advancing more permanent change and impact in the neighborhood. Founded in 1987, Public Art Saint Paul has worked in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods for 20 years and has a permanent program in Western Sculpture Park, located in these neighborhoods. PASP has created a public art plan for University Avenue, which runs through Frogtown and Rondo. PASP produced a major community project with photographer Wing Young Huie in 2008-2010 that documented life in these neighborhoods before the building of the Green Line light Rail Line, resulting in a summer-long outdoor photography exhibition on University Avenue. PASP believes that artists are critical to city-making and building strong communities.^{xiii}

Urban Farm and Garden Alliance

The Urban Farm and Garden Alliance (UFGA) has worked since 2014 to connect community, church, and backyard gardens, build racial, economic, and environmental justice, and support peace and reconciliation through gardening in Rondo and Frogtown in order to increase healthy eating and local control over food access. The Alliance, as part of its participation in this project, also brought Bethel University, the Twin Cities Agricultural Land Trust and Hamline University's Environmental Studies and Sustainability programs to our shared project table.^{xiv}

As Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo partners, we agreed to collaborate and start a community planning process, embracing ART, FOOD, CULTURAL IDENTITY, COMMUNITY WEALTH-BUILDING, and CREATIVE PLACE-MAKING as our initial framework.

Art of Food Planning Values

In 2016 we named the following set of values that we saw our communities modelling and wanted to use for the Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo planning process.

Community Pride- in traditions, in food, culture, in history, I hope we can reflect that in our events, in the data and in the project(s) we plan for.

Response/Impact- many projects have been funded in our communities but people haven't necessarily seen the impacts or benefits of them from the resources spent. The project partners need to be mindful of that, we need to make sure this project does respond to what the community wants and has real impact.

Rhythm- The community has energy and power, respect for different energies through our process

Integrity- We need to be aware that we shouldn't just try to speak for others. We should figure out how to engage people and help amplify their voices around transformative change. Many things are already happening, how do we support the work and solutions that come from the community?

Care for each other- the community cares for one another, we need to practice that level of solidarity among our partners- this leadership team. How are we enacting a good team dynamic?

Resourcefulness- the community has grown around and in spite of many barriers and used its resources to do a lot. Growing around obstacles.

Creativity- there is incredible creativity shown in our community to address different issues, how do we remain creative in our work?

Amplifying Assets- we want to make sure we amplify the assets that exist in our communities in our plan.

Cross generational work- of community groups and organizations

Dedication, commitment- we, the partners/this team, should embody dedication and commitment in our work on this project, for this planning phase--from our visioning to planning to the implementation of this project. When we are here (in planning meetings) we are present and participating.

Community Engagement Process

An integral strategy for this planning process has been to center our work in community engagement. Our communities are dynamic and changing each year. From the beginning, we wanted to lift up community experiences and voices to contextualize what is happening in our communities. A critical part of our process was community storytelling. We partnered with the Saint Paul Almanac and the Storymobile to help us capture our communities' food memories and stories as part of our process.^{xv}

We also understood that engaging community in a participatory process with our organizations would help build and strengthen relationships, create transparency through our process, and build momentum for the project. With a commitment to community-based work and the CREATE Meal as a model, we began planning a community discovery process.

Community Discovery Process Overview:

- 1) Curate Community Meals:

Engage artists to design community meals and provide a social experience for hosting conversations around food; celebrating different cultural foods and traditions, building connections, and collecting community input on how residents experience the food system; using video and audio equipment we recorded people sharing their own stories and input.

- 2) Organize and Archive Community Input: Organize and catalogue what was shared at community meals, planning meetings, and one-on-one interviews

- 3) Identify Major Themes at Community Listening Sessions: Analyze what was shared in community listening sessions with community residents, leaders, and artists

The Storymobile is a moveable community engagement space—on bicycle wheels and solar powered—where artists/writers and community members work with residents in writing, speaking, performing, and recording the stories of their lives using film, audio, typing stations, and good old-fashioned handwriting. Storymobile focuses on joy and connectedness, understanding that storytelling is the heartbeat of a community. They cultivate belonging and strengthen human connection in our neighborhoods through listening to, sharing, and celebrating the stories of the community.

1) Curate Community Meals

The Art of Food Community Meals served as a method of artist-led creative placemaking, cross community organizing, and community data collection. Each meal experience was curated by local artists in collaboration with partner organizations and community volunteers from both communities. From planning to execution, the meals were community-based efforts, featuring produce grown in local gardens and farms, and highlighting and supporting local artists, community cooks, and locally owned restaurants and businesses. Each meal was unique in its energy, setting, and activities, but all were consistent in that guests had rich conversations about what food means to them, shared their cultural foods and food traditions, and built

connections across neighborhood borders. With the collaboration of the Saint Paul Almanac's Storymobile we collected hundreds of images, videos and audio files to document these meals. Together we hosted a total of four community meals with over 600 people in attendance, 200 volunteers, supported 8 local businesses and had more than 50 different artists participate. We used 240 lbs. of locally grown food and redirected over \$25,000 back into local businesses, artists and community organizations.

Harvest Fest

The first Art of Food Community Meal was hosted in the fall of 2016 at Frogtown Farm and was curated by African American Artist Sheronda Orridge and supported by the Frogtown Farm staff and volunteers. The outdoor event featured several food and art related activities including: local tomato tasting competition; Do-it-yourself pizzas with produce from the farm in a mobile pizza oven; Fresh food cooking demonstrations at a mobile kitchen; tours of the farm; neighborhood jazz band; Frogtown food truck, *Sumo Eggrolls* used carrots and cabbage from the farm; and a Picnic Operetta by *Mixed Precipitation*. Through one on one interviews and at creative input stations, adults and youth shared their thoughts and experiences about food access and health, cooking and eating, community gardening and farming, and many other topics.

AEDA Meal

The second Art of Food Community Meal was hosted in November of 2016 at the Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA) offices in the Rondo community. Local Japanese artist Aki Shibata curated the event with AEDA staff, and several local artists and businesses from the area. This meal was a family style dinner that focused on guests sharing connections among food, culture, family and tradition around tables. Several local performing artists, including a local dance troop, spoken word poets and rappers spoke to the intersection of food, family, culture, cultural identity, and poverty among other community issues. Hmong performers danced and reflected about hardships as Hmong immigrants, how making time for family while eating was essential. Hmong business owners talked about their experiences integrating in the Saint Paul community and spoke about how having a food business was a way to survive culturally and economically.

Greens Cook-Off

In December of 2016, Art of Food hosted its third Community Meal. African American Artist Melvin Giles and the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance planned a Greens Cook-Off and Tasting Contest, featuring local greens from several community gardens and urban farms in Rondo and Frogtown. The event was hosted at the historic Pilgrim Baptist Church in the Rondo community and featured locally grown and sourced food, African Drumming, spoken word poetry, and a vignette from the History Theater's acclaimed play, *The Highwaymen*, which gave an account of the successful African American community that was demolished by the construction of the Highway 94 in the 1950s and 1960s. With 13 community gardeners and culinary artists, a slate of local food celebrity judges and a People's Choice Awards voting process, the event was a platform for local talents, African American food traditions, and a recognition of the

interconnections of our community food system. Elders were interviewed and shared different ways they grow, prepare and cook greens, and commented on the medicinal purposes of the traditional African American food staple. Attendees were so excited about the Cook-off that they have generated support to make it an annual event.

Sweet Spring Rolling Youth Meal

In the Spring of 2017 Artists Sieng Lee and Mary Johnson with Public Art Saint Paul worked with youth from Frogtown and Rondo communities to plan and host the fourth community meal, which focused on creating a space for youth voices. The meal took place in the middle of the Hmongtown Marketplace in Frogtown, a Hmong owned and operated large scale market where 200 food, clothing, and other product vendors have booths. Food and art were made interactive with an Art of Food mural wall. Our youth interns taught their peers and their parents how to make-your-own fresh spring-rolls and honey sweetened ice cream. Community interviews were conducted with youth and their parents. The Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center Climate Change Crew, part of a Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) based career and youth leadership program, launched their Frogtown Food Access Map App, showing youth and parents how to download the smart-phone based application to find healthy and local food resources including restaurants, grocery stores, recipes, community gardens.

2) Organize and Archive Community Input

In partnership with a Hamline University Environmental Studies class entitled “Youth and Elders Civil Rights Work in the Food Movement,” we were able to organize, annotate and archive hundreds of video and audio files of interviews and conversations from the community meals. Using an online application called SCALAR, the community food stories and interviews are archived and accessible to view online at: (<http://scalar.usc.edu/works/the-art-of-food-in-frogtown-and-rondo/index>)

3) Identify Major Themes at Community Listening Sessions

In February of 2017, we hosted five Listening Sessions with community residents and artists to listen to the community interviews and conversations archived on the SCALAR platform and identify major categories and themes from what was shared.

Key Themes from Listening Sessions

(*for a full list of themes see the Themes from Community Listening Sessions in the Appendix)

Things People Value:

- People value the knowledge and legacy of growing food, cultivating the land, and culinary food traditions as part of their cultural identity
- People value community gardens as teaching spaces, reconnecting youth and people of all ages to nature, growing, nutrition and community building

- People love food for its amazing flavors, its wide varieties and love it as a creative tool to make their own
- People love food for its ability to make one feel “at home.”
- People value cooking and eating as a way to spend time with family and friends
- People value the diversity of small food businesses and want to promote community asset building strategies to increase equity and financial independence

Challenges and Obstacles:

- Proximity to food is a challenge. Fresh, healthy and culturally appropriate food is not near where people live
- Accessing land is a challenge. People who want to grow food often don't have access to land, and specifically to unpolluted soil for growing food to eat or sell (as an economic asset). Often governmental institutions are seen as obstacles rather than allies in helping people access land.
- Health and wellness are major concerns, especially for people with low incomes, youth and seniors
- Loss of generational knowledge and cultural memory of cooking and cultivation methods, hunting and fishing, gardening, garden to table cooking and plant-based medicine are being eroded over generations
- History of economic and social inequities have kept people from accessing resources for growing food, for food-based business development, for land and homeownership, and important tools and pathways for community wealth-building
- Hunger and poverty are of major concern. The area lost a food shelf in 2016 and people are wondering how to address hunger for individuals and families

What People Want to See Supported:

- Intergenerational gardening to reclaim vacant spaces and create spaces for peace
- Use gardens and other spaces in our neighborhoods to build social capital, intergenerational connections and power
- Spaces for people to discuss the intersections of food, art, place/land, culture and history, and organize solutions that work for them
- Ways for businesses to expand community networks with social events, social media and in-restaurant entertainment, to be part of the community
- People and organizations working to reclaim their culture, land, and resources through food
- More opportunities for creative social interactions, story-telling, cultural exchange and building local level solutions around food and art.

Artist Convening

Once the input was organized into themes we convened artists from our communities to imagine future possibilities for our communities concerning art, food, land, place, culture, identity, and economy. First, artists spoke about the food memories and stories they held and then they looked through the Community Listening Session themes and discussed several questions. “How can we use art (visual, experiential, performance, sculpture, poetry, and otherwise) to bring people together, reconnect us to food? How can we create events and spaces to celebrate food, our cultural traditions, bring attention to the complex systems and issues around food, and accomplish goals for greater health and wealth? How can we connect our two communities through experiences, and provide opportunities for shared action? How can we encourage creativity and imagination in all of this?

Artists shared their reflections on the community voiced themes, and added their thoughts for building a stronger community food system and ideas for potential project activities. (*for the full notes from the Artist Convening see the Appendices following this report)

Reflections on Community Themes

What People Value:

- The experience people have in sharing food cultures, stories, and identities help make food special, helps us remember and discover heritage and tradition
- Tradition, celebration, home
- Economic opportunities around food and art- businesses are stepping stones for families
- Bridges are important- links for Rondo, land bridges, spiritual-connects people to their churches
- Work and eat together- work out problems, stay connected
- History- lift up experiences of people of color to make change
- There is a continuum of people attached to these places-not the developers

Challenges and Obstacles:

- Land ownership--legacy of it being taken from people of color and given to white immigrants to grow wealth- Homestead Act
- Time, it takes time to grow, shop, cook
- Look for ways to build bridges- intergenerational opportunities- older people may not have kitchens, younger people may not have knowledge
- Resilience and sustainability, place-keeping/fighting gentrification
- Why is so much unhealthy stuff promoted instead of healthy food branding

What people want to see supported:

- Invest in resident-owned assets, businesses, community wealth building, invest in what you want to grow
- Build on what's already there (birthed in the community) and build it through annual series, not just one-off events
- Food is made special by growing, fosters a sense of pride
- Skill-shares- how could artful approaches make them more accessible?

Thoughts for building a stronger community food system:

- Important to think broader idea about what health looks like
- Foster community participation in what we do, change is participatory
- Think about creating a pipeline or pathway, shared space to make and sell food
- Community has knowledge, how to make that shine

Potential Project Activities: (invest in things that bring people together and create networks and connections)

- Frogtown Farm as a hub with nodes that connect sites in the 2 neighborhoods- placemaking that crosses neighborhood boundaries
- Dinner co-ops (collective community meals) as spaces to eat, talk organize, as a tool to solve problems and address challenges as a community
- Host a series of events for people to get together to cook and prepare food for the week, call it "Chop it Up"
- Community Supported Agriculture- Share the shares and cook together
- Recipe Sharing- "Rondo Recipe Rescue"
- Start competitions among growers, making tastings mobile-taste a tomato at each garden on a tour
- In conjunction with MN State Fair- undoing racism that's part of State Fair

Key Learnings and Lessons from Our Process

Throughout our process we learned more about our communities, about using art and food to create change, and about supporting greater health and equity through shared food work in our neighborhoods. We also learned, as leaders of the planning process, about our own assumptions and perspectives and what it means to share leadership. In this section, we discuss what we heard from the community -- in broad strokes, then in more detail -- and reflect on how what we learned, working across diverse organizations, has taught us about collaborative place-making and food systems work in Frogtown and Rondo.

What We Learned About our Communities and Ourselves

Food is important to people culturally, socially, and economically, but that importance is not reflected in how easily people can get to healthy and desirable food, if they can afford it and have the means to benefit from its production. The conventional food system does not work for many people in our communities and in light of increasing economic, health and social disparities, we must come together to create systems that work for and benefit *all* people.

People in our communities are working to reclaim food and the food system; the measures that they are taking in their own lives and in their communities are not small or disconnected. They are working on empty lots, in backyards, at community organizations, and schools. They are working with the modest resources they have and often despite obstacles from government and institutions. Our planning process, organized around a series of community meals, helped make these efforts visible across communities that would not necessarily interact with one another. We also encouraged the documentation of and reflection on existing community efforts. The listening process revealed these key points:

- **There are many people engaged with the local food system as farmers and urban growers, cooks, business owners, consumers, teachers, composters, artists, and aspiring entrepreneurs, but the systems of support and infrastructure for them to work together and benefit mutually are generally not developed.** For example, many of our local food producers and food vendors (restaurants, cafes and small grocery stores) generally cannot afford to work together given the cost pressures of the conventional food system. But having producers and buyers in the same space generated some small possibilities, like seasonal purchasing on small scales and pop-up farm stands outside of cafes and interest in exploring more community level opportunities. (Many of these businesses are part of the Asian Economic Development Association, which has been trying to build these links.)
- **The process of integrating a listening-planning process with community meals supported the building of micro-systems and a network for collective growing, harvesting, cooking/processing, and business development opportunities between community groups who do not often have the resources to work in such a network.** For example, in coordinating the local food for our meals we found that a larger circle of community growers could coordinate to deliver large amounts of produce for our events. We found that some people have access to church or school kitchens, but usually only for specific events, such as sanctioned fundraisers or institution-based celebrations. At our meals we found many people interested in using resources as a group, like commercial/ teaching kitchens (i.e. cooperative meal-making, teaching different culinary skills and seasonal cooking, talking about the origins of various foods and recipes,) but most were not sure of places where those activities could be supported. Our Greens Cook Off Winner comes from a long line of gardeners and cooks. She is a local resident who is interested in developing a line of Frozen Collard Greens as a value-added product but she does not have access to the business development and commercial kitchen resources to develop this business. We also heard from local growers and food business owners, who provided food for some of our meals, that they

would appreciate collaborating with the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance for Garden Tours or pop-up farm-stands.

- **People want a voice in decisions that impact their communities, and organizations need to work, not just to build projects, but to give people ongoing chances to lead and guide community food planning work.** We heard people say that they have practical knowledge about how systems that interact with food (transportation, gaps in retail development, food/enterprise regulatory challenges) should and could work to better serve their needs and organizations should open opportunities for that to happen and support leadership development and advocacy.
- **Food and art are bridges for cross cultural understanding and awareness. Linking food and art together through this project expanded who we, as project partners (and conveners), had at the table as well as how people attach meaning to food.** Artistic expressions like theater, dance and poetry are incredible tools to lift up the experiences of people, especially marginalized people, whose stories have largely been excluded from literature and media. These expressions allowed us to have much more complex and systems-focused conversations with people at our community meals and planning meetings. We also see the potential for art exhibitions, local food/cooking events and Art of Food tours as potential places to lift up the experiences of marginalized people for transformative change.
- **We learned that people have desires for healthy eating knowledge and need places where they can receive, *share* and practice that knowledge.** For example, Because greens of various sorts were a backbone of many of our shared meals, we witnessed a lot of cross-cultural greens cooking and learning happening that delighted participants, and gave them the opportunity to emphasize their desire for more shared places to cook, eat, and learn together. We heard about a Hmong recipe for Mustard Greens soup and rice dish that is made for elders for easy digestion, and specific recipes that are for expecting and new mothers. We heard from college students and young professionals who had purchased Community Supported Agriculture shares but didn't know how to cook the produce in them. Part of our work is to create spaces to exchange culinary and nutritional knowledge.
- **For some organizational and institutional participants, there was significant movement from a perception of the weaknesses in the food system in Frogtown and Rondo (e.g., the “food desert” perception) to understanding that there is abundance in various food sources in the neighborhoods that could thrive with resources.**
- We found major economic concerns at the individual levels and the community levels that directly challenge people's ability to grow food, purchase the food they need and benefit directly from their own labor. **There is a definite and ongoing need to broaden the city and community conversations about the intersection of food and health with issues like gentrification and rent increases, access to land/growing on public land and soil health, underemployment and living wage, wealth-building versus charity.**

What We Learned About the Integration of Arts and Culture with Food-oriented Development

We learned that food and art belong together! Art can enhance visibility, deepen engagement, express meaning, and communicate across cultures. Art is a powerful generator to lift up healthy eating, reveal systemic food issues, and motivate behavioral change. Artists engaged with community storytelling to produce powerful ways to learn about and share food traditions, and then to think critically about how to purposefully elevate these meaningful engagements through artistic expressions.

- **We were amazed at the innovative ideas that our artists designed for the four community meals.** The local artists who curated our community meals specialized in a wide array of media including, culinary art, performance art, graphic design, experiential/behavioral art, gardening and landscaping, visual art, among others. They used vegetable costumes, hand thrown pottery bowls, spoken word poetry, drumming, dance, theater, musical theater, games, collage vision walls, story-telling and do-it-yourself cooking demonstrations to engage community members of all ages.
- **We learned that many artists in our city are experienced and eager to put their creativity to work to help advance healthy food systems and make food special** in communities. At our artist listening session, the artists generated an enormous list of potential activities and events for bringing people together to cook seasonal food, create free edible landscapes that also serve artistic or environmental purposes, host contests or large public events as part of public awareness campaigns, and much more.
- **We found that Artists orientation toward shared *practice* works well in food systems and community planning contexts.** We learned from artist who had participated in other art and community planning initiatives that art can create languages, or ways for people to understand complex systems using techniques like infographics, smart phone applications, kinetic games, even experiential activities to help people engage authentically in systems thinking and planning.
- Although both food systems organizing and art are chronically under-resourced, especially in communities of color, this meant that **artists and food system activists had a headstart on resourcefulness and collaborative and respectful process.**
- Through the stories we heard and experiences that were uncovered, we saw many ways to use art to change the narrative around food and the food system. **Changing the narrative of our food culture and history is critical to challenging the practices and policies that drive a broken food system,** and putting more artists and community food advocates into conversation showed how when non-dominant stories (which hold tools and knowledge) are elevated and represented, knowledge and practical wisdom can be utilized and people of color and their contributions can be valued more actively.

What We Learned About Health and Equity

There are historic reasons many communities, especially communities of color, are disconnected from land, agriculture, food, food culture, and associated health benefits. Contrary to popular representations of *deficits* in healthy food culture in underserved communities, these historic reasons are being actively and critically discussed in our communities. People explained

how their communities were moved away from agriculture, hunting, fishing, preserving foods and were moved towards a dependency on government subsidized foods and corporatized food. This legacy has particularly impacted people of color and indigenous people in ways that reverberate through the narratives we're hearing. Each of the points below came out of rich stories shared at the community meals:

- **It is important to think broader about what health looks like for our communities.**
We heard people talk about the importance of working towards community health in many different contexts (physical, mental, spiritual, economic, social, environmental.) We heard people talking about healing from historic and current traumas and reconciliation work happening in community, the role of dignity in health, problems of hyper consumerism and the commodification of people and animals, addressing ableism and social stigmas, power dynamics between communities and organizations and institutions, too much technology, and reconnecting with nature, all reflecting the complex and compounded nature of what it means for our communities to be healthy.
- There are many people in our communities who want to and are growing food. But **land access and soil contamination are major barriers to urban growing in our communities.**
- **Many ethnic cultural food traditions incorporate health and wellness practices** (i.e. greens and rice soup recipes for easy digestion, or eating certain meals when pregnant) There are ample opportunities for community-led education to learn and share nutrition-based cooking and plant-based medicine that are known in our communities.
- **Community health (and other desired) outcomes must be achieved through participatory measures.** Activities like community gardening, urban farming, group/community cooking, community food events with entertainment, and programming, engage people socially in healthy practices; these can then become the basis for healthy behavior change. Our communities need support for these activities to counteract the ways that food growing, cooking, and cultural traditions have been distanced from our lives.
- **People with low incomes don't have a lot of money to spend on food, but a food system that supports cheap food reinforces the exploitation of small farmers and food workers, many of whom are low income and vulnerable themselves.** Instead our communities can grow food (and a large proportion of people we spoke with are growing or want to), find ways to make fresh food more affordable (buying in bulk, on sale, direct from farmers-in season, preserve food, waste less), and ultimately we all need to earn enough money to afford the real costs of good food.
- **Food justice is not an isolated issue.** Economic justice, housing justice, land access, transit justice, environmental justice and health equity are all interrelated and part of a larger chain of social justice work.

Key Learnings About Working to Collaboratively Implement our Food Values

Initially, the core partners knew we had shared interests but very different approaches to working in community and different institutional capacity coming into the project; this report has given us an opportunity to reflect on what has changed since we started out and what we learned as partners during this planning process. Overall, we learned how to work together to explore issues, plan programs, and balance individual organizational needs with the needs of our partner group to achieve the goals of our project. We learned that this process isn't easy and that we need to invest as much time in partner trust and knowledge building as towards our project goals. The benefit of this collaboration is that each organization and each person on our steering team brings different strengths, skills, perspectives, networks, and capacities to the project as a whole, making our work bigger and more effective than any of us could do as individual organizations.

A central theme in our work together has been understanding how we can complement each other's areas of work and build a collective vision for improved food infrastructure, creative placemaking and place-keeping in Frogtown and Rondo. While we had many goals and hopes for our community in common, we also stumbled over and through some operating values for our own group. Early on, we realized that our various strategies for building a stronger community food system were complementary because we shared such a strong commitment to raising up the creative capacity and assets of our communities, supporting work coming from the community, and building a more resilient infrastructure in the face of uncertain funding and a hostile competition in food commerce. As we move forward, we are orienting our ongoing discussions of shared values toward organizing the way we do our work together as well as the way we work in community.

Our key recognitions linking our organizations have been that:

- We have many community assets and creative capacity, but we are still figuring out how to coordinate and leverage them, making them more visible and connected;
- We recognize the central challenge of the lack of financial and economic resources for many community members and grassroots organizations, especially given the credit-intensive nature of food financing, it remains a real challenge to develop balanced power and equitable systems within larger systems (economic system, funding world, banking/lending, political system, etc.) and a society that is largely inequitable; and
- There are a lot of artists who want to work on -- and are already working on -- neighborhood-based food issues and capacity building, especially with youth!

Our working commitment to collaboratively implement our food values is currently centered around these premises:

- **We value a balance of exploratory process with intentional process.** While taking opportunities as they arise and working flexibly, we make an explicit commitment clarify

our goals and discuss steps to achieve them. We embrace a culture of learning around different work styles and relationship practices and try to remain mindful of our partner's strengths and challenges, without judgement.

- **We commit to focusing on projects that build success and momentum while retaining power and process in the hands of the community!** For example, we improved the ways we could process large amounts of collard greens before for our Greens Cook-Off winter event by finding resources in the neighborhood for washing, blanching, chilling, and freezing them.
- **We recognize shared community leadership and *thinking together*.** Early on in the process, we recognized the tradition of institutions taking authoritative positions in community work, overshadowing the value of community knowledge and suppressing community leadership and power. It was clarified that the institutional partners should not lead conversations on process and outcomes but play supportive roles in our group process, offering input when prompted and waiting for invitations to take action rather than assuming ones. As a leading team, we have to pay attention to power dynamics and think carefully about roles and modes of engagement for the many nearby institutions that would like to get involved.
- **We strive for transparency between partners,** for example, explaining what opportunities and resources, related to our common work, we each have and what kind of claims we are making (to our constituencies and funders) about what we're doing. Trust building and getting to a place where you can discuss organizational intentions and concerns honestly, is part of the work.
- **We value the representation of many communities and skillsets and making time to navigate complex decision-making.** Our partner organizations have different capacities, from grassroots and all-volunteer led, to more established organizations with many staff. This is important for having many communities and skillsets represented, but also creates a more complicated decision-making process, and we commit to making the time to work through this and to continue to support different modes and models for meetings, records-keeping, risk-management, and food-systems building -- a commitment we realize helps build more values-oriented engagement and a more accessible partnership team.

These values and practices will inform our work as collaborative partners in planning as well as in the implementation of projects and programming moving forward.

The Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Plan

The Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Plan is both a culmination of an eighteen-month planning process as well as a call to action for our communities, organizations, and policy makers. The following overview of the plan highlights some strategies that we believe build local food systems in communities like ours and identifies some concrete steps that our organizational partners will take moving forward. Our plan is not all encompassing, it is a reflection of our community planning process and our commitment to working cooperatively to respond to what we heard. No one policy, project or program can address the many complex challenges that we face in our food system - we must find ways to work together.

Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Vision

We envision a thriving local community that comes together across cultures and generations to celebrate, share and learn with art and food; food, and the people who grow it, being fully valued and everyone can afford to pay the full value; a food system that is resilient to the changing climate, and that adds value and meaning to residents experience of their neighborhoods as vibrant places to live, work, and eat together.

We envision a more locally controlled and inclusive food system where we all benefit from the food that we grow, make, and eat and where:

- Neighbors grow food in their community, in backyards, on empty plots and they share food and skills with each other;
- People celebrate and share their cultural food traditions;
- Local farmers and gardeners are thriving (with adequate land access and social supports) and their food is widely available at nearby stores and farmers markets;
- Schools, hospitals and other institutions serve healthy and delicious meals that include food from local growers;
- Stores in our community sell healthy, high quality foods at affordable prices;
- Government policies support a healthy local food system and people have a voice in decisions that affect them;
- Artists are engaged in planning processes and valued as key decision-makers

Community Food System Strategies

Building a just local community food system will take many different strategies and efforts, the following are recommended strategies that we support, are engaged in and that we will strive to manifest in the future as a partnership and as part of the broader network of local and regional food system cultivators.

- Utilize the arts to engage local communities in community food planning. Use art and design to create events, explain issues and build connections that support growing, preserving, processing, cooking and composting at the neighborhood level.
- Practice social-change education as a means of understanding the systems of oppression that impact our communities, our food and decisions-making systems about both. Use art to lift up the work, realities and recommendations of marginalized communities as a means to address and shift food system inequities.
- Support community economic development in food. Create economic opportunities and build assets for people of color and low-income communities all along the food chain (in production, processing, distribution, retail and consumption, and waste and reuse.) Support the networks of small businesses that make up our local food economy and that reinvest in our communities. Support minority owned and family owned business development. Connect local growers of color and local retail to build equity in our local economy.
- Support policies and demonstration projects that create access to resources and facilitate community food production and controlled agriculture (including farmland and greenspace protection, urban agriculture, market gardening, zoning and public land use development)
- Invest in systems for greater public health. Support the development of balanced food environments that empower residents with opportunities to make healthy food choices and reduce environmental causes of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other diet-related illnesses.
- Support the protection of environmental resources and promote consumption of locally and sustainably-grown food, particularly food produced using environmentally-benign and energy-efficient growing, processing, and distribution practices.

Next Steps

Through our discovery process we heard our community prioritize several areas for investment. After thinking about the resources and capacity of our own organizations and partners we decided to come together around three:

- 1) Support the local food economy and economic opportunities in food enterprise
- 2) Create opportunities to bring people together around food and culture
- 3) Support community voiced solutions and continued community food planning

Over the course of the next three years, the Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo partners will invest time and resources in a two main areas: A Community Food Center and Community Food Programming and Organizing.

Community Food Center at Frogtown Farm

At the heart of a thriving network of vibrant gardens, restaurants and food-based businesses, art spaces and pop-up events, we imagine a Community Food Center. The Community Food Center, adjacent to Frogtown Farm, one of the largest urban farms in the country, will be the hub of this network with a commercial and teaching kitchen, community gathering space, art gallery and retail space, greenhouse, classrooms and cold storage. The Community Food Center will amplify the rich cultural and food traditions of the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods, attracting economic opportunity to the neighborhoods while serving as the backbone of food and art-based projects throughout the community.

Community Food Programming and Organizing

Art of Food Tours

The Art of Food tours will connect the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods through our neighborhood gardens. Led by our partner, the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance, our tours will address three main goals. First, we aim to further engage gardeners and community members in understanding the food system work that goes on at these gardens and how to get involved in the broad range of community and food infrastructure building that goes on there. Second, by hiring community artists to build out a guidebook featuring on-site Alliance tour garden installations, and tour infrastructure, including a garden salad serving kit, handouts, and tour-giving checklist, we will support Alliance gardeners and local youth in practicing food production and creative and equitable place-making activities. And third, through the participatory design of garden tours that engage community gardens in both communities, we are strengthening connections between Rondo residents (especially because they are further away from Frogtown Farm) and Frogtown residents, and between all of the sites of our Art of Food network, including the heart of the project at the Frogtown Farm Community Food Center.

Pop-up Events

In conjunction with the Art of Food Tours and the ongoing creative place-making events of each of the core partners, Public Art St. Paul will engage artists to lead a series of pop-up events to continue to build the community networks already activated by The Art of Food project in its planning phase and continue to gather residents' and business people's ideas for how to strengthen community food assets. The Artist-Organizers will use creative place-making strategies to activate the future site of the Community Food Center and link activities and resources at Frogtown Farm with other key sites in Frogtown and Rondo: food businesses along University Avenue, community gardens and back/front yard gardeners, neighborhood associations, festival gatherings, churches, and more. Through vegetable-sharing, food sampling, garden info sharing, and art-making activities, artists will link residents to the efforts at Frogtown Farm to build a Community Center to serve the needs of the two neighborhoods.

Community Food Ventures Programming

AEDA will collaborate with Art of Food partners and lead implementation of outreach and educational workshops and business development services to Frogtown-Rondo food growers and entrepreneurs. The goal is to support the growth of local food-based businesses by providing business development services and resources. This will serve as a

pilot phase to build the partnership between Frogtown Farm and AEDA and solicit feedback on the services from businesses and entrepreneurs, who will also be critical in shaping the design of the commercial kitchen space in the Community Food Center. AEDA will pilot these food business development activities out of AEDA's incubator space in Little Mekong for the 2 years of the implementation grant with the goal of locating the program to the Community Food Center when complete.

AEDA will provide technical assistance to Frogtown and Rondo food entrepreneurs ready to start or expand their businesses. AEDA's technical assistance support consists of initially meeting with the entrepreneur to identify and assess the specific needs of their business. Once a determination is made to provide technical assistance, an on-going individualized consultation and coaching plan is created for the client. Consultation sessions cover these business topics:

- *Business Plan Basics*: Identify personal strengths, values, vision, and goals (worksheets). What is your product or service? How are you different from your competitors?
- *Marketing*: Identify customer. What is your value proposition? Where and how are you going to sell your products? Pricing? Discuss market channels and how to access the market.
- *Operation and Management*: Business structure. Legal issues, tax, and compliance. Defining job duties and responsibilities.
- *Financial Plan*: Budgets, monthly cash flow projection, record-keeping system for tax purposes
- *Financial Plan*: Annual balance sheet, income statement, annual statement of cash flow, importance of credit.

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Citations

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Appendices

- I. Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Posters Board Series
- II. Community Listening Session Theme Notes
- III. Artist Convening Listening Session Notes
- IV. Art of Food in Frogtown and Rondo Film (<https://vimeo.com/217251253>)