

## Urban Agriculture Working Group – Agenda

Location: Nora Navra Library



March 18th, 2026

11:30AM - 1PM

### Animal Husbandry Working Group Updates (Lissie)

- Small working group made up of farmers, food/ag non profits, and city departments focused on making updates to the CZO (Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance) to **clear legal pathway** to responsibly **keep a reasonable number of animals** for an urban setting
- This group has also been pursuing what an Animal Husbandry License could look like - but considering accessibility and cost

### Urban Agriculture Directors' Alliance (Grace)

- **Resources / Reference Documents:**
  -  Urban Ag and Food Plans - Database.xlsx
  -  UADA Convening Notes - March 2026
- **UADA Background**
  - Spun out from the [Urban Sustainability Directors Network \(USDN\)](#)
  - About 40 city workers focused on urban agriculture and food policy gathered in Austin, TX (March 9 - 11, 2026)
  - Timeline
    - First Urban Ag Director: Atlanta (2015)
    - UADA member cities wrote a letter to Mayor Cantrell to support creation of Urban Agriculture Liaison (2024)
- **Land Access Programs**
  - Chicago
    - [Community Growers Program](#)
    - [Chi Block Builder Program](#)
      - \$1 lots for urban agriculture
      - It's still an involved process with lots of hoops to jump through: need to show public benefit, need alderman/council support, need proof of funds (usually \$20,000 to be competitive) but possible to get a lot for \$1



Master Plan process will start later this year / early 2027 but we're starting the Urban Ag and Food Plan soon.

## Land Access

- **25 responses so far**
- **Survey Results**
  - Do you own or lease land in Orleans Parish for farming / gardening?
    - About 40% own
  - What does this space do with its harvest?
    - A little more than a third give away produce
    - About 20% sell - small businesses to support
  - Are you content with the way you're currently accessing land?
    - A little more than 50% or not
  - Are you or have you been looking to acquire vacant property to expand / start your growing space?
    - About 65% said yes
  - Which type of land acquisition would you be most likely to participate in?
    - More than 50% are interested in purchasing
    - 11.8% want to lease to own
- **NORA Updates (Alex Vialou)**
  - Growing Green
    - There have been some sales from Growing Green. According to NORA's policies and procedures, they sell at appraised value. NORA contracts with an independent company to appraise the lot.
    - Sales Records of Growing Green lots
      - 2017 (first sales) - 7 properties sold, average price: \$4k
      - 2018 - average price: \$5,300 (different neighborhood than 2017)
      - 2019 - average price: \$10k
      - 2020 - average price: \$11k
      - 2021 - average price: \$13k
      - 2024 - average price: \$25k
    - The longer the lease is renewed (per their policies & procedures), they re-appraise and the price keeps going up
    - Ongoing Growing Green leases (24 total)

- Future path: it's possible that NORA will not renew the leases and then put these lots up for auction (with the hopes that the current leaseholders could buy closer to minimum bid of \$4k)
    - This is clearly a big risk and not a secure option for current Growing Green leaseholders. Grace is going to coordinate a meeting with Alex and current GG leaseholders to discuss alternatives.
- **Auction (Non-Housing Development)**
  - *Non housing development* means the lot does not have the same development requirements as the *housing development lots*.
  - 2025 - Included 11 lots (out of 100) as “non-housing development” for the first time
    - Average appraised value: \$18k
    - Average purchase price: \$5,300
  - Planning to expand the number of lots available at auction
  - NORA plans to gather information from growers of where they would like to purchase land and identify lots (especially in clusters) to make available in the *non-housing development* lot list
  - **NORA Property Inventory:** <https://noraproperty.nola.gov/>
  - Minimum bid is \$4,000- Alex going to bring this to the NORA Director to ask if they can lower that minimum bid (to align more with other cities) for *non-housing development*
- **Questions / Discussion**
  - NORA Auction does not function to be able to get loans, especially USDA but also other private loans. There needs to be a set price.
  - There needs to be another path to purchase, for active Growing Green leaseholders, to affordably purchase the land they've invested money and sweat equity into.
  - How is the land appraised? At what use? Is there an agricultural land value appraisal option?
    - From NORA: Appraisals happen by comparing lots to other residential lots because there's no other reference for non-residential lots. Alex will bring back to NORA that this may need to change.

- Can the percentage of *non housing development lots* increase for this year's auction? It was 11 of 100 lots in 2025
  - From NORA: Yes - this is going to go up. And NORA is going to do better outreach this time.
- Can the lower minimum bid be lower than \$4,000?
  - From NORA: Alex is going to look into if this possible for agriculture use specifically (aka *non housing development*)
- Can there be a separate auction for *housing* and *non-housing development lots* so that farmers are not potentially competing with developers for the same lots?
- Purchase price ended up being about \$7,000 for each lot - even though Dr. Jas technically got the minimum bid of \$4,000. There were many additional and unexpected costs
- What sort of incentives can NORA offer to past / current Growing Green program participants? Past Growing Green participants have a requirement to keep use for at least 5 years after purchase.
- Ava: Anyone can buy City-owned land through the Tax Assessor's website. The law states that it has to go to auction and auction price has to start at appraised value. When there's no building on it, appraised value is considerably less.

### **Urban Agriculture & Food Plan (Mina and Devin)**

- This will be the city's first urban ag and food plan. Food is barely mentioned in any city's plan and we know we need this to help share policy and programs that invest in and support a stronger local food system (including food production!)
- Core Planning Committee: Sprout, New Orleans Food Policy Council, Urban Agriculture Liaison / City Planning Commission, New Orleans Health Department (Luke)
- This plan will involve A LOT of community input. Get ready!
- The first step is a Stakeholder Feedback Session where the Core Planning Committee will be meeting with about 20 community partners to give us feedback on the Community Engagement Plan and let us know who may be missing from our outreach plans.
  - This group includes food system orgs, city health department, stakeholders working across the food system, growers, chefs

- They will be informing the *process* before we get to engaging residents for the *plan*
- How will this be implemented??
  - The goal is for everyone in this room and beyond to see themselves in so that we can hold ourselves and the City to it.
  - We will have to work to ensure this is implemented and we intend to do that!
  - It's a tool that we will continually point to in order to advance food system and urban ag work

### Next Steps:

- **NORA**
  - Grace will schedule meeting with NORA (Alex) to discuss plan for Growing Green active leaseholders and the non-housing development auction
  - Set up meeting with Growing Green leaseholders and NORA
- **Urban Agriculture & Food Plan**
  - Keep an eye out for a schedule of community meetings and other ways to engage with this planning process - we want you involved!!
- **Next Urban Agriculture Working Group meeting:** Wednesday, June 10th 11am - 1pm at Imbue Farms (Lower Coast Algiers)

### Community Events

- **Saturday, March 21st**
  - 8am: **Hollygrove Neighbors Association Garden Service Saturday** (9325 Forshey St)
  - 10am: **Hollygrove Neighborhood Association + Grow Dat Fresh Food Distribution** (9000 Oleander St)
  - 11am - 1pm: **Gather in the Garden at Recirculating Farms**
- **Saturday, March 28th**
  - 10am - 2pm: **Bottomlands Coop Plant Sale** (Press Street Gardens)
  - 11am - 2pm: **Recirculating Farms 3rd Annual Community Health Day** (Myrtle Banks Building - 1307 Oretha Castle Haley)
- **Saturday, April 4th**
  - 10am - 1pm: **New Orleans Flower Collective's Spring Plant Sale** (Press Street Gardens)

- **Wednesday, April 15th**

- 10:30am - 12pm: **Animal Husbandry Working Group** (hosted by the City's Urban Agriculture Liaison) - virtual