

next STEPS WELL FED & SUSTAINABLE

In response to the high interest of the community at the August 2, 2012, Community Conversation, Clarkston Development Foundation scheduled a list of dates to discuss next steps and evaluate potential projects or activities in each of the identified focus areas. On February 12, 2013, CDF hosted the fifth and final in a series of Next Steps Sessions. The Session focused on the Well Fed and Sustainable Community.

The evening included a sharing of ideas generated at previous meetings. This report¹ reflects the comments and opinions of the attendees as documented at the Next Steps Session: Well Fed and Sustainable Community.

Process

Approximately 30 people attended and divided into small groups based on their interests. Three groups met. While in small groups, participants discussed their visions for a well fed and sustainable community and identified projects for group consideration and implementation. Participants were asked to consider these primary questions:

1. What vision of a well fed and sustainable community do we have with respect to the topic chosen?
2. What needs to be done *generally* to achieve that vision?
3. What actions can *this group* take to achieve that vision?
4. Given the actions identified, what are the specific projects this group can commit to undertaking in the near future?
5. What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

Participants met in small groups on the topics below. The numbers of corresponding groups were as follows:

- Encouraging Business and Local Economy (2 groups)
- Growing Green Spaces and Gardens (1 group)

Themes

Over the course of the evening's conversation core themes arose. Participants were clearly interested in solutions that have a local focus, present the positives of Clarkston, and include all the communities within the area. As in previous meetings, participants expressed interest in

¹ Report prepared by Clarkston Development Foundation. An appendix is also available for download so that the reader can see every idea written on the easels by each group.

building on existing projects. The themes referenced here are not exhaustive, but are reflective of the types of discussions that occurred throughout the evening.

Next Steps: Projects/Actions

Out of these conversations, groups identified the following projects for further consideration and planning:

- Identifying and securing local spaces for gardens
- Exploring and creating incentives for people to buy local like local dining clubs and local business incentives
- Identifying space on Ponce de Leon to beautify

Growing Green Spaces and Gardens – Easel 6

What does “growing green spaces and gardens” look like to this group?

- Edible landscapes (along sidewalks, trees and bushes)
- Integrated greenery –accessible
- Beautiful, green all around with vegetables
- Every apartment has green spaces
- Greenery everywhere – up walls, on roofs, etc.
- Large area for planting and selling vegetables
- Space for farmers to plant
- Seasonable foods
- Fresh food and gardening provides better health and exercise
- Green space gives educational opportunities

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Agencies can help locate spaces
- Need raw materials
- People to help identify space
- Understanding from apartment managers
- Create advocacy group
- Separate space from apartments due to soil quality
- Government to give authority
- Transform available space to green spaces

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Get a large piece of land
 - This requires us to leave Clarkston
- Education on how to grow food in Georgia
- More green spaces in apartments
- What is more important?
 - Large space that is far and requires transportation
 - Small space that you can walk to
- Identify green spaces
 - Large spaces
 - Small spaces (apartment)
- Have class on agriculture
- Have competition for person to get a large space
- What spaces exist that could be used?

- How can we identify existing space?
 - Ask neighbors
 - Ask agencies
 - Walk around and take pictures
 - Talk to apartment managers
 - Find connections among people you know
- Find good land then ask for help getting the land to us

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Look for space around Clarkston
 - Ganga
 - Goma
 - Haeka
- Look on Google Maps for space
 - Mark
- Host a tour at 40 Oaks and explain history of how they got the garden
 - Basmat
- Invite people to walk around and identify spaces
 - Basmat
 - Ganga will coordinate with Nepali speakers
 - Meet this Sunday, Feb. 17th at 1:00 pm in front of library
- Share information about what good soil is in Georgia
 - Susan
- Attend Food and Agriculture Resource Day this Saturday at the CCC --12-4pm
- Make a phone tree

Encouraging Business and Local Economy – Easel 10

(Note: two groups met to discuss this topic. They are summarized separately)

What does “encouraging business and local economy” look like to this group?

- Jobs: an employed citizenry
- Healthy “well” community
- Self-sustaining community
- Literacy (food labels, etc.)
- Understanding local food systems and local foods
- Cross-cultural / multi-cultural food understanding
- Food festivals and other events
- Community dine-outs
 - Engage restaurants
- Sellers connected to local producers
- Vibrant local markets
- Community engaged in entire farm-to-table process
- Local regulations and codes supporting local agriculture and food-related businesses

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Review local codes and create spreadsheets of codes
 - Farms , farmstands, gardens, sellers
- Identify local commercial kitchens (churches, schools, etc.)
- Identify “certified” kitchens
- Getting local sellers (restaurants/stores) to buy/sell local
- Encourage customers to ask for and buy local
- Commit farmers to sell locally
- Create some “local” designation for local buyers/sellers (e.g. Indie.catur)
- Engage extension offices, colleges, etc. in local food programs
- Community Dine-outs
- Food/Dining Tours as seen in Chicago
- Agro-tourism generally
- Restaurant “Toolkits” that include marketing to outside groups
 - Cross-cultural educational programs
- Places to wash, store food
- Enhanced transportation system for foods
- “Buy local” incentives
- Donations to Churches, Mosques, Community, Schools, other faith facilities

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Community Potluck- April 14th CCC Field
 - Recipe swap
 - Promote potluck
 - Recruit people to potluck
- Encourage community members to eat local
- Create local diner's club discounts for eating local
- Create local restaurant guide/website
 - Name, types of food
 - Include food producers guide
- Neighborhood funds: United Way, Opportunity Zone
- Promote local restaurants in faith organizations
- Encourage/Recruit to attend local farmers' market (starts April 21st)
- Letter writing/ advocacy campaign
 - Get involved in DeKalb Urban Growers
 - Atlanta Local Food Initiative.org
- Move DeKalb International Food Festival to Clarkston
- Compile local codes

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Reach out to local restaurants to discuss possibilities like a diner's club, local buyers program
 - McKenzie, Doua
- Reach out to Atlanta Local Food Initiative
 - Amber, Janice
- Go to Farmers' Market; recruit for same
- Promote programs to buyers and producers
 - CPACS
- Identify local restaurant leaders/ owners

Encouraging Business and Local Economy – Easel 11

(Note: two groups met to discuss this topic. They are summarized separately)

What does “encouraging business and local economy” look like to this group?

- Micro-enterprise
- Small scale industry
- Attract small enterprise to employ locals
 - Appropriate size for Clarkston
 - Thinking about internet business ideas
 - Internet business marketplace/ zone
- Make area along Ponce pretty
 - Make area look like “we” (community) care
 - Ordinances encouraging upkeep of property and regular maintenance
 - More opportunities for growing
 - Examples: Ponce and Mell Ave
- Signage “We care in Clarkston.”
- Good example of MLT
- Connecting local growers with other local markets and local businesses
- Encourage new kind of business
 - Example like art center, local museum
 - Cultural market: art, food, handicraft (could this start in a parking lot?)
 - 4-5 major areas that you could host a daily event that would happen several times a year
 - Possibly pairing with Farmers’ Market
 - Maintain integrity of existing
- Food Trucks
 - Increase number
 - Food truck coalition

What needs to be done to achieve that vision?

- Pairing with Farmers’ Market for theme weekend
 - Schedule out the culture focus/education around the market weekends (monthly)
 - example: Bhutanese in March; Somali in April
 - Keep exhibitions fresh (quality control)
 - (Shannon could serve on this)
 - Professional level
 - Make space for new artists
 - Need education for community and training so people know what is desired or expected from quality and what sells

- Need good communication
 - Sagal Radio
- Folk school
 - Common Place
 - Engage community leaders (cultural and others)
 - They can identify these talented people and groups
- Internet business ideas
 - Need high speed free internet
 - Get Google to do
 - Comcast Internet Program?
 - Determine whether internal focus or external (Both)
 - More people on Common Place
 - phone focus – text, internet
- “We care in Clarkston.”
 - Trash, clean, etc. more attractive to businesses
 - Recycling and trash on every corner
 - Communication with community leaders
 - They then can tell their community
 - Their voice matters
 - More trash cans. What is the city cost for increased pickup?
 - Knowing or Education about healthy environment
 - Environmental impact of litter on water
- Connecting local growers to lead markets
 - Farmers’ Market moving to weekly from monthly
 - Farmers’ Market has wholesome wave now
 - Education of population that they can use
 - Educating local restaurants about the possibility or benefits
 - Developing the quantity that is needed for restaurants
 - Creating Clarkston as an Edible community
 - Year-round food production
 - Use of train tracks for beauty and possible food production as well
 - Emanuel can connect to his community
 - Who are the community leaders?
 - Build that list and access them for help on the communication strategy

What actions can this group take to achieve that vision?

- Landscapes around train tracks
 - Improve beauty
 - Edible and low maintenance
 - Very visible
 - Addressing water issue
 - Maintenance (labor of love)

What are the next steps to move these identified projects forward?

- Casa Woods clean-up
 - Mell and Ponce 9-12 Feb 16
- Near tire shops (Before Welcome to Clarkston)
- J. A. Spot
- Spot near parking near Bluebird
- Shannon will help locate spots and talk with others
- Pick one area on Ponce to take care of
 - Each community takes responsibility
 - Need to have a plan for the area
 - Done by and maintained by?
 - Designed
 - Yearly adding more space
 - Shannon and Steve could help with design
 - Steve has wood chips
 - Karen has contact with leaders and can get growers
- Follow up with group by Ted Terry