



# APPENDIX A: Food Hub Concept

**Biggest struggle for food hubs is managing growth and balancing supply and demand.**

**About half of food hubs are equipped to accept SNAP benefits.**

- 2013 National Food Hub Survey Findings

**Most food hubs were either farm to consumer or farm to business. Only 22% were both.**

- USDA "Regional Food Hub Resource Guide"

**From 2007 to 2012, the total value of direct sales from farmers to consumers in Marion County has increased 17.5% to \$214,000.**

- USDA Agriculture Census

## **Direct Demand for and Supply of Local Fresh Food**

The success of a food hub on the Carrier Bryant site requires the union of sufficient supply of and demand for local farm products to ensure long-term sustainability. On the supply side, agriculture has exhibited the highest growth in small farms around metro areas, such as Indianapolis, where markets are available. Evidence from the last few USDA agriculture censuses shows a growing number of farms in Marion County as well as an increase in direct sales. Statewide, the number of farms increased from 3,576 in 2007 to 3,673 in 2012 and from 7 to 24 over the same time interval in Marion County. These new farms are often much smaller, than established farms and focus on specialty crops that command higher market prices than commodity crops.

These farms could benefit from an urban food hub for central aggregation, sales, and networking. Evidence shows that there are currently more specialty crops produced in Indiana than are being sold in the state, indicating an opportunity to improve regional distribution and capture these agricultural products locally. The Central Indiana Food Hub Feasibility study, which looked at Marion County and adjacent counties, reported that farmers in this region believed they could sell more produce locally if they had easier access to markets.

Demand for fresh farm products continues to grow, as the USDA agriculture census shows

direct sales from farmers to consumers have been increasing for around four decades in both Marion County and the state. A food hub at Carrier Bryant may not actually focus on direct sales, depending on the business model, but the recent increase in direct sales represents a larger trend of increased demand for local farm products. Specialty crop farmers in Marion and the surrounding counties could take advantage of this demand by using a food hub as a tool to reach local restaurants and consumers.

## **Indirect Demand**

Much of the indirect demand lacks a direct access to funding, but these sources of indirect demand should still be discussed because they are important to improving quality of life in NWA and could be monetarily supported through various means. There is a demand for uses that produce local value from a food hub at the Carrier Bryant site, which could be realized if subsidized by a funding source like a grant or nonprofit. For example, increased food access in NWA has been identified in the QoL as a key need to increase the health and nutrition of residents. If a nonprofit could help subsidize the purchase of fresh vegetables for residents or training to help local residents garden their own food, that component of a potential food hub should be considered in the market analysis. Through improved health and nutrition, increased food access can also reduce health care costs. There is also a larger value to the Indianapolis community from the improved resiliency associated with localizing food distribution.

By defining food hub in the broadest sense, the goal is to consider a range of uses that maximize the social co-benefits and address as many of the needs discussed in the Northwest Area Quality of Life Plan as are feasible. For example, there could be a partnership between a local university and an urban farm on the site that helped to train residents for farm jobs. Another component could be a reentry program for formally-incarcerated individuals, helping to reduce recidivism and increase quality of life through meaningful work. Once again, in order for these uses to be sustainable, they may require financial support from community partners and grants.

### Other Key Opportunities

This brownfield site has some key attributes that increase its market potential. First, the Carrier Bryant site is located less than three miles from downtown. This proximity increases the site's market potential in several ways: (1) potential to develop the site as an agritourism destination and (2) close access to most of the restaurants that are interested in purchasing locally sourced ingredients, and (3) a central location increases surrounding community's access to the site. In addition, the site has great access to Interstate 65, which can help both to connect farmers to the site and connect the site to a larger market.

The true economic feasibility of a food hub on the Carrier Bryant site will depend on the business plan, including funding sources, stakeholder participation, and uses. There

seems to be a demand for mixed uses on this site in order to fulfill a variety of needs, but in order for a food hub to succeed on this site, a well-crafted business plan must effectively identify and outline the most important and economically feasible of the potential uses. The whole range of food access uses should be considered such as production, aggregation, distribution, direct sales, education, and value-added processing.

There are myriad resources available for both the implementation of this plan as well as general reuse of brownfield sites. This section gives an overview of available grants for the cleanup of brownfield sites, redevelopment of brownfield sites, and programs that support community development, environmental restoration, and educational programs. In addition, this section summarizes state and federal funding sources to support urban agriculture and local food procurement for the assistance on the projects laid out in this plan. At the end, there is a list of databases for additional funding resources.

### Food Hub Business Assessment Toolkit

- Food hubs exist to strengthen regional food systems
- “all food hubs create impact on the food system by promoting greater producer and supply diversity, supporting young and beginning farmers, building infrastructure and systems to make local food accessible to consumer and to make larger markets

accessible to farmers, and stimulating economic growth”

- Overwhelming ecological and economic reasons drive the need to grow in a diversified manner
- To increase the resilience of our agricultural sector, we must also increase the number and viability of small and mid-sized farms.
  - Improving market access and size for small farmers will encourage more to join the market
  - “food hubs provide the critical market access, income, and services to support young and beginning farmers as they learn to grow and expand.

Food hubs face low margins that necessitate high volumes and efficiency to be successful.

- The National Good Food Network lists 230 business as food hubs
- 75% of food hubs were located in metropolitan counties
- About half of food hubs are for-profit 34% are non-profit and 13% are co-ops
- Four key ways that food hubs differ from conventional sector: pricing, traceability, market access and development services
- Environmental, social, and economic impact potential
- “a complete market overview covers the size of the addressable market, key customer segments, competitive environment, regulatory climate, and market trends or other market drivers that are relevant”.

## Creating an Urban Agriculture Food Hub

The following narrative identifies the variety of design components that have been associated with developing a mixed-use urban ag food hub.

**Fresh produce in the United States travels an average of 1,500 miles.**

- National Center for Appropriate Technology

Currently, much of the food consumed by Americans is grown in regions far from where it is consumed. The images at-right illustrate help further illustrate this concept. The intent of establishing a Food Hub in NWA is to provide locally-grown, fresh, nutritious food to NWA residents, while also creating jobs in the neighborhood. On a regional scale, the Food Hub aims to be a destination for the Indianapolis metropolitan region, as a local public and/or private food distributor to area residents, restaurants, and businesses.

### Intensive Agriculture

One of the fastest growing areas of agriculture is “intensive agriculture” which falls in three primary categories:

- Hydroponics (growing plants in water)
- Aquaculture (growing fish)
- Aquaponics (growing plants and fish in the same system)

### Present Outsourced Meal

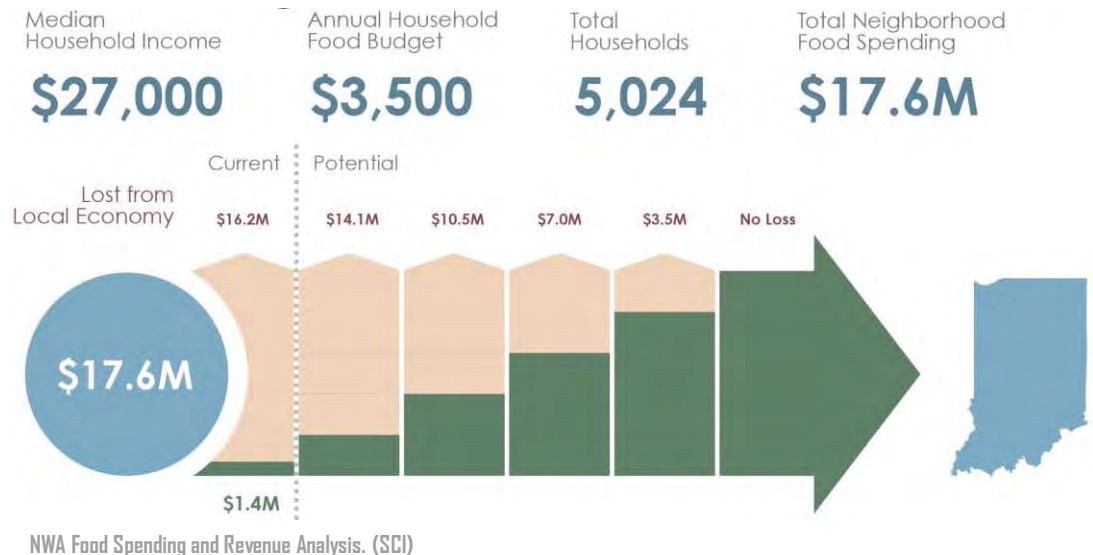


Foods grown in Brazil, California, North Dakota and Idaho. (SCI)

### NWA Food Hub Meal



Foods that could be grown in NWA via aquaponics, soil farming, community gardens and orchards. (SCI)



### Community Center

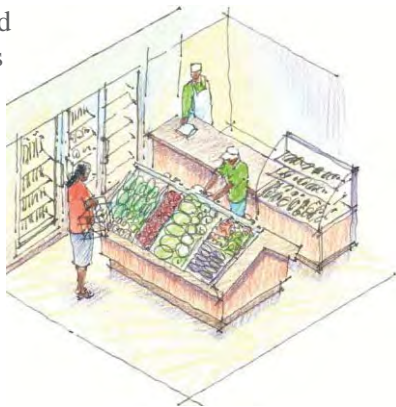
A cornerstone of the urban ag hub would be a community center that provides space for local owned businesses, neighborhood services and amenities including any or all of the following:

- Café / Bakery
- Job Training
- Community Kitchen
- Child Care
- Playground
- Co-op Grocery



### Co-Op Grocery

Community supported grocery as an extension of food produced by local growers and area farmers that provides employment opportunities and access to healthy food.



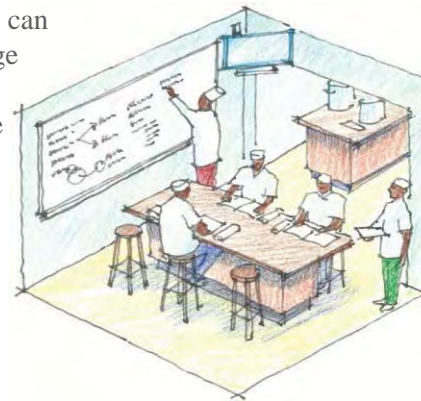
### Retail Food Service

Extension of food production into retail food service and dining. Increased opportunities for application of culinary and hospitality job training, neighborhood entrepreneurship, and neighborhood socialization.



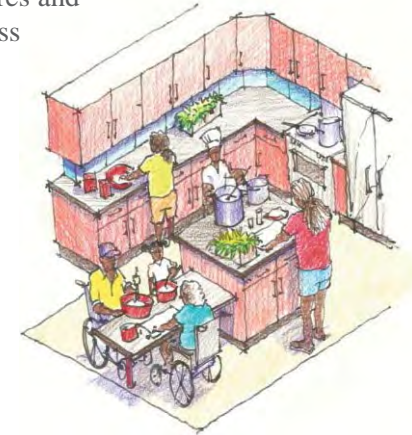
### Community Classroom

Integrated into the community center will be classrooms that can serve as outpost for community based educational programs, certificate and degree programs as well as focused life skill training activities. Culinary programs and nutrition focused class can take advantage of the food grown on site and reinforce our community health programs.



### Community Kitchen

An important component of the community center will be the community kitchen. The kitchen can provide training for cooking, canning and other value adding activities to expand the local food usage. It can also be rented by start-up businesses providing them with a certified kitchen to prepare products for markets, stores and other business ventures.

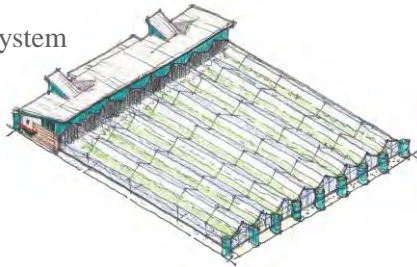


## NWA Urban Agriculture Design Components

**Intensive Agriculture:** One of the fastest growing areas of agriculture is “intensive agriculture” which falls in three primary categories:

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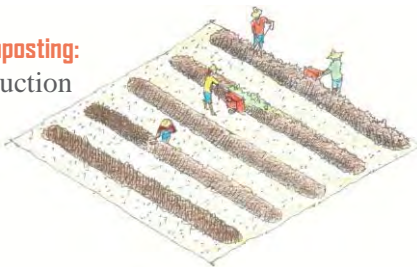
**Aquaponics:** A system of growing vegetables and fish at an increased rate of production.



**Commercial Farming:** Urban, soil-based farming in hoop houses.

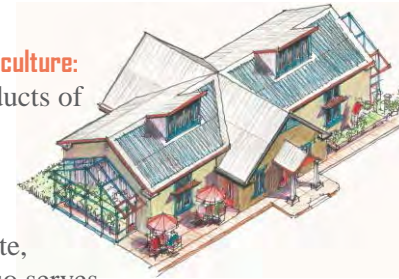


**Commercial Composting:** Rich soil production for on-site agriculture and for sale.



## Building Typologies and Uses

**Processing / Retail for Intensive Agriculture:** Preparation and sales of bi-products of intensive agriculture processes.



**Processing / Retail for Commercial Farm:** Space to package, distribute, and sell food grown on-site. Also serves as an urban farming supply store.

**Community Outreach and Education Center:** An information center for the demonstration of agricultural processes and nutrition awareness.

**Distribution:** A value-adding and distribution facility for food grown on site.

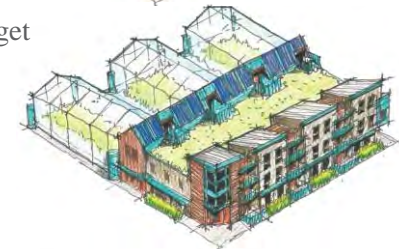


**Maker Space:** Shared spaces, including studios for artists and makers.

**Eco Homestead:** Row houses with aquaponic systems on the property.



**Specialty Housing:** Housing for target populations with intensive agriculture systems attached, offering food and jobs.



## Centers of Activity

### Community Garden:

Vegetable garden plots and greenhouse space are made available to the public.



### Orchards:

Fruit trees planted for food production.



### Shelter Market Space:

Market stalls for sales of on-site produced food, products, and other goods.



### Urban Animals:

Eggs, honey, and other bi-products from animals for food and value-added activities.



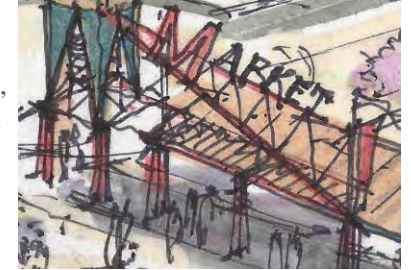
### Commercial Greenhouse:

This portion of the commercial farm is housed in greenhouse conditions for specific outputs.



### Neighborhood Plaza:

Community gathering space for performance, discussions, and exhibitions.



### Composting:

Rich soil production for on-site agriculture and for sale.



### Mobile Markets:

An area for food trucks, food wagons, and food stands to sell to the neighborhood.



### Outdoor Classroom / Amphitheater:

Community gathering space for instruction, demonstration, and food awareness.

