

City	
Country	United States of America
Population	129,585
Title of policy or practice	Green Ordinances Working Group
Subtitle (optional)	Food and Farming-Related Ordinances Overhaul
URL video	
Category	Food Production
SDGs	SDGs: 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15.
Brief description	<p>Recognizing the connections between food and the community's environmental, economic, and physical health, several departments in the City of New Haven are partnering to launch the Green Ordinances Working Group to guide a concerted effort to systematically and methodically update and overhaul the New Haven Code of Ordinances, especially in regards to food and farming. In order to support the production and sale of locally grown foods, build community, improve public health and well-being and provide economic opportunity, particularly in areas that have vacant or underutilized land, and after many decades of growth and change happening across the city without coordinated planning for the future, the City is now looking to shape the way urban agriculture and other food systems work happens in the city through planning.</p> <p>The City is attempting to better use zoning to support local food systems in each neighbourhood. The new zoning ordinance is designed to enhance the quality of urban design across the city rather than simply focusing on how land or buildings are used. Each building in the city works like a puzzle piece and the updated ordinances will make sure those pieces fit together to create a high-quality puzzle. Land use policies can assist in securing access to and ensuring the preservation of land for agricultural uses. Zoning regulations can ensure that agriculture occurs in suitable locations and under the proper conditions. But there is no one-size-fits-all urban agricultural land use policy. Urban areas vary in availability of land for agriculture, population density, soil suitability, and resident interest. Uniquely, we also hope to incorporate ordinances that support worker cooperative models and racial equity (i.e. undue historical redlining). The goal is to provide an effective, responsive, fair, efficient, user-friendly, and predictable but flexible system to regulate development across the City's neighbourhoods.</p>
Date of start and state (ongoing/completed)	05/2019 Ongoing
Actors and stakeholders involvement	The Working Group currently consists of City staff from the Planning Department, the Food System Policy Division, Engineering, Transportation, and Building. Additional partners include volunteers from the mayorally-appointed Environmental Advisory Council and New Haven Food Policy Council. Other national and international networks engaged in this work for guidance are the US Conference of Mayors Food Policy Advisors Network and ICLEI - North America along with ICLEI's RUAF-CITYFOOD network.
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff participating in the Working Group held several internal meetings to decide on an initial approach to overhaul; • Initial topic area discussions with community stakeholders will occur soon; • Public review on the ordinance drafts will follow; • Staff will publish a summary of public comments; • Staff will incorporate and finalize draft ordinance changes; • Ordinance changes will be submitted to the Board of Alders (BOA);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will develop implementation practices pending BOA approval.
Innovation	<p>Cities across the US have started to adopt urban agriculture zoning ordinances which provide access to land and encourage food production in low-income black and brown communities. However, many cities fail to use an anti-racist lens (thereby ignoring structural racism) in the creation and implementation of these policies. According to scholars and activists, anti-racist practices in urban agriculture zoning require that first, community organizations and policy makers co-create policy with black and brown communities and second, develop secure land tenure arrangements for urban agriculture. For these reasons, it is our priority in New Haven that marginalized low-income black and brown community members who live within neighborhoods should lead in the decision-making process for this zoning overhaul.</p> <p>We hope that through this process, we would be able to create a toolkit that sets forth a framework and model language for urban food and farming-related land use policies that communities can tailor to their particular context and needs. Furthermore, we are also currently drafting ordinances that encourage worker cooperative models that support the local food system as well as incorporating language around anti-racism and food justice. To the best of our knowledge, this approach is unique, especially in relation to zoning and food systems.</p>
Impact	<p>Planning for urban agriculture can foster food justice by benefiting socioeconomically disadvantaged residents. The potential social benefits of urban agriculture include increased access to food, positive health impacts, skill building, community development, and connections to broader social change efforts. The literature suggests, however, caution in automatically conflating urban agriculture's social benefits with the goals of food justice. Urban agriculture may reinforce and deepen societal inequities by benefitting better resourced organizations and the 'propertied' class and contributing to the displacement of lower-income households. The precariousness of land access for urban agriculture is another limitation, particularly for disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>In New Haven, we aim to more explicitly support the goals of food justice in our urban agriculture policies and programs. We are prioritizing urban agriculture in long-term planning efforts, developing mutually respectful relationships with food justice organizations and urban agriculture participants from diverse backgrounds, targeting city investments in urban agriculture to benefit historically disadvantaged communities, increasing the amount of land permanently available for urban agriculture, and confronting the threats of gentrification and displacement from urban agriculture. A monitoring framework for tracking these changes is currently being developed.</p>
Inclusion	<p>This Green Ordinances Working Group is embarking on a large, year-long endeavour. This project involves the active participation of and partnership between two departments in the City of New Haven - Planning & Zoning and Food System Policy - and several civil society representatives from the New Haven Food Policy Council. Our ongoing strategy includes public participation to co- create a vision for the community's long-term land-use goals and community building to connect individuals and groups to each other and to additional resources for implementation of these strategies and realizing this vision. This project will also aim to better connect urban food production to surrounding rural areas represented by the Connecticut South Central Regional Council of Governments. Throughout the process, we will interact with stakeholders through public meetings, targeted outreach, and meetings with key leaders and partners.</p>
Adversity coefficient	<p>New Haven is a challenging municipal environment for food policy change. Administrative conditions such as the lack of resources and lack of leadership and capacity within and between departments act as barriers to effective change. There is currently very little internal awareness around urban food systems and food policy in the local government. Even with a Food System Policy Director in place, much of the work that is expected of this position focuses on charity and emergency food assistance, with little focus on systems-level or root-cause solutions.</p> <p>Many do not understand the importance of, for example, supporting a thriving food economy through economic development, creating an enabling environment for urban agriculture through</p>

zoning amendments, or the cross-cutting issues between food and health. This lack of awareness is not limited to within the local government, but is also prevalent in the Board of Alders, and among many New Haven residents.

However, relative autonomy for the Food System Policy Director/Division provides an opportunity for collaboratively defining a new food systems vision and priorities for New Haven, especially through the partnerships developing during the process of drafting food-systems related zoning ordinance language.