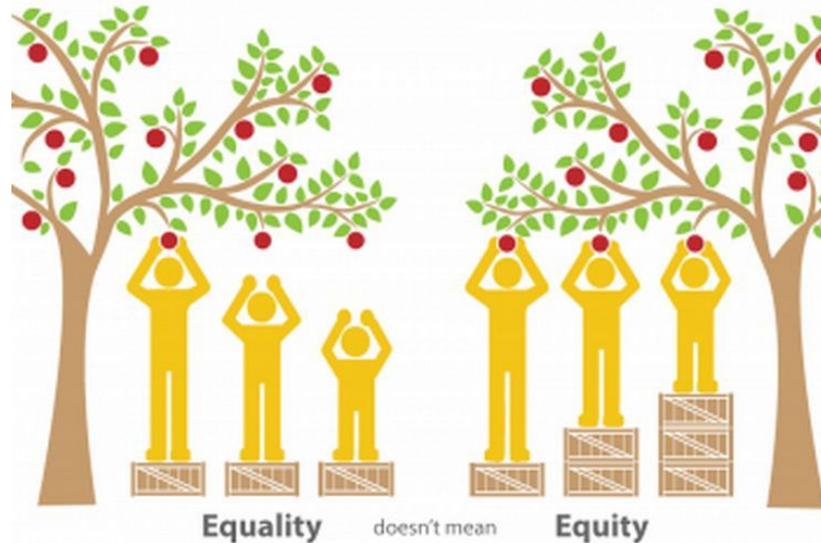




# Cultivating Food Equity in Glassboro, NJ

Undergraduate Planning Studio 2021 | Geography, Planning, & Sustainability, Rowan University





## Presentation Outline

- Introductions
  - The team
  - The project
- Concepts
- Context & data
- Community voices
- Recommendations
- Concluding remarks
- Questions or comments from the audience



## Planning Studio Team

- Emma Callan
- Gabrielle Davis
- Teddy Markou
- Daniel McAleavey
- Samuel Opal
- Camden Putnal
- Mason Spino
- Hunter Swanson
- Kymonie Thomas-Nagil
- Shane Weeks



## Faculty Advisor

Mahbubur Meenar, PhD

### Partners



Glassboro  
Health Equity Coalition



## Purpose & significance of the project

- To create a **vision plan** to achieve food equity in Glassboro
  - Based on literature review, data analysis, and community input
- Significant because --
  - 22% of Glassboro residents live below the poverty level, compared with 7.6% of all Gloucester County residents
  - 70% of Glassboro residents have limited access to healthy food
  - Poor and minority populations across the nation have less access to healthy and affordable food
  - Food inequity issue became more crucial during the global pandemic.



## The process

- Methodology included a four-step process

### THE PROCESS



#### Understanding concepts

Food equity, health equity, community food access, local food system, community food projects, programs, and policies.



#### Collecting & analyzing data

Socio-demographic data, local food environment, existing food resources and projects, land use, zoning and other regulations.



#### Capturing community voices

Two online surveys (48 and 24 responses), interviews with 21 local stakeholders, two focus groups with 20 participants.



#### Drafting recommendations

Recommendations for potential food-related projects, programs, and policy changes, along with the visualization of sample projects.





## Local and Regional Food Systems

- Place-specific clusters or collaborative networks of agricultural producers, consumers, and institutions engaged in sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of a particular city, region, or foodshed
- Democratically controlled local or regional food system





## Other concepts (plus case studies) presented in the report

- Community gardens
- Urban farms
- Home gardens
- Healthy corner stores
- Food deserts, food swamp, grocery gap
- Farm to table programs
- Farmers' markets
- Food co-ops
- Food pantries, food banks, fresh food distribution program
- Gleaning
- Edible landscaping
- Fruit tree projects
- Foraging
- Community food education programs



## Glassboro, NJ

- A small historic town specialized in glassblowing as well as local agriculture such as berry farms and orchards
- Loss of agricultural land - development pressure - Rowan University's expansion - influence on food scene



Source: Summit City Winery

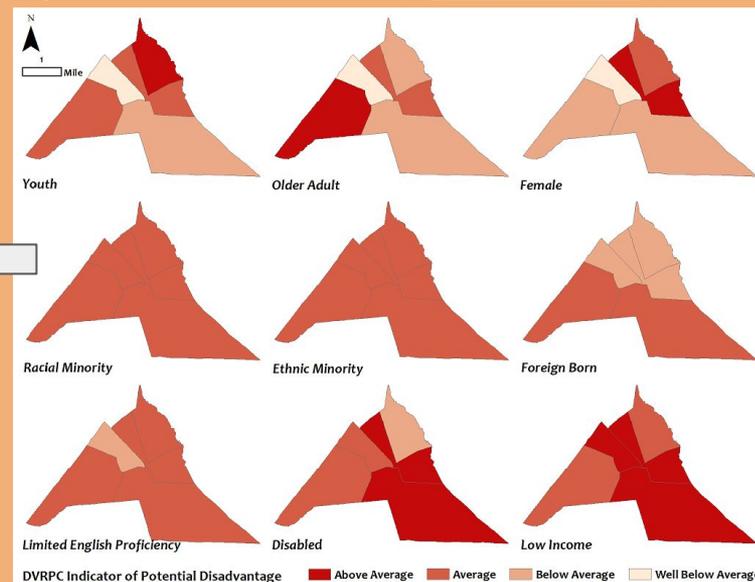
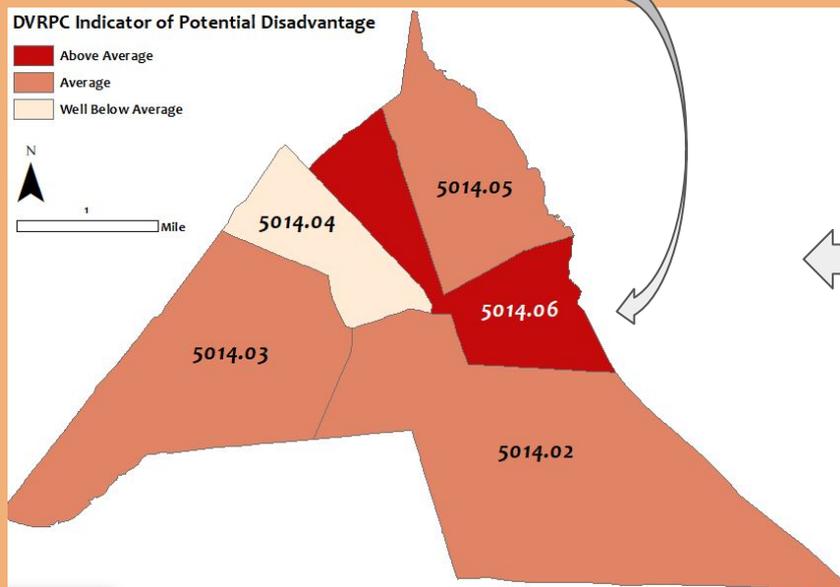
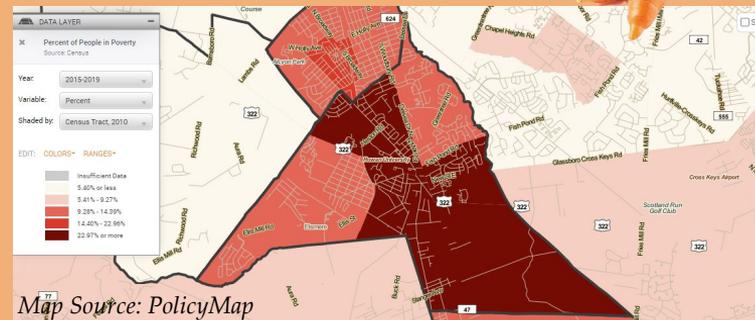
Glassboro Legacy Mural





## Socio-Economic Environment

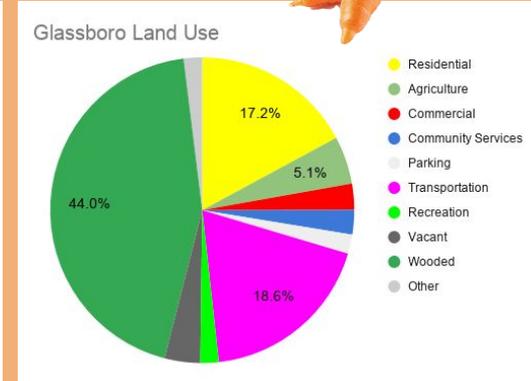
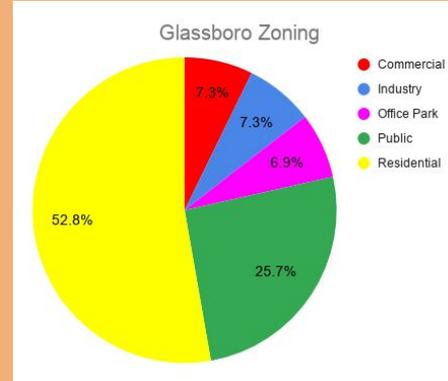
- A diverse community
- 22% people under poverty (tracts 2, 4, & 6)
- DVRPC indicator of potential disadvantaged (IPD) data - Tract 6 ranked "above average"



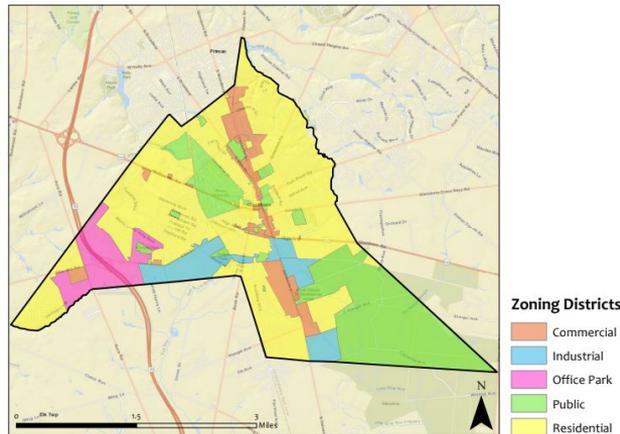


### Built Environment

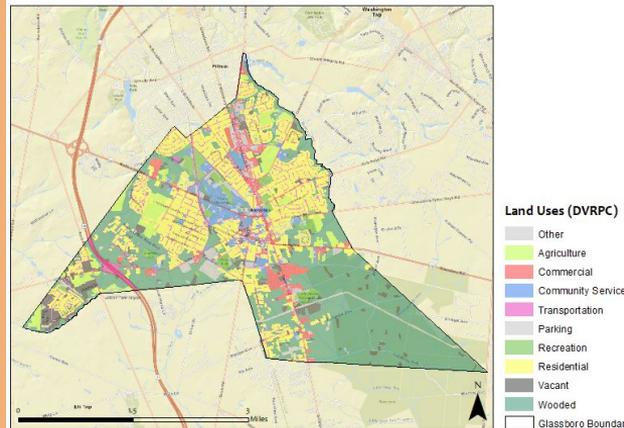
- Zoning, land use, public transportation
- Urban agriculture provision



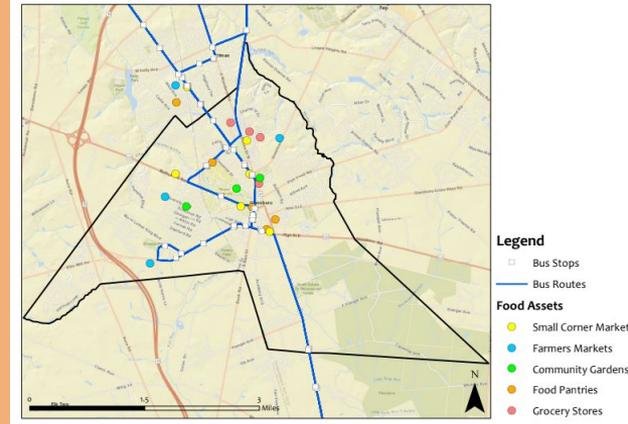
Glassboro Zoning Districts



Land Use in Glassboro, New Jersey



Bus Transportation in Glassboro





### Food Environment

- 70% of residents have limited access to food
- Almost half of the area - low income + low access
- Organizations, institutions, and food security programs

Data Source: City Health Dashboard

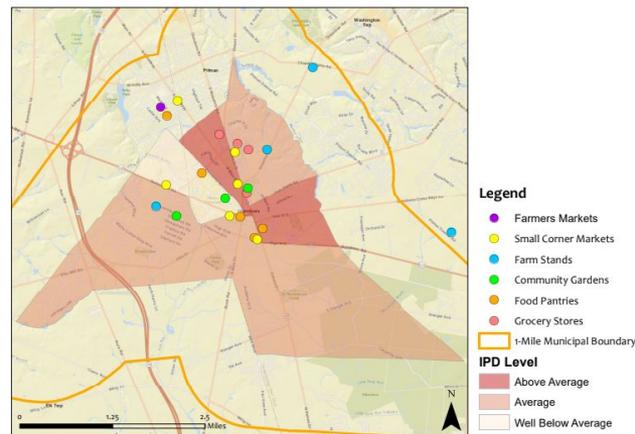
#### Limited Access to Healthy Foods in Glassboro, NJ

Source: City Health Dashboard; Data from Food Access Research Atlas, Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 2015



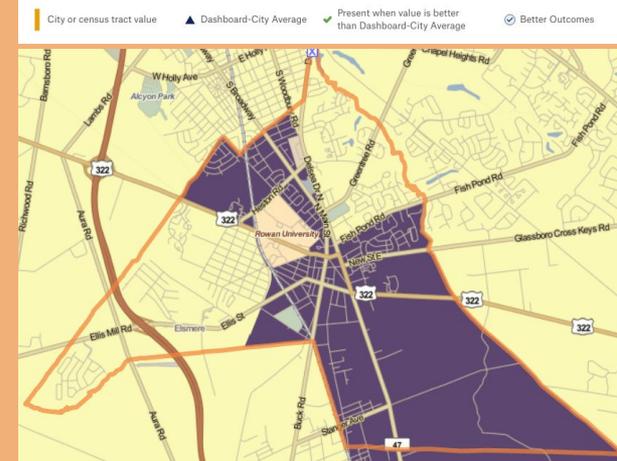
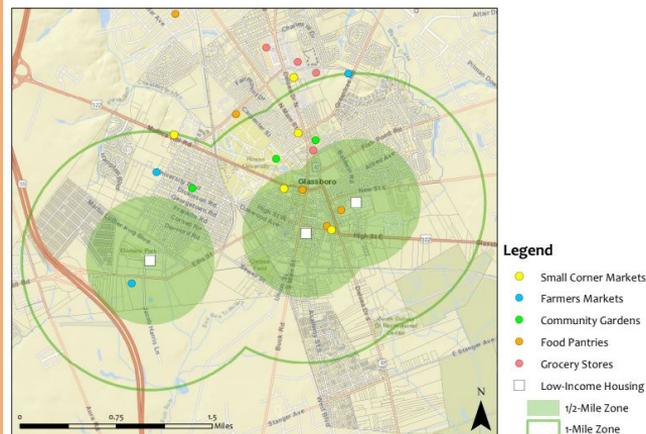
70.3% of Glassboro's residents had limited access to healthy food, compared to an average of 63.9% across the Dashboard cities.

Glassboro Food Sources with IPD Scores



Data Sources: DVRPC, Google

Low-Income Housing Spatial Food Access



Map Source: PolicyMap (low income - low access to food)

# 4 Community Voices



## Three ways to learn from the community:

- Surveys
  - Community residents and stakeholders
  - “Glassboro Grows” participants
- Interviews
  - Stakeholders and residents
- Focus groups
  - Rowan University students
  - Glassboro Health Equity Coalition

# 4 Community Voices



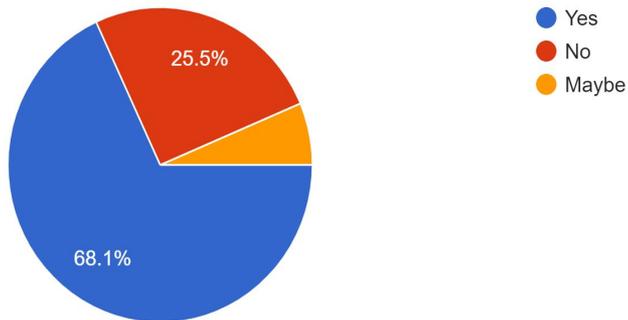
## Results - Glassboro Food Equity Survey (n = 47)

*“people like me don’t like to talk about it but experience food insecurity all the time. I think food is a right but many people don’t have access to food (let alone healthy food) all the time, kids go hungry, and we need to do more collectively.”*

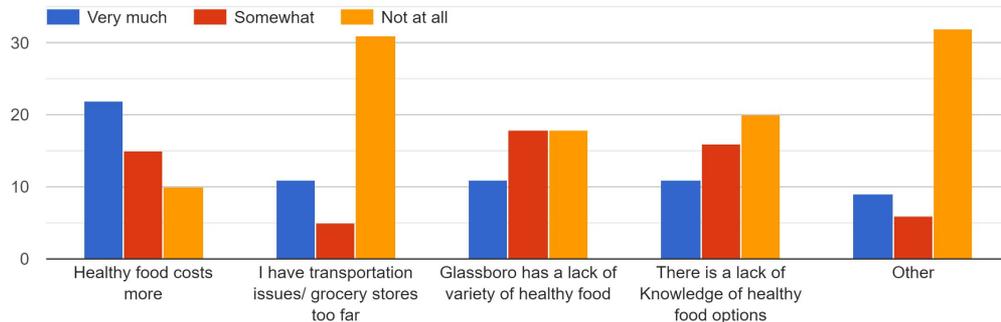
*“Glassboro is for rich people where some kids go hungry.”*

Do you have easy access to healthy and fresh food?

47 responses



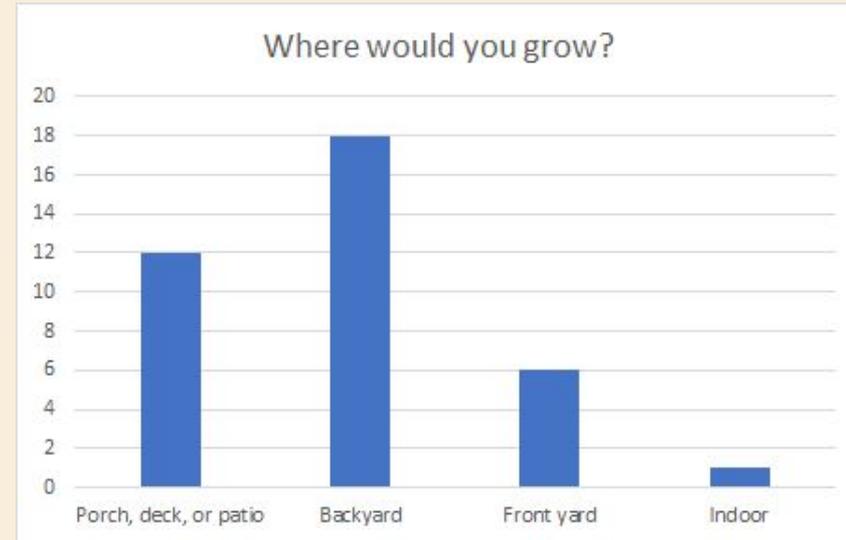
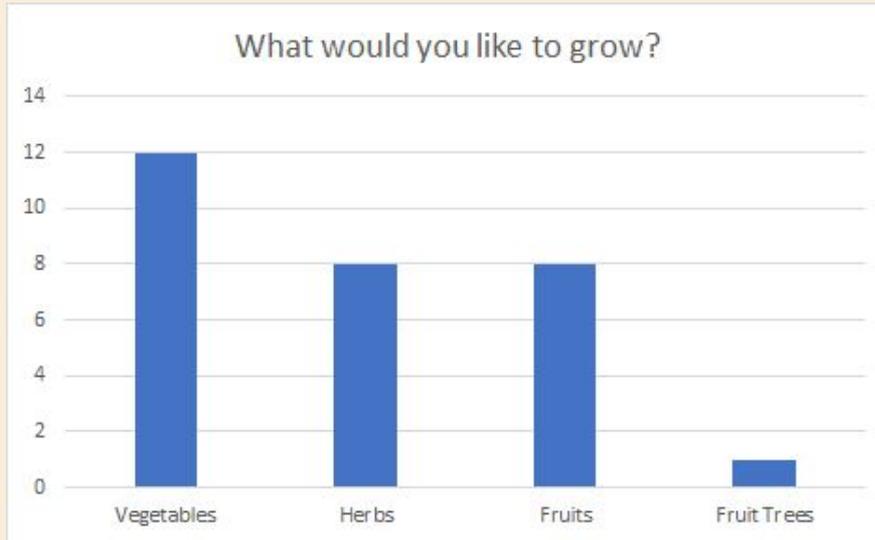
How is healthy food access restricted to you? (If it is)





## Results - Survey of "Glassboro Grows" participants (n = 20)

- Interested in growing vegetables, fruits, and herbs
- In the backyard or deck, even in the front yard



# 4 Community Voices



## Results - Interviews (n = 21)

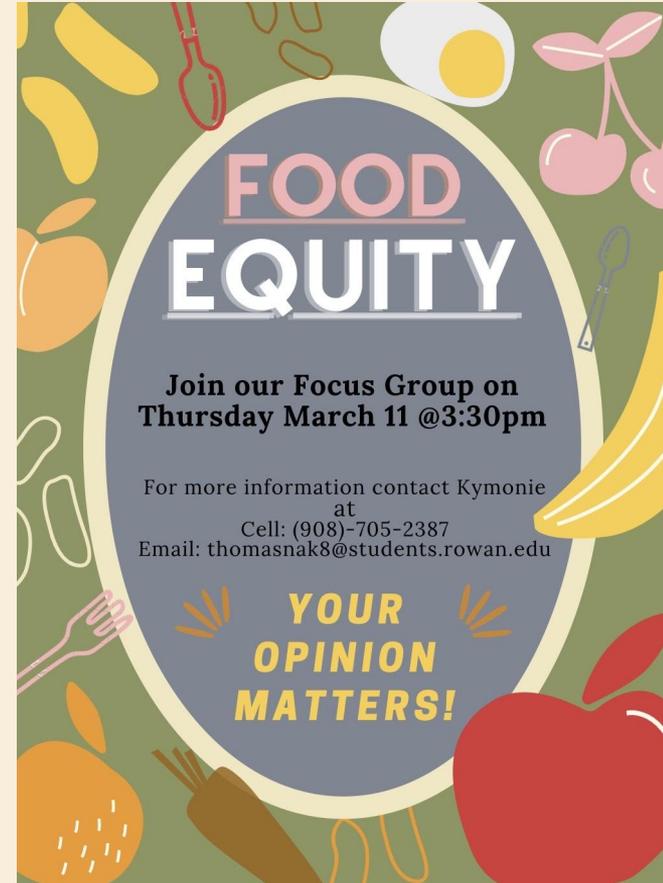
- “Food inequity exists in Glassboro”
- “Food equity is two fold” - physical access and financial access
- “The issue isn't the availability, but it is the transportation and the affordability”
- “Look at where big grocery stores are located and where lower income and minority residents live. The lack of access is clear.”

*“...back then, everybody had gardens, people used to have chickens, and so they had fresh eggs, um, those kind of things. So they were a little bit more self-sufficient, I believe, as far as when it came to food and vegetables.”*



## Results - Focus group (RU students, n = 6)

- “Food equity ... means having the access and the resources to be able to have, at least three nutritional meals, a day.”
- Rowan Rouge Initiative



*Focus group flyer*



## Results - Focus group (Glassboro Health Equity Coalition, n = 17)

- Diverse group of members
- “the neighborhoods with the most minorities were also the neighborhoods with the least access to fresh foods and overall betterment to their health”
- Eight top ideas generated to address food inequity



Glassboro  
Health Equity Coalition

# 5 Recommendations

## Projects

- **Goal:** Achieve food equity through various projects, so that residents have a variety of options to choose from in order to best suit their needs, affordability, and schedules.
- **Objective 1:** Empower residents to cultivate their own food through community gardens and home gardens. Increase ease of access, equitable access for people of all abilities, and affordability.
  - Community gardens
  - Home gardens





## Projects

- **Objective 2:** Increase healthy food supply through various initiatives such as
  - Healthy corner stores
  - Mid-size grocery or food co-op
  - Pop-up farmers markets
  - Community fridge



# 5 Recommendations

## Projects

- **Objective 3:** Increase “free” access to healthy food by adding edible plants and fruit trees to Glassboro’s existing landscapes and streetscapes.





## Programs

- **Goal:** Reinforce local food systems and community food security by engaging community institutions, increasing cross-sector collaborations, and empowering residents through various programs.
- **Objective 1:** Serve food insecure residents by including healthy food options to existing charitable programs or creating/expanding such programs.
  - Healthy food pantries
  - Gleaning and foraging program



## Programs

- **Objective 2:** Empower residents by increasing informational access and providing education and training programs on healthy food production, preparation, consumption, and business.
  - Communication hub
  - Community education and training program
- **Objective 3:** Create cross-sector collaborations between multiple entities to ensure equitable local/regional food systems.
  - Farm to table program



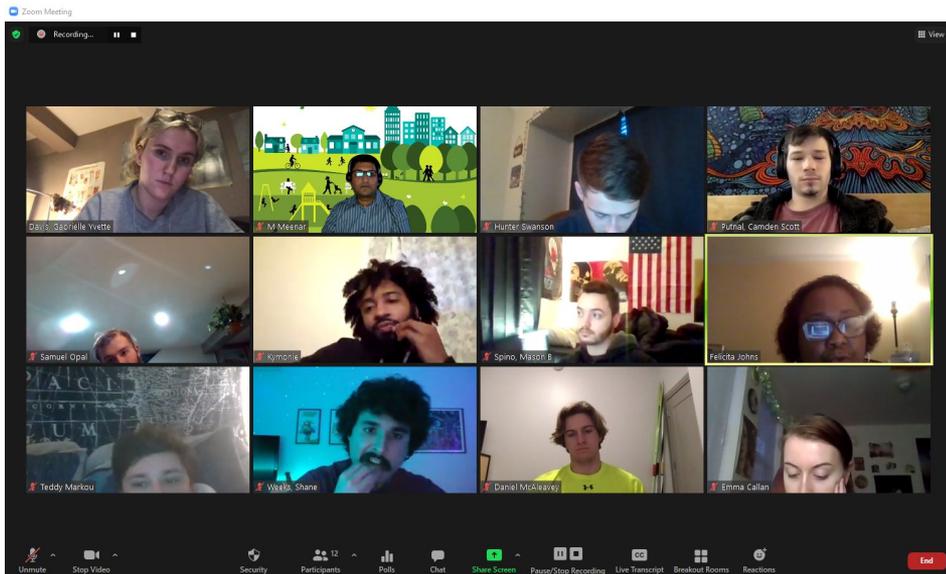
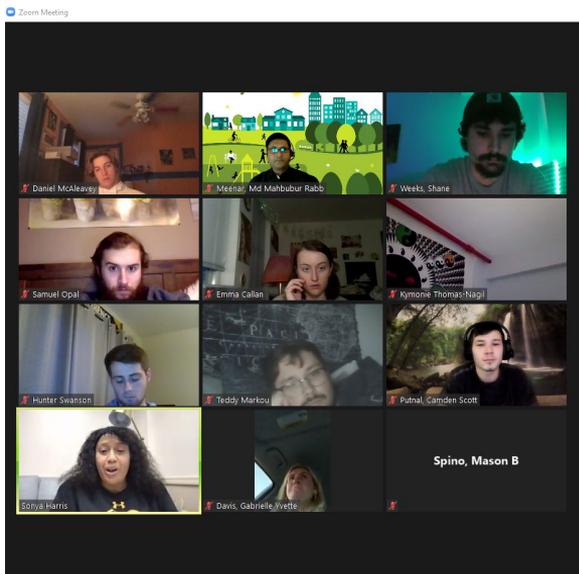
## Policies

- **Goal:** Provide financial and legislative assistance to establish healthy food programs and increase healthy and affordable food access.
- **Objective 1:** Provide legislative support to food and poultry production as well as food programs.
  - Urban agriculture ordinance
  - Chicken ordinance
- **Objective 2:** Provide financial support to establish healthy food programs and increase healthy and affordable food access.
  - Borough incentives

# Concluding Remarks



- Strengths
- Limitations
- Next steps



*Having class meetings week after week on ZOOM was sometimes challenging, but we were pleased to have guests like Felicity Johns and Sonya Harris in our class.*



# Acknowledgements Questions - Comments

