



Cherry Hill Food Co-op



Readiness Report

Exploring the prospect of a cooperatively-owned,
community-controlled grocery store in South Baltimore



April 2019

by Eric Jackson

Black Yield



Black Yield Institute is a Pan-African power institution based in Baltimore, Maryland, serving as a think tank and collective action network that addresses food apartheid. Since our beginning in November 2015, we have worked collaboratively with black people and entities, along with other institutions, in pursuit of Black land and food sovereignty. We are to build independent power by establishing an action network and serving as an incubator for ideas and projects. We are unapologetically a Black-led institution, utilizing Afrocentric, Pan-African, and human rights frameworks to anchor our thought and works toward liberation through food.

Learn more about Black Yield Institute on our website, www.blackyieldinstitute.org.

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Author's Notes



In July 2017, I officially began meeting Cherry Hill leaders and residents to discuss the possibility of a project to secure a grocery store. After years of studying cooperatives and the utility of collective and cooperative economic models to address real needs in Black groups and communities throughout the African Diaspora, I was sure that I was going to assert that we try to address the issue of food apartheid in Cherry Hill through means considered and moved past mere food security toward a model that address the poverty-centered ownership and control of resources.

This project has represented a major turning point in my faith that cooperatives are viable means of addressing issues of food insecurity and health disparities, while

daring to shift social imagination by engaging in the huge task of leading, with so many wonderful people, an effort to build community wealth in a poor, mostly Black area in South Baltimore.

An ode of honor and respect is owed to the people, groups, and organizations that have contributed to the struggle for liberation generally and through food, upon whose shoulders I stand. Thank you, Ancestors, for your resilience and resistance. Thank you for those to come!

Special love and honor to **Mama Juanita Brown-Ewell**, matriarch of the Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden, my grandmother **Edith Briscoe**, a mother-warrior who raised her children and grandchildren in Cherry Hill Homes only to transition into the realm of the ancestors prematurely due to complications from Type-2 diabetes; and my father **Eric Junior Jackson, Sr.**, who met my mother in South Baltimore, married and lived in Cherry Hill, worked hard and sacrificed his health and life in this inequitable food system in 2013. I give thanks for their work in life and in transition. It's your collective works that allows Black Yield Institute to live strong.

Shout outs

While I have authored this document, I am not a lone wolf in this work. So many hours, brain and heart work, and

resources were utilized to get to this in our collective work. Big ups to—Mama Faith Cunningham, Saché Jones, Tiffany Jones, and Ty Alston—the Cherry Hill Food Co-op Steering Committee for your leadership and labor. There is no foundation for the co-operative economic work without you! Thank you all for the countless hours in planning meetings, door knocking, thought leadership, social media marketing, and all of the undocumented activities that has helped us get to this point! You all are special!

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of some partner and family organizations and some of Baltimore's brilliant people. Thank you, Cynthia Wu, for your support during the summer with your countless hours of processing readings and producing the literature review that laid the bases for much of the background content. Cynthia, your data collection and management support has been most helpful in this monumental project. Also, thank you to all of the volunteers that helped us through door knocking. Of course, thank you to those who responded to our questionnaire. Thank you to the behind-the-scenes supporters, like Michael Middleton of Cherry Hill Development Corporation (CHDC) and Cherry Hill Community Coalition; the CHDC Board of Directors; Fanon Hill, Navasha Daya, Mama Shirley Foulks, and the families of Youth Resiliency Institute. Thanks to the editors of this report—including, Kristin Dawson, Sarah Buzogany, Cynthia Ham, and Joyce Bartlett. Your work is critical to making this document ready for the next steps in greatness. Humungous shout out to the Cherry Hill community past and present for the strong presence, will, and divine energies that run through us. Here's to years

and generations of workers and leaders. I walk with you all in mind, heart, and body!

I want to acknowledge the philanthropic institutions (and the people that operate them) that have believed enough in BYI to partner with us through financial contributions and investments. Thanks to Baltimore Development Corporation and the Casino Impact Fund; Fund for Change; and OSI- Baltimore. I also acknowledge that Black Yield Institute is a program under the umbrella of Fusion Partnerships, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization registered in the state of Maryland. Thanks for the support and fiscal sponsorship, which has been invaluable throughout our process!

And big ups to BYI staff, volunteers, and the leadership of the Circle of Wise Counsel & Action for your respective works and support of this process. Thanks to all of the people willing to dare to imagine different realities in local, regional, and national food system. Salute to all of the folks doing amazing work and figuring it out on the ground! You all inspire, energize, ground, and challenge me. And I love it and you all!

Lastly, I would like to express my love and gratitude for my family of origin and friends for emotional, spiritual and other supports. I have deep honor and respect for my internal family for compassionately and selflessly sharing me with others and supporting work in all the creative ways they do! This is really for you first and everyone and everything else secondly. I am, therefore we are; we are, therefore I am! Give thanks to the Most High Creator and all things divine for Life and Life-giving! Asé!

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Executive Summary

Food co-ops are economic models utilized by members of particular groups to address the social, cultural, and economic needs expressed by the collective and are centered on the consistent access to relatively healthy foods. Co-ops are democratically governed, meaning one voice and one vote. Many people become member-owners of co-ops as a way to get around policies and practices that do not meet their needs and desires or that lock certain people away from resources to meet those expressed needs. Marginalized groups have utilized cooperative business structures, in order to create opportunities to have their basic human needs met. Black people, or people of African descent, have organized co-ops since the 19th century because oppressive systems have left them no choice. In the 21st century, food co-ops are still viable options for addressing food apartheid, which is a way that oppression shows up in local and global food systems.

This report has been written to explore the food co-op model to address inequity at the hyperlocal level—in Cherry Hill, a historically, Black community in South Baltimore built in the 1940s. The first section shares the food history through the lens of race and politics. It lifts up discussions of macro and micro-level issues and how they connect to the current state of the food environment in

While economic sustainability, as a measure of a successful outcome, is critical, the outputs are equally valuable and deserve deep attention and analysis if the cooperative tradition is to live strong in the 21st century.

Cherry Hill. At the same time, the report shares stories of how people, even through many forms of institutional racism and white supremacy, engaged in resiliency and resistance practices to ensure that food and economic development was available to the people of Cherry Hill. The report also attempts to explicitly illustrate the thread of the work of Black Yield Institute into the thread of food resilience and resistance, with the work it does currently to combat food apartheid.

Furthermore, the report discusses the importance and uses for food co-ops, while sharing the results of a two-year process of community work. The author and other leaders connected to Cherry Hill Food Co-op, a budding institution committed to addressing food issues in the area through community wealth building and food access for Black people, embarked on a journey to assess the community's readiness for a grocery store that is community-owned and controlled. The methods of data collection are shared and the results are clear—people in

Cherry Hill and beyond want, deserve, and ready to learn more and accomplish the community goal of establishing a grocery. After 15 years without a full-service grocery store, this report is envisioned as a beacon of light toward a near future and process that is ripe for a complete change to the current food environment. As the report concludes, the author offers recommendations for how the Cherry Hill Food Co-op can move forward with the perspective success of other historic and current food co-ops.

The recommendations have been crafted based on training, experience, and well wishes for an effective and sustainable cooperative venture in South Baltimore that centers Black people. In an effort to realize the vision, the author suggests the following actions, which can be carried out over the next three years:

- **Hire a Consultant and Organizer** in order to increase the capacity and both internal and external expertise.
- **Engage New Steering Committee Leaders** with diverse skill sets, perspectives, experiences, socioeconomic statuses, and identities.
- **Hold Space for Continued Education** because creating and sharing knowledge is the life-blood of the work.
- **Complete a Feasibility Study & Business Plan** because there will not be a sustainable business without these things.
- **Incorporate as a Legal Entity** with Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, and other legal precedence, in order for the work to be protected.

- **Plan and Execute an Expansive Marketing Strategy**, to include the purchasing of audio-visual equipment, creating and utilizing various online platforms, and marketing materials.
- **Continue Community Programming**, because programming should center practicing cooperation—the very basis of the co-op development work.
- **Develop an Advisory Team**, comprised of people who have specific training and comparable skills but who cannot commit to a “full-time” commitment.
- **Plan and Execute a Community Investment Campaign** that raises funds, friends, and members through engagement.
- **Connect more closely with Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden and other partners** to ensure commitment to a larger effort to change the food system.

In conclusion, this report is to contribute to the process of changing how people think about themselves, the people, beings, and elements around them, and the types of realities that can exist. This report and work attempt to shift the social imagination of Black and other marginalized peoples. This report asserts that we have been ready for land and food sovereignty!

“Cherry Hill showcases a deep culture of survival practices and change interventions...”

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Introduction

Background

In December 2016, Cherry Hill Development Corporation leaders contracted Black Yield Institute (BYI) to lead a series of Community Food Justice Conversations. Utilizing an interactive historic asset mapping process, the author was able to facilitate the creation of a collective narrative of the successes of food access from the 1950s to the 2010s. The conversations revealed a need for a grocery store, intergenerational cooking and nutrition, and expansion of the current garden. As a result, BYI has organized leaders and supporters to address two major issues in Cherry Hill—lack of community wealth building opportunities and limited access to healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate foods.

BYI has been working in Cherry Hill, since the initial community conversations in Spring 2017, to establish two entities that respond to community interest and expressed

solutions. Subsequently, we have been working extremely hard, in partnership with community leaders and other people committed to addressing food apartheid. We are managing the food production and community programming, while planning for the expansion of, Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden, a 1.25-acre urban agriculture project. Simultaneously, we have been establishing the foundations for Cherry Hill Food Co-op, which houses the Cherry Hill Community Cooks, intergenerational cooking and nutrition education program. The idea of a co-op model of grocery store was generated through many community meetings and independent one-on-one meetings with members throughout the fall and winter of 2017.

In January 2018, the Cherry Hill Food Co-op Steering Committee, consisting of residents of Cherry Hill and other

community stakeholders with specific experience with economic development and food retail, commenced meetings about organizing a food co-op. The Steering Committee was formed to assist with initial activities related to forming a food co-op, including board development, data collection, community engagement and outreach, and business planning. A focus on creating a simple questionnaire to begin a process of data collection and assessing readiness for a community wealth building venture was the impetus for the activities and result presented in this report.

Connecting to the Food History of Cherry Hill

Cherry Hill is a majority Black community in South Baltimore. The community has been politically and geographically isolated from “in town,” as seasoned residents call the communities north of its borders. It is a unique community in that it was one of the first planned suburban-designed community, specifically for African Americans during the era after World War II (Breihan, 2003). In the early 1940s, Cherry Hill was targeted for low-income public housing by local government officials who were mandated by the GI Bill passed. The community, through several housing projects over a period of 30 years, increasing grew the number of working class and poor families, with more than half of the housing stock being low-income, public housing (Institute for Urban Research, 2015). Despite the institutional racism apparent in the social policies that formed the basis for the contemporary Cherry Hill, community members organized to build a vibrant community. Community amenities and resources, like schools, religious institutions, and shops, were developed by a subset of mixed-income residence,

entrepreneurs, and investors, largely Black (Breihan, 2003).

Throughout the period of the 1950s to 1970s, during a period of community and economic development, the Cherry Hill community was furnished with multiple options for accessing healthy, affordable food. Farmer Brown, an early farmer in Cherry Hill, provided a direct-to-consumer model, while there were at least two grocery stores at any given time. The community was also the site of several early sit-in restaurants and carryouts, until the trend began to shift toward take-out carryouts in the 1970s (C. Walker, personal communication, June 3, 2017). Another food retail trend, still effective today, was the cottage industries or microenterprises by black independent and family entrepreneurs selling goods from their homes and retrofitted school buses or bread trucks, known as “candy buses” or “buses.” Food was a commodity most prevalent in Cherry Hill, available to a majority of families with diverse socioeconomic statuses. Arabbers, or people selling produce and fish from horse and buggy or pick up truck, contributed to good food access in the community, as well. Oral history asserts that food and social cohesion co-existed, as families shared or bartered food items to ensure children, particularly, were fed well (C. Walker, personal communication, June 3, 2017).



Source: Frank Miller/Baltimore Sun, 1946

During the period of the mid-1960s to early 1970s, federal government interventions, most notably the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, had a bittersweet impact on the trajectory of Cherry Hill economic and sociopolitical reality (Breihan, 2003). While many middle-class families left, other categorically low-income and working-class families remained stifled by the overwhelming social immobility characterized by poverty in 1960s and 1970s America (M. Middleton, personal communication, January 10, 2018). As a result, the economic, social, and political fabric that characterized the power of the Cherry Hill community was changed. The newly-constructed, government-induced concentrated poverty created gaps in human capital, economic capital and other resources. Community food resources diminished slightly, as farming ceased to be a viable resource for accessing food. However, the community's economic center, colloquially known by members as the "Shopping Center," owned partially by Black investors, remained a reliable source of healthy food. The 1970s and 80s also ushered in a successful food buying club and food share programs operated by Black women in the Cherry Hill community and housed in St. Veronica's Catholic Church (C. McClain, personal communication, August 16, 2018). Food pantries and food banks have also been sources of staple food for decades (C. McClain, personal communication, August 16, 2018), as they have been rudimentary to low-income food aid for decades.

Overall since the 1980s, the community's food environment steadily declined, yielding fewer quality foods with the reduction in food outlets, a progressive increase in packaged goods, and increase in carryouts. This period



is also characterized by the influx of immigrant-owned food shops. In the 1990s, the Cherry Hill Shopping Center changed hands, with a transfer of ownership from Black investors to Catholic Charities, a local nonprofit agency. Additionally, Cherry Hill residents and stakeholders witnessed the ebbs and flows of maintaining a quality grocer, as an estimated dozen of chain and independent retailers occupied the "grocer's footprint" until the early 21st century. Since 2003, Cherry Hill has not had a full-service grocery store where residents and other patrons can access fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods.

The above historical analysis of the food resilience and food resistance in Cherry Hill showcases a deep culture of survival practices and change interventions worth further exploration and subsequent refurbishing, as the community forges forward to transform the current food environment into a robust, self-determining local food economy.

A Look at the Current Cherry Hill Food Environment

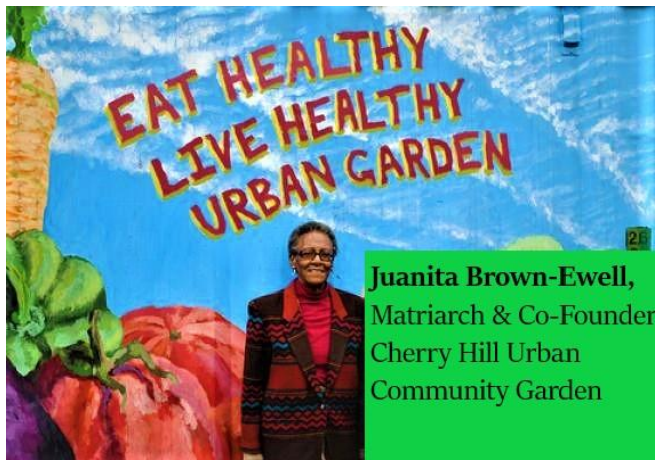
According to Baltimore City's 2018 Food Environment Report (Misiaszek, Buzogany, & Freishtat, 2018), all of Cherry Hill is designated as a "Healthy Food Priority Area," which suggests a lack of access to healthy foods and often abundance of unhealthy foods. Black Yield Institute, however, asserts that Cherry Hill community members are experiencing food apartheid, a socio-economic and political phenomenon characterized by race-class motivations, which have spread across generations at this point. The National Black Food and Justice Alliance (2017) has defined this reality as, "the systematic destruction of Black self-determination to control our food (including land, resource theft and discrimination), a hyper-saturation of destructive foods and predatory marketing, and a blatantly discriminatory corporate controlled food system that results in our communities suffering from some of the highest rates of heart disease of all times."

To illustrate this issue clearer, it is appropriate to share statistics that highlight how inequities manifest, using the social determinants of health frame. Cherry Hill is still mostly Black at about 89% of the population. This community of 8,202 people has over 3100 households. With the fourth lowest in the Baltimore, Cherry Hill has a median household income of \$23,585, compared to \$44,626 for Baltimore City ((Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance [BNIA], 2018). Cherry Hill has a life expectancy of 69 years and a Healthy Food Index score of 7.9, which is extremely low, compared to Mt. Washington/Coldspring at 28.5 (BNIA, 2018), a community with a Whole Foods Market in its borders. Over 50% of the community are renters (BNIA, 2018); most members do not control or own land in the community.

There are 13 food stores in the neighborhood—two convenience stores, nine fast food/takeout vendors, one specialty food store, and one liquor store (Childs & Lewis, 2012). Despite strong African American presence in the neighborhood, the commercial landscape reveals an unbalanced distribution of economic ventures. Business owners and operators, along with employees, are disproportionately Asian-American. The author estimates that 90% of all of the small businesses operating in Cherry Hill are owned by non-Black people. While the scale of economic justice leans in the favor of non-Black stakeholders and non-residents, including multinational corporations and small businesses, Black people living in Cherry Hill experience heavier burdens in the areas of poverty, morbidity and mortality, and consumerism.

While the Cherry Hill Town Center previously housed several supermarkets and grocery stores, today there is no full-service grocery store; there has not been a grocery store in 15 years. The space once occupied by several grocery stores is currently operated by a Family Dollar. The closest supermarket is about two miles away. Logistically, it is difficult to access transportation to these healthy foods, with relatively low car ownership and limited public transportation (Baltimore City Health Department, 2011). In light of this occurrence, healthy food availability is very poor. Almost all of the food available in Cherry Hill is low in nutrients and high in preservatives, salt and fats; carryouts, corner stores and convenience stores provide most of this food (Croog, 2014). Families have to travel over one mile to access healthy foods, as reported by the 2018 Baltimore Food Environment Report (Misiaszek et al., 2018). While not the focus of this report, in the contemporary context, structural barriers like zoning codes, transportation, and traditional economic

development trends, also contribute to the experienced food apartheid.



Source: United States Department of Agriculture, 2011

Urban agriculture has been a key component of the community food environment, Cherry Hill Urban

Community Garden (CHUCG), was founded in 2010 as Cherry Hill Urban Garden by the Cherry Hill Development Corporation and spearheaded by one of the neighborhood's residents and the first Garden Manager, the late Juanita Brown-Ewell. As a member of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore, the CHUCG operates to provide fresh food through commercial sales at the Waverly Farmers Market and direct sales to consumers at a farm stand and other distribution channels throughout the Cherry Hill community. The operations also include a community garden, designed for collective food and flower production. Low community involvement, inadequate funding, and diminished organizational capacity, proved to be challenges to the sustainability of the project. CHUCG is currently under re-development, through strategic planning, and will be aligned with other efforts to transform the food environment.

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A Word on Co-ops

What is a Food Co-op?

A food cooperative, or food co-op, is a food-based business (often grocery store) that is owned voluntarily and controlled by those owners (Food Co-op Initiative [FCI], 2017). International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as a member-owned, controlled, and operated enterprise created to address the expressed needs of the member-owners through democratic governance (FCI, 2017), typically focused on ecological, economic, and social concerns (Gordon Nembhard, 2014). The seven principles that guide the practices and policies of co-ops include: “1.) Voluntary and Open Membership; 2.) Democratic Member Control; 3.) Member Economic Participation; 4.) Autonomy and Independence; 5.) Education, Training, and Information; 6.) Cooperation among Cooperatives; 7.) Concern for Community” (FCI, 2017). Food co-ops can come in the form of full-service grocery stores or food buying clubs and members organize them for the purpose of meeting needs associated with food consumption. Food co-ops, just like other cooperatives, can be member- or consumer-owned (owned by those who use the goods or services), worker-owned (owned by those who operate the entity), producer-owned (owned by a collective of producers to shared resources, like tools, machinery,

marketing/branding, etc.), or hybrid models (a combination of any of the three previous examples) (Gordon Nembhard, 2014).

In order to start a food co-op, a vision should be established and research needs to be conducted regarding feasibility, interest, and organization; this can be done in the form of surveys given out to the community, measuring the demand of products and services of the potential co-op, and forming a core team of people to guide the co-op (FCI, 2017). Policies of the enterprise should be established by a few initial members, as well as by a manager and board of directors. An appropriate site should be selected in the initial stages, and sources of financing should be established. Once the cooperative is established, efforts should be made to continue promoting it as well as making sure that customer expectations are met with regard to produce availability and choice. The staff can be trained and further educated about running a co-op business, and processes can be established on transitioning the board and managing finances (FCI, 2017).

Food Buying Clubs

Another possible cooperative food venture is a food buying club. A food buying club is a group of people who collaborate to purchase food wholesale and distribute it among the members at low costs (Yes We Can!, n.d.). Food buying clubs typically depend on volunteers for the major operations, although outsourcing or insourcing labor are optional. Club members begin by identifying potential distributors; they can be local cooperatives or farms (Yes We Can!, n.d.). Member commitment is an essential ingredient to the success of volunteer-run buying clubs; members are expected to fulfill the tasks and responsibilities assigned to them, in order to sustain the group. Roles for members within a food-buying club include compiling each member's order, meeting at a delivery site to unload the products, distributing the orders, and calculating finances (Yes We Can!, n.d.). Compared to a food co-op, a food-buying club takes fewer financial resources, space, and time to start and sustain. Experts suggest that a food-buying club could be established within one year compared to the 3-5 years it would take to establish a cooperative grocery store (FCI, 2017). Also, a co-op grocery store would require 7,500 to 10,000 sq. ft., while a club could require as few as 1,000 sq. ft. A fully-renovated co-op grocery store could cost approximately \$2-\$3 million to start up, compared to the less than \$100,000 required to start a food-buying club.

Examples of food co-op "success(es)"

Cooperatives are one of the oldest forms of business development. There has been success in creating and sustaining food cooperatives for over thousands of years. For the purposes of this report, success is defined by the documented processes of the co-op business and not merely the longevity of the business. While the economic sustainability as a measure of a successful outcome is

critical, the outputs, such as community connections, member education, feelings of hope and pride, and ownership, are equally valuable and deserve deep attention and analysis if the cooperative tradition is to live strong in the 21st century. Many marginalized peoples have utilized the cooperative model because of the benefits of collective knowledge, aggregation of resources, and the accessibility to tangible social, cultural, and economic needs (FCI, 2017). Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard (2014) has written extensively about the history of cooperative economic theory and practice, especially in the late 19th and entire 20th centuries. Black-centered (those that focused on Black issues but supported by non-Black member-owners) and Black-owned agricultural, school, manufacturing, land prevention agencies, credit unions, insurance companies and other cooperative businesses established successful models (Gordon Nembhard, 2014). Cooperatives run deep in the political economic traditions of people of African descent in the Americas and the traditions continue today.



Many food co-ops have been created across the country, and have seen success in rural areas and in urban centers. A few examples rise to the top when considering factors of race, class, and geography, along with other market forces

like gentrification patterns and disinvestment. In Greensboro, North Carolina, the Renaissance Community Co-op (RCC) found success through the leadership of local community members, as well as partnership with local farmers (Wilbourn, 2014). RCC organized community residents in several communities around an abandoned grocery store, after national chains declined offers to open a market. (Ginsburg, 2018). Financial investors, co-op members, community developers and leaders, public agencies, advocates, and co-operative consultants, worked to open a grocery in 2016. However, due to challenges in sales the store closed in January 2019 (Wilson, 2019). This model provides an example of success by diversifying human, social, and economic capital to operate a store in a low-income area. The issues of marketing and consumer support are examples of essentials to steward well during the process of creating and sustaining a co-op in an urban, Black community.

Another example is the Detroit People's Food Co-op, which is being established by Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN). DBCFSN is a member-based, grassroots organization which operates D-Town Farm, Detroit's largest urban farm, selling to the community at farmer's markets. The organization also provides youth and community programs that organizes and educates the community (M. Yakini, personal communication, February 2, 2019). The organization has worked with the municipal government to gain control of land to build a larger development, Detroit Commons, which will house the food co-op (Wilbourn, 2014). The food co-op is born out of almost a decade of formation and operating a food buying club amongst DBCFSN's members.

Now in the last stage of co-op development, Detroit People's Food Co-op is on track to open in early 2020 (M. Yakini, personal communication, February 2, 2019). This co-op model is illustrious of success through the community centered means upon which it has gathered members and partnership with the municipal government. The practice of cooperative economics and good food access has been employed for decades with the food buying club and D-Town Farm, which creates the caliber of relationships that are necessary for co-op development. This success offers insights into the necessity of collective persistence and community building that is resulting in tangible development.

Glut Food Co-op is another food co-op that provides a great example of success. Glut Food Co-op is a non-profit grocery store operating in the state of Maryland, specifically in Mt. Rainier, where it has been since 1969 (Gray & Martin, 2015). Taking a more in depth look at this co-op, it is located in a rural context with a mission to provide healthy foods for people living in food desert. Glut offers organic products that are either locally sourced or from other co-ops; there is a large selection of fresh produce / products, health and beauty products, and herbs and spices (Gray & Martin, 2015). Partnerships with other cooperatives, such as Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative and Frontier Cooperative, provide some of these products seen in the store. Glut's annual sales total to about \$2 million (Gray & Martin, 2015). Members attend bi-monthly meetings to discuss any issues, and decisions are made democratically with each member having one vote. Aside from members, volunteers also contribute time and labor to sustain the co-op, and after some time are allowed to apply for membership (Gray & Martin, 2015).

The non-profit nature and longevity of Glut offers promising characteristics of a cooperative worth engaging in order to learn. The business management is clearly effective, as the entity has been in existence for 50 years. It is also noteworthy to mention Glut's longevity seems to be contingent upon the membership and community and, more specifically, racial and class composition of its supporters, which is mostly white and middle class.

The Urban Greens Food Co-op, in Providence, Rhode Island, officially incorporated in March 2007. The co-op has grown from 22 member-owners in 2007 to over 1000 member-owners in 2019 (Urban Greens Food Co-op [Urban Greens], n.d.). With the membership at a level to pursue real estate options, the co-op made a decision on the future location, which is a property that previously housed another commercial business. In early 2016, the Co-op received tax credits that increased their working capital to "approximately \$2.7 million (Urban Greens, n.d.)." The retail space is 5200 sq. ft., making it an anchor tenant in a mixed-use development (Urban Greens, n.d.). At the time that this report is being written, Urban Greens is hiring and training staff for a projected grand opening by the second quarter of 2019.

Following social media and website communications, the co-op shows promising elements of co-op development in

its robust communication with members and potential members in the Greater Providence-area. It seems that public-private tax programs, along with member shares have bolstered the financial foundation. Urban Greens offer a great model for the balance of internal and external focus in the development process.

While there are many other food co-ops nationally and internationally, the four models highlighted in this report have provided lessons and insights through their processes and products. As continued education is central to the work of co-op development, successful models of longevity or sustainability or failure, independent projects or projects anchored by mother organizations, and three- to five-year or 10-year development processes, have a special place in our collective consciousness. There is much to be learned by developing and developed co-ops operating in rural and urban contexts. It is the occupation of the reader and learner to discern the type and potency of knowledge gleaned during our liberatory praxis—continuous reflection and action (Freire, 1970). The collective learning, which includes the above literature review, trainings, cooperator trainings and conferences, networking, and other readings and lectures, has assisted Cherry Hill Food Co-op in imagining and realizing the ways forward in developing a grocery store in South Baltimore.



Source: Renaissance Community Co-op, 2019

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Methodology

After the initial community conversations in Spring of 2017, Black Yield Institute engaged in community outreach and political education. The decision was made to approach intervention in this manner because community investment and accountability are important values. BYI engaged community members and stakeholders through community forums, community festivals, health fairs and other public events organized by others organizations in Cherry Hill. BYI also organized community meetings and education sessions specifically designed to discuss and learn about our work and food co-ops, generally. Local students volunteered to support canvassing and meeting facilitation.

Throughout this process, valuable information and sentiments were gathered. It is important to note that there was a theme of disbelief in the idea of the community sustaining a grocery store. This sentiment seemed to stem from the history of failed attempts at securing a grocer to serve Cherry Hill. Our engagement also gleaned that there was concern for safety and theft a community grocery store. Some commentary, also leaned on stories, or myths, that Cherry Hill's luck with grocery stores was somehow connected to serious thievery. Not settled on the above themes, BYI was inclined to investigate other sentiments and found that many people thought it was a "shame" that

the community did not have a grocery store for the thousands of residents and visitors. Our engagement yielded that people were not clear on steps to effectively engage government to materialize the vision of a quality supermarket. We found that one or two people were interested in erecting a small grocery store through a sole proprietorship or incorporated company. However, a full-service grocery store owned by members and controlled by the community was a fascinating idea once presented and explained. Many people did not seem to be clear about how it would work and if it was possible to use this structure to meet their needs. BYI understood that further engagement and capacity building was necessary to explore the idea and dispel the doubt in the co-op model.

In the Spring of 2018, the Cherry Hill Food Co-op Steering Committee, supported by Black Yield Institute staff and Circle of Wise Counsel, centered our work on community engagement through community programming, civic engagement, and data collection. The *Cherry Hill Food Co-op Questionnaire* (see *Appendix*) was initially confirmed on July 20, 2018, as a shorter version of a more comprehensive survey. The questionnaire was altered later in the process due to the audience shift from strictly Cherry Hill to a larger catchment area—Baltimore. We employed five questions; however, our data reflects

questions 2-4, as the first and last questions are related to personal identification. All other questions included a five-point Likert scale, with 1 as the lowest rated option and five being the highest rated option. The questionnaire was utilized through diverse tactics to collect responses. The Steering Committee utilized the questionnaire to reach people through door knocking, canvassing, table outreach at community fairs and events, community meetings, and email and social media distribution. The team also conducted one listening session and several in-person, one-on-one meetings with people about the co-op concept and possibility for materialization. The data collection period lasted over five months.

It is also important to note that independent volunteers and volunteer groups assisted the Steering Committee. Utilizing a widely publicized outreach campaign, called “Canvass and Kickback,” the Co-op recruited and trained 24 unique volunteers, employed to reach out the

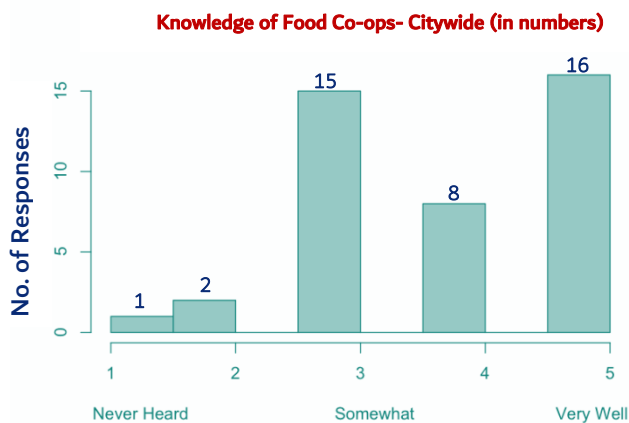
thousands of people and households represented in Cherry Hill. A volunteer data manager also supported the organizing and processing of data. Collectively, volunteers successfully clocked over 200 hours to add to the 100-plus hours devoted to planning, training, and outreach. Other significant features of our community engagement methods were the creation and continuation of the Cherry Hill Pop-Up Market and the Cherry Hill Community Cooks Program. These activities allowed space to have consistent contact with a subset of the community, build relationships that translated to support of outreach, and engaged in dialogue around land and food sovereignty. A large portion of the people who responded to the surveys were reached through these avenues. After reaching out to Cherry Hill stakeholders, we transitioned our energy to reaching out to people in the Baltimore-Metro area, as we know that the Co-op can serve people across community borders. The results below will reflect these delineations.

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Findings

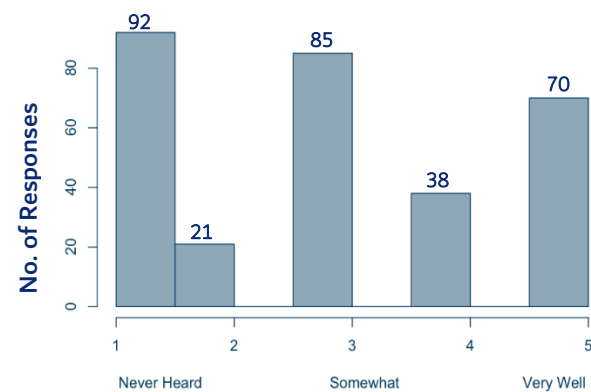
Through our process, stated in the above sub-section, the sample size for our study is 351 respondents—309 in Cherry Hill and 42 citywide. Three of the questions administered directly regarded interest in establishing and knowledge of a food co-op, of which we will report here. The first question, *“How well do you know about food co-*

ops (buying clubs, grocery stores, etc.)?” answers ranged from “Never Heard” to “Very Well” Respondents largely do not know about co-ops very well. About 37% never heard or have very little knowledge, while 27% know about co-ops moderately. However, approximately 35% know little to a lot about co-ops. City-wide responses show a different picture. About 57% know about co-ops; approximately 35% somewhat know about co-ops and less than 8% have no knowledge of co-ops.



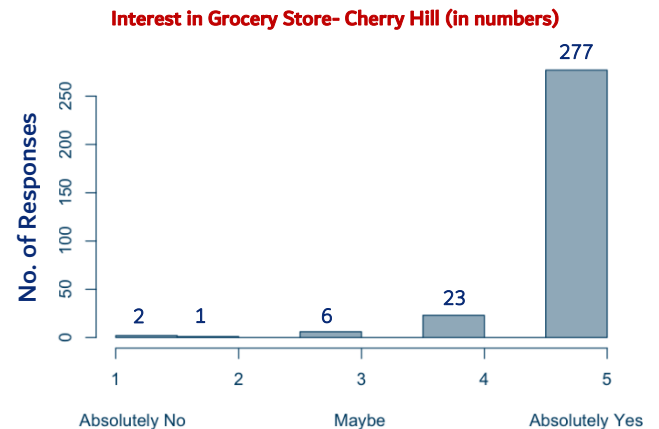
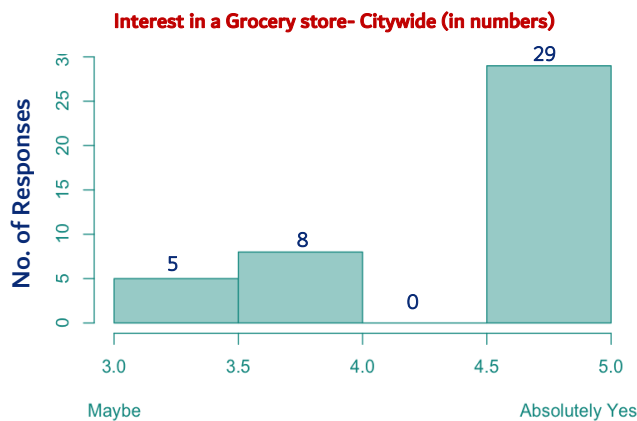
For the next two questions, answers ranged from “Absolutely No” to “Absolutely Yes” on a 5-point Likert scale. The second question was, *“Are you interested in having a grocery store in Cherry Hill?”* For Cherry Hill,

Knowledge of Food Co-ops- Cherry Hill (in numbers)

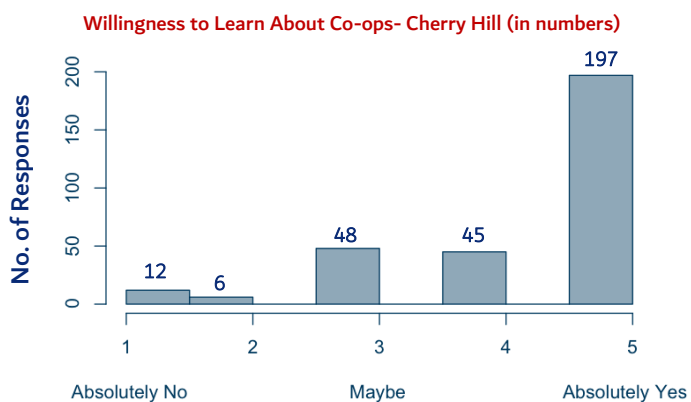
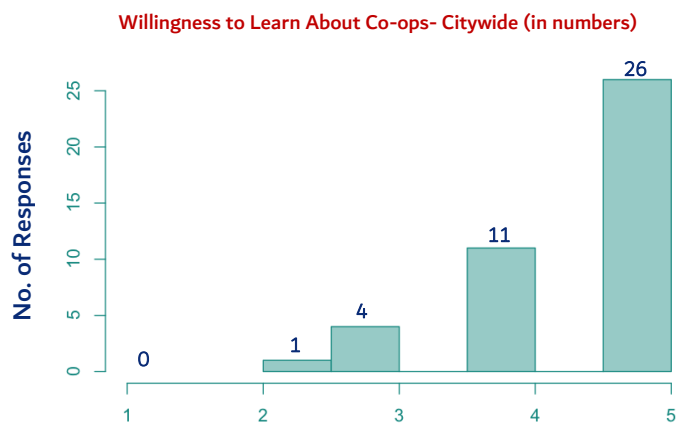


96.6% participants expressed high interest in having a grocery store, compared to 88% high interest citywide. It is noteworthy to communicate that while about 3% were “Somewhat” interested in Cherry Hill and about 12% citywide; a very insignificant number of participants in Cherry Hill have low interest at less than 1% and citywide data had no “1” or “2” rating for this question.

“The problem is rooted at the level of political will—the view of the means by which a grocery is thought to come to an area or what area it belongs.”



The third question asked “Are you willing to learn more about creating a cooperative grocery store, owned by people in Cherry Hill?”



Participants in Cherry Hill, responded to this question with very high interest in the citywide populations at about 88% high interested in learning more about co-ops; this is compared to a slightly lower percentage in Cherry Hill (79%). The citywide moderate (“maybe”) willingness to learn more is lower than Cherry Hill, at 9.6 and 16%, respectively. On the low end, 6% respondents in the Cherry Hill subset expressed low to no interest and about 2.5% in citywide group.

learning more about how to use the co-op model to obtain said interest. Previous studies suggest that the demand and capital exist for Cherry Hill, and other peoples around the city to sustain a grocery store in or near the community. Considering the projections related to how residents and other stakeholders currently spend food dollars, it seems plausible that the issue of food apartheid is not contingent on economic capabilities of the community as a bloc. This is evident in the lived experiences of people, which was confirmed during our data collection period, that people eat! The issue is not rooted by the lack of need or inability of the market to care

In summary, most participants and potential contributors, know little about food co-ops. However, the overwhelming majority of participants are interested in a grocery and in

for itself. The problem is rooted at the level of political will—the view of the means by which a grocery is thought to come to an area or what area it belongs. Based on the empirical evidence presented above, it is the position of Black Yield Institute and the leaders of the Cherry Hill Food Co-op to move forward to the next stages of development, which entails many tasks and planning in the next few years. Most immediately, in order to accomplish what we know the community interest expresses, we will commence to establish next steps that consider the trajectory and sustainability of the project, as well as the fiscal and human resource development aspects.

Previous market studies have been conducted to look at the feasibility of establishing grocery store. Every single study has concluded largely that a traditional grocery store is not viable in Cherry Hill as it is currently situated. A Huff Analysis (Reinvestment Fund, 2016), which reports the probability of an individual shopping at a store based on factors of distance and store footage, was conducted of Cherry Hill. The Analysis illustrated that the probability of an individual shopping at a store in Cherry Hill is 51-100% (Reinvestment Fund, 2016). The analysis also reported a \$9 million demand for grocery retail in the area, which surpasses the estimated annual sales of Food King by \$2 million. Data from the Urban Research Institute (2014) has also shown that \$1.25 million is spent at three so-called grocery stores (they are more like convenient or corner stores selling mostly snacks) surrounding the area.

According to a Market Feasibility Analysis conducted by Valbridge Property Advisors (2015), in 2014 Cherry Hill households spent an estimated \$6 million at supermarkets and \$3.6 million at restaurants, entertainment/drinking establishments, etc. The spending potential averages at 25-40 out of 100, which translates to limited buying power that may not be able to support a large supermarket. This is why a food co-op would be fitting in a community like Cherry Hill, where the leading causes of death are largely diet-related, such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Successful food co-ops require 7,500 to 10,000 sq. ft. of retail space (J. Johnson, personal communication, March 12, 2018). In this context, success in cooperative grocery stores is measured by financial health, along with functionality (i.e. increased healthy food access, affordability, etc.). Cherry Hill has the numbers, need, and the interest to sustain a grocery store that is homegrown.

In conclusion, based on the empirical evidence presented above, it is the position of Black Yield Institute and the leaders of the Cherry Hill Food Co-op to move forward to the next stages of development, which entails many tasks and planning in the next few years. Most immediately, in order to accomplish what we know the community interest expresses, we will commence to establish next steps that consider the trajectory and sustainability of the project, as well as the fiscal and human resource development aspects. The development of a cooperatively-owned, community-controlled grocery store is possible and people are ready to accomplish this feat.



Stage 3: Implementation

Employ staff and/or volunteers, building construction, finalize operating procedures

Stage 2B: Planning

Secure location, raise funds, and create effective business plan

Stage 2A: Feasibility

Membership growth, research, market studies, and assessing financial and operational markets

Stage 1: Organizing

Begins with a core group of people with a shared vision of establishing a cooperatively owned grocery store

Graphic created by Black Yield Institute, based on Food Co-op Initiative's Food Co-op Development Model. For more info on the "4-in-3" Model, go to <https://www.fci.coop/about-us/food-co-op-development-model/>

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Recommended Next Steps

Hire a Consultant and Organizer. Cherry Hill Food Co-op needs to hire a consultant and an organizer, in order to increase the capacity and both internal and external expertise. An experienced consultant with a co-op development background is critical to the next phase of organizing and as we move into assessing feasibility and planning stages. Moreover, the Co-op needs support with increasing leadership. The Organizer serves as the point of contact and coordinator of the co-op activities and volunteers.

Engage New Leaders. Cherry Hill Food Co-op has to engage new leaders for the core team of the effort. The new leaders must be committed to the work necessary to move to the next phase of development. The strength of the informal group, steering committee, has to translate to the formal group during the process of incorporation. The new leaders must have diverse skill sets, perspectives, experiences, socioeconomic statuses, and identities. Most importantly, new leaders have to be mostly comprised of people who live, work, and play in Cherry Hill and South Baltimore, by extension.

Hold Space for Continued Education. Cherry Hill Food Co-op must continue to engage learning in the same ways that community outreach and programming is engaged. In this context, education is the process of continuous balance between reflection and action (or

praxis). Education can happen within meetings, separate trainings in the regional and national food co-op organizations and networks, and/or book clubs. Co-op members must engage praxis like breathing or eating. Along with the human connections, creating and sharing knowledge is the life-blood of the work—teach as one learns.

Complete a Feasibility Study & Business Plan.

Cherry Hill Food Co-op needs to complete a feasibility study or market analysis and develop a tight business because there will not be a sustainable business without these things. One enormous task for the consultant to help the current steering committee and future Board is facilitating these processes with the Food Co-op members. The study and plan will employ traditional business frameworks, applicable to cooperatives and there will be an emphasis on consistent communication with current and potential members.

Incorporate as a Legal Entity. Cherry Hill Food Co-op will incorporate and become a formal entity, with Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and other legal precedence. The Steering Committee has to first determine the best entity that allows for the execution of the vision, mission and plans of the co-op. A pro bono or a low-cost lawyer or team of lawyers could be recruited to support with process. Another tactic that may prove itself

helpful is recruiting a lawyer as a part of the recommendation for securing new leaders.

Plan and Execute an Expansive Marketing. Cherry Hill Food Co-op need to establish a robust marketing campaign. Tangible/physical and digital communications should be daily or at some frequent interval that gives the group access to people and vice versa. In order to be effective, the co-op must develop a communications/marketing strategy. This recommendation will require some purchasing of audio-visual equipment, creating and utilizing various online platforms—website, Instagram, Facebook, etc.—and marketing materials. Documenting and archiving is critical to this work, as it is a new, unique project in Baltimore. Thus, producing media and earning media are important, as it may help leverage financial support and/or establish link to networks and relationships.

Continue Community Programming. Cherry Hill Food Co-op should continue to impact people through increased food access with the pop-up market on the first Saturday of the month, while supporting intergenerational cooking and nutrition education. These are ways people can make connections without being on the Steering Committee, especially since there is not a brick-and-mortar. It is also recommended to include youth leadership development and decision making as key component to the work. Furthermore, the Co-op should continue with more consistent and clearly communicated political education sessions related to co-ops and larger social consciousness raising. Programming should center practicing cooperation.

Develop an Advisory Team. Cherry Hill Food Co-op should consider establishing an advisory team, in addition to the current Steering Committee and future Board. The

Advisory Team should be comprised of people who have specific training and comparable skills but who can not commit to a “full-time” commitment. The Advisory Team would help to support with specific issues, including but not limited to navigating zoning, leveraging funding partnerships, facilitate planning meetings and training sessions, secure physical space and connect with powerholders.

Plan and Execute a Community Investment Campaign. Cherry Hill Food Co-op need to raise funds and membership through strategic planning and implementation of said plan. The campaign would focus on securing members, which includes membership pledges and full shares, or investments. The campaign would also need to include specific ways in which financial institutions, investors, and philanthropic organizations should be involved, framing based on the funder interests. The co-op should first have bylaws set and fiscal infrastructure in place before moving in this direction. At the same time, foundations and granting institutions may be engaged sooner.

Connect more closely with Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden and other partners. Cherry Hill Food Co-op need to increase food provision through the pop-up market and other programs through partnership with Cherry Hill-based and other community-based, community-driven organizations, and faith institutions. The Co-op is only as large as its network; after all the food co-op work is one piece of a larger effort to shift power dynamics and transform the food system by centering the people most affected by food apartheid.

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Timeline & Budget

*Note: The below timeline and budget include the “combined” program plans and budgets for the execution of expansion at Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden and Cherry Hill Food Co-op, which are inextricably tied to the plan of changing the food environment. Each project, even with independent elements, are dependent upon the other. This occurrence is consistent with the final recommendation avowed above. Please note that BYI’s fiscal year is consistent with the calendar year.

Proposed Timeline & Annual Benchmarks

Year One (FY 19)

- Hire Organizer for Food Co-op and Farm Manager positions by July
- Hire a co-op consultant by July
- Facilitate eight (8) community listening sessions primarily in Cherry Hill, along with citywide, to determine what member desire in a grocery store
- Operate pop-up market/produce stall hosting food from CHUCG and other Black and local producers
- Host five co-op education series, reaching 75 people citywide, for the purpose of growing food co-op ambassadors
- Create and administer a comprehensive survey with a goal 500 respondents
- Secure 350 co-op members
- Produce 4,000 lbs. of food
- Host quarterly community cultural celebrations in the garden, teaching history, harvesting, and building relationships across sectors

- Develop a community urban agriculture expansion plan, including the purchase and/or acquiring of tenure of land and increase in production
- Host six (6) six-week intergenerational, cooking/nutrition courses, reaching 60 people

Year Two (FY 20)

- Collaborate with community schools to establish growing programs at the garden and food/agricultural oral history projects, reaching 40 youth
- Host quarterly community cultural celebrations in the garden, teaching history, harvesting, and building relationships across sectors
- Establish a Cherry Hill Food Tour, including historic and contemporary sites, focusing on women and youth in the Cherry Hill community
- Produce 6,000 lbs. of food
- Host six (6) six-week intergenerational, cooking/nutrition courses, reaching 60 people
- Create legal business entity and establish an official Board for the enterprise

- Secure 350 co-op members
- Produce a comprehensive business plan and project map
- Secure a location and produce plans for building and/or development

Year Three (FY21)

- Secure 350 co-op members
- Begin Construction of Grocery Store and Infrastructure for Garden Expansion
- Organize and host a citywide food sovereignty forum, highlighting the CHFC and CHUCG flagship projects (goal: establish a collaborative team to organize this conference)
- Produce a Cherry Hill Food Environment Change report, chronicling community history



South Baltimore Agriculture Hub Visual Concept by Mahan Rykiel Associates, Baltimore, MD

*Projected Project Budget**Black Yield Institute- Cherry Hill Food Project Budget*

Program	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	3-Year Item Cost	Narrative
Cherry Hill Food Co-op					
Personnel					
Community Organizer	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$138,000	Salary + Fringe for co-op staff
Co-op Steering Committee	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$144,000	Stipends for leadership board members for tasks related to business planning, facilitating community meetings, and other tasks related to co-op development (8 @ \$500 per month)
Co-op Outreach Fellow	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0	\$80,000	Stipends for youth and young adults supporting outreach and other tasks related to data collection and member development (10 @ \$4000)
Contract Services	\$26,200	\$26,200	\$7,200	\$59,600	Consultation from legal and technical assistants; Nutrition Educator
Program					
Office Supplies	\$750	\$500	\$500	\$1,750	Chart Paper, Markers, Copy Paper, Ink, Pens. Plates, etc.
Food	\$3,200	\$2,400	\$1,200	\$6,800	Food for monthly Meetings (@ \$100 per meeting)

Marketing	\$6,300	\$4,800	\$3,500	\$14,600	Banners (2), Online and in-person flyers, shirts, website management, posters, etc.
Publishing	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	Copyrighting and printing costs for reports
Transportation	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$2,400	Costs associated with travel
Community Forum	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	Rentals, Catering, Etc.
Training/Conferences	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	Continuing education and conference fees
Capital					
Pop-up Market Supplies	\$4,600	\$3,550	\$3,550	\$11,700	Costs associated with pop-up farmer's market and farm stand, including wholesale Produce Purchases, Crates, Boxes, Bags, Ice, Coolers, Signs, Tables POS System, etc.
Renovation Costs	\$0	\$0	\$678,360	\$678,360	Cost associated with renovation of a 12,000 sq./ft location
Inventory	\$0	\$0	\$70,000	\$70,000	Cost of initial inventory
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$140,000	\$140,000	Costs associated with the purchase of shelving, refrigeration, registers, baskets, signs, POS system, etc.
Total Food Co-op Program Costs	\$180,850.00	\$177,250.00	\$1,014,110.00	\$1,372,210.00	
Cherry Hill Urban Community Garden					
Personnel					
Farm Manager	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$138,000	Salary + Fringe for farm staff
Community Organizer	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$138,000	Salary + Fringe for farm staff
Apprentice	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	Organizational contribution for AmeriCorps VISTA
Contract Services	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$20,000	Consultant for Soil Remediation

Program					
Seeds/Seedlings	\$450	\$250	\$125	\$825	Purchase of seeds and starter plants for growing fruits and vegetables
Storage	\$3,500	\$4,200	\$0	\$7,700	Two shipping containers and one tool shed
Moving Costs	\$0	\$0	\$3,500	\$3,500	Costs associated with moving equipment to new location
Organic Materials	\$4,500	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$12,000	Soil, Compost, Wood chips, Mushrooms, Sunflower Seeds
Animal Farming	\$5,400	\$4,900	\$7,000	\$17,300	Costs Associated with raising chickens (up to 15 @ \$400 each), goats (4 @ \$400 each), and rabbits (10 @ \$200 each), including purchase of animals, feed, housing, city permits, etc.
Beekeeping	\$0	\$5,000	\$6,700	\$11,700	Costs Associated with beekeeping, including bees, hives, suits, harvest tools, jars, etc.
Water	\$250	\$250	\$750	\$1,250	Annual charge for municipal water access
Mushroom Farming	\$0	\$650	\$1,350	\$2,000	Costs associated with mushroom farming, including log inoculants, oak logs, boxes, etc.
Program Supplies	\$4,700	\$1,800	\$1,200	\$7,700	planters, youth tools, whiteboard, chairs, building materials, paint tents, rentals. etc.
Honorariums	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$6,000	Speakers' fees for workshop leaders
Member Fees	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$450	Cost of membership fee for Farm Alliance of Baltimore
Food	\$3,200	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$7,700	Prepared Foods for Community Gatherings and Workshops
Conferences	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000	Continuing education and conference fees

Transportation	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$3,600	Costs associated with travel for produce sales
Marketing	\$4,700	\$6,300	\$2,300	\$13,300	Garden Signage, Banner, Photos, Posters, Flyers, Wrap for vehicle, Etc.
Capital					
Farm Truck	\$0	\$35,000	\$4,280	\$39,280	Cost of purchasing a used vehicle, titles, tags, and maintenance of the vehicle
Gardening Equipment	\$2,450	\$500	\$250	\$3,200	Labels, Tarps, Wheelbarrows, Trays, Concrete Slabs, Ground Staples, Hoop House Plastic, Wood/Lumber, Etc.
Mechanical Equipment	\$4,000	\$500	\$500	\$5,000	Tiller and Landscaping Equipment (= Maintenance)
Hoop House Construction	\$4,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$19,500	Hoop House construction costs, including labor, materials, and shipping
Total CHUCG Program Costs	\$148,000	\$192,700	\$152,305	\$493,005	
Total Annual Costs	\$328,850	\$369,950	\$1,166,415	\$1,865,215	

Revenues					
Grants/Fellowships	\$315,850	\$284,950	\$587,415	\$1,188,215	Revenues from philanthropic, governmental and other financial institutions
Member Shares	\$0	\$70,000	\$140,000	\$210,000	Revenues from member shares (@\$200/share)
Loan(s)	\$0	\$0	\$340,000	\$340,000	Revenues from loans with non-traditional financial institutions
Contract Services	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	Revenues from services rendered by BYI staff- speeches, workshops

Produce Sales	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,000	\$24,500	Revenues from produce sales at farm stand and farmer's market
Donations	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$75,000	\$88,000	Financial contributions by individuals, companies, and groups
<i>Total Annual Revenues</i>	<i>\$328,850</i>	<i>\$377,450</i>	<i>\$1,164,415</i>	<i>\$1,870,715</i>	

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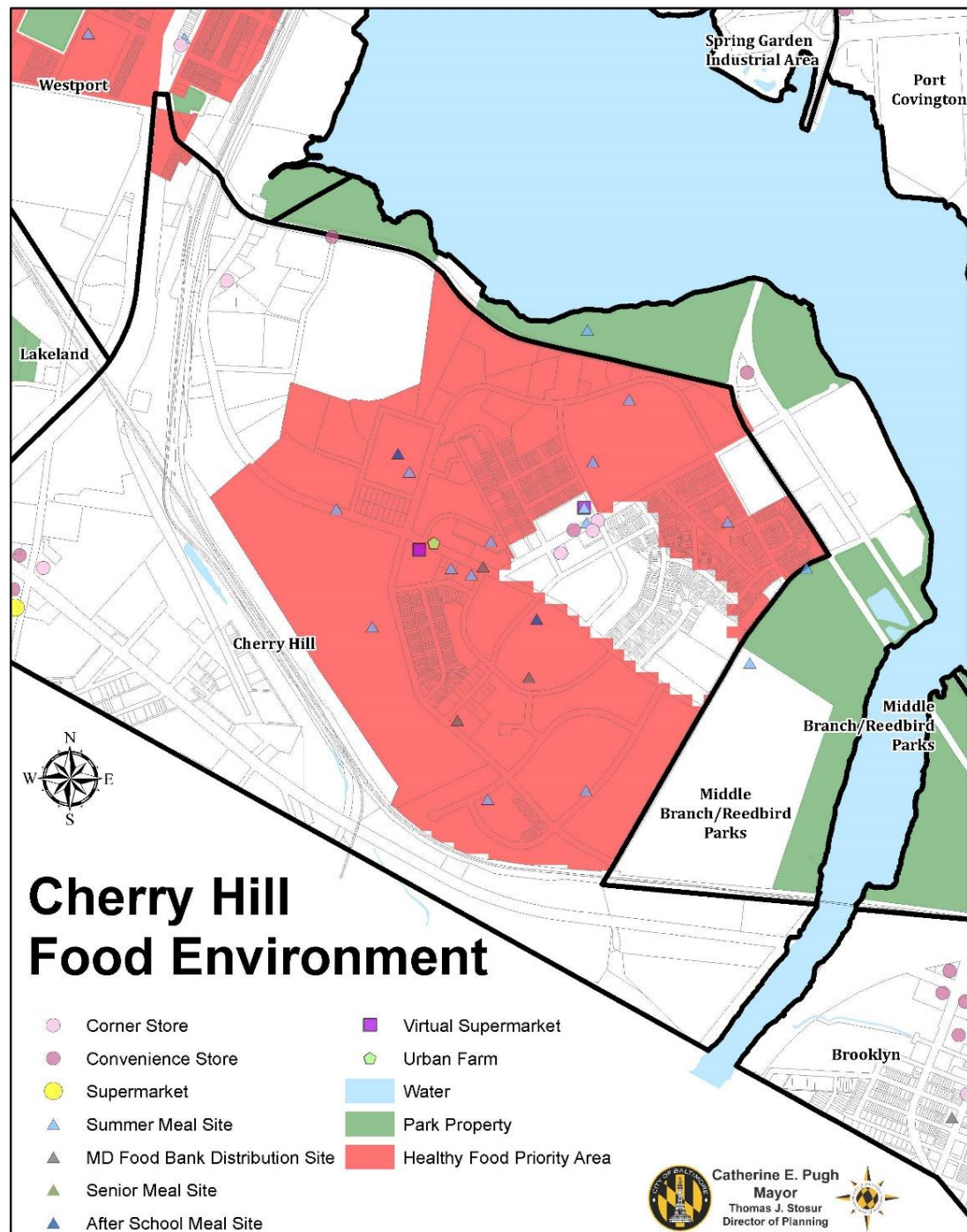
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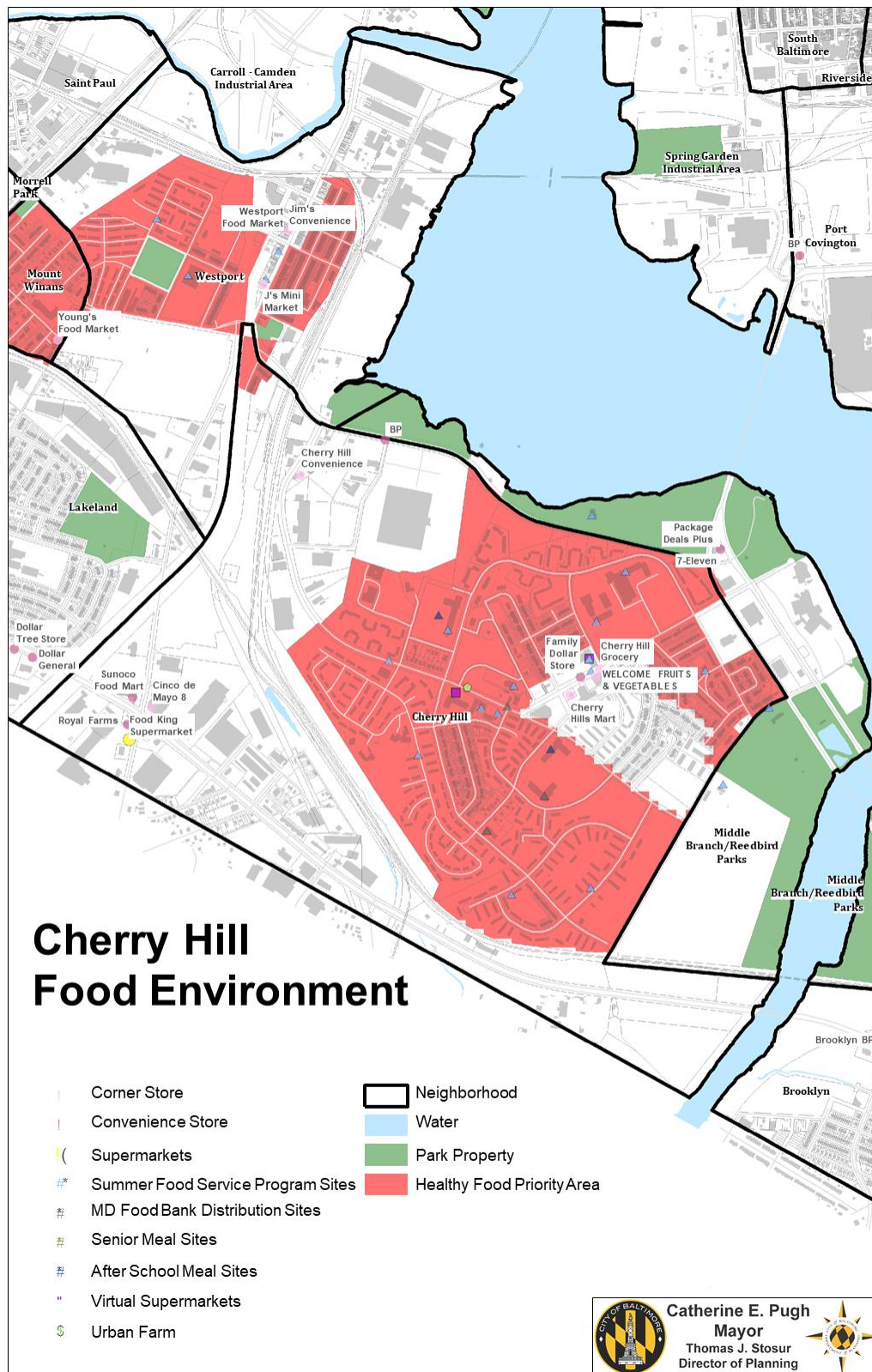
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Appendix

Maps



Map Source: Baltimore Food Policy Initiative



Map Source: Sarah Buzogany, Baltimore Food Policy Initiative

Cherry Hill Food Co-op Community Questionnaire

1. How well do you know about food co-ops (buying clubs, grocery stores, etc.)?

☐

1

Never
Heard

☐

2

☐

3

Somewhat

☐

4

☐

5

Very
Well

2. Are you interested in having a grocery store in Cherry Hill?

☐

1

Absolutely
Not

☐

2

☐

3

Maybe

☐

4

☐

5

Absolutely
Yes

3. Are you willing to learn more about creating a cooperative grocery store, owned by people in Cherry Hill?

☐

1

Absolutely
Not

☐

2

☐

3

Maybe

☐

4

☐

5

Absolutely
Yes

4. Would you be willing to volunteer to build and become a member of a cooperative grocery store?

☐

1

Absolutely
Not

☐

2

☐

3

Maybe

☐

4

☐

5

Absolutely
Yes

5. Are you willing to share your contact information to receive emails and text communication?

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Facebook: _____ IG: @ _____

Twitter: @ _____



About the Author



Eric Jackson is an organizer, educator, and filmmaker. He humbly serves as Servant-Director of Black Yield Institute, a Pan-African institution based in Baltimore, Maryland committed to movement building toward Black Land and Food Sovereignty.

Eric has over ten years of experience in organizing, education, and program development and management. Of these years, Eric worked with others in various capacities to support community development in Cherry Hill (an urban village in Baltimore) on issues of food access, improving education opportunities, and organizational capacity building. He is also a 2017 OSI Baltimore Community Fellow and a 2016 US Human Rights Network FIHRE Fellow. In 2018, Eric co-directed a film entitled, *Baltimore's Strange Fruit*, a documentary film that explores the intersections of food, land, race, and class politics through personal narrative and social commentary.

Since 2013, Eric has been contributing to educating future change agents, as an Adjunct Professor teaching/facilitating courses on community organizing and macro social work practice, earning the 2017 Exemplary Faculty Award. Known as Baba Eric, he has also served as an educator and nurturer of Baltimore youth at Orita's Cross Freedom School, an African-centered youth program.

In previous years, Eric has served in leadership capacities on issues and programs related to food access, community schools, youth development, and overall community organizing and development. Eric has received Bachelor's and Master's Social Work degrees from Morgan State University & University of MD, School of Social Work, respectively.

Ultimately, Eric's vision is to organize and develop leadership within Black and poor communities with the goals of dismantling racism, building greater social, political and economic power, and establish self-determination through institution and movement building. Outside of his work, Eric, a life-long resident of Baltimore, Maryland, enjoys teaching, reading, basketball. Playing spades, connecting with good people and eating good food. He is supported and loved on his journey by his four strong children and powerful Queen, Diara.



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