Community-led Food Systems

A report for the food resource navigator project, showcasing visions and principles to co-create a more equitable, racially just Chicago region food ecosystem.

CHIBYDESIGN

SPR 20 21

COVER PHOTO **Zen Chung // UNSPLASH**
CURRENT PHOTO **Tom Hermans // UNSPLASH**

There is a desire to tell stories and share histories (context) for what's happened and the current state of the local food ecosystem.

— Quote by a workshop participant.

Megan Thomas // UNSPLASH

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Jan Kopriva // UNSPLASH

INTRODUCTION

One out of six Chicagoans is at risk of being food insecure; predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods on the South and West sides of the city are affected the most. COVID 19 illuminated this crisis and disproportionately affected low-income households. A recent poll by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that in Chicago, 17% of households say they cannot afford to pay for both their food and bills. Fortunately, BIPOC-led Chicago urban growers continue to work tirelessly to support and meet the needs of the communities.

To build upon the work begun by the Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC) in 2019, the 'Navigator' aims to co-create a resource navigator focused on food by and with growers and community food advocates to bring forward the stories and experiences of those facing inequities in the current system. It also aims to make it easier to connect people and organizations to the knowledge and resources available to make sure we have a Chicago region food system that works for all, especially those in communities fighting inequities related to growing, processing, producing, and distributing fresh, local food.

In support of the effort, our team used a co-design approach to bring forward community response to what a food resource navigator would do to support equitable community food development. **We found that capitalistic modes of production, racism, and disinvestment in BIPOC communities create immense challenges for BIPOC growers within this food ecosystem. There is a need to rethink what is 'valuable' and shift mindsets to value collective well-being.** Through 11 workshops and 15 individual conversations with community participants, we provided a blueprint for the Navigator to lead with the visions and principles outlined below to create racial equity within the food ecosystem.

Chicago region food system stakeholders showed how challenges for BIPOC growers are:

sometimes initiated by the racism in adjacent systems (e.g. justice system),

rooted in racist norms and mental models, and

fueled by economic apartheid.

Therefore, the creation of an equitable food system will require multi-level interventions and multi-sector collaboration. Further, the report also highlights prototypes created by the participants to address self-identified challenges to achieving an equitable Chicago region food system.

NAVIGATOR

The 'Navigator' will not be the solution to the challenges stated throughout the document but can play a vital role in creating the space for massive social shifts in the local food system. **The 'Navigator' should provide the space for collaboration to happen within the BIPOC growing community and with the larger ecosystem. The 'Navigator' should be the platform that enables BIPOC growers to understand the current and future conditions of the Chicago region food system to make informed decisions about their businesses, and most importantly, their communities.** The 'Navigator' should be a medium for BIPOC growers and participants in the food system to author their own authentic stories. Most importantly, the 'Navigator' should listen to and take its directions from the BIPOC growing community.

V	P
Visions	**Principles**
Achieve food sovereignty	Increase agency of BIPOC growers to drive and influence policy and process.
	Increase clarity and transparency of processes and policies.
	Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.
Collective Care	Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.
	Building support systems across the food system.
	Create a self-sustaining infrastructure.
Equitable opportunities	Create financial stability/viability.
	Building support systems across the food system.
	Reimagine spaces and existing infrastructure.
	Strengthen Intra-sector alignment.
Circularity and sustainability	Create a self-sustaining infrastructure.
Education about food production and consumption	Educate and train (grower and consumers).

Jeppe Vadgaard // PEXELS

PROJECT PARTNERS

CHIBYDESIGN

ChiByDesign is a social justice-oriented design firm pioneering the use of co-design and social science approaches to create anti-racist outcomes for social and civic challenges. We are a black-owned, people-of-color-led design firm where we nurture multiple perspectives and amplify lived experiences.

We view social and civic challenges through an anti-racist lens. At ChiByDesign, we seek to understand and redesign the social technologies that create inequities and power-based structures. Our work is grounded in co-creating an equitable and sustainable future with you. We are firm believers in sharing the power, tools, and mindsets of design with the folks closest to the challenge. In doing so, we unlock limitless creative and effective solutions.

TEAM

Chris Rudd, Co-Design Lead

Surbhi Kalra, Design Lead

Justin Walker, Design Researcher & Strategist

Jessica Nelson, Visual Communication Designer

Tommie Collins, Visual Communication Designer

TABLE XI

Table XI is a UX design and custom software development firm with 17 years of experience building integrated web applications, mobile apps, and custom digital experiences. Since 2002, we've partnered with the Fortune 100, start-ups in Singapore and Tokyo, industry leaders in London and LA, and mission driven non-profits in our hometown of Chicago.

Antonio García, Design Advisory

Alex Chen, Design Lead

Kesha Watson, Delivery Lead

Jason Liao, Developer

FOOD RESOURCE NAVIGATOR PROJECT

At the time of this report, we are an emergent project that seeks to connect people who contribute to a Chicago region food system that works for all, especially those in communities fighting inequities to grow, process, produce, distribute, donate or buy fresh, local food.

Deepa Gupta, Project Director

Bahati Aimee, Project Manager & Community Steward

David Goodman, Independent Data Strategist

Advisory Board

Margot Pritzker, Founder, Advisory Board chair

Francee Harrington, Founder, Advisory Board member

Erika Allen, Co-Founder/CEO, Urban Growers Collective; President of Green ERA Educational NFP; Co-Owner of Green Era Sustainability Partner, Advisory Board member

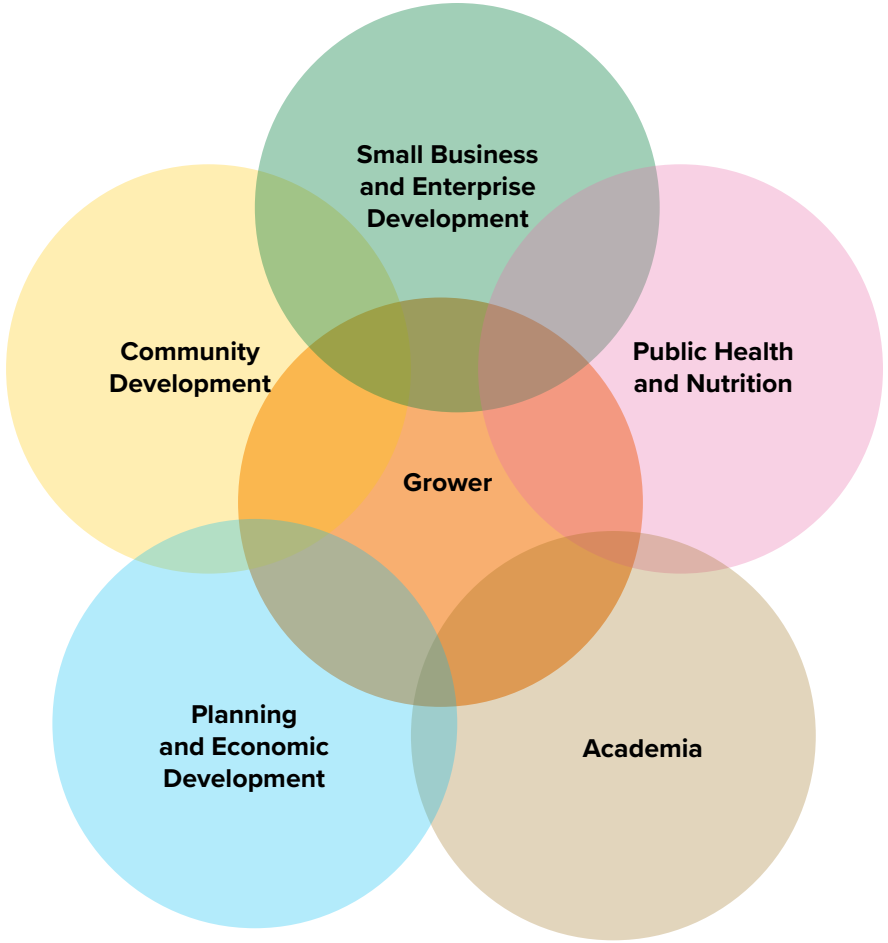
Zen Chung // PEXELS

PARTICIPANTS OVERVIEW

In assembling the workshop participants, we sought to center on the perspective of those working to mitigate or eliminate food inequities in Chicago communities. In Chicago, food insecurity and unequal access to fresh, healthy, locally grown or produced food are concentrated in the city's South and West sides. **The majority of residents in communities like South Shore, Englewood, Little Village, Pilsen, Back of the Yards, Austin are Black, Brown, and people of color. Thus, we sought individuals supporting community food and urban agriculture who lead or serve programs or functions supporting racial and economic equity and justice through the lens of community food systems and value chains.**

Participants brought forward experiences that extended across multiple lenses- growing, community development, small business and enterprise development, public nutrition and health, planning and economic development, and academia.

We are deeply grateful to all of the participants for their willingness to share their perspectives so honestly in a virtual setting, during a Chicago winter and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, major state, local and federal elections and the continuous occurrences of murder and mistreatment of black and brown residents.



Number of participants:

39 growers, community food advocates, and community partners (urban growers and food producers, social enterprise and small business leaders focused on community and economic development, people working in policy, human services, food security, public health, academia, mutual aid, and community gardens)

10 youth in partnership with the farm training program

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2017, one out of six Chicago residents was at risk of being food insecure, but in predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods on the South and West sides of the city, food insecurity affected 56-85% (image 1) of the population. **The COVID-19 pandemic intensified food insecurity around the world and in Chicago food pantries saw a 150% rise in people searching for food. The pandemic further illuminated racial disparities. Black families experience food insecurity at double the rates of white families in our city. Structural racism, a collection of institutional, historical, cultural, and interpersonal practices, has led to intergenerational inequity and, specifically, disconnection from the food system for Black and Brown Chicagoans.**

Chicago is fortunate to have an urban agriculture ecosystem, led by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) growers, that responds to the multi-faceted and various needs (food, connections to social services, clothing, etc.) that exist within communities. The BIPOC growing community works tirelessly to reintroduce Black and Brown Chicagoans to the land, the process of growing, and is simultaneously redesigning the systems that have excluded BIPOC communities.

Inspired by and built upon the research and engagement work that the Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC) started in 2019, **the food resource navigator project seeks to connect people who contribute to a Chicago region food system that works for all, especially those in communities fighting inequities to grow, process, produce, distribute, donate, or buy fresh, local food.** (Throughout this report, 'Navigator' refers to the food resource navigator project.)

The workshops and conversations described in this report comprise a crucial early stage for the 'Navigator': hearing directly from those working in the system. **This phase of the project focused on the insights and experiences of those facing the most significant inequities in the current system to create such a resource.** Inequitable decision-making and design utilize a top-down approach; this work utilizes a bottom-up approach to co-create new ways to collect, curate, and analyze our shared knowledge and resources so that people in communities with the greatest food inequities can generate and retain value that stays in place.

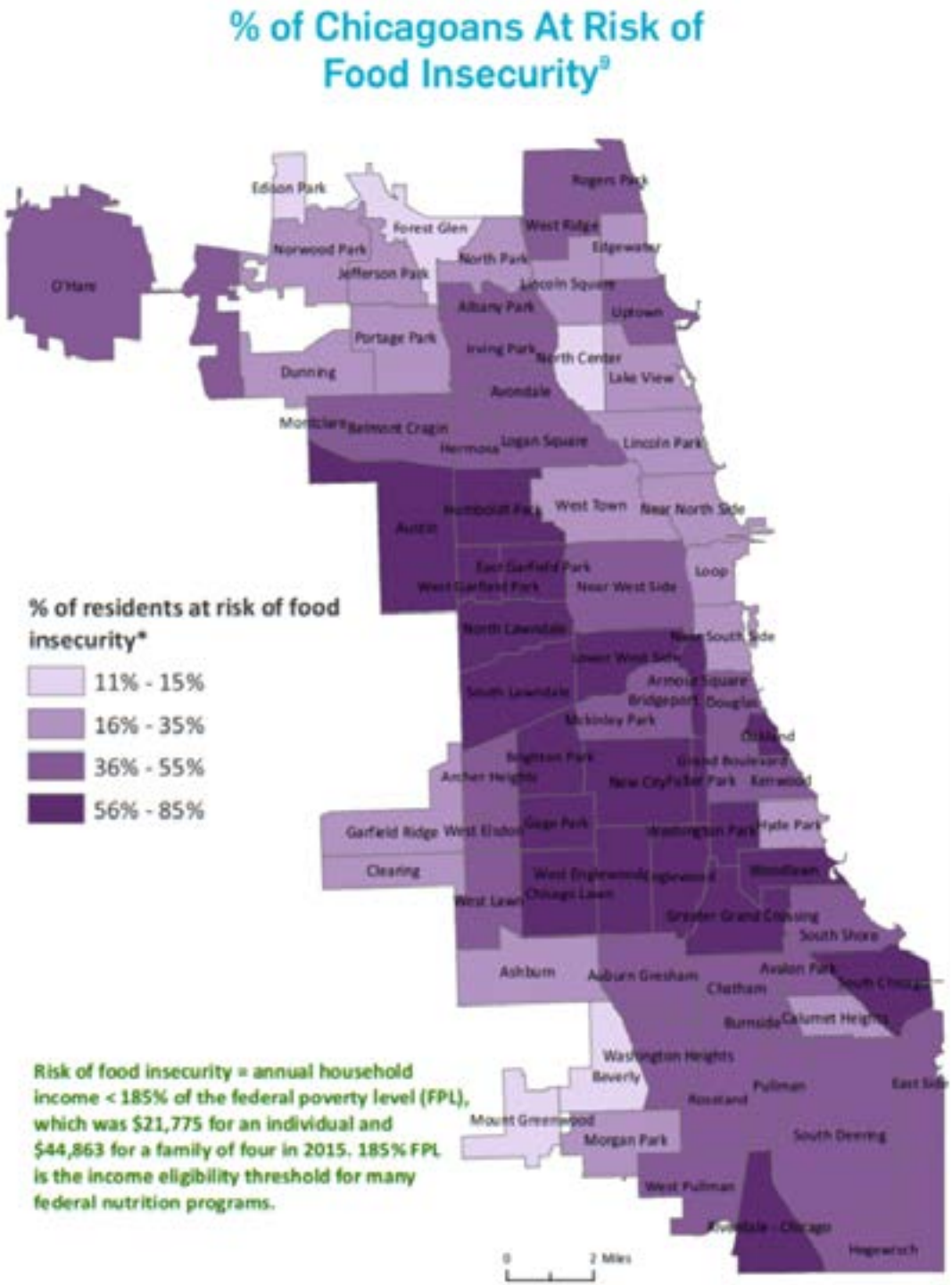


IMAGE: *Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. Map the Meal Gap 2017: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2015. Feeding America, 2017.*

APPROACH

GOALS

To begin the dialogue about unmet needs and opportunities, **the 'Navigator' engaged ChiByDesign to design and execute collaborative sessions to understand what a food resource navigator might address to support equitable community food development.** These co-design sessions focused on bringing together community partners to:

- **Build trust among different stakeholders to have honest conversations .**
- **Bring forward stories of stakeholders within the food system and their experiences in growing, producing, processing, distributing, and consuming food.**
- **Create alignment between participants to co-design a future that is in service to communities facing the most significant food inequities.**

METHODOLOGY

This project's goals were achieved by:

1. **Conducting 1-1 conversations with growers and community food advocates** who are engaged within the Chicago region food system and look at food, food production, food access, and food businesses as a pathway to achieve equity, inclusion, health, and wealth-building.
2. Engaging stakeholders (growers, advocates, policymakers, and academics) in a series of **three co-design workshop sessions: explore, connect, and prototype.**
3. Facilitating a **two-day youth workshop session: vision and prototype**, which brought together high school youth participants from existing farm training programs.

The 1-1 conversations shaped how we framed and facilitated a series of three co-design workshop sessions and the two-day youth workshop sessions.

During the project, we conducted a total of **9 virtual workshops with 39 participants—growers, community food advocates, and community partners** (urban growers and food producers, social enterprise and small business leaders focused on community and economic development, people working in policy, human services, food security, public health, academia, mutual aid, and community gardens,)—and **10 youth in partnership with the farm training program**, in a two-session youth workshop series. The workshop sessions prompted different food stakeholders to discuss and share stories, experiences, challenges, and possibilities for an equitable future.

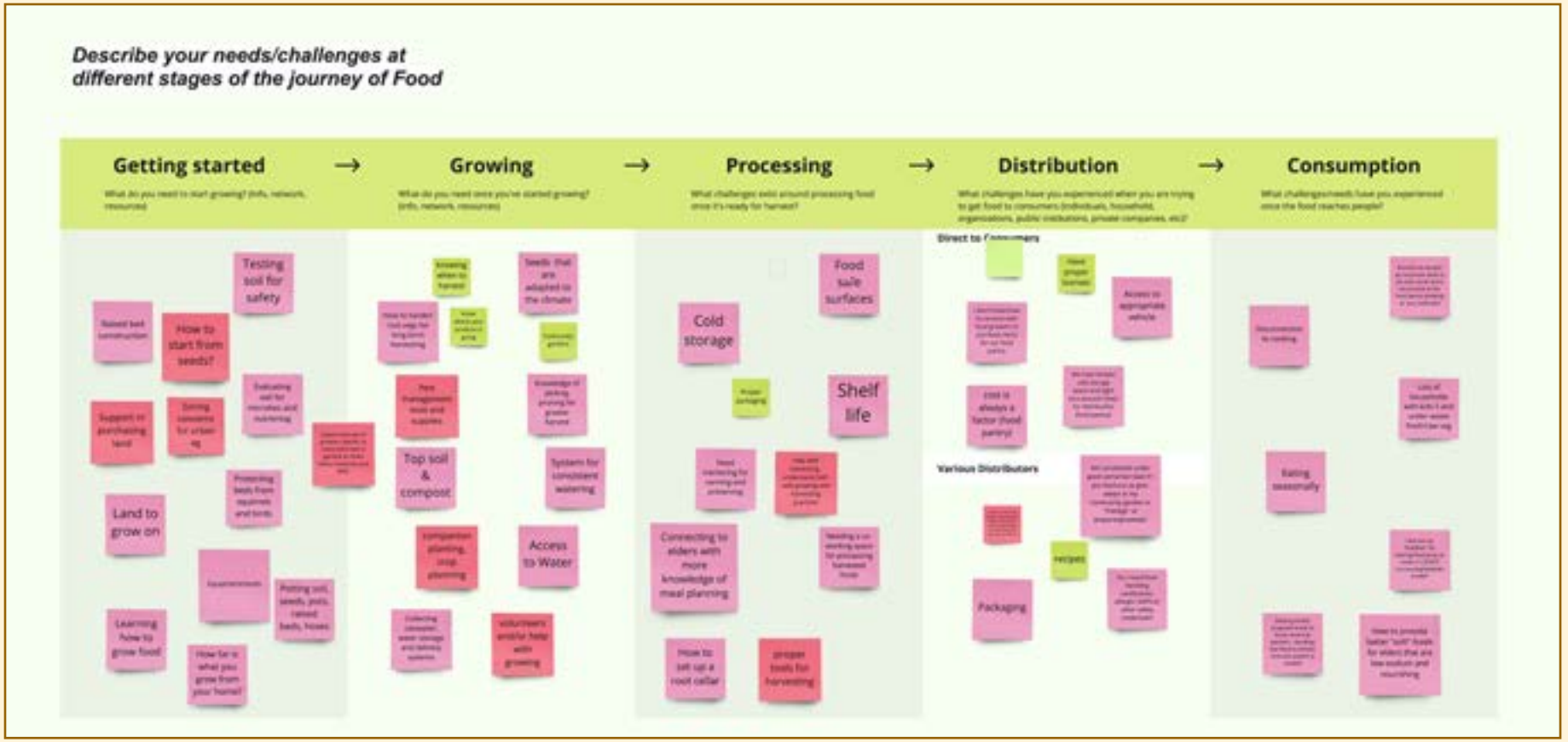
Centering the design process around these critical stakeholders informed the project's direction *(refer to the 'Visions and Principles' section below)*. **It specified the needs of community members for a community grounded in care and racial and economic justice within the Chicago region food ecosystem.**

Explore

First of the series, the exploration workshop focused on building a co-design mindset and building trust and connection among participants to

Understand needs, patterns, challenges, etc. by surfacing the stories and experiences of BIPOC growers and other actors in the local food ecosystem; and

Connect stories to policies to inform product and system-level decision-making about interventions and future policies.



LEFT: *COVID-19 care package activity to instill co-design mindset amongst participants—building something together and sharing their knowledge about local food producers with each other.* **ABOVE:** *Activity highlights needs/challenges faced at different stages of the food journey by growers, distributors, and other actors within the food system.*

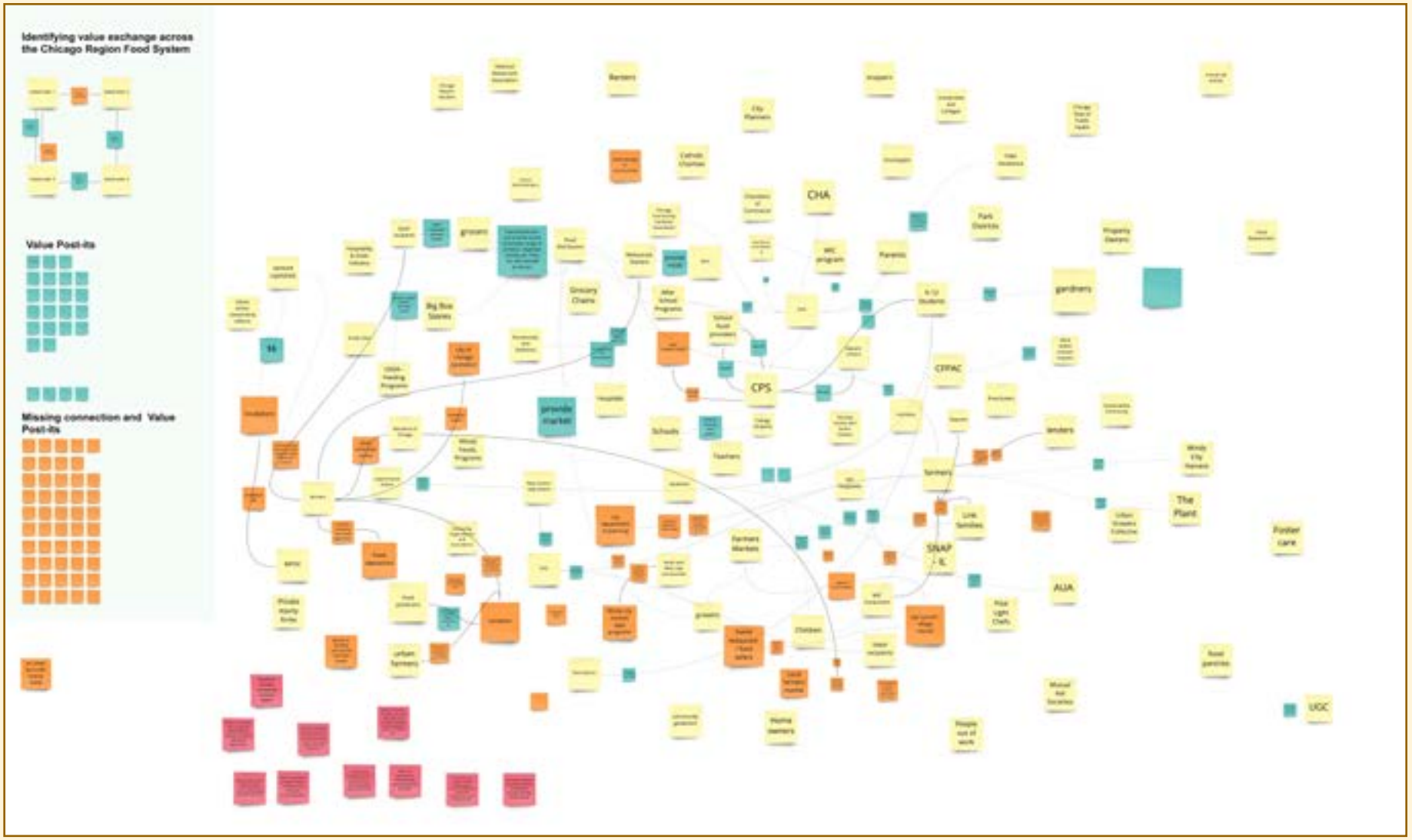
Connect

Second of the series, connection workshops built on the needs and challenges identified in the first workshop and provided a space for participants to

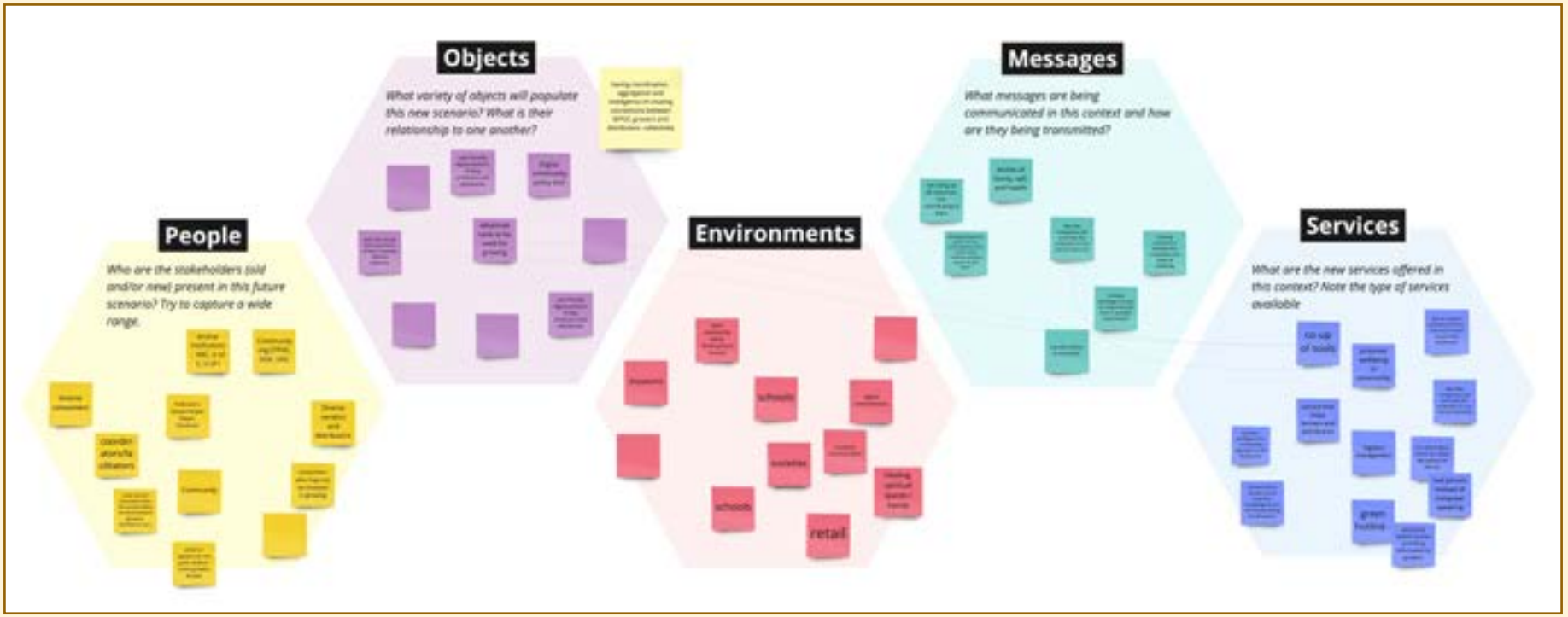
Visualize existing connections and relationships;

Identify exchanges of value (money, knowledge, relationships, environmental resources, etc.*) between different stakeholders within the Chicago food system through the lens of racial and economic justice; and

Surface missing and desired connections between current stakeholders in the system.



LEFT. *Stakeholder map highlighting critical stakeholders within the three levels- Impact, Interest, and Influence.* **ABOVE.** *Activity highlights needs/challenges faced at different stages of the food journey by growers, distributors, and other actors within the food system.*



ABOVE. *People, Objects, Environments, Messages, and Services (POEMS) framework to think through the specifics of the HOW for the challenge.*

Prototype

Last of the series, prototyping workshops provided a space for participants to co-design and build together to

Visualize new objects, organization(s), technology, etc. to address self-identified challenges;

Understand the mindset, motivations, and connections of the different stakeholders into actionable solutions; and

Surface hidden gaps and connections through quick trial and error and collective feedback.

Zen Chung // PEXELS

APPROACH

In partnership with a Farm Training Program, the team engaged youth to contribute their valuable perspective to shape the project. This work includes Black and Brown growers who will engage with and lead a more equitable food system in the near future.

We adapted a **'Youth Food Bill of Rights'** created by students in an existing farm training program as design principles to ground the conversations as we envisioned a 'new Chicago.' Youth were brought together to:

Vision

Align and articulate goals, values, and vision of the Chicago region food system to

- **Elevate the desires, needs, and creativity of youth stakeholders; and**
- **Imagine new futures based on principles identified by youth.**

Prototype

Critique and build prototypes created by the youth stakeholders based on ideas from the first session and

- **Provide feedback and add new insights to the 'Navigator' project based on the prototypes created from a youth perspective; and**
- **Test the desirability and feasibility of the concepts** and prototypes created by the youth in the first session.

Reimagined Chicago food system visual by one of the youth working groups based on design principles aka food Bill of Rights.

Brienne Hong // **UNSPLASH**

Recommendations

FINDINGS

> **There is a lot of institutional racism for BIPOC <growers> accessing money and land. Discrimination impacts <our> ability to secure capital and access land loans / mortgages.**
>
> — Quote by a workshop participant

The 'navigator' seeks to connect people who contribute to a Chicago region food system that works for all, especially those in communities fighting inequities to grow, process, produce, distribute, donate, or buy fresh, local food. To do that, it's important to recognize how capitalist modes of production and racism pervade the food system, leading to practices, policies, and behaviors detrimental to BIPOC success.

The **11 workshops** and **15 individual conversations** with community participants confirmed that capitalistic modes of production, racism, and disinvestment in BIPOC communities create immense challenges for BIPOC growers within Chicago's food ecosystem. There is a disconnect between what is valued and invested in by those who control needed resources (environmental, capital, human) and those who seek those resources for more than financial or economic gains. There is a need to rethink what is 'valuable' and shift mindsets to prioritize collective well-being.

The workshops and conversations shaped visions and principles to guide the design of the 'Navigator' and actions to create racial equity within the food system. The following section highlights:

Capitalist modes of production and a culture of racism

Addressing inhibitors for cross-sector collaboration

Rethinking what is 'valuable'

Mindset and Narrative shifts

CAPITALIST MODES OF PRODUCTION AND A CULTURE OF RACISM

The primary elements that influence all the other challenges faced by BIPOC growers are capitalist modes of production and a pervasive culture of racism.

A capitalist or for-profit food system optimizes for lower prices and larger quantities at the expense of smaller scale, more geographically proximate production that generates and keeps value in place. Value includes labor practices that create local jobs and skills, circular economy constructs to promote environmentally sustainable practices, and value chains, produce, and goods that are higher quality, more nutritious, and prevalent, particularly in historically disinvested communities.

A pervasive culture of racism includes racial biases and prejudices that persist in the accessibility and culture of capital and land access, use, and ownership. These biases and prejudices are built into this region's policies, regulations, and business practices and were historically designed to exclude people based on race, color, and culture.

BIPOC individuals and organizations are delegitimized and systematically excluded from the food system through misinformation, misinterpretation, disconnection, and disinvestment. Disconnection and disinvestment in BIPOC communities have led to the isolation of BIPOC growers from other growers and support organizations. They have also contributed to growers' frayed relationships with funders and large institutional buyers, hindering some community food producers and growers' ability to economically thrive and continue to provide for local communities.

Racist and capitalist norms have led to practices and mindsets that reinforce individualism and protectionism across the food system. They have also led to a lack of transparency about processes and decision-making systems supporting local agriculture.

Similar biased, prejudiced, and racist mental models impact growers' relationships with consumers, preventing some from patronizing or supporting food producers of color.

In the scope of the workshops and conversations, participants brought forward two goals:

- **Dismantling systems that control wealth, land, and power, which are designed to prevent economic mobility and growth by those without existing wealth; and**
- **Reducing the impact of racist culture on the food system.**

Racist and capitalist norms have led to practices and mindsets that reinforce individualism and protectionism across the food system. They have also led to a lack of transparency about processes and decision-making systems supporting local agriculture.

KEY TENSIONS

The work of the 'Navigator' centers BIPOC growers and there are key tensions that this community continues to struggle with:

BUILD WITHIN SYSTEM

VS

RESTRUCTURE THE SYSTEM

To continue to build within the industrialized food system, which is unfavorable to BIPOC growers but provides some level of stability around food procurement, revenue, etc., such as connections with institutional buyers or

vs

Build alternative self-sustaining regional food ecosystems and compatible practices to challenge and address the barriers to building new capacities, systems, and governance from scratch.

DATA POINT

There is a tension between the desire to participate economically in the current industrialized system to build up a local system VS. building an alternative system outside of the system that could be self-sustaining on a hyper-local, local or regional scale (e.g., cryptocurrency models).

PAYING LIVING WAGES

VS

KEEP PRICES LOW

BIPOC growers wrestle with the tension of building within the industrialized food system or working to build a new system. While the current system has produced unfavorable outcomes for BIPOC growers, it provides some level of stability around food procurement, revenue, etc. Conversely, building alternative self-sustaining regional food ecosystems would enable the building of new capacities, systems, and governance structures.

DATA POINT

It's hard to balance making a living wage while remaining affordable to all consumers.

Reconciling fair wages for growers/farmers as they relate to pricing products for lower-income communities.

Zen Chung // **PEXELS**

Rethinking what is 'valuable'

Values drive behaviors and actions, which then drive outcomes. **There is a disconnect between what is valued and invested in by those who control needed resources (environmental, capital, human) and those who seek those resources for more than financial or economic gains.** The workshops highlighted that our collective thinking about what is 'valuable' has to change and expand to reach future visions. The following are values that require rethinking and commitment across the Chicago region food system.

1 Collective well-being versus individual/ organizational benefit

Prioritizing food as a conduit to care, physical and psychological safety, and well-being as opposed to only considering financial returns as value and maximizing profit margins.

2 Economic and environmental sustainability versus convenience

Protecting the long-term productivity and health of resources to meet future economic and social needs without negatively impacting communities socially, environmentally, or culturally.

3 Reparative wealth redistribution versus philanthropy

Commitment from the structures of power to listen to communities to identify the ways in which they have been harmed by the system (government, private sector, etc.) and repair the harms through redistribution of capital (money, environmental) and policy changes.

Mindset and narrative shifts

Through this process, we've learned that for BIPOC growers to thrive in an economically and environmentally sustainable food system that values collective well-being and provides necessary resources, the following mindset and narrative shifts need to occur.

From	To	Associated Vision*
Growers' strengths are in growing and supplying food. They don't have any significant broader contributions.	Growers provide immense value to communities and have social, ecological, and health contributions that are often unseen and unmeasured.	**Education about value generated through around food production and consumption**
Capitalist mindsets, practices, and metrics are the gold standard	Black, Brown, and Indigenous culture, traditions, and ways of being are valued, recognized, invested and integrated.	**Circularity and sustainability**
Dependence on commercial, large scale, industrialized food systems	Valuing and prioritizing investments in localized, smaller-scale food systems and associated cultures and practices.	**Food sovereignty and sustainability**
Profit-leading and therefore exploitative to people, environment, animals and local economies	People-leading and therefore centered on care and equity holistically, balancing returns across economic, health, cultural, environmental well-being	**Collective Care**
BIPOC growers having little to no influence on policies designed for them	Increased BIPOC agency in policy-making/decision making	**Food sovereignty and sustainability**
Scarcity mindset	Abundance mindset	**Equitable opportunities**
Food as a commodity	Food as a tool for equity / Food as a connector	**Collective care and Equitable opportunities**
Reliance on imported food	Learning to eat what the land provides	**Education about food production and consumption**

**These visions will be elaborated in detail in the 'Visions and Principles' section.*

Benjamin Suter // UNSPLASH

Navigator seeks to connect people who contribute to a Chicago region food system that works for all, especially those in communities fighting inequities to grow, process, produce, distribute, donate or buy fresh, local food. To do that, it's important to recognize how capitalist modes of production and racism pervade the food system, leading to practices, policies, and behaviors detrimental to BIPOC success. This is a challenge that influences all the other challenges brought up during workshops and other conversations. Below are some of the inhibitors workshop participants emphasized addressing to achieve the desired change.

1 Corporate, institutional and governmental stakeholders perpetuate the racist culture inherent in capitalist social norms, leading to risk-averse behaviors, a lack of transparency, and practices encouraging individualism and protectionism.

- Institutional buyers are risk-averse and don't have protections or incentives to buy locally, or smaller scale - perceived or real risk because there are not big systems for safety and regulation built-in.
- Power distributed from larger institutions creates barriers between urban growers. The "chosen one" becomes the local gatekeeper.
- No transparency into the City of Chicago strategy or plans—things happen without community input.

2 Pre-existing biases, prejudices, and racist mental models of Black and Brown growers and the food that they grow limit their ability to sell products and reach wider audiences.

3 Organizations supporting farms (lobbyists, IL Farm Bureau) support white rural farmers and provide little to no support to BIPOC/urban growers, creating an inequitable distribution of resources—leaving them to fend for themselves.

- There's a missing connection between urban growers and farm lobbyists to influence what food we get/consume and where we get it from.
- The Illinois Farm Bureau provides resources to white rural farmers partially because the system is set up that way and lacks incentive.

4 Scarcity mindset (protectionist behaviors) stem from conditions exacerbated by racist policies; pitting organizations against each other and creating an "Us vs. Them" dynamic.

- 20-year arc of having to piecemeal resources, having to fight against the status quo of what's considered good enough.

Scott Goodwill // UNSPLASH

5 Because the US favors the industrialized food system over Black and Indigenous food culture and practices, there is a lack of policy development that emphasizes access to healthy food in all communities and more inclusive definitions of healthy food.

- ...Lack of policy requiring healthy food to be accessible in all communities
- Structures - not valuing indigenous food culture and community and its healthier food culture
- Policies - we are “dependent” upon an industrialized food system
- Structures - gentrification, overdevelopment, and displacement of people

6 The biggest barriers to economic opportunity are systemic racism embedded in the national food system.

- When people think about pathways about racism and some separate outcome (health, food, etc.) - those pathways impact people’s access to the food system, how they work in the system, how they’re marginalized in working in it, accessing it, and controlling it.
- 10-1 financing gap for entrepreneurs of color in this space.

7 Organizations—large and small—are reluctant to share openly and give up their competitive advantage, but this hurts the food system overall.

- Large companies like Aramark don’t want to share price point information because they don’t want competitors to know what their pricing is. There’s a lot of proprietary information in the food supply chain.

VISIONS AND PRINCIPLES

Visions are overarching aspirations of an organization: what it hopes to achieve or to become.

Principles are ‘rules’ or ‘laws’ that govern what you do and how you do it. They provide a shared approach to achieving goals and actualizing visions.

The learnings from 1-1 interviews and workshops led to designing a list of visions and principles that could shape Navigator’s focus. Contributors include a mix of urban growers and food producers, social enterprise and small business leaders focused on community and economic development, people working in policy, human services, food security, public health, academia, mutual aid, community gardens, and high school youth in farm training programs.

Insights and quotes from the discussions support the visions and principles in the following pages. Here is a simple diagram to explain how to read the next section.

Vision

**Achieve food sov
Collective Care**

Principle

**Create stronger relatio
enable collective actio**

Principle Description

Stronger interpersonal,
organizational and socie
across the food chain n
to build a connected, tra
supportive and robust f

Key Inhibitor

**Broken networks
collaboration, gro
collective learning**

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COVID 19 surfaced the disconnections and the silos that exist within the local food system. There is a dire need to build more robust and interconnected grower networks to collaborate and learn from each other.

Insight

- There's interest in getting familiar with others for collaboration and partnership: "We don't know each other".

Datapoint

BIPOC growers' and community food advocates' stories are missing, creating unfamiliarity within the growing community and distance from the consumer.

- There's a desire to tell stories and share histories (context) for what's happened and the current state of the local food ecosystem.
- Narratives and sharing our challenges and how you cope with them to support others in their challenges.

Economic opportunities alone cannot solve for distrust and lived trauma - need relationship and community building.

- Black folks distrust the system.
- Entities don't access resources because we've been screwed so many times (trust).
- It's hard to collaborate when everyone's under duress.
- After duress and conflict, comes collaboration.
- Interaction and collaboration comes after healing and emerging from survival mode.

(cont. on page 52)

Zen Chung // PEXELS

> **BIPOC farmers WANT to inform policy makers and have access to urban planners to reframe city planning and land allocation.**
>
> — Workshop participant

Achieve food sovereignty

Food sovereignty is a food system in which the people who produce, distribute, and consume food also control food production and distribution mechanisms and policies. This stands in contrast to the present corporate food establishment, in which corporations and market institutions dominate the global food system. Food sovereignty can be achieved through:

1 **Decentralization and deprivatization of wealth and resources.** Distributed control and collective ownership of resources (land, water, and tools) for food production.

2 **Decommodification of food.** Food production to be based on the needs of people and society first, rather than selling. Distributed access to food through the public way to center food as common for all.

3 **Localization of food systems.** Reducing or removing dependency on imported food distributed by corporations, giving priority to 'local first'. Bringing together local communities to be a part of the food system (eg., growing, processing, distributing and consuming), thus reducing the physical, intellectual and emotional distance between food-providers and consumers.

4 **BIPOC driven decision making.** Black, brown and residents of color from communities living with food inequities are seen as experts and have the agency to drive policies, structures and processes that center on their needs.

Zen Chung // PEXELS

> **Need more economic framing than social service framing. Economic framing can do social service, but there's also other things.**
>
> — Workshop participant

Collective care

Community developed models of care replace “trickle down economics” to redefine interactions in the social, civic and business sectors. This can be achieved by:

1. **Building connected communities.** Food is an integrator and a means to create and sustain connections within and across communities.

2. **Valuing collective well-being over financial gain.** Co-developing a thriving ecosystem where people and communities’ physical and psychological health and safety is valued more than economic returns from food production.

3. **Affirming and rewarding community stewards and caretakers.** Valuing work and efforts of those individuals who invest their time, money, and effort to create safe, healthy, and connected communities.

Anna Shvets // PEXELS

> **BIPOC and small-mid sized scale producers are at an even bigger disadvantage due to misperceptions about quality, value of BIPOC operations and increased challenges in accessing capital investments to support growth and/or operational systems building.**
>
> — Workshop participant

Equitable opportunities

Centering equity as a core tenet in creating a just and sustainable food system: This can be achieved through:

1 **Cultivating and perpetuating an abundance mindset.** Focus on leveraging the many types of assets (cultural, physical, environmental, relational, etc.) that exist in communities in and around Chicago to advance an equitable food ecosystem.d sustain connections within and across communities.

2 **Reparative investment in exploited BIPOC communities.** Eliminating racist policies and practices (institutional racism) and allocating resources in BIPOC communities that aim to repair the damage caused by them.

3 **Equitable food distribution through the creation and sustainment of new infrastructures.** Creating new physical and digitally connected infrastructures that provide communities with modes of equitable food distribution that remove capital, fear, and mobility as barriers to healthy food access.

4 **Learning and employment opportunities for all community members.** Creating learning and employment opportunities for the most vulnerable (formerly incarcerated, homeless, etc.) in our communities across the food chain.

Markus Sp // PEXELS

Farmers/producers/small food distributors have a lot of value in providing marketing and supporting the case of Chicago being a green city and maybe it's a missed opportunity to not think of food production and its role in the conversation around sustainability.

— Workshop participant

Circularity and sustainability

Creating a thriving ecological economy with opportunities for communities to become autonomous by building circular, sustainable infrastructures and integrated solutions. This can be achieved through:

1 **Building and sustaining community wealth.** Building community wealth by creating new business opportunities in resident-owned properties, while removing financial capital as a barrier to healthy local food.

2 **Multi-purpose use of existing infrastructures.** Activating agile spaces, repurposing currently underutilized natural and manufactured infrastructure to address the dynamic needs of growers and communities.

3 **Infrastructuring collective support through:**

- **Peer-to-peer models.**
- **Land and space (re)utilization.** Utilizing existing spaces to create physical and digital infrastructures for mutually beneficial collaboration among actors within/outside the food system and their communities, such as reclaimed land, foregone for industrial use, can be dedicated to food production.

4 **Creating and utilizing renewable sources of energy.** Building integrated solutions and practices that center people and planet replenishment and renewal rather than extraction or removal . Ex. waste management solutions such as composting, waste-to-energy generation etc.

5 **Valuing regenerative farming practices - both traditional and indigenous, and newer, technologically supported practices.** Optimize the use of current infrastructure and biodynamics to build a more sustainable food ecosystem, returning to traditional and indigenous practices and/or making new technologies more financially and technically accessible by residents addressing food inequities in their communities.

Eyoel Kahssay // UNSPLASH

> **Lack of inspiration for considering becoming a grower/farmer an attractive career path—no mentorship or exposure to connect with the younger generation.**
>
> — Workshop participant

Education about food production and consumption

Educating consumers about their food system can be empowering and increase food literacy, while showing the value created from growing. This can be achieved by:

1 **Supporting food literacy in communities.** Building physical, relational, and digital infrastructures and systems that enhance food literacy in communities to better engage with food production and consumption.

2 **Educating and developing growers.** Empower current and aspiring growers by providing educational opportunities to build their skills and knowledge as growers and mature as business owners.

Achieve food sovereignty

1

PRINCIPLE + PRINCIPLE DESCRIPTION

Increase agency of BIPOC growers to drive and influence policy and process.

BIPOC growers should have the agency to drive decision-making about policies, processes, and structures that directly impact them and their businesses.

KEY INHIBITOR

The lack of inclusion in city decision-making forces growers to navigate unnecessarily burdensome policies and practices on their own.

The city does not prioritize urban growers' inclusion in the planning, policy, and decision-making processes. This creates barriers for BIPOC growers to access land, licenses, and other resources to support food production.

- Policy connections to BIPOC growers require a direct line to communicate needs and opportunities for policymakers to advance the interests of urban growers and make it easier to farm in the city boundaries. (e.g., certifications, access to land, water, soil, remediation, seeds, marketplace, etc.).
- BIPOC growers and urban planners - focus on food growing as a priority among urban planners - reframing how we think about city planning to include local food.
- BIPOC farmers WANT to inform policymakers and access urban planners to reframe city planning and land allocation.

Policies are not currently set up for BIPOC growers to start thriving farms, ranches, or gardens because they are anti-Black, anti-migrant, and anti-small business.

- There is a lot of institutional racism for BIPOC accessing financial capital and land. Discrimination impacts the ability to secure capital and access land-loans/mortgages.
- There were questions around why growers can't just grow on undeveloped, essentially untouched lots (too many hoops to jump through and rules).

“There is no urban farm license” - current processes are not set up in a way that allows small, local, and/or BIPOC growers to succeed.

- Becoming a WMV-owned business isn’t as hard as securing space (so much empty land available but no “urban farm” license—they simply don’t exist—alternatives are “peddlers” licenses.)
- Not enough incubation spaces to help scale value-added food production in Chicago; licensing is too bureaucratic and stifles innovation and entrepreneurship under the pretense of food safety.

The current policies and licensing structures are restrictive and cause an undue burden on small-scale growers and/or entrepreneurs.

- There aren’t enough licensing opportunities for entrepreneurs (food providers/restaurants) who don’t operate in commercial spaces but in their homes.

To create and maintain sustainable conditions and systems, BIPOC growers require an interdisciplinary coalition of supporters who aid them in advocating for favorable policies and implementing methods suitable for urban growing.

- Connections are needed between lawyers and regulators and local BIPOC growers and food producers to design regulations and policies that support smaller-scale market development and sustainment.
- Connections are needed between engineers, planners, and BIPOC growers and food producers to design and support irrigation, farming systems that are sustainable in urban settings.

Achieve food sovereignty

2

Increase clarity and transparency of processes and policies.

The system needs to provide enhanced clarity and transparency for policies, processes, and procedures across the food chain for easy navigation for growers and all stakeholders within the food system.

City bureaucracy necessitates growers to enact a “do it myself” mindset.

BIPOC growers have the “do it myself” initiative and drive to provide for themselves where the system fails them.

- Doing it myself as a grower - finding storage and transporting with my own vehicle (black and brown delivery options).
- What’s working - Grabbing my vehicle and doing it myself, volunteer networks.

Because some growers have more direct, accessible relationships with alderpersons, playing the role of urban ag focal points, they often find it easier to work with them on challenges related to land, water, etc., rather than navigating the city’s bureaucratic processes and infrastructure.

- BIPOC growers currently have a valuable connection to aldermen, who help with land access and marketing - this is technically not allowed, and they’re supposed to go through the city instead.
- Alderpersons provide BIPOC farmers with land and water access.

Due to a lack of transparency around data and process, growers require access to and cooperation from gatekeepers to thrive.

- I’ve heard over and over that a community wants to get access to land the city owns. Very opaque in terms of understanding how to get access. White owned or controlled orgs jump in and get access to a space.
- There are a lot of backroom deals that happen, and there’s no transparency for communities.

Achieve food sovereignty Collective Care

3

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

Broken networks are stifling collaboration, growth, and collective learning.

COVID 19 surfaced the disconnections and the silos that exist within the local food system. There is a dire need to build more robust and interconnected grower networks to collaborate and learn from each other.

- There's interest in getting familiar with others for collaboration and partnership: "We don't know each other."

BIPOC growers' and community food advocates' stories are missing, creating unfamiliarity within the growing community and distance from the consumer.

- There's a desire to tell stories and share histories (context) for what's happened and the current state of the local food ecosystem.
- Narratives and sharing our challenges and how you cope with them to support others in their challenges.

Economic opportunities alone cannot solve for distrust and lived trauma - need relationship and community building.

- Black folks distrust the system.
- Entities don't access resources because we've been screwed so many times (trust).
- It's hard to collaborate when everyone's under duress.
- After duress and conflict come collaboration.
- Interaction and collaboration come after healing and emerging from survival mode.

(cont. on page 52)

Achieve food sovereignty Collective Care

3

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

Broken networks are stifling collaboration, growth, and collective learning.

(cont. from page 51)

There is value in harnessing institutional power toward solutions by expanding relationships with private and public sector power brokers.

- Managers and middle management people are the important people in the system because they're doing the work.
- These folks stick around through administrations and carry knowledge. Some are riding it out, but you want to look at those who aren't and want change.
- To expand purchasing power, we need to work with community anchor partners like hospitals (GFPP)

Decentralizing relationships for BIPOC growers and bringing them closer to each other and others (communities, institutions, non BIPOC people) who want to be in solidarity.

- You need to connect BIPOC growers to people in close proximity yes, but part of it is we need to have more connections.
- Leverage information from social groups that are culturally and civically focused.
- Connect to community, local institutions.
- Strengthen weak ties and leverage social connections.

Achieve food sovereignty Collective Care

3

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

The misalignment between institutional buyer priorities and grower capacity inhibits partnership and relationship building.

Institutional and organizational buyers lack a method of initiating, developing, and maintaining business relationships with growers, leaving them without a means to understand each other's needs, requirements, and capacity.

- "I don't know how to connect with local growers to purchase items for our food pantry."

Achieve food sovereignty Collective Care

3

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

Increased competition transforms allies into competitors.

Increased competition forces like-minded BIPOC growers and community organizations to compete rather than collaborate.

- Opportunities for community organizations to work with one another, not competing (resources, etc.).
- Opportunities for organizations to work together / share responsibilities / efforts (sharing resources / knowledge / joint efforts).

To sustainably and collectively meet the growing demand of the population, urban BIPOC growers desire deeper connections with rural farmers to mutually grow, support, and enhance growing and business practices.

- BIPOC growers want conventional farms to give them a platform to amplify their work in exchange for sharing sustainable practices.
- Missing connection between urban growers and the rural farmers. Connection/collaboration is necessary if urban growers want to be able to produce at the scale society needs.

Achieve food sovereignty Collective Care

3

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

Data on its own can be exploitative, if not supported with narrative and trust-building mechanisms.

Information is an entry point to drive and build relationships between and among growers and dependent stakeholders.

- Directory of local growers, food producers, products by location.
- That ease of finding each other at the right time.

Data alone will not solve these problems; growers must experience relational (cognitive) trust first.

- Allow people to see the scope of things and find each other. Figure out where they sit in the system and geographically.

Data without historical or real-time context and interpretation may lead to exploitative narratives and data manipulation.

- There's a lack of understanding around what's meant by the racial equity gap
- The measurements of success are different than a eurocentric perspective.
- Tell the story of the scale, bring visibility to decision-makers so we can't be ignored anymore.
- Certainly can see a Navigator that helps us tell lots of stories, especially based in Congressional districts.

Achieve food sovereignty Collective Care

3

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

Divergent views on the strongest levers.

The food system is not monolithic - some are focused on food access/security; some on making money; some on racial, economic, and social justice, some on a combination.

- Has historically been tension between emergency food vs. sustainable agriculture (still ongoing convo)
- Local food system strengthening v. EQUITABLE and LOCAL food system strengthening

Achieve food sovereignty
Equitable opportunities

4

Create financial stability/viability

Create equitable economic opportunities for BIPOC growers to gain more financial stability for themselves and their businesses.

There is no equity without economic opportunity.

Economic opportunity is the first order priority to reach equity.

Fair worker standards - recognizing that 20 million + people in the food system have some of the worst working conditions, least protected - mainly people of color, women.

Economic viability - close the racial wealth gap, improve health and well-being, reduce trauma, and create jobs.

Achieve food sovereignty
Equitable opportunities

4

Create financial stability/viability

Create equitable economic opportunities for BIPOC growers to gain more financial stability for themselves and their businesses.

Growers wrestle with the tension of paying a living wage and providing affordable food.

Due to a lack of funding and being unable to control market pricing, growers feel they need to decide between paying workers a living wage and making their produce affordable for all customers/ communities, especially BIPOC communities.

- It's hard to balance making a living wage while remaining affordable to all consumers.
- Reconciling fair wages for growers/farmers as they relate to pricing products for lower-income communities.

Achieve food sovereignty
Equitable opportunities

4

Create financial stability/viability

Create equitable economic opportunities for BIPOC growers to gain more financial stability for themselves and their businesses.

Unnecessary administrative criteria and expectations obstruct growers' ability to thrive.

Unnecessary and unrelated requirements posed by the city admin make it harder for people to: 1) become a grower, and 2) progress in a career as a grower, farmer, food producer or contributor along the value chain and ecosystem in support of community food.

- Any kind of criminal record or legal issue (traffic violations) holds people up from being able to advance and progress. (e.g., parking violations or well-hidden traffic cameras (when we are driving fast because of security concerns such as not wanting to get caught in crossfire).

The city's notion and expectation of a business mean one can afford fees, water, etc., but small farmers and businesses do not fit into this criteria. Thus, making it challenging for the growers to: 1) get access to the fundamental requirements (continuous access to capital, remediated land, clean water, and healthy soil) for growing. 2) have viable income generation to support themselves and their business.

- There is a definite "us/ them" and an active antagonism that growers feel from city and county officials. They have to deal with small-scale enterprise in food and growing, which does not feel valued based on how hard the bureaucracy makes it.

- Challenges getting started: misunderstanding of what "incubator" means, misunderstanding in the funding world of what "urban agriculture" business means (hard to make money, but when you put the word "business" in the title, it makes it seem like the business should be able to afford fees/water/etc.

Achieve food sovereignty
Equitable opportunities

4

Create financial stability/viability

Create equitable economic opportunities for BIPOC growers to gain more financial stability for themselves and their businesses.

Reliance on short term or temporary resources prevents growers from thriving.

Growers currently rely on rented land and volunteers, which is not sustainable for long-term, reliable planning, and growth for the future.

- Need volunteers and/or help with growing
- Care and maintenance requires a high ratio of leaders (one skilled leader to 4-6 support/volunteers)

BIPOC growers currently rely on unsustainable financial resources and agreements which creates the need for mediators to negotiate more favorable terms on behalf of growers.

- People to facilitate commercial contracts (need)
- Growers need longer leases, licenses from the city as well as more transparency around long-term planning.

Near-term opportunities alleviate the "symptoms" (e.g., lack of time, lack of collaboration); but also need long-term interventions that get to the core of the issue - economic empowerment.

- BIPOC growers aren't in the charitable food space; they're in the economic business space - we need to separate the two.
- Ownership doesn't lead to economic independence right away.
- Need more economic framing than social service framing. Economic framing can do social service, but there's also other things.
- Policies are one size fits all, while things are different for black and brown farmers.

Achieve food sovereignty
Equitable opportunities

4

Create financial stability/viability

Create equitable economic opportunities for BIPOC growers to gain more financial stability for themselves and their businesses.

Unclear funding channels and a lack of administrative support pulls growers away from their core competency.

While BIPOC growers desire stronger connections with investors and philanthropists, there's a lack of clarity about who they are, the process by which to engage them, and the implications of accepting investments.

The many forms of financial capital (e.g., "wealthy investors") are not transparent and clear to BIPOC urban growers, but the desire to be seen, valued, and heard by them is clear.

Who are they? How do you connect with them directly? What's different about the way in which that money is granted, borrowed, invested, and what that means for the BIPOC grower?

BIPOC and small growers lack the necessary administrative support, which causes them to spend excessive amounts of time seeking funding instead of utilizing their true expertise: growing and managing their farms or gardens.

With 1,200 growing sites and counting, competition is growing fierce in Chicago. Deliverables, timelines, expectations, and overbearing tracking/reporting make this cycle (seeking funding) incredibly challenging. Growers must continuously weigh the "Ask" against the "Offer".

Most growers waste so much time hunting for subsidies (financial support, grants, etc.). Full-time grant-writing expertise is very limited and inaccessible.

Collective care
Equitable opportunities

5

Building support systems across the food system

BIPOC growers need reparational, infrastructural, and institutional support along with power to direct policies that will provide optimal value to local communities and their residents.

Growers lack the reparational, infrastructural, or institutional support needed to provide optimal value to local communities.

Reparations are needed to combat institutional racism for BIPOC and rebuild infrastructures so that they're rooted in equity.

- Racial reconciliation is needed to establish a shared understanding of "food security" issue as a systematic issue that needs REPAIR and, therefore, reparations as part of the solution.

Although BIPOC serving and/or BIPOC led growers and food producers provide certain communities access to hyper-local and culturally relevant food, their impact has been limited by the lack of necessary/sufficient support from government municipalities, agencies, and institutions.

- BIPOC growers provide equitable access to culturally relevant produce to households in exchange for $$$ and support/validation of their work.

Although community organizations advocate for under-resourced communities to buy locally grown or produced food, there aren't sufficient incentives and support for them to purchase locally-grown food, leading to a continued over-reliance on the corporate food system.

- CFPAC provides legitimacy for CDPH and advocates for greater local food procurement by those creating value-added food products
- Folks using WIC/SNAP/Link have access to purchase from farmers markets, but there's little access to transportation to those purchasing places for those who don't own transportation or have other mobility issues.

Equitable opportunities

6

Reimagine spaces and existing infrastructure

Build new infrastructure and/or reimagine existing spaces to support equitable distribution of food to communities.

Growers lack the reparational, infrastructural, or institutional support needed to provide optimal value to local communities.

Corner stores have the potential to provide fresh local food to the communities they operate in; however, they lack the necessary investment in infrastructure such as cold storage.

- Corner stores need better access to cold storage in order to distribute fresh produce and access (or possibly greater visibility?) to consumers in the neighborhood.

Lack of economic opportunities in the existing food chain for black and brown residents in predominantly black communities.

- There are not many corner stores that are owned by black and brown residents.

Equitable opportunities

6

Building support systems across the food system

BIPOC growers need reparational, infrastructural, and institutional support along with power to direct policies that will provide optimal value to local communities and their residents.

Equitable and convenient distribution is hampered by insufficient infrastructure and persisting inequities across systems.

The lack of localized and accessible infrastructure needed to support distribution restricts BIPOC growers from providing hyper-local food to communities.

- Folks using WIC/SNAP/Link have access to purchase from farmers markets, but there's little access to transportation for those who don't own transportation.
- Corner stores need better access to cold storage in order to distribute fresh produce and access (or possibly greater visibility?) to consumers in the neighborhood.
- Connections to large trucks and pallet loaders for moving of large distribution.

Equitable opportunities

7

Strengthen Intra-sector alignment

Priority alignment and relationship building between private and public institutions and small-scale growers is key to creating a supportive partnership.

The misalignment between institutional buyer priorities and grower capacity inhibits partnership and relationship building.

Institutional buyers are price-sensitive, risk-averse and, value consistency, which motivates them to buy high volume, low priced products, which all BIPOC growers can't provide because not all desire that scale of infrastructure, and those that do lack the support and opportunities needed to achieve such scale and strength of connections.

Food service distributors like US Foods and Sysco provide cheaper food and reliability to large food service companies (like Aramark).

Small-scale producers are at a disadvantage because they can often lack the volume and consistency prized by big distributors.

Institutional buyers are risk averse and don't have protections or incentives to buy locally or smaller scale - perceived or real risk because there are not big systems for safety and regulation built in.

BIPOC and small to mid sized scale producers are at an even bigger disadvantage due to misperceptions about the quality and value of BIPOC operations and increased challenges in accessing capital investments to support growth and/or operational systems building.

(cont. on page 66)

Equitable opportunities

7

Strengthen Intra-sector alignment

Priority alignment and relationship building between private and public institutions and small scale growers is key to creating a supportive partnership.

The misalignment between institutional buyer priorities and grower capacity inhibits partnership and relationship building.

(cont. from page 65)

Food service companies internally incentivize buying from local, urban, and women-owned growers. However, they lack the external incentive and accountability to develop structures to support purchasing from BIPOC growers at their current scale and volume.

- Aramark, Sodexo, and Compass employ food service folks; they all have incentive programs to buy from local, urban and women-owned growers.
- Institutional buyers are risk-averse and don't have protections or incentives to buy locally, or smaller scale - perceived or real risk because there are not big systems for safety and regulation built in.
- Small-scale producers are at a disadvantage because they can often lack the volume and consistency prized by big distributors.

Because institutional buyers have strict pricing requirements, keeping costs low, they aren't incentivized to purchase local; thus growers aren't able to sell to them profitably.

- Grow at a volume to serve large-scale buyers (if that's your goal)... (institutional chefs) experience downward price pressure, restrictions on who they can buy from.

There is a need to be more biased towards small-scale growers and businesses and incentivize large institutional buyers to change their purchasing practices (restrictions/requirements) to become more diverse and equitable.

- Need subsidies to go to more diversified, smaller growers who are growing a wide range of things.
- "Food justice on the demand side (locations, accepted payments, prices) is incongruent with food justice on the supply side (sustainable growing practices, paying fair wages, costs)."

Because of the lack of transparency about market demand and pricing restrictions for buyers, growers aren't able to grow at optimal levels without risking waste and financial loss.

- Balance of how much you are growing with market demand (need enough carrots / items at scale - 1000+ at times).

Circularity and sustainability Collective Care

8

Create stronger relationships and enable collective action.

Stronger interpersonal, community, organizational and societal relationships across the food chain need to be created to build a connected, transparent, supportive and robust food system.

Broken networks are stifling collaboration, growth, and collective learning.

BIPOC growers have difficulty finding predictable and reliable distributors because distributors can't accommodate the growers' needs for flexibility and pricing requirements. Therefore, BIPOC growers often store and transport their own products, creating a significant strain on them.

- Been observing this problem out of the hatchery kitchens: Distributors with a robust business are more reliable and more expensive- local independent distributors are leaner, less costly, and less reliable.
- Available distributors vary in price on a week-to-week basis - from vendor to vendor- it becomes difficult to find a reasonable price.

BIPOC growers who look to advance an equitable food system face a specific challenge of finding BIPOC distributors due to racist inequities in adjacent systems (criminal justice system, fines, and fees, etc.).

- Acknowledgment of finding flexible and reasonably priced local distribution partners- but curious about other issues that more precisely need to be solved to (re)build the value chain of BIPOC owned businesses to get food from garden to plate in the local food chain.

Circularity and sustainability Collective Care

8

Create a self-sustaining infrastructure

Build systems and infrastructures that remove the strain on growers and create self-sustaining support and economics.

Food production and sustainability in Chicago: an open debate!

There's a direct connection between local food production and sustainable cities, but there is a debate over the impact and importance of cultivating and promoting this connection.

Farmers/producers/small food distributors have a lot of value in providing marketing and supporting the case of Chicago being a green city, and maybe it's a missed opportunity to not think of food production and its role in the conversation around sustainability.

Local food systems provide a level of conservation to local ecosystems.

Education around food production and consumption

9

Educate and train

Growers require educational programs and infrastructures to grow their practice and expand opportunities in the field. Similar structures are also needed to shift mindsets to more local and sustainable modes of consumption.

The growth of BIPOC growers and their practice is stunted by the lack of cohesive infrastructures for exposure and learning.

BIPOC growers lack the cohesive educational infrastructure about growing and agribusiness needed to educate current growers and young people—leading to a growing desire to strengthen programming and connections with CPS and community-based educational partners.

- BIPOC farmers WANT access to CPS to provide produce and get training.
- There's a need for more programs like windy city harvest to provide training for agribusiness.
- Incubator Farms and Agriculture Business Training is needed on the S and W sides at the scale and level as Windy City Harvest (hands-on training for 9 months).

In addition to establishing a commercial relationship with CPS, BIPOC growers want to establish a mutually beneficial relationship by providing students knowledge of and exposure to growing.

- BIPOC growers desire a connection to provide produce and info to CPS students.
- Potential connection: CPS could provide a platform to amplify the work of BIPOC growers, buy from them, and share information with students.

Due to a lack of exposure and connection to growers, young people aren't inspired to consider growing as an attractive and viable career path.

- Lack of inspiration for considering becoming a grower/ farmer an attractive career path—no mentorship or exposure to connect with the younger generation.
- To see more minority farmers within communities, young people must see the path—vision and know-how—tacit knowledge - public evidence as inspiration.

Education around food production and consumption

9

Educate and train

Growers require educational programs and infrastructures to grow their practice and expand opportunities in the field. Similar structures are also needed to shift mindsets to more local and sustainable modes of consumption.

The knowledge and cultural traditions existing in BIPOC communities are not amplified, leading to consumers not being educated about local food production and consumption practices.

Increased local food consumption requires consumer education on the concept of eating seasonally and knowledge on ways to handle and prepare new/alternative foods.

- Education on handling, storage, preparation, and healthy recipes.
- If you want to buy local, it can be hard to buy/eat the foods you want to eat.

There is a need to educate consumers on the real cost involved in growing and producing local food in order to shift their mindset from the false sense of cost created by industrialized farming and encourage them to buy more local food.

- Information and educating people on growing and production as “food is medicine.”
- Fast food and industrialized farming gives people a false sense of the true cost of food at the expense of living wages and immigrant/slave labor.

Increasing transparency across the food chain to enhance food literacy and decision making for consumers.

- Greater awareness of what’s going on- commercial/song to promote transparency of where the food is coming from. Pros and cons of food items
- Government food labels should be explicit/scannable.
- USDA inspections are more thorough and strict.
- App scanner to scan the food to tell people about its side effects etc.

Brienne Hong // UNSPLASH

Addressing Inhibitors for Cross-Sector Collaboration

ADDRESSING INHIBITORS FOR CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

The Chicago region food ecosystem is currently designed to create barriers and/or intentionally exclude BIPOC growers from full participation.

Despite the failures of the overarching food system, BIPOC growers have a “do it myself” mindset, initiative, and drive to provide for themselves and their communities.

To create and maintain sustainable conditions and just systems, BIPOC growers require a cross-sector coalition of supporters who aid them in advocating for favorable policies and implementing methods suitable for urban growing. These sectors include:

Government

Private Enterprise

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

Philanthropy

Community & Individuals

The overarching challenges related to capitalist modes of production and racism manifest in tangible ways, which we call ‘inhibitors,’ through a subset of systems/actors that each play a role in excluding and/or creating a barrier for BIPOC growers.

In the following section, we have collected the inhibitors under the sector primarily responsible for—or best positioned to address—each inhibitor. However, each sector may also influence or be able to impact inhibitors collected in other sectors. Each subsystem/actor within the Chicago region food system has opportunities to do its part and work collaboratively for collective action and impact.

Additonal sectors that have an influence/impact on the inhibitor are represented through icons next to them.

Government

Any entity that exclusively works in the public interest, is ultimately accountable to its residents, and can create and enforce policies and regulations. Ex. Public schools, city hall, alderman, department of finance, etc.

- The city's (Chicago's) notion and expectation of a business mean one can afford fees, water, etc., but small farmers and businesses do not fit into this criteria. Thus, making it challenging for the growers to get access to the fundamental requirements (continuous access to capital, remediated land, clean water, and healthy soil) for growing.

- "There is no urban farm license." Current processes are not set up in a way that allows small, local, and/or BIPOC growers to succeed.

- The city does not prioritize urban growers' inclusion in planning, policy, and decision-making processes. This creates barriers for BIPOC growers to access land, licenses, and other resources to support food production.

- Policies are not currently set up for BIPOC growers to start thriving farms, ranches, or gardens because they are anti-Black, anti-migrant, and anti-small business.

- Institutional and organizational buyers lack a method of initiating, developing, and maintaining business relationships with growers, leaving them without a means to understand each other's needs, requirements, and capacity. [Private sector, NGO]

- The lack of localized and accessible infrastructure needed to support distribution restricts BIPOC growers from providing hyper-local food to communities.

- BIPOC growers who look to advance an equitable food system face a specific challenge of finding BIPOC distributors due to racist inequities in adjacent systems (criminal justice system, fines and fees, etc.).

- Reparations are needed to combat institutional racism against BIPOC communities and rebuild infrastructures so that they're rooted in equity. [Private sector, Philanthropy]

- Increased local food consumption requires consumer education on the concept of eating seasonally and knowledge on ways to handle and prepare new/ alternative foods. [Private sector, NGO]

- There is a need to educate consumers on the real cost involved in growing and producing local food in order to shift their mindset from the false sense of cost created by industrialized farming and encourage them to buy more local food. [Private sector, NGO]

- In addition to establishing a commercial relationship with CPS, BIPOC growers want to establish a mutually beneficial relationship by providing students knowledge of and exposure to growing.

Private Enterprise

Privately held corporations and businesses whose primary interest is profit and shareholder satisfaction. Ex. Sodexo, Walmart, etc.

- Due to a lack of funding and being unable to control market pricing, growers feel they need to decide between paying workers a living wage and making their produce affordable for all customers/communities, especially BIPOC communities.

- There is value in harnessing institutional power toward solutions by expanding relationships with private and public sector power brokers.

- Lack of economic opportunities in the existing food chain for Black and Brown residents in predominantly black communities.

- Institutional buyers are price-sensitive, risk-averse and value consistency, which motivates them to buy high volume, low priced products, which all BIPOC growers can't provide because not all desire that scale of infrastructure, and those that do lack the support and opportunities needed to achieve such scale and strength of connections.

- Food service companies internally incentivize buying from local, urban, and women-owned growers. However, they lack the external incentive and accountability to develop structures to support purchasing from BIPOC growers at their current scale and volume.

- There is a need to be more biased towards small scale growers/business and incentivize large institutional buyers to change their purchasing practices (restrictions/ requirements) to become more diverse and equitable.

- Because of the lack of transparency about market demand and pricing restrictions for buyers, growers aren't able to grow at optimal levels without risking waste and financial loss.

- BIPOC growers have difficulty finding predictable and reliable distributors, because distributors can't accommodate the growers' needs for flexibility and pricing requirements.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Organizations which are independent of government involvement are known as non-governmental organizations or non-government organizations. Ex. community organizations, hospitals, universities, etc.

- Institutional buyers have strict pricing requirements, keeping costs low, they aren't incentivized to purchase local, growers aren't able to sell to them profitably.

- BIPOC growers' and community food advocates' stories are missing, creating unfamiliarity within the growing community and distance from the consumer.

- Although community organizations advocate for under-resourced communities to buy locally grown or produced food, there aren't sufficient incentives and support for them to purchase locally-grown food, leading to a continued over-reliance on the corporate food system.

- Economic opportunities alone cannot solve for distrust and lived trauma - need relationship and community building.

- Due to a lack of exposure and connection to growers, young people aren't inspired to consider growing as an attractive and viable career path.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy consists of "private initiatives, for the public good, focusing on quality of life". Philanthropy contrasts with business initiatives, which are private initiatives for private good, focusing on material gain, and with government endeavors, which are public initiatives for public good, e.g., focusing on provision of public services.

- BIPOC and small growers lack the necessary administrative support, which causes them to spend excessive amounts of time seeking funding instead of utilizing their true expertise, growing and managing their farms.

- While BIPOC growers desire stronger connections with investors and philanthropists, there's a lack of clarity about who they are, the process by which to engage them, and the implications of accepting investments.

- Growers currently rely on rented land and volunteers, which is not sustainable for long-term, reliable planning and growth for the future.

- BIPOC growers currently rely on unsustainable financial resources and agreements which creates the need for mediators to negotiate more favorable terms on behalf of growers.

Community & Individuals

Community is focused on the growing community that has shared values and world views of equity, justice and sovereignty. “Individuals” is a call to action for all Chicagoans.

- Pre-existing biases, prejudices, and racist mental models of Black and Brown growers and the food that they grow limit their ability to sell products and reach wider audiences.

- COVID 19 surfaced the disconnections and the silos that exist within the local food system. There is a dire need to build more robust and interconnected grower networks to collaborate and learn from each other.

RETHINKING WHAT IS ‘VALUABLE’

Values drive behaviors and actions, which then drive outcomes. **There is a disconnect between what is valued and invested in by those who control needed resources (environmental, capital, human) and those who seek those resources for more than financial or economic gains.**

The workshops highlighted that our collective thinking about what is ‘valuable’ has to change and expand to reach future visions. The following are values that require rethinking and commitment across the Chicago region food system.

- **Collective well-being vs individual/org benefit**
- **Economic and environmental sustainability vs convenience**
- **Reparative wealth redistribution vs philanthropy**

COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING VS INDIVIDUAL/ ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFIT

Prioritizing food as a conduit to care, physical and psychological safety, and well-being as opposed to only considering financial returns as value and maximizing profit margins.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY VS CONVENIENCE

Protecting the long-term productivity and health of resources to meet future economic and social needs without negatively impacting communities socially, environmentally, or culturally.

REPARATIVE WEALTH REDISTRIBUTION VS PHILANTHROPY

Commitment from the structures of power to listen to communities to identify the ways in which they have been harmed by the system (government, private sector, etc.) and repair the harms through redistribution of capital (money, environmental) and policy changes.

MINDSET AND NARRATIVE SHIFTS

Through this process, we've learned that for BIPOC growers to thrive in an economically and environmentally sustainable food system that values collective well-being and provides necessary resources, the following mindset and narrative shifts need to occur.

From	To	Associated Vision(s)*
Growers' strengths are in growing and supplying food. They don't have any significant broader contributions.	Growers provide immense value to communities and have social, ecological, and health contributions that are often unseen and unmeasured.	Education about value generated through around food production and consumption
Capitalist mindsets, practices, and metrics are the gold standard	Black, Brown, and Indigenous culture, traditions, and ways of being are valued, recognized, invested and integrated.	Circularity and sustainability
Dependence on commercial, large scale, industrialized food systems	Valuing and prioritizing investments in localized, smaller-scale food systems and associated cultures and practices.	Food sovereignty and sustainability
Profit-leading and therefore exploitative to people, environment, animals and local economies	People-leading and therefore centered on care and equity holistically, balancing returns across economic, health, cultural, environmental well-being	Collective Care
BIPOC growers having little to no influence on policies designed for them	Increased BIPOC agency in policy-making/ decision making	Food sovereignty and sustainability
Scarcity mindset	Abundance mindset	Equitable opportunities
Food as a commodity	Food as a tool for equity / Food as a connector	Collective care and Equitable opportunities
Reliance on imported food	Learning to eat what the land provides	Education about food production and consumption

**These visions will be elaborated in detail in the next 'Visions and Principles' section.*

Jeppe Vadgaard // UNSPLASH

Actualizing the Vision

ACTUALIZING THE VISION

PROTOTYPING WORKSHOPS

The last of the three series workshops provided the participants with an opportunity to co-design and build together to address some of what we identified (insights) as most valued and in service to communities facing the most significant food inequities. **The insights generated from community responses in the 'connect' and 'explore' workshops series helped identify the most valuable 'challenge statements' for the participants to address during the prototyping workshops.**

A pre-workshop survey supported by in-session voting provided participants an opportunity to select a primary challenge from a list of **19 themes covering a total of 46 insights.** The participant groups selected 5 themes comprising six insights as their selected challenge statements to serve as a premise for their respective workshops. This process highlighted what is on top of the mind for the community they would like to address first and have the most impact.

IMAGE: *Challenge set up for one of the prototyping workshop with growers and community food advocates groups showing sticky notes as insights under 'challenge prompts'. Voting stars further narrowed the group's focus for the session.*

GOALS AND CHALLENGES

This section highlights how the community sees the selected 6 challenges and what shape or form they choose to analyze (goals). The primary challenge that influences all the other challenges are capitalist modes of production and racism. BIPOC individuals and organizations are delegitimized through misinformation, misinterpretation, disconnection, and disinvestment.

METHODOLOGY NOTE: *the results of the prototype workshops use a tool called Anatomy of Infrastructure. The tool's structure and usage are explained in the appendix.*

Capitalist modes of production and racism pervade the food system, leading to practices, policies, and behaviors detrimental to BIPOC success.

Corporate, Institutional, and governmental stakeholders perpetuate the white supremacy culture inherent in social and capitalist norms, leading to risk-averse behaviors, a lack of transparency, and practices encouraging individualism and protectionism.

Dismantling the control of wealth, land, power which is currently controlled by those with wealth.

Reducing the impact of white supremacy culture on the food system.

Equitable and convenient distribution is hampered by insufficient infrastructure and persisting inequities across systems.

The lack of localized and accessible infrastructure needed to support distribution restricts BIPOC growers from providing hyper-local food to communities.

BIPOC growers have difficulty finding predictable and reliable distributors, because distributors can't accommodate the growers' needs for flexibility and pricing requirements. Therefore, BIPOC growers often store and transport their own products, creating significant strain on them.

Creating hyper local and accessible infrastructure for growers and distributors to provide hyper-local food access for communities

Food Sovereignty

Unclear funding channels and a lack of administrative support pulls growers away from their core competency as growers.

BIPOC and small growers lack the necessary administrative support, which causes them to spend excessive amounts of time seeking funding instead of utilizing their true expertise, growing and managing their farms

BIPOC growers are able to spend their time growing rather than navigating and overcoming administrative and bureaucratic barriers to operate and grow their businesses.

Growers are able to meet and

respond to the dynamic consumer demand for local food.

The lack of inclusion in city decision-making forces growers to navigate unnecessarily burdensome policies and practices on their own.

The current policies and licensing structures are restrictive and cause an undue burden on small scale growers and/or entrepreneurs.

Clear urban agriculture licensing process.

Access to land, water, and capital.

Policy that values and is created by BIPOC growers

Growers aren't recognized for their immense value; beyond supplying food.

Growers are not recognized or rewarded for their unseen strengths; non-financial, oft-unmeasured social, ecological, and health contributions they provide to local communities, as financial utility is the central metric by which value is measured and appreciated.

Demonstrate the power of collective stewardship to shift narrative.

Insight Theme

Insight framed as challenge statements

Goals (identified through in-workshop discussion)

LEARNING FROM PROTOTYPES: ANATOMY OF INFRASTRUCTURES

To critically analyze the discussion, visioning, prototyping, and concepting done by participants in the prototype workshop series, we adapted the tool 'anatomy of infrastructure' to learn from the prototypes created by the participants in the workshops with growers and community food advocates, and youth. The Anatomy of Infrastructure is a tool that designers use to understand and communicate complex concepts. It is a tool which combines principles of multi-level systems mapping with the POEMS/AEIOU* design framework. POEMS and AEIOU are frameworks that were used in the workshop to help the young people expand their ideas. It illustrates:

1

Goals. The primary goals the participants sought to address through prototyping and concepting. The initial challenge, participants' vision of the future, and the arch of the conversation informed the goals.

2

Impact. The impacts that can be created given the primary goal. They were driven by participants' vision of the future and informed by the affordances and the features identified through the POEMS/AEIOU-G framework.

3

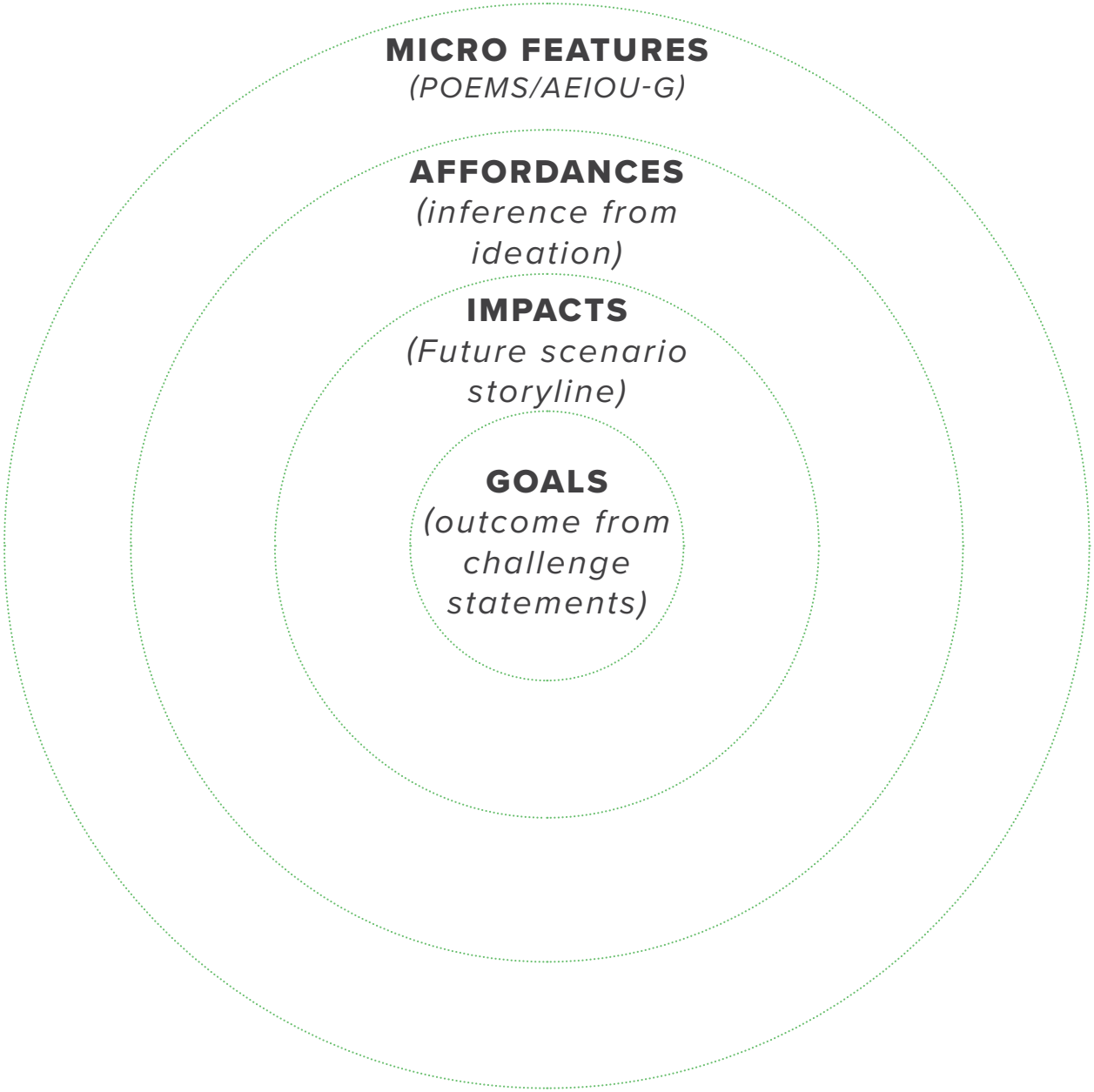
Affordances. The actionable properties that need to be created/afforded to reach the identified impacts and goals. Affordances are specific capabilities that a user is enabled to do. (identified through the POEMS/AEIOU-G framework).

4

Features. The resources identified through POEMS/AEIOU-G drive enablement of the identified affordances in order to achieve the identified impacts.

*POEMS: People, Objects, Environments, Messages, and Services
*AEIOU-G: Activities, Environments, Interactions, Objects, Users- Governance

This tool follows the subsequent logic: the goals of man-made infrastructures (center of the diagram) determine the intended and unintended impacts that individuals and organizations create in the broader context in which they exist when they mobilize different resources. These impacts are determined by the possible actions that users can take given the offerings available (outer circles), thereby suggesting how individuals and organizations may use or leverage them through their activities. The correlation between offerings, affordances, impacts, and goals is helpful to understand the current relationships within the hard and soft dimensions of the infrastructure being analyzed, and how these four elements can be integrated into new system interventions.*



This tool can be used to

1. Learn from prototypes, concepts, and associated ideas created by the participants

2. Spark the development of concepts that align with workshop participants' goals, impacts, and affordances.

3. Prompts questions and ideation to build on what's needed and identified through the workshops to reach the identified goal.

*Nogueira, André; Ashton, Weslynne; Teixeira, Carlos; Lyon, Elizabeth; Pereira, Jonathan. 2020. "Infrastructuring the Circular Economy" Energies 13, no. 7: 1805. https://doi.org/10.3390/en13071805

LEARNING FROM PROTOTYPES: ANATOMY OF INFRASTRUCTURES

(created in prototyping workshop with growers and community food advocates)

As the participants selected six challenges to address, the workshop series ended with six prototypes. The following section elaborates on each challenge on the anatomy of infrastructure.

1

THEME

Equitable and convenient distribution is hampered by insufficient infrastructure and persisting inequities across systems.

GOAL

Creating hyper-local and accessible infrastructure for growers and distributors to provide hyper-local food access for communities.

The ideal future consists of creating a thriving ecological economy by activating open land, unattended and agile spaces within BIPOC communities to increase local food production, meet the dynamic needs of the growers and value-added food producers to adhere to the necessities of the communities. The goals, impacts, and affordances were driven and informed by the thoughts and ideas offered to address this challenge.

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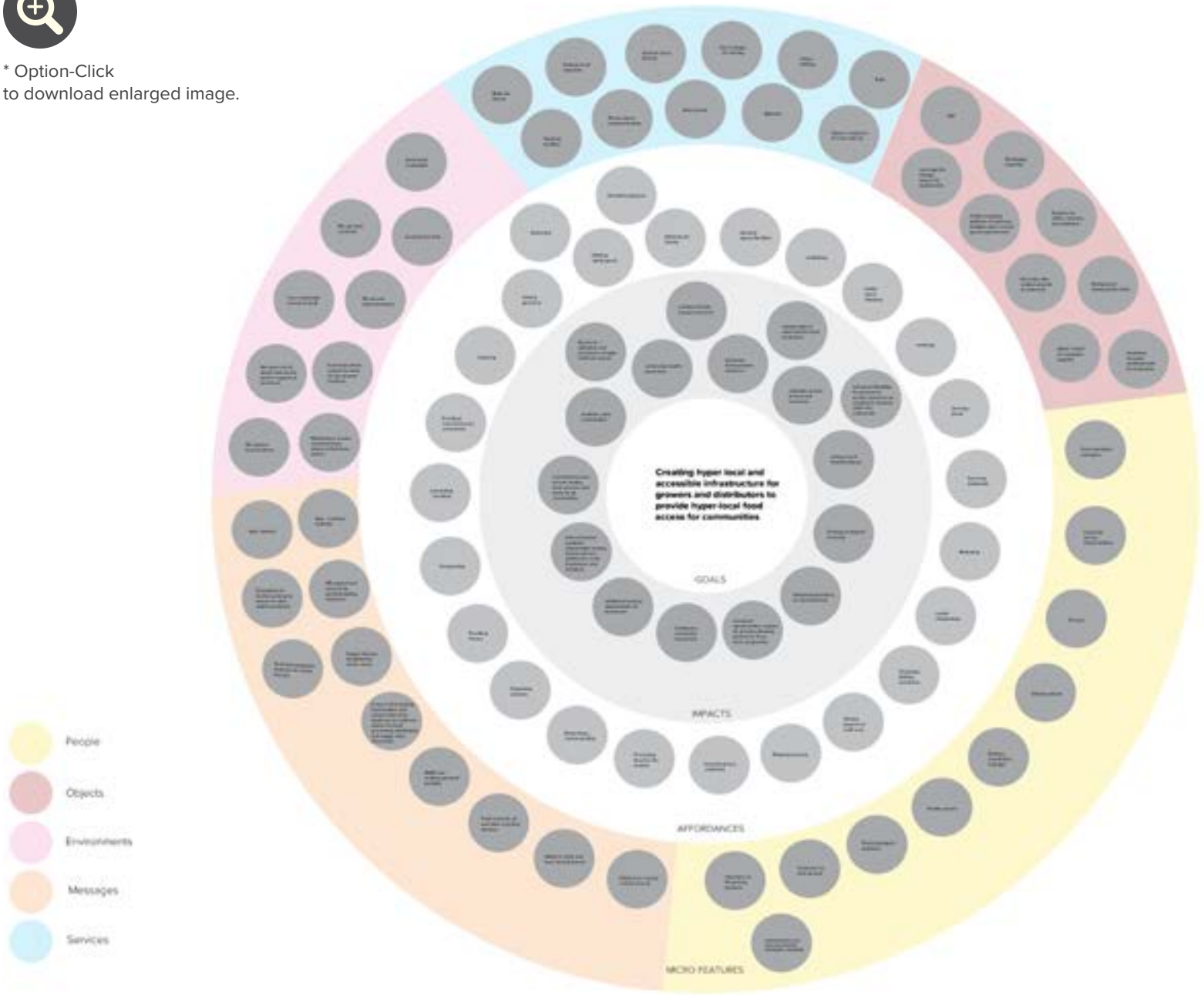

EXAMPLE // LEARNING FROM PROTOTYPE. This diagram depicts how the different affordances and micro features might come together to achieve the selected impact while addressing the challenge.

GOAL

Creating hyper local and accessible infrastructure for growers and distributors to provide hyper-local food access for communities

Selected impact. Access to /utilization and prevalence of agile, multi-use spaces

The **black circles** highlight the connected affordances and micro features that might be utilized to achieve the highlighted impact (access to /utilization and prevalence of agile, multi-use spaces)

The **grey circles** show the supporting impacts that would be created while aiming to achieve the main impact.

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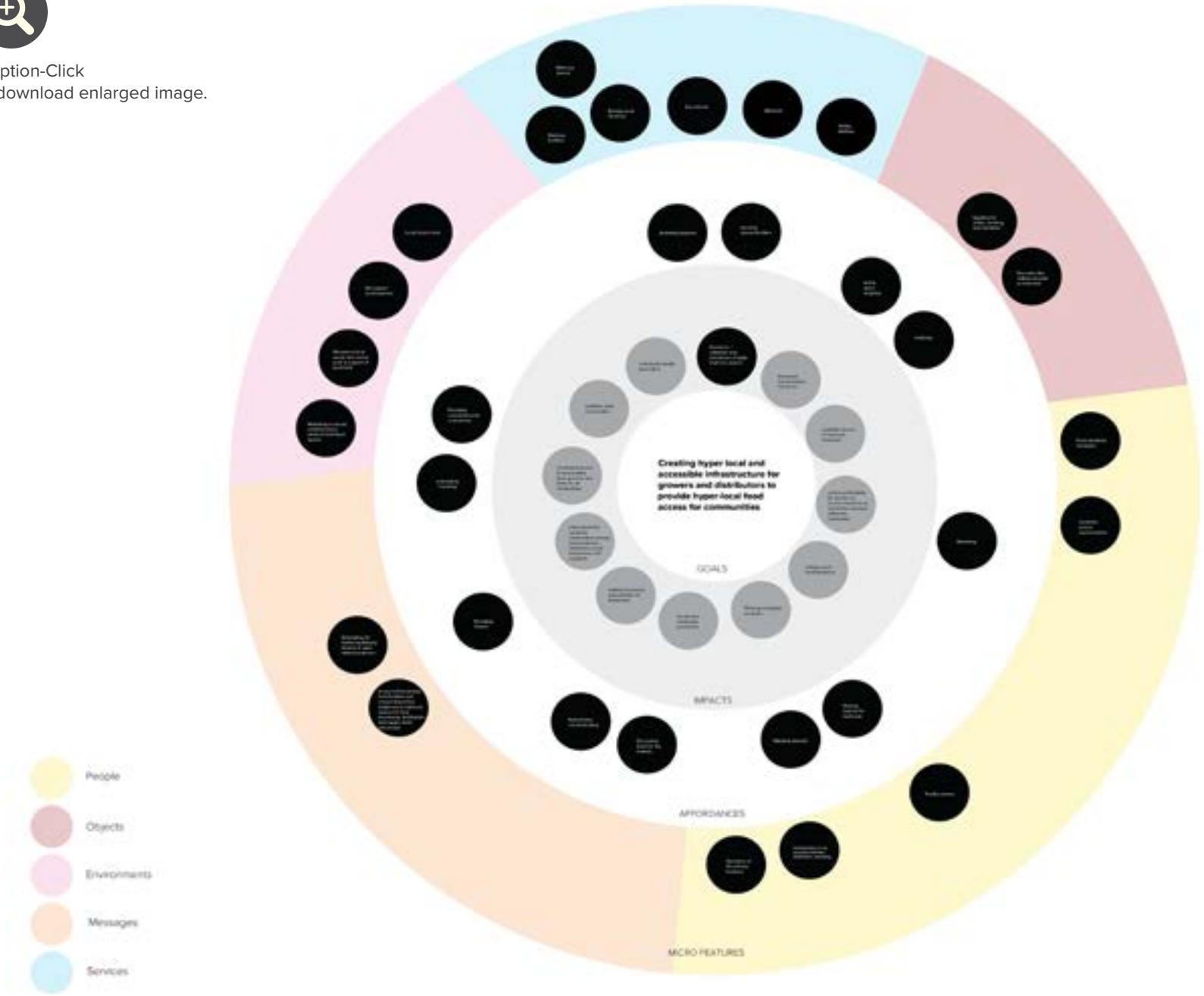

2

THEME

Capitalist modes of production and racism pervade the food system, leading to practices, policies, and behaviors detrimental to BIPOC success.

CHALLENGE

Corporate, Institutional, and governmental stakeholders perpetuate the racist culture inherent in social and capitalist norms, leading to risk-averse behaviors, a lack of transparency, and practices encouraging individualism and protectionism.

GOAL

While addressing this overarching challenge, the group narrowed their approach to focus on the below two aspects:

Dismantling the control of wealth, land, power, which is currently controlled by those with wealth.

Reducing the impact of racist culture on the food system.

The ideal future comprises the dismantling of structural racism, inequality, pre-existing biases, prejudices, and racist mental models of Black and Brown growers. Communities will not be denied resources because of race and ethnicity, and their expert voices are drivers of decision-making aiming to build community wealth. The goals, impacts, and affordances were driven and informed by the thoughts and ideas offered to address this challenge.

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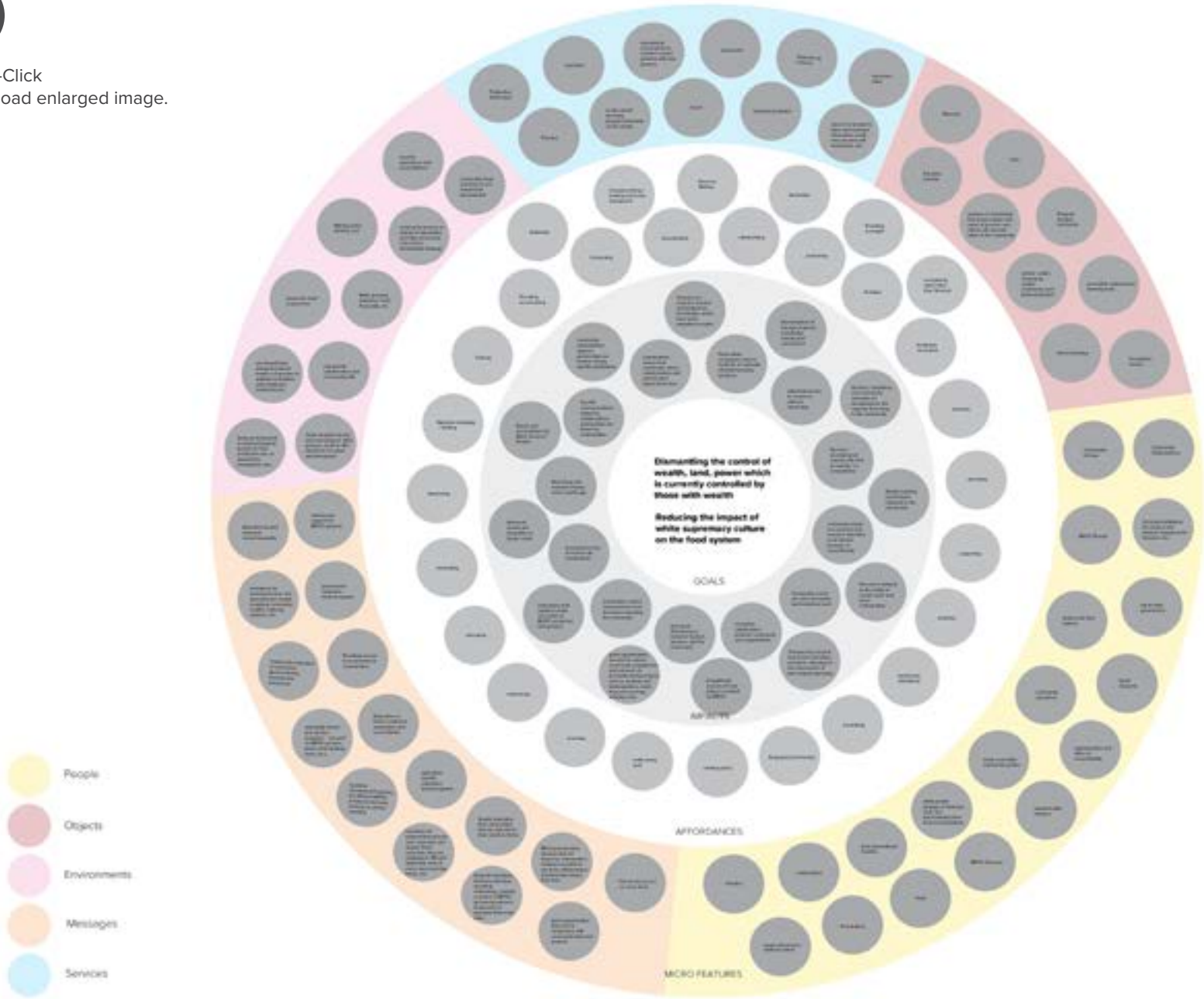

3

THEME

Equitable and convenient distribution is hampered by insufficient infrastructure and persisting inequities across systems.

CHALLENGE

BIPOC growers have difficulty finding predictable and reliable distributors because distributors can't accommodate the growers' needs for flexibility and pricing requirements. Therefore, BIPOC growers often store and transport their own products, creating significant strain on them.

GOAL

Achieve food sovereignty

Forced self-reliance and the growers' 'do it myself' initiative and drive. The ideal future comprises of having coordination, aggregation, and intelligence of creating connections between BIPOC growers and distributors collectively, which aims to solve the strain placed on growers due to the difficulty of working on their own to get products to consumers for BIPOC growers in order to achieve Food Sovereignty - diverse participation and ownership of steps along the food chain (growers, distributors)

The goals, impacts, and affordances were driven and informed by the thoughts and ideas offered to address this challenge.

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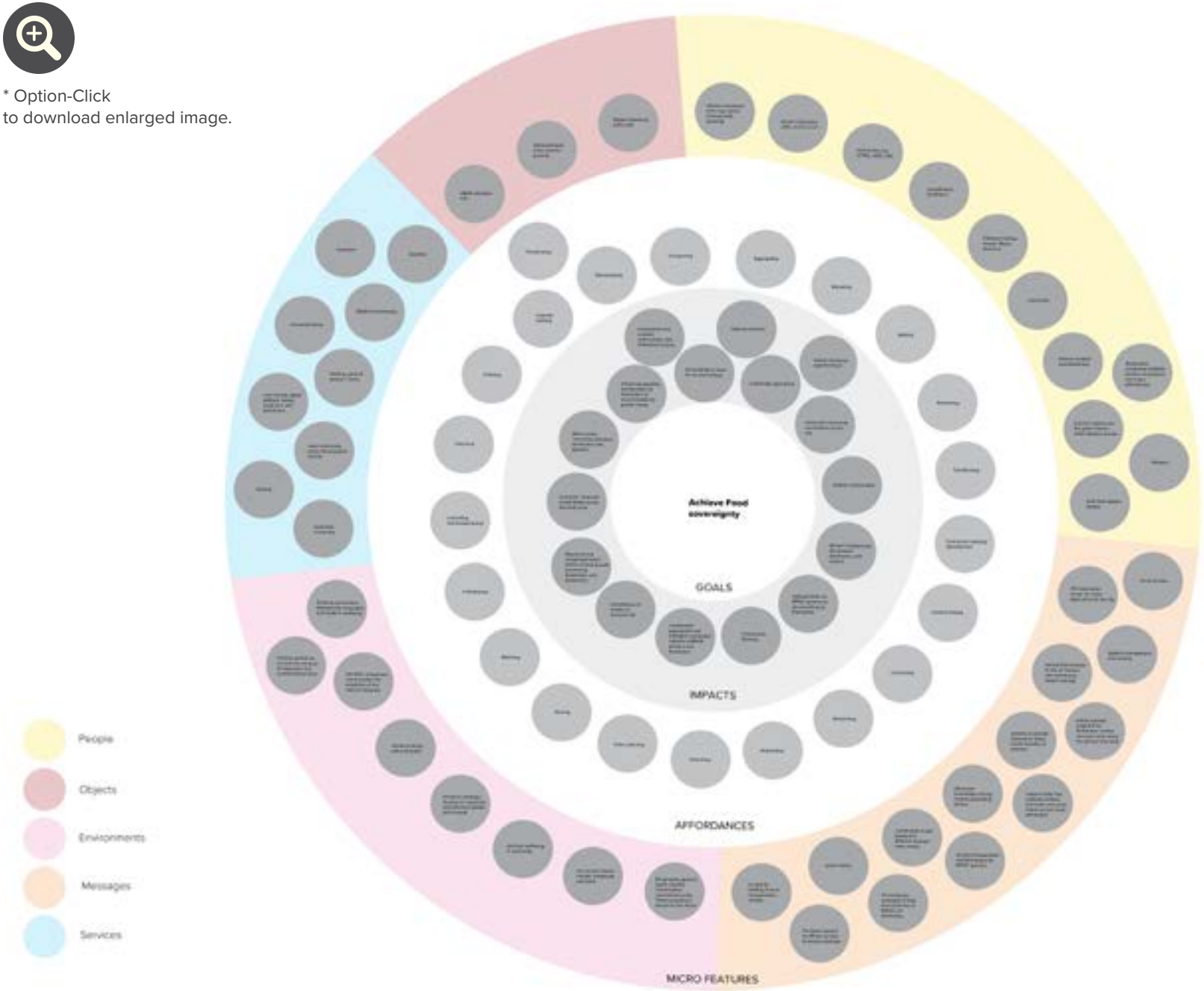

4

THEME

Unclear funding channels and a lack of administrative support pulls growers away from their core competency as growers.

CHALLENGE

BIPOC and small growers lack the necessary administrative support, which causes them to spend excessive amounts of time seeking funding instead of utilizing their true expertise, growing, and managing their farms.

GOAL

BIPOC growers are able to spend their time growing rather than navigating and overcoming administrative and bureaucratic barriers to operate and grow their businesses.

Growers are able to meet and respond to the dynamic consumer demand for local food.

Most growers spend large amounts of time hunting for subsidies (financial support, grants, etc.) instead of utilizing their time and energy for growing. Unnecessary administrative obstacles and bureaucratic policies limit BIPOC growers from operating their businesses. The ideal future comprises streamlining and automation of processes supported by the city/municipality for accessing/ turning on water/electricity, conditional licensing/business registration fees, and supporting building their businesses from the ground up. The goals, impacts, and affordances were driven and informed by the thoughts and ideas offered to address this challenge.

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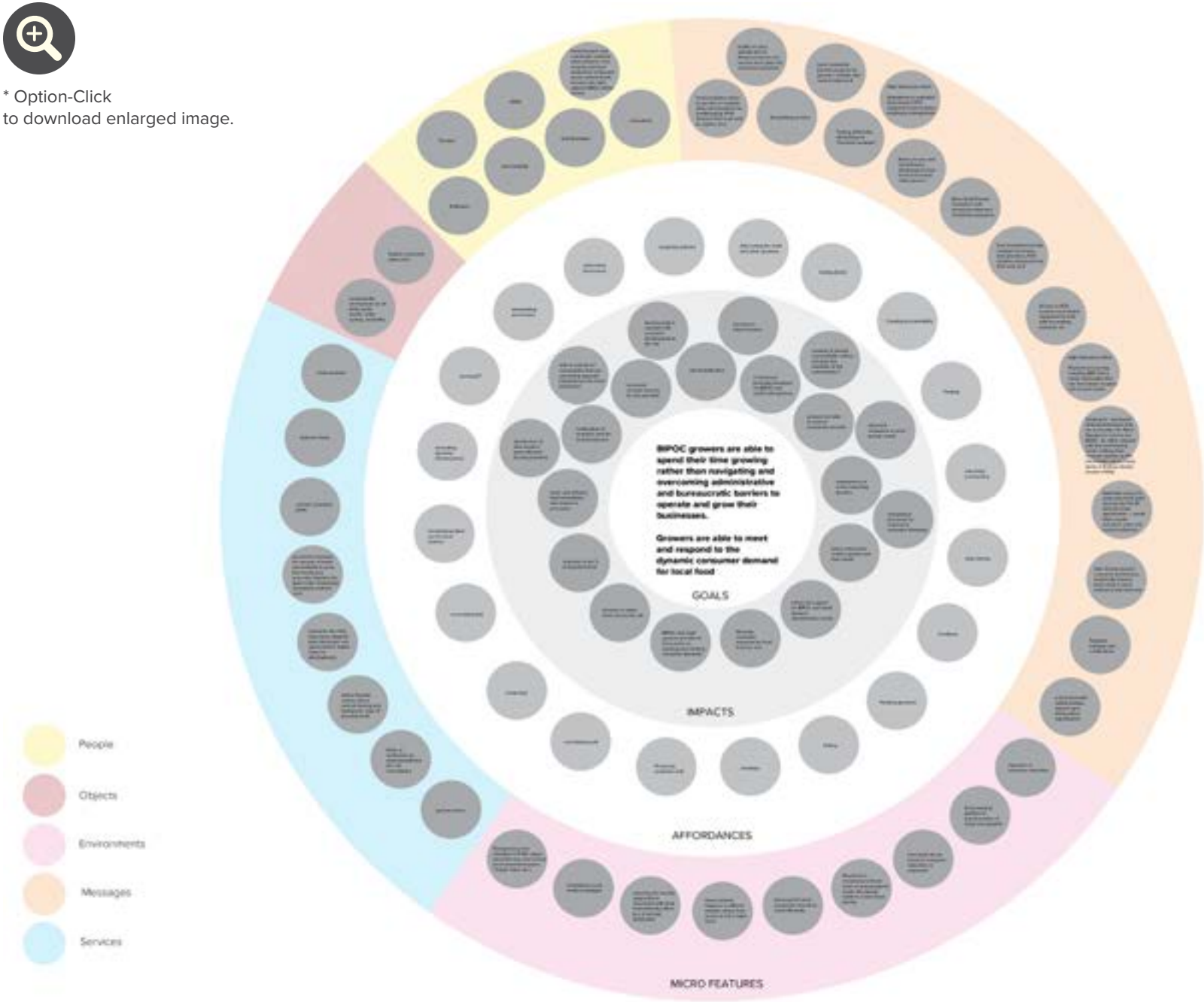

5

THEME

The lack of inclusion in city decision-making forces growers to navigate unnecessarily burdensome policies and practices on their own.

CHALLENGE

The current policies and licensing structures are restrictive and cause an undue burden on small-scale growers and/or entrepreneurs.

GOAL

Clear urban agriculture licensing process

Policy that values and is created by BIPOC growers

Access to land, water, and capital

The ideal future comprises a clearly identified urban agriculture licensing process which aims to solve confusion and unnecessary restrictions for BIPOC and urban growers in order to access land, water, and capital. Community voices are seen as experts and have agency to drive policies, structures and processes that solve for the needs of the communities.

The goals, impacts, and affordances were driven and informed by the thoughts and ideas offered to address this challenge.

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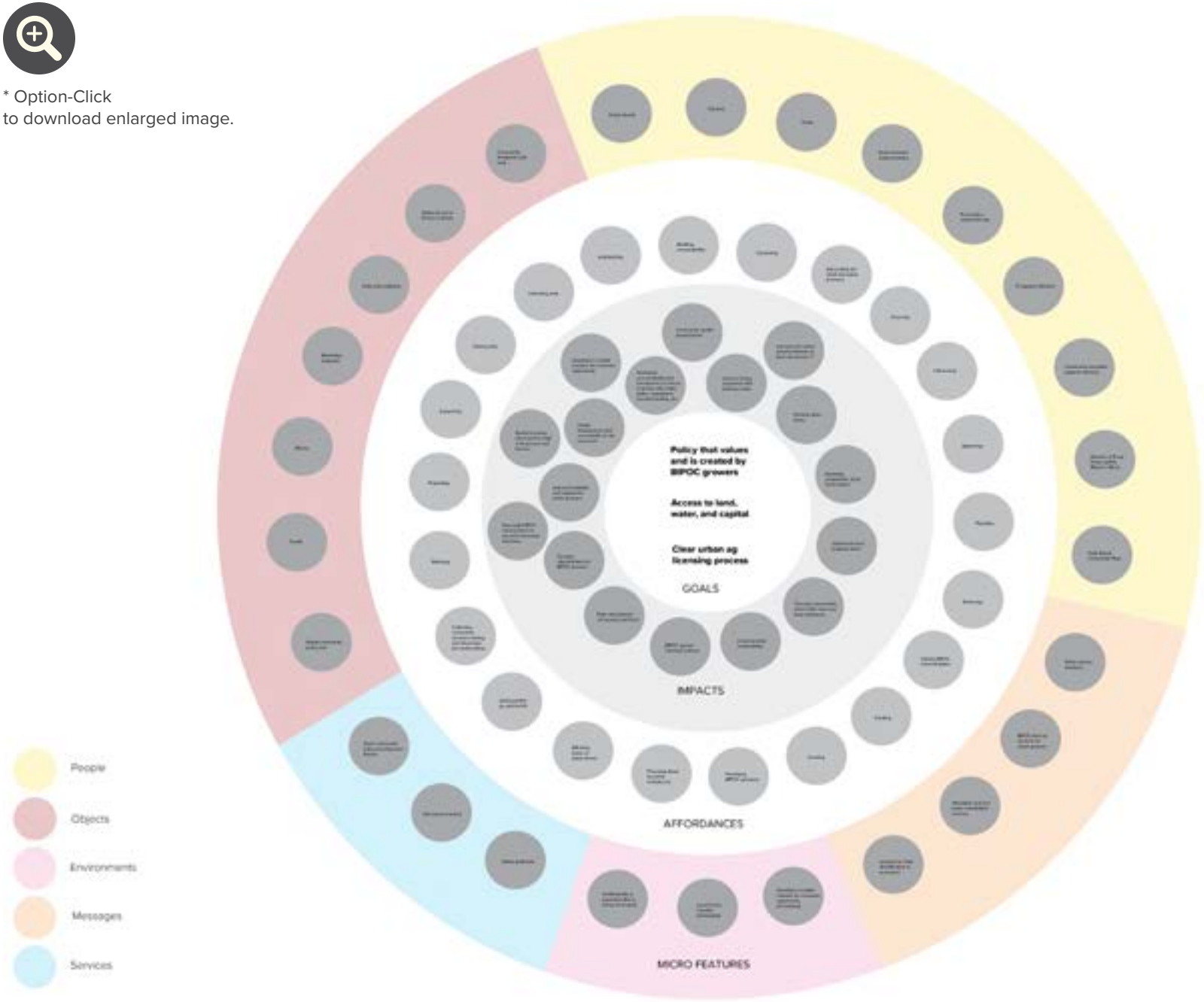

6

THEME

Growers aren't recognized for their immense value; beyond supplying food.

CHALLENGE

Growers are not recognized or rewarded for their unseen strengths; non-financial, oft-unmeasured social, ecological, and health contributions they provide to local communities, as financial utility is the central metric by which value is measured and appreciated.

GOAL

Demonstrate the power of collective stewardship to shift narratives.

This future action aims for a mindset and narrative shift to solve the racial wealth and health gap, lack of sovereignty in BIPOC communities, lack of bargaining power as an entity to negotiate, and the need to develop collective skill-building.

The goals, impacts, and affordances were driven and informed by the thoughts and ideas offered to address this challenge.

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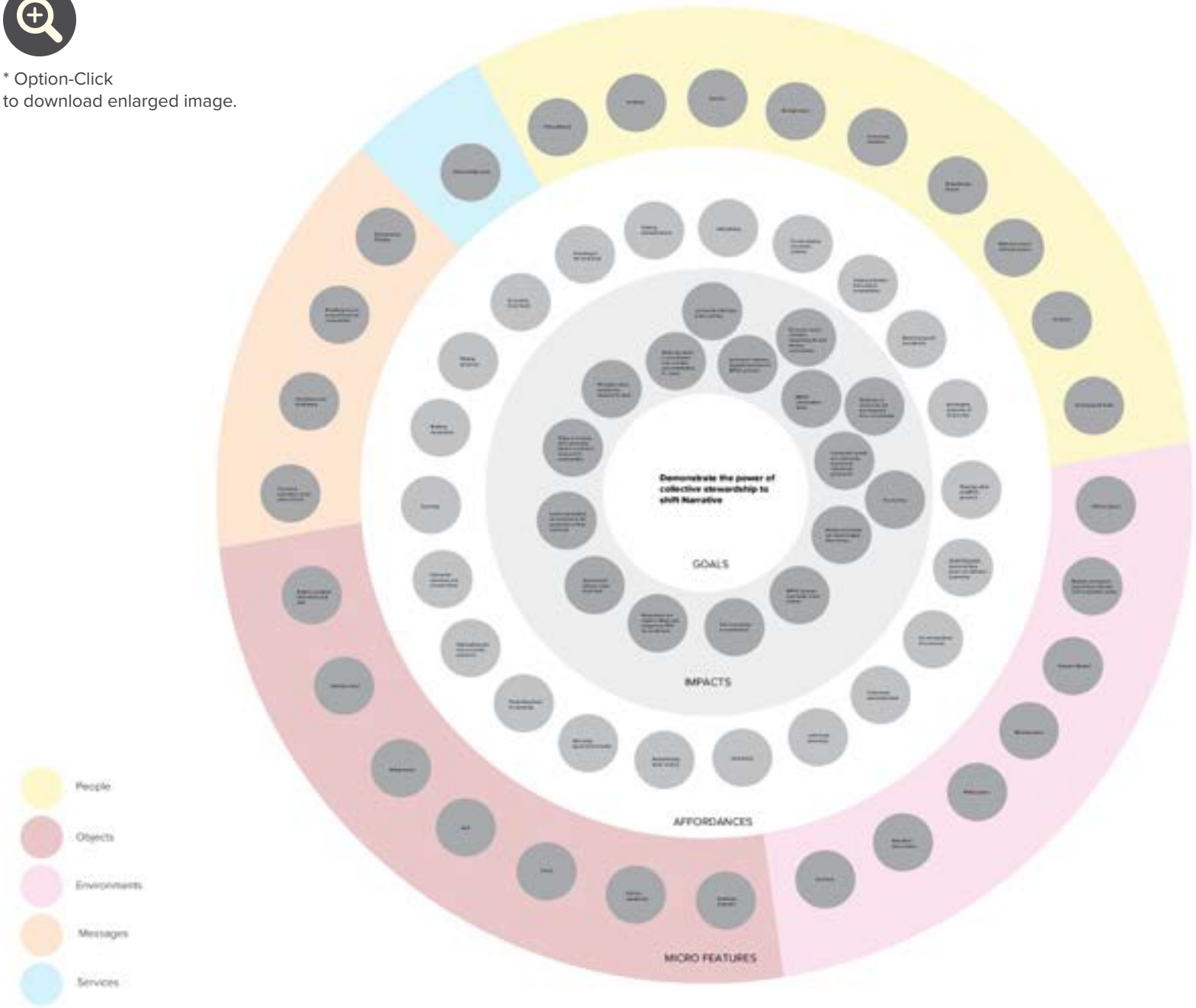


LEARNING FROM PROTOTYPES: YOUTH WORKSHOPS

In partnership with a Farm Training Program, the team engaged youth to contribute their valuable perspective to shape the project. This work includes Black and Brown growers who will engage with and lead a more equitable food system in the near future. We adapted a 'Youth Food Bill of Rights' created by students in an existing farm training program as design principles to ground the conversations as we envisioned a 'new Chicago.' Youth were brought together to:

VISION

Align and articulate goals, values, and vision of the Chicago region food system to

Elevate the desires, needs, and creativity of youth stakeholders; and

Imagine new futures based on principles identified by youth.

PROTOTYPE

Critique and build prototypes created by the youth stakeholders based on ideas from the first session and

Provide feedback and add new insights to the 'Navigator' project based on the prototypes created from a youth perspective; and

Test the desirability and feasibility of the concepts and prototypes created by the youth in the first session.

1. *We have the right to healthy, unprocessed, more appealing food in schools.*
2. *We have the right to ask for fresh fruits and vegetables.*
3. *We have the right to have more options when it comes to produce no matter where we live.*

1. *We have the right to produce and sell our own food*
2. *We have the right to distribute our products and knowledge to others*

1. *We have the right to access to grocery stores in all communities.*
2. *We have the right to safe communities.*
3. *We have the right to easier transportation for healthy food.*
4. *We have the right to not go hungry.*

1. *We have the right to demand good working conditions in food production factories.*
2. *We have the right to hold companies accountable for providing inadequate food products. (Transparency)*

1. *We have the right to demand clean water.*
2. *We have the right to the land as we see best fit.*

1. *We have the right to know how our food is made and where it comes from.*
2. *We have the right to get updates on what is happening in the food chain.*
3. *We have the right to know that our recycling is actually being recycled/reused.*

Design Principles listing the Food Bill of Rights

To further the thinking, we prompted questions (detailed below) based on the AEIOU+G (Activities, Environments, Interactions, Objects, Users + Governance) framework to support detailed thinking for actualizing the vision.

A	E	I	O	U	G
Activities	**Environments**	**Interactions**	**Objects**	**Users**	**Governance**
What are the actions/ activities happening?	Describe the space(s) where the activities and interactions are happening?	What are the interactions between people, people with objects and environments?	What things or objects exist in this space? Why? How are they used?	Who are the primary users?	How are decisions made? Who controls it?

The Anatomy of Infrastructure tool details the concepts, elaborating on different components for the defined goals to be actualized. It highlights what activities, environments, interactions, objects, users and governance make the reimagined vision; affordance that would need to be activated to bring this vision to life, and the various impacts this goal/vision could have on the broader food ecosystem and communities in general.

Marco Antonio Victorino // PEXELS

1

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Accountability for labor conditions and food quality

We have the right to demand good working conditions in food production factories.

We have the right to hold companies accountable for providing inadequate food products. (Transparency)

Access to fundamental natural resources

We have the right to demand clean water.

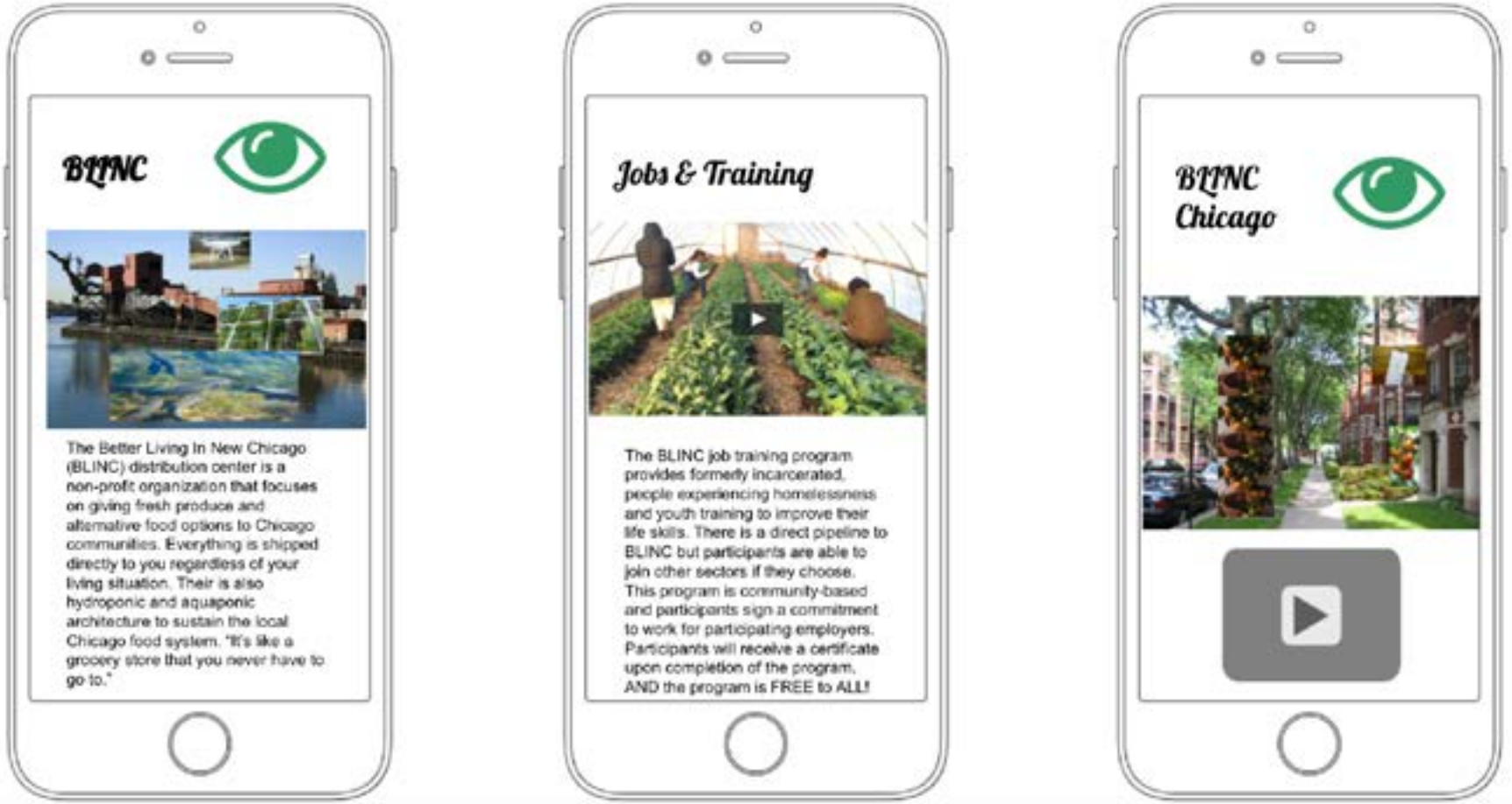
We have the right to the land.

Visioning of the ‘new Chicago’ through images and text, visualizing how their assigned principles might contribute to a more accessible, inclusive, and thriving food system.

The prevailing components/concepts of this vision were:

1. Reutilizing front yard spaces, open garden spaces and vacant lots in neighborhoods to promote food production and free public utilization
2. Establishing a “hub” to provide convenience, quality, accessibility of food to residents who otherwise don’t have access (homeless, some youth, recently incarcerated and released)
3. Green industry sites to support job training opportunities for community members, youth, felons/ released from incarceration
4. Increase of non-traditional growing practices for water purification and use of vertical spaces for agriculture
5. Increased use of plant-based products

Lack of fresh produce and pathways to employment for returning citizens, youth, and people experiencing homelessness is a challenge. The group, thus, collectively focused on “Green industry sites to support job training opportunities for community members, youth, felons/ released from incarceration” as a concept to prototype.



Participants using Instagram stories to launch this new vision of the city they created as a part of social media campaign.

GOAL

Creating green industry sites to support job training opportunities for community members, youth, felons/ released from incarceration.

CONCEPT

Better Living in New Chicago

The Better Living In New Chicago (BLINC) distribution center is a non-profit organization that focuses on giving fresh produce and alternative food options to Chicago communities. Everything is shipped directly to you regardless of your living situation. It also supports hydroponic and aquaponic architecture to sustain the local Chicago food system. “It’s like a grocery store that you never have to go to.”

The BLINC job training program provides formerly incarcerated, people experiencing homelessness and youth training to improve their life skills. There is a direct pipeline to BLINC, but participants can join other sectors if they choose. This program is community-based, and participants sign a commitment to work for participating employers. Participants will receive a certificate upon completion of the program. AND the program is FREE to ALL!

The concept is detailed through the Anatomy of Infrastructure diagram elaborating on different components, if the goal of establishing a BLINC distribution center were to be actualized.

Storyboard created by the participants to visualize the experience of the concept at different stages.

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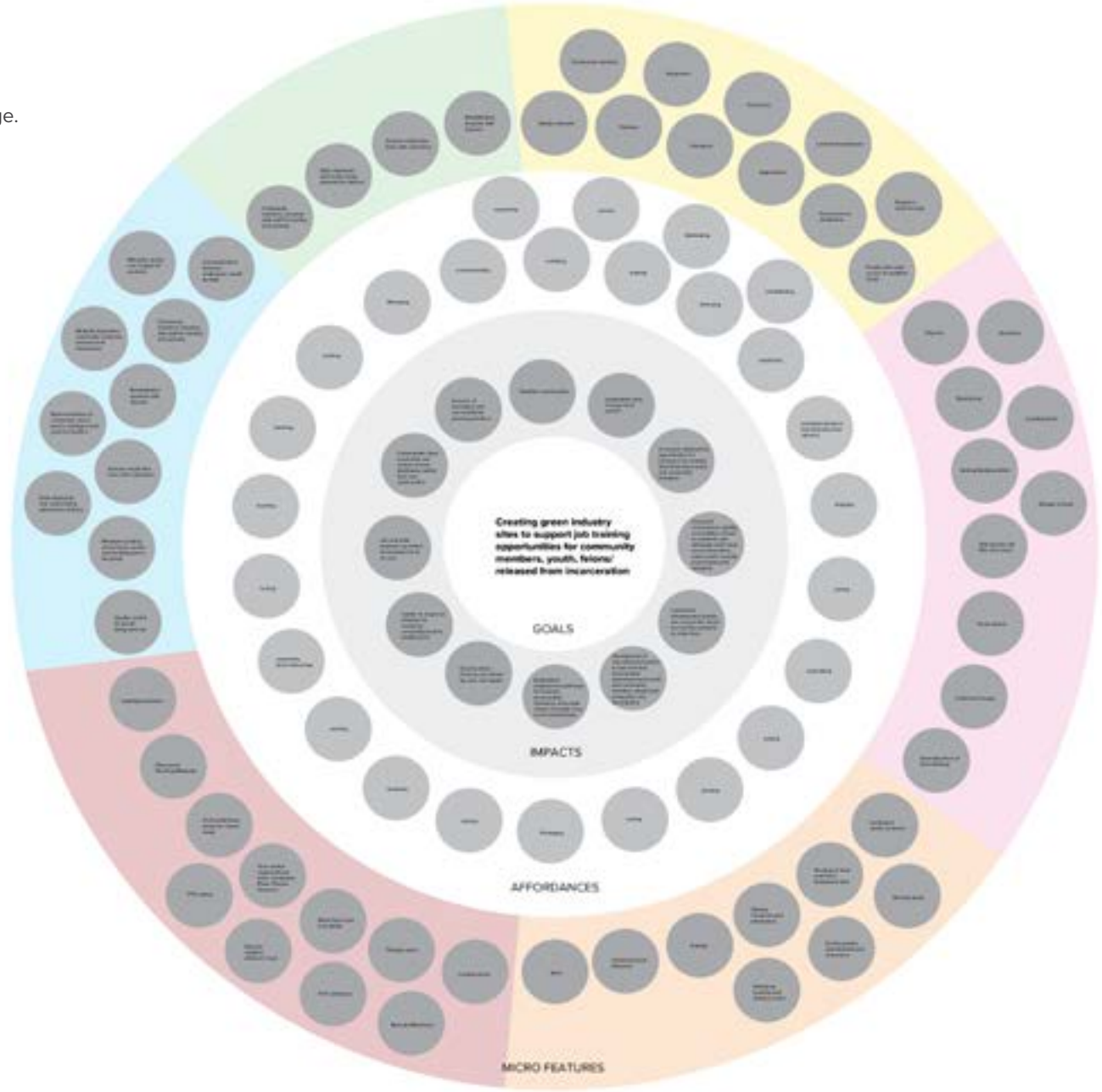

2

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Availability of healthy / natural food

We have the right to healthy, unprocessed, more appealing food in schools.

We have the right to ask for fresh fruits and vegetables.

We have the right to have more options when it comes to produce no matter where we live.

Transparent and traceable information across the food system

We have the right to know how our food is made and where it comes from.

We have the right to get updates on what is happening in the food chain.

We have the right to know that our recycling is actually being recycled/reused.

The prevailing components/concepts of this vision were:

1. Repurposing abandoned and vacant lots/warehouses for food production and distribution to increase access to healthy and local food
2. Creating abundant clean energy resources and generating more energy through waste within the city (circular infrastructure)
3. Community-supported growing and animal agriculture practices in neighborhoods
4. Building community wealth through alternative revenue sources
5. Government. transparency to enhance food literacy
6. Increase of non-traditional growing practices

Visioning of the ‘new Chicago’ through images and text, visualizing how their assigned principles might contribute to a more accessible, inclusive, and thriving food system.

GOAL

Creating an abundance of clean energy resources and generating more energy through waste within the city (circular infrastructure)

CONCEPT

GREEnergy

GREEnergy is all about creating clean energy resources for the communities within the communities to create increased autonomy and sustainability.

This concept includes building a waste-to-energy facility in the city or closer to the neighborhood to create abundant energy through varied trash sources- household, commercial waste. Infrastructures will be set up in the city to collect trash directly from homes and from across the city; while also motivating people to bring trash directly to the unit. All communities will have equitable access to resources to better manage waste in their communities and neighborhoods.

Along with the facility, integrated solutions like solar panels and wind turbines are set up across the city to convert renewable resources to clean energy for the communities and neighborhoods.

Participants using Instagram stories to launch this new vision of the city they created as a part of social media campaign.

During the discussion, one of the points highlighted the challenge of how inadequate and inequitable waste management across the city contributes to creating unsustainable environments. Thus, the group collectively focused on that challenge to prototype for "Creating an abundance of clean energy resources and generating more energy through waste within the city (circular infrastructure).

Storyboard created by the participants to visualize the experience of the concept at different stages.

The Anatomy of Infrastructure details the concept, elaborating on different components of establishing a waste-to-energy facility.

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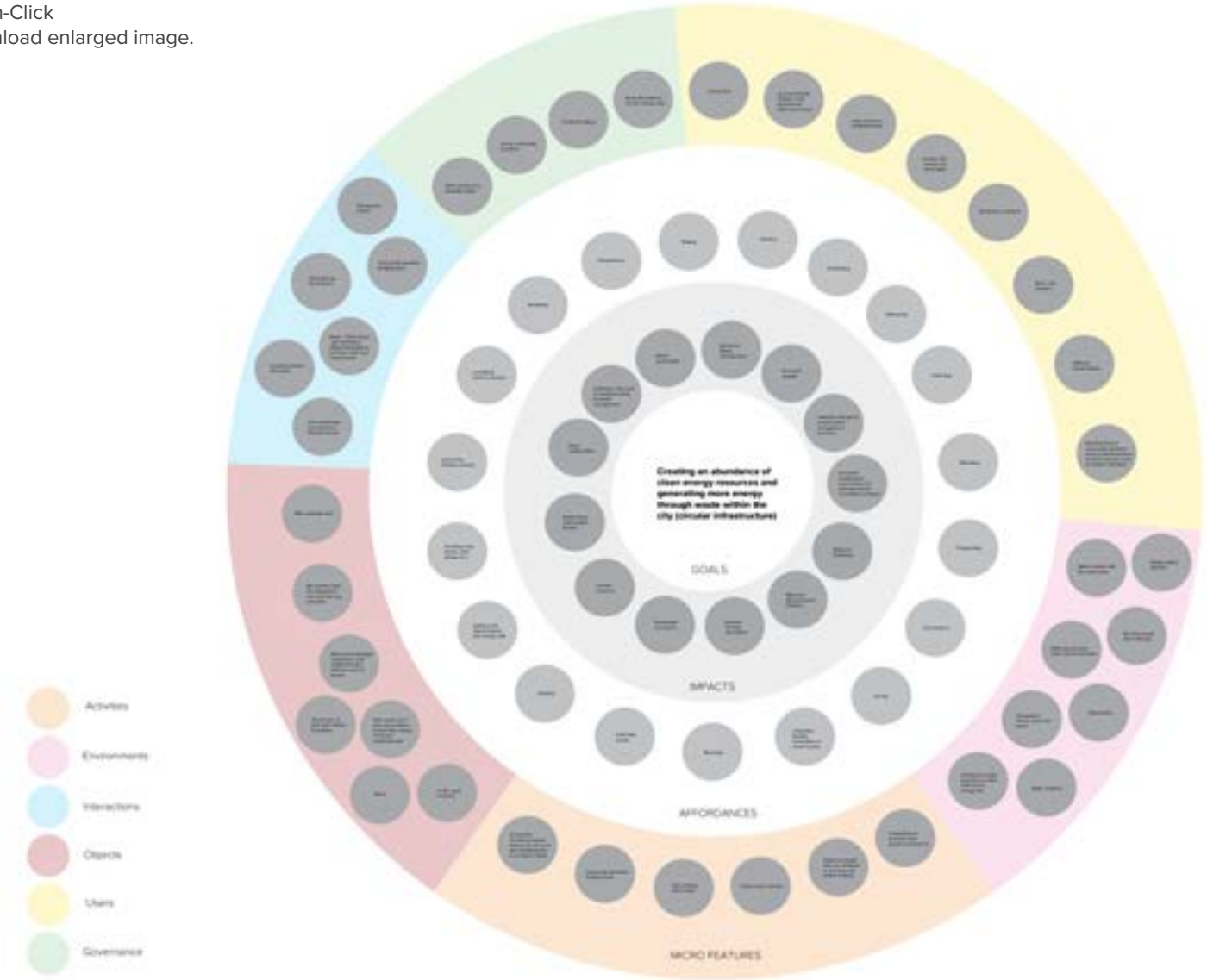


3

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Opportunities to own and control the growth and distribution of food and knowledge

We have the right to produce and sell our own food.

We have the right to distribute our products and knowledge to others.

Equitable and convenient food access for communities

We have the right to access to grocery stores in all communities.

We have the right to safe communities.

We have the right to easier transportation for healthy food.

We have the right to not go hungry.

Visioning of the 'new Chicago' through images and text, visualizing how their assigned principles might contribute to a more accessible, inclusive, and thriving food system.

The prevailing components/concepts of this vision were:

1. Utilizing parks as community hubs to grow and spread knowledge and food.
2. Providing equitable and convenient produce delivery for our communities.
3. Converting corners and corner stores to community markets.
4. Connecting food and people through environmentally safe modes of transport.
5. Utilizing parks to provide convenient, accessible, and affordable food to communities.

To address the challenge of lack of access to affordable food and knowledge around growing to all communities, the group collectively prototyped for “Utilizing parks as community hubs to grow and spread knowledge and food and provide convenient, accessible, and affordable food to communities.

Participants using Instagram stories to launch this new vision of the city they created as a part of a social media campaign.

GOAL

Utilizing parks as community hubs to grow and spread knowledge and food and provide convenient, accessible, and affordable food to communities.

CONCEPT

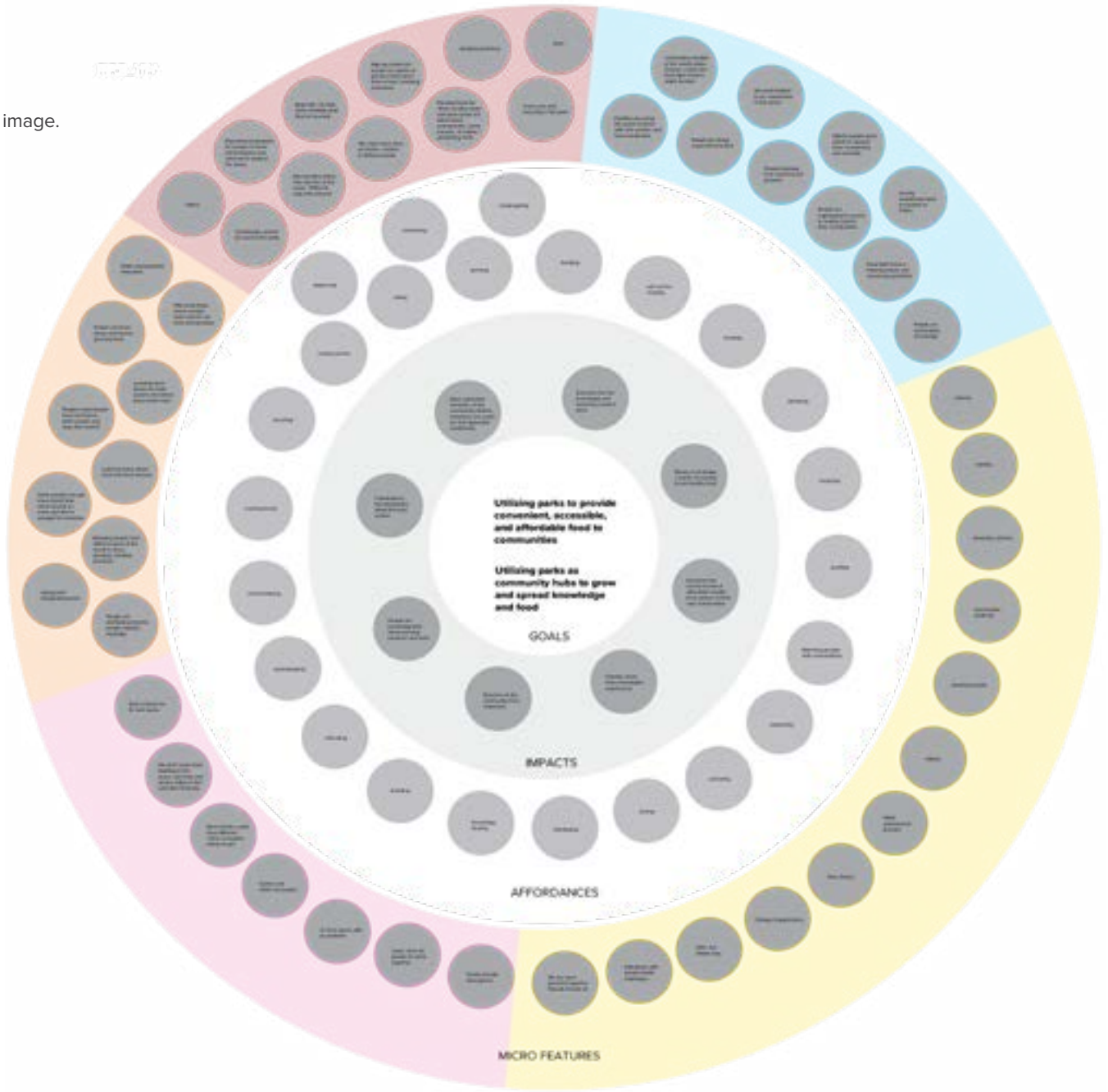
Food Fight

Food Fight is an organization or movement that repurposes parks and open green spaces in communities across Chicago to be spaces where people can receive healthy food, knowledge about growing, and associated tools irrespective of financial circumstance. These new spaces would create welcoming environments where everyone in the community feels cared for and respected. Food Fight facilitates exchanging ideas, cultures, knowledge of growing practice, and tools people can use to develop their growing skills outside Food Fight spaces.

Food Fight is controlled and operated by an intergenerational group of experienced growers and young people. Relevant experience and not age drive decision-making, and young people have opportunities to grow and gain life skills.

The Anatomy of Infrastructure details the concept, elaborating on different components for establishing an organization or movement to repurpose open green spaces to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills.

* Option-Click
to download enlarged image.



AFFORDANCES TO STRATEGIES

The goals the growers, community food advocates and youth participants worked on during prototyping workshops highlighted many actional properties (affordances) that the individual/organization would need to afford to achieve the impact the goals aim to achieve. The identified impacts and features (identified through the POEMS/AEIOU-G framework) informed these affordances.

The below are the most highlighted affordances (noted in more than 6 of 9 anatomies of infrastructure) and can be further developed as strategies.

- **Acknowledging the value of BIPOC growers and prioritizing their needs**
- **Equitable distribution of resources and collective governance**
- **Networking/communicating/connecting**
- **Education and training**

The next set of affordances highlighted (4-6 times out of 9 anatomies of infrastructures) are:

- **Data collection, knowledge sharing, informing**
- **Transparency/accountability**
- **Sustainable practices/circular model of development**
- **Funding/fundraising**
- **Investing**
- **Marketing and promoting**

Note: the above set of affordances are specific to the goal that the concept aims to achieve, its impact, and its features. They are broad categorizations across a number of goals and highlight common actionable properties.

Ricardo Iv Tamayo // PEXELS

IDENTIFIED IMPACTS

The anatomy of infrastructure based on the goals and challenges elaborated in the appendix (and more in the detailed report that follows this summary) highlighted various direct and indirect impacts that communities want to achieve to create a future vision of an equitable, accessible, inclusive, and thriving Chicago food system.

While impacts span the individual, interpersonal, community, and policy levels, the majority of the impacts the participants identified were at the community and policy levels, reinforcing the need for collective and systems-level interventions to the problems they're seeing and facing.

The diagram represents impacts with an overlay of challenges identified and addressed during the workshops on the socio-ecological model. The overlay highlights the interrelation of an impact with various challenges.

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** In the diagram, the impact themes are color-coded to represent the frequency of reappearance across the workshops. This method provided a way to gauge what themes the community cares about or are top of mind.*

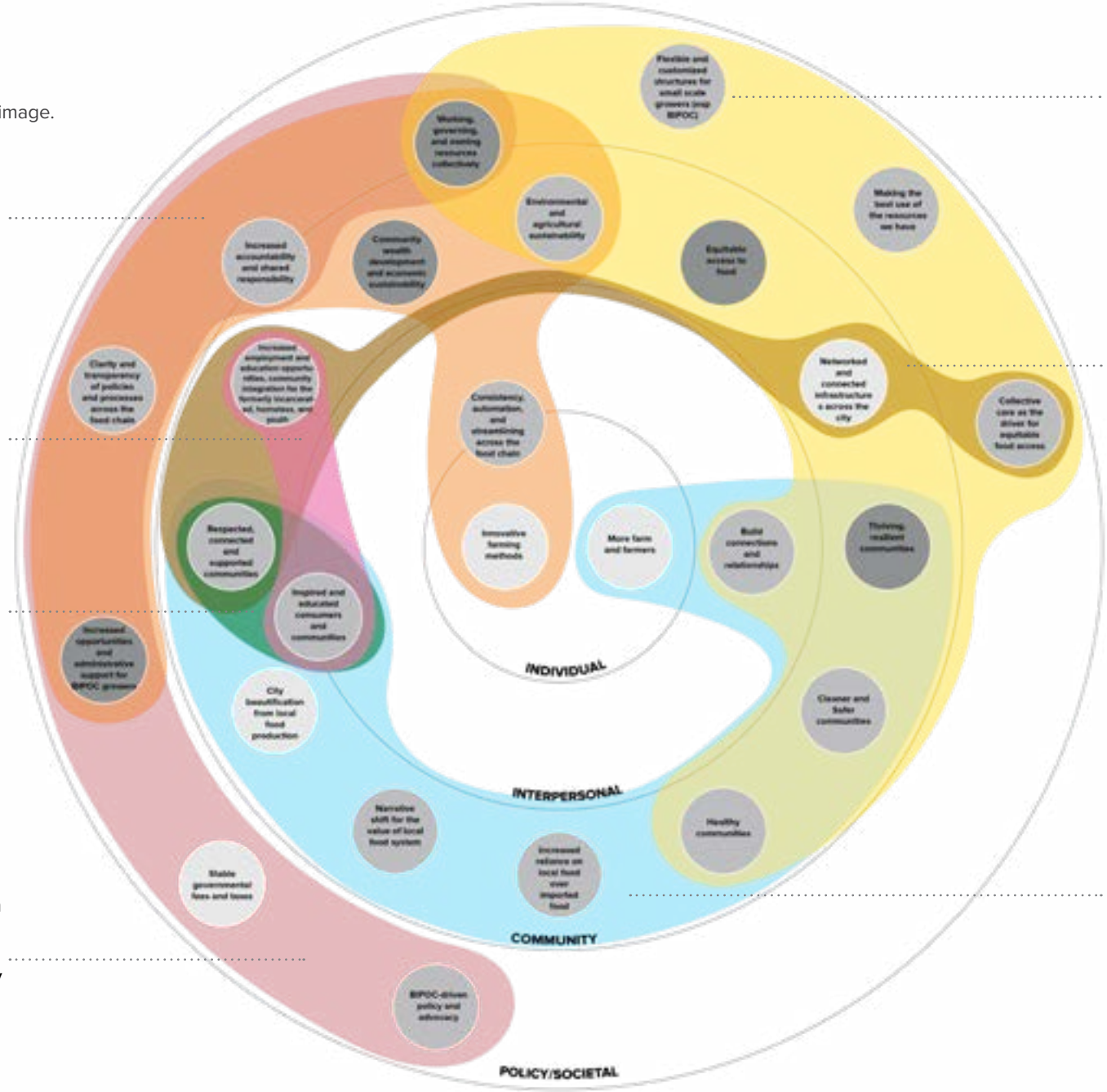
* Option-Click
to download enlarged image.

Unclear funding channels and a lack of administrative support pulls growers away from their core competency as growers.

Inadequate and inequitable waste management across the city contributes to creating unsustainable environments.

Lack of access to affordable food and knowledge around growing to all communities.

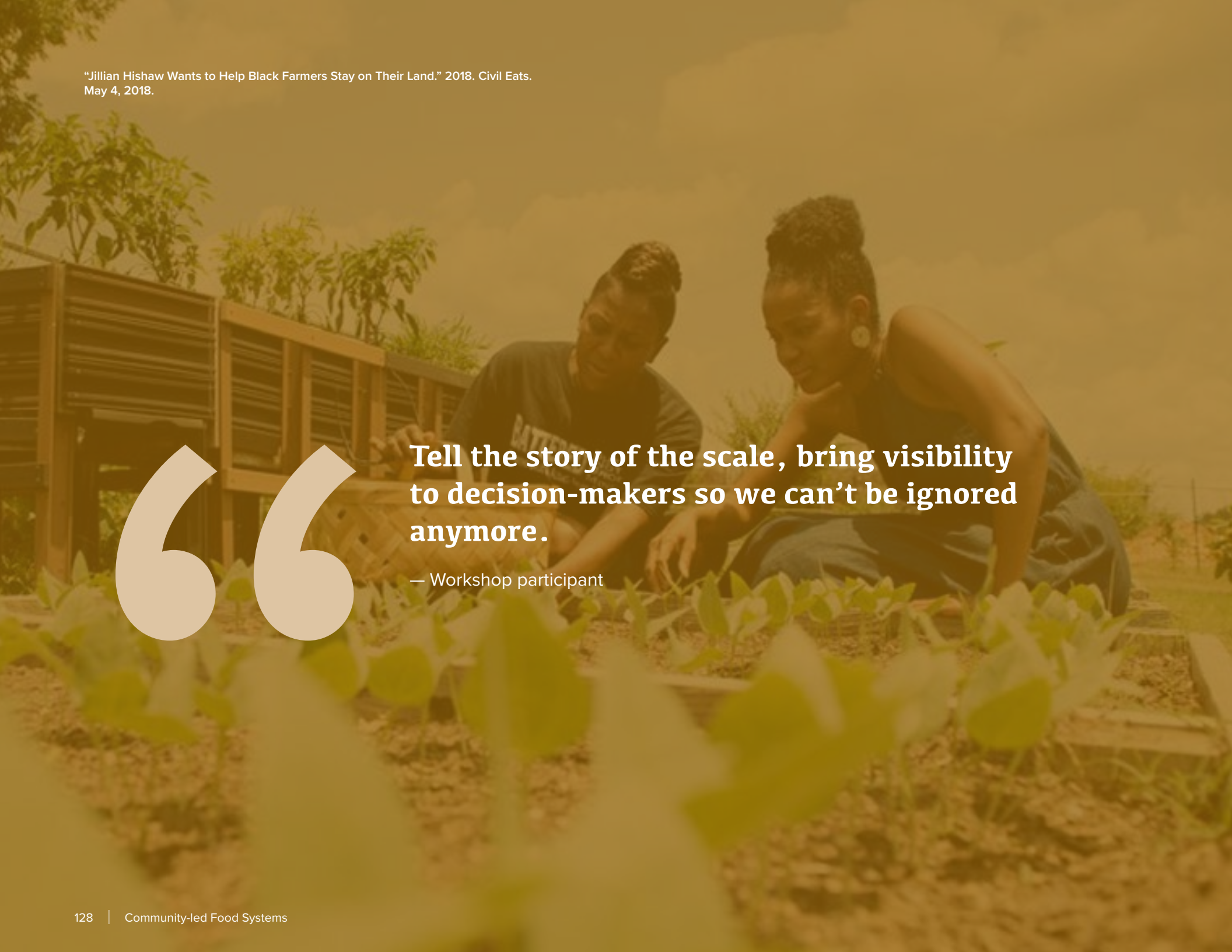
The lack of inclusion in city decision-making forces growers to navigate unnecessarily burdensome policies and practices on their own.



Equitable and convenient distribution is hampered by insufficient infrastructure and persisting inequities across systems.

Lack of fresh produce and pathways to employment for returning citizens, youth, and people experiencing homelessness.

Growers aren't recognized for their immense value; beyond supplying food.



"Jillian Hishaw Wants to Help Black Farmers Stay on Their Land." 2018. Civil Eats. May 4, 2018.

> **Tell the story of the scale, bring visibility to decision-makers so we can't be ignored anymore.**
>
> — Workshop participant

CONCLUSION

The original shepherds of this land have been systematically removed and excluded from the food system through a long history of racist policies (e.g., Homestead Act) and practices (e.g., loan denials). This historic and ubiquitous pattern of removal and exclusion continues today in the form of racialized capitalism. **The co-design of this work sparked by the 'Navigator' has undoubtedly underscored how racialized capitalism has penetrated all aspects of our society, including the Chicago region food system. Engaging a variety of stakeholders who sit at different levels of the system in a co-design process allowed us to understand the many ways in which racism and capitalism prevent the emergence of an equitable Chicago region food system.**

The co-design process for this project highlighted how necessary a collective approach is to understand and address the complexity embedded into the infrastructure of the food system. Chicago region food system stakeholders showed how challenges for BIPOC growers are:

Sometimes initiated by the racism in adjacent systems (e.g. justice system),

Rooted in racist norms and mental models, and

Fueled by economic apartheid.

Therefore, the creation of an equitable food system will require multi-level interventions and multi-sector collaboration.

The 'Navigator' will not be the solution to the challenges described in this document, but can play a vital role in creating the space for massive social shifts in the local food system. The 'Navigator' has the opportunity to provide the space for collaboration to happen within the BIPOC growing community and with the larger ecosystem.

The 'Navigator' will not be the solution to the challenges described in this document, but can play a vital role in creating the space for massive social shifts in the local food system. The 'Navigator' has the opportunity to provide the space for collaboration to happen within the BIPOC growing community and with the larger ecosystem. To be a platform that enables BIPOC growers to understand the current and future conditions of the Chicago region food system so that they can make informed decisions about their businesses and, most importantly, their communities. To be a medium for BIPOC growers and participants in the food system to author their own authentic stories. Most importantly, the 'Navigator' should continue to listen to and take its direction from the BIPOC growing community and the supportive ecosystem that currently surrounds it.

APPENDIX

FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

Community partners: General reference to all who participated in the workshops and interviews. This includes urban growers and food producers, social enterprise and small business leaders focused on community and economic development, people working in policy, human services, food security, public health, academia, mutual aid, community gardens and high school youth in farm training programs.

Grower: Anyone producing fresh, local food

Community food advocates: Policy makers, public health and/or urban agriculture, and inclusive of community space, environmental justice, equitable community development policy advocates.

Reparations: The making of amends for a wrong that has been done. Reparations for victims of human rights violations are meant to recognize and address the harms suffered and acknowledge wrongdoing. Financial compensation — or the payment money — is only one of many different types of material reparations that can be provided to victims. Other types include restoring civil and political rights, erasing unfair criminal convictions, physical rehabilitation, and granting access to land, health care, or education. *(https://www.ictj.org/our-work/transitional-justice-issues/reparations)*

Circularity/circular economy: A regenerative system in which resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimized by slowing, closing, and narrowing material and energy loops. This can be achieved through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing, and recycling. *Based on key literature analyzed in "The Circular Economy – a new sustainability paradigm?" by Geissdoerfer et al. (2017)*

Sustainability/sustainable development: Focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social—also known informally as profits, planet, and people.

Food sovereignty: Food sovereignty is a food system in which the people who produce, distribute, and consume food also control food production and distribution mechanisms and policies. This stands in contrast to the present corporate food system, in which corporations and market institutions dominate the global food system.

Food literacy: Understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and our economy –and understanding that these impacts are not experienced equitably. Building upon existing traditional, cultural, and indigenous knowledge. Acknowledge and address generational gaps in knowledge due to lack of access and prevalence of healthy food, facilities to learn how to prepare and consume food, cultural support / reinforcement to choose such foods, and early education to break negative cycles.

Biodynamics: Holistic, ecological, and ethical approach to farming, gardening, food, and nutrition.

Trickle-down economics: Also called "trickle-down theory," states that tax breaks and benefits for corporations and the wealthy will trickle down to everyone else. It argues for income and capital gains tax breaks or other financial benefits to large businesses, investors, and entrepreneurs to stimulate economic growth. The argument hinges on two assumptions: All members of society benefit from growth, and growth is most likely to come from those with the resources and skills to increase productive output.

DESIGN TERMS

Co-design: Co-design is an approach to designing with, not for, people. It involves sharing power, prioritizing relationships, using participatory means and building capability.

Co-designer: Someone who is a part of the co-design team throughout the co-design process. In this context, the co-designers are the workshop and interview participants. In this work, that includes growers and community food producers, social enterprise and small business leaders focused on community and economic development, people working in policy, human services, food security, public health, academia, mutual aid, community gardens and high school youth in farm training programs.

Insight: The act of 'seeing into' a situation or understanding the 'inner nature' of what we observe. It is an unbiased, agreed upon, deep, intuitive understanding of the stated emerging theory.

Theme: A topic emerging from recurrent groups/clusters of something. In this context, it is impact themes, insight themes, etc.

Design principles: A set of laws, guidelines, biases, and considerations that form the basis of any good product/service/experience. For example, the 'Youth Food Bill of Rights' served as guidelines/considerations while envisioning a future with youth participants.

Zen Chung // PEXELS

IMPACT THEMES

6+ mentions

- *Community wealth development and economic sustainability*
- *Increased opportunities and administrative support for BIPOC growers*
- *Enhanced connections and relationships across the food system*
- *Thriving, resilient communities*
- *Equitable access to food*
- *Working, governing, and owning resources collectively*

3-5 mentions

- *Flexible and customized structures for small scale growers (esp BIPOC)*
- *Environmental and agricultural sustainability*
- *Clarity and transparency of policies and processes across the food chain*
- *Increased accountability and shared responsibility*
- *Narrative shift for the value of local food system*
- *Respected, connected and supported communities*
- *Collective care as the driver for equitable food access*
- *BIPOC-driven policy and advocacy*
- *Healthy communities*
- *Increased reliance on local food over imported food*
- *Making the best use of the resources we have*
- *Consistency, automation, and streamlining across the food chain*
- *Cleaner and Safer communities*
- *Inspired and educated consumers and communities*
- *Increased opportunities for employment, education, and community integration for the formerly incarcerated, homeless, and youth*

1-2 mentions

- *More farms and farmers*
- *Innovative farming methods*
- *Stable governmental fees and taxes*
- *City beautification from local food production*
- *Networked and connected infrastructures across the city*

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CHIBYDESIGN

To learn more about our work,
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