



Urban Agriculture:

Growing food, values, places,
and people

American Society of Nutrition

Katherine Alaimo, Ph.D.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY





Urban Agriculture



**Community/
Family Gardens**



Urban Farms



**Cooperatives/
Farmers Markets**





Urban Agriculture: Creative economic development engine for urban areas

Urban Assets

People

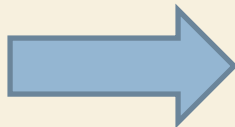
Land

Knowledge

Community

Creativity

Waste



Community/Family Gardens



Urban Farms



**Cooperatives/
Farmers Markets**



Benefits

Reduce food budgets

Job creation

Nutrition

Physical activity

Green space

Social connections

Emotional health

Healthy physical/
social environment



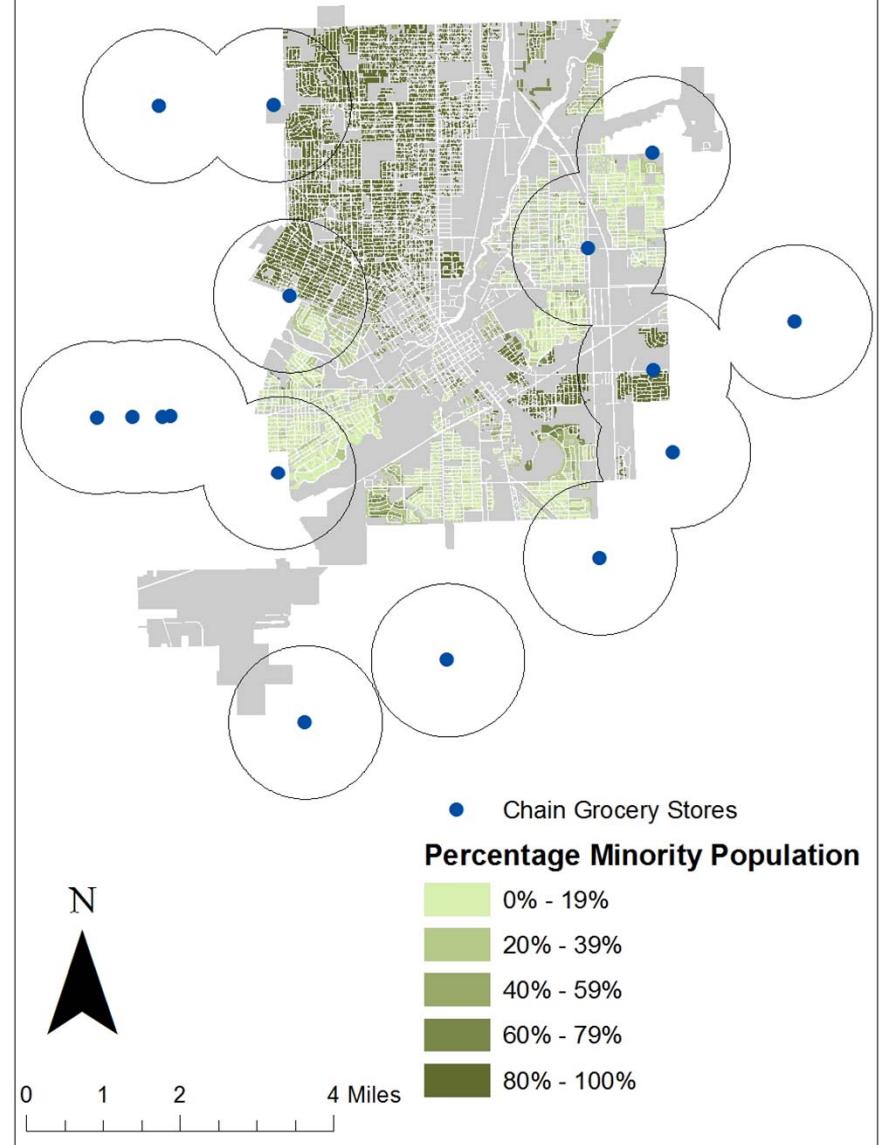
Flint, MI

Poverty : 26.4%

Unemployment: 20.3%



Grocery Stores in Flint, MI



Source: Census Data 2000 & Genesee County Land Bank
Created By: Carlevaris-Bianco, A., Shell, B. & Schneider, J. 3.25.10



Flint, MI

Poverty : 26.4%

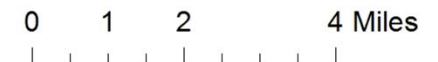
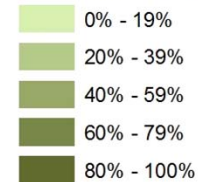
Unemployment: 20.3%



Gas Stations and Liquor Stores in Flint, MI



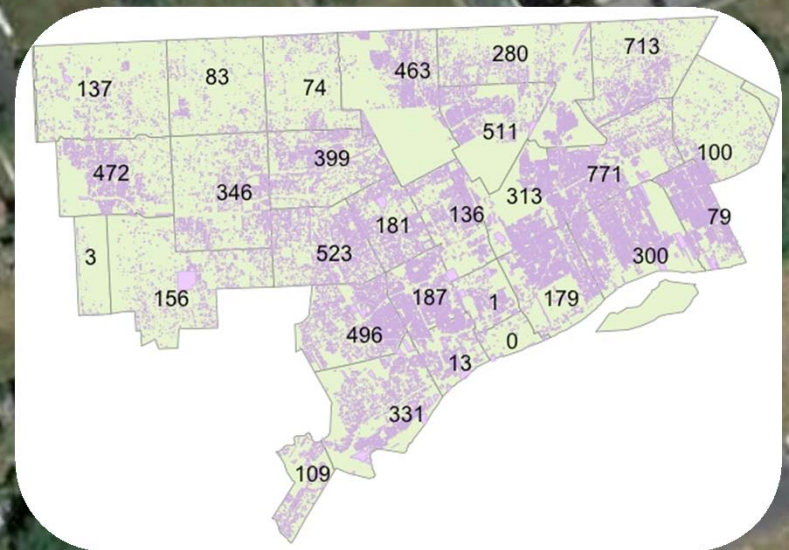
● Gas Stations and Liquor Stores
Percentage Minority Population



Source: Census Data 2000 & Genesee County Land Bank
Created By: Carlevans-Bianco, A., Shell, B. & Schneider, J. 3.25.10

Cities have multiple ASSETS.

2811 Wabash St, Detroit, MI 48216



Detroit, MI: 30-50% VACANT

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Urban/community gardeners:

- **Eat more Fruits and Veggies**
- **More physically active**
- Kids: more likely to try and like vegetables, and eat more of them.

(Alaimo K, et al. 2008; Miles, Alaimo, et al 2009; Litt et al, 2011; Robinson-O'Brien, 2009)



Farmers Market coupon programs: ↑ F&V intake

(McCormack et al, 2010)

GARDENS/ MARKETS = ↑ access to F&V + ↑ social connection = ↑ eating F&V
(New norms and knowledge about eating F&V)



Social Capital and Fear of Crime

Urban/Community Gardeners:

- Know and trust neighbors
- Feel more connected to their neighborhood
- Involved in their community
- Social support
- Know police
- Spend time with neighborhood children
- Reduced fear of crime

(Alaimo et al, 2005; 2010; in prep; Hale et al., Teig et al. 2009; Comstock et al. 2010)





Economic Benefits

EXAMPLE: Detroit, MI

- \$450 M per year SNAP (Food Stamps): 56% is spent at liquor, party stores, and gas station convenience stores
- Shift to local food production = 4,700 jobs & \$20 mill in tax base (Shurman, fairfoodnetwork.org)
- Production of 76% of vegetables and 41% of fruit possible on vacant land (Colasanti et al, 2010)

Garden Resource Program Collaborative

- Detroit gardeners : grew ave **235 pounds** produce per family



“Grown in Detroit” Program

- 79 gardens
- 2010 sales: \$54,000 at 3 weekly farmers markets & restaurants



Urban Agriculture: Multiple benefits, including economic development

Challenges and opportunities

- Zoning and land tenure, recognition of urban ag as viable “redevelopment end use”
- Farming/gardening is labor intensive/volunteers support
- Small farms: Creative financing and infrastructure
- Local urban farmers markets, acceptance of SNAP and market coupons
- Soil fertility and toxicity
- Creative spaces (rooftop)





DENVER URBAN GARDENS
Growing community - one urban garden at a time.



greenguerillas.org



**DETROIT
AGRICULTURE
NETWORK**



"We Can Help A Lot"



Flint Urban Gardening & Land Use Committee Fall Newsletter