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Jonesboro to Receive \$75,000 to Grow Local Food Access

Food Well Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Commission select Jonesboro to Develop a City Agriculture Plan

Atlanta, GA, March 15, 2023 - After successfully launching City Agriculture Plans in East Point and Alpharetta, Atlanta nonprofit Food Well Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Commission have selected the City of Jonesboro as the third metro city to develop a City Agriculture Plan. Once Jonesboro's plan is developed with the Atlanta Regional Commission, Food Well Alliance will guide its implementation and provide \$75,000 in funding to help the community bring it to life. Jonesboro was selected due to their high level of community engagement with current local food and agriculture activity, enthusiastic City staff, and location as the seat of Clayton County.

Food Well Alliance (FWA) and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) partnered to introduce the City Agriculture Plan program in 2019 with the goal of helping cities in the Atlanta region develop unique roadmaps to create vibrant and sustainable community food systems. Funding to pilot the City Agriculture Plan was made possible by the Zeist Foundation and FWA founding benefactor, the James M. Cox Foundation.

Jonesboro has a thriving weekly farmers market with over 50 regular vendors and a growing community gardens program run through the Jonesboro Police Department. "I am so excited for the potential to foster a sense of community and social cohesion by bringing Jonesboro citizens together around a common goal. The City of Jonesboro Police Department is committed to opportunities for collaboration, education, and skill-sharing. We are humbled and grateful to be chosen to execute upon the ARC and Food Well Alliance City Agriculture Plan," said Jonesboro Chief of Police Tommy Henderson.

The City Agriculture Plan process intentionally incorporates an equitable and inclusive community engagement phase that reaches as many residents as possible, as well as ensures a balanced and diverse Steering Committee to guide the planning phase. It also identifies ways that locally grown food can be integrated into the City's existing plans and programs.

“We are thrilled to expand this program into Clayton County and to work with the City of Jonesboro over the next year to build on community assets and develop a Plan that reflects their resident’s priorities for local food and agriculture,” said Food Well Alliance Policy and Planning Manager Sarah Brown.

Supporting and growing Jonesboro’s community food system will involve strengthening the relationships between local food producers, distributors, and consumers. The Plan will convene those community stakeholders and local leadership, under ARC’s guidance and planning expertise. These relationships can help build connections, support local ecosystems and soil health, increase access to healthy food, and create entrepreneurial opportunities to bolster the local economy.

“Local agriculture is a key part of developing healthy, safe, and livable communities, a key goal of ARC,” said Sam Shenbaga, manager of ARC’s Community Development Group. “ARC is proud to support community agriculture and put our resources behind local initiatives that serve as a foundation to address food insecurity in our region.”

The Community Engagement phase of the Plan is now underway. Dates and locations for community engagement events will be shared by the City of Jonesboro and Food Well Alliance on their websites and social media pages.

***Food Well Alliance** is a collaborative network of local leaders working to build thriving community gardens, urban farms and orchards across metro Atlanta. The mission of Food Well Alliance is to provide resources and support to local growers to connect and build healthier communities. Our vision is for an equitable, local food ecosystem in which everyone can participate and benefit. Today, we support more than 300 gardens, farms and orchards in Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton counties. www.foodwellalliance.org, @foodwellalliance*

***The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)** is the official planning agency for the 10-county Atlanta Region, including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties as well as the City of Atlanta and 73 other cities. The Atlanta Regional Commission serves as a catalyst for regional progress by focusing leadership, attention and planning resources on key regional issues. www.atlantaregional.org, @planatlanta ####*