



Common Good City Farm

Growing Food. Cultivating Community.

Three Year Strategic Plan

2022 - 2024



"Our mission is to sustain and support a more equitable community through growing, learning, cooking, and sharing fresh food together."



Executive Summary

Common Good City Farm (Common Good) was founded in January 2007. The organization has successfully improved community health by focusing on providing people with food to nourish their bodies. Over the years, programming has expanded to feed more people, educate DC residents of all ages, and contribute to the sustainability of Common Good. Common Good partners with non-profit organizations, community associations, and neighborhood businesses with similar work focus.

After years of transformation and growth, Common Good embarked on a strategic planning process centered in racial equity to establish a foundation for organizational development and mission alignment.



Overview of Plan Development

Common Good City Farm (Common Good) engaged with Gladiator Consulting to guide a strategic planning process in July 2021. After review of the RFP, conversation with the Common Good Board and Executive Director, Samantha Trumbull, a series of guiding questions for exploration and engagement were agreed upon. The primary guiding question was “How can Common Good be strategic in goal-setting while also exercising agility in addressing evolving and new challenges and needs?”

To address this overarching question, several other questions were identified:

- Who is Common Good’s community?
- How can this community inform the decisions of Common Good?
- How can the strategic plan ultimately be used as a decision-making tool?

Logistics

A Project Team was identified at the start of this project to manage the logistics associated with the planning process and also review and respond to preliminary themes and drafted documents. This team consisted of the Executive Director, Board Chair, and the Chair of the Program Committee. The project team met with Gladiator on a bi-weekly basis throughout this planning process.

The process began with an artifact review. Common Good shared evaluation data, programming documents, annual reports, budget and financial statements, development plans, prior organizational goals, and general historical information of the organization. Gladiator reviewed these documents to increase familiarity with the organization and gain context for future conversations. Findings from this review were incorporated into interview questions and surveys that were utilized with stakeholders throughout the planning process.



Overview of Plan Development

Planning Stage

Three groups were thoroughly engaged throughout this planning process- board members, staff, and the Project Team. Other groups (Farmstand users, general surrounding community, and funders) were engaged via brief interviews conducted by Common Good staff and a survey that was made available in a Common Good monthly newsletter. In September, Gladiator conducted 1:1 conversations with every Common Good staff member and the majority of Common Good Board members. From October - December, Gladiator facilitated a total of 6 workshops with Common Good Board members and staff. Of these sessions, one was just for Common Good Staff.

Feedback on plan components was collected throughout the planning process. Each workshop began with first reviewing information and decisions that had been shared, drafted, and decided in the prior workshop. This review gave space for those who were not present to understand decisions made and establish a foundation for all.

At the conclusion of these workshops, a draft strategic plan was created and shared first with Common Good staff for their review and initial reaction.

Feedback was incorporated and then ultimately shared with the Common Good Board for their assessment prior to the final plan being submitted to the Executive Director and Board for approval.

This planning process was grounded in practice of moving at the speed of trust. This was exemplified in that some topics had to be revisited over a series of workshops (purpose and mission statement development) whereas other topics (goals and actions steps) were addressed in their entirety in one workshop. Consistent pulse checks were done in the bi-weekly Planning Team meetings to see the organizational responses to the process.

Throughout these workshops, both staff and board members were transparent about their thoughts, beliefs, initial reactions, and long-term desires for the discussed topics surrounding the strategic plan. Many of these conversations exemplified a continued need to be explicit in certain terminology. The following terms and definitions were offered to center conversations:

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Key Definitions

COMMUNITY

A social unit with commonalities such as norms, values, customs, and identities. We believe that communities may share a sense of place characterized by a physical space (i.e. The Farm), or virtually (i.e. our online community). At Common Good, our primary community are those who are most impacted and exploited by our current corporate controlled, extractive agricultural system within the LeDroit Park neighborhood.

FOOD JUSTICE

A process whereby communities most impacted and exploited by our current corporate controlled, extractive agricultural system shift power to reshape, redefine, and provide indigenous, community-based solutions to accessing and controlling food that are humanizing, fair, healthy, accessible, racially equitable, environmentally sound, and just.

Dara Cooper : What is Food Justice

COMMUNITY-CENTRIC FUNDRAISING (CCF):

A fundraising movement that is grounded in race, equity, and social justice. We will know that we are practicing CCF when we prioritize the entire community over individual organizations, foster a sense of belonging and interdependence, and present work not as individual transactions but holistically, and encourage mutual support between nonprofits.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

A framework going beyond access to ensure that our communities have not only the right, but the ability to have, community control of our food including the means of production and distribution.

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FOOD APARTHEID

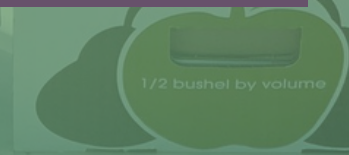
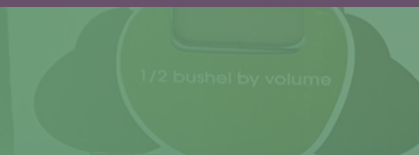
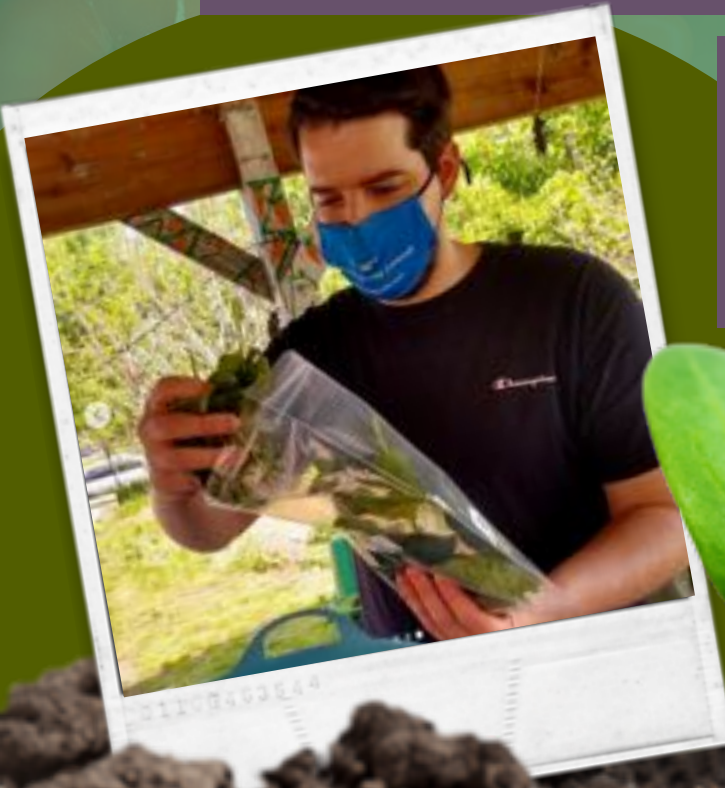
The systemic destruction of Black self determination to control our food (including land, resource theft and discrimination), a hyper-saturation of destructive foods and predatory marketing, and a blatantly discriminatory corporate controlled food system that results in our communities suffering from some of the highest rates of heart disease and diabetes of all times. Some may use the term "food desert," however food apartheid is a much more accurate representation of the structural racialized inequities perpetuated through our current system.

Dara Cooper : What is Food Justice

IDENTITY

Everyone has a personal and social identity. Personal identities include someone's name, unique characteristics, history, personality and other traits that make one different from others. Social identity includes affinities one has with other people, values, and norms that one accepts, and the ways one has learned to behave in social settings. Everyone has more than one identity: racial, gender, ethnic, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, nationality, religion, age, and many more. It is important to remember that a person's identities are theirs alone to claim and may not have any correlation to outward physical or behavioral characteristics.

For Reference click on the bold print **Dara Cooper : What is Food Justice**



As a part of the Strategic Planning process, Common Good established the following Purpose, Mission, Values, and Theory of Change Statements:

PURPOSE

To work with our neighbors in nurturing a sustainable community space grounded in food justice, education, and connection.

MISSION

Our mission is to sustain and support a more equitable community through growing, learning, cooking, and sharing fresh food together.

Dara Cooper : What is Food Justice

VALUES

We believe that community is more than just a physical space. We are intentional in creating an environment in which all are welcomed.

SUSTAINABILITY

We believe in the interdependence of the world, and our responsibility to ensure that we are creators and not just takers. We recognize that it is our role as stewards to ensure that the earth we farm, the community we co-create, and the city we exist in are nurtured and maintained.

CURIOSITY

We approach the world with curiosity. We believe that when we embrace different ways of thinking and knowing, we develop deeper relationships and co-create new approaches to this work.

JUSTICE

We recognize the long history of systemic racism and discrimination in our country. We believe that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities, and are working towards a future in which outcomes are no longer predicted by identities. We recognize that we are responsible for identifying and correcting ways in which we as an organization perpetuate systems of inequity, as well as for dismantling systems of oppression that we operate within through centering and uplifting the voices of those who have been targeted by those systems.

THEORY OF CHANGE

If we have fresh food and create intentional opportunities for intersectional and intergenerational relationship building, and welcome those who are in LeDroit Park, then youth and adults will interact with the food system. This gives them opportunities to use tools to change the food system and ultimately this will lead to a more equitable community.

Stakeholder Engagement Summary

There were several themes identified as a result of 1:1 conversations with Common Good board, staff, and individuals who visited the Farm Stand Market and survey responses submitted by residents of LeDroit Park and Common Good's funders. Below are themes that often resonated across all groups:

The Farm (Physical Space) + Sense of Community:

The concept of "Community" and the clarification that the term community encompassed both the physical space of the farm as well as the welcoming environment exhibited by the farm came up in nearly every conversation. For example, conversations with individuals who were visiting a weekly Farm Stand Market highlighted that they appreciated having a local space available where they felt comfortable and welcomed.

This concept of community was also observed in 1:1 conversations with Common Good Board members and staff. One staff member shared that they especially enjoyed working in a space where neighborhood children are welcomed and will frequently come by just to say "Hi."

Communication

A theme emerged among Farm Stand Market users: individuals want to know more about what is going on at Common Good (example of upcoming events) and learn more about options available to them as consumers. For example, one senior Farm Stand Market user was unaware of payment options available to them. These conversations implied that the surrounding community of Common Good knows that there are events and opportunities occurring at the Farm but more communication and information is required to capitalize on engagement and programming efforts.

Organizational Direction + Focus

This theme came out in conversations with Common Good staff. During these conversations it was shared that their perception is that the organization does many things so staff do not always know what to anticipate. There were also sentiments of concern shared that when workloads grow too much, staff may not have capacity to implement scheduled programs and initiatives. It was also observed in conversations with Common Good board members. Specifically, board members wanted to have a strong and agreed upon focus that would help them determine organizational efforts.

Organizational Culture

This was another theme that was observed in conversations with Common Good staff and board members. Both groups verbalized their current and continued commitment to the organization; they also shared a desire to positively impact the culture of the organization. Examples of this included practicing how to make decisions when there is not 100% consensus and/or when emotions are high, having organizational norms around board meeting practices, and identifying ways to effectively practice conflict as an organization.



Priorities and Focus Areas for 2022 - 2024

PRIORITY AREA 1: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Impact Statement:

By 2024, Common Good will increase fundraising by 20% by diversifying fundraising streams and utilizing a Community Centric approach in fundraising efforts.

By utilizing a Community Centric approach to fundraising efforts, Common Good can diversify and expand its donor base and increase overall funds. Diversity of funds will strengthen the organization for increasing capacity and program growth. Continued review and monitoring of fundraising processes and procedures surrounding donor communication, stewardship, and financial management will allow for advancement of resource development.

PRIORITY AREA 2: PROGRAMMING

Impact Statement:

By 2024, Common Good will have completed a thorough review of all programming to allow for programming decisions to be made based on data and community input.

By creating a culture of program evaluation and community input, Common Good can be intentional with making programmatic decisions and begin to collect longitudinal data that can inform program impact.

PRIORITY AREA 3: INTERNAL OPERATIONS + CULTURE

By 2024, Common Good will have standardized organizational roles and policies to allow for staff and board members to have clarity on expectations.

Standardizing policies and procedures as well as creating shared norms will allow Common Good to operate within agreed upon contexts This will ultimately increase organizational efficiency.

Decision Making Process Tool

This tool is heavily adapted from training provided by [Interaction Institute for Social Change](#) and specifically was found in a “[Core Models of Facilitative Leadership](#)” workshop guide found online in January 2022.

Instructions:

Instructions: This tool provides a framework to use when deciding if a new program/initiative/activity should be implemented. To use it, first decide which decision making approach is best suited for the decision that needs to be made. The following prompts are offered as guiding reflection questions that can be used with the selected decision making approach.

Discussion Questions for Consideration:

Specifically, whom does this decision intend to benefit?



- Are there different benefits determined by race/ethnicity?
- What subsequent actions can we do to minimize or eliminate racial disparities?

To what degree is this decision associated with any of the three priority areas of the strategic plan?



If there is no alignment, why is it important for Common Good to pursue this opportunity?

If we say “yes” to this decision, to what could we potentially be saying “no?”

Whose workload/capacity is impacted the most by this decision?



What support can be provided to those who are impacted the most?

Which individuals are not being asked for their ideas and suggestions?



- Should they be asked?
- What is the best way to ask?

Decision Making Approach Options:

Decide + Announce

The Leader makes a decision with little to no input; the decision is then communicated to those who are affected and/or must carry out the decision.

Step One



The Leader announces the decision and explains the context surrounding the decision.

Step Three



The Leader provides time to answer questions, address concerns, and identify supports needed to implement the decision.

Step Two



The Leader explains the reasons for using the “Decide + Announce” approach.

Step Four



The Leader documents who does what by when.



Decision Making Approach Options:

Gather Input from Individuals + Announce

The Leader asks selected individuals for ideas and suggestions. The Leader makes a decision after gathering input from the individuals.

Step One



The Leader explains how people will be involved in the decision making process and provides rationale.

Step Two



The Leader explains what considerations and criteria they will take into account in order to make the decision. The Leader is also clear about the type of input needed from individuals to make the decision.

Step Three



The Leader makes a decision.

Step Four



The Leader documents who does what by when.



Decision Making Approach Options: Gather Input from Individuals + Announce

The Leader asks selected individuals for ideas and suggestions. The Leader makes a decision after gathering input from the individuals.

Step One



The Leader explains how people will be involved in the decision making process and provides rationale.

Step Two



The Leader explains what considerations and criteria they will take into account in order to make the decision. The Leader is also clear about the type of input needed from individuals to make the decision.

Step Three



The Leader makes a decision.

Step Four



The Leader documents who does what by when.



Consensus

A decision is made that every member of the team is willing to support and help implement. All key stakeholders are given the opportunity to give their opinion and understand the implications of various options. All members (including the Leader) have the same amount of power to support or disagree with proposals. If consensus is not reached, the Leader will make the decision taking the group's discussion into account.

Step One

The Leader explains what consensus means in the given situation and why it was selected for this decision.



Step Two

The Leader outlines the any constraints surrounding the decision.

Step Three

The Leader identifies how the decision will be made if consensus is not reached.

Step Four

All members are provided with the opportunity to give their opinion.

Step Five

The Leader decides and communicates how long will be spent having clarifying discussion.

Step Six

Anyone on the team can make a proposal.

Step Seven

When a proposal is made, all team members must verbally state if they support the proposal. If no- revert back to Step Five.

Step Eight

When a decision is made, the Leader documents who does what by when.

Appendix

Board of Directors

Kenan Dunson, Chair
Norman Anthony Greene, Treasurer
Mareeha Niaz, Governance Committee Chair
Allison Grossman, Secretary
Jamie Mierau Lindsay, Planning Committee Chair
Galila Daniel
Tegan Blaine

Staff

Samantha Trumbull, Executive Director
Emily Richardson, Youth Programs Director
Foster Gettys, Farm Production Manager
Josephine Chu, Deputy Director
Juan Laster, LEAF Educator
Marc James, Farm Programs Manager

Strategic Plan Planning Committee

Kenan Dunson, Board Chair
Samantha Trumbull, Executive Director
Jamie Mierau Lindsay, Chair of Planning Committee

Gladiator Consulting Project Team

Ann Fisher-Jackson, Chief of Staff
Sherrell Hendrix, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Tosha Phonix, Consultant