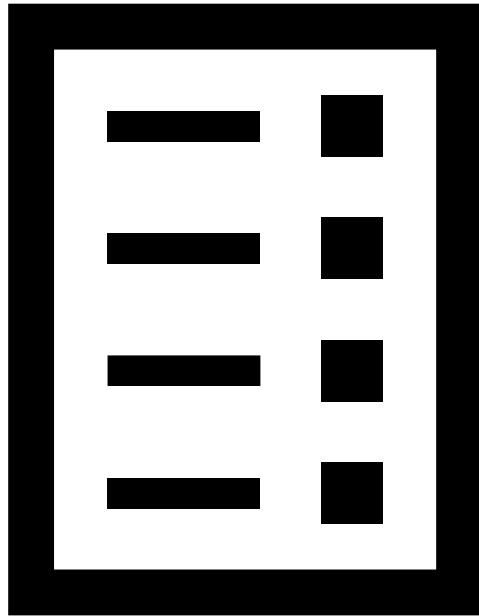


Durham County Food System Assessment

Donna Rewalt, County Extension Director

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Agenda

- Background and need
- Project overview and process
- Vendor selection
- Next steps

Purpose

- Analyze the entire food system from farm to table
- Identify assets and gaps in our current food system work
- Recommend policies, programs, and resources to ensure long-term food and nutrition security.
- Provide actionable steps for implementing and evaluating the plan.



Durham County Food Security Approach

Enhance the social safety-net to meet current needs

Work towards systemic change to improve long-term food security



Durham County Food System Snapshot

- County investments
 - Over \$3 million in ARPA food security projects
 - Food security grants to community organizations
 - Food Security Coordinator since 2021
- Durham Public Schools – Free school meals for every student
- Over 60 food pantries
- Over 300 farms
- Strong SNAP and WIC programs



Food Insecurity Rates - 2023

	Durham	NC	US
Total %	13.8	15	14.3
Children	18.3	18.9	19.2
Black	26	28	*
Latino	22	23	*
White (non-Hispanic)	10	10	*

Data from [Feeding America Map the Meal Gap](#)

*Data unavailable

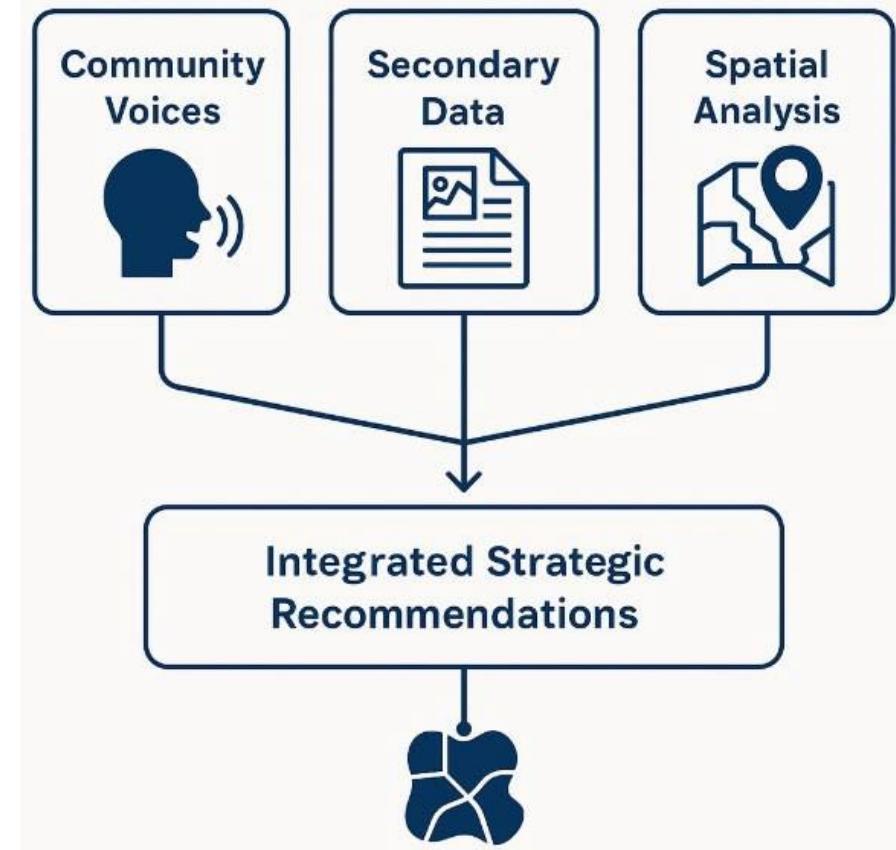
Food System Assessment History

- The Need
- BOCC Approval – post-COVID
- ARPA projects and USDA Farm Campus grant took priority
- USDA Planning Grant ended June 30, 2025
- Now is the right time



Food System Assessment Overview

- **Timeline** – 18 months
- **Process** -Three main components
 - Community engagement
 - Data gathering and review
 - County food system spatial analysis
- **Result** – 10-year strategic plan with data-driven, community-centered recommendations



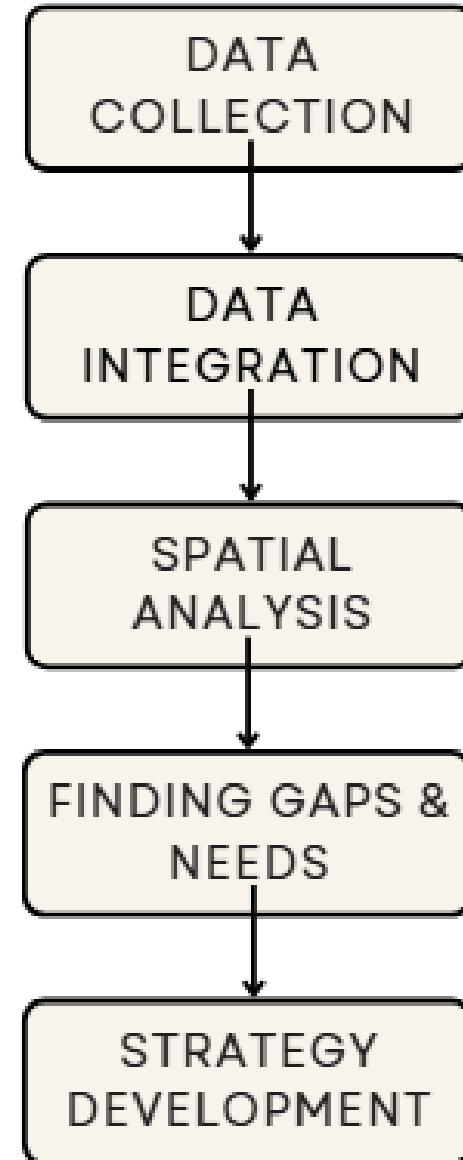
Community Engagement

- Formation of steering committee
- Variety of engagement activities
 - Listening sessions
 - Interviews
 - Storytelling
- Community review of drafted plan



Data and Spatial Analysis

- GIS spatial analysis of food access
 - Groceries and markets
 - Farms and other food production
 - Food distribution networks
- Policy and comprehensive plan analysis
 - Review local, state and national policies and plans
 - Identify best practices and strategies
 - Findings will be used to evaluate Durham's current efforts



Strategic Plan – Framework

Final recommendations in the strategic report will aim to:

1. Ensure access to affordable, safe, nutritious foods that meets individual dietary needs and food preferences
2. Provide economic opportunities for communities and people in the food value chain to flourish and live with dignity
3. Incorporate practices that encourage environmental sustainability, protection of natural resources, and safeguard animal welfare

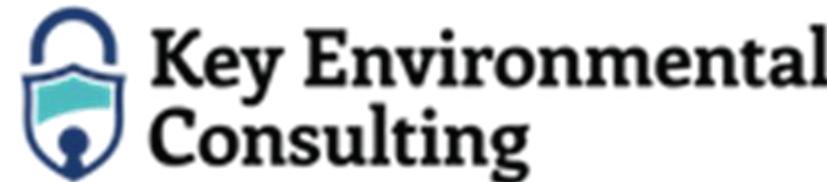


Strategic Plan – Format

- Prioritized 10-year plan with phased implementation
- Implementation toolkit
- Governance and partnership framework
- Evaluation plan rooted in accessibility and accountability

Vendor - Key Environmental Consulting

- Highest scoring of 11 bids
 - Selected based on experience, credentials, and alignment with project vision
- Located in the Triangle with experience in Durham
- Multidisciplinary team – food system/urban planning, public health, data science, community development
- Successful projects throughout the food system, including local government
- Strong technical expertise in data collection and analysis
- Proven track record in community engagement and stakeholder participation



Next Steps

Project Component	Key Tasks/Activities	Estimated Timeline
Complete and execute contract		Dec. 2025
Project kickoff and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Form steering committeeDevelop final project plan	Project Months 1-6
Assessment activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community engagementData gathering and reviewCounty food system spatial analysis	Months 3-12
Strategic plan development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Synthesis of findingsCollaborative goal settingDraft strategic plan	Months 9-15
Finalize, publish and present strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revise strategic planPublish full-length strategic plan documentCreate presentation materials and public facing summaryPresent to BOCC and Durham public	Months 15-18

Thank you! Questions?

