

## Urban Agriculture

### Perry Avenue Community Garden and Market



### Introduction

An individual's access to fresh fruits and vegetables is vital to physical health and well-being. Food is an integral part of culture and self-identity. As the issue of food availability becomes more of a national focus, the disparity between affluent and low-income communities is apparent in the availability and variety of fresh produce. Local food based industries promote the productive use of public and private lands to improve access to good nutrition.

This studio will engage in the design and development of an urban agriculture farm, market and educational facility in collaboration with the Perry Avenue Community Garden (<http://sweetwaterfoundation.com/>). The collaboration's mission is to introduce students and the larger community to an understanding of buildings, their surrounding landscapes and communities as systems embedded in ecology and culture. The development is part of the Green Healthy Neighborhood Initiative, the Recipe for Healthy Places and the Food Plan of Chicago, the Goto2040 Plan of Chicago, the Cultural Plan of Chicago, and WBC's Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs.

The questions surrounding urban agriculture are not new. The landscape of urban agriculture and local food systems is extremely dynamic with an enormous amount of information published in recent years reflecting intense interest in this topic. Cities must now define and clarify their intentions, and begin to develop best practices for urban agriculture and food system infrastructure. The larger objective of the studio is to work beyond the actual project and speculate on the economic viability of the initiative. The promise of urban agriculture, the requisite science and technology employed, and the potential for improving the quality of life in urban communities, are some of the discoveries this studio hopes to make.

### Site/Program

The site for the project is located at the intersection of West 57 and Perry Avenue in the Englewood neighborhood. One building currently occupies the site. The formerly foreclosed/vacant 3-bedroom house has been repurposed into a dynamic Think-Do House that serves as a wellness center, a community and business meeting place, workshop, educational, and interdisciplinary research space. The adjacent parcel to the west of Perry Avenue is currently being farmed by local several resident farmers. The entire site is already zoned as an urban farm.

The program calls for the transformation of a series of donated shipping containers into a market plaza. The market will be used to sell the produce grown at the farm, potentially extend the growing season through the winter months, and provide space for additional community activities. The initial program for the project envisions the following: market spaces for selling produce, food processing spaces, educational spaces (classrooms, studios, etc.), office space, public space/performance space, parking areas/restrooms, storage/services and garden allotments. Exact program and space requirements will be determined during the research phase of the project and in consultation with the client.

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For questions contact: [kultermann@iit.edu](mailto:kultermann@iit.edu)