



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: MARCH 6, 2018**

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **WARDS: ALL**
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: GROWRIVERSIDE UPDATE

ISSUE:

Receive an update on the activities and accomplishments of GrowRIVERSIDE in 2017 and information for the upcoming annual 2018 GrowRIVERSIDE Conference.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council receive and file this update on GrowRIVERSIDE.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013, the City of Riverside launched GrowRIVERSIDE to develop a local food economy that increases access to nutritious foods and encourages the sustainable use of natural resources. Specifically, GrowRIVERSIDE encompasses seven pillars:

1. Assist growers and producer groups
2. Create local jobs
3. Develop value added products and build local demand
4. Reduce food waste
5. Improve food access and health equity
6. Build distribution capacity
7. Ensure results

Since its inception, GrowRIVERSIDE has become an important component of Riverside's community and economic development strategy. It encompasses a cohesive plan to increase community and economic development in food and agricultural activities to activate an estimated 1,000 acres of vacant agriculturally-zoned land in Riverside's 4,800-acre Arlington Heights Greenbelt and increase food and agricultural activities across the city. The activities and efforts of the initiative are carried out in collaboration with multiple partners including the Riverside Food Systems Alliance.

DISCUSSION:

GrowRIVERSIDE 2017

2017 marked an eventful fourth year of GrowRIVERSIDE. The City continued its collaboration with multiple partners to host the well-attended 4th Annual GrowRIVERSIDE Conference at La Sierra University. Two Growers Forum events provided technical and agri-business development workshops in sustainable agricultural cultivation practices and emerging opportunities. Each of the three farm-to-fork dinners were sold out and two Community Gathering events were well attended.

Several food systems milestones and accomplishments were also realized in 2017:

1. Multiple GrowRIVERSIDE events generated \$77,000 in revenues to support the initiative. Revenues came from more than two dozen partner sponsorships and ticket revenue sales.
2. The City of Riverside was selected as the only Inland Southern California entity to receive grant funding from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to pilot a city-wide food rescue and food waste prevention project. Grant funds in the amount of \$209,736 will be used to implement four food waste intervention strategies: creation of an online community exchange to post and alert food donation opportunities; create a position to hire an individual from a socio-economic disadvantaged community to serve as the program coordinator; deliver a pilot Food Rescue & Waste Prevention Ambassador Certificate program to educate community leaders and advocates to foster attitudinal changes regarding food waste; and expansion of the Gleaners for Good program.
3. The Riverside Food Coop established the Gleaners for Good program, a volunteer based effort that gleanes backyard produce that is then donated to food pantries across the city. More than 1,000 pounds of produce was gleaned and donated six food pantries in 2017.
4. Four local farmers were selected as recipients of a California Department of Food and Agriculture Health Soil's Incentive Grant. The grant funds will provide financial assistance for these farmers to implement conservation agricultural management practices in order to sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, improve soil health, increase production, and serve as a model for other farms.
5. The Riverside Unified School District (RUSD) Nutrition Services launched a pilot food hub to distribute locally grown produce to smaller school districts, corner and WIC stores, restaurants with limited access to fresh produce, and other local restaurants. The RUSD food hub plays an important role in developing and expanding markets for local growers and beginning farmers. (Ward 3)
6. Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District received a \$50,000 Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant, which provided funding to create and print 30,000 hard copies of the inaugural edition of the "Fresh & Local! Food and Farms for the Greater Riverside Area" guide. The guide, informed by much stakeholder input, provides an accounting of the food and agricultural assets and resources in the Riverside region.
7. Riverside Food Systems Alliance (RFSA) received a \$20,000 Market Match grant from the Ecology Center. The funds enable the RFSA to assist CalFresh participants to double

their purchasing power for produce by receiving up to \$10 in match funding at three local farmers markets: the Friday Farmers Market at Arlington, the Sunday farmers market at Tyler, and the Thursday San Jacinto Valley farmers. More than two hundred fifty families were served in 2017.

8. City of Riverside received a \$10,000 grant from the League of Cities' Leadership in Community Resilience Program. Grant funding made it possible to bring William Allen, the nation's preeminent practitioner of urban agriculture, to speak at the 4th GrowRIVERSIDE Annual Conference.
9. City of Riverside was one of 50 cities to receive a \$60,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to participate in the Invest Health Initiative. The funds assisted a cross-sector team to begin work on three built environment projects aimed at improving the health and well-being of Riversiders. The three projects include: establishment a beginning farmer training program (in the works); establishment of a food hub (partnership with RUSD); and an agrihood project (in the works).
10. GrowRIVERSIDE was awarded the 2017 Sustainable and Green Development Award by the Inland Empire Economic Partnership.
11. City of Riverside is one of fourteen cities selected to participate in the Center for Community Investment's Connect Capital Initiative. This initiative will train a team from Riverside to develop strategies to attract and deploy capital to fund projects addressing barriers to food, health and housing equity. Team members will be provided tools, coaching, and peer learning to identify and pursue opportunities to accelerate change.

GrowRIVERSIDE 2018

Moving forward, staff continues to develop programming for GrowRIVERSIDE to maintain the momentum and further community and economic development in food and agriculture sectors. Planned programs for 2018 include the annual GrowRIVERSIDE conference. Staff is actively working with partners to launch the region's first beginning farmer training program to provide workforce development opportunities to train the next generation of farmers.

5TH Annual GrowRIVERSIDE Conference and Events

When	Description	Location
April 4, 2018	5th Annual GrowRIVERSIDE Conference	Central Middle School
April 4, 2018	Citrus Circle Fundraiser Farm-to-Fork Dinner	Fox Farm, Riverside
April 5 – 6, 2018	2-Day Profitable Urban Farming Workshop with Curtis Stone	Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District
April 7, 2018	GrowRIVERSIDE Farms Tour	Bus Tour leaving from California State Historic Citrus Park

Additional information on GrowRIVERSIDE is available at www.growriv.com and registration information for the 5th Annual GrowRIVERSIDE conference can be located at www.growrivconference.com.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving this update.

Prepared by:	Rafael Guzman, Community & Economic Development Director
Certified as to availability of funds:	Adam Raymond, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by:	Al Zelinka, FAICP, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment:	Presentation
-------------	--------------