



Department of  
**Community Sustainability**

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | College of Agriculture  
and Natural Resources

# SCENARIO PLANNING WORKBOOK Urban Agriculture in Lansing

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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**Introduction**  
**PAGE 2**

**What is a Scenario Workshop?**  
**PAGE 4**

**Workshop Goals**  
**PAGE 5**

**Key Definitions**  
**PAGE 6**

**Scenario Recipe**  
**PAGE 7**

**Vision and Grounding**  
**PAGE 8**

**Values**  
**PAGE 9**

**Cooking Scenarios**  
**PAGE 11**

**Summary of the Scenario**  
**PAGE 13**

**Next Steps**  
**PAGE 17**

**Acknowledgements**  
**PAGE 18**

**References**  
**PAGE 19**

**Reflection**  
**PAGE 20**

**THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:** .....



# INTRODUCTION

*Photo Credit: Participant, Lansing Urban Agriculture Research*

Building on previous research about community priorities (Piso et al 2019; Kirby et al. 2020), we held workshops in 2019 and 2020 with stakeholders involved in urban agriculture in Lansing. At these workshops, researchers and community members identified multiple features of the urban agriculture system in Lansing that support resilience, such as strong organizations that support participation and learning (Hodbod et al. 2019). The workshops also identified features that could be improved, such as increasing the diversity of individuals in leadership positions and enhancing learning to foster complex systems thinking about cities (Hodbod et al. 2019). The resilience of the urban agriculture system in Lansing was tested by the COVID-19 pandemic and our second workshop showed that while there were challenges, the system was able to cope well and that COVID-19 actually created some windows of opportunity (Swartz et al. 2021). For example, early in the pandemic there was an increase in Lansing residents' interest in urban agriculture, both as growers and as consumers. There are also opportunities for improvement, including improved capacity building to help organizations respond to challenges more quickly. The result of these previous activities is a vision for a sustainable and resilient urban agriculture system in Lansing.

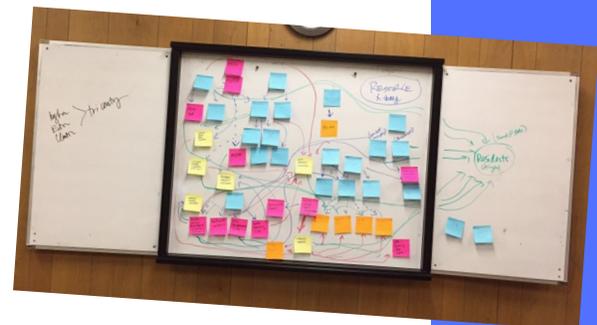
Our next step is to build upon this work through the co-creation of scenarios. These scenarios help identify actionable pathways that would achieve our vision of the future twenty years from now. This workbook will walk us through this process.

Summary of the 2019 workshop (Hodbod et al. 2019):

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/resilience-of-urban-agriculture-in-lansing>

Summary of the 2020 workshop (Swartz et al. 2021):

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/resilience-of-urban-agriculture-in-lansing-to-covid-19>



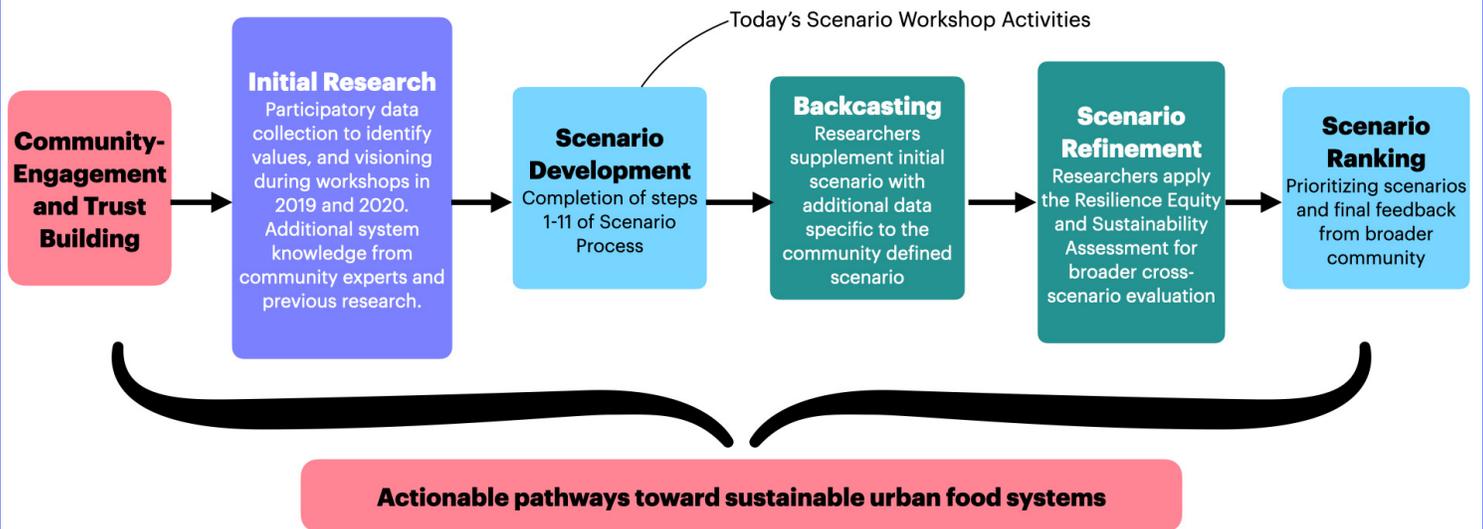
*Photo Credit: Jenny Hodbod*



# SCENARIO TIMELINE

Photo Credit: Participant, Lansing Urban Agriculture Research

## Scenario Process: Integrating Data with Community-Engaged Processes



**Note:** Scenario development and ranking are participatory processes, while backcasting and scenario refinement involve researcher led activities

The scenario timeline outlines the process of scenario planning, with the ultimate goal of co-creating actionable pathways towards a sustainable urban agriculture system. This is a community-engaged research project, with some steps that are community-led, and other steps that are researcher-led. The initial research box shows the previous work that has been done prior to today, and the scenario development box represents the work that we will be doing in this workshop. So far, these two processes have centered community voices. The following steps of backcasting and scenario refinement will be led by the research team, based on what we learn from you, to check for sustainability, equity, and resilience trade-offs. After careful analysis, we will present a final set of scenarios back to you, our community partners, for final feedback and prioritization.

# WHAT IS A SCENARIO WORKSHOP?

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*Photo Credit: Participant, Lansing Urban Agriculture Research*

A scenario workshop is a place where the community and researchers work together to co-create scenarios for the future, based on previously defined values and a resulting vision. The scenario process we present in this workbook is informed by the literature on scenario planning. To operationalize this literature, we outline the process step by step in this workbook. We also assembled findings from previous workshops and research on urban agriculture in Lansing in this workbook. Therefore, the process is based both on literature and our previous research.

## Scenarios frameworks:

We are building on three existing frameworks (Sustainable Future Scenarios, Three Horizons, and Nature Futures (Sharpe et al. 2016; Iwaniec et al. 2020; Pereira et al. 2020)) to develop a new scenario planning process. In this process we will work together to co-create scenarios for our shared vision of our future system about 20 years in the future.

We will be innovative in this process - we encourage you to think creatively about a truly desirable future and how to get there! Drawing on the values we provide in these pages, we will co-create scenarios, write a summary of each scenario, and discuss barriers and conduits to implementing these scenarios as well as how to evaluate future success.

**In this workshop, we will co-create scenarios for the future of urban agriculture systems in Lansing, MI.**



# WORKSHOP GOALS

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Our main goal is to develop actionable pathways toward a sustainable and resilient future for urban agriculture in Lansing. We will do this based on the following recipe and ingredients, which we will use to cook our scenario:



## 01 — Discuss the Recipe for a Scenario

We will go over the steps for creating a scenario and answer questions about the process - we frame this as a recipe with 11 steps. This workbook has a one-page summary of all the steps for a scenario on page 7 to use as a reference. Beginning on page 11, each of those steps is presented in detail with room for notes and discussion.



## 02 — Learn about Key Ingredients:

### Values and Visions

A recipe requires a set of ingredients—some of these we have already, and some we will outline together today. Values are an important ingredient in a scenario. In this context, values are the community's priorities that define a desirable state for urban agriculture. Visions build on the values to describe what a desirable future for urban agriculture looks like in 20 years from now, and this serves as our end goal.



## 03 — Cook a Scenario Together

Based on the recipe and ingredients outlined in this workbook, we will co-create scenarios that describe actionable pathways towards the vision.



## 04 — Reflection

As we work together in this process, it is important for us to hear from you about your experience and how we can improve the scenario planning process in the future. We will have time for anonymous feedback at the end.

# KEY DEFINITIONS

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Below are some key terms that we will use in this workshop.



## Food System

The food system is a series of activities that should support food security - food production, processing, distribution, preparation, eating, recycling, and waste. We aim to consider all the people and products involved at each of these stages in the food system.



## Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture refers to the growing, processing, and distribution of food products (primarily plant cultivation, although it can include animal husbandry) in and around cities (Newell et al 2020).



## Values

We think of values as priorities that define a desirable state and drive human action towards it (Tadaki et al. 2017).



## Vision

A vision is a description of a desirable future.



## Scenarios

Scenarios are descriptions of a plausible and desirable future system AND the steps that can be used to achieve them. Scenarios are co-created with stakeholders and draw on evidence-based research.



## Stakeholders

Individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by changes in the system.

# SCENARIO RECIPE

Scenarios are created when we think creatively about how to achieve a positive future. In this workbook we provide the recipe and some of the ingredients required to help you create a scenario. We will work together in small groups to bring in other ingredients from your expertise and cook up your ideas. All of these points are explained in detail on subsequent pages, with room to write notes. **This page is intended as a one-page reference sheet.**

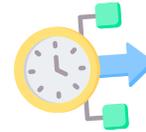
## Ingredients

1. **Big Vision:** State the broader vision that will shape the scenario.
  2. **Grounding the Scenario:** Identify what key features of the vision will ground the scenario development process, and name your scenario.
  3. **Values:** Choose at least three values from the list that will be achieved by the scenario.
  4. **Location:** Define the geographic area where the scenario will take place.
  5. **Time Frame:** The target date for achieving this scenario will be in 20 years from now-2042. This should provide time for significant change, while still focusing on actionable results in the foreseeable future
    - a. **Short-Term Actions:** Identify key actions that will need to occur in the first 10 years of the time frame. These may be actions that will finish before commencing the long-term actions.
    - b. **Long-Term Actions:** Identify key actions that will occur in the final 10 years of the timeframe. These actions will finish at the end of the time frame and when the scenario is realized.
  6. **Resources and Stakeholders:** Identify resources needed to complete the actions and who holds them.
    - a. Firstly, focus on identifying multiple types of resources. We know money is a central component but also consider what collaborations, spaces, education or training, policies, and programs are needed to achieve the scenario goals and who holds (or could hold) these resources.
    - b. Identify key community partners, organizations, or experts who will need to contribute to the work of completing the actions in other ways, beyond supplying resources.
    - c. Also identify any community partners or organizations that will be affected by these actions.
  7. **Summary of Scenario:** Read over scenario components and think about the overall message. Then, write 3-5 sentences that describe the scenario.
- BREAK:** Let our thinking simmer.
8. **Pros and Cons:** Consider if this scenario privileges a specific outcome at the expense of others within the vision. List activities or projects that might be lost or gained in the implementation of this scenario.
  9. **Broader Impacts:** Describe the broader effects of implementing this scenario, including any other positive or negative impacts this could have outside of the urban agriculture system.
  10. **Conduits and Barriers to Action:** Identify actions that could facilitate or hinder the scenario from being achieved
  11. **Evaluation:** Provide a list of benchmarks that will indicate progress toward the goal. Consider how progress and milestones will be shared, and next steps in this process.

# VISION



Based on previous workshops, a desirable vision for the future is provided here as a summary statement. This is a big picture of what stakeholders envision a desirable future to look like, but not how to get there. Our work today is to talk about actionable pathways towards this vision of the future!



## 1. Big Vision Statement

In 2042, urban agriculture in Lansing is recognized as a legitimate practice and use of space by the local government, with extensive support from the local population. A municipal committee for urban agriculture becomes a key space for interactions between local actors and policymakers, enabling the creation and modification of policies that are tailored to address local needs. The “Lansing Grown” label is recognized for producing healthy and nutritious food in an environmental-friendly way. An expanded customer base contributes to the flourishing of opportunities for urban agriculture to be a source of income and professional opportunities. Fruitful partnerships are established between stakeholders, MSU, and local schools so that urban gardens and farms become sites for youth engagement, knowledge generation and capacity building. Urban gardens and farms become places that foster and support relationships between community members while providing a space for reconnecting with the land. Equity is centered as one of the key values for urban agriculture: a diverse set of people, including the often marginalized, participate in and lead urban agriculture organizations and initiatives. Cooperatives and resource hubs are strengthened, enabling the sharing of resources, tools, and information across the network of actors. Urban agriculture becomes a key factor to the establishment of a local food system that is fair and just for all.

## 2. Grounding the Scenario

Think about the big picture – there are multiple ways and multiple strategies to achieve the overall vision. So, what would you like to start with? We will ground the rest of the scenario process in the piece of the vision you want to build a scenario around as you describe below.

# VALUES

Previous work has identified common community priorities in relation to urban agriculture. Your scenario should achieve multiple values. **Step 3. Circle the values you would achieve through your scenario.** Aim for three at least and feel welcome to add values that are not included in the list (adapted from Piso et al. 2019).

Value	Description (Urban agriculture should...)
Beautification	improve the look and feel of neighborhoods
Community	support relationships between community members
Economic Growth	support community revitalization through diverse local business
Education	provide opportunities to learn about food and agriculture
Environmental Stewardship	produce food in ways that support a healthy natural system
Food Security	make fresh food available and affordable
Health	ensure that healthy and nutritious food is available
Job Training	provide employment and/or training to people looking to enter the workforce
Market Opportunity	empower stakeholders to participate in local business
Place Attachment	support one's individual connection to the land and emotional well-being
Safety	minimize risk associated with food production
Social Justice	support a fair and just food system
Sovereignty	promote local control of food production and distribution

# COOKING SCENARIOS

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This process involves discussion, notes, and revisions. Use this workbook for ideas and notes. We encourage you to move back and forth between steps - they do not have to be completed in order. The summary sheet listing each step is found on page 7. The steps are also described in the following pages.

**4. Location:** What is the geographical scale of your scenario? The vision is for Greater Lansing, but scenarios could include a smaller (e.g., individual gardens) or larger scale (e.g., state policy) than the overall vision.

**5. Time frame:** We will aim for this vision to be achieved in 20 years from now (2042) but actions within the scenario might be required or achievable sooner. Consider:  
**5a. Short-term Actions:** What should be integrated into this scenario and be done in the next 0-10 years to help Lansing reach the big vision?

# COOKING SCENARIOS

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**5b. Long-term Actions: What should be integrated into this scenario and be done in 11-20 years to help Lansing reach the big vision?**



*Photo Credit: Participant, Lansing Urban Agriculture Research*

# COOKING SCENARIOS

## Resources and Stakeholders

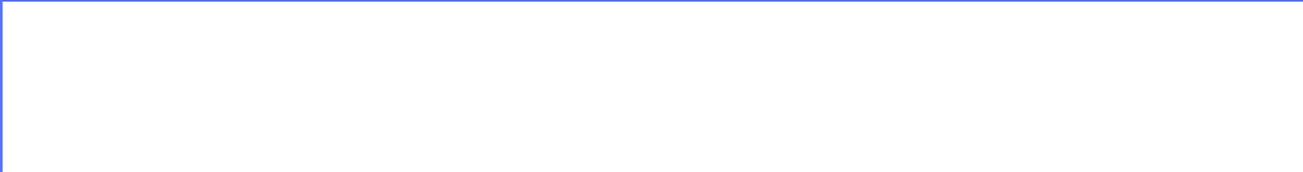
**6a. What resources are needed to complete these actions? We know money is needed for nearly all actions, but what other types of resources (collaborations, information, spaces, facilities, education or training, policies, programs, people etc.) are needed?**



**6b. Who are the community partners and organizations who will need to contribute to the work of completing these actions? Who has these resources already or who could supply them in the future?**



**6c. Who are the community partners and organizations that will be affected by these actions?**



# SUMMARY OF THE SCENARIO

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*Photo Credit: Participant,  
Lansing Urban Agriculture Research*

Step 7: Read over your scenario components and think about your overall message. Update your title. Then write 3-5 sentences that describe your scenario. Be descriptive and work to incorporate what you think are the key elements of your scenario. You are also welcomed to add a photo, drawing, map, or any other components that help illustrate your vision for the future of the urban agriculture system here. We welcome creativity!

Updated Title:

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Scenario Summary and/or Images:

# COOKING SCENARIOS

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## BREAK

Let your scenario cook, your ideas simmer, and come back ready for more.

After our break we will re-read, revise, and add to your work.



*Photo Credit: Participants, Urban Agriculture Research*

# COOKING SCENARIOS

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**8. Pros and Cons:** Within the urban agriculture system, what might be gained in the implementation of this scenario? Is this scenario privileging one outcome in the vision at the expense of others?



**9. Broader Impacts:** What are the broader effects of implementing this scenario, and how does that impact factors outside the urban agriculture system? Could implementation have other positive or negative impacts in Lansing or for community members?



# COOKING SCENARIOS

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**10. Conduits and Barriers to Action:** What could facilitate or hinder the scenario from being achieved?



**11. Evaluation:** How will we know if this scenario is supporting progress toward the vision? Are there quantifiable benchmarks that we can outline to show progress toward our goal? Who would need to be involved in this evaluation process?



# NEXT STEPS

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Creating shared scenarios for the future of urban agriculture in Lansing is an important step, and now we need to talk about steps for collective action. In what ways can different stakeholders work together?



## Policy Makers and Community Organizations

Ideas to launch collective action:



## Communications

Ideas to launch collective action:



## Ways to Get Involved

Ideas to launch collective action:

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would like to acknowledge the urban gardeners, farmers and residents of Lansing who graciously shared their time and knowledge over the course of this project. Funding for this project was provided by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) at Michigan State University.

**We thank you for your participation and ongoing work to improve urban agriculture in Lansing, Michigan!**

## Contact

Questions about this project can be directed to Jenny Hodbod at [jhodbod@msu.edu](mailto:jhodbod@msu.edu) or Lissy Goralnik at [goralnik@msu.edu](mailto:goralnik@msu.edu)



*Photo Credit: Participant,  
Lansing Urban Agriculture Research*

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## How to Cite this Workbook

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# REFLECTION

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As we work together in this process, it is helpful for us to hear from you about your experience, and how we can improve the scenario planning process in the future. Please share your feedback anonymously in the space below.



**Thank you for your  
time and feedback  
on this process!**



*Photo Credit: Participant, Lansing Urban Agriculture Research*