

Growing, Selling, Buying and Eating Food on the East End of Long Island

Negotiating Conflict and Consensus for a Shared Food Future

Prepared by CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute
In collaboration with East End Food Institute

About the Project Organizers



CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute provides policy makers, advocates, researchers and nutrition professionals with evidence and support to create more equitable, healthier and more sustainable solutions to food problems in New York and elsewhere.

cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org



East End Food Institute is a nonprofit organization that supports, promotes, and advocates for local food and local producers to create a more sustainable and equitable local food system on eastern Long Island, New York.

eastendfood.org

Goals

This portrait of the food system on the East End of Long Island seeks to **SPARK PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS** about the future of the local food system.

WE HOPE THAT THESE CONVERSATIONS WILL ALLOW US ALL TO:

- Develop a list of outcomes and goals shared across diverse groups.
- Identify the action steps and timelines to accomplish our shared vision.
- Establish partnerships to begin taking steps toward a better food future.
- Create a 5-year food plan to unite efforts toward a healthier, more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable East End food system.



Let's create a better food future for the next generation.

Food Systems Perspectives

There is always a **tension between economic development and land preservation**. If you look at Long Island's landscape, two-thirds are already covered with pavement, buildings and other structures.

Richard Guardino, Jr.
Executive Director
Long Island Regional Planning Council



Our sandy soils are very prone to **leaching and runoff of pollutants**, pesticides and nutrients leading to... **contamination of our drinking water sources**. We see a win-win where you can **save farmers money while reducing environmental impact**.

Debbie Aller
Agricultural Stewardship Specialist
Cornell Cooperative Extension Suffolk County



You **reduce your carbon footprint** just by not sourcing from other places. **Eat and drink local** in general. That's what it's all about.

Gregg Rivara
Aquaculture Specialist
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Suffolk County



You have to make some real choices... You say, 'OK, **I've got to feed the family.** I've got to go to work. What am I going to do?

Bonnie Cannon
Executive Director
The Bridgehampton Childcare Center



Here we sit in the middle of 'Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous', yet 60 percent of people in our community are **below the poverty level.**

Lance Gumbs
Vice President
Shinnecock Tribal Council

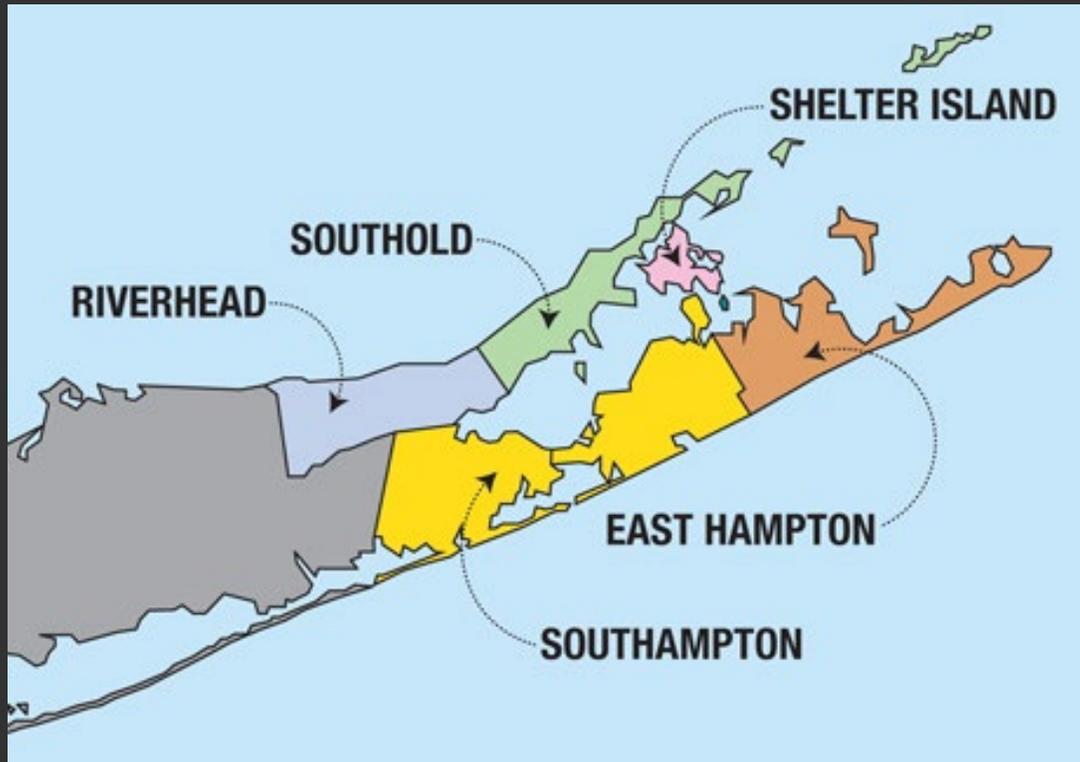


I think it's not only being mindful of how local produce is grown nearby ... but also the **kids are learning that, in their lives, they need to support agriculture.** And, a lot of times, also, they're learning that not everything comes packaged.

Marta Blanco
Bilingual Nutritionist
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Suffolk County



What is unique about the East End?



- Much of the East End is driven by a **SEASONAL ECONOMY**, which drives up the price of land and other resources, including food.
- **AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT** are both important for a thriving seasonal economy, but these industries often face competing priorities and challenges.
- **THE FOOD WORK FORCE** is an important engine for the East End economy that is sometimes undervalued.
- **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & HEALTH** are unevenly distributed across the East End population, with obstacles in access to healthy food, affordable housing, and healthcare.
- The community holds **SHARED VALUES** around food that can promote a unified vision and action plan.

SEASONAL ECONOMY

- The farms, beaches, restaurants, and general allure of Long Island attract 6 million visitors annually, accounting for \$5.9 billion in tourist spending in 2017.
- Seasonal tourism promotes economic development and prosperity, but it also worsens economic inequality.
- Second-home residents constitute an essential part of the East End economy, influencing seasonal employment on farms, in restaurants, and in homes.
- High demand for housing drives up costs and contributes to food insecurity, especially for those working in the industries serving tourism.



AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

- The market value of Suffolk County agricultural products was \$225 million in 2017, and approximately 85% of Suffolk County's farmland is on the East End.
- High property values, competing uses for land and water, environmental pressures, and rising wages present significant challenges to the agriculture industry.
- A healthy natural environment is essential for agriculture, but farmers and environmentalists are often at odds when it comes to use of chemicals and fertilizers.
- Achieving agricultural and environmental sustainability will require resisting pressures for other economic development.



THE FOOD WORK FORCE

- The food work force is critical to sustaining the seasonal tourism economy, yet food workers often earn relatively low wages and receive few benefits.
- Despite the East End's reputation for wealth, many food workers who live here year-round are burdened by the high cost of living and seasonal unemployment.
- Median annual income, Suffolk, 2018:
 - Food Retail Salespersons
\$31,438
 - Restaurant Food Servers
\$27,425
 - Food Preparation Workers
\$24,970



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & HEALTH

- About 28% of East End residents are people of color:
 - 16.2% Hispanic or Latinx
 - 5.4% Black or African American
 - 1.2% American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.8 Asian
 - 1.2% Mixed Race
- Research shows people of color experience higher rates of poverty and diet-related diseases than white residents.
- Poverty and diet-related diseases are clearly linked to lack of access to affordable housing, healthy food, and preventative healthcare.
- Several East End organizations exist to address disparities, and their work should be united as part of a long-term food plan.



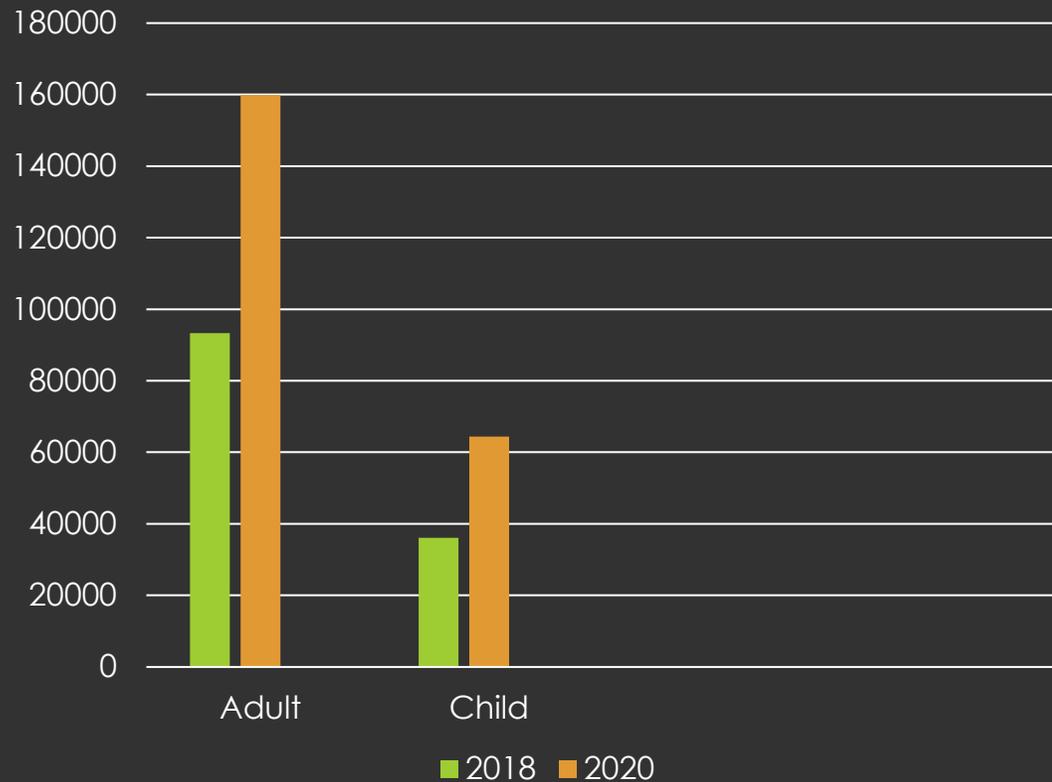
SHARED VALUES



Identifying and implementing unified values around the role of food in the **seasonal economy**, **agriculture & environment**, the **food work force**, and in **diversity, equity & health** on the East End will ensure a vibrant future for the local food system.

COVID-19 ON THE EAST END

Suffolk County Food Insecurity Rates Before and After COVID-19 (Count)



*Due to a 2020 update in Feeding America's methodology for tracking food insecurity, rates of food insecurity are not directly comparable, but useful for identifying trends over time.



“[Food] pantry leaders are preparing for another increase in demand. As seasonal workers lose their jobs, unemployment runs out and more positive COVID cases force people to quarantine, it will become increasingly difficult for families not only to have enough food in the house, but to pay the rent and utilities”

*Claudia Pilato
Board President
All For The East End (AFTEE)*



Some East End organizations and institutions working toward food security, local food sourcing, conservation and land use efforts, and/or health equity:

Food Security, Health, Research, and Education

Community Action Southold Town (CAST)
Cornell Cooperative Extension
East End Food Institute
East Hampton Meals on Wheels
ERASE Racism
Heart of the Hamptons
Hallockville Museum Farm
Island Harvest Food Bank
JBJ Soul Kitchen
Local North and South Fork Food Pantries
Long Island Cares
Long Island Health Collaborative
Maureen's Haven
OLA (Organización Latino-Americana)
of Eastern Long Island
Peconic Bay Medical Center
Rural and Migrant Farm Ministry
Share the Harvest Farm
Shinnecock Nation Senior Nutrition
Slow Food East End
Stony Brook Medicine Nutrition Dept.
Sylvester Manor Educational Farm
The Food Lab at Stony Brook Southampton

Farm, Land, and Environmental Protection

Concerned Citizens of Montauk
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt
Group for the East End
Long Island Clean Water Partnership
Long Island Farm Bureau
Long Island Pine Barrens Society
Peconic Baykeeper
Peconic Estuary Partnership
Peconic Green Growth
Peconic Land Trust
Perfect Earth Project
Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition
South Shore Estuary Preserve
Save the Sound
Stony Brook University
The Long Island Native Plant Initiative
The Nature Conservancy

Local Councils, Foundations, Institutions, and Public Sector Departments

All For the East End (AFTEE)
Hamptons United
Long Island Community Foundation
Long Island Food Council
North Fork Environmental Council
Peconic Community Council
Suffolk County Department of Economic
Development and Planning
Suffolk County Food Policy Council
Suffolk County Health Department and
Office of Minority Health
Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

Join the effort!

A Draft Food Vision for the East End

Five years from now, we hope the East End will have...

SEASONAL ECONOMY

- Visitors who understand the value of the local food system and the people in it
- A resilient local food economy that supports more year-round employment

THE FOOD WORK FORCE

- Food workers who are paid a living wage
- Safe and comfortable working conditions
- Health benefits for food workers
- A more resilient local food economy

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

- More food grown and consumed locally
- Less carbon emissions and pollution
- Combined local food systems planning for agriculture and the environment

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & HEALTH

- Healthier people and communities
- Less diet-related diseases, especially in people of color and at-risk populations
- More equitable access to local food, affordable housing, and health care

Join us in conversation to explore a shared food future for the East End.

1. How can we make significant progress in reducing overall rates of food insecurity on the East End and closing the wide gaps in rates between towns?
2. How can the East End make meaningful progress in increasing the proportion of food eaten here that is grown here?
3. How can East End food businesses increase pay, security, benefits and working conditions of those employed in its food sector?
4. How can the East End identify and reduce agricultural and other food practices that contribute most to pollution, carbon emissions and global warming?
5. How can the East End reduce overall rates of diet-related diseases and shrink gaps in rates by town, income, and race/ethnicity?
6. How can the East End create a fair and democratic process for food planning and monitoring that ensures that all who live here have a voice in shaping our food choices?
7. How can those working to improve the East End food system best work with advocates, public officials and food organizations from Suffolk County, Long Island, New York City, and New York State to achieve shared goals?

Send Your Ideas
Find Out More
Join a Working Group

We welcome your feedback and insights into this report and a subsequent food plan for the East End.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

Nick Freudenberg, DrPH – Lead Researcher

Jessica Walsh & Samantha Goulding – Researchers

Kate Fullam & Heather Meehan – Collaborators

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Image: Bob Hatton. Courtesy of East End Food Institute.

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