COMMUNITY CAPACITY: Cedar Rapids has progressive policies in place that facilitate local food production and food-based business development. This city will capture the creation of a comprehensive food systems plan for the city that can be used for decision-making about zoning, business development, school programs, and other related systems. In addition, we will identify and develop catalyst projects to assist in site demonstrations. This will be unique because there will be projects at the human scale that residents can learn from and use at home or in other areas around the city, and the sites will focus on the development of particular areas in conjunction with the comprehensive plan. Potential site catalyst projects will be based on proximity to existing local food system infrastructure and a needs assessment for improvements.

RESEARCH + ANALYSIS: CDL began a partnership with the Blue Zones’ Food Environment Working Group, which is now known as the Food Environment Alliance. Through the partnership with Blue Zones, there are additional measures to bridge capacity among the “four pillars” of food access: Creating Access to Healthy Food, Creating visibility for healthy food, Promoting and educating local food opportunities, and building policy support. The tactics of the agricultural urbanism toolkit bridge into many of these tactics and will continue to support the work of the Food Environment Working Group.

PUBLIC INPUT: Cedar Rapids offered their comprehensive public mapping meeting in tandem with Veteran’s Day. This was a unique combination because the Iowa Food Systems Policy Council showcased the movie Terra Firma, with a local Cedar Rapids woman veteran farmer after the open house for Agricultural Urbanism. The open house led to a comprehensive understanding of where residents perceived opportunities of local food system development within their neighborhoods. The open house allowed for residents from organizations, neighborhoods, businesses, to express their interest and offer insight on potential sites for implementation. The Open House input was used to determine the tactic priorities for implementation.

TACTIC PRIORITIZATION:

High Impact: Low Hanging Fruit
1. Faith Garden- coalition-programming
2. Coe College- public edible landscaping design
3. Urban Orchard- BIG at Noelridge

High Impact: Long-Term Goal
4. Public/ Urban Farm- BIG at Beaver Park
5. Shared Use Kitchen