

A photograph of a grocery store aisle. In the foreground, a metal shopping cart with red handles is filled with green onions. The aisle is lined with shelves of various products, and the floor is light-colored. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the cart and the produce.

Supply Chain Vulnerability Assessment Toward food resilience in Central Texas

*A Report Prepared by Emmie DiCicco
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This report was prepared for the Office of Sustainability by Emmie DiCiccio with support from Caroline Alexander.

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Executive Introduction

A message from Edwin Marty, City of Austin Food Policy Manager

On any given day, approximately three days' worth of food is available for everyone in Austin. In the current global food system, complex supply chains connect food from other states and countries to our community. Austin relies on local infrastructure—like roads, energy, warehouses, and retail stores—to ensure uninterrupted access to the food we need to live healthy lives. That same infrastructure supports a robust local food economy of regional growers, manufacturers, and food sellers.

Many community members don't have the ability to keep a sufficient supply of food and water in their homes to make it through a disaster that disrupts our food supply and leaves grocery store shelves empty. Because of our reliance on I-35 for most of our food transportation needs, we are just one climate-related disaster away from another major food access emergency in our community.

In January 2023, with [Austin City Council's direction](#), City staff and consultants launched the first-ever assessment of the hazards threatening our local food system. Through extensive interviews and focus groups with local stakeholders across food supply chains, the consultant team uncovered important and timely information that we hope inspires immediate and ongoing action across our community.




The goals of the Food Supply Chain Vulnerability Assessment report are to:

- Review a baseline briefing on the regional supply chain as articulated through stakeholder input
- Identify stakeholder-generated barriers to a robust local food economy and threats to resilient supply chains
- Identify stakeholder-generated opportunities to address these barriers and threats
- Offer supplemental recommendations on next steps to incorporate this work in the Austin/Travis County food plan

We'll be working closely with the [Community Advisory Committee](#) that is driving the [Austin/Travis County food plan](#) to integrate the opportunities and recommendations outlined in this report. We will also work with local governments and private sector companies **to build a more resilient local food system, together.**



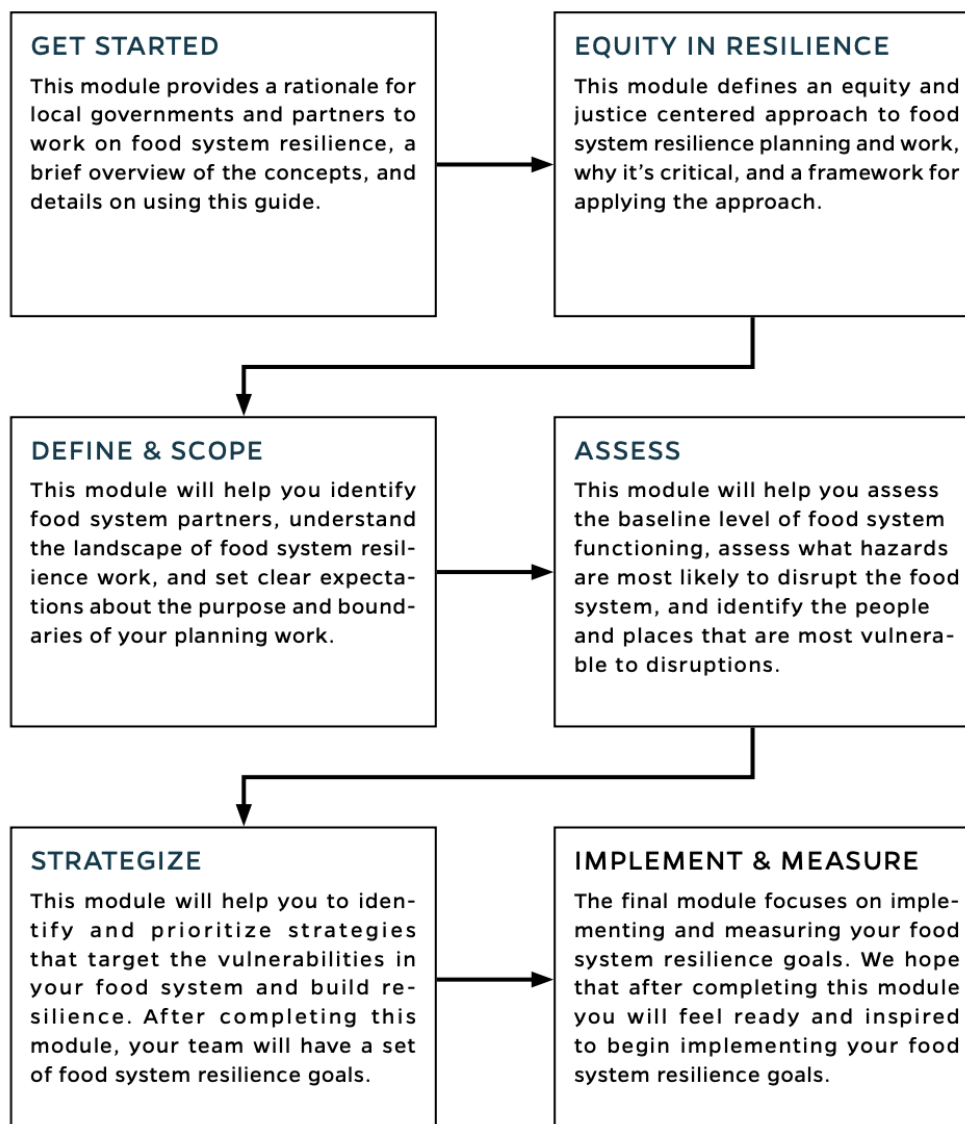
Summary of Findings

	PRODUCTION	PROCESSING	DISTRIBUTION	MARKETS & RETAIL	LABOR	RECOVERY
STRENGTHS 	-Blackland prairie soil & year-round growing season -Support for small growers to institutional/ restaurant supply chains -Organizational capacity & City of Austin/non-profit support -Strong culture & demand for local food	-Many local vendor start-ups -Support from retail: local retailers offer local vendor/ producer support programs to increase scale -Large customer base: <i>"People want to move to Austin"</i>	-Centrally located in Texas -Large customer base	-Organizational capacity & collaboration within food procurement -City of Austin engagement with large retailers -Austin's restaurant density: restaurant & consumer culture supports local food	-Foundation of the local food/music economy -Organizational capacity & unionization efforts	-Organizational capacity & collaboration -Retailers looking to decrease food waste
BARRIERS TO LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY 	-Lack of mid-size farmers -Numerous barriers to increasing local production including access to land/capital, lack of infrastructure, & lack of communication between growers/ buyers	-Few regional food processors -No food hubs in Austin -Bottleneck for protein producers	-Distribution centers that serve Austin located outside of the city -Consumers/ buyers want the cheapest option—cannot afford the price of local food	-Concentration/ consolidation of retailers/suppliers -Inequity in food access -Inadequate communication/ understanding of complex procurement regulations	-Difficult conditions, low wages -ATX affordability -Loss of power threatens income & resilience of retail	-Food donations have decreased: challenging for food banks & food redistribution
THREATS 	Regional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme weather & climate change • Infrastructure reliability • Loss of agricultural land and farmers • Dependence on 1-35 			National: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor shortage & automation • Avian influenza and other health risks • Supply shortages • Inflation & "Greed-flation" • Consolidation of supply chain • Food waste 		

According to the [Johns Hopkins Center for a Liveable Future](#), **vulnerability** is the degree to which an asset or group is exposed, susceptible to, or unable to cope with a hazard/**threat**. Something more "**vulnerable**" to a particular event is at a greater risk of experiencing the negative consequences of a disruption because it is either more exposed, more sensitive, or unable to adapt or transform in the wake of a disruptive event. Our regional food supply chains are "vulnerable" to both regional and national **threats**—the natural or human disruptions that can impact our food system. **Barriers** prevent both a robust food economy and a more resilient regional food system.

Methodology and Framework

This report utilizes the [Food System Resilience: A Planning Guide for Local Governments](#) developed by Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Center for Livable Future.



Source: [Food System Resilience: A Planning Guide for Local Governments](#)

Define & Scope

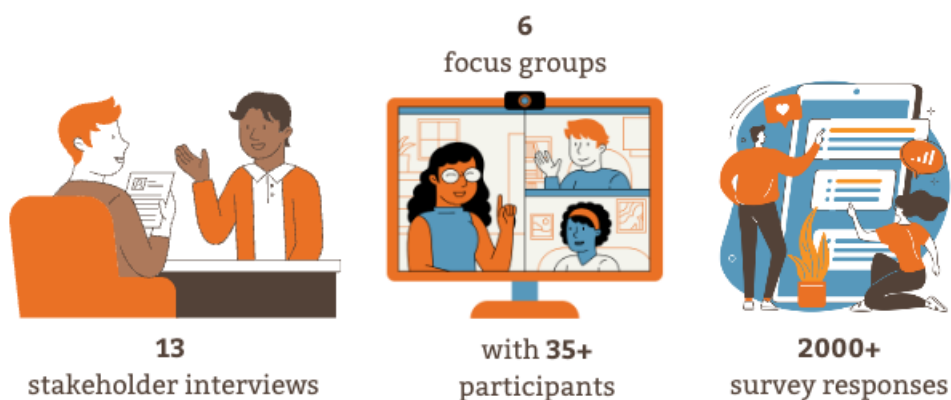
To gather input for this assessment, we identified stakeholders within the regional supply chain—defined as the Austin MSA: Travis, Caldwell, Bastrop, Hays, Williamson counties—and organized them by the following food sectors:

- Production
- Processing
- Distribution
- Retailers/Restaurants
- Institutional Buyers
- Recovery
- Labor

Managerial and executive stakeholders were invited to individual interviews and/or focus groups organized by sector. Front-line food workers in food retail/service¹ were invited to share their input through an anonymous survey to mitigate concerns of employer retaliation.

Input from these stakeholders was used to develop the content of this report. The baseline briefing, barriers/threats, and opportunities were generated by stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and the food worker survey. Additional context and data are provided by the author.

In total, the team collected input through:



For the Participant List, see Appendix A.

¹ The Central Texas Food Worker Survey engaged individuals employed in grocery stores/farmers' markets/convenience stores, restaurants/food trucks/bars, processing/distribution, and restaurant delivery. The survey excluded farm and agricultural workers because of the unique characteristics of farm labor and because farm workers were invited to participate in the "Food Production" focus group.

Assess & Strategize

Supply chain input Interviews and focus groups utilized the following Discussion Guide:

1. Evaluate baseline food system functioning

- a. How well does our regional supply chain function? How well is our regional supply chain positioned to respond to disruptions?

2. Identify food system strengths and assets

- a. What are some of the strengths and critical assets of your supply chain and our region as it relates to the global food supply chain more generally?
 - i. Topics for consideration:
 1. Sourcing
 2. Transportation
 3. Supply capacity & storage
 4. Financial impact
 5. Equity

3. Assess potential hazards to the food system and food system vulnerabilities

- a. What are our food supply chain's biggest risks (current and future)?
 - i. What are the local disruptions planned for (or are planning for)? How do you plan for these risks?
 - ii. What are the lessons learned from recent disruptions and disasters? (COVID-19/inflation/Winter Storm Uri/2023 Winter Storm Mara)
 1. Topics for consideration:
 - a. Sourcing
 - b. Transportation
 - c. Supply capacity & storage
 - d. Financial impact
 - e. Equity

4. Resilience Visioning: Discuss opportunities to collaborate between private actors and government to achieve food system resilience

- a. What can we do together to strengthen our supply chain and address some of the discussed challenges?

For the Food Worker Survey text, see Appendix B.

Baseline: A Briefing on the Regional Supply Chain

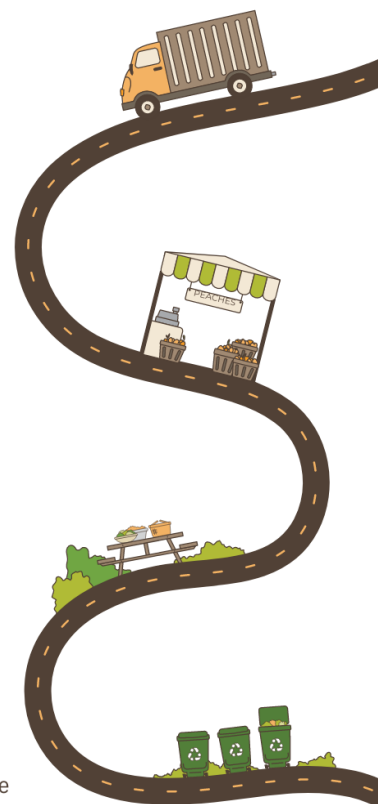
Food Production

Where our food comes from, including everything from farming to ranching to backyard gardening.



Food Processing and Distribution

What happens to food from where it is grown to when it reaches your plate, including how food is moved and processed.



Food Markets and Retail

How food is sold and purchased.

Food Consumption and Access

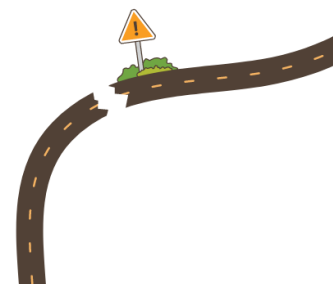
How we eat our food, who struggles to get enough food, and what impact our consumption has on our health.

Post-Consumption and Food Waste

What happens to the parts of food we don't eat and the impact of food waste on the environment.

Food Justice

How systemic racism and colonization impact how the food system works — *or doesn't work* — for each member of our community.



The regional supply chain is defined as the Austin MSA–Travis, Caldwell, Bastrop, Hays, Williamson counties.

Food Production

“We have farmers' markets that we can sell to. We have some wholesalers like Farmhouse Delivery [that we can sell to.] There are some local farms that have really incredibly successful restaurant wholesale channels but... when it comes to participating in and actually getting food to the community of Austin—I don't know how I plug into that, and I want to. I want to feed my community—why else would I grow food?”

— Food production focus group participant



- **Central Texas**—Travis, Caldwell, Bastrop, Hays, Williamson counties—hosts **8,498 farms**.
 - With blackland prairie soil and a long growing season, the land offers a large capacity for growing food.



- **There is a “missing middle” in regional food production.**
 - Just over half of all USDA-recognized producers farm on 50 acres or less; 80% of farms generate between \$1,000-\$9,999 in sales.
 - 17% generate between \$10,000-\$99,999 in sales.
 - 3% generate \$100,000 or more in sales.



- **There are numerous barriers & threats to increasing local production, including:**
 - Lack of access to land, capital, distribution channels, and markets.
 - Lack of infrastructure, including cold storage, aggregators, and processing facilities.
 - Lack of understanding among smaller producers of quality standards, retail purchasing requirements, and food safety certifications.
 - Inadequate communication between suppliers and buyers.
 - Climate change-fueled extreme weather.



- **Despite the lack of supply, there is a huge demand for local food.**
 - Fruit and vegetables account for **13%** of acres of cropland harvested regionally—vegetables alone make up just 0.1%.
 - Only about **0.06%** of food consumed in Travis County is produced locally—meaning our food supply is subject to disruptions nationally and abroad.
 - The Austin area has a vibrant restaurant scene with a **strong culture for local food**, though the cost of local food is not accessible to all buyers or consumers.



- **There are numerous City and nonprofit programs to support small, local farmers and strong organizational capacity (such as Sustainable Food Center, FarmShare, and Urban Roots).**



Central Texas Agricultural Profile, 2017

County	Farms	Top crops (by acres)	Market value of products sold	% of total farms w/ sales less than 10,000	% of total farms w/ sales ≥ \$100,000	% of sales from direct to consumers	% that hires farm labor
Bastrop	2,120	Hay, pecans, sod, corn for grain	\$44,650,000	77%	3%	5%	16%
Caldwell	1,517	Hay, corn for grain, cotton, sorghum for grain, pecans	\$53,638,000	79%	3%	3%	19%
Hays	1,128	Corn for grain, hay, sorghum for grain, cotton, wheat for grain	\$21,751,000	86%	2%	7%	18%
Travis	1,099	Hay, corn for grain, sorghum for grain, wheat for grain, cotton	\$28,000,000	79%	0.04	9%	22%
Williamson	2,634	Corn for grain, Hay, cotton, wheat for grain, sorghum for grain	\$114,923,000	77%	5%	5%	16%
Central Texas	8,498		\$262,962,000	80%	3%	6%	17%

Source: [2017 Census of Agriculture](#) (most recent data)

Food Processing

“The city has done a great job supporting the technology industry, and that's why so much tech has moved here, right? But they haven't replicated that with food. In Austin, you have costs that don't make sense to manufacture here, and then on top of it, if you do figure it out, you can't count on the grid, water, or the roads. Tell me why someone would want to produce here.”

— Food processing focus group participant



- **Central Texas hosts few food processors.**
 - In addition to a lack of infrastructure, recent extreme weather events have contributed to a loss of power and/or water, further jeopardizing food manufacturing.
 - Compared to the Dallas area, which is a hub for food processing and [hosts](#) giants like Tyson, Mission, Quaker, and Hillshire, **Central Texas maintains just [178 food manufacturing facilities and few national brands](#)**. For national brands, the region does not provide convenient access to other large population centers outside of Texas. For example, Siete Foods is headquartered in Austin but does not manufacture here.



- **There are no food hubs in Austin.**
 - Common Market serves some of Central Texas, and Austin has two local food aggregators (Farmhouse Delivery and Farm to Table). Still, there is no food hub to support local farmers' integration into larger markets by handling the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of their products.



- **There is a bottleneck for protein producers due to the lack of processing capacity**—just [12](#) animal slaughtering/processing facilities operate in the region.
- **While some food businesses like restaurants have suffered, some food products have benefited during and since the COVID-19 pandemic.**
 - Frozen foods sales (like Nighthawk Frozen Foods, manufactured in the region) jumped and remained high. Nationally, frozen food sales [increased](#) 22% in 2020 and 9% in 2022.



- **National and global shortages of packaging supplies have continued through COVID-19, including [paper](#) and [cardboard](#).**



- **Retailers in Austin, including Wheatsville Co-op and Whole Foods Market, offer local vendor support programs.**

Food Distribution

“Last year, I was able to buy a bunch of carrots for \$1.50. This year, they're \$3, \$4, \$5 for a bunch of carrots—and that's wholesale. Then I got to go and mark it up and try to sell it to my customers. That's like 24-karat carrots. It's too expensive—but the inputs are increasing just like labor, and the loss of land is increasing, so the farmers have to charge more, which then further limits who has access to those products... farmers have to hit profitability, or they can't continue operating. They have to find that line of what makes sense for them to grow or produce.”

— Food distribution focus group participant



- The largest distribution centers that serve Austin are located outside of Austin near Temple and San Antonio—reducing the amount of food stored locally in the case of disasters.
- Despite the demand for and interest in local/organic products, in the wake of COVID-19 and [record-high food prices](#), consumers and purchasers want the cheapest option.



- For distributors, the lack of consistent quantity that small, local producers can provide dissuades partnerships.



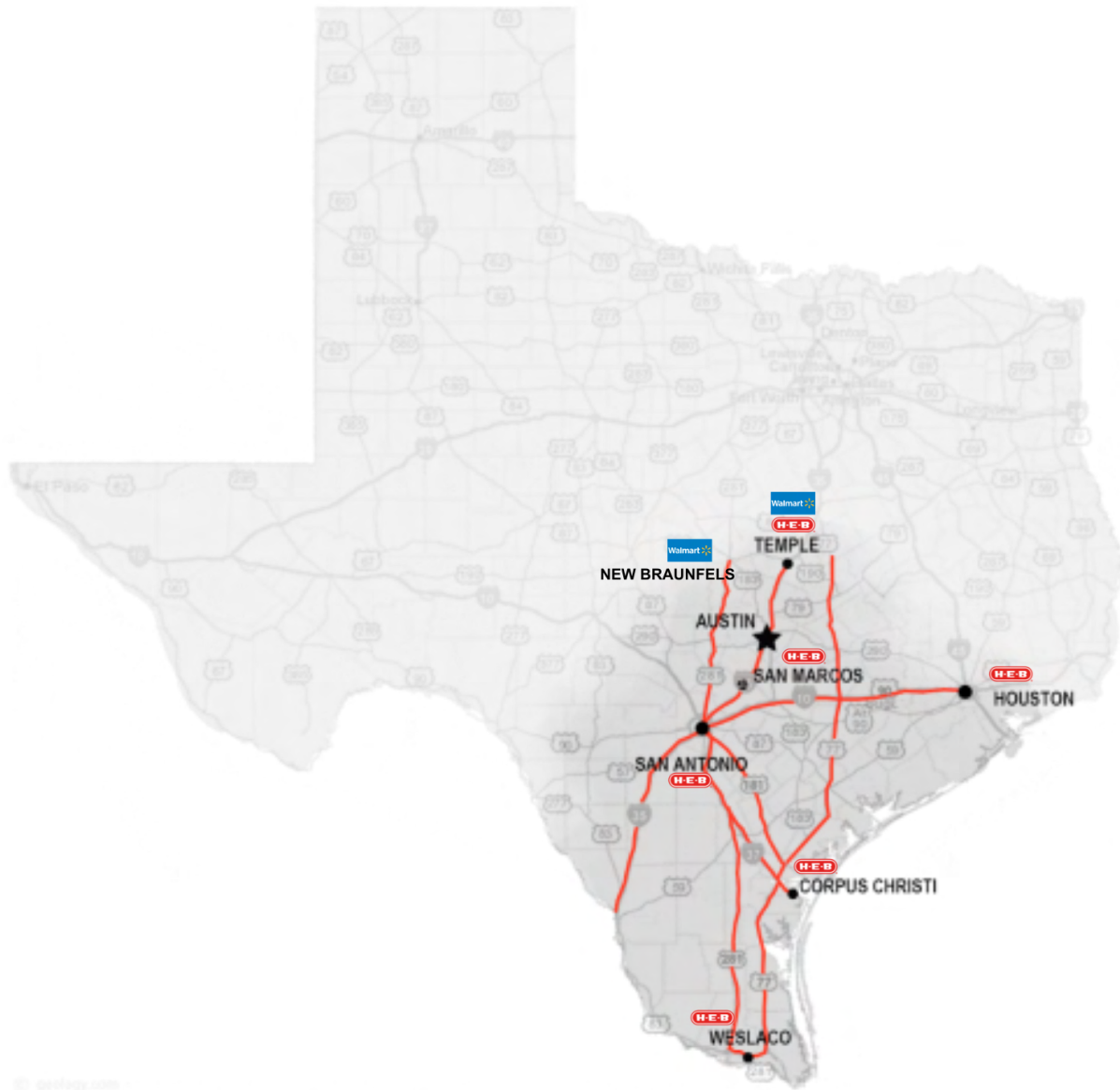
- National and global shortages of supplies and price increases have continued through the COVID-19 pandemic—increasing prices along every aspect of the supply chain.
 - Labor shortage has led to capacity reductions and less predictability and reliability in supply.



- The labor shortage is accelerating investments in warehouse automation
 - Kroger is entering the Central Texas region using [automation for micro-fulfillment](#).
 - Truck driver availability has stabilized for some actors while remaining a significant labor challenge for others.



Top grocers' food distribution centers serving Central Texas



Source: Interviews with HEB and Walmart. Map: Geology.com








H-E-B, Central Texas' top retailer, maintains all six of its food distribution warehouses within the state—with its main distribution center in Temple. Walmart, the #2 retailer for food purchases regionally, maintains 19 distribution centers in Texas; two centers in New Braunfels and Temple primarily service Central Texas.

Because nearly all food is distributed to food stores by truck, roads, bridges, and tunnels are crucial points of [vulnerability](#) within food distribution, particularly in areas with limited transportation routes, such as Austin.

Food Markets & Retail

“Pre-COVID was excellent—there were limited interruptions. In a post-COVID world, there are a lot more challenges around the supply chain. Even things like transportation and labor continue to be issues. Anything that comes up globally can and will impact the supply chain. There are periodic shortages on the shelves depending on what the product is and where it comes from. That impacts our customer base—all depending on what's going on in the world.”

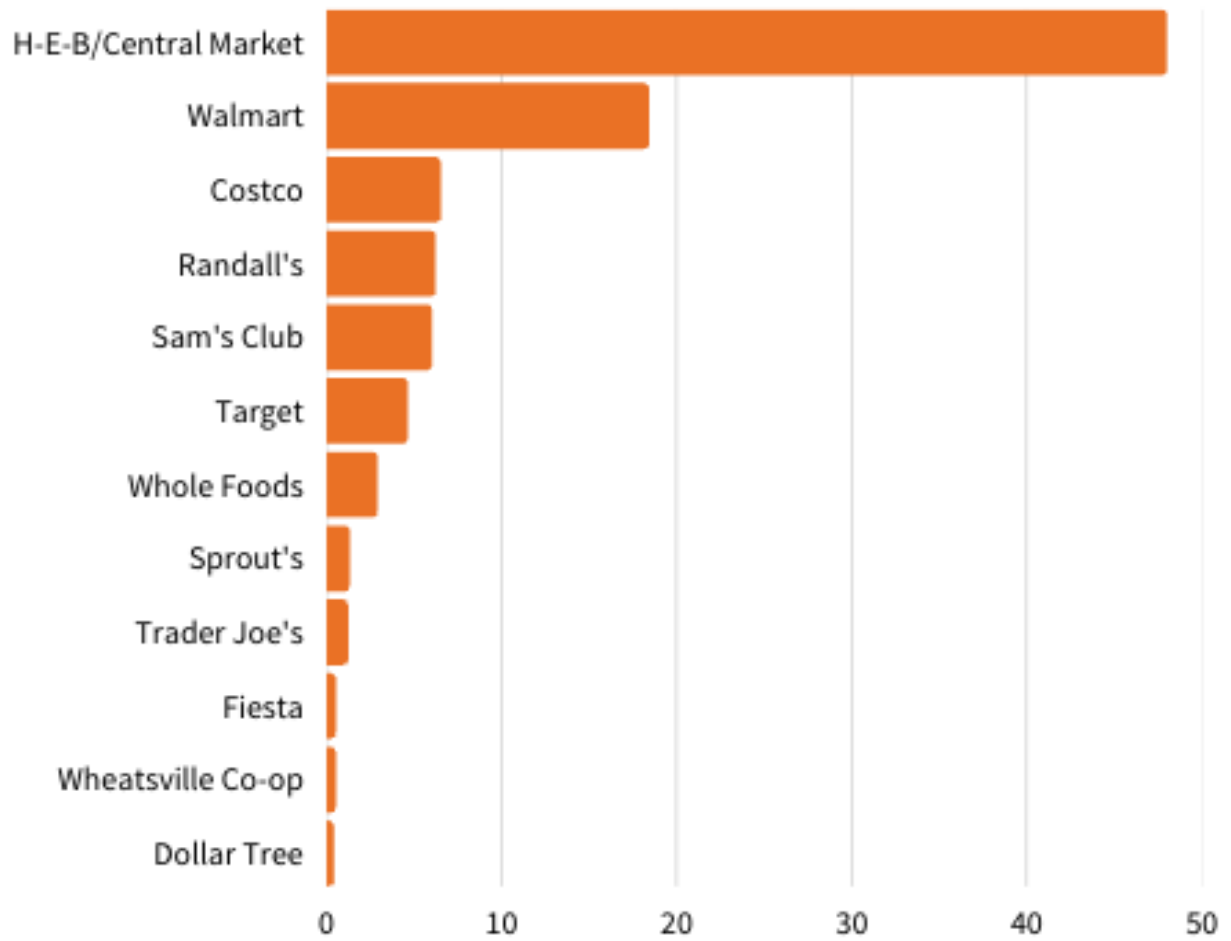
— Food retail stakeholder interview

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 - **In the Austin area, there are nearly 200 supermarkets; consumers spend around [\\$7 billion](#) collectively in food retail (primarily grocery stores and restaurants).**
 - While there is diversity in food retail offerings, H-E-B stores overwhelmingly [dominate](#) the market.
 - There is inequity in food access: 18 out of 47 zip codes in Travis County have no grocery stores—making them particularly [vulnerable](#) to disruptions.
- 
 - **Since 2020, supply shortages have been the “new normal” for retailers, restaurants, and institutional buyers.**
 - Before the pandemic, retailers received [99%](#) rates of supplier fulfillment; in 2020, rates dipped as low as 80% and have not returned to historic levels.
 - Institutional buyers must reckon with daily outages and item substitutions.
- 
 - **Inflation and labor remain a challenge for food business employers.**
 - In Texas, [92%](#) of restaurants have recently raised prices for customers due to rising costs; 70% reported that they were understaffed last year.
- 
 - **There is organizational collaboration and support around school food procurement—Central Texas Food Services Collaborative, Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP), and Menus for Change provide valuable networks and learning communities.**
- 

 - **Vertical integration and consolidation across the supply chain make it difficult for small players to “break into” the industry and create barriers to the institutional procurement of local food.**

Nearly 50 cents of every \$1 spent on groceries in Austin goes to H-E-B



Austin-area grocery stores by market share



Source: [AXIOS Austin](#)

Food Labor

“I make \$2.13/hr, and there’s no wage security. When the store’s power went out, and we couldn’t serve customers (and thus couldn’t make tips), the store did not compensate us to make up for that loss of income. I feel incredibly disrespected as a worker.”

— Food worker survey comment



- The thousands of individuals across Central Texas that work in the food system provide critical labor that is the foundation of the local food and music economy.
- While retailers and restaurants are experiencing disruptions from labor vacancies, those employed in the food industry face long hours, strenuous conditions, and often low wages (and an average wage of just [\\$11.25/hr](#) for service workers).
- These workers, surrounded by food, are struggling to eat themselves. Locally, **almost half** of those surveyed reported currently or having previously experienced hunger.²
 - Because of outdated eligibility barriers, the [majority](#) of low-income food workers are denied nutrition assistance.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, while servers lost income, food retail, delivery, and processing (and production) workers were classified as “essential” and continued operations.
 - In Central Texas, the majority of those surveyed reported catching the virus, many through exposure at work. Some reported having to work even when feeling sick.
- **The majority of survey respondents lost power in their homes during at least one of the recent extreme weather events**—threatening their ability to travel to work and creating a vulnerability within food retail in times of crisis.
 - Around half reported receiving compensation for missed shifts during these emergencies.
- While Texas is a “[right-to-work](#)” state, Austin hosts many organizations supporting food labor, including Austin Democratic Socialists of America, Texas Service Industry, Restaurant Workers United, Unite Here Local, Texas Service Industry Coalition, and Good Work Austin.
 - In Austin, two Starbucks locations (24th & Nueces/45th & Lamar) have voted to unionize through [Starbucks Workers United](#). Three Austin locations of the pizza chain Via 313 also [filed](#) and worked towards unionization in 2022 through Restaurant Workers United.

² The Central Texas Food Worker survey was open from April 14 to June 9, 2023, and received 2,037 responses. This survey was intended to gather feedback from food workers to better understand their experiences, challenges and needs while assessing potential vulnerabilities within the private food system.

Challenges facing local food workers

Voices from the food labor survey

Wages & Inflation

“Job wages do not keep up with inflation (the constant rising in costs of groceries, gas, health insurance as an example).”

“I've worked in the Austin Service industry for 15 years and am constantly facing job instability, no access to healthcare, housing instability due to the rising cost of living, and no increase in my wages.”

Housing

“I have just now gotten myself to a stable living situation this year. Before this year, I was paying and moving to the cheapest apartments I could find at the end of every lease term if it made sense to do so (after calculating the cost of moving versus potential savings from rent increases).”

Lack of medical care

“A substantial part of this city's economy runs on hospitality and food service workers, and so many of us are barely scraping by. I've had to watch friends and coworkers come in sick or injured because the cost of missing work would ruin them—if they could afford health care at all.”

Mental health

“It has been challenging to work the DoorDash shift while I am going to school. It puts a lot of stress on me to time-manage getting school work done and balancing the responsibility of work to pay the monthly bills.”

Access to the social safety net and food assistance

“In order to afford rent, you have to have multiple incomes coming in. My husband & I have applied for SNAP [food stamps,] but are always denied. One time, we were denied for \$23 over income.”



Food Recovery

“The amount of food donations have gone down—particularly from grocery chains. Retailers are keeping things on the shelf a little bit longer trying to sell them up as long as they can. Some of the retailers are now moving to a discounted price for “last day foods.” *But many places still have a ton of surplus food every day. Getting them or their corporate managers to agree to donate is a different issue.*”

— Food recovery focus group participant



- **Every day, [1.24 million pounds](#) of food are wasted in Austin, with significant environmental implications.**
 - Decomposing food in landfills accounts for about 2% of our community’s total greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Food is wasted because of cosmetic imperfections, damaged packaging, incorrect descriptions, irregular size or weight, or it is labeled as past its expiration date.**
 - The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confirmed that [expiration dates are often not accurate](#), but there is a need for more clarification for both retailers and consumers. These health regulations often prevent food waste reduction.



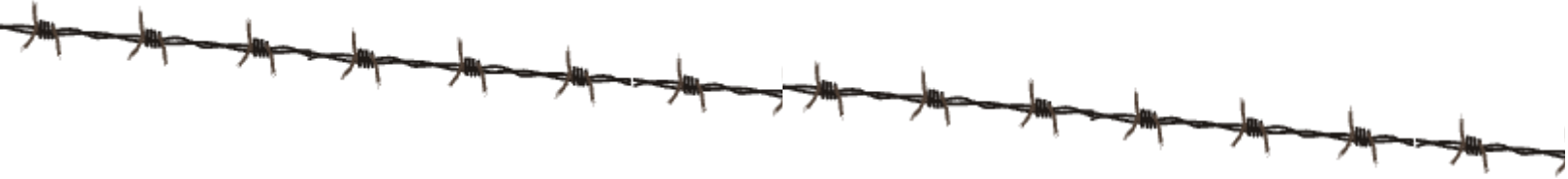
- **Post-COVID-19, food donations have decreased.**
 - Since 2020, in response to changing consumer patterns and inflation, retailers have started purchasing less and are looking for alternative uses or re-uses for products to reduce waste. Although less food waste has positive environmental benefits, the decrease in donations has created a challenge for food banks and mutual aid organizations that rely on surplus food to feed those in need.
- **Preferences are moving away from canned/frozen goods and towards fresh foods, which are harder to rescue, store, and distribute quickly.**
- **Food recovery/waste diversion largely takes place at restaurants, distribution, and retail facilities and some at institutional/corporate buyers.**
 - While there is an increased interest in donating surplus food, obtaining those food donations is difficult because of a lack of organization, planning, and communication.



- **Central Texas hosts a robust community of organizations working in food recovery, including ATX Free Fridge, Keep Austin Fed, WorkingGroup512, and Carol’s Kindness.**



Hazards: *Barriers to a Robust Local Food Economy & Threats to Resilient Supply Chains*



Natural disasters and other social/political crises threaten the complex supply chains that connect food from the fields to our forks. Although supply chains have recently gained notoriety during the COVID-19 pandemic, these globalized networks have long been a point of vulnerability within the US food system. These disruptions threaten food security—particularly during a localized disaster—while aggravating existing inequities.

According to the [Johns Hopkins Center for a Liveable Future](#), **vulnerability** is the degree to which an asset or group is exposed, susceptible to, or unable to cope with a hazard/**threat**. Something more “vulnerable” to a particular event is at a greater risk of experiencing negative consequences of a disruption because it is either more exposed, more sensitive, or unable to adapt or transform in the wake of a disruptive event. Our regional food supply chains are “vulnerable” to both regional and national **threats**—the natural or human disruptions that can impact our food system. **Barriers** or obstacles prevent both a robust food economy and a resilient regional food system.

The following barriers and threats were identified by stakeholders during focus groups and interviews.

Barriers to a robust local food economy

“We farm five acres pretty intensively. Our CSA-style program with 150 households is about 20% of our sales. 80% of sales are specialty wholesale with around 40 restaurant accounts that are always growing. Right now, as a farm business, we feel the demand and pressure to produce, but we've hit our ceiling where we currently are and have been looking to buy land for nearly two years. Land is really expensive—so how is the business going to grow? Is it going to grow?”

— Food production stakeholder interview

- **Access to markets**
 - Consolidation makes it hard to break into the food industry across sectors, and the legacy of ongoing [racial/gender and other forms of discrimination](#) impacts opportunity.
 - Because of real and perceived risks, retailers are often unwilling to purchase from or work with local vendors.
- **Lack of scale**
 - There are not enough growers to satisfy demand. The low supply/high cost of locally grown food means prices are too high for local manufacturers (and for many consumers) to afford.
- **Infrastructure**
 - There is a consistent lack of support, infrastructure (aggregation), resources, and access to land/space for small actors across the supply chain.
- **Communication/coordination**
 - There is inadequate communication and coordination across supply chain players.
 - Actors have a lack of understanding of the complex laws that govern institutional procurement, retail purchasing, and other regulations
 - Consumer expectations: The global food system has eliminated food seasonality—consumers expect to have access to food items year-round. Consumers also have an unrealistic understanding of the “[true cost](#)” of food because of artificially low food prices from industrially-produced agriculture with environmental externalities.
- **Local policy**
 - There has been inconsistent support for food systems from local elected officials.
 - Affordability in Austin is a challenge for employers—***will agricultural and food workers continue to be able to live in the area?***

Regional threats to resilient supply chains

- **Extreme weather & climate change**
 - Austin can [expect](#) an increase in annual and seasonal extreme temperatures, more frequent droughts and precipitation, and likely increases in humidity and heat indexes.
 - All supply chain players must now grapple with the “new normal” of Texas weather:
 - Statewide disasters that impact 1-35 have been the most disastrous.
 - Previous models of emergency preparedness largely focused on hurricanes, not ice or snow.
 - Large retailers are moving away from just-in-time inventory for shelf-stable items like water and toilet paper—sometimes “preloading” stores months or years in advance.
- **Infrastructure reliability**
 - In the past decade, Austin has experienced three major power outages in [2011](#), [2021](#), and [2023](#)—disrupting food production, processing, distribution, sale³, and consumption. Winter storm Uri in 2021 caused losses exceeding [\\$600 million](#) for Central Texas farmers and ranchers.
 - Small retailers are struggling to prepare for emergencies in the same way as larger actors due to financial constraints:
 - Larger retailers can more easily increase their transportation fleet, invest in backup power, and offer labor incentives. Industry giants like [Walmart](#), which established a corporate Emergency Operation Center in the early 2000s, generally have the resources to invest in structural improvements to withstand disasters.
- **Loss of agricultural land and farmers**
 - Farmers are [aging out](#): 41% of farm workers in Travis County are 65 or older; 8% are under 35.
 - Travis County loses [16.8 acres of farmland every day](#)—a trend that has shot up in recent years. ***With just [221,900 acres of farmland](#), agricultural land could be lost in less than 40 years.***
- **Dependence on IH-35**
 - Most major food distribution centers are located outside of Austin on the IH-35 corridor—the reliability of this highway during extreme weather events represents a crucial point of [vulnerability](#).

³ See Appendix C for a map of impacted retailers during Winter Storm Uri.

National Threats to resilient supply chain

- **Labor & Automation**

- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, US food workers—traditionally exploited for cheap employment—have [increased union organizing](#) for better wages and conditions, in part contributing to a national [labor shortage](#).
- To address this shortage, companies like Amazon threaten to replace workers through increased [automation](#). [One-third](#) of all grocery retail tasks could be automated in the next eight years.
- Automation in agriculture—though offering the potential to improve [efficiency](#)—also threatens the [livelihoods](#) of farmworkers and small farm owners.

- **Avian influenza and other health risks**

- Avian influenza recently wiped out more than [58 million birds](#)—dramatically increasing the price of eggs. Similar outbreaks threaten the sustainability of animal protein production.

- **National and global shortages of food items and supply**

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were limited interruptions in food retail and purchasing.
- Since 2020, crises like the lingering effects of the pandemic, Russia’s war on Ukraine, climate change-fueled disasters, and the closure of the nation’s top infant formula producer have contributed to food shortages for items like [baby formula](#), [wheat, and bread](#), and food packaging supplies like [paper](#) and [cardboard](#).

- **Inflation & “Greedflation”**

- In 2022, U.S. consumers saw the largest annual increase in food prices since the 1980s. While food prices generally increased about 2% in prior years, they increased about [11%](#) from 2021 to 2022.
- Corporate profits accounted for [54%](#) of food price increases between 2020 and 2021—more than doubling from decades prior.

- **Consolidation of supply chains**

- A hyper-consolidated industry, supermarkets generally have a vertically-integrated supply chain—meaning they own their supplier (or vice versa).
- [Four](#) companies—Walmart, Costco, Kroger, and Ahold Delhaize—control 65% of the food retail market. Supermarket giants Kroger and Albertsons are [currently planning a merger](#) which, if it takes effect, would make them the second-largest food retailer in the U.S.
- This kind of consolidation gives corporations the power to keep prices high—particularly during crises.

- **Food Waste**

- The U.S. is the world’s leader in food waste—nearly [40%](#) of all food is wasted, significantly [contributing](#) to greenhouse gas emissions. While some retailers are looking to decrease food waste, this creates challenges for charitable food redistribution.

Opportunities for Collaboration

The following recommendations were generated by stakeholders during focus groups and interviews to inform Austin/Travis County food plan goals. These opportunities should be shared with relevant stakeholders for their incorporation into food planning.

RECOMMENDATION	HAZARD	CURRENT/PREVIOUS EFFORTS	EXAMPLES	STAKEHOLDER
1. Engage food businesses in the development of the Mass Care Standard Operating Procedure	Emergency preparedness/ disaster response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster Food & Drinking Water Appendix Mass Care SOP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Green Deal: plan for ensuring food supply and food security in times of crisis 	Mass Care SOP Steering Committee; COA Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
2. Engage private sector businesses that represent critical infrastructure (food/restaurants/distributors/housing) year-round in emergency preparedness and response through monthly coordination meetings	Emergency preparedness/ disaster response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual disaster preparedness table-top (HSEM) The Austin-Travis County Winter Storm Uri After-Action Report Hot Wash After Action Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Houston/ San Antonio regularly convene private sector businesses involved in disaster response 	Mass Care SOP Steering Committee; COA Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
3. Develop a City/County grant to offer financial support for disaster-impacted food businesses; consider public/private partnerships	Emergency preparedness/ disaster response		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF) Seattle Small Business Relief Fund DoorDash Disaster Relief Fund GIANT Emergency Grant 	Mass Care SOP Steering Committee; COA Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
4. Contract with local suppliers during disasters—particularly for shelf-stable items and water	Emergency preparedness/ disaster response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster Food & Drinking Water Appendix 		Mass Care SOP Steering Committee; COA Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
5. Explore resource sharing between the City and food businesses for food/water distribution during disasters (trucks etc.)	Emergency preparedness/ disaster response			Mass Care SOP Steering Committee; COA Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
6. Organize a supplier showcase to provide buyers the opportunity to find/meet local suppliers (producers & processors)	Access to Markets (for producers and local food processors/CPG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future of Food at SXSW 		Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Groups (Production, Markets & Retail, Processing)
7. Establish an incentive program to reward institutional buyers for purchasing local foods	Access to Markets (for producers and local food processors/CPG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Food Purchasing Program - AISD (TDA) Texas Farm Fresh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Food Purchasing Program Menus of Change 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Groups (Markets & Retail, Procurement)

RECOMMENDATION	HAZARD	CURRENT/PREVIOUS EFFORTS	EXAMPLES	STAKEHOLDER
8. Incentivize large retailers to support more local food products through contracts, marketing, and technical assistance	Access to Markets (for producers and local food processors/CPG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheatsville Co-op Local Vendor Spotlight Local and Emerging Accelerator Program (LEAP) (Whole Foods Market) 		Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Groups (Markets & Retail, Procurement)
9. Encourage more collaboration between institutional buyers at different scales to support buying power and resource sharing	Access to Markets (for producers and local food processors/CPG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Texas Food Services Collaborative Texas 20 Purchasing Cooperative Farm to School (Sustainable Food Center) 		Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Groups (Markets & Retail, Procurement)
10. Purchase parcels identified as USDA prime farmland, such as the property previously occupied by Johnson's Backyard Garden, for conservation purposes and lease to farmers to keep the land productive	Farmland conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin Healthy Food Access Initiative Austin Climate Equity Plan Travis County Food and Farm Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Farms Fund Maine Farmland Trust 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
11. Explore opportunities to develop a safety net for farmers at the local level	Farmer support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural Producer Support Fund (Texas Farmers Markets) 		Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
12. Research a contract guarantee fund that could reduce the risk for farmers and buyers	Farmer support		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
13. Work with TAMU Extension Service to build a program to support sustainable, local food production	Farmer support/scaling production			Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
14. Encourage labor, equipment, and other resource sharing between food producers	Farmer support/scaling production		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future Harvest 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
15. Collaborate with nonprofit organizations to support farm and ranch incubator programs	Farmer support/scaling production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austin Community College (Elgin) Sustainable Agriculture Program FarmShare "Farmer Starter" Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
16. Expand education/training opportunities, particularly around food safety and relevant certifications, to promote retail and wholesale readiness	Farmer support/scaling production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSMA Produce Safety Rule Training 		Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production)
17. Support the creation of a food hub (including cold and/or dry storage, distribution, processing, and retail space)	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travis County Food and Farm Initiative Central Texas Food Hub Feasibility Study Nourish Austin food hub proposal Elgin Local Food Center (ELF)-Unfunded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Acre (Minnesota) Red Tomato Food Hub (Providence) Profound Food Hub (Dallas) 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production, Processing, Distribution)

RECOMMENDATION	HAZARD	CURRENT/PREVIOUS EFFORTS	EXAMPLES	STAKEHOLDER
18. Support shift in consumer culture to benefit local producers/distributors through a City “Buy Local” campaign around seasonal, local food	Communication/ coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Farm Fresh • SFC Buy Fresh Buy Local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy Fresh Buy Local Hawaii • Utah's Own 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Production, Markets & Retail)
19. Launch and manage loan or grant fund to support local producers and processors/CPG in scaling up to meet the needs of retailers	Farmer support / scaling production/ scaling processors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Justice Mini-Grant program • Local and Emerging Accelerator Program (LEAP) (Whole Foods Market) 		Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Processing)
20. Leverage supermarkets operating regionally to expand support for local food system through peer learning for small retailers	Communication/ /coordination/ scaling production		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (LEAP) (Whole Foods Market) • HEB Supplier Diversity Program 	Austin/Travis County food plan Issue Area Group (Markets & Retail, Processing)
21. Convene the food community across the supply chain to break down silos and build connections while strengthening the network of actors involved in the food system	Communication/ coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Food Access monthly call (OOS) • Texas Food Policy Roundtable • Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board • Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance • Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Conference • Texas Hispanic Farmer and Rancher Conference • Small Producers' Conference • Texas Cities Food Access Summit • Central Texas Foodshed Collaborative 		Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee
22. Create a common language around the food economy and its economic contributions to the region through the Austin/Travis County food plan to ensure better coordination between food system stakeholders and City/County government	Communication/ coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Texas Food System Data Dashboard 		Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee
23. Coordinate with other organizations engaged in planning initiatives related to the food system to identify shared goals and aligned metrics	Communication/ coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Texas Food Bank FRESH Initiative 		Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee
24. Create a legislative agenda & advocate for changes in food policy at the City/State level to support the goals of the Austin/Travis County food plan	Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Food Policy Roundtable • Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) 		Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee
25. Elevate investments in water systems, power grids, and roads as critical to the food system; consider additional support for which critical assets are most vulnerable to disruption	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Resilience as a Service (Austin Energy) 		Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee; Mass Care SOP
26. Conduct a food economy asset map to identify missing players that reflect Austin/Travis County food plan values	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Real Food Economic Impact of Austin's Food Sector (2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Local Food Portal • Eat Local First (WA) 	Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee

Conclusion

Supplemental recommendations—moving this work forward

Most Americans rely on the private food system—supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores, and restaurants—to put food on their plates. Even the largest federal nutrition assistance program in the United States—food stamps—helps to meet the food needs of low-income individuals by way of grocery stores. Times of emergency are no different. When there is a crisis, those with access and ability head to the nearest store to gather necessities, expecting that it will be open with stocked shelves. As climate-related and other disasters increase in prevalence, the role of food supply chains has become more prominent, and secure food supply chains more critical.

Below are recommendations for immediate next steps:

- 1. Share this report with Austin/Travis County food plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to support the selection of Issue Area Groups.**
 - a. The CAC should consider how the “resilience” of the food system and its supply chains will be incorporated into Issue Area Groups to prioritize resilience and emergency preparedness within the Austin/Travis County food plan.
- 2. When selected, share this report and relevant opportunities with Issue Area Groups chairs and members.**
 - a. This report and other recent relevant reports like *The State of the Food System* should be used as materials to further familiarize Issue Area Groups with their sector.
 - b. The 26 opportunities identified by stakeholders should be included within food plan goals for a more resilient food system.
 - c. All barriers and threats should be reviewed by Issue Area Group members to consider additional recommendations to address vulnerabilities within regional supply chains.
 - d. This report may be used as an Appendix to the food plan or incorporated throughout as appropriate.
- 3. Share this report with the Mass Care Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Steering Committee for incorporation and consideration.**
 - a. Review the participation list to ensure that relevant food supply chain stakeholders are engaged in the development of the Mass Care SOP.
 - b. Review relevant “Emergency preparedness/disaster response” opportunities (#1-5; 25) for immediate attention and consideration within the development of the Mass Care SOP.

4. Continue to engage private food supply chain actors in both emergency food access planning and the Austin/Travis County food plan.

- a. The [Austin-Travis County Winter Storm Uri After-Action Report](#) observed that “the private sector is an integral part of the supply chain and provides crucial food support to communities during the response and recovery period. The role of private companies, such as grocery stores and restaurants, likely could have been better coordinated before the storm.” The report recommends “codifying relationships with private companies regarding their roles in planning and operations during disasters and catastrophic events, including supply chain management.”
- b. In the creation of the Mass Care SOP, City staff should include retailers, distributors, and other key supply chain stakeholders as advisors in the piloting and socialization of the plan. The designation of responsibilities between public, private, and non-profit actors should be clearly defined, and communication protocols (informally developed during Winter Storm Uri) should be expanded and maintained. This will ensure buy-in for the plan and better coordinate emergency resources between the private and public sectors.

5. Continue to engage front-line food workers.

- a. Food workers are essential workers. During recent storms, H-E-B, Wheatsville, and other retailers experienced staffing challenges as workers were unable to travel to work. Labor shortages were another factor that contributed to long lines and empty shelves.
- b. To continue to engage and prioritize front-line workers, the CAC should consider how “labor” will be included within Issue Area Groups and consider targeted outreach to retailers, restaurant workers, and other front-line workers through organizational relationships and targeted events.
- c. Consider opportunities to expand the Food Worker Survey—such as through regular collection as part of the State of the Food System report. In future iterations of surveying, consider partnering with grassroots and labor organizations to distribute gift cards or other financial/in-kind incentives for participation. If there are organizations with food worker buy-in, consider supporting an organization-hosted focus group or roundtable.

6. Continue to engage elected officials to ensure a food resilience champion.

- a. A successful planning process must prioritize constant engagement with those with the agency for the adoption of its goals.

Appendix A: Participation List

Stakeholder Interviews

1. Production
 - a. Sue Beckwith–Texas Center for Local Food
 - b. Finegan Ferreboeuf–Steelbow Farm
2. Processing
 - a. Mason Arnold–Conscious Pet Food/Cece’s Veggie Co/Naturally Austin
3. Distribution
 - a. Margaret Smith–Common Market
 - b. John Miller–Sysco
4. Retailers & Restaurants
 - a. Joaquin Jaimes–HEB
 - b. David Shephard and Craig Andrews–Walmart
 - c. John Shaw–Whole Foods
5. Supply Chains: General
 - a. Errol Schweizer–Industry Expert
 - b. Sam Eder and Christina Wing–Big Wheelbarrow
 - c. Sari Vatske–Central Texas Food Bank
 - d. Elliott Smith–Kitchen Sink Strategies
 - e. Hallie Casey & Joseph Ramirez–Sustainable Food Center

Focus Groups:

1. Institutional Buyers
 - a. Manor ISD, Florence ISD, University of Texas Austin,
2. Production
 - a. Texas Buffalo Project, Truebird Farm, Farmshare Austin, Green Gate Farms, Millberg Farm, Munkebo Farm, Urban Roots, Festival Beach, Big Wheelbarrow, Black Lives Veggies
3. Processing
 - a. Siete Foods, Clif Bar, Nighthawk Frozen Foods, Austin Foodshed Investors, Greener Pastures
4. Distribution
 - a. Hardie’s, Farmhouse Delivery
5. Retailers & Restaurants
 - a. Wheatsville Co-op, Texas Restaurant Association, County Line BBQ, Farmshare Austin, Texas Farmers Markets
6. Waste
 - a. Keep Austin Fed, Working Group 512, Carol’s Kindness, Rural Mutual Aid, Reskused, Good Work Austin/ATX Free Fridge, Farmshare

Appendix B: Central Texas Food Retail & Service Worker Survey

As part of the Austin/Travis County Food planning process, the Office of Sustainability is conducting a research survey about the experiences of food workers employed in:

- Food markets and retail (grocery stores/farmers' markets/convenience stores)
 - Food establishments (restaurants/food trucks/bars)
- Food processing/ distribution (Packing facilities/ industrial kitchens/commercial and commissary kitchens/meat/poultry processing facilities, etc)
- Food delivery (UberEats/DoorDash/Instacart)

The findings from this anonymous survey will be considered by the Community Advisory Committee and Issue Area Groups, who will develop goals for the food plan; no personal information will be shared publicly nor will any employers have access to any responses.

This survey has five short sections and will take at most 10-15 minutes to complete.

1. **Tell us about you**
2. **Tell us about your role at work**
3. **Tell us about how satisfied you are with your work**
4. **Tell us about your experience during emergencies/disasters**
5. **Tell us about your experience paying for basic needs like housing and food**

If you have questions about this survey or need help completing it, contact Emmie DiCicco, (emdiccico@gmail.com) or Sergio Torres-Peralta (sergio.torres-peralta@austintexas.gov).

Do you work in Central Texas as defined by Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, or Williamson Counties?

- Yes
 - No (This survey is only being offered to those currently working locally in these sectors. Thank you for your time.)
-

1) Tell us about you:

1. Zip code where you live:
 - write-in
2. Zip code where you work:
 - write-in
3. How old are you?
 - write-in
4. What is your gender identity?
 - Man
 - Woman
 - Trans-Man
 - Trans-Woman
 - Non-Binary
 - Other
5. Which racial or ethnic group do you identify with?
 - African American or Black
 - Asian or Asian American
 - Latinx or Hispanic
 - Native American
 - Two or More races/ethnicities
 - White or Caucasian

- Middle Eastern or North African
 - Other
6. What is the highest level of school that you have finished?
- High school without completion
 - High school degree or GED
 - Some college, trade school, or four-year college
 - Advanced degree

2) Tell us about your role at work:

7. What sector of the food system do you work in?
- Food markets and retail (grocery stores/farmers' markets/convenience stores)
 - i. Food establishments (restaurants/food trucks/bars)
 - Food processing/distribution (Packing facilities/ industrial kitchens/commercial and commissary kitchens/meat/poultry processing facilities, etc)
 - Food delivery (Ubereats/DoorDash/Instacart)
8. Where do you work? (not required)
- Short answer
9. What is your job title?
- Short answer
10. How many hours a week do you work?
- Write-in
11. Do you receive overtime pay if you work more than your scheduled hours?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
12. Do you work more than one job?
- Yes
 - i. In total, how many part-time or full-time jobs do you have? (write-in)
 - No

3) Tell us about how satisfied you are with your work:

13. "I am given adequate time off for vacation or personal needs."
- Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree
14. "I am given paid time off when I am sick or unable to work for health reasons."
- Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree
15. "My workplace is a comfortable temperature to complete my duties (cool in the summer/warm in the winter)"
- Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree
16. "I have witnessed or experienced sexual, gender, or another form of harassment at my workplace."
- Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree
17. Are you currently a member of a union?
- Yes
 - No
18. Have you or your coworkers expressed interest in joining a union?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
19. Have you or your coworkers expressed fear around joining a union?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
20. Has your employer hosted a meeting around the dangers of unionization?

- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
21. In your opinion, do your wages and benefits from your work fairly compensate you for your experience and work?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
22. Has your employer ever withheld your wages or tips?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
23. Has your role at work contributed to any of the following (Select all that apply)
- Physical discomfort
 - Mental discomfort
 - Chronic pain
24. Have you ever been injured at work?
- Yes
 - i. : Did you receive compensation for the injury?
 - No

4) Tell us about your experience during emergencies/disasters:

25. Have you been infected by COVID-19? (select all that apply)
- No, I have never been infected
 - Yes, I have been infected
 - Yes, I have been infected and I believe it happened at work
 - I don't know
26. How has your job accommodated for illness during the COVID-19 pandemic? (select all that apply)
- Employees were able to stay at home while sick and were paid with proof of COVID infection
 - Employees were able to stay at home while sick and were paid without proof of COVID infection
 - Employees were able to stay at home while sick but were not paid
 - Employees had to work even when feeling sick
 - Employees had to work even if they tested positive for COVID-19
 - Employees were required to provide a negative test before working
27. Did your work lose power during the following events in Austin? (select all that apply)
- Winter Snow Storm Uri (January 2021–Texas Freeze)
 - Ice storm (February 2022)
 - Winter Storm Mara (2023–Tree-related power outages)
 - I don't know
 - Other:
28. Did your home lose power during the following events in Austin? (select all that apply)
- Winter Snow Storm Uri (January 2021–Texas Freeze)
 - Ice storm (February 2022)
 - Winter Storm Mara (2023–Tree-related power outages)
 - I don't know
 - Other:
29. Were you unable to travel to work for an assigned shift during any of the recent weather events in Austin? (select all that apply)
- Winter Snow Storm Uri (January 2021–Texas Freeze)
 - Ice storm (February 2022)
 - Winter Storm Mara (2023–Tree-related power outages)

- I don't know
 - Other:
30. Were you offered financial compensation if you missed work during any of the recent weather events in Austin?
- Yes
 - No
 - I did not miss work during any of the recent weather events in Austin
31. If applicable, how has the loss of income during a recent weather event significantly impacted your financial stability? (select all that apply)
- I had to use my savings
 - I borrowed money from others
 - I took out a loan
 - I lost my job
 - I lost my housing
 - None
 - Other:
32. Does your place of employment have procedures for dealing with emergencies such as winter storms or power outages?
- Yes, the store has a plan for protecting workers/customers if different types of emergencies occur and this plan is reviewed with workers
 - Yes, the store has a plan for protecting workers/customers if different types of emergencies occur but I do not know any details
 - There is no plan that I am aware of
 - I don't know
33. "I am satisfied with the current plan around emergencies at my place of employment "
- Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Neutral ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

5) Tell us about your experience paying for basic needs like housing and food:

34. Please select all that apply:
- I have experienced hunger or uncertainty about where my next meal will come from in the past
 - I am currently experiencing hunger or uncertainty about where my next meal will come from
 - I have received financial assistance (SNAP, TANF, WIC, Medicaid, other benefits) OR considered applying
 - I currently receive financial assistance (SNAP, TANF, WIC, Medicaid, and other benefits)
 - I often struggle to afford my basic needs (rent/mortgage, food, medical costs, transportation, debt)
35. During the past 12 months, was there any time when you or members of your family needed any of the following but didn't get it because you couldn't afford it? (select all that apply)
- Telephone service
 - Vehicle payment (Vehicle maintenance and/or insurance)
 - Bus pass
 - Medical procedures
 - Child care
 - Groceries
 - Clothing or Shoes
 - Utility bills
 - Rent
 - Debt or loan payments
 - Other
36. During the past 12 months, (select all that apply)
- I was hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food
 - I cut the size of my meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food

- I could not afford the kind of food that I wanted to eat
 - I could not eat foods I consider healthy because of their cost
37. During the last 7 days, did you or anyone in your household get free groceries or a free meal?
- Yes
 1. Where did you get free groceries or free meals? (select all that apply)
 - a. Co-worker
 - b. The store where I work
 - c. My union
 - d. Food pantry or food bank
 - e. Free fridge
 - f. Free meals through the school or other programs aimed at children
 - g. My place of worship
 - h. Shelter or soup kitchen
 - i. Family, friends, or neighbors
 - j. Other:
 - No
38. Do you feel your wages have kept pace with rising prices over the past year?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
39. Do you own or rent your home?
- I or another person in my household owns my home.
 - I pay rent.
40. In the past 12 months, was there ever a time when you did not have a place of your own to sleep and had to sleep in the home of a friend or relative, in your vehicle, at a homeless shelter, or any other inconsistent location?
- Yes
 - No

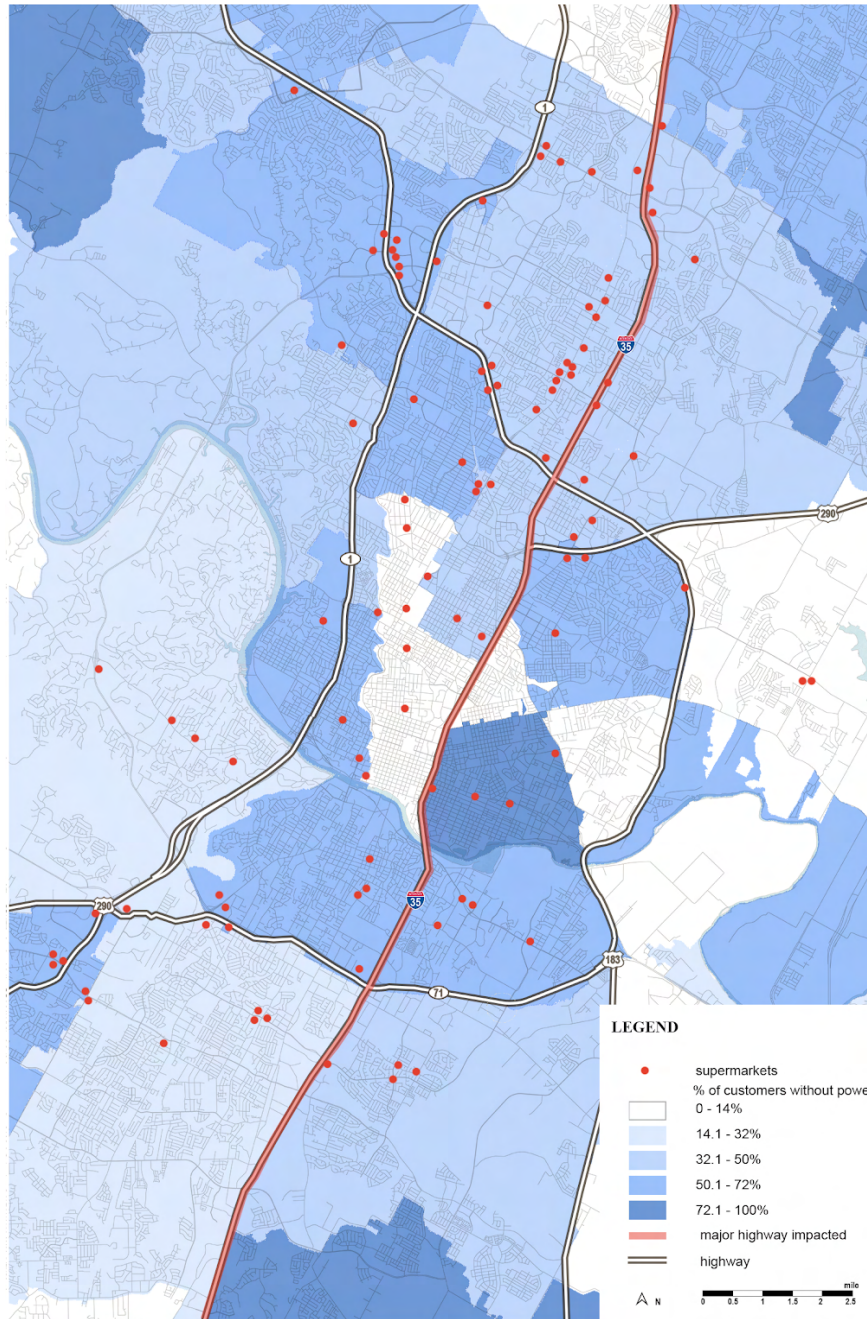
Optional: Please share your email address if you would like to hear about getting involved with the Austin-Travis County food planning process. *To be randomly selected for a \$50 VISA gift card, you MUST share an email address.

Optional: Share anything you'd like to tell us about what it is like working at your job and/or anything that you would like to see change.

Disclaimer:

The findings from this survey will be considered by the Community Advisory Committee and Issue Area Groups, who will develop goals for the Food Plan. This is no guarantee that what is shared here will be reflected in the final Austin Travis County Food Plan; however, we encourage all interested parties to get more involved in the planning process to have your voice heard. Check out bit.ly/FoodPlanningATX for more information and how to get involved.

Appendix C: Food retailers impacted by power outages during peak outages–Winter Storm Uri, 2021



This map shows the % of energy customers impacted by power outages on Thursday, February 18, 2021. Supermarkets without backup generators within impacted areas likely lost power. 100% of H-E-B stores in Central Texas were affected by power, water, or staff issues; however, the retailer worked with Austin city departments to maintain power in areas without any other food retailers. Source: Austin Energy

A photograph of a grocery store produce section. In the foreground, there are yellow and red bell peppers. In the background, there are green bell peppers, yellow squash, and other produce. Price tags are visible, including one for "HOLLAND YELLOW PEPPER" at \$1.99, "YELLOW SQUASH" at \$1.99, "BELLARD ORANGE PEPPER" at \$4.99, and "CUCUMBER" at \$1.99. A blue shopping basket is partially visible in the lower right.

Acknowledgments

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- **Report by: Emmie DiCicco**
- **Interviews & focus groups conducted by: Caroline Alexander and Emmie DiCicco**

We wish to express deep appreciation to all participants in the stakeholder interviews, focus groups and survey. We also wish to thank all of those involved in the creation of the Austin/Travis County food plan, particularly the Community Advisory Committee.

We look forward to working towards a more resilient food system with all of you. *Thank you.*