At Zenger Farm, we believe that communities thrive when people have a direct connection to their food and where it grows.

This is essential in the context of place and location—we are a 24-acre urban farm and wetland located in Portland’s Powellhurst-Gilbert neighborhood, one of the most ethnically, racially and culturally diverse neighborhoods in Oregon. While rich in culture, the communities that surround the farm in outer Southeast Portland face current and historic oppression and a legacy of inequitable urban development and gentrification. This in turn creates an ongoing threat of displacement, concentrated poverty and food insecurity. The USDA classifies Powellhurst-Gilbert as a “food desert,” meaning our neighbors do not have equitable access to fresh food that is vital for health and happiness.

People feel empowered to cultivate personal and communal well-being when they are connected to land, food and community. Our goal is to be a place where diverse communities come together to find access to nourishing food, connect with helpful resources, participate in food and farming education and grow within a respectful and collaborative environment. As part of this commitment, we will be working over the next year and beyond to better understand and address the root causes of food insecurity, outline our vision and develop a theory of change towards shaping a just food system.

Longtime community member and Community Chef, Paula Hernandez, shared: “The Zenger program has really changed my family’s health and their lives. Before the CSA Partnerships for Health Program, we didn’t often find fresh vegetables. We would buy them, but they weren’t really fresh...I love the farm—they have opened the door to my family’s health. I continue to work with the Community Chef program because throughout this experience I have seen the way my story impacts my family and my community and I know that people who hear my story are motivated to get involved.”

Paula’s story articulates an important aspect of who we are and what we do at Zenger Farm. Through our work, we hope that Zenger Farm can serve as a model of a just food system: a place where children and adults can connect to sustainably grown, nourishing and culturally-appropriate food and transform a narrative of injustice and insecurity into one of health and sovereignty.

With Gratitude,

Zenger Farm Board and Staff
In 2017, we held conversations with neighbors, program participants, kids, teachers, non-profit partners and other community members. In total, we received 227 written surveys, conducted 20 in-person key informant interviews and hosted 250 participants through a series of community dinners and meetings that doubled as listening sessions. We distilled these perspectives into organizational goals, objectives and priority initiatives which will inform our work over the next four years.

Although we have selected priority goals and initiatives, we are committed to receiving ongoing community feedback to make necessary alterations to the plan during these ever-changing times. As this strategic plan continues to develop and mature with community guidance, we will strive to 1) acknowledge and address interconnected issues of food access and current struggles communities experience, such as Portland’s housing crisis 2) build organizational capacity with a cohesive theory of change using strong definitions of equity and inclusion, 3) increase direct food access, 4) build relationships with schools and parents, 5) connect to and elevate the voices of communities most impacted by injustice and 6) build resilience through creating strong partnerships with local organizations.

Thank you for your partnership!
MISSION
We are a working urban farm that models, promotes and educates about sustainable food systems, environmental stewardship, community development and access to good food for all.

VALUES
We believe good food is a basic human right. We envision a world where everyone has equal access to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through methods in which people and land are not harmfully exploited. We understand that root causes of inequity—racism, poverty and oppression—must be addressed in order to create a just food, health and education systems. We believe the way we do things matters and that process shapes outcomes.

The following values are central to our mission and guide our work.

Stewardship
The City of Portland entrusts our organization to steward the 24 acres of farm and wetland that make up Zenger Farm. Through stewardship, we balance the needs of both nature and community members. In doing this work, we honor our various human and natural histories, including the pre-colonial history of the indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial. We responsibly manage the financial resources entrusted to the organization and provide a place where people can connect with the land.

Knowledge
We honor the knowledge that exists within communities. We partner with community members to share knowledge, strength, traditions and wisdom.

Social Justice
Social justice is the foundation of Zenger Farm’s work. There are interconnected barriers to food access for under-resourced communities that need to be addressed. We center the voices and follow the leadership of those most impacted by injustice to shape just food, health, environmental and education systems.

Nourishment
Food is life—it feeds our minds, bodies, and spirits, connecting us to one another and the land. At Zenger Farm, people feel nourished, strengthened and inspired.
Goal 1: Pursue High Quality, Place-Based Education.

Utilize the farm, wetland and community space to expand opportunities for all people to learn about the connections between people, land, food and culture.

OBJECTIVES:

- Strengthen and expand school partnerships with a focus on excellent and innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) education that can be a model for other organizations.
- Continually improve all educational programs to be more equitable and inclusive of diverse learning styles, abilities, ages, identities, cultures, economic status and backgrounds.
- Educate the next generation of farmers.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS:

1) Develop after-school programs in partnership with neighborhood schools and organizations to support place-based education at the farm and partners sites.

2) Conduct assessment of ADA accessibility at the farm.

3) Host more open times at the farm on weekends and evenings.
Goal 2: Increase Equitable Access to Nourishing Food.

Build a food system which supports holistic community health by modeling programs that create equitable access to fresh food.

OBJECTIVES:

• Create connections between the food systems and health systems in order to strengthen local farms and improve community health.
• Pilot new program models to make nourishing food easily accessible to under supported community members.
• Build and strengthen partnerships with under supported communities and related organizations to link community members to nourishing, affordable and culturally appropriate food resources.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS:

1) Expand models of food access, including subsidized CSA shares and vegetable prescriptions.

2) Increase access to fresh food through the International Kitchen Garden and Children’s Garden.

3) Share knowledge and resources to support community members and partners to grow their own food.
Goal 3: Build Strong Communities.

Strengthen relationships and connections within and among communities to learn, support one another and build our future together.

OBJECTIVES:

• Bring people from diverse cultures and backgrounds together to build meaningful relationships across differences.
• Make Zenger Farm spaces, food, and land available to community members and partners.
• Work in partnership to elevate the concerns and voices of community members most impacted by food insecurity.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS:

1) Open space to community-led events, particularly those that address issues of food injustice as it overlaps with other struggles communities are experiencing

2) Continue to offer free or low-cost community cooking and skill-building workshops co-led by community members and Zenger staff.

3) Participate in community events led by other groups or organizations to build stronger relationships with community members and partners.

4) Connect families of students participating in Zenger Farm educational programs to other resources and programs.
**Goal 4: Strengthen organizational capacity.**

It takes a healthy and just organization to support a healthy and just community. Recognizing this, Zenger Farm will act to advance equity, invest in staff and board development and build organizational financial resources.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Institutionalize a culture of equity and inclusion that guides our decision-making, planning processes and includes ongoing community feedback.
- Build a culture of learning and excellence by investing in the people who lead our work including staff, volunteers and board members.
- Grow organizational resources and improve organizational systems to sustainably accomplish community-defined priorities.

**HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS:**

1) Engage in equity audit and invest in equity and professional development trainings.

2) Build cash reserves to increase organizational capacity to withstand change.

3) Formalize organization-wide theory of change using strong definitions of equity and inclusion.

4) Assess what is required to save the original Zenger Barn.

5) Create an organization-wide system of collecting, analyzing, and integrating community input and evaluation to continue informing our processes, such as surveys or community dinners.
GET INVOLVED

There are many different roles that you can play in advancing the community-identified goals and priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan. Through your involvement in Zenger Farm, you help our community thrive.

- Learn -

• Explore Zenger Farm on a field trip or tour
• Send your child on an adventure in cooking, harvesting and sharing food at Zenger Farm camp
• Learn more about our work by visiting our website, zengerfarm.org

- Eat -

• Join us for an event at the Urban Grange, such as a community dinner, an open house, our annual Hoedown or a chef-focused fundraiser
• Join our CSA, a subscription for seasonal produce from Zenger Farm
• Shop for produce at Lents International Farmers Market, hosted on Sundays from June through October
- Grow -

• Get dirty in the Zenger Farm fields and gardens
• Follow @zengerfarm on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram
• Learn about Farm Intern program

- Give -

• Make a gift to help connect community members with good, healthy food and hands-on education
• Contribute your passion and talent as a volunteer at Zenger Farm
• Become a monthly donor and support our work in every season
In the summer of 2015, thanks to the generosity of foundations, agencies, individuals and businesses, we completed the Zenger Farm Urban Grange, a hub for healthy food and community connection. The Urban Grange was the capstone of our previous strategic plan, allowing us to scale our hands-on educational programs and our community-based work with 8,690 additional square feet of space for learning, working, teaching and growing.

GROWTH AND CHANGE MADE POSSIBLE BY THE URBAN GRANGE

- We welcomed more than **12,000 visitors** in 2017
- Farm School, which provides hands-on learning directly connected to students’ science curricula, grew from 753 students in the 2015-16 school year to 1,272 students in the 2017-18 school year, a **60% increase**
- Farm School serves students from **21** under resourced schools, including every elementary school in the David Douglas School District
- Zenger Farm Summer Camp enrollment increased by 45 percent, from **380 campers in 2015** to **550 campers in 2017**
- **8,214** children and families visited for farm- and food-based field trips
• CSA Partnerships for Health has served 291 families with a season’s worth of fresh vegetables from local farms to include as part of their healthcare regimen

• In 2016, CSA Partnerships for Health participants reported a **30% increase** in the consumption of orange and dark green vegetables, a **20% decrease** in reported food insecurity and a **40% decrease** in feelings of depression and hopelessness

• In 2017, we engaged 150 families through our CSA, up from approximately 90 families in 2015, and grow **30% more crops**

• A total of **8,491** of our neighbors participated in Community Engagement activities, including cooking workshops, to learn about healthy food and how to cook with it since June 2015

• Since the opening of the Urban Grange with Charlee’s Community Kitchen and the Bridgetown Natural Foods Classroom, we have hosted more community events on site, including Open Houses and Community Dinners, new events which collectively reached **436** community members in 2017.

• The Community Chef Program, which supports local food leaders, has expanded from **3 to 9 chefs**, celebrating the diverse food traditions in outer Southeast Portland.
These lists reflect the Board and Staff members at the time that we completed this Strategic Plan, December 2017.
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