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Food secure Baltimore: Mapping alternative futures for the food systems of Baltimore

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With the resurgence of interest in urban agriculture and urban food systems, policy makers across the United States have been working to try and find the best ways possible to build, grow and maintain more sustainable, effective and equitable food systems. Although progress has been encouraging, recent interventions to improve food systems have met a number of obstacles, chief among them being the struggle to provide true equality within the system, a concept more commonly referred to as food sovereignty. In order to provide truly equitable food systems, food needs to be thought of not just as a commodity, but also as an integral part of the social life of members within specific communities. In order to do that, a more nuanced contextual understanding of current urban community food systems and what food systems those communities ideally envision must be taken into account. Geonarratives, a mixed-methods analysis approach that combines geographic information systems (GIS) with more traditional survey methods, stands uniquely qualified to tackle this problem. This study seeks to create geonarratives for members of select communities within Baltimore city showing their current interaction with their food system from a geospatial perspective, and then use these geonarratives during a follow-up interview to assist participants in envisioning their ideal food system and how they would interact with it. Providing a geospatial context to how someone interacts with their food system will provide them with the knowledge necessary to envision a more equitable and supportive system tailored to their specific needs.

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