Priority 12: Expand support for **SMALL FARMS PRODUCING IN URBAN AREAS**

**144 out of 584 respondents (25%) ranked this topic as highest priority. Of those, 83 provided justification as follows:**

* 22 respondents (or 27%) commented that expanded support for small farms producing in urban areas would benefit communities and cities in a myriad of ways, including increasing urbanite access to fresh, affordable, healthy food, creating social spaces and strengthening community ties, creating employment opportunities for youth and other community members, and reducing urban heat and storm water runoff.

*“Urban areas should not be food desserts. They’re often on great soils that should be used for more than just lawns, parks, and concrete. Urban food production is profoundly important in ways that go beyond supplying food, to include psychological health, positive youth development and job training, heat island remediation, and social justice (by way of improved food access, etc.).”*

* 19 respondents (or 23%) commented that it is important to expand support for small farmers producing in urban areas so as to capture the market potential of a concentrated population and reduce transportation costs associated with feeding that population.

*”We must bring food production to the people that consume the majority of the food, and that is inhabitants of urban areas. Fuel and packaging, which are almost essential for rural farm produce to get to urban consumers, are ultimately not sustainable components of a food system. For long-term local and regional sustainability, urban farmers are an important part of our future.”*

* 13 respondents (or 16%) commented that expanding support for small farms producing in urban areas would encourage productive use of otherwise underutilized land, such as vacant lots or buildings.

*“We know much of the land in urban areas not be utilized in a productive manner. Why not convert more vacant lots and buildings into small farms, community gardens, etc. and produce the food closer to the consumer?”*

* 13 respondents (or 16%) commented that they would like to see increased support for all small farms and in urban areas in particular so as to increase consumer awareness around farming, sustainability, and food production.

*“The closer people are to their food, the better informed they will be.”*

* 7 respondents (or 8%), two of whom are active urban farmers, commented that they felt small urban farmers deserve additional support given their unique set of constraints and challenges, such as restrictive and prohibitive codes and regulations and public misconceptions about urban agriculture.

*“I would like to see support for zoning changes and ordinance changes that would support local small farms within city limits.”*

* 7 respondents (or 8%) commented that it is important to expand support for small farmers producing in urban areas so as to capture the current energy and excitement surrounding urban agriculture and ensure its long-term success and viability.

*“Urban farming is particularly trendy right now, meaning that there is a lot of interest and excitement coming from out of that area. It may or may not subside in a few years, meaning now is the time to ensure that even if the trend does not continue, that those currently energized by it will continue to succeed in the long term.”*

* 2 respondents (or 2%) commented that expanded support for small farmers producing in urban areas is essential for long-term national food security and should be a national security priority.

*“The urban farming movement is critical to the survival and long-term food security of our civilization.”*