



# FOOD CITIES 2022

PROFILE

# JOHANNESBURG



**JOHANNESBURG  
POPULATION  
6 MILLION**



The City of Johannesburg represents one of the most diverse cities in the African continent with an estimated population of 6 million. The City embraces an African character while hosting world class infrastructure in various fields including telecommunications and transport. Johannesburg is one of the three metros in the Gauteng Province, and one of eight in South Africa. Johannesburg is proclaimed as the most advanced commercial city in the African continent, and is regarded as the country's economic hub.

### Food System Challenges

Food insecurity has become topical in South Africa. In the same context, the City of Johannesburg is facing a host of challenges with regards to its food systems. These encompass food distribution, access and scarcity, coupled with lack of access to information on healthy diet. This has grossly led to shortages and malnutrition especially among poor communities. Mitigation measures have tended to focus more on access and availability, thereby shunning the dietary requirements. Johannesburg is faced with lack of capacity to drive food resilience, which has impeded the City from attaining its vision for a food secure City. High unemployment rates (40.8%)

have tended to perpetuate poverty and food insecurity overtime. In addition to the above, lack of access to land is also a hindrance to the City's food systems, and individuals who have access, often underutilize it. Challenges have also been exacerbated by farmers who resist the shift towards contemporary farming methods. In a quest to mitigate these challenges, the City is implementing the Hub and Spoke (bringing farmers to participate in the value chain), and Empowerment Zones (bringing livestock and crop farmers together and commercialising them). Johannesburg has also partnered with a number of stakeholders to improve on the food security.

### City Food Vision

The City of Johannesburg aspires to be food secure. It has a vision for an ability to feed its citizens, a City whose people have access to a balanced diet, and thus its affiliation with global communities and relevant stakeholders. This aspiration saw the development of numerous policies and strategies that seek to mitigate food insecurity, including the review of the Food resilience policy (underway). The City seeks to ensure food security through promoting smart farming and entrenching

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the fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in agriculture, agro-processing, and supporting small scale farmers through skills development and facilitation of access to markets. Johannesburg is in a process of factoring in eco-friendly farming initiatives through a grant from UNEP. Experiences from the Covid19 pandemic also paved the way for the City to actively develop reliable systems to respond to such shocks. These comprise entrenching sustainable development principles into urban farming so as to conserve natural capital and the City's ecosystem services, and establishing agro-processing centres across the City to improve on the value chain. Johannesburg is also envisioning using its BRT stations as convenient stores for farm produce, and also creating a conducive business environment by unlocking potential in the agribusiness space.



## Food Strategy

The City devised a blueprint to guide its food security interventions. This entails giving citizens access to fresh produce while minimising carbon emissions by utilising regional markets. Johannesburg has also availed itself to partnering with the international community as well as the local national and provincial departments to improve on food resilience. This has culminated in various interventions encompassing the Food Bank, and establishment of backyard and communal gardens. The City also established empowerment zones to promote participation in the food value chain; and facilitation of food safety standard centre for compliance, training and facilitating links to markets.

## Expertise

Johannesburg has a spectrum of capabilities encompassing agronomists, animal production scientists, and agricultural economists. This has allowed the City to execute various food resilience projects guided by the notion of community based planning. Utilising the internal expertise and outsourced capabilities, the City is also undertaking various research projects related to food systems and resilience as well as the mapping of vulnerability hot spots to optimise food resilience interventions. Johannesburg's commitment to work with internal and external partners is highlighted by partnerships that have assisted in the creation of a dashboard that assist in locating the vulnerability hotspots.

## Learning Needs

The City of Johannesburg is keen to entrench sustainability in its food value chain, from production to consumption. Also, just like other cities of the global South, Johannesburg is vulnerable to changes and shocks brought about by climate change which calls for a need for adaptation. Concepts of sustainability, adaptation and resilience are still scantily understood when it comes to climate change. This therefore becomes one of the learning needs for the City. The 4IR era brought with it various new technologies applicable to the City's food systems, thus, learning is needed to mitigate its current abstract nature among personnel.

