



# Grow with Us FAQ

## Impact

### What is Land's Sake Farm?

Land's Sake Farm (LSF) is a small nonprofit farm located in Weston, Massachusetts, established in 1980 with a mission *to connect people to the land to build community and inspire lifelong stewardship*. We accomplish this by using sustainable farming methods to build a community where people understand the importance of the land for food production and hunger relief, education, health, community building, and enjoyment. We seek to inspire the community to take action to sustain the many human values and environmental functions that the land offers.

LSF is located on town-owned land and operates under a renewing lease.

### What is the Grow With Us project and how does it align with LSF's mission?

The Grow With Us project is a two-phase plan that will bring much needed infrastructure to the Farm, including water, electricity, and shelter, allowing us to operate year-round thereby significantly increasing positive impact on the populations we serve.

Project impacts include:

- Increased food production and better storage resulting in year-round availability of local, fresh farm produce and expansion of our Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a program that connects you with your food. By buying a share in the winter or early spring before the season, you're reserving weekly pick-ups of sustainably-grown produce right here on our farm, straight from our farmers). On average the Farm grows over 120,000 pounds of food each year, the equivalent of 480,000 servings. This project would increase the seasonal availability and overall production by an estimated 30%.
- Enhanced food donations, which will result from increased food production. LSF donates and will continue to donate 30% of the produce it grows annually to those with food insecurities. The seasonal increase in our food production will allow us to donate produce throughout the year and will result in more than 100,000 servings additional servings donated.
- Expanded agricultural based education programming that focuses on environmental stewardship and leadership, doubling our impact and people reached within 10 years.
- Increased opportunities to build community through year-round gatherings and events.

- An overall increase in efficiency and safety, with an ability to properly wash and store produce on-site, store and maintain farm equipment and supplies in such a way that they are sheltered from environmental elements, and protect seedlings from weather extremes and pests.
- Significant contributions to climate resiliency, including structures with net-zero energy emissions that minimize environmental impacts and result in reductions in future energy costs, which are well-aligned with the town of Weston's forthcoming Climate Action and Resiliency Plan.
- An opportunity to care for our farm animals year-round on site and increase related education programs.
- An opportunity for wholesale food and flower partnerships with local schools, the Josiah Smith Tavern, catering companies, and more.
- Increased financial sustainability.
- Staffing stability as a result of year-round employment opportunities.

### **Why are we doing this project? Why now?**

Since 1980, LSF has operated without power, year-round water, or indoor space. Because of the lack of infrastructure, LSF's contributions to the community, while still significant, have been limited due to the seasonal nature of our operations and dependency on the generosity of neighbors to successfully operate. We receive our electricity via an extension cord, our produce storage coolers are on a neighbor's property, and we have no barn to take care of our own animals or store and maintain farm equipment. And, while we have had access to water, it has been only seasonally available, severely limiting our growing season and production capacity.

In 2018, LSF received a long-term land lease from the Town that allowed us to consider a long-term plan for the farm. LSF went through a strategic planning process and feasibility study in advance of launching the campaign, being sure to connect with key stakeholders throughout the planning process. We worked with Payette, 2019 recipient of the AIA Architecture Firm Award, whose President and CEO is a Weston resident and who generously provided their services pro-bono to benefit our community. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we reworked the project to put an emphasis on food production to meet the growing need for hunger relief and local food security. Having raised initial support for the project over the past few months, we are now ready to share our vision with the community.

### **What changes are planned, and how long will it take?**

The Grow With Us project is divided into two phases.

#### **Phase I - Spring - Fall 2021**

Phase I includes connecting the Farm to basic utilities such as electricity and water, and building an animal barn, equipment barn, greenhouse, and hoop house (a simple structure used to extend the growing season). The animal barn will house animals year-round and provide space to host education programs and classes for everyone from local school students to seniors. Until the

completion of Phase II, the animal barn will serve as our temporary farmstand, vegetable washing area, and vegetable cooler storage. The equipment barn, greenhouse, and hoop house will allow for year-round vegetable production, and better care and storage of equipment and, increasing production and decreasing the need for equipment repairs.

#### Phase II - Winter 2022 - Winter 2023

Phase II will encompass building a year-round multi-use farmstand in the footprint of the existing farmstand. The 3,800-square-foot net-zero energy-efficient building will serve multiple purposes and offer flexibility to fit the changing needs of the farm. This space will enable LSF to sell products year-round, centralize currently off-site administrative offices, and serve as a gathering place for residents of Weston and surrounding communities. To ensure all-season access, internal roadways will be improved and surface parking will be enlarged, but nothing will be paved.

This plan was developed with the understanding that LSF is a working farm. While construction will take place during months that we normally operate, we will continue to serve the community as we have for 40 years.

## Use

### **How will the project impact farming operations?**

The addition of a greenhouse and hoop house on the 40 acre parcel will significantly increase the efficiency of our farming operations as well as expand our growing season and capacity. Currently, during planting season LSF staff have to drive back and forth many times a day between our current offices and greenhouse at the Malone property and the farm. Having an on-site greenhouse will decrease our carbon footprint, and cut down on the time it takes for watering and transporting seedlings to the fields. In addition, we have outgrown the greenhouse at Malone. In addition, an on-site high tunnel will allow LSF to get plants in the ground earlier and later in the season which extends our ability to grow produce more months of the year. Once the farmstand is completed, LSF will have a proper root cellar and on-site coolers, which will decrease the amount of produce LSF loses to rotting. This project will increase our produce production, sale and donation by 30% and from six months a year to year-round.

### **Will the farmstand operate year-round?**

Yes! Not only will this project allow us to grow and properly store our food 12 months out of the year, we will also be able to sell our produce alongside other local artisanal products, year-round. LSF currently does not have proper storage for our root vegetables and loses upwards of 20% of this produce in the winter months. The farmstand will also offer a teaching demonstration kitchen where we can teach classes and host small events where people can (spontaneously) meet up. Bathrooms will be available at the farmstand as well. Approximately half of the farmstand will be dedicated to farm operations such as vegetable coolers, produce washing stations, and storage. During the winter months, due to shorter hours of operation, smaller (if any) winter CSA and decrease in density of programs offered we are expecting a 30% decrease in foot traffic.

**What animals does Land's Sake Farm plan to keep on site? Will they remain on-site year round, and who will care for them?**

In addition to our fan-favorite rabbits and chickens, we plan to maintain our own small herd of goats. Up until now LSF has had to borrow goats, and move rabbits and chickens off-site in the winter since there is no water or protected space. LSF will hire a staff person whose primary responsibility will be animal care and the education programs that go along with it. We are excited for all participants to learn about the animals and to have an opportunity to assist with their care year-round on the farm. LSF will continue to work with the Danforths' and their sheep as long they are willing. We remain thankful for this long running partnership.

For the first year after the animal barn is built it will act as our farmstand. We will not remove any animal fencing during this time. We will work with a small group of animal care experts to create a proper plan for fencing and maintenance for the animals prior to their year-round arrival.

**How will this impact education programs?**

We currently serve over 5,000 people of all ages annually in our education programs and have long-standing partnerships with Weston and Waltham public and independent schools, METCO, and Waltham Boys and Girls Club. With a new animal barn and year-round animal residents, we will be able to offer more education programs to the community and connect more people to the land. Additionally, the barn will have a touchdown area for student drop-off and bathrooms, making programs like after-school classes, school visits, and summer programs run more smoothly, especially in inclement weather. We will no longer have to use seasonal tents, porta potties, neighbors' barns, the Recreation Center, or the Scout House (both located across Wellesley Street) for cover in poor weather. May through mid-November will continue to be the highest use times for education programs with the winter months focusing on smaller group programming and frequency.

**How will this plan impact hunger relief donations?**

This plan will allow us to give more food to those who need it most. Annually, we donate approximately 30% of the food we grow to those with food insecurities through local hunger relief organizations such as Lovin' Spoonfuls, Community Servings, Bristol Lodge, Weston's Council on Aging, and Food for Free. One major goal of this project is to increase our food production from 6 months to 12 months a year so those with food insecurities can enjoy healthy food year-round. Because of the inherent limitations due to our lack of infrastructure, produce is only donated from June through November. The winter months are often the hardest to find fresh food for those with food insecurities. This plan will allow us to increase our production in poundage and growing season, allowing us to donate more food throughout the entire year.

## **How will the seasonal flow of farm visitation (and events) be impacted? How will year round operations impact visitation and use of the farm?**

This project will allow LSF to connect the community to the land throughout the entire year, increasing the total number of people who will be using the farm throughout the year. However, the majority of our visitation will remain in the late-spring/summer/early fall months (May-October), when we will continue to have a robust CSA program, farmstand sales, educational and community programming, and events, like family-farm night. With our seasonal growth in the winter months, LSF will be able to grow, sell and donate fresh produce year round, expand our educational program offering to showcase farming, animal husbandry and forestry in the winter months and provide a location for small community gatherings. Like other community farms in the area who are open in the winter, our expected general daily use will be far lower than in summer months. The farmstand will have shorter hours of operation in the winter, with reduced number of CSA's available and fewer outdoor community events will be planned. The events will predominantly include activities like occasional supper clubs, programs on our sustainable building and farming practices and small events that enable us to leverage the indoor space for educational and adult programming.

## **How will this impact traffic and parking?**

During the prime growing and harvest seasons, farm employees, customers, and program participants will continue to access the site as they do today via the driveway on Wellesley Street in volumes and patterns consistent with current use of the site. LSF intends to operate the farm year-round and so we do expect customer traffic to extend into the late fall and winter seasons at lower volumes, which can and will be accommodated in the existing gravel parking lot. We are not expanding parking nor creating any paved parking areas.

In Phase 2 we are formalizing the existing overflow parking zone in the grass area within its existing footprint so that it is safer and more accessible, while still permeable. LSF will use the on-site overflow parking primarily during larger scheduled events held in the summer (like the Summer Solstice dinner). In the winter months we do not plan to plow the overflow area. When there is the occasional need for additional parking off-site we will work with the recreation department, Library and town police to create a specific parking plan for the event.

## **Is there soil contamination on the Farm?**

The Town of Weston performed environmental testing on the property in 2007 and 2011. No contamination was found in any of the fields used for growing produce. There were, however, limited areas of contamination discovered and remediated; the contaminated material was removed from the site and replaced with clean fill.

During construction all soil handling will occur in accordance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP) which includes all local, state and federal regulations.

### **How will the project impact the specimen trees on the property?**

Concern about six large dawn redwoods, and three golden larches had been expressed by a number of the tree interest groups. A meeting was held in April with a certified (ISA- degree) arborist. The arborist found the animal barn was already placed outside the critical root zone of the Golden Larches and well outside the impact range of the Dawn Redwoods. In addition, the placement of the service area was reviewed and slight modifications were made to building placement to protect one white oak.

### **Why are you not using the Case Estate?**

In addition to the tremendous cost involved in renovating non-code compliant historical structures that were not designed for Land's Sake Farm's purposes, the lack of synergy and efficiency in not having the farmstand or the maintenance buildings on site were driving factors. Land's Sake's mission is connecting people with the land, and this scheme does not do this. More information about this decision is available upon request.

### **How did you come up with this master plan? Why are the buildings sited as they are?**

Developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders, the 40 acre master plan focuses on increasing efficiency, reducing reliance on neighbors, and creating a more sustainable farming model with the goal to better serve the community. The site development focuses on the core needs of the Farm, including an equipment barn, greenhouse, and hoop house to care for and store equipment and allow for year-round vegetable production. A multi-functional animal barn will serve not only to house animals and feed, but also serve key educational functions. A new farmstand will provide permanent space for vegetable processing, cold storage, sales, and staff as well as community gathering space. These carefully sited structures avoid developing on cultivated soil or removing specimen trees. Together, the structures will enhance the exposure of LSF as a vibrant working farm while preserving expansive views of the farmland.

The "infinite vista" from the Farm's entrance to the furthest extent of the site at the rear is something that we have determined to protect by not placing buildings in the center of this vista: the farmstand will stay in its current location and the animal barn will be off to the side, set amongst and screened by existing trees. The buildings are set back as far as is practical from the street to diminish their impact, but with just enough visibility for passersbys to know that there is a farmstand and a place for animals and students. These locations enable us to best serve all individuals, including those with access challenges. The animal barn was also located to create a path to the education garden, thereby minimizing the need for children to cross more heavily trafficked service roads or the parking lot.

The maintenance building, greenhouse and hoop house, while originally planned in the front of the 40-acre field, were relocated to the rear of the Farm, out of sight, behind a stand of existing trees. While most historic barns and farm buildings are located close to the street to provide for ease of access, moving produce, animals, etc., we made this change to protect the view and accommodate

feedback from community members. In addition to maintaining the vistas, the buildings are strategically sited to avoid both building on cultivated soil and encroaching on existing trees, particularly specimen trees.

LSF will have to improve the existing roads that will give farmers access to the buildings in the back of the farm, but no paving will occur on the site. There are no new roads planned as part of this proposal.

### **Why do you feel the buildings fit into the landscape?**

We think of landscape in the most figurative sense, the existing view scape of the Farm, its infinite horizons, its colors and the canopied tree line. We have carefully sited the buildings below the tree line and away from the view corridors, so as to not interrupt the vista and maintain the continuity of the landscape. The buildings are clad in natural wood siding, rather than painted red or white, to blend with the color, material and tone of the surrounding landscape.

The intention for the project is to fit-in to the larger context of the agrarian landscape, its colors, tones, and vistas without compromising the infinite vista through the Farm by following traditional timber framing methods and a natural material palette that weathers with the landscape around it. The landscape is the context for this building, and great care has been taken to preserve this relationship from the outside and the inside of the barn.

The same care has been taken in planning and siting the farmstand. This building is sited on the existing farmstand site and consolidates many of the farm operations which are spread out including coolers which had been in the neighbors barn and the CSA tent used to distribute CSA's. The farmstand placement and plans take into account the same landscape thoughtful process as the animal barn.

These builds are designed to fit into the historic Case Corner (See attached Op Ed by Pam Fox Town Historian)

### **Why does the animal barn have that roof slope and overhang?**

The roofline of the barn establishes a gentle profile below the tree line; the building is cradled by an existing cluster of trees, revealing periodic glimpses from Newton and Wellesley Streets. It is delicately positioned below the tree line and is the color of the landscape, precisely to fit in and become part of the landscape.

The roof overhang on the sides are to provide shade cover for the animals on one side and for the student touch-down area and bathrooms on the other side. This will give LSF programs a space to teach protected from the elements as needed, as well as give students a dedicated place to store their gear. The overhang on the ends are to protect the openings at the hay loft and ground level. The lower profile of the overall roof form is intended to lessen the impact of the mass of the animal barn. Most New England Barns in working agricultural settings are much taller and wider than what

is proposed. Sloping gutters at the edges of the roof direct water directly to infiltration wells that will recharge the groundwater and prevent run-off around the barn. This can be combined with rainwater storage tanks that can be used for irrigation around the barn.

## Sustainability

### **You have said the project will be “Net Zero” - what does that mean?**

We are committed to create a model for sustainability that will not only stand in alignment with the Farm’s goals but enrich the educational programs. The buildings will utilize traditional timber framing, rainwater collection and reuse, renewable energy from photovoltaics and other strategies that lower their impact on the site and environment. A net zero energy goal will allow the Farm to function responsibly as a model of sustainable farming and sensibly minimize operational costs.

The project will achieve net-zero energy through many means, including producing its own energy through renewables (solar panels). It’s the goal that the buildings will offset any grid energy use with on-site power generation and will have a net zero effect on greenhouse gas emissions within one year of full operation. This has a secondary benefit to the Farm as it will help to minimize operating costs.

The first principle of designing to net zero is to use systems that minimize energy use and second, to offset the remaining energy use with renewable on-site power generation. To achieve Net-zero, the projects will follow Passive house design principles. This includes designing an airtight and thoroughly insulated building envelope as well as carefully orienting the buildings to allow for passive heating through glazing in the winter months. Additionally the farm stand is looking to pursue Living Building Certification, one of the most rigorous sustainable building certifications that will fulfill 3 key goals:

- Regenerative buildings that connect occupants to light, air, food, nature, and community.
- Self-sufficient and remain within the resource limits of their site.
- Create a positive impact on the human and natural systems that interact with them.

LSF has been honored to work with Payette, a renowned architectural firm with the needed expertise in sustainable and low energy buildings. Payette has been working pro bono with LSF for over 4 years on this project.

### **How does this fit into Weston’s sustainability plan?**

Weston received a MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) grant in 2019 and is currently developing its Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), which will be completed in the spring of 2021. The CARP will help the Town of Weston to prioritize ways in which the community can mitigate and become more resilient to the effects of climate change. Local resilient food systems, environmental education, and land preservation and protection are key focus areas of the CARP.



LSF's mission and the services it provides to the community align perfectly with these three areas. Hence, LSF will be a core partner in Weston's plan for climate resilience and awareness building.

Specifically, the project will help to advance the CARP in two of five overall focus areas:

(1) Resilient Infrastructure and Services: Enhancing Weston's infrastructure, utilities, and critical services to be resilient to the impacts of climate change.

(2) Sustainable Resource Consumption: Promoting processes that reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill, encourage reduced water usage, and support locally sourced products.

**Will the building or parking lot be lit up at night?**

All new facilities adhere to the Dark Sky principles of lighting with all indoor and outdoor lighting designed to direct light to the ground. In addition, building lights will be on a seasonally changing timer to reduce environmental impact.