ST. LOUIS, MO — Imagine a bustling rooftop farm teeming with urban farmers of all ages growing fresh, local food and a stronger community right here in downtown St. Louis.

Urban Harvest STL, the non-profit behind St. Louis’ first downtown Community Garden, today celebrated being one step closer to realizing its vision to build the city’s first rooftop farm, the FOOD ROOF Farm, after signing a lease for the rooftop space this week.

“As cities like St. Louis grow so does the need for access to fresh, affordable, local food,” says Mary Ostafi, Founding Director of Urban Harvest STL. “With issues such as food deserts and climate change threatening the very safety of our current food systems, which often depend on food being shipped from hundreds of miles away, our future resilience requires us to urgently strengthen our local food systems. In other words; we need to grow food where we live.”

One of the first projects funded through the Rally Saint Louis (RallySTL.org) crowdsourcing and crowdfunding platform, the FOOD ROOF Farm will be located in downtown St. Louis atop a three-story building on 14th and Convention Plaza, adjacent to the downtown volleyball courts, just one block north of Washington Avenue, and one block east of the famed City Museum.

More than just a farm, this 10,000-square-foot rooftop will feature an outdoor classroom, as well as gathering space for community events. In addition to raising chickens and tending bees, the FOOD ROOF Farm will also demonstrate innovative approaches to urban agriculture including hydroponics and vertical farming.

The seed for this rooftop farm project was planted early on during the development of St. Louis’ first downtown Community Garden by a group of grassroots downtown residents, which opened in 2011. But after two years of growing at ground-level, the lease on their land expired, so they relocated the garden to the top deck of an underutilized parking garage.
Meanwhile, the nonprofit’s vision to expand with the building of the FOOD ROOFarm kept on growing. With the lease now signed, construction on the rooftop farm will begin in March, and is expected to be complete by summer.

Property owner Beau Reinberg says “we are thrilled to be able to work with true leaders like Urban Harvest STL on this project. Their passion is contagious and this project will take downtown St. Louis to the next level.”

Given the magnitude of this exciting project, the nonprofit would love to hear from any media or other interested photographers, videographers etc. who might want to document and tell the story of the building of this historic roof farm from the start of construction to first harvest in fall 2015.

For regular interviews, additional photos or more information on Urban Harvest STL, please contact:

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Click here to watch Mary Ostafi’s TEDx Talk about starting STL’s first community garden: Grow Food Where You Live