

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (affiliations are provided for identification purposes only)

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FOOD POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PORTLAND-MULTNOMAH FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

OCTOBER 2003





Project Background

This report provides the findings and recommendations of the Food Policy Council (FPC), a citizen advisory panel created in June 2002 by the City of Portland and Multnomah County. Established as a subcommittee of the Sustainable Development Commission, the Food Policy Council was asked to identify options for improving how the region's food system functions. It is comprised of business and community leaders with expertise spanning retail, restaurants, farming, hunger relief, land use, community education and institutional purchasing.

A Call To Action

- FPC's work responds to a food system that currently yields unacceptable results for Multnomah County residents.
- Some parts of the community lack sufficient access to fresh, healthy regionally-grown food.
- Oregon's rate of hunger is nearly double the national average: one in 17 households is hungry
- One in seven (14.3%) are food insecure (have experienced the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food)
- Over half (54%) of Multnomah County adults are overweight or obese, leading to diabetes, heart disease and other preventable ailments.
- Farmers in the region are threatened by challenges to the land use system and global competition.



Recommendations

Based on its research and input from a broad group of businesses, organizations and individuals, FPC has outlined how local government can influence the food system, supporting existing community efforts and catalyzing further action.

Governing Principles

The Food Policy Council maintains that local government should begin by adopting governing principles that affirm its commitment to promote, support and strengthen a healthy regional food system.

Land Use Policy - The Food Policy Council maintains that the City of Portland and Multnomah County should play a leading role in defending and promoting agricultural interests at the Metro and state levels. The Food Policy Council is available to meet periodically with City Council and County Board members to discuss current issues of concern to regional farmers.



High-Priority Actions

FPC recommends the following actions for immediate implementation by the City and County. The full report identifies additional actions.

Pilot Project in Low-Income Areas

Focused effort is needed in low-income areas where food access problems are particularly acute.

- City:** Conduct a pilot planning process, including outreach to residents and collaboration with community partners to develop solutions such as expanding retail options, developing farmers' markets, creating community gardens, or expanding access to federal or state food and nutrition programs.
- County:** Identify areas with food access barriers through GIS mapping, data collection and analysis.

Institutional Purchasing

Government can lead by example, using its purchasing power to support a healthy regional food system. The starting point is building connections with regional food suppliers.

- County:** Incorporate sustainability criteria into food purchases for correctional facilities.

Summer Food Program

Of children who use the school lunch program during the school year, less than 25% access summer food programs.

- City:** Implement Portland Parks & Recreation activities and facility improvements in order to increase the low-income kids participating in Summer Food Programs.

Farmers' Markets and Public Market

These venues will provide a foundation for building the regional food economy and raising public awareness.

- City:**
 1. Create policies supporting the use of public sites for farmers' markets and the development of a network of permanent market sites.
 2. Support current efforts to establish a public market in Portland.
- County:** Improve access to farmers' markets for food stamp users, and increase use of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program by raising awareness of farmers' market dates and times, using promotional strategies that fit the culture of specific communities.

Continued Work of Food Policy Council - In order to make the improvements necessary to support the health of our citizens, the food sector of our economy and our environment, the City and County will need the support and expertise of the Food Policy Council. Therefore, the Council seeks to continue its work providing guidance for food policy initiatives.

