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Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council 2006 Report

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council began the year by determining focus areas for 2006. While food system issues are numerous and diverse, the Council agreed to continue building on existing work in land use planning, purchasing and food access. The committees researched, explored and produced a broad range of policy recommendations for city and county commissioners.

LAND USE PLANNING

The Land Use Planning Committee researched State of Oregon and Metro land use planning updates and offered policy recommendations to city and county elected officials for Oregon's Big Look and Metro's New Look.

Big Look

The Oregon Task Force on Land Use Planning, established under SB 82 and known informally as the "Big Look," provides the platform for a three-year assessment of Oregon's land use planning program. This task force is poised to make recommendations that will affect Oregon's future land use protections, including protecting farms and building livable communities.

The Food Policy Council recommended that the City of Portland and Multnomah County be actively engaged in the Big Look; encourage the inclusion of issues relating to food access and distribution, availability of affordable food, and viability of state agriculture; and advocate for an extensive — and broad — citizen involvement campaign as the Task Force's first priority in their workplan. The recommendations are posted at www.portlandonline.com/osd/food.

New Look

The New Look at Regional Choices is the Metro Council's collaborative effort to find new, creative ways to absorb the arrival of a million new residents in this region in the next 25 years, while preserving the values of long-term vision.

The FPC proposed a series of recommendations that targeted farmland protection, the urban growth boundary expansion and urban planning (design, housing, food access, and urban agriculture).

The Land Use Committee plans to share their findings with the City Of Portland Planning Bureau in order to further refine the recommendations. The current recommendations can be found at www.portlandonline.com/osd/food.

Diggable City

The Land Use Committee was also active in providing follow-up research to a project that was initiated by students in the Portland State University Masters in Urban and Regional Planning program to identify city-owned lands that might be suitable for urban agriculture (www.portlandonline.com/osd/food).

At the start of 2006 the work of over 60 citizens, who served on Technical Advisory Committees, was compiled into the Diggable City Phase II Report (www.portlandonline.com/osd/food). FPC members presented the document to Portland City Council in February and it was accepted unanimously. Through the rest of the year, Office of Sustainable Development staff focused on the report's goals, most notably refining the city-owned property inventory and coordinating the pilot projects as they developed. OSD received USDA Risk Management Association funding to hire a recent graduate of the PSU Masters in Urban and Regional Planning Program who was skilled in GIS technology. The next iteration of the report was discussed in Land Use Committee meetings and staff and the committee will work together to present the subsequent findings to Council in 2007.

PURCHASING

In 2006 the Institutional Purchasing Committee focused primarily on the development of a sustainable food purchasing policy for City of Portland and Multnomah County owned and operated facilities. Because food production and distribution significantly affect the public health, land use, economy and quality of life of the Portland region, all residents of Multnomah County and the City of Portland should have access to nutritious, affordable, locally and sustainably grown food especially in publicly-owned and operated facilities. A draft policy statement was written with the intent of encouraging City and County facilities and service contractors engaged in food purchasing for publicly-owned facilities to purchase according to the following hierarchy:

- Purchase locally produced foods when available and competitively priced.
- Purchase third-party certified foods when available and competitively priced.
- Plan menus and purchase food with a priority given to seasonal availability.

Provide the opportunity for citizens to make healthy choices when purchasing, receiving or otherwise consuming foods from publicly-owned facilities, including vending machines.

Further discussion of the purchasing plan will resume following the county's investigation into the legal challenges presented by Oregon's contracting code.

FOOD ACCESS AND HEALTH

The FPC offered the following recommendations:

Wellness Policy

The FPC urged county and city elected to encourage local school districts to support the Oregon Nutritional Policy Alliance recommendations for Model Wellness Policies. These included providing standards for foods sold outside the National School Breakfast Program, physical education classes for every student, and creating safe routes for walking and biking to school. The recommendation can be found at www.portlandonline.com/osd/food.

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)

The FPC asked the County to support healthier foods for low-income mothers and children in our community by sending a letter of support for new initiatives proposed for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. The Council advocated for six recommendations that would update the USDA's WIC Food Packages Rule to improve the health and nutritional quality of the foods offered, expand cultural food options, and increase choices for the women, infants, and children served by the program. The full text of the letter is at www.portlandonline.com/osd/food.

School Nutrition Bill

Recognizing that schools play an influential role in the foods children eat nearly every day, the FPC asked the County to support healthy school food by sending a letter of support for the Healthy Foods, Healthy Students Bill (HB 2650). This bill establishes nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold outside the federal school lunch program, such as setting calorie limits and removing soda and high-fat, high-sugar snacks. This bill is an important step to address childhood obesity which is reaching epidemic levels and threatens the health and longevity of all Multnomah County residents. The full text of the letter submitted by the FPC can be found at www.portlandonline.com/osd/food.

Food Policy Council Members

Chair

Suzanne Briggs, Oregon Farmer's Markets Association

Jennifer Bass, Kaiser Permanente

Nancy Becker, Portland State University

Rachel Bristol, Oregon Food Bank

Jennifer Erickson, Metro

Scott Exo, Food Alliance

Tom Gillpatrick, Portland State University

Toby Hemenway, Portland Permaculture Institute

Steven Hiatt, Oregon Health Sciences University

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Michael Paine, Gaining Ground Farm

Marcus Simantel, Retired farmer

Paul Sunderland, Oregon State University Extension Service

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