Acting Food Policy Council

SEATTLE KING COUNTY

Strategic Planning Framework | May 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the strategic framework

The purpose of the strategic framework is to serve as a guiding document for a regional food policy council to make real community-level changes. It is intended to create a solid research and policy agenda that will keep food systems issues relevant and offer guidance to regional policy makers.

Key components of the framework

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Vision: A vibrant food system that supports healthy people, communities, economies and environment.

Mission: Partner with communities, businesses, agriculture and government to develop integrated and sustainable food policy and action.

Values: Collaboration, equity, research-driven, systems approach

Strategic areas:

- **Equitable food access**
  - Complete and publish a needs assessment of food access in the region within two years to measure system improvements and increased accessibility over time.
  - Recommend and promote policies that will decrease disparities in food access, within nine months of assessment publication.

- **Infrastructure**
  - Increase the availability of locally produced goods by reducing barriers and increasing utilization of farmland in sustainable production by two percent per year over five years.
  - Increase amount of locally produced food purchased by regional institutions to 15 percent of food budgets over five years, ensuring that small and mid-sized producers have access to expanded markets.
  - Increase local processing capacity for Washington meat and poultry products within two years to give consumers more access to locally raised products and help ensure farm and ranch viability.
  - Identify other infrastructure needs required to meet regional market demands and regional food security goals, within two years.
- **Local economic development**
  - Identify and help build a research base around how a local food economy contributes to community economic development to advance supportive investment and policy decisions by local decision makers.
  - Develop policy recommendations based on research for maximizing local economic development opportunities in the food system.
- **Public health**
  - Advocate and collaborate immediately for policies that improve the nutritional quality of foods served at schools, jails, hospitals and other public facilities.
  - Build a network of advocates to promote coordinated, food system-wide solutions to food insecurity and diet-related disease in the region.
  - Increase key stakeholder understanding of how food safety in production, processing and distribution can impact human health.
- **Council development**
  - Successfully negotiate an effective, formal Food Policy Council (FPC) within the Puget Sound Regional Council that adheres to our core values and vision, by June 30, 2009.
  - Develop FPC staffing and structure sufficient to carry out the strategic framework.

Participants in strategic planning process

AFPC MEMBERS

Steve Bauck,
Northwest Harvest

Branden Born,
University of Washington
Urban Design & Planning

SuJ'n Chon,
City of Seattle Department
of Neighborhoods

Mary Embleton,
Cascade Harvest Coalition

Jennifer Lamson,
Good Food Strategies

Erin MacDougall,
Public Health - Seattle &
King County

Pablo Monsivais,
Center for Public
Health Nutrition

Tammy Morales,
business owner

Linda Nageotte,
Food Lifeline

Laura Niemi, Seattle Tilth

AFPC GUESTS

Goldie Caughlan,
PCC Natural Markets

Heather Day,
Community Alliance
for Global Justice

Claire Dyckman,
King County Agriculture
Commission

Siri Erickson-Brown,
Local Roots Farm

Phyllis Shulman,
legislative aide for
Seattle City Council
President Richard Conlin

Aaron Waldkoetter,
Central Co-op's Madison
Market

INTRODUCTION

History of the Food Policy Council

The Acting Food Policy Council of Seattle-King County (AFPC) was created in 2006 in response to an expressed community need for a comprehensive vision to address food security and farmer viability issues. After two years of community meetings discussing food systems issues, the group elected to seat a food policy council that would take a holistic, systemic look at the gaps in our food system and begin recommending solutions to local policy makers. Much of the AFPC's work has been focused on influencing policy through research and collaboration. Beginning in 2006, the AFPC released several briefing papers that addressed food systems issues ranging from greenhouse gas emissions and the federal farm bill to food insecurity and the impacts of local food purchasing on our regional economy. In addition, the AFPC partnered with the University of Washington to conduct neighborhood community food system assessments. The result of this work was the "Sound Food Report," a rich source of local food systems data that has prompted other research and policy development efforts around poor transit access to healthy food.

Purpose of the strategic framework

AFPC's initial success has been accomplished through a volunteer-driven workgroup with minimal staffing. While this research has made important contributions to local policymaking, the AFPC determined that a strategic framework was needed to advance organizational development and

offer regional policy makers guidance on the food system priorities that have emerged during the last few years.

The purpose of this framework is to lay the foundation for the next phase of the food policy council. This framework is to serve as a guiding document for a regional food policy council that can leverage the resources and influence of many jurisdictions to make real community-level changes. The strategic areas focus on facilitating regional economic development, ensuring adequate infrastructure for food processors and distributors, and improving public health and access to healthful foods. AFPC's goals are grounded in the belief that substantial benefit can come from policy development driven by collaboration and research. The framework is intended to create a solid research and policy agenda that will keep food systems issues relevant in the context of other policy decisions being made.

Participants in strategic planning process

The strategic framework was developed during an AFPC retreat. Participants included AFPC members and guests representing aspects of the food system not represented by AFPC members.

AFPC members include:

Steve Bauck, Northwest Harvest

Branden Born, University of Washington Urban Design & Planning

SuJ'n Chon, City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Mary Embleton, Cascade Harvest Coalition

Jennifer Lamson, Good Food Strategies

Erin MacDougall, Public Health Seattle & King County

Pablo Monsivais, Center for Public Health Nutrition

Tammy Morales, business owner

Linda Nageotte, Food Lifeline

Laura Niemi, Seattle Tilth

Guests who attended the retreat included:

Goldie Caughlan, PCC Natural Markets

Heather Day, Community Alliance for Global Justice

Claire Dyckman, King County Agriculture Commission

Siri Erickson-Brown, Local Roots Farm

Phyllis Shulman, legislative aide for Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin

Aaron Waldkoetter, Central Co-op's Madison Market

Process for developing the strategic framework

AFPC developed the strategic framework through a series of conversations and an organizational retreat. The initial conversations helped to form the foundational elements and strategic areas. Goals and tactics were brainstormed in the retreat, and later selected based on staff capacity, appropriate timeline and other relevant criteria.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Vision

A vibrant food system that supports healthy people, communities, economies and environment.

Mission

Partner with communities, businesses, agriculture and government to develop integrated and sustainable food policy and action.

Values

- **Collaboration**

  Collaboration is a commitment to strengthening a group's collective thinking and relationships in order to prioritize and align efforts. The work of changing a food system is more than one organization can initiate or sustain.

- **Equity**

  Equity is demonstrated commitment to ensuring equal access and opportunity to influence and make decisions on the direction of work. In this effort, there is not a voice, nor a portion of the food system that is more important than the other.

- **Research-driven**

  Research-driven means that AFPC will select policy targets based on informed, well-studied and documented emergent and best practices. All policy recommendations will be informed by research.

- **Systems approach**

  Systems approach addresses challenges and opportunities as they manifest in policies and practices within institutions, communities and cultural groups. Sustainable change requires eliminating and/or adjusting systematic barriers to all aspects of the food system.

Strategic areas

Strategic areas are conceptual guides to help target the work. They are the "big buckets" that hold or group together goals with interdependencies and similar potential impacts.

- **Equitable food access**

  Equitable food access means that all people, regardless of ethnicity, geography or economic status, can produce, procure and/or eat good food. In order for people, communities and economies to be healthy, food environments need to provide easily accessible options for all.

- **Infrastructure**

  Infrastructure includes all the resources involved in creating a sustainable food system, including land and water, processing facilities, packaging facilities, distribution networks, marketing, consumption and waste. Having scale-appropriate infrastructure and access to it is necessary for a vibrant, sustainable food system.

- **Local economic development**

  The food system has a far-reaching economic impact on the region and the potential to act as an engine for increasing local, sustainable economic development. A vibrant food system sustains community economic health and creates economic opportunities for our region's producers, processors and distributors.

- **Public health**

  Sustainably produced food provides the foundation for good health for all individuals and communities. Making it easier for residents in the region to eat wholesome, nutritious foods grown and processed in the region can improve human health and the health of the regional food system.

- **Council development**

  Council development is an integral component of every strategic framework. Organizational infrastructure and capacity will ensure the sustainability of efforts.

GOALS

Equitable food access goals

- **Complete and publish a needs assessment of food access in the region within two years to measure system improvements and increased accessibility over time.**
  - Identify existing research and gaps to provide a baseline framework for equitable food access.
  - Define attributes of a community that has equitable food access and use them for indicators.
  - Create a regional metric that can be used to compare and contrast food access across different local jurisdictions.
- **Recommend and promote policies that will decrease disparities in food access, within nine months of assessment publication.**
  - Develop short- and long-term goals for achieving community success in food access.
  - Draft and provide policy analysis papers to public officials, legislators and general public, including but not limited to: policies on farmland protection, land use, small business and public health.
  - Develop and promote policy recommendations that decrease food access disparities.

Infrastructure

- **Increase the availability of locally produced goods by reducing barriers and increasing utilization of farmland in sustainable production by two percent per year over five years.**
  - Clarify inconsistencies between current regulatory framework and the needs of farmers.
  - Identify barriers to farmers' access to adequate land, water, financing and other resources in order to keep farmland in production.

- Develop and promote policy recommendations that increase percentage of Agricultural Production District (APD) land in sustainable production within five years.

- **Increase amount of locally produced food purchased by regional institutions to 15 percent of food budgets over five years, ensuring that small and mid-sized producers have access to expanded markets.**
  - Identify regulatory, resource and other barriers to institutional purchasing decisions, within the first year.
  - Develop and promote policy recommendations that will facilitate institutional procurement of local products, including improvements to processing, packaging and distribution networks.
- **Increase local processing capacity for Washington meat and poultry products within two years to give consumers more access to locally raised products and help ensure farm and ranch viability.**
  - Review the regulatory framework that governs processing, distribution and sale of Washington grown meat and poultry products.
  - Identify barriers to having meat in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) so that boxes can contain an array of local meat and poultry products.
  - Develop and promote policy recommendations that support scale-appropriate, USDA-inspected slaughter and cut-and-wrap facilities for processing Washington meat and poultry products.
- **Identify other infrastructure needs required to meet regional market demands and regional food security goals, within two years.**
  - Conduct an assessment of resources, facilities and distribution networks available for food production.
  - Identify potential market and gaps in infrastructure to meet current market demand or potential market capacity.

Local economic development

- **Identify and help build a research base around how a local food economy contributes to community economic development to advance supportive investment and policy decisions by local decision makers.**
  - Research economic development in other metropolitan areas specific to local food.
  - Identify local economic research opportunities and needs.
  - Coordinate necessary research to fill gaps.
- **Develop policy recommendations based on research for maximizing local economic development opportunities in the food system.**
  - Seek input from diverse stakeholders and communities in creating economic development recommendations.
  - Develop and promote policy recommendations to increase food system development opportunities.

Public health

- **Advocate and collaborate immediately for policies that improve the nutritional quality of foods served at schools, jails, hospitals and other public facilities.**
  - Assess existing standards for nutrition in food service programs to set targets for improving the quality of food provided.
  - Promote nutrition education via existing channels to enable food service directors and others to make more healthful choices.
- **Build a network of advocates to promote coordinated, food system-wide solutions to food insecurity and diet-related disease in the region.**
  - Convene stakeholders to identify and align most urgent issues.

- Coordinate ongoing communication and outreach efforts about public health priorities as they relate to the food system.

- **Increase key stakeholder understanding of how food safety in production, processing and distribution can impact human health.**
  - Identify external factors that affect food safety.
  - Promote food safety education via existing channels to enable farmers, producers and processors to successfully navigate the regulatory environment.
  - Develop and promote policy recommendations to increase food safety.

Council Development

- **Successfully negotiate an effective, formal Food Policy Council (FPC) within the Puget Sound Regional Council that adheres to our core values and vision, by June 30, 2009.**
  - Identify the stakeholders who can contribute to food system improvements.
  - Identify and engage individuals and stakeholder organizations that can be mobilized by the FPC to inform, advocate for and support its work.
  - Recruit and seat FPC members in a manner consistent with previously developed city and county guidelines by Sept. 30, 2009.

- **Develop FPC staffing and structure sufficient to carry out the strategic framework.**
  - Distribute ownership of work through collaboration with existing groups and organizations.
  - Provide ongoing development and training for members of FPC.
  - Develop a message framework.

SUMMARY

The AFPC will continue to partner with communities, businesses, agriculture and government to develop integrated and sustainable food policy and action. Through this focused work, the AFPC hopes to achieve the vision of a vibrant food system that supports healthy people, communities, economies and environment.

Food system work is tied directly to addressing disparities. A research and policy approach allows the AFPC to take a broad view of the food system and see what regulatory barriers are impeding economic progress or contributing to food insecurity. By viewing these issues through the framework of food systems, AFPC can look for policy solutions that address livable wages and job creation, encourage urban agriculture on city land and promote small business development around food processing and distribution. There is much work to be done to improve food security and public health equity, to improve access to infrastructure and to create a more vibrant local food economy. The focus of this strategic framework is to begin to make these improvements on a regional level.

Contact information

If you would like to know more or become involved, please contact:

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