Addressing Food Policy in Comprehensive Planning

TOOLBOX 2014
Brown Bag & Peer Networking Session
June 19, 2014
Overview

Why Food Policy?
Overview

Agriculture
• From 1997 to 2012, the region lost 16% of its farmland and 434 farms

Economic Impact
• Agriculture counts for more than $9 billion of our state’s revenue
Overview

Health and Hunger

• 14% of the region’s population considered food insecure

• 26% of the region’s adults are classified as obese.
Overview

What is the Food Policy Council?

- Elected officials, planners, producers, business owners, advocates, academics
- Develop just and integrated policy and action recommendations that promote health, sustain and strengthen the local and regional food system
Resources for Local Governments

Comprehensive Plan Resources

Farmers Market Viability Project

Regional Food Assessment (UW Studio)

Food Policy Scan Report (*forthcoming*)
Resources For Local Governments

Policy Blueprints

*Topics Addressed:*

- Comprehensive Planning
- Farmers Markets
- Local Food Procurement
- Urban Agriculture
- Rural Farmland Preservation
Policy Blueprints

Farmers Markets

Background

Farmers markets serve as an important community gathering place, economic development opportunity and connection point between producers and consumers. Farmers markets sit at the intersection of many important policy issues: nutrition and health, environmental protection, food security, economic growth, and community development. While farmers markets can provide significant benefits, urban markets are often challenged by complicated, expensive permitting; lack of stable, long-term locations; and underfunding.

Both locally and nationwide, local governments have taken steps to remove barriers and improve access for farmers markets. This can include establishing a clear code definition for farmers markets, amending codes to allow farmers markets in appropriate zones, allowing markets on city-owned property, streamlining permitting, and establishing a program to sponsor farmers markets. Jurisdictions may also consider supportive steps they can take to facilitate acceptance of electronic payment and food assistance benefits for participants.

Recommendation: Streamline permitting and fees to remove barriers to establishing and maintaining a farmers market.

Several local jurisdictions have identified licensing and fee schedule improvements to streamline the permitting process for farmers markets. The cities of Gold Bar and Seattle have both considered how to support their farmers markets by streamlining or exempting markets from fees, licenses, or permits. The City of Gold Bar exempts operators at farmers markets from business licenses, while the City of Seattle completed a process in 2009 to streamline market requirements and fees. MRSC has collected other state and local approaches on their Farmers Market page.

Local Examples: Streamlined Processes

Gold Bar

5.04.040(C)(10) - Business Licenses

The following shall be exempt from the licensing provisions of this chapter and are not required to comply with the licensing requirements of this chapter: Businesses operating at a “farmers” market or other city-sponsored or -approved activity so long as the activity does not occur more than one (1) time per week for more than five (5) months of each calendar year; and provided that the name, address, and telephone number is submitted to the city on a city business license application form, in advance.

Seattle

Streamlined fees and permitting: Seattle Farmers Market Ordinance (2009)

Other Resources


Community Health and Food Access: The Local Government Role - International City/County Management Association (2006)

King County Farmers Market Report – King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (2010)
Comprehensive Plan Policies

Incorporate supportive policies in the comprehensive plan:

- Agriculture and community gardening
- Healthy food access
- Local food economy
- Procurement
### Food Policy Concepts by Element

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<td><strong>Human Development</strong></td>
<td>Community Food Security, Food Assistance Programs, Emergency Planning, Coordination and Joint Planning</td>
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Policy Blueprints

Farmers Markets

- Streamline permitting and fees
- Identify locations for farmers markets
- Consider permitting markets to operate on city-owned property.
- Define farmers markets
Local Food Procurement

Support institutional procurement policies that encourage purchases of locally grown food products.

- Target Percentage of Local Food Purchases
- Mandated Percent Price Purchases
- Geographic Preference
- Comprehensive Plan Policies to Promote Local Food Procurement
Policy Blueprints

Urban Agriculture

Facilitate urban agriculture activities by ensuring they are permitted by development regulations and other municipal code, and have adequate space to occur

- Code Changes
- Identify land available and used for urban agriculture
Policy Blueprints

Rural Farmland Preservation

• Review appropriate regulations to ensure farmland is protected for long-term agricultural use.

• PDR or TDR to protect agricultural land.

• Promote property tax relief programs for farmers.

• Provide economic development and regulatory assistance to agricultural business enterprises.
Resources

Integrating Food Policy in Comprehensive Planning: Strategies and Resources for the City of Seattle

A CONTRACT PROJECT FOR THE CITY OF SEATTLE

Comprehensive Plan Policies

Background
Planning for food is increasingly a topic of interest both locally and around the country. Support for local food is important for the local economy, for community food security, for reducing the distance food travels from farm to table, and for local governments. Food planning also helps to support the local economies, increasing public health, improving access to healthy foods, increasing food security, and improving neighborhood livability.

Supporting the local food system with comprehensive planning can have economic, quality of life, and environmental benefits:

- Creating and maintaining farmland
- Linking urban food production, processing, and retail jobs
- Improving the economy by stimulating agriculture
- Increasing access to food production through urban agriculture
- Increasing access to locally produced food in neighborhoods

Regional and comprehensive planning also provides direction to local jurisdictions in addressing the local food system. The VISION 2020 is the recent regional food and agriculture growth management, transportation, and economic development framework. It addresses the importance of conserving agricultural land, supporting the local food economy, and building healthy communities. Each central Florida county has a comprehensive planning policy that discusses the food system in some capacity. Depending on the county, these policies look at production, food access, local food procurement, and agriculture.

The examples below focus on supporting food access and the local food economy. In other parts of the country, some jurisdictions have also chosen to address alternative food systems in their communities. As a minimum, these incorporate policies regarding “healthy” and “unhealthy” foods, they should define these terms.

Resources are available to help local jurisdictions evaluate food insecurity in their communities and potentially identify countable measures to take action. Several organizations have developed the national Food Access Research Atlas to help assess food access, including numbers of supermarkets and other food sources.

Recommendation: Incorporate supportive policies in the comprehensive plan.

Sustainable Options

Goal: Promote food security, local food production, and public health by ensuring locally based food production, distribution, and control throughout agriculture, community gardening, farmers’ markets, and food access initiatives. Establish partnerships and share resources to promote food access and production.

Policies:

- Agriculture and community gardening
  - Work with residents to disseminate and remove barriers to local production
  - Minimize conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural use through maintaining a high-quality agricultural infrastructure
  - Expand community gardening throughout the city, including parks and city-owned spaces
- Support the development of local, and where possible, sustainable food systems by supporting local food systems and institutional initiatives to allow gardens, distribution, and sales
- Promote inter-agency and intergovernmental cooperation and resource sharing to expand community gardening opportunities
For More Information

Rebeccah Maskin, Senior Planner
Rmaskin@psrc.org, 206-464-5833

Liz Underwood-Bultmann, Associate Planner
lunderwood-bultmann@psrc.org, 206-464-6174

Project Website
http://www.psrc.org/growth/foodpolicy