Regional Food Policy Council
May 8, 2015 • 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
PSRC Conference Room, 1011 Western Avenue, Ste. 500 Seattle, WA 98104

10:00 1. Call to Order and Introductions – Richard Conlin, Co-Chair
10:05 2. Public Comments
10:10 3. King County Local Food Initiative – John Taylor, King County
10:35 4. King Conservation District Work Program – Deirdre Grace, King Conservation District
10:50 5. Washington Food System Roundtable – Phyllis Shulman, At-Large
11:10 6. Subcommittee Work Plans
   Katharine Ryan, Chair – Food Access subcommittee
   Rebeccah Maskin, Staff – Food Economy subcommittee
11:35 6. Updates and Announcements
   a. Membership Update
   b. APA Conference Report-out

7. Next Meeting:
   Full Council - Friday, July 10, 2015, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
   Subcommittees – Food Access: Thursday, May 21st, 2015, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m.
   Food Economy: Friday, May 22nd, 2015, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

12:00 8. Adjourn
1) **Welcome.** Commissioner Charlotte Garrido (Kitsap County, *Co-Chair*) called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. There were around-the-room introductions.

2) **Public Comments.** There were no public comments.

3) **Subcommittee Work Plans.** Gina Clark (Food Lifeline) Chair of the Food Access subcommittee, stated that the work plan has come together smoothly. Barriers were grouped into four buckets, including financial barriers (affordability of food), transportation logistics, capacity of distributors and access to healthy food retail. Members have decided to tackle data needs as a first step. The subcommittee will hold a data party, compiling data provided by each member onto a template. Members will decide what data to focus on and move on to prioritize model policies.

An additional focus will be on system coordination, connecting the food system to other social services. Members will hold informal meetings this summer to coordinate with housing and transportation providers and other groups working on food access regarding what is working and what is missing. The subcommittee would like to hold a workshop or candidate forum in winter 2015 or spring 2016. Gina stated that challenges for the work plan include agreeing on data sources, choosing model policies, deciding on what providers to link with, which elements of the work plan to seek outside collaboration on and the nature of the workshop or forum.

Members congratulated the work of the subcommittee, saying that it was thorough, focused and ambitious. Members stated that it would be important to coordinate the subcommittee’s work with other organizations, such as the Kitsap Food Policy Council. They commented that, depending on the time of year, it might be difficult to get elected officials’ participation in a forum, unless they were already at PSRC for a meeting.

Some council members expressed concern that the subcommittee was not looking to impact the basic cause of hunger, which they identified as poverty, low wages and lack of job training. Other members pointed out that providing healthy food for school children would go a long way toward getting food to where it is needed. Gina Clark (Food LifeLine) stated that the subcommittee could discuss the role of these larger issues in its work. There is also the issue of healthy food access for senior citizens. How large of a target can the subcommittee aim for and how narrowly should the work program focus?

Members suggested that there is a lack of a uniform focus on the food system at the local and regional government level. While educating elected officials attending PSRC meetings is helpful, they may or may not be the key individuals to reach out to. Investing in bottom-up infrastructure and efforts such as working with faith-based organizations is valuable.
Richard Conlin (At-Large, Co-Chair) cautioned that although the group should think about major transformational measures, it is very important to build things that make a difference in the near term as well. It is important to ask where the subcommittee's work can be most effective, using the influence, knowledge and connections that it has. Small good changes can be hugely effective.

In introducing the Food Economy Subcommittee's workplan, Nancy Tosta (Deputy Mayor, City of Burien), Chair of the Food Economy subcommittee, stated that the two subcommittees' work parallels each other. Building a Viable Food Economy (BVFES) is the name taken by the subcommittee. Nancy stated that the subcommittee encompasses a large diversity of viewpoints. Issues that have been under discussion include how to keep farmland in production, how to promote urban agriculture, how to ensure that distribution and marketing facilities are available, and how to build local markets. She reviewed the list of barriers identified in the subcommittee's work plan, and then reviewed a matrix of proposed tasks. She stated that the subcommittee will compile existing recommendations/strategies, organizing them to draw conclusions on how to focus the group's work. The goal is to build from previous work, identifying gaps in data and attempting to fill these so that the subcommittee can begin to craft policies and develop tools that can be used widely. In response to audience comments, she stated that all of the subcommittee's tasks must be done in a way that respects the environment. She identified one of the challenges for the group is how to get this work done when subcommittee members have limited time to devote to it. Smaller subcommittees may be formed to take on particular tasks.

The State Food Policy Roundtable collected data from food policy councils around the state on policies and recommendations. That work should be utilized by the subcommittees. Members commented that the work plans as presented look more like one-year plans than three year plans. Perhaps they should be noted as such and then expanded as more input is gathered. Other members supported a three year plan as a way to identify future goals.

Council members identified food waste, the environmental impacts of farming, and the regulations affecting salmon recovery as large issues. The council should identify regional issues to focus on and regulations are a huge issue, including state regulations that create impediments. Speaking with a unified voice across the region could be very powerful.

King County members stated that the county has a very aggressive goal to get attract new farmers and to make farmland available, through a variety of methods and it is hoped that some of these ideas will be used by other counties in the region. It was suggested that PSRC could generate a map identifying all of the crops being grown in the region and this information would be very useful to county governments.

Members asked what lens was being used as the subcommittees were planning implementation. Protecting the environment should be a part of the goal. Chair Garrido suggested referring to the council goals, which include an environmental focus.

An audience member suggested that a good question to ask would be if there was grant money available, what would be the first tier of work that the council would take on?

Chair Garrido ended the discussion by stating that there seemed to be general consensus that the work plans were implementing the council's overall action plan. Subcommittees should be coordinating with each other and be back in May with an update for the council.

4) **Overview of PSRC Planning: Growth Management.** Liz Underwood-Bultmann (PSRC) provided a chart of the agency’s integrated planning schedule to show the range of the work program for growth management, transportation, and economic development. She provided a presentation on the growth management, centers planning and regional planning at PSRC. She stated that the Growth Management Act (GMA), passed in 1990, requires local governments to establish urban growth boundaries and to protect agricultural and rural lands. Most local governments in the central Puget Sound are updating their comprehensive plans by June 30th, 2015 in order to comply with the GMA periodic review requirements.

PSRC reviews and certifies the transportation-related provisions of local comprehensive plans because the agency grants transportation funding to local governments planning consistently with the region’s transportation and growth management plans. VISION 2040 is the agency’s regional growth strategy, and it concentrates growth in metropolitan areas and core cities. VISION 2040 informs other plans, such as Transportation 2040 and the Regional Economic Strategy. Liz reminded the members that the policy blueprints created by the council were written to provide information to jurisdictions completing comprehensive plans. Scoping for an update to VISION 2040 will begin in 2017 and the council
could provide recommendations on the role of food systems in the plan. Chair Garrido suggested that it would be useful to the council to see the comprehensive plan provisions addressing the food system in the plans that are being submitted to PSRC for certification this spring.

Members stated that the nexus between economic development and viable farming is very clear. The role of agriculture should be considered in the next update of the regional economic strategy. Chair Garrido stated that it would be valuable for the council to present to the EDD Board on the economic importance of agricultural work. Members asked if there could be mention of food policy and the Regional Food Policy Council at the PSRC General Assembly this year. Charlie Howard (PSRC) stated that that was feasible.

Richard Conlin (At-Large, Co-chair) reflected that the council brought up food policy when the Regional Economic Strategy was being updated two and a half years ago and there was openness to the idea. There is a seat on the council for county economic development councils. Liz Underwood-Bultmann (PSRC) pointed out that there was a food and economy panel in 2013 co-hosted by the Economic Development District and the Regional Food Policy Council. Members stated that one in five jobs in the region are in the food system, and that it generates $11 billion/year, making it a significant sector of the regional economy.

5) Membership Update. Liz Underwood-Bultmann (PSRC) reminded the council that outreach was done in February to fill seven sector seats via a membership application process. The applications were discussed at a steering committee meeting and the recommendations were brought to the full council today for approval. The council was in agreement in appointing the candidates for the Farmland Preservation, Waste sector, Grocer, and K-12 education seats. There was discussion regarding the Social Justice Organization seat. Members wanted to be sure that there was regional representation on the council. The candidate organization for the Wholesale seat was considered to be a better fit to represent urban agriculture interests rather than Wholesale Marketing. The council recommended that more candidates for the seat be pursued. Chairman Garrido requested that the steering committee discuss membership recommendations again at their next meeting.

6) Updates and Announcements.

a. Legislative Update.

Ellen Gray (Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network) joined the meeting by phone and gave a brief overview on the important food legislation before the current legislative session. She provided a handout of the legislation that her organization is tracking. She stated that the top priority was for a bill resuming WSDA funding to farm to school and small farm direct marketing assistance. An additional priority was the $1 million request to fund a pilot project to provide farming education, targeting at-risk high school students.

Representative Mia Gregerson also joined the conversation to give an update her sponsorship of SHB 1685, which creates a Washington food policy forum, including completing a study by Washington State University. She stated that she has been doing a lot of education of representatives regarding the importance of the food system. Chair Garrido encouraged council members to contact their local representatives to support the bill. Members asked why the PSRC could not send a letter and Liz Underwood-Bultmann (PSRC) explained that PSRC adopts a legislative platform each year that is approved by the Executive Board. Members requested that the council be kept informed of PSRC’s platform.

7) Adjourn.

Chair Garrido adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m. and invited council and audience members to stay for Department of Commerce’s Short Course Video on Comprehensive Planning. The next scheduled meeting of the Regional Food Policy Council is Friday, July 10, 2015 in the PSRC Conference Room.

Questions: Contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann at (206) 464-6174 or LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org or Marina King at (206) 464-6174 or mking@psrc.org.