

**REGIONAL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
WORKING GROUP**

Friday, February 10, 2012
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
REGIONAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500 – Seattle, Washington

Agenda

- 10:00 a.m. I. Call to Order and Introductions** *Councilmember Richard Conlin, Chair*
- 10:05 a.m. II. Citizen Comments** *Councilmember Richard Conlin, Chair*
- 10:10 a.m. III. PSRC Presentation: Resource Lands** *Rebecca Maskin, PSRC*
This presentation will discuss trends on agriculturally designated lands in the Central Puget Sound from 2000-08. The analysis comes from a *Puget Sound Trends* article on natural resource lands published by PSRC in 2011. See: http://www.psrc.org/assets/6954/Oct11trend_Lands-revised.pdf
- 10:20 a.m. IV. American Farmland Trust** *Dennis Canty, American Farmland Trust*
American Farmland Trust will discuss the County Farmland Protection Study and the Foodshed Project. Please follow the link to the study here: <http://www.farmland.org/programs/states/wa/Puget-Sound-Farmland-Protection-Report.asp> and a summary of county assessments here: <http://www.farmland.org/programs/states/wa/Puget-Sound-Farmland-Protection-Findings.asp>
- 10:55 a.m. V. Council Workplan Discussion*** *Councilmembers*
Councilmembers will discuss recommendations from the Steering Committee for the 2012 Workplan.”
- 11:45 a.m. VI. Updates and Reports**
a. Farmer-Fisher-Chef Connection *Roy Breiman, Chefs Collaborative*
b. Farm to School *Erin MacDougall, Public Health – Seattle & King County*
c. Legislative Update* *Ellen Gray, WA Sustainable Food and Farming Network*
- 11:55 a.m. VII. Announcements – Next Regional Food Policy Council meeting** *Councilmember Richard Conlin, Chair*
Friday, March 9, 2012, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
- 12:00 noon VIII. Adjourn**

* Agenda materials attached or enclosed separately

Friday, January 13 2, 2012, 10:00 to 12:00 noon

Members/Alternates Present:

Councilmember Richard Conlin, Seattle – <i>Chair</i>	Justice Andrea Dwyer, Seattle Tilth	King County Linda Nageotte, Food Lifeline
Jerry Bartlett, Cedar Grove Composting	Brad Gaolach, WSU Extension	Linda Neunzig, Snohomish County
Branden Born, UW	Commissioner Charlotte Garrido, Kitsap County	Joanna Richey, King County
Brynn Brady, Pierce County	Kate Halstead, Sno-Valley Tilth	Dwight Sutton, Kitsap EDA
Roy Breiman, Chefs Collaborative	Sharon Lerman, City of Seattle	Mark Weed, Puget Sound Meat Producers Cooperative
Linda Chauncey, Chefs Collaborative	Bobbi Lindemulder, Snohomish Conservation District	Finley Young, UFCW 367
Diane Dempster, Charlie’s Produce		
Tony D’Onofrio, Town & Country Markets		
Heather Day, Community Alliance for Global	Erin MacDougall, Public Health Seattle	

Others Present (for all or part of the meeting):

Alon Bassok, PSRC	Preservation	Olivia Robinson, PSRC
Travis English, Community Alliance for Global Justice	Marina King, PSRC	Phyllis Shulman, Seattle City Council
Linda Fox, PSRC	Sharon Lerman, Seattle	Joseph Timmons, Office of Congressman Jay Inslee
Richard Gelb, King County	Tammy Morales, Urban Food Link	Liz Underwood-Bultmann, PSRC
Josh Gruntoli, WA Office of Farmland	Grace Reamer, King County Council	

- 1) **Welcome.** Councilmember Richard Conlin (*Chair* - Seattle) called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
- 2) There were no **Citizen Comments**.

Food Distribution: Grocery Distribution. Tony D’Onofrio of Town & Country Markets, Inc. presented on the distribution issues of a mid-sized grocer. The presentation can be viewed at: http://www.psrc.org/assets/7315/Grocery-Food_Distribution_System_-_Short_Ve.pdf. Tony suggested that the Regional Food Policy Council could help mid-sized grocers by:

1. Finding ways to lower the cost of getting the product to market, which would enable more small producers to sell their product. This could be done through changing the legal structure or providing incentives that promote cooperative production, processing, distribution, marketing and insurance.
2. Integrated media coordination, to promote healthy foods and local foods.
3. Promote alternative retail formats, such as the healthy corner store and more grocery stores in inner city areas. One area that may help increase grocery stores in these areas in by waiving current parking requirements.

Richard asked who bears the cost of food waste, which happens when products spoil or don’t sell. Town & Country passes this cost on to customers, and estimates that approximately 1% of products are wasted. They donate product to local foodbanks, which in turn have farmers pick-up spoiled produce to compost.

Members asked if Town & Country educates around healthy habits and healthy food. The market educates by stocking produce and local foods in the check-out area, rather than non-nutritional “junk” foods or alcohol. Council members additionally were interested in ingredient use education. Town & Country educates regarding ingredients with culinary kiosks, where cooks provide food samples and recipes every day.

The top factors that Town & Country considers when looking at a new product is whether the producer can provide enough of it and whether the cost is low enough that customers will buy it and Town & Country can make a profit. These factors can be barriers to the small producer.

3) **Small Group Work**

The council broke into four small groups to discuss what issues the council should take up in 2012, based on the work of the subcommittees and the issues brought out in presentations and discussions last year.

Group representatives included Olivia Robinson, Alon Bassok and Liz Underwood-Bultmann from PSRC staff and Phyllis Shulman from the City of Seattle. Olivia reported that her group discussed more education around the federal Farm Bill, scale-appropriate infrastructure, and working towards a consistent regulatory framework throughout the region. The group also noted the importance of keeping the Council's Vision in mind as we create the work plan.

Phyllis reported that her group requested more discussion on this issue, perhaps in the form of a subcommittee or steering committee meeting. They also recommended focusing on city and county comprehensive plans, collecting complete data on farmland, as well as the economic impact of farming and the impacts when farmland goes out of production. They also noted the need to have more rural and suburban voices on the council and to better clarify the roles and responsibilities of the council and its members.

Liz's group focused on 2 key factors – education and consolidating/amplifying the message. To this end, they recommended creating a speakers' bureau and identifying audiences and topics for education.

Alon's group also requested more time to fully discuss this issue. They also discussed recognizing the good work already started, thinking broadly about producing model policies, looking for ways to provide education on multiple topics and multiple levels and helping to save Puget Sound Fresh by investigating various avenues of potential funding.

The topic was concluded with the caveat the discussion would continue at the February 10th meeting. In addition, the Steering Committee would have an extended meeting on January 25th to review the comments and form recommendations for the larger group meeting. All council members are welcome to attend the January 25th Steering Committee meeting.

4) **Updates and Announcements**

PSRC staff transition. Liz Underwood-Bultmann was promoted to assistant planner. While she will continue to have some involvement with the Regional Food Policy Council, Marina King will take on Liz's administrative duties for the council.

Healthy Food Access. Richard Gelb of King County provided a short slide presentation on mapping of healthy food access. This presentation was a follow-up from his presentation to the Council in September. More information can be found on the PSRC website at <http://www.psrc.org/about/advisory/regional-food-policy-council/food-policy-past/> and at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/extranet/gis/ClientServices/DNRP/HFAAll/>

USDA Agriculture Census –Linda Neunzig (Snohomish County) noted that the USDA Agriculture Census is taking place. The census was sent to land owners, as well as farmers, in order to determine farming use of non-agriculturally designated land. It is important to collect this information to get a better picture of regional agricultural activities. Please ask anyone who receives the form to complete it, even if they do not have agriculture activities on their land.

Food Movements Unite – a book edited by Eric Holt Gimenez, Executive Director of FoodFirst/Institute for Food and Development Policy, was going to be featured at a January 19th presentation at U.W. <http://www.foodmovementsunite.org/>

Puget Sound Meat Producers Co-op – Mark Weed noted that they are looking for a speaker for their annual meeting. If anyone is interested in presenting, please contact him. If not, he will connect with potential speakers

Hunger Action Day – February 3rd is the day when food advocates will meet with the state legislature to discuss hunger issues. It is important to register, to participate. More information and registration information is available here <http://www.wsahnc.org/hunger-action-day/>

Celebration of Food Festival – sponsored by Edmonds Community College, will be held on May 20th at the Lynwood Convention Center. More information is available here <http://www.edcc.edu/odet/FoodRevSnoCo.php>

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Olivia Robinson at (206) 464-7890 or orobinson@psrc.org or Marina King at (206) 464-6174 or mking@psrc.org.

DISCUSSION ITEM

February 10, 2012

To: Regional Food Policy Council Members

Subject: Regional Food Policy Council 2012 Planning

AT ISSUE

During their January 5th meeting, the Steering Committee proposed a new process to synthesize what the Council has discussed and learned in 2011 to create an actionable 2012 work plan. During the January 13 meeting, the council divided into small groups to review attached summary of Key Issues and discuss potential work plan items for 2012. The full council asked for the Steering Committee to hold an extended meeting with an open invitation to all councilmembers on January 25th. At this meeting they asked for the expanded Steering Committee to consider the discussion notes from the January 13th meeting of the full council and to determine a recommendation to bring to the February 10th meeting of the full council. At its January 25th meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed a summary of the small group discussion notes (see page 3 of this memo). The full list of issues discussed at the January 13th meeting begins on page 6.

RECOMMENDATION

The Steering Committee focused on three main areas for their recommendation: creating a policy landscape to help the council better understand where we can affect change and then constructing recommendations on specific issues for specific decision-makers, working a small number of key projects identified by the subcommittees including focus on agriculture and land-use, and creating a strategy to educate decision-makers in the region about the Regional Food Policy Council, so that policy recommendations will be well received.

The Steering Committee recommends that the full council discuss and refine these three issues at the February 10th meeting. The refined recommendations will be presented for action at the then be readied to be voted on at the March 9th Regional Food Policy Council meeting.

Policy Landscape Map – The Steering Committee felt that understanding where and how policy is made is imperative for the council. The council has stated that affecting changes in policy is a main focus for the council's actions, but to do that, we should have a full understanding of where the decisions are made and who makes them. The policy landscape would go beyond cataloging government policy-making to include information on decisions made by businesses and institutions. It was noted that this work could potentially be accomplished by PSRC staff with the assistance of an intern and the council. If this recommendation is adopted, the Steering Committee also recommended convening a workshop to further develop what should be a part of the Policy Landscape Map. Once the Policy Landscape Map is completed the Council would then begin to develop recommendations on specific

issues for decision-makers and identify the best method to influence them (for example letters to elected bodies with recommendations).

Sub-committee projects, Agriculture, and Land-Use – The Steering Committee noted that work preservation of agriculture and agricultural lands is vital and work already has started in this area through the City of Seattle contract and grant applications. The council should continue to focus on the issues and projects identified by the subcommittees and develop early policies to address identified land-use and agricultural needs.

Education – Both the Steering Committee and the small groups convened at the January Council meeting noted the importance of laying the foundation for future recommendations and educating decision-makers about the existence and work of the Regional Food Policy Council. The council and PSRC staff should begin to create a presentation about the council, an outreach strategy, and develop a timeline for the strategy.

January 2012 Regional Food Policy Council small group notes

During the January 13 meeting, the Council divided into four groups led by Alon Bassok (PSRC), Olivia Robinson (PSRC), Phyllis Shulman (City of Seattle), and Liz Underwood-Bultmann (PSRC). The Steering Committee attempts to pull together the major themes from the discussion notes from these groups.

Groups noted a need to recognize work already underway by the Council and to keep in mind the Vision and Mission statements while developing the work plan. The projects noted below, either associated with the 2012 City of Seattle contract or current grant applications under review, will continue as funded.

- The contract with the City of Seattle will provide recommendations on how to include food policy in comp plans and create a tool to assess urban agriculture
- A proposal has been submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to investigate the barriers to and a potential tool to aid livestock production in the region. This grant proposal came out of the work of the Economic Development Subcommittee.
- A separate proposal has been submitted to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to fund a policy analysis and development of model policies related to healthy food access in the region.

The small groups also emphasized the need to clarify what exactly the council can do and to look for ways to achieve multiple outcomes with our actions.

The potential work plan items discussed divided a few main areas: Council Education, Outreach and Community Education, Research and Data-gathering, Targeted Projects, and Council Structure

Council Education

These items tended to focus on areas where the council could benefit from further education on specific topics leading to potential future action items or to advise work currently underway.

- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) – how it works and what are its goals
- In-depth presentation and discussion around particular land-use and distribution policies – particular interest in policies around the floodplain and where policies are in conflict between jurisdictions with an eye towards eventually working on context appropriate regulations and best practices for all counties
- Balancing agriculture and environmental stewardship - Snohomish County Sustainable Lands program may be a model that could of what might be able to assist other counties in balancing environmental and agricultural interests.
- Food-Supply diagram to provide a better visual of the process.
- Farm Bill – education would help the council better learn what is contained in the current federal Farm Bill, understand potential changes, and members can take that information and advocate with their own organizations
- Education on institutional procurement, including schools and hospitals

Outreach and Community Education

These suggestions focused on ways to connect with the broader community on the work of the Regional Food Policy Council and on how to influence governments around the region.

- Increase outreach on the work and aims of the Regional Food Policy Council, as well as providing education on key issues to decision-makers and influencers, including public officials. This could include visiting individual cities in the region and partnering with someone from each city
- Create a Speakers Bureau with a clear message about the Regional Food Policy Council and content and speakers to specific audiences
- Develop educational package on why local, nutritious food is important
- Organize Listening sessions around topics that most impact individual communities
- Encourage a program targeted at school children and to teach them about agriculture and food issues. This would be a project the Council would catalyze but not run

Research and Data-gathering

These issues involved gathering more information for potential future actions or model policies.

- Consolidate current resources, including policy language, current data, etc.
- Gather data on the exactly how many farms exist in the region, where they are, and where flooding is a serious problem
- Bring together information on the economic impact of production on existing farms
- Bring together the data needed to make the economic case for the need for small and mid-size processing
- Information on the economic impact of losing farmland and farmland affordability
- Identify the policies, regulations, research, funding, business decisions, and education efforts that currently impact the food system, as well as who is currently responsible for those decisions. This would help clarify the policy landscape and provide background for the council to develop recommendations on specific topics to each of these entities.
- Perform an analysis on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of current regulations
- Understand the impact of biofuels in Washington state
- Gather data on food access issues, including connections between urban agriculture and food access

Targeted Projects

These issues could ultimately be the focus of the Council's work plan. Many of these items are broadly focused and could be divided into steps the council could take to achieve the larger goals.

- Ensure a consistent regulatory framework in the region
- Re-invest in scale appropriate infrastructure with a particular focus on the needs of the meat production industry
- Work on issues related to farmland affordability
- Influence institutional healthy food purchasing
- Work on ways to create effective marketing for small producers, including expanding food hubs

- Develop model policies for municipalities
- Work on food access issues
- Find potential ways to Save Puget Sound Fresh

Council Structure

These issues focused mainly on ways to potentially improve the council itself.

- Create a subcommittee to work with the steering committee to create a prioritization process.
- Set targets to measure success and provide clarity of who will be responsible for what actions
- Pick one project for the year to start and for the rest create recommendations for policymakers and others based on the policy landscape work.
- Forge more connections with the medical community
- More involvement from Agricultural commissions and conservation districts
- Increase participation of suburban and rural cities on the council

Agriculture

Common Themes

- Farmland preservation
- Aging farmer population and related farm succession
- Regulations – context-appropriate regulation and differences between counties
- Economic / market challenges for local farmers
- Infrastructure to support production

Kitsap County, January 2011

- Develop agricultural policy recommendations for the comprehensive plan
- Refine farm audits for energy efficiency

King County, February 2011

- Farm succession
- Land affordability
- Water – too much/too little

Small groups, April 2011

- Collect Best Management Practices (BMP) from the region and create a list/database of what is working
- Create a retirement fund for farmers
- Create a Regional Good Food Stewardship Fund with targeted small funding to help tie farmers to their land
- A program to pay for farming business plans
- Improved flood management through coordination and context-appropriate regulation
- Cost-neutral land-use definitions
- Identify common legislative barriers around surface water management
- Better flood management—retrofit existing developments, flood control projects, better oversight and planning
- Zoning that is mindful of soil profiles
- Define “local”
- Possibly expand Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

UW Studio, June 2011

- Counties inventory farmland using different methodologies making it difficult to make regional policy decisions – it may help to hold a forum to discuss inventory methods and data types and determine baseline data that could be collected in each county
- Better track and survey urban agriculture activities in the region

Pierce County, August 2011

- Issues continue around high land prices, land conversions, an aging farmer population, and the declining of both infrastructure (physical decline due to aging) and support agencies
- On the strengths side, they have excellent growing conditions, successful small farms, growing interest in farming, and key infrastructure in place

- Linking farming and agricultural land conservation to broader public benefits such as water quality, habitat protection, open space value and food security may generate broader public support.

State Food Policy, October 2011

- Increase production, consumption, and sales of Washington-grown foods
- Protect the land and water resources needed for sustained food production
- Examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number of farmers, education needs for an adequate agricultural workforce and provide for continued economic viability of local food production, processing, and distribution

PSRC Policy Scan, October 2011

- There are policies in place around the region addressing food policy, however, the potential exists to increase the number of supportive food policies in order to reduce barriers, increase access to healthy food, increase urban agriculture, and protect agricultural lands

Direct Marketing Presentation, December 2011

- Promote consumer education through programs such as Puget Sound Fresh, which has had much of its funding slashed
- WSU Extension focuses on education of growers and youth, but also is facing funding cuts
- Washington State Farmers Market Association assists in educating around marketing and market management
- Tilth also works to connect farmers for education

Agriculture Subcommittee

- Recommended an assessment should be conducted for King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties that would build on the work done by the University of Washington planning studio and compile existing information from other sources. The full assessment would describe 1) existing conditions and needs and 2) existing tools in place to protect farmland and their use
- Creating a benchmark program to measure the success of the Regional Food Policy Council's goals. A set of indicators would be developed and measured on a regular time interval. Specific indicators would be developed once the assessment is complete
- Creation of a checklist that would provide a list of end results coupled with best practices and model policy language.

King County Farm Tour, October 2011

- The ongoing need to balance needs of farmers and regulations regarding building in the flood plain, protecting critical areas, the encroachment of development and infrastructure needs for farm pads, packing, processing, and farmworker housing

Seattle Contract, 2012

- Provide recommendations on how to include food policy in comprehensive plans
- Create a tool to assess urban agriculture

Economic Development

Common Themes

- Marketing of Washington-grown products
- Food/distribution hubs
- Creating a Green Restaurant Program

King County, February 2011

- Provide and fund marketing and economic development services, including Puget Sound Fresh and Farmers Markets

Snohomish County, March 2011

- Use public/private partnerships to create new markets, opportunities to create year-round public market, distribution hubs, and processing facilities

UW Studio, March 2011

- Green Restaurant Program

Small Groups, April 2011

- Distribution and access are important areas for focus including improving distribution access through existing network, connecting producers to large institutions, and cross-sector cooperation/alliances
- Promote local purchasing and procurement
- Strengthen Farm to School and look at ways to tie food production and marketing into education
- Create a Green Restaurant Program
- Increase processing capabilities for artisan producers
- Establish produce departments in small corner stores
- Better connect buyers and producers through hubs
- Consider co-op butcher
- Focus on marketing including reviewing existing marketing efforts for effectiveness, increasing costs so producers are paid more and there are living wage jobs, and creating a common understanding around organic, grass-fed, and local
- Be mindful of the difficult economics for small farmers and inspection issues

UW Studio, June 2011

- Need to gather more data to better determine the economic impact of fisheries and the fishing industry
- Look into developing more food hubs in the region
- Create Green Restaurant program that includes a checklist with recommendations and an emphasis on local incentives and resources

Healthy Corner Stores, July 2011

- Consider how zoning and land use codes affect food retail
- Look into economic development efforts that could help food deserts

Pierce County, August 2011

- Issues continue around high land prices and the declining of both infrastructure (physical decline due to aging) and support agencies
- On the strengths side, buy local initiatives are supported in the county

City of Des Moines, October 2011

- Improve access to healthy food options

State Food Policy, October 2011

- Increase production, consumption, and sales of Washington-grown foods
- Increase state-level purchasing of local food products

Direct Marketing Presentation, December 2011

- Washington State Farmers Market Association is working to expand shopper base for markets
- At least 265 unique farmers from around the state sell at Farmers Markets in the region
- Concerns over how to fund direct market sales and general support for local food, which do not fall under the traditional economic development model
- Limited distribution channels remain an issue
- Farmers need increased education on marketing
- The Regional Food Policy Council can conduct research to learn the economic impact of investment in direct market farm support and engage stakeholders to support food-centered economic development
- Increasing interest in locally-grown food, but demand is not being met
- Direct marketing sales reported by local farmers in the Central Puget Sound region ranges from nearly \$5 - \$10 million
- There are difficulties in building relationships between growers and buyers
- Small and mid-sized producers lack a unified voice
- There are no commodity commissions for small- and mid-sized diversified producers to support outreach and marketing or represent their interests at the policy/legislative level

Economic Development Subcommittee

- The subcommittee recommends focusing on a comprehensive assessment of each of the main sectors of the food system to provide a better understanding of the current state and various components of this part of the food system, where there are whole and possible ways to affect changes to the system. The assessment would begin with the processing sector as this is an arena that likely would not get addressed without the support of the Regional Food Policy Council.
- Supporting the Green Restaurant Program
- Marketing issues.

Education

Common Themes

- Increasing education on food and farms in schools
- Educating public officials on food policy issues
- Marketing value of local products

Snohomish County, March 2011

- Need to educate about farms, farmland, and local food, especially with children

Small Groups, April 2011

- Develop K-20 career education tract to emphasize career opportunities in the food system
- Create experiential education opportunities for K-12 that tie food system curriculum to general standards
- Create a Speakers Bureau
- Provide outreach to elected officials
- Invite a public relations firm to participate with council
- Consider opportunities for continuing education, professional development or recertification/licensing in the food system

City of Des Moines, October 2011

- Use public education to improve access to healthy food options

Direct Marketing Presentation, December 2011

- Promote consumer education through programs such as Puget Sound Fresh, which has had much of its funding slashed
- WSU Extension focuses on education of growers and youth, but also is facing funding cuts
- Washington State Farmers Market Association assists in educating around marketing and market management
- Tilth also works to connect farmers for education
- Farmers need increased education on marketing
- The Regional Food Policy Council can help by bringing suburban/rural cities to the table and support consumer education, expand access to stakeholder research and information resources, and present information to the Suburban Cities Association

Environment

Common Themes

- Balancing environmental stewardship and the needs of working farms

Kitsap County, January 2011

- Refine farm audits for energy efficiency, utilize biofuels

King County, February 2011

- How to allow productive agriculture to expand in flood zones while maintaining public safety
- Water and irrigation issues

Snohomish County, March 2011

- Use environmental stewardship to protect farmland

Small Groups, April 2011

- Promote the protection and restoration of habitats for pollinators, fish and wildlife while supporting varying scales of agriculture business viability by evaluating offsite mitigation possibilities and protecting watershed quality
- Analyze and change, if appropriate, regulations to promote environmentally friendly waste disposal
- Evaluate and develop best management practices that ensure water quality protection and restoration for seafood industry, livestock and food crops
- Make it easier for farmers to create their own on-site energy production systems
- Evaluate best management practices for carbon sequestration on farms
- Promote farming practices that reduce the use of non-renewable energy
- Promote farming practices that use natural nutrients as opposed to synthetic nutrients

Pierce County, August 2011

- Linking farming and agricultural land conservation to broader public benefits such as water quality, habitat protection, open space value and food security may generate broader public support

State Food Policy, October 2011

- Protect the land and water resources needed for sustained food production

King County Farm Tour, October 2011

- The ongoing need to balance needs of farmers and regulations regarding building in the flood plain, protecting critical areas, the encroachment of development and infrastructure needs for critter pads, packing, processing, and farmworker housing

Equity

Common Themes

- Food deserts and food insecurity
- Wages and worker rights in the food system
- Listening sessions/process equity

Small groups, April 2011

- Matching food supply and demand by undertaking an assessment of food and hunger in the region to gain an understanding of the root causes of food insecurity, mapping Food Deserts, analyzing assets and demographics, and using mobile food options as a way to take food where it is needed
- Convene a summit to connect producers and distributors with organizations that serve communities with food insecurity
- Create an information clearinghouse
- Consider a possible exchange program for schools and food stamp programs

Food Score Project, 2011

- Need to better map and understand food deserts

UW Studio, June 2011

- Workers in the food industry could be helped by food hub employment, trade associations, career ladders, paid medical leave, living wages and farm succession initiatives
- Coordinating transit systems with food retail could help in food deserts, bring together community groups and government to discuss causes and solutions for food deserts

Healthy Corner Stores, July 2011

- Consider how zoning and land use codes affect food retail
- Look into economic development efforts that could help food deserts

City of Des Moines, October 2011

- Improve access to healthy food options

State Food Policy, October 2011

- Reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure the benefits of a healthy food system are shared with families at all income levels, particularly vulnerable children, the elderly, the disabled, and communities of color.

Equity Subcommittee

- Develop a research proposal for an equity assessment with the ultimate objective to provide decision support for targeted actions to reduce disparities in the food system
- Engage in listening sessions with the public around equity and participation in the food system

Health

Common Themes

- Improve access to healthy food options
- Food deserts and food insecurity
- Exposure to unhealthy food

Small groups, April 2011

- Focus on food system workers by endorsing campaigns that encourage paying farm workers more (such as state and national-level advocacy efforts) and focusing on worker safety and health
- Promote access to nutrient-rich foods by better understanding food deserts in the region, enduring all regional Farmers Markets accept WIC and EBT, and promoting healthy foods in schools/institutions
- Consider restrictions on unhealthy food in and near schools and hospitals
- Increase opportunities for urban agriculture and look for ways it might reinforce health goals
- Increase healthy food retail, such as healthy corner stores
- Consider nutritional quality of food banks
- There are barriers around the lack of knowledge of preparation and nutrition, an abundance of cheap alternatives with less nutritious value, large institutions with a large demand, grocery worker health and worker safety in the food system

Healthy Corner Stores, July 2011

- Consider how zoning and land use codes affect food retail

City of Des Moines, October 2011

- Improve access to healthy food options

State Food Policy, October 2011

- Review and develop programs that support proper nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related diseases
- Reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure the benefits of a healthy food system are shared with families at all income levels, particularly vulnerable children, the elderly, the disabled, and communities of color.

PSRC Policy Scan, October 2011

- There are policies in place around the region addressing food policy, however, the potential exists to increase the number of supportive food policies in order to reduce barriers, increase access to healthy food, increase urban agriculture, and protect agricultural lands

Direct Marketing Presentation, December 2011

- The Regional Food Policy Council can convene/assist local health departments to develop consistent food safety regulations

Policy

Common Themes

- Balancing regulations and the needs of working farms
- Integrating food policy into comprehensive plans
- Creating model policies for local government

Kitsap County, January 2011

- Develop agricultural policy recommendations for the comprehensive plan
- Refine farm audits for energy efficiency

King County, February 2011

- Long-term sustainability of agriculture program and related service
- Increase financial support of agriculture
- Coordinate funding with cities, Conservation Districts and counties
- Issues related to permitting with a focus on the need to streamline the process that integrates the different levels of regulation
- How to allow productive agriculture to expand in flood zones while maintaining public safety
- Water issues

Snohomish County, March 2011

- Better support agricultural land and rural preservation

Small Groups, April 2011

- Create a Speakers Bureau
- Establish an annual inventory of needs and challenges by municipalities
- Engage policy-makers to meet these goals and help them structure their work through model policies, budget screens, educational opportunities, planning charrettes, policy recommendations for GMA, CPPs and local plans, and roadshows to jurisdictions
- Targeted outreach to other food policy councils, update the Goals annually to keep them relevant and sustain the Regional Food Policy Council

UW Studio, June 2011

- Counties inventory farmland using different methodologies, making it difficult to make regional policy decisions– it may help to hold a forum to discuss inventory methods and data types and determine baseline data that could be collected in each county, coordinating transit systems with food retail could help in food deserts
- Create a standard food systems vision/goal, create basic and adaptable comprehensive plan language and resolutions
- Develop relevant model code language for cities

Pierce County, August 2011

- Issues continue around land conversions and the decline of support agencies
- Inconsistent policies and regulations challenge continued agriculture in the region

City of Des Moines, October 2011

- Consider how comprehensive plans, zoning and procurement policies can improve access to healthy food options

State Food Policy, October 2011

- Increase state-level purchasing of local food products
- Place the state in a favorable position to qualify for available federal funds, moneys from foundations, and other sources to address issues of food security, nutrition and health
- Improve communication among state agencies and educate the public and policy makers on the status of food issues

PSRC Policy Scan, October 2011

- There are policies in place around the region addressing food policy, however, the potential exists to increase the number of supportive food policies in order to reduce barriers, increase access to healthy food, increase urban agriculture, and protect agricultural lands

Direct Marketing Presentation, December 2011

- Directing marketing can be hindered by land use and zoning policies, health/food safety regulations, cross-jurisdictional issues impacting farmers' ability to sell, and complex food assistance programs that are difficult to adapt to farm-direct sales
- The Regional Food Policy Council can provide model policies encouraging local food access, compose a "State of the Food System" report, engage stakeholders in research, support legislation benefitting regional food systems, present information to the Suburban Cities Association, advocate for an equitable and stable regional funding model, and unite cities, counties, and stakeholders to fund farm-direct marketing efforts

King County Farm Tour, October 2011

- The ongoing need to balance needs of farmers and regulations regarding building in the flood plain, protecting critical areas, the encroachment of development and infrastructure needs for critter pads, packing, processing, and farmworker housing

Seattle Contract, 2012

- Provide recommendations on how to include food policy in comprehensive plans
- Create a tool to assess urban agriculture

WASHINGTON SUSTAINABLE FOOD & FARMING NETWORK



List of 2012 State Legislative Issues

The Network is a nonprofit organization that was formed in 1997 to create a statewide, grassroots voice for sustainable food and farming advocacy. Join our listserv and grow our voice for sustainable food and farming! Below are policy issues that we are tracking. For more information contact Ellen Gray, Executive Director 360-336-9694 or egray@wsffn.org **wsffn.org**

State Legislation	CALL OLYMPIA TOLL FREE 1-800-562-6000 www.leg.gov.wa
Farmers Market Nutrition Programs slated for elimination in FY 2011-13	<p>Last session we were able to save the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) but once again the programs are slated for elimination in the Governor's budget. Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) operate FMNPs which provide vouchers to low-income mothers, children and seniors to purchase healthy food from local growers at farmers markets. With only \$100,000 in state funds, FMNP leveraged more than \$894,000 in federal dollars in 2011 to support local farms and healthy food for poor families. DOH's Nutrition Services division provides administrative support for WIC FMNP and, through shared efficiencies with DSHS, for the Senior FMNP as well. Without sufficient administrative funds in the DOH budget, the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs for WIC families <i>and</i> for low income seniors will be eliminated. This year 887 farmers, 130 farmers markets and 179 farm stores received FMNP dollars. This is a strong program that leverages 9:1 federal dollars, helps our farmers, our children and our local economy! Without a state program, the federal dollars will go to another state, and it is unlikely that Washington will ever get it back. Request: Call legislators and ask them to restore \$100,000 in DOH's budget to administer the FMNP for WIC and Seniors. A flyer is available on our website.</p>
Conservation Districts Slated for 57% Cuts In state Budget	<p>The governor is proposing to cut \$1,360,000 from the Conservation Commission and conservation districts: Her Proviso states, "<i>Reduce administrative and operations grants to conservation districts by 57% percent to encourage districts to pursue local assessments. To date, only 15 of 47 conservation districts have implemented local assessments to fund district administration and projects.</i>" The cuts will reduce the districts' ability to provide assistance to landowners. The requirement to implement local assessments is challenging for districts because the county commissioners (or councils) must vote to approve any assessment and many won't do that because it's a tax vote. The WA Conservation Commission recognizes the need to take their fair share and voted in September to reduce their budget by 5% so the impact to districts would be minimized. The governor's proposal is out of proportion to other natural resource agency proposed cuts. Last year the legislature completely eliminated WSDA's small farm direct marketing program, so very few state funded resources are available for small farms and the conservation districts are an important resource for technical support to small farms. Albert Roberts with the Okanogan Conservation District and the WA Association of Conservation Districts is taking the lead on this issue and he can be reached at 509-322-0445 or albert_roberts@hotmail.com.</p>
Statewide Small Farm Internship Program SB 6392	<p>In 2010 The legislature established a small farm internship pilot program in Skagit and San Juan Counties. A report summarizing the results of the pilot project has been prepared. This session Senator Ranker is sponsoring SB 6392 which continues the pilot in San Juan & Skagit, and expands it into King, Whatcom, Kitsap, Pierce, Jefferson, Spokane, Yakima, Chelan, Grant, Kittitas, Lincoln and Thurston until Dec 2017. The Bill has been heard by Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection and has moved to Rules. Sarita Schaffer w/ GrowFood is taking the lead and can be reached at sarita@growfood.org.</p>

Executive Order 10-02 Strengthening WA's Food System	In 2010 SSB 6343 passed the House and Senate and would have created a statewide food policy council but unfortunately the bill was vetoed by the governor, who supported the intent but did not want to create a new council in statute. Instead she signed EO 10-02 in June 2010 which directed five state agencies to work with stakeholders to strengthen our food system. A draft report is being prepared and the final will be presented to the legislature and governor in December. The report provides a snapshot of our food system and ways to strengthen the food system through continued collaboration.
Model Food Procurement Policy for all State Agencies HB 1801 & SB 5653	Last session HB 1801 and companion SB 5653 recognized the State's role in improving nutritional health as an employer, a caregiver and as a significant food purchaser. State government should be a model in purchasing healthy local food. The bill requires Dept of Health, in consultation with the newly-formed Dept. of Enterprise Services, to adopt a model food purchasing policy for all agencies which meet certain nutritional standards and encourages purchase of Washington grown food. HB 1801 was heard in the State Government and Tribal Affairs Committee and has moved to Ways & Means. WSFFN urges adoption. Vic Colman with the Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition is the lead and is reached at vicsolutions@comcast.net .
GMO Labeling Bill SB 6298 and HB 2637	Senator Chase and Representative Condotta have sponsored identical bills that require labeling for genetically engineered raw agricultural commodities and genetically engineered ingredients offered for retail sale. Both bills were heard in the ag committees Jan 26th and 27th. GMO Free Washington has established a comprehensive website with updated information: www.TinyURL.com/GMOBillWa
Homesite Exemption in Open Space Law SB 5814	Last session SB 5814 was introduced but did not pass. It is likely that the bill will be substituted this session to reflect work done over the interim. Today, under the current use exemption (RCW 84.34.020) , the land under a farmstead is valued at current use instead of market value, but only if the parcel is enrolled in open space ag land (one of the current use taxation programs) and the parcel is greater than 20 acres. (WAC 458-30-317(3)). The proposed bill would remove the acreage threshold and extend the farmstead exemption so that the land upon which employee housing or residence of the farm operator or owner is located is valued at current use rather than the fair market value. The gross income thresholds in existing law are left as is. The bill as introduced targets specific farm activities. These will be refined in the substitute bill. No hearing has been set yet. Leslie Cushman with Gull Harbor Farm is taking the lead and can be reached at lesliecush@comcast.net or 360-280-0087.
School Bidding Requirements for WA Grown foods SB 6183	Senator Morton has introduced a bill that would change the bidding requirements for schools purchasing Wa-grown foods. WSFFN supports school purchases of WA-grown food but does not support this bill. WSFFN believes that the bill is not needed because existing regulations already give a bidding preference for WA-grown purchasing and the bill would add confusion to an already complex regulatory environment. WSFFN is working with Senator Morton's office to resolve the issue.
Federal Legislation	
2012 Re-authorization of Federal Farm Bill	The current Federal Farm Bill expires in 2012. The Senate and House Ag Committees will be drafting changes. WSFFN is supporting two Marker Bills that would strengthen our food system: The Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act. We are asking our WA senators and representatives to support these proposals. Handouts for each of these marker bills are available from The Network. An excellent source of information on the Farm Bill is the National Sustainable Ag Coalition at www.sustainableagriculture.net . In addition Jennifer Miller from Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides is tracking this issue and can be reached at 208-850-6504 or jmiller@pesticide.org .