Second Year Progress Report

The Regional Food Policy Council first met in September 2010, and has since been engaged in council development, strategic planning, research, and outreach. A summary of the council’s first year highlights is available at http://psrc.org/assets/6715/rfpc_progress_report_2011.pdf.

Outlined below are significant council actions and staff activities from September 2011 to August 2012.

Convene. The Regional Food Policy Council met monthly and heard presentations on the federal Farm Bill, farming mentorship, food distribution, direct marketing, and Transfer of Development Rights, among other topics.

Work Plan. The council developed a 2012 work plan to advance the goals of the council, including developing a policy landscape map and outreach strategy. The Equity Subcommittee continued to meet regularly, and other subcommittees met on an ad hoc basis.

Equity Subcommittee. Through the Community Alliance for Global Justice, the Equity Subcommittee worked with interns to complete aspects of the committee’s work plan. This work included developing a strategic outreach plan and researching the role of listening sessions in community engagement. Two interns also worked to develop a framework for an equity assessment of the food system.

Funding. The City of Seattle contracted with PSRC to provide support for food policy work, including developing planning resources and designing a survey for urban agriculture. PSRC also secured funding from the Washington State Department of Health to identify and pursue local policy change. Staff also applied to several funding opportunities to continue support for the Regional Food Policy Council.

Public Health Summit. In June 2012, the council hosted a summit of public health professionals and food systems advocates to explore the connections and opportunities to advance this work. Over 60 attended this summit, including participants from Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia.

King County Farm Tour. King County Agricultural staff organized a tour of King County farms for the Regional Food Policy Council. Approximately 25 attendees visited three farms in King County in October 2011 to explore first-hand the opportunities and policy challenges for producers in the central Puget Sound.

Comprehensive Plan Resources. The City of Seattle contracted with the Puget Sound Regional Council to research food policy concepts for its comprehensive plan. PSRC staff worked with Seattle staff to identify food policy topics that could be addressed through the comprehensive plan, and the Regional Food Policy Council provided comment on this work in June 2012. The City of Seattle is expected to consider some of these policy topics in its 2012 - 2013 amendment cycle.

Policy Scan. Staff completed review of codes and plans from 65 jurisdictions within the region and developed a database to organize existing local food-related policies. This project helped identify innovative practices, opportunities for action, and future directions. A report on findings from this project is forthcoming.
Food Policy Landscape Map. The Regional Food Policy Council started work to develop a common understanding of decision-making within the food system. With financial support from WSU Extension, the Regional Food Policy Council worked with consultant Jon Ramer to develop a web-based visualization tool for this overview of policy-making. The online tool will serve as a data resource for both the council and the general public.

Transportation and Food Policy. In May 2012, the council heard a briefing from PSRC staff on development of a rural transportation strategy. The Regional Food Policy Council will be involved with this work as the project progresses, and will provide comments on how to strengthen food policy in the region’s long-term transportation plan, Transportation 2040.

Council Assessment and Membership. The council participated in an assessment of its own work and organization, and continued to build membership to best represent and move forward the goals of the council.

Other Staff Activities. Staff represented the council at various external meetings, such as the Good Food Coalition, and also presented during a Centers for Disease Control webinar on the food system assessment prepared in 2011 by a University of Washington graduate studio. Several outreach documents were prepared by staff, including an article on the Regional Food Policy Council in Read the Dirt magazine.

For More Information. Please contact Olivia Robinson, o robinson@psrc.org or 206-464-7890.