



Food Policy:

At The Core of a Healthy Community

Portland-Multnomah County Food Policy Council
2004 Highlights

From farm to table, good food grown well nourishes the heart, the soul, the soil and the pocketbook. Food is at the core of a livable, sustainable community.

That's why it made sense for the City of Portland and Multnomah County to form the Food Policy Council (FPC). Since 2002, the FPC has invited to its table farmers and planners, hunger advocates and chefs, environmentalists and government agencies, citizens and experts. Together, we are advancing an ambitious menu of collaborative projects.

We invite you to share our vision of a community where healthy food is available to everyone, grown with respect for land, air and water, produced and consumed by our neighbors and eaten with joy.

"The Food Policy Council has raised the profile of community food issues among local government, business and citizens."

Brian Rohter
President, New Seasons Market
Co-chair, Food Policy Council

How often can we say that the solution will actually taste good?

Fresh local food – it's a simple idea with profound potential.

- Avoidable conditions of obesity, diabetes and heart disease are time-bombs for already escalating health care costs, particularly considering their growing incidence among children. Part of the prescription? More fresh produce.
- Food purchases are an easy way to redirect dollars into the local economy. Food is a major budget item and the Northwest has an abundance of great local products.
- The energizing weekly ritual of farmers' markets transforms public space by bringing people together as a community in urban neighborhoods.
- Prosperous working farms are a key part of Oregon's tradition of a thoughtful, planned approach to growth.
- Giving kids the nourishment they need to learn is one of the best investments a community can make.
- Local food reduces reliance on fossil fuels. The average fruit or vegetable travels 1500 miles to market.

A partner in local government

Through its work in health, economic development, recreation programs, solid waste, purchasing, and urban planning, local government can influence how food gets from farm to the table and how food waste gets from table to farm. FPC is working to ensure that policies and actions are directed toward creating a healthy food system, where residents and businesses make informed choices and where strong local market networks help farmers and food entrepreneurs grow their businesses. FPC brings public and private partners together to identify opportunities and develop solutions.

Food Policy Council efforts bear fruit in 2004

Healthy, affordable, accessible:

Lessons in Lents create neighborhood model

What can be done about Oregon's high rates of food insecurity and obesity? To answer that question, FPC convened a broad-based coalition to address the needs of one low-income neighborhood. As a first step, the group completed a community survey and market study to identify challenges and opportunities in improving nutrition and food security for residents of the Lents neighborhood of Southeast Portland.

We're buying local:

County Corrections purchases local food

Multnomah County Corrections, food service vendor Aramark and local wholesaler Rinella Produce increased purchases of fresh foods from local farmers during a four-month pilot project. More than \$30,000 that would have otherwise left the region was redirected to local farms, and the program expanded to and additional seven Oregon counties.

Preserving local farms:

Expanding tools for farm protection

Regional, local, state and federal land use experts helped FPC assess how conservation easements might be used to protect farms within and at the fringe of the Urban Growth Boundary. While no substitute for statewide land-use planning, expanding the tools of farm protection is even more important with the passage Measure 37.

Direct from the fields:

FPC projects link producers and consumers.

Workshop expands opportunity for immigrant farmers



Fifty Hmong, Latino, Cambodian and Somali-Bantu farmers attended an FPC workshop on farm-direct marketing.

Market open for food stamp recipients

FPC partnered with Eastbank Farmers' Market in its pilot effort to accept electronic food stamp benefits. Over the season, a total of \$2,380 was spent at the market, with a growing amount each week.

Farmers' market needs highlighted

FPC gathered input from eight farmers' market organizations in the county and hosted a brownbag lunch on farmers' markets needs for City staff working on design and management of public space.

"We're excited to continue working with FPC to bring food stamp access to more markets."

Sasha Pollack
Co-manager, Eastbank Farmers' Market

Setting the table for 2005

Turning information into action

Lents neighborhood team to create action plan

Based on the research completed in 2004, FPC will convene hunger relief programs, government agencies, community partners and neighbors to collaborate on nutrition and food security initiatives in the Lents neighborhood. This process will create a blueprint for food planning in other neighborhoods.

A network of urban farms

Creating a cultural and historic resource

Imagine a network of small urban farms dotting the region. Laboratories for teaching and learning, these pockets of history would connect neighbors of all ages to both the heritage of food and the future of sustainable agriculture. FPC is preparing to present this urban farm concept to local government agencies, farming organizations and community groups.



Zenger Farm, located on property owned by the Bureau of Environmental Services, is a cultural and educational asset in Southeast Portland.

The market connection

Farmers markets as focal points for revitalization

Markets form the thriving centers of cities around the world. Our own farmers markets can awaken the same vibrant energy. The Food Policy Council will work with planners, local governments and businesses on ideas from simple site improvements at existing farmers markets, to the development of new public plazas to house markets and other functions.

Local purchasing takes root

Multnomah County to formalize pilot project

When Multnomah County's food service contract comes up for renewal, the Food Policy Council will work with managers to incorporate local purchasing, institutionalizing the relationship between local agriculture and local government.

Room to grow

Portland to inventory available land

FPC will consult with the City of Portland as it completes an inventory of city-owned lands that may be available for community gardening or other agricultural uses.

There's room at the table

Get involved

The Food Policy Council works with a diverse group of businesses, non-profit organizations and community volunteers. Contact us to receive notice of upcoming meetings and learn about activities where you can be involved.

For more information on the Food Policy Council

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The City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development provides leadership and contributes practical solutions to ensure a prosperous community where people and nature thrive, now and in the future.

An emerging national network



Community Outreach and Partnership Project

The Portland-Multnomah FPC is part of a network of state and local food policy councils receiving support from the USDA Risk Management Agency's Community Outreach and Partnership Program. The Drake Agricultural Law Center coordinates the network, providing a mechanism for sharing and partnership among communities in this emerging field.



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OFFICE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
A BETTER FUTURE. A BETTER NOW.

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