

Multnomah
FOOD
Initiative

Multnomah Food Report

Multnomah Food Initiative Background Report

April 2010



2010 Multnomah Food Report



Acknowledgements

Multnomah County Office of Commissioner Judy Shiprack
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A Shared Vision & Action Plan

On September 10, 2009, the Multnomah County Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendations from the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council (FPC) and launched the creation of the Multnomah Food Initiative, a four-phase initiative to develop and implement a long-term food action plan. The FPC determined that the current economic and hunger crises, as well as long-term climate change challenges, create an immediate need for innovative action and visionary policy implementation to help meet food security needs, promote the nutritional health of the community, and create meaningful economic development opportunities. The Multnomah Food Initiative envisions a sustainable and equitable local food system that produces healthy people, a healthy environment, and a thriving local economy.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Shiprack, the Sustainability Program and the Chronic Disease Prevention Program guided the first two phases, which laid the foundation for the initiative and hosted the Multnomah Food Summit. Building upon our tremendous natural assets and the existing efforts of passionate individuals and organizations, Multnomah County began inviting food system stakeholders to join in creating a shared vision and a collaborative action plan to transform our food system and bring about systemic change. The sustainability Program will lead the long-term planning and implementation phases of the Multnomah Food Initiative in partnership with Commissioner Shiprack.

The Multnomah Food Initiative

Building on Existing Efforts

The Multnomah Food Report and the Draft Action Plan Framework synthesize:

- Case Studies
- Regional Planning Documents
- Local Community Food Assessments
- Local Food System Recommendations

Phase 1:

Building on the Existing Foundation

Synthesize background reports

9/2009 - 5/2010

Phase 2:

Community Engagement

Multnomah Food Summit

May 1, 2010

Phase 3:

Action Plan Development

5/2010 - 12/2010

Phase 4:

Action Plan Implementation

2011 - 2025

Action Areas

Local Food

Increase viable local options in our food system



Healthy Eating

Make the healthy choice an easier choice for all



Social Equity

Build systemic justice, health and food security



Economic Vitality

Promote a thriving local economy



Public Input

Attend the Multnomah Food Summit
May 1, 2010

Provide Input on the Action Plan
May-December 2010

Volunteer to Help!
February-December 2010

Get Involved!

Visit www.multnomahfood.org or call 503-988-4576

Outcomes:

- Shared community vision
- 15-year community-owned, strategic action plan
- Network coalition
- Sustainable, healthy, equitable local food system

Multnomah
FOOD
Initiative



Our Steering Committee Members and Community Partners:

City of Portland • Metro • City of Gresham • Portland / Multnomah Food Policy Council • East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District • Bright Neighbor • Alison Dennis, Burgerville • CNRG • Cogan Owens Cogan, LLC • Andy Fisher, Community Food Security Coalition • Stacey Sobell Williams, Ecotrust • Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership • Growing Gardens • Hacienda CDC • Suzanne Briggs, Kaiser Permanente • Loaves and Fishes • Montavilla Farmers Market • Native American Youth and Families Center • New Seasons Market • OSU Extension Service • Oregon Food Bank • Portland Farmers Market • Sheila Martin, Portland State University, Director of the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies • Portland Permaculture Guild • Portland Public Schools • ReCode • The Dirt • Transition PDX • Mel Rader, Upstream Public Health • Village Gardens, Janus Youth Programs, Inc. • 47th Ave. Farms



Purpose and Use of the Multnomah Food Report

The 2010 Multnomah Food Report presents background research that has informed and influenced the development of the Multnomah Food Initiative thus far. The purpose of the report is to (1) recognize and compile previous local work around food system issues, and (2) build upon existing efforts to create a sustainable, healthy, and equitable food system. It is designed to be used as a resource, tool, and starting point for collaborative action and strategic planning.

Chapter I: Introduction to the Multnomah Food Initiative

This chapter provides background information on the development of the Multnomah Food Initiative, explains the role of Multnomah County and the steering committee, and introduces the draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework. It also discusses the benefits of a vibrant local food system, as well as the consequences of not acting.

Chapter II: Existing Conditions of Multnomah County's Food System

This chapter presents information and data on the existing conditions of Multnomah County's food system. It briefly summarizes what has been learned from past assessments of regional, local and neighborhood food systems and highlights the conditions most relevant to the Multnomah Food Initiative process. The information presented in this chapter is organized by the draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework and the following four action areas: Local Food, Healthy Eating, Social Equity, and Economic Vitality.

Chapter III: Case Study Processes, Outcomes, Best Practices, Lessons Learned

The Multnomah Food Initiative staff and Steering Committee conducted research to learn from other communities that have undergone the process of creating a shared vision and community-wide action plan. This chapter presents three case studies that were used to inform the development of the framework and prepare for the Multnomah Food Summit in May 2010.

Chapter IV: Draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework Based on Local Recommendations

In an effort to recognize previous local work around food system issues and build upon existing efforts to create a sustainable, healthy, and equitable food system, the Multnomah Food Initiative staff compiled and synthesized local recommendations. This chapter presents draft action plan frameworks based on local recommendations and identifies macro-level conditions that will facilitate community recommended actions.

Summary of Findings

Through an analysis of the current collective impact that organizations and individuals have on the creation of a healthy, sustainable, economically viable, and just food system in Multnomah County, it has become clear that while there is tremendous effort, there is a need for collaboration, coordination, and shared goals.

Multnomah County, like much of the country, is at a critical juncture in fixing its food system. On one hand, Multnomah County is at the epicenter of the local food movement.

Executive Summary



There are countless food-related, grassroots efforts being made in the community, as well as numerous projects and initiatives led by local government.

On the other hand, it has become evident the hidden costs of our broken food system are soaring. The following statistics demonstrate the need for a community-wide shared vision and a strategic food system action plan.

- Oregon is ranked second in hunger by the US Department of Agriculture.
- About 36,000 people in Multnomah County access emergency food boxes/month.
- Over half of all adults in Multnomah County are either overweight or obese.
- Chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke are on the rise.
- Over half of all public school students in Multnomah County are eligible to receive free/reduced price lunches.
- Approximately 30% of Multnomah County children receive food through the SNAP food assistance program.
- In May 2009, Oregon had the second highest unemployment rate at 12.4%. It has been at 11% since December 2009, yet still ranking 9th highest in the nation.

In Multnomah County, tremendous effort has been focused on preventing chronic disease, improving food security, and building a robust local food system. Regionally, discussions of the food system have generated piqued interest as community members rally around projects and initiatives to create a vibrant and sustainable local food system. While it is estimated that only a small percentage of the food consumed in Multnomah County is grown locally, demand for local, organic food has created a profitable market and burgeoning local food economy providing new opportunities to buy healthy, sustainably produced food from local farmers and producers.

Yet the bottom line remains, Multnomah County lacks a coordinated strategy around its food system. There is tremendous effort being made to create a sustainable, healthy, and equitable local food system in Multnomah County and the collective impact of our work can be increased through a community-wide vision and strategic action plan.

Next Steps

Multnomah County policymakers have proclaimed that all community members should have access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, locally and sustainably grown food. Planning for this outcome is critical. Our region has transportation plans, land use plans, climate action plans, and economic development strategies. The time has come to develop a food system strategy and action plan to protect and enhance our food system. On May 1, 2010, leaders from across our regional food system will gather for a day-long summit to facilitate an in-depth conversation with the community about working together to create a sustainable, equitable, and healthy local food system. Summit participants will build new connections across the food system, explore the tremendous work already being done and lay the groundwork for a long-term action plan.



The purpose of the Multnomah Food Summit is to:

- Examine the existing conditions of Multnomah County's food system
- Celebrate the tremendous work already being done in our community
- Examine and build consensus on the framework for a long-term action plan
- Provide feedback and get involved in the next steps of the action plan development
- Hear from national leaders in the areas of food policy and social equity
- Network and build new connections across the food system

The summit is the kick-off event for the Multnomah Food Initiative. Currently lead by Multnomah County, the initiative is as an innovative partnership between community organizations, businesses, and local governments. Our goal is to develop a shared community vision, collaborative food system goals, and a 15-year action plan to:

1. Increase viable local options in our food system
2. Make the healthy choice an easier choice for all
3. Build systemic justice, health, and food security
4. Promote a thriving local economy

All stakeholders have a voice in the future of our food system --- every eater, backyard gardener, urban and rural farmer, food processor and distributor, emergency food provider, restaurant, grocer, and market vendor. Creating a shared vision and goals among stakeholders through collaborative action is critical for making effective change in food system policy and programs.



Introduction

It is time to write a new chapter on Multnomah County's food system – the solutions chapter, which comes not a moment too soon, as it has become evident that the hidden costs of our broken food system are soaring. Multnomah County, like much of the country, is at a critical juncture in fixing its food system. On one hand, the county is at the epicenter of the local food movement, and is proactively identifying and attempting to manage food-related health disparities. On the other hand, Oregon is ranked second in hunger by the United States Department of Agriculture¹ and an estimated 36,000 people in Multnomah County access emergency food boxes every month² as they struggle to feed their families. Half of all public school students in Multnomah County are eligible to receive free/reduced price lunches³ and 30% of all children ages 0-17 receive food through the SNAP food assistance program,⁴ indicating that healthful, affordable food is inaccessible to a large portion of our population.

As many research studies have shown, there is a strong correlation between hunger, food insecurity, obesity, and chronic disease. In Multnomah County, as throughout the nation, obesity rates have reached troubling proportions. Over half of adults in Multnomah County are overweight or obese⁵ and at increased risk for a variety of chronic health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and stroke.

As national studies have shown, people in low-income, minority, and rural neighborhoods are most often affected by poor access to supermarkets and healthful food.⁶ While the Portland region does not have extreme “food deserts,”⁷ there are areas with poor access to full-service grocery stores, including some areas with higher poverty or otherwise confounding factors such as lack of transportation. Even community members with good access to full-service grocery stores can fall victim to a commoditized Western diet of refined sugar and fat. Almost half of the top ten causes of death today are linked to nutritionally poor diets⁸ consisting of highly processed food, sugar and added fat, and lack of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Compounding the obesity and chronic disease crisis, in May 2009, Oregon had the second highest unemployment rate at 12.4%.⁹ While the unemployment rate dropped to 11% in December 2009,¹⁰ local food system issues are particularly germane during the current economic downturn that has caused a significant number of Multnomah County community members to struggle to find a job and put food on the table.

Systemic Problem: Tremendous effort, lack of coordination

In Multnomah County, tremendous community effort has been focused on preventing chronic disease, improving food security, and building a robust local food system. Regionally, discussions of the food system have generated piqued interest as community members rally around projects and initiatives to create a vibrant and sustainable local food system. These efforts have contributed to the creation of abundant resources



available to those who are able to grow their own food, buy from local farmers and producers, support individuals struggling with food insecurity and hunger, improve personal health, and promote community health throughout the county.

While it is estimated that only a small percentage of the food consumed in Multnomah County is grown locally, consumer demand for local, organic food has created a profitable market and burgeoning local food economy providing new opportunities to buy healthy, sustainably produced food from local farmers and producers. Throughout Multnomah County, there are a growing number of community gardens, farmers markets, farm stands, buying clubs, community supported agriculture (CSA) networks, locally owned grocery stores, co-ops, and restaurants that feature local food. The economic benefits of a local model are numerous. A pilot study conducted by Ecotrust found that for every dollar spent on local food through farm to school programs earned a 241% return on investment¹¹ (\$1 = \$2.41).

Yet the bottom line remains, Multnomah County lacks a coordinated strategy around its food system. Despite notable successes like the menu-labeling legislation and farm-to-school initiatives, a systemic approach to addressing these issues will be necessary to achieve real progress. There is tremendous effort being made to create a sustainable, healthy, and equitable local food system in Multnomah County and the collective impact of our work can be increased through a community-wide vision and strategic action plan.

Systemic Solution: Shared vision and strategic action plan

There is an ever-increasing awareness of the food system among activists, businesses, and individuals. Food system stakeholders working on issues related to local food production, healthy eating, social equity, and regional economic vitality have begun to recognize the interconnectedness of their work and potential for collaboration.

Multnomah County policymakers have proclaimed all community members should have access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, locally and sustainably grown food. Planning for this outcome is critical. Our region has transportation plans, land use plans, climate action plans, and economic development strategies. The time has come to develop a food system strategy and action plan to protect and enhance our food system, which is a major social determinant of individual and community health and resilience during economic crisis.

The purpose of the Multnomah Food Initiative is to promote the health and resiliency of our community, strengthen our local food system, create equitable access to healthful food, support economic development, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and highlight food system issues as a policy priority so that we plan accordingly and invest wisely. In times of economic crisis, the need for a strong local food system is greater than ever, but the means to achieve this goal is limited. Recognizing the need for collaboration and coordination, the Multnomah Food Initiative will foster valuable partnerships and combined solutions to reaching goals that would otherwise remain elusive.



Role of County Government

Multnomah County recognizes that our regional food system significantly affects public health, land use, economy, and quality of life in our community. As part of its health and sustainability mission, the county also recognizes it has a critical role in ensuring that the regional food system is robust and equitable.

County policymakers are proactively working toward creating a food system to provide healthy, sustainable food to all community members. The Multnomah Food Initiative is consistent with the county's efforts to develop a strong set of programs, policies, and community partnerships around healthy eating, food access, and urban agriculture.

These efforts include:

- Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council
- Healthy Eating Active Living program
- Menu-labeling legislation (HB 2726)
- Local food purchasing legislation (HB 2763)
- County Digs program
- County CROPS (Community Reaps Our Produce and Shares) farm
- Hope Garden rooftop demonstration garden at the Multnomah County Headquarter building

Recognizing the superb past and current efforts in our community to develop a sustainable and equitable regional food system, the county is acting as a convener, as well as a stakeholder, for collaborative community action. The Multnomah Food Initiative will build upon existing efforts in order to create a strategic framework for a shared vision and long-term action plan to achieve our food policy goals.

Role of Multnomah Food Initiative Steering Committee

The steering committee has guided the development of the Multnomah Food Initiative from its initial stages. Committee members have contributed their insight and expertise to the overall direction and development of the initiative and helped plan the Multnomah Food Summit, which will be held on May 1, 2010. The purpose of the summit is to create a community-wide vision and gather input to shape the development of a strategic action plan.

To ensure the steering committee was representative of our community's broad network of food system stakeholders, organizations and individuals embodying the diversity and complexity of food system issues were asked to serve as advisors throughout the developmental process.

The steering committee began meeting in November 2009. Monthly meetings were held through April 2010 to coordinate outreach efforts and invite a broad range of stakeholders from our community's network of government, business, non-profit, faith, and neighborhood groups to participate in the summit and action-plan development. Drawing from the steering committee's community networks, a diversity of individuals and organizations will be engaged in the process of creating a shared vision and coordinated plan to increase the sustainability, health, and equity of our local food system.



Benefits of a Local Food System

A vibrant and diverse local food system is an integral component of a sustainable and resilient community. Food is a basic necessity, a celebration, and a powerful medium through which sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities can be created. Food is common to all human beings; it crosses borders, creates community, and allows us to share elements of our diverse cultures. By reconnecting food to soil and sun, and producer to consumer through a food system based on principles of environmental and social justice, a new future can be envisioned for Multnomah County and the Portland Metropolitan region.

The Multnomah Food Initiative is an endeavor to create the following benefits as described in “Whole Measures for Community Food Systems” (2009)¹², published by the Center for Whole Communities in partnership with the Community Food Security Coalition and the Center for Popular Research, Education, and Policy (C-PREP).

Vibrant Farms¹³

Vibrant farms are central to the health and vitality of community-based food systems. While diverse in scale, methods, crops and markets, farms that contribute to whole communities often embody practices that eliminate or minimize pesticides, support biodiversity, promote human treatment of animals, and provide safe, just working condition. Vibrant farms are often “local farms” that shorten the gap between farmers and consumer and actively contribute to sustaining and revitalizing regional food systems and economies. The continuation of traditional farms and practices, multigenerational family farms, and support for young farmers and immigrant farmers are essential to the future of farming, and food for all. (Whole Measures CFS, 2009)

Sustainable Ecosystems¹⁴

Sustainable, balanced ecosystems are built upon interdependent relationships, depend upon clean air and water and healthy soil, and provide the foundation for all life. Developing whole communities and strong and just food systems means honoring this interdependence and enhancing ecological integrity through our actions. A sustainable food system depends upon a sustainable ecosystem and produces, processes, and distributes food in a way that supports and enhances rather than destroys ecological systems. (Whole Measures CFS, 2009)

Healthy People¹⁵

Community and individual health includes our physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. All of these dimensions are intrinsically connected to food and food systems. For example, engaging with community members at farmers’ markets promotes our social connectedness. Learning to prepare our own food helps develop our physical and spiritual awareness as we connect to larger natural systems. Whole communities need whole people and community food systems that increase access to healthful food while also cultivating broader dimensions of health. (Whole Measures CFS, 2009)



Strong Communities¹⁶

Food can be a common and unifying force socially, culturally, and spiritually. A strong food system builds strong communities across class, race, age, education, and other social categories. Cultivating leadership from within a community and forging relationships based on characteristics such as trust, respect, and transparency can strengthen resilience, build capacity and enhance engagement for change toward a shared vision of a whole community. (Whole Measures CFS, 2009)

Justice and Fairness¹⁷

Just and fair food and farms come from food systems deliberately organized to promote social equity, justice, worker rights, and health through all activities. Achieving justice and fairness is an ongoing and evolving process involving many members of a community. It is a process that cultivates appropriate venues to recognize and dismantle unjust systems and that works to create alternative just systems. (Whole Measures CFS, 2009)

Thriving Local Economies¹⁸

Thriving local economies depend upon the ecological integrity of the earth, its ecosystems, and species living within those ecosystems. Thriving local economies form decisions that ensure the well-being of future generations. They account for hidden costs in decision-making and work to build systems that regenerate output (wastes) into input (resources). Thriving local economies may utilize decentralized, participatory, and democratic processes designed to be informed by diverse community members and based upon a community's assets. (Whole Measures CFS, 2009)

Whole Measures Community Food Security (CFS) is a values-based community-oriented tool for evaluation, planning, and dialogue geared toward organizational and community change. The Multnomah Food Initiative is a collaborative, community-wide visioning and action planning process. For the following reasons,¹⁹ Whole Measures CFS was used as a guide in drafting the Multnomah Food Initiative Framework, which is described at the end of this chapter:

- Whole Measures CFS is an effective training and strategic planning tool that helps staff, board, partners, and community members think big picture and learn more about the potential impacts of the group's work.
- Whole Measures CFS initiates a process of organizational change that leads to being more open to the perspectives of others, collaborating authentically with new constituents, and honoring the larger meaning of the organization's work.
- Whole Measures CFS is an engaging and easy-to-use assessment tool that allows diverse community groups or individuals to find common ground in the things that matter most to them.

Consequences of Not Acting

Ecological & Economic Impacts

Agriculture is a quintessential representation of the interaction between humans and the environment. While agricultural practices have changed dramatically over the years, the interdependent relationship binding people to soil, sun, wind and rain has remained unchanged. Michael Pollan poignantly reminds us that at each end of the food chain are



biological systems: that of soil and human body.²⁰ This connection has become obscured. To put it briefly and simply, food has become disconnected from soil; human beings have become disconnected from the origin of food and from one another.

The current world population is approaching 6.7 billion, at a time when a significant amount of the earth's arable land has been paved over or severely degraded. We are facing some serious questions and tough decisions with regard to the future of food, and thereby, human well-being. Our current global food system requires a significant amount of energy to produce, package and transport food across great distances. In the U.S., food travels an average of 1500 miles (an increase of 25 percent since 1980) and requires an estimated seven units of fossil fuel energy to produce one unit of food energy.²¹ This energy and resource intensive food system is simply unsustainable. Industrialized agriculture and the globalization of trade has led to severe environmental degradation, increased global warming, and has created significant social inequities that have brought the current economic model food systems into question.

Across North America and around the world, communities are recognizing their local food systems are integral to their resiliency and sustainability. People are thinking more consciously about the origin of food: from where, by whom, and under what conditions was it grown? At the markets, consumers are presented with a confounding new set of choices: organic or conventional, local or global, fair or free trade? Each choice is laden with political, economic, cultural, and environmental implications. The associated costs of these choices are paid for either at the register or at the expense of the physical, environmental, and economic health of the community. There is mounting concern for the environment and a growing realization that the solutions implemented to overcome agricultural challenges have themselves become part of the problem. As a result, people around the world have begun to re-conceptualize the nature and global scale of the food system.

Health & Equity Impacts

Multnomah County, like most of the country, currently has a two-track food system. Those who can afford it have access to sustainable, locally grown, healthful foods, while lower-income families have few healthful food options in their communities, and even fewer economic resources to purchase such foods.

The extent to which people eat healthful, nutritious foods is impacted by both personal choice and the availability of healthful foods. Food access is defined as the ability of a household to consistently acquire, both physically and economically, sufficient amounts of healthful, culturally appropriate, safe foods. Food security refers to a condition where all members of a household can consistently access enough nutritionally adequate food to lead active, healthy lifestyles. It also means households have the ability to acquire food in socially acceptable ways, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies.²²

Advocates of increased food access consider number and placement of grocery stores and other healthful food outlets; the transportation network connecting these outlets to customers; affordability of those foods and their availability day-to-day; concentrations of outlets of non-nutritive foods; opportunity to grow and prepare food; and cultural

Chapter I



appropriateness of available foods. Food access is not a simple yes or no issue, but rather a spectrum of possibilities ranging from “food deserts” with little or no food access, to communities with convenient, abundant, affordable, local and sustainable food options.²³

It is important to note that hunger, food insecurity, and health disparities result from a system perpetuated by economic inequality and social injustice. In the United States, obesity is often strongly linked to hunger and food insecurity. People with low incomes are less likely than those with higher incomes to get the nutrients they need for good health and less likely to have diets consistent with healthy eating. Furthermore, individuals suffering from food insecurity have a higher incidence of chronic health conditions. Statistics also show that certain ethnic and racial groups in Multnomah County are at a higher risk of overweight and obesity,²⁴ leading to the development of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. Compared with non-Hispanic whites, type 2 diabetes more often affects low-income Oregonians and people of color, including Asian/Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaska Natives, African Americans, and Hispanics.

The scales must be rebalanced. As we begin the process of building social structures and relationships to create systemic justice, health, and food security, we must also identify and dismantle systems that perpetuate inequality and lead to injustice.



Draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework

Action Area 1: LOCAL FOOD

OBJECTIVE THEMES

1. Maintain the Agricultural Land Base
2. Support Small- and Mid-Scale Farming Ventures
3. Increase Urban Food Production
4. Encourage Environmental Resource Stewardship

Action Area 2: HEALTHY EATING

OBJECTIVE THEMES

5. Apply Systemic Solutions to Create Food Environments that Support Health and Optimal Quality of Life
6. Increase Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food in Underserved Neighborhoods
7. Promote Individual and Community Health by Encouraging Healthy Food Choices
8. Provide Education and Increase Access to Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs

Action Area 3: SOCIAL EQUITY

OBJECTIVE THEMES

9. Address the Systemic Roots of Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Injustice
10. Increase Self-Sufficiency and Community Resilience
11. Facilitate Equitable Community Participation and Decision-Making
12. Create Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers

Action Area 4: ECONOMIC VITALITY

OBJECTIVE THEMES

13. Develop the Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure
14. Promote Local and Regional Food Products and Producers
15. Encourage Farm-to-School and Institutional Purchasing that Support the Regional Food System
16. Increase Local Supply Chain Capacity (locally owned and operated processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling facilities)



Existing Conditions: Multnomah County Food System

This chapter briefly summarizes what we have learned from past assessments of regional, local and neighborhood food systems and highlights the conditions most relevant to the Multnomah Food Initiative process. Where appropriate, we provide links to additional resources and deeper conversations on the topics covered.

Most of the referenced reports either focus on one geographical part of the county, such as the community food assessments, or address one aspect of the food system, such as food access or farmers markets. Two documents address the broadest range of topics: *Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health*, published by the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, and the *Portland Plan Food Systems Background Report*, published by the City of Portland’s Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. *Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health* considers the regional food system in terms of resources – land, water, energy, human talent, capital within Oregon and Washington. The *Portland Plan Food Systems Background Report* compiles existing local data to examine the numerous and diverse elements of our food system. This report summarizes information from these and other sources while framing the conversation at the geographical level of Multnomah County when and where possible.

For consistency and ease of reading, the sections included in this chapter are organized by the Draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework. Within each of the four action areas are four objective themes that frame this discussion of the existing conditions of Multnomah County’s food system.

Action Area 1: Local Food	Action Area 2: Healthy Eating	Action Area 3: Social Equity	Action Area 4: Economic Vitality
1. Maintain the Agricultural Land Base	5. Apply Systemic Solutions to Create Healthy Food Environments	9. Address the Systemic Roots of Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Injustice	13. Develop the Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure
2. Support Small- and Mid-Scale Farming Ventures	6. Increase Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food	10. Increase Self-Sufficiency and Community Resilience	14. Promote Local and Regional Food Products and Producers
3. Increase Urban Food Production	7. Promote Individual and Community Health by Encouraging Healthy Food Choices	11. Facilitate Equitable Community Participation and Decision-Making	15. Encourage Farm-to-School and Institutional Purchasing that Support the Regional Food System
4. Encourage Environmental Resource Stewardship	8. Provide Education and Increase Access to Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs	12. Create Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers	16. Increase Local Supply Chain Capacity (processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling facilities)



Action Area 1: LOCAL FOOD

This action area focuses on the act of growing food. As one of the goals of the Multnomah Food Initiative is to create viable local options in our food system, this section describes existing conditions related to agriculture and growing food within the region, focusing on Multnomah County where possible and appropriate.

About 80% of Oregon's agricultural products are exported out-of-state; more than 60% leave the country.

Do we eat locally in Multnomah County?

Unfortunately, we have no sure way to determine what proportion of the food that we consume within Multnomah County comes from “local” sources. We do know much of Oregon’s agricultural bounty is not consumed in-state. About 80% of Oregon’s agricultural products are exported out-of-state, and more than 60% leave the country.²⁵ It is likely that there is opportunity to increase the percentage of crops that are consumed in-state, but what would be considered a reasonable goal? In Multnomah County, the number of direct market channels for farmers to sell directly to consumers continues to increase, and local foods are increasingly identified as such in local grocery stores and supermarkets. More information about direct marketing of local foods can be found in the “Economic Vitality” section of this chapter.

Main Conclusions

- Oregon has a diverse agriculture industry; Oregon farmers produce hundreds of different crops rather than focusing on single commodities. Many Oregon agricultural products are currently exported outside of the state.
- The market for locally produced foods continues to grow in the Portland area; increasing demand could serve to protect at-risk farmland.
- Multnomah County is a major player in the agricultural economy of Oregon, ranking among the most productive counties for caneberries (raspberries, blackberries, Marionberries, and Boysenberries) and greenhouse/nursery products.
- The high demand for small, urban agriculture projects exceeds the number of opportunities currently available. While this had led to numerous grassroots projects as well as efforts by local governments to increase offerings, many barriers remain.
- Agriculture affects the natural environment; more can be done by large, mid and small-scale operators alike to protect environmental integrity and health.
- There are a limited number of identified local food system indicators due to a lack of food system planning. Fortunately, planners are beginning to recognize the role and importance of food systems as an important component of regional planning.

Possible Indicators

Data Currently Collected:

State and County Level Data

- Population density of cities within Multnomah County
- County acres in agricultural production (USDA five-year agricultural census)

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- County agricultural sales (Oregon Department of Agriculture)
- Farmers' markets sales within Multnomah County
- Number of overall community garden plots in Multnomah County
- Number of community gardens per person/household within Multnomah County
- Number of home gardens installed in Multnomah County by Growing Gardens, a non-profit organization
- Annual Multnomah County Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Total number of Multnomah County farms by size classes (by sales volume and acreage)

From Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health²⁶ (with page references)

- Population growth (A:1)
- Global warming/temperature destabilization (A:3)
- Land use and conversion (A:5)
- Number of farms/acreage of land in farms (A:7)
- Land value (A:9)
- Realized farm net income (A:11)
- Top commodities by sales (A:15)
- Value of commodity exports (A:17)
- Value of farm production (A:19)
- Prime agricultural soils (A:21)
- Topsoil loss on cropland (A:23)
- Chemical use on farms (A:27)
- Waste produced by cattle (A:29)
- Water use by category/source (A:31)
- Water use for irrigation (A:35)
- Stream water quality (A:37)
- Energy prices (A:47)
- Energy use on farms (A:49)
- Characteristics of principal farm operator (A:51)
- Agriculture-related degrees (A:59)

From The Vivid Picture Project²⁷

- Number of organic growers and acres
- Fuel, fertilizer and chemical expense in agriculture; as % of total expenses
- Dollars for renewable energy programs
- Amount of water-quality-limited surface water with agriculture as a source of pollution
- Total tons of food and agricultural waste disposed; pounds per capita
- Number of composters accepting food and agricultural waste
- Number of operating Food Diversion Programs
- Number of Certified Humane Raised and Handled producers
- Number of grass-fed animal producers

From the Food Environment Atlas²⁸

- # Farms with direct sales
- % Farms with direct sales
- % Farm sales \$ direct to consumer
- \$ Direct farm sales
- \$ Direct farm sales per capita



- # Farmers' markets
- Farmers' markets/1,000 pop
- # Vegetable acres harvested
- Vegetable acres harvested/1,000 pop
- Farm to school program

Data Not Currently Collected on a Regular Basis:

- Percent of food consumed in Multnomah County from local/regional sources
- Acreage of urban land in agricultural production (backyards, rooftops, vacant lots, etc.)
- Estimates of number of home food gardens in Multnomah County, amount of production, size, etc.

Objective Theme 1: Agricultural Land Base

State Statistics

The Oregon Farm Bureau provides some baseline figures about the state's agriculture as an industry and economic driver²⁹:

- Oregon is a specialty crop state with more than 220 recognized commodities.
- Oregon's agriculture industry accounts for nearly \$18 billion in direct sales and \$25.8 billion in overall sales, accounting for 10.6% of the state's total sales, according to a 2008 Oregon State University study.
- Oregon's agriculture industry directly or indirectly supports about 214,500 full- or part-time jobs in production, processing, transportation, input industries, and marketing, making up 10.1% of total positions in the state, according to a 2008 Oregon State University study.
- Oregon's farmers spend nearly \$3.4 billion a year to run their businesses.

Oregon's Agricultural Land

The 2007 Agricultural Census reports there are 38,553 farms in Oregon on 16.4 million acres. These farms, which include cropland, pasture, woodland and other uses, account for approximately 26% of all Oregon land. Many of the farms are small in size (about 60% are under 50 acres) and income (two-thirds of all Oregon farms earn less than \$10,000).³⁰

The Planting Prosperity report identified the following threats to agricultural lands in Oregon and Washington:

- Rapid population growth
- Rising land prices
- Suburban encroachment
- The expansion of non-food crops, including crops grown for conversion to bio fuels, compete with food for cropland

Land use laws have protected agricultural land regionally, especially in Oregon. Yet 371,000 acres of cropland, pasture and rangeland were lost in Oregon and Washington between 1982 and 1997.³¹

Ten percent of Multnomah County is in agriculture. In 2007, 2,575 acres of vegetables were harvested for sale.

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Multnomah County's Agricultural Land

Despite the fact that Multnomah County includes the state's largest city and multiple suburbs and smaller cities, Multnomah County has a significant amount of land in agricultural production. In 2007, Multnomah County had 563 farms totaling 28,506 acres, just over 10% of the county's land. However, much of this land was not used for food production; almost one-third of farmland was used for nursery/greenhouse and hay production. Multnomah County farms also are mostly small-scale: roughly 80% of Multnomah County farms are under 50 acres (one-third are nine acres or less) and close to two-thirds of all farms within Multnomah County sold less than \$10,000 dollars in agricultural products that year.³² The chart below summarizes some of Multnomah County's top commodity crop production.

2008 Crop Yields, Multnomah County³³

Crop	Acres Harvested	Yield	Sales
All vegetables harvested for sale ³⁴	2,575		\$11,774,000
Nursery and greenhouse	5,000		\$42,000,000
All wheat	1,500	112,300 bushels	
All hay	4,200	7,100 tons	
All berries	745	4,949,000 pounds	
Evergreen blackberries	20	116,000 pounds	
Marion and other blackberries	170	1,085,000 pounds	
Boysenberries	30	99,000 pounds	
Blueberries	190	1,539,000 pounds	
Strawberries	50	460,000 pounds	
Red raspberries	270	1,620,000 pounds	
Black raspberries	15	30,000 pounds	
Cattle and calves		2,500 head (total, not harvested)	
All crops			\$76,296,000
All animal products			\$2,851,000
Total Sales			\$79,147,000



Additional Resources:

- 2009 Oregon Agripedia. http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/pub_agripedia.shtml
- Portland State University, Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, “Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health: Trade-offs and Sustainability in the Oregon-Washington Regional Food System.,” October 2008. Chapters on land and capital. http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.ims/files/media_assets/ims_foodsystemsfinalreport.pdf

Objective Theme 2: Small- and Mid-Scale Farming Ventures

In the urban context, interest in growing food has never been higher. Local government initiatives like Multnomah County’s County Digs program have made new parcels of land available for urban agriculture projects. Remnant historic farms like Zenger Farm and the new Multnomah County CROPS project provide larger growing areas within the county. However, as discussed in the conclusion of this section, more could be done to remove barriers to growing food in urban areas.

- **County Digs:** County Digs is a Multnomah County program that seeks to promote opportunities for urban agriculture throughout the county by providing unused or surplus County property to individuals or organizations for agricultural use and food production. This is done primarily through the Greenspace Review Committee that evaluates tax-foreclosed properties for urban agriculture donation.
- **County CROPS (Community Reaps Our Produce and Shares):** County CROPS is a two-acre farm located across from McMenamins Edgefield in Troutdale on an underutilized Multnomah County property. The farm grows fresh, local, organic produce for Oregonians facing food insecurity and hunger. The produce is distributed through hunger relief organizations, such as the Oregon Food Bank network, that provide support and emergency food to the local community.

Opportunity for Urban Agriculture within the Urban Growth Boundary

The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is one of the tools used to protect farms and forests from urban sprawl and to promote the efficient use of land, public facilities and services inside the boundary.³⁵ According to Metro, who is responsible for managing the Portland metropolitan urban growth boundary, land inside the UGB supports urban services such as roads, water and sewer systems, parks, schools and fire and police protection that create thriving places to live, work and play. Land outside the UGB is mainly used for agriculture and rangeland, provides easy access to nature, and serves to protect the natural beauty of our area.

Given population growth projections for the next fifty years, there has been concern about the potential tension between the region’s commitment to maintaining the current UGB in order to protect farm and forestland outside the boundary, and the ever-increasing interest in growing food within the UGB. This same argument was raised fifteen years ago around greenspace issues when greenspace was not considered a critical urban amenity.

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Currently, the local urban agriculture movement has focused largely on making better use of underutilized resources such as yards, rooftops and vacant land. For example, the Diggable City inventory conducted for the City of Portland, identified dozens of City-owned properties that could potentially be used for urban agriculture projects. As a result, several community gardens now reside on what were once city water pumping stations.

The city of Berlin, Germany exemplifies one successful model of the balance between urban agriculture and population density. Approximately 15% of the city's land is in agricultural production and an estimated 80,000 people garden in allotment (community) gardens.³⁶ Berlin's population density is more than double that of Portland, and more than five times that of Multnomah County, yet our local community gardens only accommodate a few thousand people.

Location	Density (people per square mile)	Number of Community Gardeners
Portland	3920	Between 3,000 and 4,000
Multnomah County	1642	Slightly more than in Portland (5 additional gardens)
Berlin	9587	80,000

Backyard Gardening as Business Model

A new generation of farmers is thriving in the urban context by utilizing small plot intensive farming techniques. Most of these new farmers work as independent operators (rather than hiring staff) and have a limited number of shareholders or clients who share the risks of farming by purchasing Community Supported Agriculture shares. This model, with a focus on small, mostly hand-tended operations, has enormous potential given the number of yards and small plots of land within the county.

These “micro-farms” are often located within a specific part of the county, using vacant/open land or arranging with private landowners to use front-, side-, and back yards for growing food. Some examples of these micro-farming enterprises include Your Backyard Farmer, Calliope's Table Urban Gardens and CSA, Sellwood Garden Club, Backyard Bounty Farms, RiverHouse CSA, and Sunroot Gardens. Through a community-supported agriculture model, these farmers deliver produce to seasonal subscribers on a weekly basis, trade produce with the landowners themselves, and sell to local restaurants or at a farmers' market. The Hawthorne Urban Farmers Market caters to these small operations and is the most casual of all the county's markets, operating on a first-come, first-served basis with no fees or pre-approval processes.

Additional Resources:

- Diggable City reports, Phases I, II, and III.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42793>
- Rhoads, Amanda for City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, “Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems,” Fall 2009.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=51427&a=273154>



Objective Theme 3: Urban Food Production

Community Gardens

Community gardens are beneficial to people's physical and mental health, social connections, and pocketbooks. Community gardeners tend to eat more vegetables, get more exercise, meet other people, and save money on food.³⁷ The City of Portland manages thirty-two gardens with around 1,000 plots and the City of Gresham manages four community gardens with approximately fifty plots total. Churches, student groups, and other organizations run an additional fifteen community gardens, one in Troutdale and the rest in Portland.³⁸

Multnomah County is home to 51 community gardens in Portland, Gresham and Troutdale. Sites per person:

Multnomah County 1:14,011

Seattle 1:10,780

Denver 1:9,280

By all accounts, the number of community garden plots available in the county is significantly lower than the demand for them. The City of Portland alone maintains a waiting list of over 1,300 people for its 1,000 plots. Multnomah County has fewer sites per person (1:14,011) than do Denver and Seattle.³⁹ There are large areas of the county that do not have a community garden nearby, thereby limiting access and the ability to grow one's own food, especially in increasingly dense areas with few backyards.

Home Gardens and Beyond

Gardening is one of America's favorite pastimes and the people of Multnomah County go beyond traditional row crops and raised beds. Community members are interested in raising chickens for eggs, growing fruit trees, rooftop gardening, and using permaculture design systems that focus on perennials. Unfortunately, data is not currently collected on the number of people who grow a percentage of their own food, though some data reveals an increasing interest level:

- Growing Gardens built over 650 gardens for low-income families in the last decade.
- The "PDXBackyardChix" listserv has almost 1,000 members and hundreds of people participate in annual chicken coop tours organized by Growing Gardens.
- The Portland Fruit Tree Project maintains a database of several hundred privately owned fruit trees whose owners donate their harvest to food banks and hunger relief organizations.
- visionPDX, Portland's community visioning project, received around 1,000 comments about growing food in the city from the 14,000 surveys that they collected.

Identified Barriers to Urban Food Production

Urban agriculture has captured the imaginations of people in Multnomah County. However, currently, more people want to grow food in the county than are able to do so. The City of Portland describes some of the barriers to increasing urban food production, which include:⁴⁰

- A limited number of community garden plots, well below the level needed to meet existing demand
- High cost of water meters and water when developing a new urban agriculture project
- Lack of clarity in the City zoning code regarding the legality of selling produce coming from backyards through new CSA models
- Policies against selling produce from community garden plots in Portland and Gresham



- Zoning limitations as to where agriculture is allowed within Portland
- Limitations to planting edible plants and trees in public rights-of-way, including fruit and nut trees and vegetable plots
- Limited availability of land for urban agriculture projects, either from public or private sources
- Limited resources directed at public education around growing food
- Lack of a coordinated constituency

Increases in water and sewer rates will pose an additional barrier to urban food production. To comply with a new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rule requiring the Portland Water Bureau to either cover the open reservoirs in Mount Tabor and Washington parks or treat the water coming out of them, Portland City Council raised rates by 18% in the 2009 budget.⁴¹ The bureau proposed to raise rates about 13% per year for the next four years, thereby increasing the average residential water bill from \$22.02 a month to \$41.18 and medium size businesses could see their monthly bills increase from \$510.13 to \$935.45.⁴² These costs could decrease the ability and willingness of community members to grow their own food and could also discourage new entrepreneurs from starting local food related businesses.

Additional Resources:

- Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council, “City of Portland Community Gardens Program Recommendations,” February 2008.
- Vision into Action, “Voices from the Community: The visionPDX Community Input Report.” For Portlander’s perspectives on urban agriculture, see sections on Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens.
http://www.visionpdx.com/reading/inputsummary/urban_livability/urban_agriculture_community_gardens.html
- Portland Parks and Recreation, “Community Gardens Technical Paper,” June 2008.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?a=218787&c=38306>
- Rhoads, Amanda for City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, “Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems,” Fall 2009.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=51427&a=273154>

Objective Theme 4: Environmental Resource Stewardship

Some of the environmental impacts of the industrial food system include water pollution from animal wastes, pesticide runoff and watershed pollution, and high energy usage. Part of the drive to create local food systems is to increase the sustainability of food production and become better stewards of the land. Organizations like the Portland-based Food Alliance are working to define sustainability and stewardship in the agricultural context and help farmers and ranchers improve the sustainability of their operations.

Water

While per capita use of water has fallen in Oregon since the mid-1980s, overall water usage has increased and the usage of groundwater has risen to 30%. Oregon uses twice



as much water for irrigation as does Washington, an increase that accounts for the rise in groundwater usage. Despite the increases, Oregon's water quality has shown improvement over the past decade, meaning we have cleaner waterways⁴³ and drinking water.

Soil

In Oregon, most of the best soil (Class 1 and Class 2) is concentrated in the Willamette Valley near waterways where the ground is flat. Most of Oregon's urbanization has also taken place in the Willamette Valley, thereby bringing population growth and agriculture into conflict (a conflict that led to the passing of Senate Bill 100 in the 1970s that established Oregon's land use system, which has been beneficial to farmland preservation). In terms of agricultural land in production, data shows that water- and wind-caused soil erosion decreased in the 1980s and 1990s. Other threats to soil fertility, though, including chemicals, nitrogen, pathogens, feed additives and others, are not as easy to account for or measure.⁴⁴

Energy and Climate Change

Industrialized agriculture is very energy-intensive when petroleum-derived fertilizers, heavy equipment, food storage and processing, and transport are all taken into account. Some parts of the food system are very inefficient. For example, producing one calorie of beef requires as many as 30 calories of inputs. The total carbon footprint of the food system has been estimated to be as large as or larger than that of passenger transportation.⁴⁵ Re-localizing the food system can reduce many of these impacts by requiring less transport, processing, and fewer energy inputs.

Additional Resources:

- Discussion of health and environmental consequences of industrial agriculture: Harvie, Jamie, "Redefining Healthy Food: An Ecological Health Approach to Food Production, Distribution and Procurement," September 2006. Paper presented by The Center for Health Design and Health Care Without Harm at a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation conference.

<http://store.healthdesign.org/whitepapers-reports/redefining-healthy-food.html>

- Portland State University, Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, "Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health: Trade-offs and Sustainability in the Oregon-Washington Regional Food System.," October 2008. Chapters on land, water and energy.
http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.ims/files/media_assets/ims_foodsystemsfinalreport.pdf



Action Area 2: HEALTHY EATING

The Multnomah Food Initiative is working to make the healthy food choice an easy choice for all community members. The extent to which people eat healthful, nutritious foods is impacted by both personal choice but also by the availability of healthful foods. Advocates of increased food access consider number and placement of grocery stores and other healthful food outlets; the transportation network that connects these outlets to customers; affordability of those foods and their availability day-to-day; concentrations of outlets of non-nutritive foods; opportunity to grow and prepare food; and the cultural appropriateness of available foods.

This action area addresses health outcomes related to food consumption and food access in Multnomah County.

Main Conclusions

- While the Portland region does not appear to have extreme “food deserts,” there are areas with poor access to full-service grocery stores, including some areas with higher poverty or otherwise confounding factors (like lack of transportation).⁴⁶
- Perceptions of affordability and other factors such as proximity, quality, selection and cultural appropriateness can cause people to seek out grocery stores much farther away than the store nearest to them.
- Poor diet and physical inactivity contribute to a number of health conditions: obesity, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.
- In Multnomah County, obesity and diabetes are both serious health conditions that are increasing in prevalence.
- Hispanic populations in Multnomah County have among the highest rates of obesity, significantly higher than the national average. Native Americans and Alaska Natives also have high obesity rates.⁴⁷
- Among different racial/ethnic groups in Multnomah County, African Americans have the highest prevalence of diabetes as well as the highest rate of diabetes-related mortality.⁴⁸
- An area’s Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI) has been linked to rates of obesity and diabetes. The city of Portland has a high RFEI, indicating the possibility that the city’s retail food environment affects community and individual health.
- Demand for food assistance continues to rise, especially during the current economic downturn and high unemployment throughout the state.

Possible Indicators

Data Currently Collected:

State and County Level Data

- Location of food outlets within Multnomah County (InfoUSA and Oregon Employment Department)
- Self-reported obesity and diabetes rates within Multnomah County (Multnomah County Health Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Percentage of Multnomah County households that are food insecure/food secure
- Percentage of Multnomah County population that is in poverty
- Number of community gardens per person/household within Multnomah County



- Number of Multnomah County participation in SNAP (Oregon DHS)
- Number of Multnomah County participation in WIC (Oregon DHS)
- Number of Multnomah County participation in Free and Reduced Lunch Program (Oregon Department of Education)
- Number of Multnomah County participation in food bank network services (Oregon Food Bank)

From Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health⁴⁹ (with page references)

- Consumer expenditures on food (A:73)
- Daily servings of fruits and vegetables (A:77)
- Direct marketing trends (A:79)
- Community gardens (A:81)
- Food insecurity (A:83)
- Use of food stamps (A:85)
- Use of food banks (A:87)
- Overweight and obesity rates (A:89)
- Diabetes rates (A:91)
- Food safety (A:95)

From the Healthy Development Measurement Tool⁵⁰

- Proportion of population within 1/2 mile of a supermarket
- Proportion of households within 1/2 mile of a farmer's market
- Proportion of households with 1/2 mile access to a community-supported agriculture (CSA) drop-off site
- Proportion of households with 1/4 mile access to a community garden
- Density of fast food outlets
- Retail food environment index score
- Proportion of retail food establishments that accept state/federal food assistance programs

From the Food Environment Atlas⁵¹

- # Households no car & >1 mile to store
- %Households no car & >1 mile to store
- # Low income & >1 mile to store
- %Low income & >1 mile to store
- Average monthly # SNAP participants
- Total SNAP benefits (\$1,000)
- Average monthly SNAP \$ benefits
- SNAP participation rate
- % Low-income receiving SNAP
- Average monthly # WIC participants
- WIC \$ redemptions
- Average monthly # School-Lunch participants
- % Students free-lunch eligible
- % Students reduce-price-lunch eligible
- Average monthly # School-Breakfast participants
- Average monthly # Summer-Food participants
- # Summer-Food program sites



- Average daily meals at Summer-Food sites
- Low-income preschool obesity rate
- Soda sales tax, retail stores
- Soda sales tax, vending
- Chip & pretzel sales tax, vending
- State food sales tax, general
- Relative price of low-fat milk
- Relative price of sweetened drinks
- Relative ratio low-fat milk/sweetened drink
- Price ratio green-leafy/starchy vegetable
- Price ratio fruit/package sweet snacks
- Price ratio fruit/ package savory snacks
- Price ratio whole grain/refined grain
- Lbs per capita fruit & vegetable
- Ratio per capita fruit & vegetable/prep food
- Lbs per capita package sweet snacks
- Gals per capita soft drinks

From The Vivid Picture Project⁵²

- Number of farmer's markets that accept farmers market nutrition program (FMNP) coupons such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), senior FM coupons, and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- Number of Slow Food members
- Number of school gardens
- Number of farms that offer agricultural tourism

Data Not Currently Collected on a Regular Basis:

- Retail Food Environment Index score (though information on the relevant outlets is available through InfoUSA or the Oregon Employment Department)
- Market basket survey information comparing relative affordability of different retail food outlets
- Data on consumer shopping habits and preferences
- Estimates of number of home food gardens in Multnomah County, amount of production, size, etc.
- Number of grocers and farmers' markets in Multnomah County catering to minority and immigrant communities.

Objective Theme 6: Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food

Food access is defined as the ability of a household to consistently acquire, both physically and economically, sufficient amounts of healthful, culturally appropriate, safe foods. Food access is not a simple yes or no issue, but rather a spectrum of possibilities ranging from "food deserts" with little or no food access, to communities with convenient, abundant, affordable, local and sustainable food options.⁵³



In the Portland region, food access is one of the most widely studied aspects of our community food system. Numerous studies, neighborhood food assessments, and scholarly papers have researched issues related to food access. Neighborhood studies mainly explore people's experience of their food environments, while others focus largely on the number and location of grocery stores and other food outlets within a larger geographic area.

One of the most in-depth and recent studies comes from Portland State University, where a team of students from the Masters of Urban and Rural Planning (MURP) program examined several elements of food access, including affordability, accessibility, availability, appropriateness, and awareness. Using the first three variables, the team created a "foodability" score to analyze the city of Portland's food access. The team found the following:

Overall, Portland is well served by the private market and does not suffer the sort of 'food deserts' that impact other cities. Most parts of the City are accessible, with a number of food points offering a fairly affordable range of food.

In Portland, areas with poor and very poor food access are largely located in neighborhoods with high median household income. Residents in these neighborhoods are unlikely to perceive their food access as poor because they rely on auto travel to do their food shopping and are comfortable doing so.

Most residents live in areas in which the available food is accessible and affordable—though some communities may still desire improvements in their neighborhoods, and vulnerable populations may struggle to access food, even in well-served communities. According to input received during visioning meetings and other community projects, residents feel that Portland could improve food access, especially for low-income households and other vulnerable populations.

There are a few underserved areas within Portland that are not within a one mile radius of an affordable full-service grocery store, including sections of north and northeast Portland and outer east Portland.⁵⁴

The Foodability team did not consider areas outside the boundaries of the city of Portland. However, an analysis in *Metroscape* magazine looked more broadly at the Portland metropolitan region as it is defined by the urban growth boundary (UGB). While this study is still not inclusive of Multnomah County as a whole, it does bring more of the county under review. Some findings from *Metroscape* using 2000 Census data are as follows:

- Poor access areas are often areas of low population density
 - Poor access is defined as: "eight or more convenience stores within a half mile of the block group and no grocery store within a mile of the center of the block group."⁵⁵
 - Good access is defined as: "three or fewer convenience stores within a half mile of the edge of the block group and a grocery store within a half mile of the center of the block group."⁵⁶
- Poor access areas do appear to be associated with higher concentrations of poverty
- In most of the areas identified as having poor access, the percentage of households without access to a car was higher than the mean for the region

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See the map below for a look at our regional food access.



Three local community food assessments (CFA) have been conducted in recent years: one in Lents and two in parts of North and Northeast Portland. While primarily a process to organize the communities in which the CFA was focused, CFAs highlight issues not usually uncovered in typical food access mapping exercises. For example:

- In N/NE Portland, half of the 202 respondents were dissatisfied with the number of grocery stores in their neighborhood, though most of them lived within a half-mile of a full-service grocery store.⁵⁷
- A quarter of respondents spent over 30 minutes one-way to reach their usual store.⁵⁸
- Almost a third of respondents in Lents thought they did not eat enough fruits and vegetables; 80% said they would like to eat healthier.⁵⁹
- Most respondents felt they would prepare more fresh foods if they had more time or grocery money.⁶⁰

The Portland Plan report concludes the following regarding grocery access:

In Portland, data indicate that grocery access is more complicated than whether a store is within walking distance. Affordability is also an important factor in determining where people shop, as well as availability and accessibility. While many communities contain at least one full-service supermarket, there are concerns about whether this one store can serve all members of their communities. In many cases, low-income people are left traveling long distances to reach affordable, quality food. In addition to proximity, other factors like affordability, quality, selection and cultural appropriateness all also play into the food access issue.⁶¹



Fast Food Restaurants

Trends in Eating Out⁶²

Dining Out More: National trends show Americans are dining out more. In 1970, Americans spent just 26% of their food dollars on restaurant meals and other foods prepared outside their homes. By 2003, Americans were spending almost half (46%) of their food dollars on away-from-home foods and consuming a third of their daily calories while eating out.⁶³

Increasing Portion Sizes: Portion sizes have grown over time. It is not uncommon for a single restaurant meal to provide half a day's calories or a whole day's recommended calories. Restaurant foods are often served in large portions well beyond the recommended standards of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and priced in a way that makes larger serving sizes more appealing.⁶⁴ For example, a Double Gulp from 7-Eleven contains six servings, meaning it provides six times as many calories as would a standard serving size of soft drink.

Increased Calorie Intake: Several studies have found a positive association between eating out and higher calorie intake and higher body weights. Increased calorie intake is a critical factor in rising obesity rates.⁶⁵ Children eat almost twice as many calories at a restaurant compared to at home.⁶⁶ Studies suggest that foods consumed away from home are more calorie-dense and less nutritionally beneficial, as compared with foods prepared at home. Food from restaurants and other food service establishments is generally higher in nutrients like saturated fat for which over-consumption is a problem, and lower in nutrients that the body needs, such as calcium and fiber.⁶⁷

Health Impacts of Fast Food Restaurant Concentration⁶⁸

Eating at fast food restaurants on a regular basis has a negative impact on health. Fast food restaurants tend to cluster around schools⁶⁹ and in low-income neighborhoods.⁷⁰ For example, a study in England and Scotland showed there was a significant correlation between neighborhood poverty and the mean number of McDonald's outlets per 1,000 people.⁷¹

The location and prevalence of fast food restaurants is often used as an indication of a community's access to unhealthful food.⁷² However, studies on fast food restaurants have shown mixed results in determining the correlation between the concentration of fast food restaurants and increased consumption of unhealthful foods. In California, obesity and diabetes prevalence were found to be highest in adults "who have the most fast-food restaurants and convenience stores near their homes relative to grocery stores and produce vendors."⁷³ Another study, however, found that "proximity of 'fast food' restaurants to home or work was not associated with eating at 'fast food' restaurants or with BMI [Body Mass Index]."⁷⁴ A recent study of 13,000 New Yorkers found that while higher concentrations of full-service grocery stores were associated with lower BMI and lower prevalence of obesity, higher concentrations of convenience stores and fast food were not significantly associated with higher obesity or BMI.⁷⁵

It is likely the variance of these findings is due to differences in methodology and/or the location of the study. However, it is clear there are mixed conclusions about the location of fast food restaurants and associated consumption of unhealthful foods. One possible



explanation for this variance is related to distance. A recent study of fast food restaurants near schools found an association with student obesity if the restaurant was within one-tenth of a mile of the school, but a restaurant located one-quarter or one-half mile did not have the same effect.⁷⁶ Recognizing these methodological challenges, research on the health impacts of fast food restaurants will continue to be a field ripe for exploration.

Multnomah County Fast Food Outlets and Chain Restaurants

A 2008 study identified over 500 fast food and chain restaurants within Multnomah County. As seen in the map below, the locations of these restaurants are clustered in several areas, including downtown Portland, inner Northeast Portland, and along several major arterial roads. As the map indicates, these restaurants are often located in areas of higher poverty. However, little data has been collected on who, demographically speaking, eats at fast food restaurants within the Portland region, how often, or other factors that determine food choice.

Nationally, the number of fast food restaurants has increased seven-fold from 30,000 in 1970 to 220,000 in 2001. Fast food is especially popular among adolescents, who on average visit a fast-food outlet twice per week.⁷⁷ According to the Lents Community Food Survey, 33% of respondents reported that they eat at fast food restaurants at least once a week, while 65% reported eating at fast food restaurants a few times a month or more.⁷⁸ There is insufficient data to accurately compare health outcomes of Multnomah County community members who live near fast food restaurant concentrations with those who do not.

Additional Resources:

- Portland State University Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program, Community Food Concepts group, “Foodability: Visioning for Healthful Food Access in Portland,” June 2009. <http://foodability.wordpress.com/the-foodability-report/>
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership, “Everyone Eats! A Community Food Assessment for Areas of North and Northeast Portland, Oregon,” June 2008. http://www.emoregon.org/pdfs/IFFP/IFFP_N-NE_Portland_Food_Assessment_full_report.pdf
- Sparks, Andrea Leigh, “Measuring Food Deserts: A Comparison of Models Measuring the Spatial Accessibility of Supermarkets in Portland, Oregon,” June 2008. Thesis presented to the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon.
- Coalition for a Livable Future, “The Regional Equity Atlas: Metropolitan Portland’s Geography of Opportunity,” 2007. <http://www.equityatlas.org/>
- Margheim, Joy, “The Geography of Eating Well: Food Access in the Metroscape.” Metroscape, Winter 2007. http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.ims/files/media_assets/ims_mscape07atlas.pdf
- Lents community food assessment and market basket survey, by the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council and Active Living by Design grant team, November 2004.
- Coalition for a Livable Future, Food Policy Working Group, “Neighborhood Food Network Report: North/Northeast Portland Community Food Security Project,” 2002. <http://www.cfuture.org/publications/Neighborhood%20Food%20Network%20Report.pdf>
- Rhoads, Amanda for City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, “Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems,” Fall 2009. <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=51427&a=273154>



Objective Theme 7: Individual and Community Health

Poor diet and physical inactivity contribute to a number of health conditions including obesity, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.⁷⁹ A 2003 World Health Organization report stated the increasing importance of considering the link between food and health:

Nutrition is coming to the fore as a major modifiable determinant of chronic disease, with scientific evidence increasingly supporting the view that alterations in diet have strong effects, both positive and negative, on health throughout life. Most importantly, dietary adjustments may not only influence present health, but may determine whether or not an individual will develop such diseases as cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes much later in life.⁸⁰

In Multnomah County, obesity and diabetes are both serious health conditions that are increasing in prevalence. The following text regarding health outcomes is adapted from the “Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems,” published by the City of Portland in fall 2009.⁸¹

Obesity

About 55% of Multnomah County’s population self-report as being overweight or obese.⁸² While the proportion of people in Multnomah County that fall into the “overweight” category⁸³ has remained more or less the same since the early 1990s, obesity rates have more than doubled from 11% to 24% in the same period. This is consistent with national trends, but is moving sharply in the wrong direction. Serious health consequences are associated with being overweight. Overweight or obese adults in Multnomah County age 45 or older are more likely to have high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol⁸⁴ than their counterparts who have maintained a healthy weight. About one-quarter of overweight or obese adults 45 or older were also diagnosed with diabetes.⁸⁵

Disparities among ethnicities and low-income populations

Certain ethnic and racial groups in Multnomah County are at a higher risk of becoming obese or overweight. Asian Americans had the lowest rates of overweight or obesity, but their rates were higher than the national average. African Americans had significantly lower rates locally than nationally (28% countywide vs. 34% nationally), yet the rate for Hispanics was higher than the national average (30% countywide vs. 24% nationally)⁸⁶. Native Americans/Alaska Natives and Hispanics had the highest rates of overweight or obesity in Multnomah County.

Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables

The measure of fruits and vegetables consumed daily is often used as an indication of adequate nutrition. According to self-reported data, over 70% of Multnomah County community members fail to eat five or more fruits or vegetables per day.⁸⁷ While the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans increased the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables to nine 1/2-cup servings,⁸⁸ currently most people in Multnomah County are not currently meeting this target.

Chapter II



Consumption choices can also result in positive health impacts. For example, increased consumption of fruits and vegetables has been linked to reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including stroke, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, certain cancers, and coronary heart disease.⁸⁹

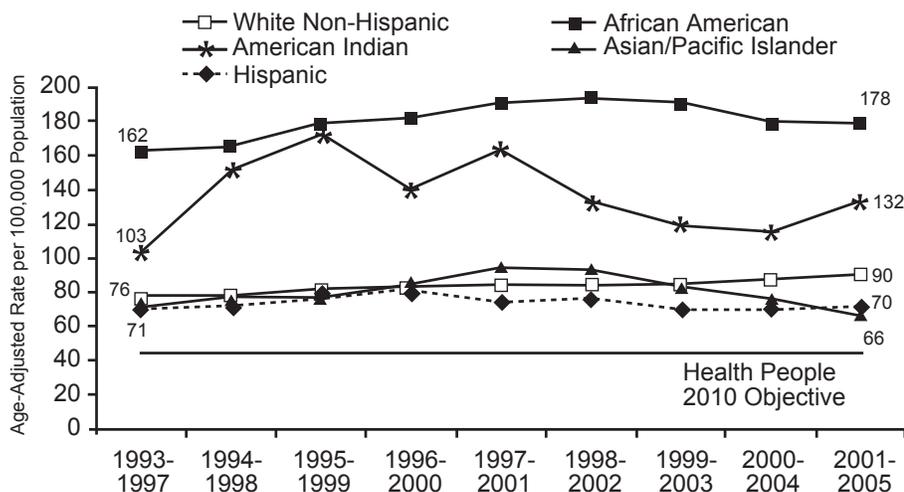
Diabetes

The rate of diabetes cases in Multnomah County (62 people per 1,000), is substantially higher than the Healthy People 2010⁹⁰ target of 20 people per 1,000 (Healthy People 2010 Target 5.3). In 2005, the rate of diabetes-related death within Multnomah County was 96 per 100,000,⁹¹ which is also substantially higher than the Healthy People 2010 target of 45 diabetes-related deaths per 100,000 (Healthy People 2010 Target 5.5).⁹²

Disparities among people of color

Compared with non-Hispanic whites, diabetes more often affects lower income Oregonians and people of color, including Asian/Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaska Natives, African Americans, and Hispanics. Prevalence is higher, and so too is mortality. Death rates for African American and Hispanic Oregonians due to diabetes are significantly higher than for non-Hispanic whites, with African American and Hispanic women faring the worst.⁹³

Diabetes-related Mortality Rate by Race or Ethnicity, Multnomah County⁹⁴



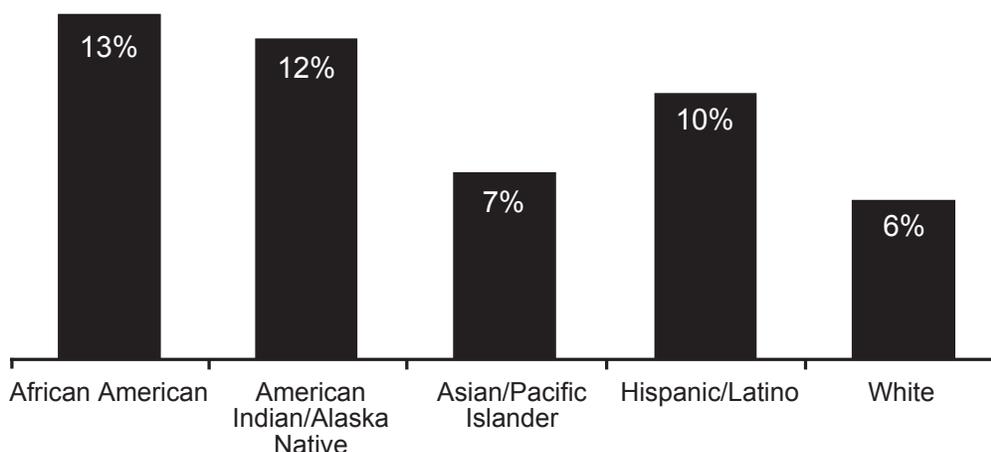
Multnomah County has a 24% obesity rate; 55% of the population qualifies as being overweight or obese.

Over 70% of Multnomah County community members fall short of the recommended five or more fruits or vegetables a day.

The American Diabetes Association reports that 65% of all people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke; adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to experience stroke or death by heart disease as adults without diabetes.⁹⁷ Diabetes is also linked closely with other diseases such as obesity, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, high cholesterol, and kidney disease, many of which are life threatening.



Diabetes Prevalence by Race/Ethnicity, Oregon, 2004-2005,^{95,96}



Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI)

The Retail Food Environment Index is a relatively new tool developed to consider the quality of a retail food environment by creating a ratio of healthful food outlets to unhealthful. The index originated with the California Center for Public Health Advocacy in 2005 and has also been used in New York City. A study in April 2008 found there is a relationship between RFEI and the likelihood of obesity and diabetes. According to the study, “California adults living in areas with an RFEI of 5.0 or higher had a 20% higher prevalence of obesity and a 23% higher prevalence of diabetes than their counterparts living in RFEI areas of 3.0 or lower. ... This relationship between RFEI and obesity and diabetes rates was found to hold true regardless of household income, race/ethnicity, age, gender, or physical activity levels of respondents.”⁹⁸ For this reason, considering the RFEI for Multnomah County would be instructive.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{RFEI} = & \text{(# fast food} \\
 & \text{restaurants +} \\
 & \text{# convenience} \\
 & \text{stores)} \\
 \hline
 & \text{(# supermarkets +} \\
 & \text{# produce stores +} \\
 & \text{# farmers markets)}
 \end{aligned}$$

The City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability recently calculated the RFEI for the five quadrants of the city. The overall score was 5.31, meaning that there were over five times as many places to access unhealthful foods as healthful foods. All quadrants measured over 4.0, but Southwest Portland scored the highest (see the chart below).

Retail Food Environment Index for the city of Portland, OR ¹⁰⁰						
Quadrant	Fast Food Restaurants	Convenience Stores	Super-markets	Produce Stores	Farmers Markets	RFEI
North Portland	35	25	7	2	2	5.45
Northeast	121	33	17	7	4	5.50
Southeast	104	74	22	11	5	4.68
Southwest	90	22	10	1	5	7
Northwest	27	11	6	2	1	4.22

Despite the newness of the tool and its potential drawbacks,¹⁰⁰ the RFEI offers a standardized index that can be calculated relatively easily to measure progress. The study



cited above indicates that RFEI scores can be linked to health outcomes, thereby increasing its usefulness as an indicator.

One limitation of the RFEI calculation is that new programs or efforts to increase healthful food offerings in typically nutritionally limited environments, such as convenience stores and fast food restaurants, would not be captured in RFEI calculations. A robust healthy corner store initiative, for example, would not positively affect the RFEI score, though it would increase availability of healthful foods. This limitation should be kept in mind if it is to be used as a way of measuring progress toward food access.

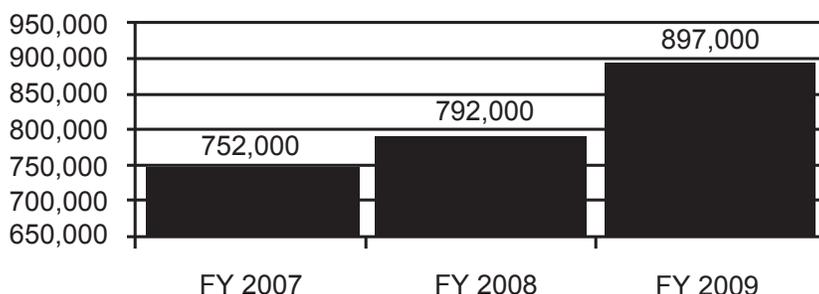
Additional Resources:

- Multnomah County Health Department, “Diabetes Mortality and Morbidity,” Community Health Assessment Quarterly, volume 4, issue 1, Winter 2009.
http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/health/hra/haq/winter2009_diabetes.pdf
- Multnomah County Health Department, “Overweight and Obesity,” Community Health Assessment Quarterly, volume 3, issue 3, Fall 2008.
http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/health/hra/haq/fall_2008_obesity.pdf
- Nutrition Council of Oregon and the Oregon Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, “A Healthy Active Oregon: Statewide Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2007-2012.”
http://egov.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pan/docs/PAN_rpt_07.pdf
- More on RFEI: The California Center for Public Health Advocacy, “Searching for Healthy Food: The Food Landscape in California Cities and Counties Factsheet,” January 2007.
http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/RFEI/policybrief_final.pdf

Objective Theme 8: Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs

Oregon currently has the second-highest rate of hunger and food insecurity in the country.¹⁰¹ Emergency food distribution has increased substantially in recent years and the current recession has caused the demand to skyrocket. For example, the number of food boxes distributed to Multnomah County community members through the Oregon Food Bank network increased by 14% between June 2008 and June 2009.¹⁰² SNAP¹⁰³ (food stamp) usage has also increased over the past several years.

**Emergency Food Boxes Distributed by Oregon
food Bank Statewide Network**





- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** In 2008, 12,749 families were served by WIC in Multnomah County, including 30,596 women, infants, and children.
- **Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL):** In 2007, nearly half of all students in Multnomah County participated in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) program, with 43,676 children and youth eating a FRL meal during the 2007 school year.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** (formerly referred to as food stamps): In Oregon's district two, which includes all of Multnomah County, more than 134,000 individuals in almost 78,000 households benefited from the SNAP program in December 2009.¹⁰⁴

Food budgets are often seen as the most flexible or expendable part of a household's budget. When the fixed costs (rent, mortgage, utility bills etc.) are paid, money left over is spent on food. This can lead to cycles of food insecurity. One key way to stabilize a household's food budget and reduce the need for emergency food is to increase their income so that more money can be allocated toward purchasing healthful food.¹⁰⁵ Such measures will require systemic change, enabling individuals to increase their self-sufficiency and ability to cover all costs, both fixed and discretionary.

Additional Resources:

- 2008-2009 Statistics for the Oregon Food Bank Network.
http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/research_and_action/documents/broadsheet_2008-09_001.pdf
- Oregon Food Bank, "Profiles of Hunger and Poverty in Oregon: 2008 Oregon Hunger Factors Assessment," September 2008.
http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/research_and_action/documents/hungerprofiles2008FINAL.pdf
- Commission on Children, Families & Community (CCFC), "Profile of Hunger & Food Insecurity Issues in Multnomah County," September 15, 2008.
<http://www2.co.multnomah.or.us/ChildrenFamily/pdf/Economic%20Security/Profile%20of%20Hunger.doc>
- Multnomah County 2008 WIC Facts
http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/wic/docs/annual2008/annual_multnomah_2008.pdf
- Rhoads, Amanda for City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, "Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems," Fall 2009.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=51427&a=273154>



Action Area 3: SOCIAL EQUITY

This action area focuses on systemic social equality and explores the root causes of hunger and food insecurity. While access to food and nutrition assistance programs are an important part of increasing the consumption of healthy foods, the Multnomah Food Initiative aims to build systemic justice, health, and food security. This will require that, as a community, we reveal, challenge, and dismantle injustice in the food system, including social determinants of health and food security.

In an effort to create systemic change, we must endeavor to ensure that all individuals have the tools and resources they need to make healthful food and lifestyle choices and have equitable opportunity to shape food system priorities and goals. Social equity, as defined in this report, also involves supporting community resilience to social and environmental threats that will affect already vulnerable populations to a greater degree, such as the effects (and associated costs) of climate change and fuel and energy shortages. Low-income communities are also disproportionately exposed to environmental threats including urban brown fields, air and water pollution.

Just food system structures protect farmers and farmworkers' rights and uphold the dignity and quality of life for all who work in the food system through living wages, health care, and safe working conditions. This report recognizes that low-skill, low-paying food industry jobs create a class of "working poor" people who are food insecure and unable to sufficiently provide for themselves and their families.

Main Conclusions

- Food insecurity negatively affects health outcomes.
- Large-scale food production is highly energy intensive.
- While there is notable interest among many young people who are interested in farming in Oregon, significant barriers, such as limited access to land and capital, remain. Overall, Oregon farmers are getting older and are predominantly white.
- Farmworkers in Oregon often work intermittently, receive relatively low pay, and continue to have challenges with housing.

Possible Indicators

Data Currently Collected:

State and County Level Data

- Rates of obesity or food-related chronic disease in minority/impoverished communities
- Federal/state food assistance programs rates
- Emergency food assistance rates
- Number of community gardens per person/household
- Statistics on fast food restaurants and full service restaurants
- Socio-economic diversity of citizens on local government advisory boards
- Socio-economic diversity of citizens on the Food Policy Council, food organizations' boards and staffs.



From Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health¹⁰⁶ (with page references)

- Income for food system sectors (A:13)
- Characteristics of principal farm operator (A:51)
- Farm employment (A:53)
- Farm and farm-related employment (A:55)
- Farmworker wages (A:57)
- Agriculture-related degrees (A:59)

From The Vivid Picture Project¹⁰⁷

- Average wage paid to farm laborers
- Average wage paid to food service and processing workers (compared to other industries)
- Age distribution of farmers
- Total number of ethnic minority farmers, farms, acreage (Hispanic, Asian, African American, American Indian)
- Total women farmers (principal operator) and acreage controlled
- Percentage of farmworkers employed through farm labor contractors
- Farmworker pesticide poisonings

From the Food Environment Atlas¹⁰⁸

- # Households no car & >1 mile to store
- %Households no car & >1 mile to store
- # Low income & >1 mile to store
- %Low income & >1 mile to store
- Average monthly # SNAP participants
- Total SNAP benefits (\$1,000)
- Average monthly SNAP \$ benefits
- SNAP participation rate
- % Low-income receiving SNAP
- Average monthly # WIC participants
- WIC \$ redemptions
- Average monthly # School-Lunch participants
- % Students free-lunch eligible
- % Students reduce-price-lunch eligible
- Average monthly # School-Breakfast participants
- Average monthly # Summer-Food participants
- # Summer-Food program sites
- Average daily meals at Summer-Food sites
- Household food insecurity 2009
- Household food insecurity 2010
- Child food insecurity
- Low-income preschool obesity rate
- Availability of food stores -- indicators for SNAP and WIC authorized stores SES characteristics
- % of population facing food insecurity that is White
- % of population facing food insecurity that is Black
- % of population facing food insecurity that is Hispanic
- % of population facing food insecurity that is Asian



- % of population facing food insecurity that is American Indian or Alaskan Native
- % of population facing food insecurity that is Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Median household income
- Poverty rate
- Persistent poverty counties
- Child poverty rate
- Persistent child poverty counties
- Population loss counties
- Recreational and Fitness Facilities per 1,000 population

Objective Theme 9: Systemic Roots of Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Injustice

Social determinants of health are social and economic conditions that affect individual and community health directly and indirectly by influencing behavior that determine health outcomes. Common social determinants include income, social status, education, gender, early childhood conditions, social networks, and more. As defined by the World Health Organization, social determinants “are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.”¹⁰⁹

Food Security as a Health Determinant¹¹⁰

Food security refers to a condition where all members of a household can consistently access enough nutritionally adequate food to lead active, healthy lifestyles. It also means that households have the ability to acquire food in socially acceptable ways, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies.¹¹¹

People with low incomes are less likely than people with higher incomes to enjoy diets that are consistent with healthy eating or to get the nutrients they need for good health. In food insecure households, the degree of adequate nutrient intake varies with how much family members are required to cut back on the quality and quantity of food that they are able to acquire.

Food security has been shown to impact people’s immediate and long-term health. People struggling with food insecurity are more likely to have multiple chronic conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and food allergies. Food insecurity may also affect the management of chronic diseases requiring diet changes. For example, studies in the United States have shown that adults in food insecure households with diabetes visited the doctor more frequently than diabetics in food secure households did.

Across the continuum of hunger severity, there are associated psychological and social, as well as physical consequences. For both children and adults, consequences include social exclusion and mental health problems such as distress and depression.



Obesity and Food Insecurity¹¹²

In the United States, obesity is often strongly linked to hunger and food insecurity. This paradox has its root in the social and biological reactions to hunger. First, food-insecure households will often try to maximize calories per dollar. Calorie-dense foods can stave off hunger, but also can be high in sugar and fat, providing limited nutritional content and leading to weight gain. Second, low-income neighborhoods often have poorer access to healthful foods, leading to lower availability of nutritious food choices. Third, people who go through periods of not having enough food to eat tend to overeat when food is available. This can happen monthly, as food stamps run out early, or can be part of a longer cycle of food insecurity. Finally, the body itself adapts in times of low food availability, becoming more efficient and conserving energy by storing more calories as fat.

Additional Resources:

- Oregon Food Bank, “Profiles of Hunger and Poverty in Oregon: 2008 Oregon Hunger Factors Assessment,” September 2008.
http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/research_and_action/documents/hungerprofiles2008FINAL.pdf
- Food Research & Action Center, “The Paradox of Hunger and Obesity in America,” 2005.
<http://www.frac.org/pdf/hungerandobesity.pdf>.

Objective Theme 10: Self-Sufficiency and Community Resilience

In the Portland region, the public has expressed interest in becoming more self-sufficient at the individual level and more resilient as a community. As discussed earlier, there is also a high level of interest in growing food within the county for reasons often related to environmental sustainability and personal health. Significant community attention and energy has also been devoted to addressing the end of the “fossil fuel era.” There is active community of people in Multnomah County who are preparing to address potential natural disasters caused by the twin challenges of climate change and peak oil. Recommendations have made to city and county policy makers related to transportation, food production, education, green building, and recycling¹¹⁵ to facilitating the transition away from an oil dependent society, toward a more sustainable future.

Peak Oil

Portland’s Peak Oil Task Force focused on food and agriculture in one of its eleven major recommendations.¹¹⁶ The task force found that as fossil fuels become more expensive and less available there will be serious consequences to the current food system:

Food is a critical resource, and the American food system has become highly dependent on fossil fuels. Food production and distribution accounts for 17 percent of U.S. energy consumption. Because of this, higher oil and natural gas prices are expected to lead to a decline in the amount and variety of food produced and available locally, even with Portland’s proximity to the agricultural production of the Willamette Valley. Food prices will rise, further straining the ability of low-income households to put food on the table.

Chapter II



Recommendations made by the Task Force Food and Agriculture Subgroup included the following:

- Preservation of “the productive capacity of the foodshed,” both in the region and in urban areas
- Education about peak oil and about growing, preserving and preparing foods
- Expansion of direct marketing opportunities for local farmers
- Strengthening of current hunger relief and emergency agencies and systems
- Increase in local food processing and composting

Climate Change

In the 2009 Climate Action Plan, Multnomah County and the City of Portland recognize the role the food system plays in the mitigation of climate change given energy-intensive nature of industrialized agriculture and global distribution of food. The plan made two major food-related recommendations to significantly increase consumption of local foods and reduce consumption of carbon-intensive foods (red meat in particular).

The impacts of climate change on our food supply are likely to be numerous and significant. Studies^{117,118} have shown that:

- Precipitation and temperature changes will reduce yields of rain-fed crops
- Temperature changes will reduce yields of irrigated crops
- In one model, calorie availability per person across the world will be less in 2050 than in 2000 due to climate change
- More extreme weather events will destroy or significantly impact crop yields
- Longer growing seasons and warming temperatures enable insects to reproduce more often and “winter over,” which will likely impact crop production

Working to overcome these challenges and continuing to diversify both crops and methods of growing will be important mitigation strategies that will also increase community resilience and cohesion.

Education

An important part of ensuring self-sufficiency and community resilience lies in providing the tools and learning opportunities for people to gain new skills. The Peak Oil Task Force made it clear that education around food production and preservation is a central component of its recommendations regarding agriculture. A recent and growing interest in learning to grow and preserve food presents an opportunity to increase our foundational knowledge of these arts and increase the number of people who can share their skills and educate others.

Additional Resources:

- Portland Peak Oil Task Force reports
<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42894>
- International Food Policy Research Institute, “Climate Change: Impact on Agriculture and Costs of Adaptation,” Washington, D.C., October 2009.
<http://www.ifpri.org/publication/climate-change-impact-agriculture-and-costs-adaptation>

Oregon farms hire 123,000 agricultural employees annually.

95,000 are seasonal workers.

40,000 are migrant labor.



Objective Theme 11: Equitable Community Participation and Decision-Making

Two recent examples of civic engagement demonstrate city and county initiated efforts to facilitate equitable community participation and decision-making: visionPDX and the Portland Multnomah Climate Action Plan. Both examples involved a broad range of community members and built capacity for community decision-making and control of resources and assets.

visionPDX

visionPDX began in 2005 as a city-initiated, community-led project to create a new vision for Portland. It is a 20-year road map and strategic guide for decision-making. It serves as a set of values stimulating community dialogue, providing a foundation for new actions, and setting the tone for long-range planning efforts. The project sought to engage a large number and diversity of community members to learn about their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the city. visionPDX was the “most extensive public engagement process Portland has completed to date, and one of the largest in North America.” The project is unique because it represents the voice of the community. Directed by community members, it became a mode of community expression and a means of engaging those typically underrepresented in political processes and local government initiated projects.

A Vision Committee of over 40 volunteers, representing a diverse group of community members and city officials, led the project. Over a two-year period, more than 17,000 people contributed their thoughts, opinions, and visions for the Portland community. The committee sifted, sorted, and analyzed thousands of public comments and summarized 21,000 pages of data. The summation of public input became “Portland 2030: a vision for the future,” which was formally recognized and adopted by City Council in September 2007. Two additional reports, “Voices from the Community: The visionPDX Input Summary,” and the “Community Engagement Report,” were published to document the processes of engagement and detail public response to the project.

visionPDX represents the energy and resources that the city has invested in inviting community members to plan for the future, as well as their commitment to engaging all Portlanders, particularly underrepresented groups. The project also demonstrates how partnerships between government and grassroots groups can lead to the development of new and creative outreach tools that are often more effective in engaging underrepresented groups. This insight onto the experiences of underrepresented groups highlights perspectives that are not as often heard in planning forums and community events. visionPDX deepens understanding of the barriers to the engagement of underrepresented groups. Because outreach strategies were successful in reaching community members not typically engaged in local government initiated outreach, project grantees were able to talk to people about the factors that prevent them from participating in public forums. Through these conversations, grantees were also able to ascertain potential solutions that could help overcome such barriers.



The Portland Multnomah Climate Action Plan

The Portland Multnomah Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a 40-year strategy to reduce local carbon emissions by 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. The plan is a “roadmap for the institutional and individual change needed to reach [an] ambitious climate protection goal.” Since the early 1990s, the State of Oregon and City of Portland have progressively initiated climate change legislation. However, until the Climate Action Plan of 2009, the public had not been engaged in the process of creating of a plan to reduce carbon emissions.

The first phase of engagement was specifically focused on creating a Steering Committee to engage community members with knowledge of a specific or technical aspect of the plan. Both the Sustainable Development Commission and Peak Oil Task Force citizen advisory groups helped review content throughout the process. The CAP team also engaged the Food Policy Council, a citizen advisory group that helped draft content and action items related to food and agriculture. Working with the Steering Committee and advisory groups, the city and county developed a draft plan, which was released for public review in April 2009. Over 2,600 public comments were received, reviewed, and incorporated into the final plan.

In the second phase of engagement, community members were invited to participate in eight Town Hall meetings held throughout the community to discuss the components and proposed actions of the draft plan. Attempting to reach a diversity of people, the CAP team held meetings in different regions of the city and county. In addition to thousands of comments received, more than 400 people participated in Town Hall meetings and engaged in the creation of the plan. In addition to public meetings, the CAP team also made presentations in the community to specific groups and stakeholders. Interestingly, food ranked second highest in terms of the objectives and actions proposed in the plan that most appealed to the community. Food is what the community wanted to talk about at meetings and a significant number of comments related to food. Such a high level of interest indicates that the Portland community is particularly interested in growing and eating local, sustainable, healthy food.

After a two and a half year process, Portland City Council and the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted the plan on October 28, 2009. Increased outreach efforts on the city and county’s behalf were a response to the number of people wanting to be part of the conversation. This caused the CAP team to take more time, have the draft version available for review for a longer period, and to be proactive in making the plan visible throughout the community. Public input significantly influenced the final development of the plan by highlighting key elements that had not been articulated in the draft. As a result, the CAP team believes the plan is much more robust than it would have been otherwise. The CAP process demonstrates the positive influence that public input can have on the creation of a plan that heavily relies on the participation and willingness of the people to modify their behavior.



Objective Theme 12: Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers

The Farmers

At 16.6%, Oregon has a higher percentage of employment in farm-related industries than does the U.S. as a whole. While the number of people working on farms has increased in recent decades, the overall percentage of farm employment has decreased.¹¹⁹

The average age of farmers in Oregon continues to rise. However, recently a growing number of young people with little or no prior experience in agriculture have become interested in small- and mid-scale farming. Friends of Family Farmers, an Oregon-based non-profit organization, has developed an online database called iFarm to connect new and emerging farmers with those more experienced.

The Farmworkers

According to The National Agricultural Workers Survey of 1997-1998, the typical farmworker in the U.S. was:¹²⁰

- Young (two-thirds are under age 35)
- Male (80%)
- Hispanic (90%, mostly from Mexico)
- Not authorized to work in the U.S. (52% admitted to working illegally)
- Poorly educated (median years of education is six)
- Lack year-round employment (worked in agriculture for 24 weeks and in other industries for five weeks)
- Qualify as low income (half of the workers earned less than \$7500 a year)

The State of Oregon Housing and Community Services department estimates that Oregon farms employ 123,000 agricultural workers annually, 95,000 of which are seasonal workers. Of the 95,000 seasonal workers, approximately 40,000 are migrant workers (including farm and processing labor).¹²¹

Oregon's average pay to farmworkers is higher than the national average, but still insufficient. Oregon law requires that farmworkers are paid at least minimum wage, even if they are paid "piece rate" (or per item picked) by averaging pay over a week and number of hours worked. However, deductions for services like food and housing can reduce a worker's pay below minimum wage.¹²² Taxes and Social Security deductions are also taken out of farmworker wages, yet unauthorized workers will most likely never benefit from such deductions.¹²³ In 2006, the average farmworker was paid \$8.56 per hour, which for full-time, year-round employment translates into \$17,805/year (before taxes, Social Security, and service deductions are made). This is 20% lower than the poverty level for a family of four.¹²⁴ Furthermore, 77% of farmworkers in Oregon work seasonally and/or part-time which means that their yearly incomes are even lower.

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A 2000 report by the League of Women Voters on Oregon farmworkers found the following:¹²⁵

- Oregon relies on farmworkers to produce labor-intensive crops. Most workers are Hispanic and many are undocumented residents.
- While a strong partnership exists between farmers and workers on most Oregon farms, language and cultural differences and the immigrant status of the workforce make workers vulnerable to exploitation and farmers vulnerable to the loss of workers at critical harvest times.
- The search for solutions has become highly politicized; there is very little constructive dialogue between farmer organizations and farmworker advocates. A stalemate exists on clarifying the collective bargaining rights of workers, which neither the courts nor the legislature has been able to resolve.
- The shortage of decent and affordable housing for farmworkers is a problem that has persisted for decades. Farmers say they are turning away from housing their workers because of costs and regulations.

Additional Resources:

- League of Women Voters of Oregon Education Fund, “Farmworkers in Oregon,” 2000. Accessed on January 31, 2010 at <http://www.lwvor.org/studyreport.htm#farmworkers>.
- Bradbury, Zoe, “Hand Picked: Row by row, day after day.” Edible Portland, Summer 2008. <http://edibleportland.com/content/2008/06/hand-picked-row-by-row-day-after-day/>



Action Area 4: ECONOMIC VITALITY

More community attention is being directed toward developing the regional food economy and infrastructure. As Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health defines it, “Economic viability relates to having strong markets where farmers, processors, distributors, and retailers can continue to earn enough to pay their workers, earn a profit, and use sustainable practices.”¹²⁶ To increase economic viability, local producers are selling directly to consumers and marketing their products in new ways (“local,” “organic,” “sustainable” for example). This action area focuses on promoting regional food products and producers, increasing the local supply chain capacity (local processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling), and encouraging farm-to-school and institutional purchasing practices that support the regional food system.

Main Conclusions

- Despite record cash receipts, Oregon farmers are still struggling.
- Direct marketing channels have grown quickly in recent years and studies indicate that their market share could grow substantially higher.
- Some progress has been made toward institutional purchasing of local products, yet several barriers have not yet been addressed and more could be done to support local producers through large institutions.
- Local processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling offers many potential benefits, including jobs created through the local supply chain, lower energy use, and reduced carbon emissions caused by long-distance transport.

Possible Indicators

Data Currently Collected:

State and County Level Data

- Number of retail food businesses by size classes (number of employees)
- Number of food manufacturers by size classes (number of employees)
- Number of people employed in food economy (Economic Census)
- Cash receipts and realized net farm income to farmers in Oregon (Oregon Department of Agriculture)
- Community-Supported Agriculture data: number of subscribers, sales, etc. (City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability)
- Number of small farms (< 50 acres)

From Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health¹²⁷ (with page references)

- Realized farm net income (A:11)
- Income for food system sectors (A:13)
- Top commodities by sales (A:15)
- Value of commodity exports (A:17)
- Value of farm production (A:19)
- Energy prices (A:47)
- Industry concentration in farming (A:63)



- Number of food distributors (A:65)
- Number of food processors (A:67)
- Food processing cluster employment (A:69)
- Food manufacturing productivity (A:71)
- Direct marketing trends (A:79)

From The Vivid Picture Project¹²⁸

- Number of school districts with farm-to-school programs
- Number of farm-to-school programs
- Number of school gardens
- Total direct sales per capita, as % of total agricultural sales
- Number of producers participating in “Buy Local” campaigns
- Number of restaurants participating in the Chef’s Collaborative

From the Food Environment Atlas¹²⁹

- # Farms with direct sales
- % Farms with direct sales
- % Farm sales \$ direct to consumer
- \$ Direct farm sales
- \$ Direct farm sales per capita
- # Farmers’ markets
- Farmers’ markets/1,000 pop
- # Vegetable acres harvested
- Vegetable acres harvested/1,000 pop

Data Not Currently Collected Regularly:

- Ongoing sales information from farmers’ markets in Multnomah County (information collected by individual markets is not regularly compiled)
- Percent and/or amount of institutional food purchases from local sources
- Total direct sales per farm business, as a percentage of total agricultural sales
- Number of certified farmer’s markets/CSAs and their total sales
- Total direct farm sales to food retailers, food service establishments
- Number farm-to-school programs and their total sales
- Percentage of consumers now buying Oregon agricultural products more often than 6 months ago
- Number of contracting agencies that have defined local production in their purchasing and contract rules per HB 2763

Objective Theme 13: Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure

This objective theme focuses on developing the regional food economy and infrastructure by investing in community-based enterprise and supporting food related local businesses and entrepreneurs who contribute to the vibrancy and strength of our regional food system. We consider farmer income, the number of people employed in food-related industries, and support available to local food entrepreneurs.



Farmers in Oregon and throughout the nation continue to face huge challenges in making a living. Slim profit margins, price volatility, inhospitable weather, rising energy prices all affect a farm's bottom line. From Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health:

Cash receipts to farmers in Oregon and Washington are at record high levels. Yet, realized net farm income is very volatile and, when adjusted for inflation, farmers are making less money today than they were in 1970. Similarly, the value of commercial fisheries landings has been volatile. Oregon's fishing industry revenue, when adjusted for inflation, is less today than it was in 1970. A number of factors influence income for farmers and fishers, including the prices of inputs such as energy, which is at historic highs.¹³⁰

In the Portland Metropolitan area, 61,750 people are employed in restaurants and food service establishments. An additional 37,500 people are employed in food and beverage stores, grocery wholesalers, food manufacturing, and other food-related fields.¹³¹ The regional food economy, therefore, affects the lives and livelihoods of many community members.

Multnomah County has valuable resources supporting the development of new food products and help regional entrepreneurs and producers make connections with regional consumers. The Food Innovation Center, an Oregon State University Agricultural Research Station, promotes research and marketing opportunities for Oregon food and agricultural products. Ecotrust also recently launched FoodHub, a searchable online database of food producers and food buyers of all scales in and beyond the Portland region. Almost 350 buyers and sellers have already joined the network and are able to make connections across the regional food system.

Objective Theme 14: Local and Regional Food Products and Producers

One way to increase the connections between producers and consumers is to create new and diverse avenues for the two to meet and do business. Direct marketing is the term used to describe when producers sell products directly to consumers. The rate of direct marketing of farm products to consumers has been increasing nationwide for the past twenty years. Direct marketing, whether through farm stands, farmers' markets, or Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations, offers a farmer, producer, or entrepreneur the opportunity to capture more of the retail price of her product than she would if she sold to a distributor or manufacturer.

Beyond the economic benefits of a vibrant local food system are tangible benefits to the consumer and the environment. Direct marketing venues provide access to just-picked fruits and vegetables and reduce the distance food travels from field to fork. They can also help overcome the traditional urban-rural divide and often create a festive, community-building environment where consumers get to know their farmers, as well as how their food is grown and raised.



For consumers who want to buy direct from the farm, the Tri-County Farm-Fresh Produce Guide lists 12 farms in Multnomah County, six of which are located on Sauvie Island. Member-farms who joined the network since 1991 must show that at least 50% of their total sales come from produce grown within Multnomah, Washington, or Clackamas counties.

Multnomah County has approximately 21 farmers markets,¹³² 47 CSAs¹³³ and 12 farm stands.¹³⁴ While the number of farmers' markets and CSAs has grown quickly in recent years, overall they still represent a very small proportion of county spending on fresh produce. A study of farmers' markets commissioned by the City of Portland calculated that the current market share for fresh produce purchased in Multnomah County at Portland farmers' markets was about 3%. The report explores increasing this share substantially, making the case that a 10% capture rate would be possible, resulting in sales of produce at farmers' markets growing from just over \$5 million to almost \$19 million.¹³⁵ Their analysis finds there is capacity to increase the number of markets, potentially drawing from new, smaller, urban farms.

The City of Portland has created a map of farmers' markets within city boundaries.¹³⁶ The map indicates there are still areas of the city where people do not have access to a farmers' market within two miles. There are even more underserved areas when the entire county is included, though some of these areas have low population density. However, changes are happening fast in the three underserved areas noted in the farmers' market report. In the summer of 2009, new farmers' markets opened in the St. Johns and NE King neighborhoods. In September 2009, an experimental mobile market opened in the NE Cully neighborhood with leadership from the Hollywood Farmers' Market.

Additional Resources:

- Barney & Worth, Inc., "Growing Portland's Farmers Markets: Portland Farmers Markets/Direct-Market Economic Analysis," prepared for the City of Portland, November 2008. <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=49940>
- Rhoads, Amanda for City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, "Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems," Fall 2009. Section on Direct Marketing, page 41. <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?c=51427&a=273154>
- Ecotrust's FoodHub. <http://food-hub.org>

Objective Theme 15: Farm-to-School and Institutional Purchasing¹³⁷

Large institutions such as schools, governments, hospitals, universities, prisons, and corporations often purchase large quantities of food for sale or use by their employees or clients. Shifting these purchases to allow preference for buying food that was grown or produced locally and/or sustainably can benefit both the nutritional value of the food and the amount of fossil fuel used to grow and transport it.

Furthermore, the economic benefits of a local institutional purchasing model are numerous. Dollars directed towards supporting the regional food system stay in the local



economy rather than being exported. A pilot study conducted by Ecotrust found that for every dollar spent on local food in farm to school programs earned a 184% return on investment¹³⁸ (\$1 = \$1.84).

In 2004, the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council commissioned a study that interviewed producers, distributors, processors, and institutions on the subject of institutional purchasing.¹³⁹ The resulting paper cited the following six key issues that must be addressed in order to increase institutional purchasing of local products (see report for more details):

1. **Demand:** Demand for local products, either from the end consumer or from the institution, could clear the path for increased local purchases.
2. **Connections through Distributors:** Institutions take part in the consolidated food service industry and in that system distributors hold the key to what products are available and how much producers are paid.
3. **Connections with Producers:** Buying directly from farmers or producers was seen as an opportunity to increase local purchases.
4. **Contracts, Bidding Specifications, and Prime Vendor Agreements:** These often provide guidelines, requirements or restrictions on purchasing decisions, which could limit access to local goods; conversely, institutions can use bidding specifications to encourage or require increases in local purchases.
5. **Lack of Information about Sustainability:** Assessing producers' sustainability practices and validating information can be time-consuming and there are not many third-party certifying agencies like Food Alliance to provide objective and comparable information.
6. **Price:** This is one of the most important factors in purchasing decisions by both institutions and distributors, but it was not clearly considered either a barrier or an opportunity. The report, written in 2003, concluded that additional research was necessary to determine price's role in buying additional local products.¹⁴⁰

Until recently, Oregon state and local government agencies were prohibited from enacting preferential policies favoring local products if they cost more than other options. Multnomah County drafted a bill passed by the 2009 Oregon legislature allowing public contracting agencies discretion to allocate up to a 10% premium for local food. A written determination is required for allocations that go beyond the 10% premium. According to this bill, each public agency writes their own rules about what is defined as a "local" product.

In 2005, with support from the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council, Multnomah County conducted a pilot project in its correctional system to purchase fresh, in-season produce. After the pilot, Multnomah County Corrections developed a comprehensive sustainable purchasing policy and included sustainability criteria in their call for proposals for a 5-year food service contract.

Farm-to-School

Oregon's K-12 schools offer another significant opportunity to increase the purchase of local food products through public institutions. Portland Public Schools alone provide 1,300 breakfasts and 21,000 lunches each school day. The National School Lunch Program, which supports school food programs across the country, recently passed legislation supporting the purchase of regionally produced foods. However, the price margins for school food are

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extremely narrow. For example, in the 2009-10 school year, each lunch given to a child who qualifies for the free and reduced price lunch program is reimbursed at a rate of only \$2.70, a figure that does not increase when food prices go up.

The Oregon legislature recently approved funds to hire a Farm-to-School coordinator through the Oregon Department of Education. The Oregon Department of Agriculture has also funded a similar position. Both farm-to-school and school gardening programs for students have been demonstrated to:¹⁴¹

- Increase children's participation in the school meals program and consumption of fruits and vegetables, thereby improving childhood nutrition, reducing hunger and preventing obesity and obesity-related diseases
- Improve children's and the communities' knowledge about, and attitudes toward, agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment
- Increase market opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers
- Support economic development
- Because these programs decrease the distance between producers and consumers, they promote food security while reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and reliance on oil.

Study Shows Economic Impacts of Local Purchasing

A recent program led by Ecotrust and funded through the Kaiser Permanente Community Fund increased local food purchases in the Portland Public and Gervais school districts. By providing an additional seven cents per meal toward the purchase of local products, the school districts were able to reduce the price gap between menu items from local farmers and processors, and those available from national distributors.

The project included an economic analysis of its impacts. The analysis found that each school food dollar used for in-state purchases generated an additional 84 cents in economic activity within Oregon: through consumer purchasing, wages and reinvestments in the food processing/production facilities. Bruce Sorte, a former community economist with Oregon State University Extension, notes that an economic multiplier of 1.84 is high, considering that typically a dollar spent on a product or service in today's economy triggers only about 50 to 60 cents worth of additional economic activity.¹⁴²

Additional Resources:

- Pierson, Teri, "Barriers and Opportunities to the Use of Regional and Sustainable Food Products by Local Institutions," 2004. A Report to Community Food Matters and the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42829&a=116839>
- Adair, Tonya, et. al., "The Spork Report: Increasing the Supply and Consumption of Local Foods in Portland Public Schools," prepared for the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council, June 2005. <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42794&a=116851>
- Anderson, Lisa, et. al., "Local Lunches: Planning for Local Produce in Portland Schools," Portland State University Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies & Planning, June 2006. <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42829&a=123023>
<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42829&a=123022>



- Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems and Practice Greenhealth, “Green Guide for Health Care-Operations Version 2.2 Second Public Comment Draft,” December 2008. Chapter on Food Service.
<http://www.gghc.org/>

Objective Theme 16: Local Supply Chain Capacity (Locally owned and operated processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling facilities)

The focus of this section is on the development of regionally owned and operated processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling facilities that are efficient, ecologically sound, and safe. Food processing and food waste recycling are highlighted below.

Food Processing

Food processing is an extremely important part of the food system.¹⁴³ Currently, highly industrialized, large-scale companies do most of the food processing in the U.S. In Oregon, we have both large companies like Con-Agra and Del Monte, as well as smaller processors like the Hood River Juice Co., Kettle Foods and Scenic Fruit Company.

In the Portland metro area, over 8,000 people are employed in the food-manufacturing sector. Portland is home to the Northwest Food Processors Association (NWFPA), which has more than 450 member companies (processors and suppliers) including 86 food processors with nearly 200 production facilities throughout the Northwest (Oregon, Washington, Idaho). Its members are primarily fruit and vegetable processors but membership has expanded over the past several years to include seafood, dairy, bakeries, specialty, and fresh-cut. NWFPA states that the Northwest food processing industry is a \$17 billion industry, which employs over 100,000 people in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Local processors are interested in taking a more active role in the “buy local” trend: “The bright spot for Oregon and Washington farmers is the number of processors that are marketing their products as produced from local food sources. These processors are responding to consumers who value supporting the economic vitality of local farmers.”¹⁴⁴

Processing in Energy-Constrained Times

The Peak Oil Task Force stressed the importance of local processing facilities, and surmised that increasing transportation costs would make out-of-state processing less viable.¹⁴⁵ Other shifts in the processing industry due to peak oil include the following:

- The foods available could shift based on which crops require fewer inputs, meaning that the processing industry will need to be ready to accept those crops
- The methods of processing could shift from refrigeration and freezing to those that require no additional energy inputs: canning, drying, curing, etc.



- Scale changes might be required due to new cost structures, with some existing infrastructure stranded due to energy inputs required to use it.

Food Waste Recycling

In 2002, food waste made up 16% of the total waste stream for the Portland region and accounts for nearly 190,000 tons.¹⁴⁶ Both Metro and the City of Portland work to reduce this amount by keeping food waste out of the waste stream.

The Oregon Food Bank collaborated with Metro in the mid-1990s to start Harvest Share, a program to divert edible fresh produce from the waste stream to emergency food providers. Metro went further with its Fork It Over! program, keeping prepared, perishable surplus food from entering the waste stream by connecting coffee shops, caterers, restaurants, and institutions with food donation sites near them. Grants to food banks to increase storage and transportation capacity were also part of the program start-up. The program now diverts 9,000 tons of food from the waste stream annually.¹⁴⁷

Metro also collaborates with the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability on the Portland Composts! program. Businesses can compost their food waste in much the same way recyclables are collected. Around 200 businesses have signed up to date.¹⁴⁸ The Portland Recycles! Plan adopted in 2008 calls for expanding food composting to residences to coincide with the construction of a local composting facility by 2015.

Additional Resources:

- Integrity Systems Cooperative Co., “Adding Values to Our Food System: An Economic Analysis of Sustainable Community Food Systems,” prepared for United States Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program, February, 1997. <http://www.ibiblio.org/farming-connection/foodsys/addval.htm#summaryD>
- Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, “Values-Based Food Supply Chains: Strategies for Agri-Food Enterprises-of-the-Middle.” <http://www.agofthemiddle.org/papers/valuechain.pdf>



Case Studies

Processes, Outcomes, Best Practices, Lessons Learned

In preparation for the Multnomah Food Summit in May 2010, the Multnomah Food Initiative staff and Steering Committee conducted research to learn from other communities who have undergone the process of creating a shared vision and community-wide action plan. While we found many great examples of food related projects and initiatives emerging around the country and the world, three food system action plans stood out as successful models that addressed issues relevant to Multnomah County and used processes which could be aptly applied in our community.

- Spade to Spoon: Brighton and Hove, UK (2006)
- Atlanta Local Food Initiative: Atlanta, GA (2008)
- Homegrown Minneapolis: Minneapolis, MN (2009)

This chapter includes summaries of three case studies that we used to model our own planning and development process. These case studies provide context for the work ahead, situate our efforts in the experiences of others, illustrate an action planning process from beginning to end, and inspire creative ideas that can be used to shape the form and content of our own visions and action plan. They also offer insight onto the different stages of development over time.

Methodology

In addition to online research and review of publicly available information, we contacted leaders of these projects to get a more complete picture of their processes, outcomes, best practices, lessons learned, and some of the strategies that helped them overcome challenges. There were certain aspects of each plan we were interested in learning more about. Generally, we asked questions related to the following processes:

- 1) Developing a framework with measurable objectives and actions, community accountability, and indicators linked to existing data sources
- 2) Planning food summit logistics, creating an agenda, and identifying desired outcomes
- 3) Engaging the community in dialogue and action
- 4) Establishing public-private partnerships and designating roles and responsibilities
- 5) Creating an organizational structure for advisory boards, workgroups, and steering committees
- 6) Identifying long-term outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices



Case Study Models

Spade to Spoon

The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership works across the community to strengthen the growth and development of a localized food system which promotes social equity, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, global fair-trade and the health and well-being of all residents.

It aims to develop an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to food policy, which links initiatives within public health, environmental sustainability, community development, education, agriculture, cultural and economic development, waste management, urban planning/land use and tourism.¹⁴⁹

Spade to Spoon is the oldest example of a visioning and action-planning process included in this report. Its development process spans an eight-year period. The Brighton and Hove City Sustainability Commission and Primary Care Trust held a food conference in April 2003 bringing together over 120 people interested in food system issues to discuss the formation of a food partnership. The conference gave rise to the Spade to Spoon mission statement and provided a framework for the food strategy and action plan.

Through a community-wide planning process, the Spade to Spoon plan was built around the vision and aims of the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). BHFP members are drawn from the food, health, environment, economic, and statutory (non-profit) sectors who work together to encourage a more sustainable food system throughout Brighton and Hove. Spade to Spoon is unique from others that we reviewed in that partners are not only accountable to the implementation of the action plan as a whole, but have designated roles and are responsible for accomplishing specific aims and objectives.

We communicated with Clare Devereux, Policy Director of Food Matters, to find out more about their processes, long-term outcomes, lessons learned since the plan's development, whether and how the aims and objectives have changed since the plan was developed four years ago in 2006. We were particularly interested in learning about the specific processes used to develop the aims and objectives. Ms. Devereux shared with us that the development of the action plan was based on participatory appraisal tools and techniques, which gave everyone an equal voice to contribute to the decision making process.

We were also interested in learning more about the development of the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership and the process of designating roles and responsibilities to specific organizations and government offices. The development of the food strategy and action plan included bringing together key statutory (non-profit) agencies, community and commercial interests to achieve a wide consultation process. Ms. Devereux told us the success of the strategy and its implementation depends on shared ownership by all stakeholders working on food and related issues across the city, as well as the wider community.

They established an Advisory Group to bring an oversight to their work. The Advisory Group was drawn from all sectors of the city, particularly those responsible for taking



identified action points forward. One of their greatest achievements is founding Food Matters, a non-profit organization supporting others in achieving the aims and objectives laid out in the Spade to Spoon plan. It currently employs 15 people and has a yearly budget of nearly one million pounds sterling.

Atlanta Local Food Initiative

The Atlanta Local Food Initiative (ALFI) is a network that joins individuals, corporations, nonprofits, universities, and governmental agencies to build a local food system that enhances human health, promotes environmental renewal, fosters local economies, and links rural and urban communities.

The Atlanta Local Food Initiative envisions a transformed food system in which every Atlantan has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food produced by a thriving network of sustainable farms and gardens. A greener Metro Atlanta that embraces a sustainable, local food system will enhance human health, promote environmental renewal, foster local economies, and link rural and urban communities.¹⁵⁰

In 2005, a group of interested citizens and organizations began a dialogue to create a more sustainable food system for Metro Atlanta. The group held a statewide Food Conference in June 2005, convening over eighty-five participants who joined together with experts from around the country to learn about local food efforts. The Atlanta Local Food Initiative (ALFI) was formed after the summit and is now led by a Steering Committee consisting of individuals from nearly forty organizations representing the diversity and complexity of food system issues. The ALFI Committee focuses on actions that keep the network strong and growing, increase the visibility and clarity of their message, and contribute resources to further the ALFI mission and goals.

Through a community-wide planning process, the ALFI Committee published “A Plan for Atlanta’s Sustainable Food Future” in summer 2008. The five-year plan proposes the Atlanta community focus on eight key goals to increase supply, improve consumption, and afford access to healthy, sustainable, and locally produced foods. ALFI held a second Food Conference in May 2009 to strengthen the ALFI partnership, increase their visibility within the community, and engage new members.

We communicated with Alice Rolls, the Executive Director of Georgia Organics, a lead ALFI partner, to learn more about their planning and implementation processes, best practices, lessons learned, and outcomes since the plan was developed in 2008. We were particularly interested in learning about the development of their goal framework. The ALFI plan includes eight goals organized into three categories: Supply, Consumption, and Access. Each goal is clear, concise, and actionable; the associated objectives are detailed, yet straightforward. The organization of goals and objectives into three broad categories facilitates food system work in a way that creates distinction between, and connection among, complex issues.

We also wanted to learn more about the process of establishing the ALFI Committee as a public-private partnership. Ms. Rolls explained the Steering Committee maintains an open door policy and creates a welcoming atmosphere. The meeting location rotates as each



member organization takes turns hosting the group and providing food. Members are committed to the process and accomplishment of goals and feel that their participation in ALFI creates synergy through collective action. Such commitment has sustained a robust partnership.

Ms. Rolls and other members feel they are able to accomplish more together than they can alone by leveraging efforts to mutually benefit ALFI and individual organizations. However, while ALFI partners make a commitment to carrying out goals and objectives, they have a limited capacity for implementation. ALFI is what Ms. Rolls calls an “instigator,” supporting organizations and galvanizing buy-in and support for their shared vision and goals. ALFI does not designate roles and responsibilities to specific organizations or government offices.

Homegrown Minneapolis

Homegrown Minneapolis is built on the idea that a strong local food system can positively impact the health, food security, economy and environment of our city and the surrounding region. The City of Minneapolis can play an important role in this process by supporting residents’ efforts to grow, sell, distribute, and consume more fresh, sustainably produced and locally grown foods.

Homegrown Minneapolis is an initiative to improve the growth, sales, distribution and consumption of fresh, locally grown foods in order to positively impact the health, food security, economy and environment of the city and the surrounding region.¹⁵¹

Homegrown Minneapolis demonstrates an alternative public engagement and community input process. Rather than holding a food summit or conference to initiate action planning, Homegrown Minneapolis began by engaging people in workgroups and developing recommendations. Over 100 stakeholders, organized into four subcommittees, met regularly from January 2009 to April 2009 to develop recommendations related to four key areas: 1) Farmers’ Markets, 2) Community, School, and Home Gardens, 3) Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture, and 4) Commercial Use of Local Foods. A tremendous effort by each subcommittee resulted in 72 recommendations and 146 detailed action steps, which appear as appendices in the full report.

The draft recommendations were made available to the public on the Homegrown Minneapolis website and community input was incorporated into the plan’s final recommendations. Community members were also invited to attend two Homegrown Minneapolis public meetings to learn about the initiative, talk about their barriers to accessing healthful food, review the draft recommendations, and offer feedback. More than 110 partners who were involved in the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative since December 2008 were invited to a Stakeholder meeting in May 2009 to closely examine the draft recommendations and offer any final suggestions or comments before the plan was published.

We communicated with Kristen Klingler, Homegrown Minneapolis Coordinator, to find out more about their planning and implementation processes, best practices, and lessons learned. Homegrown Minneapolis was published in June 2009 and represents the most



recently developed plan included in this report. Ms. Klingler's response to our questions was especially useful because she clearly recalls the initial stages of development.

We wanted to learn more about their organizational structure and the relationship between the Stakeholder Group, Subcommittee Workgroups, and the Steering Committee. Ms. Klingler explained the Stakeholder Group was comprised of over 100 partners representing the City of Minneapolis, schools, parks, local businesses, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, community members, and other organizations. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to self-select into one of the four subcommittees. Each subcommittee was co-chaired by a City staff member and a community expert. The purpose of the Stakeholder Group was to bring together key partners to share ideas and facilitate connections between those involved in the local food system.

Leading the initiative was a Steering Committee, comprised of 17 members including three tri-chairs from the community, the co-chairs of each of the four subcommittees, and additional City staff. The purpose of the Steering Committee was to gather input from the Stakeholder Group and the broader community, guide the subcommittees in developing specific recommendations, compile and synthesize the final report and recommendations. The community engagement process began by inviting individuals and organizations who were working on local food issues to join the Stakeholder Group. From the beginning, participation in the initiative was open to all community members. However, as they discovered, this did not necessarily ensure equal representation. Halfway through the first phase of the initiative, they realized that their Stakeholder Group and subcommittee members were mostly middle/upper class Caucasians. To create greater diversity of people and perspectives, they specifically reached out to community leaders who were connected with communities of color. Although, as Ms. Klingler shared with us, it was difficult to get equal representation and is something they still struggle to balance and achieve.

In an effort to make stakeholder meetings accessible to as many people possible, meetings were held at various times of the day and located in places out in the community (as opposed to downtown in City Hall or other city buildings). They tried to make the meetings action oriented so partners felt they were accomplishing something tangible and not just meeting to meet. They reached out to underrepresented groups by hosting two community meetings in geographically underserved areas. They also gave presentations on the initiative to community groups such as the Hispanic Health Network and the Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota.

Public comments were reviewed and incorporated into the final recommendations. Klingler told us that the main change they made based on the public comments had to do with the idea of equity and social justice. A few groups submitted comments asking that the recommendations be worded more strongly in support of creating an equitable food system for all people of Minneapolis, specifically communities of color, immigrant, limited English proficiency, and low-income populations, and low-income residents. As a result, they revised some recommendations to include this type of language and incorporated equity throughout the narrative section of the final report.



We were also interested in how the Steering Committee decided on the four key issues the subcommittees formed around. Ms. Klingler explained that the initiation of Homegrown Minneapolis was due, at least in part, to the Mayor's interest in supporting the farmers' markets within the city. She said the Mayor has been a long time advocate for the markets and wanted to find out how the City could support their growth and success. The Steering Committee decided therefore that one of the subcommittees would focus on farmers' markets. In thinking about other "topical" areas groups could form around, they decided to create a subcommittee focused on community, school, and home gardens. They also knew the city's new Green Jobs initiative would complement urban agriculture, so they created the Small Enterprise Urban Agriculture subcommittee to focus on small business opportunities related to growing and processing food. Ms. Klingler said their fourth workgroup, Commercial Use of Local Foods, rounded out the issues covered by subcommittees.

Ms. Klingler reflected that the four Homegrown Minneapolis subcommittees represent only one of many ways to organize people and divide work. She also said throughout the planning process, they often wished they had additional or different subcommittees. For example, one on Food Equity since racial and social justice issues came up regularly in conversations. Another option they see now is forming subcommittees based on the components of a local food system. For example, subcommittees focused on food production, processing, aggregation and distribution, and waste disposal.

Developing the Multnomah Food Initiative

Each case study significantly influenced our planning process, preparation for the food summit, and development of a draft framework. All three plans involve public-private partnerships among stakeholders and were developed through a community-wide engagement process. We gained perspective by utilizing case studies to collectively demonstrate the development of action plans over time. We also see differences in the implementation of each action plan depending on the partnership model that was employed.

We are grateful for our interactions with other communities, as their contribution to our process was invaluable. We benefitted from their forward thinking in the emerging field of food system planning.

The main elements drawn from case study research are as follows:

- Development of a public-private partnership
- Framework organized by broad and inclusive categories, rather than specific and topical
- Inclusion of social equity and economic vitality as action areas
- Steering Committee members that represent the diversity and complexity of food system issues
- Steering Committee members who can increase the depth and breadth of community engagement
- Food summit capitalizing on civic energy generated by discussions of food and galvanizing support and interest in food system issues
- Food summit geared toward food system practitioners but open to the participation of all community members



The draft Multnomah Food Initiative framework is modeled after the ALFI plan's clear and concise goals and the organization of objectives into three broad categories:

- Supply
- Consumption
- Access

In the process of developing this framework, our communication with Homegrown Minneapolis solidified our decision to use broad categories, rather than topical areas, to organize the goals and objectives to be drafted by the community during the action-plan development phase. Our decision to create separate categories for Social Equity and Economic Vitality was also based on the Homegrown Minneapolis case study, as they found that racial and social justice issues came up regularly in conversations.

Using the ALFI framework as a guide, and the lessons we learned through our communication with Homegrown Minneapolis, the draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework focuses on four action areas:

1. Local Food (supply/production)
2. Healthy Eating (demand/consumption)
3. Social Equity
4. Economic Vitality



Draft Framework Based on Local Recommendations

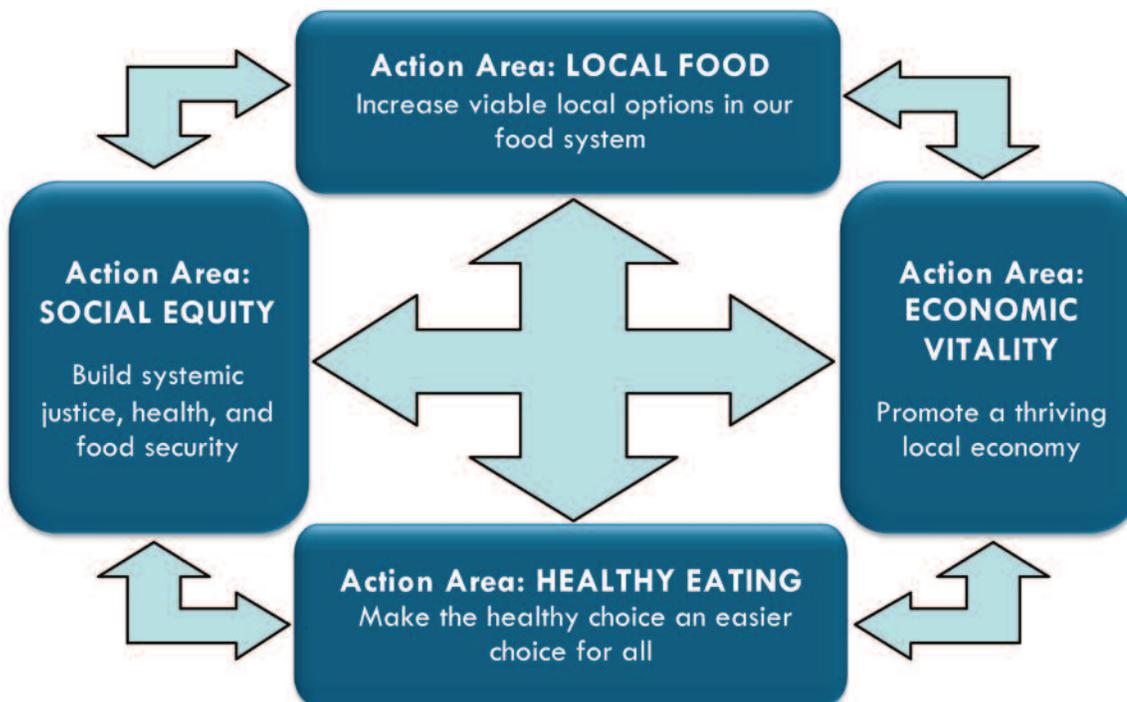
In addition to case study research, we conducted background research to compile and synthesize previous local work around food system issues, build upon existing efforts, and recognize the tremendous amount of effort being made in our community to create a sustainable, healthy, and equitable food system.

Draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework

From the analysis of local recommendations and case study findings, the draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework was developed around four action areas:

1. Local Food
2. Healthy Eating
3. Social Equity
4. Economic Vitality

The graphic below represents the draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework that will be used to guide the discussion of our local food system. This draft framework represents a big picture look at the food system and is intended to be used as a foundation and starting point for the development of a community food action plan. At the summit, we will facilitate roundtable discussions to examine and build consensus around the components of a framework to develop a long-term, strategic action plan.





We began the process of creating a framework by compiling regional reports that included food system related assessments and recommendations. By reviewing and synthesizing local recommendations, we identified the key issues and community needs. This process also allowed us to identify gaps, or the issues and needs not addressed in the reports we reviewed.

For consistency and ease of reading, we created a summary of each report we reviewed. Information about each report includes when the report was written and by whom, the purpose and goals of the report, recommendations, major findings, and next steps.

1. Barriers & Opportunities to the Use of Regional and Sustainable Food Products by Local Institutions (2003)
2. Descending the Oil Peak (2007)
3. Diggable City, Phase I (2005)
4. Diggable City, Phase II (2006)
5. Diggable City, Phase III (2007)
6. Everyone Eats! Community Food Assessment of N/NE Portland, OR (2007)
7. Foodability Report (2009)
8. Local Lunches (2006)
9. Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative (2009)
10. Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health (2008)
11. Portland Plan Background Report: Food Systems (2009)
12. Portland/Multnomah Climate Action Plan (2009)
13. Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council Recommendations (2003)
14. Public Involvement Task Force Report (2006)
15. Spork Report (2005)
16. visionPDX Community Engagement Report (2007)

Following Through with Identified Next Steps

Portland State University's Institute of Metropolitan Studies published the Planting Prosperity and Harvesting Health report in 2008. It has served as a foundational document, significantly contributing to the development of this report. In addition to providing a comprehensive assessment of the regional food system, it identifies indicators that can be used to establish a baseline and measure our future progress. The authors also identify important next steps, which have influenced the development of the Multnomah Food Initiative and determined our course of action.

Nourishing the Seeds of Prosperity

Collaboration, research, market connection programs, and new policies already have planted the seeds of regional prosperity. The strategies suggested by the stakeholders participating in this assessment process suggest that maintaining our current commitment and establishing new initiatives will help ensure a sustainable food system. They believe that effective change requires improving connections and communication among different sectors.¹⁵²



Identified Next Steps¹⁵³

1. Draft a regional strategic food system action plan
2. Convene an Oregon and Washington Food Policy Council
3. Incorporate food system issues into land use, transportation, public health, and economic development planning

Macro-level Conditions

This chapter also identifies macro-level conditions that facilitate actions for creating a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system. The identification of these conditions was based upon a synthesis and analysis of local food system reports and recommendations, stakeholder interviews, and case studies. The identified macro-level needs for a healthy, sustainable, and equitable local food system include:

- Shared community vision
- Shared goals
- Strategic planning
- Coordinated constituency

City of Portland's visionPDX project and the Spade to Spoon Food Strategy and Action Plan identify best practices, lessons learned, and provide guidance on establishing these macro-level conditions.

visionPDX: Lessons Learned on Community Visioning

- Be clear about the purpose of visioning: Community visioning is both a process and a product. Creating a vision gives residents the opportunity to express what they value about their community and to develop a consensus on what they would like to change or preserve. A vision provides a compass and a road map for policy makers to follow.¹⁵⁴
- Engage communities early and often: Start and finish as many engagement and stakeholder interviews as possible before your larger community engagement phase commences in order to incorporate suggestions. Sequencing them in this way provides your project with even more information to better engage community members and build relationships once you begin outreach to the broader community.¹⁵⁵
- Look for ways to collaborate: Continue to expand the number of people and organizations that are involved in the vision and subsequent actions so that the work may be sustained and expanded.¹⁵⁶
- Remember that visioning is continuous: Every time a community responds to change, it has a chance to incorporate the values expressed by the community through the vision.¹⁵⁷

Spade to Spoon: Implementing a Food Strategy and Action Plan

1. Provide networking opportunities and exchange of information, support and advice for individuals and organizations working on food initiatives, in order to build skills and capacity, and to encourage linkage between diverse sectors¹⁵⁸
 - Develop the Food Partnership into a focus for advice and support for all sectors of the food community



- Encourage sharing, exchange and linked working across diverse sectors
 - Increase employment opportunities through building capacity and skills within different sectors of the local food system
2. Lobby Governmental agencies at local, regional and national levels, run local campaigns within the city and influence policy and planning decisions, in order to further the aims of the Partnership¹⁵⁹
- Raise awareness amongst policy makers, of the inter-dependence of food, the economy, health and the environment
 - Ensure local plans and other strategies include relevant food work in the city and particularly the food strategy and action plan
3. Provide a policy forum to initiate research, publications and activities that encourage the exchange of ideas both within the city and beyond and to inform, and be kept informed, or emerging trends in local and global food policy¹⁶⁰
- Provide an evidence base for work on food issues within the city
 - Develop innovative and creative solutions to problems created by the current food system
 - Share best practice with similar projects around the country and internationally

Draft Action Plan Framework Based on Local Recommendations

The draft Multnomah Food Initiative Action Plan Framework was developed to synthesize and organize local recommendations. Divided into the four action areas (Local Food, Healthy Eating, Social Equity, Economic Vitality), local recommendations are organized by the 16 objective themes outlined in table 1. The draft Action Plans are designed to be used as a starting point for the creation of a food system plan built upon recommended actions identified by our community thus far.

The objective themes within each action area are based on “Whole Measures for Community Food Systems” created by the Center for Whole Communities and Community Food Security Coalition.¹⁶¹ Using Whole Measures as a guide, the objective themes are values-based practices geared toward organizational and community change. They can also be seen as desired outcomes to be realized through the creation of a shared vision and collaborative food system action plan.

The recommendations included in the Draft Action Plans are examples of actions to be potentially included in the final plan created by workgroups. The reports we drew from to create the frameworks were written at different points along our regional food system history, focus on various aspects of the food system, and include varying geographic extents. Some of the recommended actions have already been accomplished, some are no longer relevant or timely, and others should be rewritten to focus on Multnomah County and encompass the regional food system. There are undoubtedly important actions yet to be recommended by the community in a formal document. We are also sure some less visible, yet valuable, documents were not included in this report.



Table 1:

Draft Multnomah Food Initiative Framework:

The Multnomah Food Initiative is an innovative partnership between community organizations, businesses, and local governments to promote a more sustainable, equitable and healthy local food system.

Through a shared vision and collaborative action plan, we will ...

Local Food	Healthy Eating	Social Equity	Economic Vitality
Increase viable local options in our food system	Make the healthy choice an easier choice for all	Build systemic justice, health, and food security	Promote a thriving local economy
OBJECTIVE THEMES:	OBJECTIVE THEMES:	OBJECTIVE THEMES:	OBJECTIVE THEMES:
<p>1. Maintain the Agricultural Land Base</p> <p>Protect the Urban Growth Boundary and maintain the acreage and integrity of agricultural land including rural farmland, urban farms, gardens, and orchards.</p> <p>2. Support Small- and Mid-Scale Farming Ventures</p> <p>Offer an economically viable alternative to the global agricultural food system by decreasing regulatory barriers, providing training and technical support for small and mid-scale farmers, strengthening local distribution and processing capacity, and increasing farmers' and producers' access to land, capital, and direct-market opportunities.</p> <p>3. Increase Urban Food Production</p> <p>Build increased capacity and equity around access to land and resources needed for community and personal food production, which is integral to quality of urban life and critical as an urban amenity, and commit resources to teach people of all ages the skills and knowledge essential to grow, prepare, and preserve nutritious foods.</p> <p>4. Encourage Environmental Resource Stewardship</p> <p>Sustain and grow a healthy environment by promoting agricultural and food distribution practices that mitigate climate change, regenerate outputs (wastes) into inputs (resources), and enhance biodiversity through the protection and improvement of soil, water, air, and seed quality and quantity, which are essential for meeting long-term community food needs.</p>	<p>5. Apply Systemic Solutions to Create Healthy Food Environments</p> <p>Utilize a broad range of systems-based tools including environmental change strategies, public investment, land use planning, and policy that promote active lifestyles and create healthy food environments where people live, work, play, and learn.</p> <p>6. Increase Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food</p> <p>Improve community food security, reduce hunger, and enhance health by decreasing the prevalence of unhealthful food outlets and increasing the availability, affordability, and accessibility of healthy, culturally appropriate food options within neighborhoods.</p> <p>7. Promote Individual and Community Health by Encouraging Healthy Food Choices</p> <p>Promote the health and well-being of all county residents and slow and reverse rates of chronic diseases and obesity by decreasing the consumption of unhealthy foods and encouraging food choices that support personal and community health.</p> <p>8. Provide Education and Increase Access to Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs</p> <p>Expand access to federal and state food and nutrition programs for low-income people, increase acceptance and use of SNAP and WIC vouchers through direct-market channels (farmers' markets, CSAs, farm stands, etc.), and improve the ability of low-income people to become self-sufficient.</p>	<p>9. Address the Systemic Roots of Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Injustice</p> <p>Reveal, challenge, and dismantle injustice in the food system, including social determinants of health and food security, and ensure that public institutions and local businesses support a just community food system.</p> <p>10. Increase Self-Sufficiency and Community Resilience</p> <p>Ensure that all individuals have the tools and resources they need to make healthful food and lifestyle choices and support community resilience to social and environmental threats such as food insecurity, disease, fuel and energy shortages and costs.</p> <p>11. Facilitate Equitable Community Participation and Decision-Making</p> <p>Give voice to traditionally underrepresented communities, involve a broad range of community members in defining and supporting food-related goals, and build capacity for community control of food resources and assets.</p> <p>12. Create Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers</p> <p>Create just food system structures, protect farmers and farm workers' rights, and uphold the dignity and quality of life for all who work in the food system through living wages, health care, and safe working conditions.</p>	<p>13. Develop the Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure</p> <p>Support and invest in community-based enterprise development, provide economic support structures for the next generation of food entrepreneurs, encourage business incubator programs for community members, youth, and food-insecure individuals that develop skills and cultivate ownership.</p> <p>14. Promote Local and Regional Food Products and Producers</p> <p>Promote regional, sustainably grown agricultural and food products, support regional food businesses that contribute to a healthy food system, and encourage a range of diverse and resilient connections within the regional food system.</p> <p>15. Encourage Farm-to-School and Institutional Purchasing that Support the Regional Food System</p> <p>Ensure that schools and other public institutions (hospitals, jails, public universities) serve healthy, sustainably produced food and develop institutional purchasing guidelines and incentives that allow preference for food from local farms and businesses.</p> <p>16. Increase Local Supply Chain Capacity (processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling facilities)</p> <p>Create local jobs and build long-term economic vitality within the food system by encouraging the development of regionally owned and operated processing, distribution, storage, and waste recycling facilities that are efficient, ecologically sound, and safe.</p>



Conclusion

A vibrant and diverse local food system is an integral component of a sustainable and resilient community. Food is a basic necessity, a celebration, and a powerful medium through which sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities can be created. Food is common to all human beings; it crosses borders, creates community, and allows us to share elements of our diverse cultures. By reconnecting food to soil and sun, and producer to consumer through a food system based on principles of environmental and social justice, a new future can be envisioned for Multnomah County and the Portland Metropolitan region.

Multnomah County policymakers have proclaimed that all community members should have access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, locally and sustainably grown food. Planning for this outcome is critical. Our region has transportation plans, land use plans, climate action plans, and economic development strategies. The time has come to develop a food system strategy and action plan to protect and enhance our food system.

All stakeholders have a voice in the future of our food system --- every eater, backyard gardener, urban and rural farmer, food processor and distributor, emergency food provider, restaurant, grocer, and market vendor. Creating a shared vision and goals among stakeholders through collaborative action is critical for making effective change in food system policy and programs.

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