



Portland Multnomah County Food Policy Council 2005 Highlights



Portland Multnomah County Food Policy Council

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council (FPC) achieved many successes over the past year as the group pursued a collaborative, community vision of healthy and sustainable food for all. Created in 2002 by the City of Portland and Multnomah County, the FPC is a citizen advisory panel that provides guidance to the City Council and County Commission on food policy.

Comprising 14 business and community leaders with expertise spanning restaurants, farming, hunger relief, land use, and community education, the FPC added four new members during 2005. With the encouragement and support of the FPC, Portland City Council approved funding for a full-time position in the Office of Sustainable Development to work on sustainable food policy and programs. Multnomah County continues to provide staffing support to the FPC through two programs: the Multnomah County Sustainability Initiative in the Department of County Management, and the Chronic Disease Prevention Program in the Health Department.



Community Food Planning

Only through systematic planning, at both the neighborhood and regional levels, can we ensure that residents have access to healthy food.

Lents Project

In 2005, the FPC continued to build on the community food assessment and market basket survey completed in the Lents neighborhood in 2004 to determine whether residents were food insecure and, if so, how gaps in the neighborhood's access to food could be addressed. The assessment found that, although residents were satisfied with the grocery stores in their neighborhood, many of them nevertheless experienced food insecurity (not being sure where their next meal was coming from). Those surveyed indicated that they wanted to learn more about buying and preparing fresh food, growing their own food and shopping at a nearby farmers market.

The FPC was part of a collaborative effort to support a grant application submitted by Active Living by Design to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Eating by Design program (HEbD). The application was successful, and under this program, the FPC, along with Growing Gardens, Friends of Zenger Farms, and Wattles Boys & Girls Club, worked in Lents to provide home gardens, cooking classes for youth and adults, and a children's summer camp at Zenger Farm. The funding was also used to assist the Lents Food Group, a new community group spawned by the community food assessment, and plan for the Lents International Farmers Market. Under the HEbD program, the FPC is working with government agencies and community partners to determine how to replicate this pilot food assessment project in other Portland neighborhoods, with the aim of reducing the region's hunger and food insecurity. The Lents HEbD team recently received a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation award as its most effective community-based project in the country.

School and Institutional Purchasing

Local food is fresher, more flavorful, conserves fossil fuels, supports small farms, and keeps more of our dollars in the local economy.

The Spork Report

The FPC supported PSU undergraduate students' research on increasing the level of local food purchased by school nutrition services. The guiding principal of the research was contributing to the health of regional food systems, to the nutritional value of the foods for consumers, the preservation of the environment, and to educate children the origins of the food on their table. The group concluded that "...the FPC could play an integral role in the development of standards that not only increased local purchasing and the consumption of fresh, nutritionally dense foods, but clearly communicate the values and guiding principles of a sustainable food system." The Spork Report contributed to the development of the current Abernethy Elementary Pilot School Lunch program which will be highlighted at City Club in September, 2006. The Spork Report, Increasing the Supply and Consumption of Local Foods in Portland Public Schools is posted at: <http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?a=123016&c=42294>

Multnomah County Corrections Local Purchasing

Working closely with the Multnomah County Sustainability Initiative, the Food Policy Council inspired a pilot project in 2004 with county correctional facilities to purchase and track local produce purchases. This resulted in approximately \$57,000 (35% - 55% of total purchases) spent on produce from local farms in Oregon and SW Washington at no additional cost.

As a result of this pilot, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office included sustainability criteria to the food specifications of their 2005 Request for Proposals and the subsequent five-year contract for food service. The contractor, Aramark, plans to track local purchases of fresh produce, frozen produce, and dairy and eggs. An electronic reporting system is in development for clear, consistent reporting of local produce purchased.

Urban Agriculture and Education

Making stronger connections between the land and all our citizens.

Diggable City

In November 2004, Portland City Council unanimously passed Resolution 36272 calling for an inventory of city-owned lands suitable for agricultural uses. A group of Portland State University Masters in Urban Planning students worked throughout the 2004-2005 school year, studying new avenues for urban agriculture and compiling a land inventory using GIS analysis. In June 2005, the students returned to Council with their report, *The Diggable City: Making Urban Agriculture a Planning Priority*.

The Portland City Council accepted the report and directed the FPC to advise the group on how best to proceed. In response, the FPC formed an Urban Agriculture Subcommittee and six Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) that met throughout the summer and fall to explore the impediments to urban agricultural uses on city-owned properties and discuss potential management plans. More than 30 community members contributed to a report presented to Council in February 2006. The Diggable City report can be found at: <http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=42793>

2005 Farm Direct Marketing Workshop for Immigrant Farmers

The FPC's Second Farm-Direct Marketing Workshop for Immigrant Farmers, sponsored by a USDA grant, connected often landless farmers with farm-direct marketing opportunities. Over the two-year annual workshop series, approximately 80 immigrant farmers from Hmong, Latinio, Russian, Mien and Vietnamese communities attended. The work with immigrant farmers continues through Friends of Zenger Farm and the Lents farmers market. Find the workshop final report at: <http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=42796>

Learning Garden Laboratory

Portland State University's Learning Garden Laboratory (LGL) is an on-ground garden education program at the former 12-acre Portland Public Schools Green Thumb site. The project involves Portland Public Schools students, PSU teacher-training graduate students, and community members in hands-on learning activities focused on food, nutrition, food culture, and agriculture. The FPC, along with OSD staff, worked with the various interested parties and stakeholders to create an intergovernmental agreement that was formally adopted by Portland City Council at year's end.

PSU was awarded \$125,000 by the city to initiate this program and the University matched those dollars. Funding for future years is to be handled by PSU through various grants and the FPC will continue to have a role on the LGL Advisory Board.

2006 Work-In-Progress

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council continues to support and advocate for:

- The right for every city and county resident has the right to an adequate supply of nutritional, affordable and culturally appropriate food
- An economically viable and environmentally and socially sustainable local food system
- The viability of regional farms by ensuring the stability of the agriculture land base and strengthening economic and social linkages between urban consumers and rural producers
- Communities to have ready access to quality grocery stores, food service operations and other food delivery systems
- Food to continue to bring people together in celebrations of community and diversity, it is an important part of the City and Country's culture

Two FPC committees are active this year:

The FPC's **Land Use Committee** is focusing on three distinct policy advisory efforts for this year:

The State of Oregon's "Big Look"

The committee is studying this three-year assessment of Oregon's land use planning system to develop a set of recommendations on food security, production, sales, and citizen involvement around these issues.

Metro's "New Look"

Metro's New Look at Regional Choices will reexamine the region's long-range vision for growth. The FPC will focus on balancing agricultural, natural/cultural and urban land needs and ensuring that food policy is considered and incorporated where appropriate at all levels of the planning process.

Diggable City

The committee will examine the matrix developed for the *Diggable City-Phase II Report* and determine next steps with a focus on food planning.

The FPC's **Institutional Food Purchasing Committee's** goal is to develop a purchasing policy, based on the FPC guiding principles, for food purchased by Multnomah County and the City of Portland. The committee will review current food contracts and best practices from other institutions in order to develop policy recommendations and sample procurement language.

In addition to the two committees, FPC members will participate in reviewing Portland citizens' food-related suggestions gathered during Mayor Potter's Vision PDX program. The Council will integrate the comments into future Food Policy Council strategic planning.

Food Policy Council

Guiding Principles

The City of Portland and Multnomah County will promote, support and strengthen a healthy regional food system, based upon the following principles:

- Every City and County resident has the right to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food (food security).
- Food security contributes to the health and well being of residents while reducing the need for medical care and social services.
- Food and agriculture are central to the economy of the City and County, and a strong commitment should be made to the protection, growth and development of these sectors.
- A strong regional system of food production, distribution, access and reuse that protects our natural resources contributes significantly to the environmental well-being of this region.
- A healthy regional food system further supports the sustainability goals of the City and County, creating economic, social and environmental benefits for this and future generation
- Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity and is an important part of the City and County's culture.

There's Room at the Table

Get involved

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

For more information on the Food Policy Council

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