



Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council

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Sam Adams, Mayor · Jeff Cogen, Judy Shiprack, County Commissioners



2009 Report

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council is a citizen-based advisory council that provides guidance to the City Council and County Commission on food policy with a vision that all residents have access to a wide variety of nutritious, affordable food, grown locally and sustainably.

The Council is currently composed of 15 business and community leaders with expertise in the community's food system, including farmers and food distributors, public health and hunger advocates, community educators, and land use planners. The Food Policy Council brings in additional expertise from community members interested in improving the local food system through policy initiatives and advocacy.

Mission: Bring together a diverse array of stakeholders to integrate the aspects of the food system (production, distribution, access, consumption, processing and recycling) in order to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the City of Portland and Multnomah County.

Vision: All City of Portland and Multnomah County residents have access to a wide variety of nutritious, affordable food, grown locally and sustainably.

Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council Members:

Chair - Weston Miller, Oregon State University Extension

Vice-Chair - Jean Fike, East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

Members

Mary Bedard, Friends of Portland Community Gardens

David Beller, Mercy Corps NW

Eecole Copen, Oregon Health & Sciences University

Gregory Lee, Portland State University

Allison Hensey, Oregon Environmental Council

Mellie Pullman, Portland State University

Robin Scholetzky, Ecology and Environment, Inc.

Cory Schreiber, Oregon Department of Agriculture

Tammy VanderWoude, Oregon Food Bank

Josh Volk, Slow Hand Farm

Sharon Whalen, Duck Delivery Produce, Inc.

Tera Couchman Wick, Janus Youth Programs

Ryan Wist, Scenic Fruit

*Affiliations are for identification purposes only

2009 FOOD POLICY COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2009, the Food Policy Council explored a broad range of policy recommendations in pursuit of its main goals to:

- Educate and compile information about the local food system
- Develop strategies to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the City of Portland and Multnomah County
- Affect and develop food policy
- Advocate and advice on policy implementation

Climate Action Plan

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council provided valuable input and review for the Food and Agriculture section of the 2009 Climate Action Plan. The Council looks forward to helping the City and County achieve the following goals by 2012 as part of this plan:

1. Include food choice as a component of the public engagement campaign that inspires the community to live a climate friendly lifestyle.
2. Create City and County partnerships with healthcare, schools and other organizations to promote healthy, low-carbon diets.

Better Together Garden & Hope Garden

At the beginning of 2009, members of the Food Policy Council urged city and county leaders to establish food gardens at Portland City Hall and at the Multnomah County Headquarters. With unanimous support from city and county commissioners and overwhelming community support, the **CITY HALL BETTER TOGETHER GARDEN** and the **MULTNOMAH COUNTY HOPE GARDEN** were established. The harvests from these gardens were donated to Elm Court Loaves & Fishes, a senior meal site in downtown Portland.

The gardens reinforced the notion that food gardens are attractive, can be done in small spaces, and that replacing lawns with edible plants is a sustainable approach to environmental stewardship. Through these food gardens, the Food Policy Council asked the city and county to lead by example, encouraging residents to grow food at home for personal use and to donate home-grown produce to hunger-relief agencies helping neighbors in need.

Multnomah Food Initiative

At the request of Multnomah County, a work group formed to provide advice on how the county could best promote health, urban agriculture and the local economy. The Food Policy Council recommended that the county launch the **MULTNOMAH FOOD INITIATIVE** as a framework, a comprehensive strategy, and a planning tool for the government and the greater community on food system issues.

Moving forward, the Council recommends that the county work to create partnerships between local governments and the community, develop a community food vision and goals, and develop a community food strategy and action plan that prioritizes three key issues:

(1) Food Equity, Access and Community Health; (2) Urban Agriculture; and (3) Food-related Economic Development.

A public process will convene in early 2010 with a Food Summit and the development of a community food action plan with objectives, goals, and metrics under a distributed ownership model that the community will help implement. As requested by Multnomah County, the food policy council will continue to provide support and participation in developing the Multnomah Food Initiative.

Urban Agriculture

The Urban Agriculture work group goals were to increase land access, lower costs of food production and increase knowledge for food production. In 2009, the Food Policy Council passed **COMMUNITY GARDENS** recommendations to the City of Portland to increase funding for capital improvements and staffing within the City of Portland Bureau of Parks & Recreation and to reduce water service fees for the creation of new community gardens build by the city and nonprofit organizations. The Food Policy Council passed **FRUIT TREE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the City of Portland to encourage fruit tree planting and increase fruit production within the city. The Urban Agriculture work group also provided input on to Multnomah County on steps to improve the **COUNTY DIGS PROGRAM**. The Council offered testimony and a letter of support for agricultural land preservation in the Metro urban and rural reserves update process.

The Urban Agriculture work group is actively pursuing additional opportunities to increase food production and land access. In 2010, the Food Policy Council will continue to work with the City of Portland in the implementation of the community gardens and fruit tree recommendations, and as the reviews zoning restrictions for urban agriculture. Opportunities to support urban agriculture within Multnomah County exists through review and comment on administrative rules for the County Digs Program and county contribution to cooperative extension as a part of the Multnomah Food Initiative.

Public Health & Nutrition Policy

The Public Health & Nutrition Policy work group focused on policy issues that would promote the health of the community, equity and would coordinate with existing efforts underway within the City of Portland and Multnomah County. The Food Policy Council recognizes the importance of considering equity and access in all of its policy recommendations.

The work group recognizes the work of previous years' Food Policy Councils in advising the City of Portland to include food systems and human health within the Portland Plan, the 25-year strategic plan for the city. In 2009, the Food Policy Council urged city leaders and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to produce a robust **PORTLAND PLAN** that includes goals, strategies and indicators for food systems and human health to better address hunger and community health, economic development and environmental sustainability. The City of Portland initiated the **SE 122ND AVENUE PILOT PROJECT**, a project of the Portland Plan studying the relationship between planning and health. Various work group members also participated in this pilot project exploring opportunities to increase food access and food security.

In support of the health and nutrition of children, the Food Policy Council asked the City of Portland and Multnomah County to endorse support of the federal **CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION** to increase funding for the federal school lunch program and to improve the connection between schools and local agriculture.

The work group explored additional policies to improve the community's health and nutrition, including transportation policy, food safety, and opportunities to promote healthy retail environments.

Looking To The Future...

The Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council is among the growing body of more than 100 food policy councils across the North American. Never before has food held the focus of government and the community as it does today. According to the recent VisionPDX survey, the community strongly believes that all residents should have access to multiple sources of fresh, local food, including both foods purchased and grown. Government agencies are looking towards food systems as an important piece of urban planning, sustainability and economic development.

The Food Policy Council has the opportunity to confront serious trends. Hunger and food insecurity are escalating at dangerous rates with 6.6 percent of Oregon households reporting they were hungry but did not eat because there was not enough money for food. Paradoxically, obesity and diet-related disease are increasing at unprecedented rates. In Multnomah County, half of adults are overweight or obesity, putting themselves at risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Collectively, we can take action to find lasting solutions to support a local food system that is economically viable and environmentally and socially sustainable.

- Support 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.
- Ensure the right of an adequate supply of nutritional, affordable and culturally appropriate food.
- Use food as a means to build community and celebrate diversity.
- Elevate food system planning as integral in our region's planning efforts.

For more information on the Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council, contact:

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