



Policy Brief No. 19

Cutting Through the Red Tape: A Resource Guide for Local Food Policy Practitioners & Organizers

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December 2011



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Acknowledgements ||

Our gratitude goes out to Alethea Harper of the Oakland Food Policy Council, Mark Winne of the Community Food Security Coalition, and Eric Holt-Giménez of Food First for their initial review. Heather Wooten of Public Health Law and Policy and Chris Waters of the Oakland Food Policy Council also provided priceless feedback. Thanks also to Food First intern Genna Rochlin for her excellent work on this project.

The community groups, non-profits, and food policy councils across North America whose vision and creativity launched these successful projects have our deep gratitude. Additionally we would like to acknowledge the 48 food policy leaders who were interviewed for the study *Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned*. Those interviews and case studies formed the foundation for this project.

The following groups deserve recognition for their leadership in creating tools to improve local food systems. The Community Food Security Coalition, Public Health Law and Policy (PHLP), the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), the National Farm to School Network, Occidental College and the University of Washington's College of Architecture and Planning are all incredible sources of information, analysis, leadership and tools for local food system change.

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Introduction ||

Efforts to create a fair and sustainable food system are underway across the U.S. While large-scale policy change at the national level has failed to adequately address growing hunger, diet-related disease, economic inequality and structural racism in the food system, many local initiatives are gaining ground on these issues. Increasingly, the food system is seen as an engine for local economic development and community health, as well as a platform for social justice.

Levers of change exist in municipal and county governments around the U.S. Community organizations are using local policy to develop a better food system through farm to school programs, local business incubation and food policy councils—citizen advisory boards to city and state governments. This document is a collection of resources for local food policy assembled from groups across the U.S. Many organizations, both local and national in scope, have developed tools, informational resources, or successful model policies that support an integrated, sustainable and equitable food system at the city or regional level. We have collected a sample of those experiences and resources to provide community advocates with practical tools and ideas for creating local food policy change.

Long-time activist and expert on food policy councils, Mark Winne describes local food policy as “the actions and in-actions by government that influences the supply, quality, price, production, distribution and consumption of food....what government doesn’t do, whether by design or neglect, is as much a policy as a specific action like a city regulation that prescribes the location of farmers markets or a state statute that protects farmland.”¹

What local governments do or do not do can make or break community efforts at food system change. Local policy changes are multiplying around the country as innovative food policies focus on issues ranging from reducing waste to increasing the accessibility of fresh food in underserved communities. The advocates and policy makers engaged in this movement hail from a variety of backgrounds, such as anti-hunger, labor and social justice activists; sustainability, public health and city planning experts; or farmers, restaurateurs, chefs, nutritionists and schools.

There has also been a growth in networks and re-

sources aimed at supporting local food policy. The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) mounts national conferences and provides excellent networking opportunities, consultation services and information. Public Health Law and Policy (PHLP), the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), the National Farm to School Network, Policy Link and the Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College, California, all have extensive resources and support networks for local food policy.

This document is organized with policies and tools for each area of the food system: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and food waste recovery. The types of actions that are highlighted consist of city-level ordinances and zoning changes as well as pilot projects. Each of the following five sections contains “toolkits” created by a range of non-profits, universities, or think tanks. These featured documents are intended to provide food policy councils, advocates and local governments with ideas and information for designing and implementing projects to improve regional food systems. In regards to production, they offer model language for zoning ordinances that establish or expand protections for both community gardens and farmers’ markets, as well as how neighborhood groups can organize to create a community garden. With food processing, the available toolkits describe how to start a community kitchen incubator and supporting network. Toolkits related to distribution explain how to start a farm-to-school program, establish a sustainable food purchasing policy, improve school food policy rules and help local farmers market their products to local institutions. In regards to consumption, the featured toolkits cover city zoning ordinances that encourage healthy eating choices and how to organize a healthy corner store project. The waste recovery toolkits explain how city officials can implement food and yard waste recycling programs and on-site food reduction and composting for businesses.

While the resources here by no means reflect the full spectrum of relevant examples or tools, we hope the reader will take from this resource list an idea of the breadth of possibility for collaboration between local governments and advocates, and be able to apply some of these experiences to build a just, sustainable food system in your region.

Getting Started ||

Funding

The most prominent question in the minds of many people who wish to transform their local food system is a big one: *What financial resources are available?* Despite the trend of dwindling local and state government budgets tied to the national economic downturn, federal agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) have increased their funding for community food projects. The current US administration has put additional resources and focus on the issue. Signed in 2009, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* distributed \$787 billion to tax benefits; contracts, grants, and loans; as well as entitlements, some of which have been funneled to the USDA and CDC, which in turn are supporting an array of food policy work.³

In addition, private foundations and individual donors are supporting much of the food systems work in the US, both from a public health perspective and from a more comprehensive view of local economic development through a better food system.

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition recently released a useful guide to government resources for local food systems:

Guide to USDA Funding for Local and Regional Food Systems.

Released in May of 2010, this document helps producers, community-based organizations, local governments, and other groups involved in developing their local food system understand which federal grant programs are most likely to fund their work. It highlights resources that assist in project design and grant writing. The guide gives a general overview of the USDA's structure, and offers descriptions as well as case studies of fifteen grants and programs relevant to local food system development.

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/6.18-FINAL-Food-System-Funding-Guide2.pdf>

Food System Assessments

A food system assessment (similar to “community food assessments”) is a tool to engage community-based discussion and strategic planning to identify resources assess needs and develop responses to improve the local food system. Additionally, they help promote community participation in and control over food systems through collaboration. Detroit, Toronto and Oakland are noted for their comprehensive assessments, leading to the formation of local food policy councils.⁴

- *Community Food Assessment: A First Step in Planning for Community Food Security*, written by Kami Pothukuchi for the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. This paper highlights nine individual Community Food Assessments (CFAs) and discusses their commonalities within urban planning, how a planning approach can strengthen CFAs and what city planners can learn from them. <http://www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu/public/pothukuchi%20community%20food%20assessment.pdf>

Toolkit || How to Conduct a Food System Assessment

- From the USDA Economic Research Service, the *USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit* provides standardized measurement tools on various aspects of food security, though it does not touch on other food system issues or sectors. However, the guide offers other helpful tools in developing a basic assessment structure, data collection, and focus group organization. It is designed to be used by community-based organizations and municipal governments. www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efano2013/
- The Community Food Security Coalition published a comprehensive guide to food system assessments, including how to plan for, design, carry out, and put your food system assessment to work, *What's Cooking in Your Food System? A Guide to Community Food System Assessments*.

http://foodsecurity.org/pub/whats_cooking.pdf

- To read an example of an assessment that comprehensively addresses all five components of any local food system—production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste recovery—see the *Oakland Food System Assessment*, completed in June of 2005 by the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability: <http://oaklandfoodsystem.pbworks.com/>
- For an example of recommendations from a local food policy council based in part on a food systems assessment see the Oakland Food Policy Council's report: *Transforming the Oakland Food System: A Plan for Action*. <http://www.oaklandfood.org/home/resource>

Food Policy Audits

A food policy audit is a tool to help assess a community's existing local food policy infrastructure. It helps facilitate a process to assess the strengths, gaps and opportunities in community food policies and identify priorities to improve the local food system. This tool was recently developed and adapted for a graduate class in Urban Planning at the University of Virginia.

Food Policy Audit: University of Virginia

A small group of professors and graduate students developed this tool which served as a class project to assess the community's existing local food policy infrastructure.

In the Spring semester of 2010 at the University of Virginia, a planning class used a newly developed assessment tool which helped users better understand what policies are in place that impact the local food system. The 100-question Food Policy Audit was used to identify existing policies in five counties in central Virginia called the Thomas Jefferson Planning District. The audit directly addressed food production, distribution, and access, as well as community activities that might help improve the food system. The questions addressed five general topics including public health, economic development, environmental impacts, social equity, land conservation and land access for food production.

Although the audit's limitations are that it only revealed the existing policy infrastructure—not whether the policies have been implemented—the class additionally met with government and community representatives to compare their findings with actual policy implementation. The students were able to have meaningful conversations with local planning officials by using the tool to identify top priorities for the region's next steps in planning a community-based food system. Moreover, they came up with several findings, including the observation that food systems work has progressed from grassroots to institutionalized programs, such as a local environmental council’s *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaign; that the urban areas were further along in their food system policy development than the rural areas; that more effort needs to be made to grow a younger farmer population; that most localities had a high priority in changing school food nutrition; that most areas are interested in more economic development in food processing centers; and lastly, that more clear lines of communication are needed in the central region so everyone's work around food system improvement is heard and recognized. In summary, the Food Systems Planning class found that through this entire process of using the Food Policy Audit, the group's overarching goal of “providing a starting point for the region to work together to achieve common goals” was met. It serves as a useful resource to assess the policies of other medium-sized population centers and proved to be an engaging teaching tool.⁵

- To read the executive summary of the report on the Food Policy Audit conducted at the University of Virginia, access: http://www.virginia.edu/ien/docs/07FoodClassFINAL%20PAPERS/UVA_FoodPolicyAudit_ExecutiveSummary.pdf
- To access the Audit's questionnaire template, see: <http://www.virginia.edu/ien/UVA%20Food%20Audit.htm>

Food Charters

A food charter is a statement of values and principles to guide a community’s food policy; oftentimes

they lead to the formation of permanent councils to act on the proposed visions. In a charter, community members come together to develop a common mission for their food and agriculture systems. Each charter is unique to its local region. When adopted by municipal governments, food charters become public documents that can guide and influence future decision-making. Toronto's Food Charter has served as an example to many food policy efforts across North America. Groups in Detroit and New Orleans, as well as many other cities have also developed charters.

Some examples of successful food charters follow below:

- To access the Toronto Food Charter, see: http://www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf
- To see the New Orleans Community Food Charter, access: <http://www.noffn.org/charter/>
- **Broader food charters or policy statements** can set the agenda for local groups as well. The Detroit Black Community Food Security Network has a comprehensive policy statement, not unlike a food charter, that not only guides the group's analysis and action, but proposes actions to combat structural racism and create economic justice throughout the food system:

Detroit Black Community Food Security Network Food Charter: <http://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/policy.html>

General Plans for Cities and Counties

Described as the "constitution" of a community, a General Plan (GP) lays the framework for all municipal decisions over topics of land use, housing, and safety in chapters known as elements for a long-term period of between 10 and 20 years. Many GPs are updated to also incorporate protection and promotion of the public's health, safety, and general welfare by addressing issues around pedestrians, air quality, noise, park/recreation space, and exposure

to hazardous materials.⁶ Although many communities understand that planning decisions have the potential to significantly impact local food systems, this is only beginning to be addressed in GPs. However, some areas have plans worth highlighting, such as Marin County and the City of San Francisco in California, and Seattle, Washington.

Getting changes made in a GP is a complex, ambitious undertaking. This can form the central work of a food policy council, work that can take years to complete. The process requires significant momentum and buy-in on the part of local community groups and government officials, as well as a certain level of professional expertise in planning, public health, and business development. That said, the GP is one strategic point of leverage where local groups can both remove policy barriers to a better food system, and create a more supportive policy environment.

The Marin Countywide Plan: Marin County, California

This county's General Plan has gained recognition for creating high standards in health and agricultural land protection.

Located north of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, Marin County is a rural area home to scenic natural beauty and an affluent population. In 2007, the county's Board of Supervisors approved updates of the General Plan, which was originally adopted in 1973. The 11 required and optional elements in the plan cover a comprehensive set of goals to reflect the overarching theme of planning sustainable communities, and include such social equity and cultural issues as public health, environmental justice, child care, the economy, and arts and culture. The new public health section focuses on community well-being, highlighting physical activity, access to healthy foods, substance abuse, affordable senior housing, and affordable health care. The GP's Agriculture and Food element was prepared to prioritize the preservation of agricultural land and resources, improve the viability of Marin's ranches, farms, and agricultural industries, and increase the diversity of agricultural products and access to locally produced and organic food. Strategies include limiting residential development and maintaining very low density agricultural zoning to support agricultural production and discourage

conversion to housing. The plan develops policies that promote a transfer of development rights away from agricultural areas, cluster development standards, and call on California's Williamson Act. This legislation allows property owners to agree to restrict their land to agricultural uses for a long time period in exchange for a reduced county tax assessment; it also contains a clause that prevents and discourages subdivision of agricultural land parcels. The GP's Agriculture and Food section recommends a "right-to-farm" ordinance to "help preserve existing agricultural operations by protecting farmers from nuisance complaints."⁷

- To view the Marin Countywide Plan, access: <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/comdev/ADVANCE/cwp/index.cfm>
- To read a summary of Marin County's process of updating the plan, see the article, *Marin County General Plan Embraces Sustainability*, from the California Planning and Development Report's website: <http://www.cp-dr.com/node/1891>

Toolkit || General Plans that Address the Food System

Public Health Law & Policy provides two documents that offer a detailed description of the steps in forming a general plan, as well as a range of strategies to create and implement policy change. Although the toolkits specialize in model public health-related planning, they can serve as a broader model for making changes in the local food system.

- **How to Create and Implement Healthy General Plans:** http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/create_implement_gp
- **General Plans and Zoning: A toolkit for building healthy, vibrant communities:** <http://www.phlpnet.org/system/files/finalbook.pdf>

Measuring Progress

After a food policy council has formed, the group will need to be able to quantify the impacts of their prioritized goals, which means that measurable indicators are necessary to track long-term progress. In 2009, the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables was released to assist public health practitioners measure changes in a population's diet. The report ranks states by the amounts of fruit and vegetable consumption against several policy related indicators, such as the percentage of farmers' markets that offer federal food stamps. This is a worthwhile resource to use, although food policy councils have used a variety of indicators, such as Oakland's attempt to measure the protection of natural resources and farmland, building a 'closed loop food system,' promoting economic community development, and supporting local agriculture.

- *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009:* www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/indicatorreport

Production ||

Urban Agriculture Inventories

Finding available land for urban agriculture is a challenge for community groups and cities throughout the country. In many cities some under-used public land may be suitable for community gardens or entrepreneurial urban agriculture. These surveys have become the basis for work on the part of community groups and cities to explore processes to make public land available for urban agricultural production, ease zoning restrictions on agricultural activities in certain parts of the city, and evaluate the contribution of urban agriculture to city food policy goals. Examples of such inventories follow from Portland, Oregon and Oakland, California.

The Diggable City Report

Portland, Oregon

In November of 2004, the City of Portland introduced an Urban Agricultural Resolution—which originally called for an inventory of city managed lands to determine which properties could be suitable to develop community gardens. Upon the release of its first draft, the Portland Multnomah County Food Policy Council (FPC) recommended that the survey be expanded to consider other urban agricultural uses representing different sectors of the local food system such as education, collection, processing, distribution and consumption. Examples of projects that may be better suited for such properties range greatly, depending on the individual site. They are categorized into four different uses: community gardens, small-scale agriculture, large-scale agriculture and agriculture on impervious surfaces or poor soil. Small scale agriculture includes educational gardening programs, composting, beekeeping, and pocket gardens; large scale agriculture covers community supported agriculture, urban farms, animal husbandry, and native plant production; agriculture on impervious surfaces or poor soil describes greenhouses, vertical gardening, container gardening as well as farm stands. The project also called for creating pilot projects based on the results of the land inventory, which include a community garden, a native plant nursery and an urban farm educational center. The pilot projects have been used as a way to test the management

structure of using public lands for urban agriculture projects.

In the fall of 2006, the city commissioner's office guided a team of researchers to complete the inventory, which was supported by a grant that the City's Office of Sustainable Development (OSD) received from the USDA Risk Management Agency to further assess 500 sites. The research team consisted of a hired graduate student in urban planning from Portland State University as well as representation from the Portland Water Bureau, Portland Parks & Recreation, Bureau of Environmental Services, and the Office of Transportation. *Public Lands Inventory Available for Agricultural Uses* surveyed 875 sites managed by the Bureaus of Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Water. Under the guidance of a Technical Advisory Committee from the FPC, each parcel was classified for appropriate use, depending on its environmental characteristics. Upon completion of the inventory in 2007, the team published a third report that identified the properties best suited for projects, provided updates on the pilot sites, and made the following recommendations:

1. Pursue Urban Agriculture Partnerships with City Bureaus
2. Expand Scope of Potential Projects by Working with Other Public Agencies
3. Integrate Urban Agriculture into City Policies

The Diggable City: Making Urban Agriculture a Planning Priority was formally adopted by the Portland City Council in June of 2005. Since then, the FPC and Bureau of Planning and Sustainability have been working to achieve the report's recommendations which include the following activities: the completion of a number of urban agriculture projects; embarking on a zoning code revision for urban food production and distribution; and making food systems a key component in the City's Climate Action Plan and the Portland Plan. The Portland plan is the city's strategic roadmap for the next 50 years which include pursuing urban agriculture partnership with the City's bureaus, expanding the scope of what lands should be inventoried, and integrating urban agriculture into the City's policies to remove identified barriers. The FPC's long-term role is to advocate

for changing several zoning codes related to expanding exterior agricultural work activities, facilitating small-retail and creating zoning code definitions for urban agricultural uses. Other barriers they are working to overcome include urban agriculture on roof-tops, water access to potential sites, and funding for future urban agriculture projects.⁸

- To read the latest *Diggable City Phase III* report: <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=42793&a=171174>

Cultivating the Commons

Oakland, California

UC Berkeley PhD candidate Nathan McClintock, in partnership with several community organizations recently surveyed public and private land in Oakland, California suitable for urban agriculture. He found some 1200 publicly owned acres and 848 acres of private land could support agriculture, producing as much as 15-20 percent the City's vegetable needs. In addition to providing fresh and nutritious food under the city's sustainability goals, he found these urban agricultural areas could also lead to more green jobs, green space, and educational opportunities.⁹

- To read the *Cultivating the Commons* Report and view updates related to the project, see: www.urbanfood.org

Tax Credits to Properties Supporting Urban Agriculture

Revenue from raising food crops on urban land may not raise enough funds to pay urban property taxes that are often relatively high. One way around this obstacle is for cities to provide a tax credit for urban agriculture properties to offset the otherwise prohibitive annual property tax bills. The State of Maryland passed legislation that specifically authorizes municipal and county governments to give tax relief to urban agriculture land. Though controversial (especially in light of the current economic squeeze on state and local governments), this is one policy tool communities may choose to pursue to help make urban farming more economically viable.

The Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property

Maryland's House Bill 1062 authorized local governments to provide a five-year property tax credit for property used for urban agriculture purposes.

Maryland's Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property legislation (House Bill 1062) introduced by Maryland House Delegate Anne Healey was passed by the state's governor in May of 2010. The bill allows local governments to provide a five-year property tax credit for property used for urban agricultural purposes. HB 1062 authorizes the mayor and City Council of Baltimore, the governing body of a county, or a municipal corporation to grant a tax credit against regular property tax on specified urban agriculture properties. The bill specifies that the property must be between 1/8 of an acre and 2 acres, and defines urban agricultural purposes within five activity categories:

1. Crop production (e.g. mulch or cover crops to reduce runoff and control weeds);
2. Environmental mitigation (e.g. storm-water abatement and groundwater protection);
3. Community development (recreation, food donations, food preparation and canning classes);
4. Economic development (including employment and training, and direct sales to restaurants and institutions);
5. Temporary produce stands selling produce on the site.

HB 1062 is an important gesture by state government to subsidize some of the recognized cost that is involved in urban agriculture projects, which will hopefully stimulate the growth of such activities. Municipal and county-level proposals for these tax credits will likely begin in the 2012 fiscal year.¹⁰

- To read the language and status of HB 1062: <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/billfile/hb1062.htm>

Zoning Tools for Urban Agriculture

Community gardens are sprouting up in urban areas throughout North America and identifying suitable land to address the growing demand is a widespread concern. Community participation, access to water, secure land tenure and ensuring that com-

munity garden soils are free of toxic contaminants (often found in empty urban lots) are common problems. Fortunately, many cities have developed ways of integrating zoning codes to support community gardens. This section also highlights toolkits for new community gardens, things to consider when planting in urban soils, and model land use policies to protect community gardens.

Cleveland Urban Agriculture Zoning and Public Land Leasing

The City of Cleveland grew some 40 new community gardens and 15 market gardens in 2009 following radical changes to the zoning code and city land use practices. The Cleveland Food Policy Coalition encouraged a change to the zoning code to specifically allow and protect urban agriculture uses. The policy changed residential zoning code to allow urban farmers to keep chickens, bees and small livestock, build fencing, greenhouses, hoop-houses, composting toilets, and farm stands to sell products direct from the garden (as long as 75% of products come from the immediate vicinity of the garden). In response to community concern, several parcels were rezoned so the community would have a process to respond to proposed use changes on both public and private land.

In June of 2010, the city created an Urban Agriculture Overlay District to zone larger vacant tracts for commercial production. In 2010, the city created urban agriculture zoning in residential areas. The city is also working to evaluate whether the state's agricultural property tax classification can be used for urban properties. Morgan Taggart of Ohio State University and the Cleveland Food Policy Coalition states that she has seen community gardens and market gardens make more investments in infrastructure as the tenure of gardens grows more secure. According to Taggart, these improvements also tend to make the gardens more visually appealing.

In 2010 Cleveland piloted a program to help urban farmers access water at a reasonable rate. Farmers pay a flat rate for water usage for any property under two acres. Larger farms pay a higher flat rate and must invest in permanent irrigation infrastructure after five years.

The City of Cleveland has acquired a significant num-

ber of lots through foreclosure and title transfer. The Cuyahoga County Land Bank in partnership with the city council, planning department and other agencies are creating an application process for multi-year leases and single year licenses for community gardens and entrepreneurial urban agriculture on public land. Leases are required for farmers making significant infrastructure investments or operating heavy machinery. While the county requires lessees to carry liability insurance, a local provider worked with urban farmers to develop a low-cost coverage option. By August 2011, approximately 60 parcels of public land had been leased for urban agriculture.¹¹

- **To read the changes to Cleveland's zoning code see *Urban Agriculture Overlay District (DRAFT), Agriculture in Residential Districts, and Keeping of Farm Animals and Bees* at: <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/zoning/cpc.php>**

Community Garden Sub-districts in Open Space Zoning Boston, Massachusetts

The City of Boston has included integrated zoning designation for community gardens in its Open Space Plan for 2008-2012 in an effort to support and expand urban agriculture activities.

The City of Boston is known for integrating urban agriculture in its approach to land use planning. The city has a flexible Open Space (OS) designation that can be given to public or private lands. The City created an open space plan with a chapter on community gardens that identifies needs, goals, and recommendations for the city. Community gardens are included under the nine open space sub-districts of parkland, recreation, shore-land, urban wild, waterfront access area, cemetery, urban plaza or air-right. All of these sub-districts hold development restrictions and can be used in conjunction with each other to allow for a comprehensive strategy for open space expansion. The Community Garden Open Space sub-district is defined as "land appropriate for and limited to the cultivation of herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables, including the cultivation and tillage of soil and the production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, floricultural, or horticultural commodity; such land may include Vacant Public Land."¹² This designation not only protects community gardens, it makes legal provision for urban agriculture activities which can run up

against regulatory restrictions in many cities.

- To see the City of Boston's chapter on community gardens in its Open Space Plan 2008-2012, access: http://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/OpenSpace_07draft/OSP0812Section7.3.2CG.pdf

Toolkit || Starting and Sustaining a Neighborhood Community Garden

This *Community Garden Start-up Guide* from UC Davis has some great information on how to start a community garden where you live. Though it was published in 2001, the guide is still relevant and useful for community groups and individual citizens interested in starting a garden from scratch. celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/files/97080.pdf

Toolkit || Urban Soils

Testing urban soils for contaminants is essential, especially in empty lots that were once homes or other buildings. This guide for urban gardeners from the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service includes some good information about urban soils and testing resources, as well as a list of community gardening and urban agriculture organizations across the United States: <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=21>

Toolkit || Land Use and Zoning Protections for Community Gardens

Most cities and counties have a General Plan that lays out how land is allowed to be used within the municipality. The city's zoning code operationalizes the General Plan, creating use categories for commercial, residential and other uses. Frequently, zoning codes do not cover community gardens or other forms of urban agriculture. Both city zoning codes and city and county general plans can incorporate protections for community gardens.¹³

Public Health Law and Policy has an excellent begin-

ning fact sheet on land use protections for community gardens as well as model zoning, and general plan language for city governments.

- Fact sheet - Establishing Protections for Community Gardens: A Fact Sheet for Advocates <http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/establishing-protections-community-gardens-fact-sheet-advocates>
- Model Zoning Ordinance Language Establishing Community Gardens as an Approved Use: <http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/CommunityGardenToolkit>
- Model Comprehensive Plan Language to Protect and Expand Community Gardens: <http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/establishing-protections-community-gardens-fact-sheet-advocates>

Toolkit || Establishing and Expanding Land Use Protections for Farmers Markets

Similarly, farmers markets may fall outside traditional zoning and land use ordinances. Without supportive zoning, the permitting process for farmers' markets can be complex and time consuming and getting an optimal location can be difficult. Public Health Law and Policy also has a great policy package for protecting farmer's markets as an approved use.

http://www.nplanonline.org/system/files/nplan/Establishing%20Land%20Use%20Protections%20for%20Farmers%27%20Markets_FINAL_091203.pdf

Processing ||

Community Food Processing Centers

City and County governments can effectively partner with local non-profits and businesses to address food system issues. Community food processing centers and kitchen incubators are one such instance. Start-up costs for food processing businesses can be prohibitive and commercial kitchen space scarce. Several communities have initiated kitchen incubators to help small scale food processing businesses get their start. These incubators are usually founded and managed by non-profit organizations, rather than public agencies. In Toronto however, the Food Policy Council conducted research on Commercial Kitchen Incubators and forwarded their findings to the City's Economic Development Division and the local non-profit *FoodShare*, which led the city to endorse the idea.

Kitchen incubator models vary widely across regions, yet most serve as a space where emerging entrepreneurs can test ideas and begin food production for the marketplace. The typical incubator facility provides entrepreneurs with access to a licensed kitchen and retail facilities, as well as equipment, storage, library, office and workshop space. There are three typical models: a nonprofit, a university, state, or jointly sponsored project, and a for-profit business. The nonprofit organization model tends to be more accessible to low income producers attempting small-scale projects; a university, state, or jointly-sponsored venture is advantageous because the infrastructure is housed at these sites through existing grants; a for-profit model typically offers business development and marketing consultation along with the use of equipment to clients who can afford such services.

The Toronto Food Business Incubator Project Toronto, Ontario

The non-profit organization TFBI works in collaboration with the Toronto Business Development Centre and the City's Economic Development Office to support small food business entrepreneurs by making an industrial kitchen available for rent as well as providing varying levels of support in order to successfully

launch a business. Through the TFBI, entrepreneurs are able to test recipes on the market and receive technical advice and feedback on their ideas without making a huge initial investment in processing equipment.

SMP Foods, Inc. is a business that started with testing a small line of Colombian-style *empanadas*. They have since grown to produce more than 1800 per week. The company is now experimenting with five varieties of *empanadas* as well as a new line of sauces. Their success is in part attributed to the Toronto Food Business Incubator, located in Toronto, Ontario. Since Toronto is a leader in the food processing industry, business, municipal government, and nonprofit sectors support budding entrepreneurs such as SMP Foods to test ideas and eventually start up successful businesses.

Through workshops on how to start a food business or by other channels, interested individuals can apply to be members of the the Toronto Food Business Incubator (TFBI). By paying a membership fee, they gain access to management assistance, education, information, technical support services, networking resources and financial advice. Through three distinct stages—two mini pre-commercial levels and two commercial years—the TFBI provides 24-hour access to production space and fully equipped commercial kitchen, as well as hands on experience and trainings, field-trips, mentoring, and industry contacts.

From an economic development standpoint, the TFBI program makes sense. The Toronto food sector employs over 40,000 people and contributes substantially to the city's economy, so the incubator is regarded by Kyle Rae, the city council's economic development committee chairman, as the right way to increase manufacturing jobs and stimulate economic growth. The TFBI also fills an important gap in making a local food system sustainable because it supports locally processed and marketed foods.¹⁴

For more information on the Toronto Food Business Incubator, see: <http://www.tfbi.ca/index.htm>

More on community food processing centers:

- Grow Montana has a good detailed report on food innovation centers (kitchen incubators). While much of the content focuses on the economic context in Montana, the information may be useful to groups and advocates interested in community food processing centers: http://growmontana.ncat.org/docs/Babcock_Food_Innovation_Ctrs_12.08.pdf (page 48)

Toolkit || How to Initiate a Local Kitchen Incubator Project

This guide from the University of Hawaii Extension effectively explains some costs and considerations for establishing an entrepreneurial, community shared-use kitchen. Though written for Hawaii residents, many of the considerations will be applicable in other states.

<http://www2.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/FMT-2.pdf>

Ordinances to Preserve Industrial Zoning for Food Processing

Local food processing is an important economic development strategy to re-capture the local food dollar. In many communities the pressure to develop industrial space for residential uses threatens the infrastructure base from which community groups and entrepreneurs are trying to grow a sus-

tainable food processing sector. Zoning tools similar to those that allow for urban agriculture or farmers markets can make it easier to preserve space for industrial-scale food processing businesses. The City of Oakland established a policy to preserve its industrial land, which is profiled here.

Industrial Retention Policy Oakland, California

After much hard work, West Oakland City Councilmember Nancy Nadel successfully lobbied for zoning protections of remaining industrial areas of the city—called the Industrial Retention Policy. The initiative was proposed following a 2005 industrial zoning report, which proposed that the City prohibit land conversions to protect enough industrial land to supply much-needed jobs for the area’s residents. The adoption of such a policy was no small task, due to tension over development priorities in the low-income neighborhood of West Oakland.

Ms. Nadel fought for the Industrial Retention Policy because she felt the growing demand for food required industrial space, “West Oakland in particular has the large sites available that these industries need.” In support of her recommendations, the City decided to protect industrial sites that either contain existing businesses or have “high potential” for attracting such businesses, and that conversion to residential use be allowed only if light industrial uses compatible with affordable housing were preserved.¹⁵

- To read about this process, see the article, *Oakland Zoning Proposal Reversal Reflects Long-Term Community Lobbying*: <http://www.urbanhabitat.org/node/1744>
- Also see *Industrial Land Preservation: Key to Green Jobs Growth*: <http://www.urbanhabitat.org/node/1832>

Distribution ||

Farm to School Programs

There is more energy and information on farm-to-school programs than perhaps any other area in which Food Policy Councils are involved. There are hundreds of good examples, with an estimated 9,756 schools participating in the movement in one form or another around the U.S.¹⁶ The National Farm to School Network, the Community Food Security Coalition, School Food Focus and the 'One Tray' campaign all have excellent resources on the Farm to School movement. The National Farm to School Network profiles over 200 farm to school programs at <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>. We have included a few below.

Farm-to-Table Program: Santa Fe, New Mexico

Forty farmers sell and distribute produce to all the schools in the Santa Fe Unified School District, with a district-level procurement policy in the works that will prioritize local, organic produce to supply school lunches.

Santa Fe is an inspiration for farm-to-school programs in New Mexico and across the nation. The program got its start in 2003 when a local chef and restaurant owner organized a delegation of local school food service staff members, the state Department of Agriculture Marketing Specialist and the Santa Fe Director of Student Nutrition Services to visit the Santa Monica Farmers' Market Salad Bar. The trip convinced attendees a similar salad bar station in school cafeterias was a viable way to improve the district's lunch program. As a result, the district launched a three-school pilot Farm to Schools Project that eventually expanded in 2003 as the *Farm-to-Table* program serving all schools within the Santa Fe Public School System. All participating schools have the kitchen facilities to prepare and store fresh produce. Some offer a daily salad bar, while others supplement hot entrees with vegetable side dishes. Additionally, when there is a seasonal abundance of crops at the participating farms, all of the district's twenty-nine schools receive local produce like sunflower sprouts, watermelons and apples.

The program was initially supported through start-up funds supplied by a USDA Community Food Projects Grant, as well as additional funds from New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and USDA's Federal State Marketing and Improvement Program. The Farm to Table organization supplies a position within the school district to coordinate the project. With help from the SMDA and the state's Farmers' Marketing Association, forty farmers were located through *Farm-to-Table* to supply their products to the district. Since the market exists for their products throughout the school year if they expand their season, the participating farmers are currently investing in developing hothouse technologies for growing salad greens, sunflower sprouts, apples, pears, watermelons, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, peppers, squash, potatoes, onions, carrots, broccoli, and radishes. Farm to Table and Albuquerque Public Schools work with the district to coordinate produce deliveries through a cooperative distribution system either directly to school sites or to a central warehouse.

The greatest hurdle facing *Farm-to-Table* is the state's procurement law that requires most state agencies (including school districts) to bid on items that are over \$10,000 in price and that each bid secured at the lowest submitted price. Since the average farm that is supplying food for the project is around 10 to 15 acres, they find it difficult to compete with larger, industrial distributors who are also submitting produce bids. This problem was predicted early in the project's formation, and in an attempt to make change, its collaborators decided to work at the state and national levels to pass legislation not only allowing schools to give preference to local growers, but so farmers can more easily participate in the program.

In response to such concerns, there has been various efforts to make appropriate policy changes. In 2003, a memorandum was adopted in the state legislature stating that schools should serve New Mexico-grown products when possible. Additionally, the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council along with other organizations pushed for the *Nutrition Rule for Competitive Foods* as well as the *Healthy Kids-Healthy Economy* bill. Established by a Gover-

nor's task force, the Nutrition Rule sets requirements on vending machine foods, a la carte foods, and school fundraisers. *Farm to Table* is aiding this policy change by organizing a system where New Mexico products are provided specifically for school fundraisers. In 2009, the *Healthy Kids - Healthy Economy* bill requested \$3.8 million to provide 25 cents extra per plate for 2 school meals per week in addition to fruits and vegetables for every school child in the state. At the local level, organizers have been reworking the school district food purchasing system to better incorporate local producers. Due to these efforts, the sales of local food products to schools in districts across the state have risen to approximately \$500,000 per year, the largest amounts being sold to schools in Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque. In 2010 *Farm to Table*, in partnership with New Mexico Dept. of Agriculture hired a full-time Farm Direct Marketing person to coordinate expansion of the Farm-to-School program to more school districts (currently about 1/3 of the state's districts are served) and other state and local agencies that purchase food.¹⁷

- For more information about New Mexico's Farm to School programs, see: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/state-home.php?id=6>

Toolkit || How to Establish a Farm to School Program

Farmtoschool.org has many excellent resources – for other tools check out:

- The *Oklahoma Farm-to-School* program's guide offers tips and tools related to distribution and food safety protocols for farms, schools and school gardens. The kit also includes two downloadable calculators: the *Distribution Cost Calculator*, which helps producers understand the true costs of produce delivery and determines a farm gate value for their crops; as well as the *Produce Calculator*, that aids farmers and schools to determine the amount of produce needed for the schools based on number of servings. It also calculates per serving cost.

<http://www.okfarmtoschool.com/resources/fts-distro-foodsafetymanual/index.htm>

- *Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions* is written by the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. The guide provides farmers, school administrators, and institutional food-service planners with contact information and descriptions of existing programs that have made connections between local farmers and local school lunchrooms, college dining halls, or cafeterias in other institutions.

<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=261>

- This is the *Farm to School 101 Toolkit: Growing Food for a Better School Environment*, published by Farm Aid, aims at an audience of community members to introduce them to the concept of such programs, while providing steps, resources, and case studies: http://www.farmaid.org/atf/cf/%7B6ef41923-f003-4e0f-a4a6-ae0031db12fb%7D/FARM_TO_SCHOOL_101-FARM_AID_TOOLKIT.PDF

- *Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations* from the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College is a guide to help programs analyze the overall impacts of farm to school programs for stakeholders—including teachers, food service, farmers, parents, policy makers, and community—and provides various resources and tools to incorporate when assessing a program.

<http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/bearingfruit.htm>

Toolkit || Improving School Food Policies and Rules

Mapping School Food: A Policy Guide from the Public Health Advocacy Institute was written to help legislators, advocates, parents, teachers and anyone interested in improving school food navigate school food law and policy. It describes school food policy from the perspective of different personnel in the school system and provides tools to help advocates find answers, resolve conflicts, and build consensus for improving school food in their community.

<http://www.phaionline.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/mappingschoolfood.pdf>

**Toolkit || Nuevos Mercados para su Cosecha;
How Farmers can Market their Products to Local
Institutions**

This Spanish-language publication, available from the Community Food Security Coalition details strategies for farmers interested in marketing their products to local institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals, retirement homes and day care centers. Included is a resource list of organizations around the country that work with Latino farmers looking for ways to market their products.

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/NuevosMercados.pdf>

Mobile Produce Vendors

One way of addressing poor access to healthy food in urban areas is mobile vending. Although there are significant challenges including making the venture profitable as well as reliably accessible to regular customers, there are successful models that could be examined, such as this program highlighted in New York City.

NYC Green Carts Program New York City, NY

Originating as a 200-cart pilot program, it has expanded to put 1,000 mobile produce vendors in NYC streets where there is a lack of food retail outlets and low fruit and vegetable consumption.

Local Law 9, which was drafted and passed by the New York City legislature and signed by Mayor Bloomberg in March of 2008, established 1,000 permits for Green Carts, or mobile food carts offering fresh produce in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island. Specific boroughs have been targeted as food deserts and areas where “there is low fruit and vegetable consumption.” Vendors can only operate in one specific borough. Carts can be located only in certain designated areas within sub-districts. Vendors, who obtain this new type of license provided specifically for the Green Carts, are allowed to sell raw fruits and vegetables

such as carrots, bananas, apples and berries. In the interest of food safety, it is not permitted to have cut, sliced, peeled, or processed produce. The program is supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, and is also a collaborative effort with the New York City Council and the New York City Department of Health.

In 2010, there were 450 active carts operating in food deserts. However, licenses are given out on a “rolling application” basis and more will be given out over time. Of those 450 active carts, a significant number of vendors are immigrant entrepreneurs. The City of New York has contracted with the consulting group, Karp Resources, who provides technical assistance, entrepreneurship training and advice for suitable cart locations to the vendors. Although there are many positive aspects, there have been obstacles as well, such as complaints from vendors with the physical stability of the carts and regarding violation tickets despite holding legal permits. Local businesses accuse the vendors of stealing competition of grocery customers, and unfortunately, most of the carts are not equipped with the technology to accept food stamps. However, even after the pilot phase, feedback and sales from customers have helped to expand the program. Kumar Gouranga, a Bangladeshi cart operator, reported that after three months of being open that, “business is so good that we are staying open 24 hours a day, seven days a week”. Moreover, the Green Carts program fits within the City’s larger goal of improving healthy food access in the fight to decrease the rate of diet-related disease in “food deserts.”¹⁸

- To access the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s website describing the NYC Green Cart program, see: http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cdp/cdp_pan_green_carts.shtml
- To read more about the impact of the program, read the *New York Times* article “Customers Prove There’s a Market for Fresh Produce”: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/11/nyregion/11carts.html>

Consumption ||

Sustainable Food Procurement Policies for Municipal and State Governments

Cities, counties and state governments have substantial purchasing power, but many cannot use that power to buy local products. This purchasing power should not be underestimated. Economist Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center asserts that one dollar spent at a local farm has a multiplier effect of two to three times more in the local economy compared to that same dollar spent on an equivalent non-local business. Even otherwise obscure state or local agencies may make large food purchases. If a fraction of that money were spent locally, the impact could be significant. Government contracts can also be an important stable market for groups of growers.

Many state and local governments have competitive bidding processes that privilege large-scale providers that offer their product at a lower cost. Others may not have the time or staff resources to source from multiple vendors, and give their business to a central distributor. Sustainable procurement policies and local preference policies can give local governments the policy leeway to invest in local food economies.

Local Food Procurement Policy City of Toronto, Ontario

An approved update to the City of Toronto's food procurement policy that requires the municipal government to increase its purchasing of locally-produced food.

In October of 2008, the municipal government of Toronto in Ontario, Canada adopted a new sustainable procurement policy aimed to reduce greenhouse gases generated by the importation of food as part of the implementation of the *Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan*. The City of Toronto states that it is “committed to progressively increasing the percentage of food being served at City-owned facilities or purchased for City

operations from local sources,”¹⁷ and as a starting place, Children’s Services, jointly with the Toronto Environment Office, is implementing the first phase of the plan. With a food purchasing budget of \$15,000, Children’s Services was able to increase its local food procurement of 13.4% to a total of 33.4% by 2010. Although this has been identified as a successful accomplishment, the City in is the process of using its \$11 million annual food budget to buy 50% local food in supplying daycares, shelters, and seniors’ homes.¹⁹

This adoption of the revised food procurement policy came from the local government’s growing support and commitment to changing food policy. In 2001, the City of Toronto adopted the *Toronto Food Charter*, a proclamation stating that every Toronto resident should have “access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally acceptable food.” The charter highlights a commitment to “adopt food purchasing practices that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility.”²⁰

- To view the *Local Food Procurement Policy and Implementation Plan-Update* from the City of Toronto’s Environmental Service: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/decisions/2008-10-29-cc25-dd.pdf> (page 30)
- To see the Toronto Food Charter, access: http://www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf

Toolkit || Sustainable Food Purchasing Policies for Institutions

A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy by Food Alliance aims to help universities, colleges, hospitals, institutions, and advocates design and implement sustainable food procurement policies. To download the guide, visit: <http://www.sustainablefoodpolicy.org/>

Policy Tools for Food Deserts

Getting fresh food into urban food deserts has received a tremendous amount of attention. Health disparities in low income urban areas are high, access to full service grocery stores are low, even as a tremendous amount of wealth is extracted from those communities through the industrial food system. Fast food outlets in these neighborhoods are also numerous, making cheap unhealthy food accessible even as fresh food is hard to come by. There are several policy tools local governments can use to help entrepreneurs and healthy food advocates address these disparities. While increasing access to healthy food is important, public health research shows that access alone will not green food deserts.²¹

Here are a few examples of innovative city policies to fight food deserts.

Restrictive Covenant Chicago, Illinois

A change in zoning to limit restrictive covenant policies enforced by supermarkets, which prevent competitors from occupying former retail sites in attempt to gain control of the market.

In September of 2005, the Chicago City Council approved an ordinance intended to increase the availability of fresh produce by addressing a longstanding, contentious policy of grocery store covenants. These land use agreements have historically been employed by supermarkets and drug stores to prevent competitors from making use of former store sites as a way to gain control of the market and foil the competition. The results of the practice often produce two kinds of neighborhood redevelopment challenges: they restrict the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables to neighborhood corner stores that often cannot sell enough produce to turn a profit before it goes bad, and properties best designed for future full service grocery stores to sit vacant.

Chicago's zoning ordinance was introduced by Aldermen Manny Flores and Marge Laurino who both found the restrictive covenants harmful to their wards. Although the ordinance was originally drafted to ban restrictive covenants outright, oppo-

sition from the Chicago Chamber of Commerce and Illinois Retail Merchants Associations limited the scope of the new policy. The version of the resolution that passed allows for retailers to temporarily place restrictive covenants on stores if they are relocating within the same area, thus limiting direct competition without compromising all future land use. The intended result is that new grocery stores selling healthy foods can move more quickly into available properties in food deserts.^{22 23}

- To read an article published by the Metropolitan Planning Council on the ordinance: <http://www.metroplanning.org/news-events/article/3293>
- For the language of Chicago's zoning ordinance, see: http://www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/restrictive_covenants.pdf

Fast Food Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) Los Angeles, California

A temporary ban on new fast food restaurant permits in specific neighborhoods and provides incentives for grocery stores to locate in underserved areas.

In July of 2008, Los Angeles City Council approved an Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) on fast food restaurants, "designed to address the imbalance in food options currently available" in its southern neighborhoods. The ordinance establishes a permit process for new or expanding fast food restaurants. Each applicant must meet requirements related to being "in conformity with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice" to get permit approval. This permit process helps attract healthier options to the area such as grocery stores and sit-down restaurants.

South and Southeast Los Angeles has among the highest incidences of diabetes in the county, an obesity rate that is nine percent above the county average, and 73 percent of its restaurants are fast food outlets. Councilwoman Jan C. Perry, who drafted the ICO, described its importance in a 2008 *New York Times* article stating, "making healthy decisions about food is difficult when people have small incomes, the grocery store is five miles away and a \$1 cheeseburger is right around the corner".²⁴

- To view the final language of the *Fast Food Interim Control Ordinance*, see: http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2007/07-1658_ord_180103.pdf

Toolkit || City Zoning Ordinances for Healthy Eating Choices

- From the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN): *Model Healthy Food Zone Ordinance: Creating a Healthy Food Zone Around Schools by Regulating the Location of Fast Food Restaurants [and Mobile Food Vendors]*: http://www.phlpnet.org/system/files/nplan/HealthyFoodZone_Ordinance_FINAL_091008.pdf
- Public Health Law and Policy's *General Plans and Zoning: A Toolkit on Land Use and Health* is a toolkit designed for nutrition and other public health advocates who would like to better understand how land use decisions are made and how to effectively participate in those decisions. <http://www.phlpnet.org/system/files/finalbook.pdf>

L-Tower Avenue Bus Route Hartford, Connecticut

The City of Hartford utilized temporary funds to create a bus route that better connected transit-dependent residents to supermarkets. In order to make the route permanent, the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy successfully advocated for regular funding.

With temporary state and federal funding used in August of 2000, the City of Hartford created the L-Tower Avenue bus route in order to increase access to major supermarkets for transit-dependent residents in the area's northern neighborhoods. Previously, these residents experienced a longer travel time with transfers to other bus lines in order to reach their destinations. The new route, part of the Job Access program, allows riders to travel directly without transfers to supermarkets, stores, doctor's offices, and places of employment. Ridership increased by more than 5,000 people in less than a year after featuring the route, and grocery shopping was cited as the primary reason to take the bus by 33% of the riders. In order to advocate for the route

to have permanent funding, the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy communicated with elected officials on the city and state levels, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, officials from CT-Transit and representatives from North End Community-based organizations. The Commission additionally conducted surveys with the route's ridership and compiled a report outlining the fact that more people felt they had higher access to affordable, fresh, high quality food. Due to these efforts, the L-Tower route is a regularly scheduled and utilized route.^{25 26}

- To read about the activities of the City of Hartford's Advisory Commission on Food Policy, access: <http://www.hartford.gov/government/FoodCommission/Activities.htm>
- For the *Transportation and Food: The Importance of Access*, which features L-Tower route story, see: http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/transportation_and_food.pdf

Toolkit || How to Attract Grocery Stores to Low-Income Neighborhoods

Getting to Grocery: Tools for Attracting Healthy Food Retail to Underserved Neighborhoods. This report from Public Health Law and Policy aims to help community advocates and public health agencies coordinate and utilize tools available from local government and other organizations bring grocery stores into low-income communities.

http://www.phlpnet.org/system/files/Getting_to_Grocery_FINAL_090909.pdf

Toolkit || Economic Development and Redevelopment Projects

Economic Development and Redevelopment: A Toolkit for Building Healthy, Vibrant Communities. This toolkit from Public Health Law and Policy provides resources that extend beyond zoning and General Plan revisions to improve food access in low-income areas. A wide range of topics intended to change food access are covered, including economic development agencies, redevelopment law, tax increment financing, eminent domain and how decisions

are made about their use is explained. Advocates in the US have proposed using economic development and redevelopment agencies and funds to support locally and minority owned food businesses, healthy food retail in low income urban communities, and food retailers that have union contracts or other agreements that ensure workers get a fair share.

<http://www.phpnet.org/system/files/EcDevToolkit.pdf>

Corner Store Conversion Projects

Since corner stores are often the nearest retail outlet for many underserved neighborhoods, they hold potential for offering more accessible, healthy foods to customers. Doubling shelf space dedicated to fruits and cooking vegetables, for example, has been shown to increase sales. Making this change is a financial and organizational challenge for store owners, but city and community initiatives can help.

Toolkit || Corner Store Conversion in New Orleans

For an example of a prominent corner store conversion initiative, see the *Healthy Corner Stores for Healthy New Orleans Neighborhoods Toolkit*. In September of 2007, the Louisiana Public Health Institute in partnership with the City of New Orleans launched a healthy corner store initiative to increase access to healthy foods in attempt to decrease the area's rate of diet-related disease. Participating stores in the program agreed to stock at least two new items of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy and whole grain products. In exchange, the storeowners received resources designed to increase sales of

these items, such as in-store displays and stickers to promote healthy food items, promotional window posters, and health information handouts.^{27 28}

http://healthycornerstores.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/NOLA_Healthy_Corner_Stores_Toolkit.pdf

Toolkit || Healthy Corner Stores Network

The Healthy Corner Stores Network has an excellent resource page with toolkits for activists interested programs to help increase the sales of fresh produce at corner stores, as well as contact information for consultants who can help with corner store conversion strategies.

<http://healthycornerstores.org/resources/toolkits/>

Toolkit || How to Start a Corner Store Conversion Project

The Delridge Healthy Corner Store Project: A Toolkit for Community Organizers and Storeowners is a manual published by the Seattle-based Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association (DNDA) and the University of Washington (UW) Department of Urban Design and Planning. The document includes technical, educational and marketing information and templates for implementing and managing a converted corner store that provides fresh food to local neighborhoods. The manual includes two separate toolkits intended for community organizers and for participating stores.

http://healthycornerstores.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/Delridge_HCS_Toolkit.pdf

Food Waste Recovery ||

On-Site Food Scrap Composting for Institutions and Businesses

Some 32 million tons of food waste goes to landfills and incinerators around the US every year. Less than 3% of that waste is diverted or recycled. Waste services can also be a significant expense for both public institutions and food businesses. Some institutions have begun to recycle food scraps and landscaping/yard waste into compost for community gardens and local farms on site. Public institutions like colleges and schools can be trend-setters for the community, educating and supporting similar initiatives in homes and businesses in the community. While waste recovery tends to get less attention in local food policy than other food system sectors, local innovations can be important.

Chabot Community College Waste Reduction Program Hayward, California

Improvement of an institution's on-site food scrap and lawn debris composting system using existing funds.

Although Chabot College in Hayward previously had a recycling program, a partnership with StopWaste helped transform Chabot into a model for waste diversion at public institutions. The StopWaste Partnership, which provides free technical assistance services for local businesses and public agencies, helped the college develop a goal to expand on the its existing landscape composting operations to include on-site food scraps. The challenges of completing the project were daunting: neighbors were sensitive to the visibility and odors of decomposing food, California has strict quantity requirements for compost sites, and Chabot had no funding to purchase the necessary containers and equipment and needed technical knowledge to start the program. Fortunately, StopWaste was able to provide support through research and training, supplying compost covers as well as finding grant funding for the equipment.

The end results of this project are impressive. Firstly, no plant debris from the 93-acre campus is disposed of in landfills; covered piles decompose over an 18 month process, and the final product is used as a soil amendment on the property grounds. Secondly, food scraps from the cafeteria are diverted into bins that are transferred into an outdoor tub. That tub uses a bio-filter and motorized auger to mix the materials. Within five weeks, the tub is emptied and another batch can be added.²⁹

- To read more on this case study see: http://www.stopwaste.org/docs/chabot_final_101305.pdf

Toolkit || How Businesses Can Start a Food Recovery Recycling Program

- This guide details seven simple steps to help evaluate, plan, and launch a worksite composting project including how to do a waste audit, institutional scale composting, and on-site composting for small businesses: http://www.stopwaste.org/docs/compost_at_work.pdf

Municipal Food Scrap Recycling Programs

On average, food waste makes up 12.7% of total municipal waste in the U.S. Many cities have green waste and even food scrap curbside recycling programs. The City of San Francisco recently made headlines for its *mandatory* composting program. While the city was criticized in the media for the mandate, there are several unique aspects to the program – one of them being the city's waste is sold to farms in the immediate area. If your city does not have a food scrap recycling program, the resources below have detailed information on what goes into establishing one.

Recycling and Composting Ordinance San Francisco, California

The City-wide Ordinance No. 100-09 mandates local businesses and residences compost food scraps and biodegradable products

In October of 2009, The City and County of San Francisco passed the Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance, which requires all business and residences to compost food scraps and biodegradable products into multicolored bins. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, around 2,000 restaurants, 2,080 apartment buildings, and 50,000 single-family homes utilize the bins for their food waste. Their collective contribution allows city operators to turn the remains into compost. The Chronicle estimates that around 105,000 tons of food scraps and yard trimmings create enough compost for 10,000 acres of land. The finished product is sold to producers in the region such as wine growers, vegetable and nut farmers, who then supply produce to local restaurants. This municipal program is part of San Francisco's overarching waste-handling vision, attempting to divert three-quarters of its waste from landfills by the end of 2010.³⁰

- To read the language for San Francisco's ordinance, see:
http://www.sfenvironment.org/downloads/library/sf_mandatory_recycling_composting_ordinance.pdf

Toolkit || How Cities can Start a Food and Yard Waste Recycling Program

- This fact sheet is intended for local government officials who face many decisions as they develop recycling community programs. The guide highlights points to consider during the phases of planning, implementing, publicizing, and evaluating recycling programs:
<http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/vermicomposting/pubs/ag473-11.html>
- Partially created by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, *Composting in Restaurants and Schools: A Municipal Toolkit* helps city governments establish and maintain a food waste diversion program for schools or restaurants and includes a step-by-step description of how to set up a program.
<http://www.cetonline.org/Publications/res-schools-online.pdf>

Conclusion ||

Food systems can be equitable, healthy engines for local economic development. Getting the right policy frame at the local and state level is essential to this goal. Similarly, local governments can partner with community organizations to incubate programs that address serious food system failings. City governments can make a better food system a priority in the agencies that deal with food, from procurement and transportation to redevelopment.

This is not an exhaustive archive of model local food policy initiatives. Rather, it is a resource that deliberately highlights a diverse array of existing efforts so that any group—regardless of its makeup—can learn from, explore and adapt these tools and experiences to their own local context. By practically

applying these experiences, your team—whether a small committee or formal food policy council—can start making changes.

Informed, democratic action on food policy can change the way people think about health, food security, and economic development. Local food policy efforts and food policy councils hold great potential as action-centers for the social learning needed to build democracy into the food system. By helping communities and neighborhoods exercise democratic control over those aspects of the food system that they have the immediate power to change, local policy actions are helping to forge the path towards better local food systems.

Further Resources ||

[Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned](#) by Food First and the Community Food Security Coalition summarizes the experience of 48 food policy councils around North America. The report examines structure, activities, strategies, successes and challenges. The study also provides recommendations for successful local food policy actions. Many of this guide's case studies were taken directly from the report and the interviews that originally informed it.

The [Community Food Security Coalition](#) Food Policy Council Support Program provides a variety of resource for councils, including one-on-one support.

[Public Health Law and Policy](#) and the [National Policy and Legal Analysis Network](#) provide extensive information on 'healthy' planning and preventing childhood obesity.

[The Prevention Institute's](#) focus on *Supporting Healthy Food and Activity Environments* is also invaluable.

The [National Farm to School Network](#), the [One Tray Campaign](#) and the [Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College](#) all have great resources for farm to school programs and beyond.

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