

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Urban Farming and Food Security

Meeting Date: October 23, 2013
Department: Central Services
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: A
Staff Contact: Babe O'Sullivan
Contact Telephone Number: 541-682-5017

ISSUE STATEMENT

The purpose of this work session is to discuss urban farming and food security as requested by Councilor Greg Evans.

BACKGROUND

The Eugene-Springfield-Lane County region has been actively building a sustainable local food system and promoting urban agriculture. A variety of local partners are engaged in the following initiatives:

Local market development

1) Lane County Food Market Analysis

This 2010 study characterizes the demand and supply elements of the local food market. It also identifies a set of implementation strategies that local governments, nonprofits, and other organizations should consider to achieve the goal of increasing local production and consumption of food products.

2) Local Food Industry Analysis

This analysis investigated the scope of the food and beverage cluster of Lane County and what economic development strategies would best serve the cluster. The analysis found that the food and beverage industry has significant value as an economic engine for the local economy, especially in the areas of branding/economic identity, job creation and infrastructure development. Since the completion of the Local Food Industry Analysis, Lane County has distributed \$400,000 to local food projects, including expansion of distribution facilities, contributing to start-up expenses for a grain mill, and hiring a part-time local food coordinator.

3) Regional Food Consortium

The Regional Food Consortium was convened in late 2011, to guide the creation and implementation of a regional food/beverage cluster development strategy coming out of the Food Industry Analysis (described above). The strategic plan is aimed at strengthening the food and beverage industry cluster and calls for:

- Regional marketing/branding strategy of food/beverage industry
- Address distribution challenges for food/beverage industry
- Strengthen linkages between local food/beverage industry and training/educational opportunities
- Strengthen communication and linkages between local private sector and public/non-profit food advocacy groups/initiatives
- Support food/beverage industry infrastructure development

4) Sprout

Sprout is a Regional Food Hub created through the work of the Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO). The project includes:

- A year-round farmers market
- Hatch – a food business incubator
- 3,000 square-foot commercial kitchen for businesses in need of additional production capacity

Food security

1) The Willamette Farm and Food Coalition supports the development of a secure and sustainable food system in Lane County, Oregon. The group has been working to build connections to the local food system through such projects as:

- Local Bean and Grain Project
- Local food product promotion effort
- Local food measurement research
- Locally grown food guide

2) Food security scoping

In response to a recommendation from the Eugene Sustainability Commission, staff conducted a gap analysis of existing local food security assessments in 2010. This informed a food security scoping project within the City of Eugene that recommended the gap analysis be followed up with a comprehensive community food security assessment. To date, that comprehensive assessment has not been conducted.

Urban agriculture

1) Micro-livestock

Recently, changes were made to the City Code in Eugene increasing the number of allowable chickens and domestic fowl and allowing rabbits, miniature pigs and miniature goats.

2) Urban Gardens

Eugene has a variety of publically accessible food gardens including community gardens, school gardens and other gardens on private and/or public property.

The Eugene Sustainability Commission conducted a local food policy review in spring 2012. The commission recommended to the City Council that immediate action be taken to:

1) Expand the current seasonal farmers' market.

- 2) During implementation of the local Comprehensive Plan, update the land use code to facilitate the siting of food processing facilities.
- 3) Appoint a Food Policy Task Force to make recommendations regarding feasible policies and actions to enhance local food economy and security, with special attention to (i) mapping urban food production site opportunities, (ii) utilizing partnerships to enhance community garden productivity, and (iii) reviewing other policies and actions.

A team of regional partners which included City Councilor Greg Evans recently attended a training event on Urban Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems hosted by the Institute for Sustainable Communities. The training covered a wide variety of issues including access to healthy food, preserving agriculture land, advancing climate goals through food policy, and food sector innovation and investment, among others. Councilor Evans will share insights and lessons learned in his debrief with the council. The resource guide from the training is available here: http://sustainablecommunitiesleadershipacademy.org/resource_files/documents/Food_SCLA_RG_WEB.pdf. A copy is also available at the City Manager's Office.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

A variety of City policies and plans speak to local food systems and urban agriculture.

Community Climate and Energy Action Plan The 2010 Plan addresses reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use as well as preparation for climate change. Action items related to food include:

- Reduce consumption of carbon-intensive foods.
- Reduce GHG emissions associated with agriculture and food waste.
- Increase food security by preserving the productive capacity of the local and regional *foodsheds*.
- Prepare food systems for the uncertainties created by climate change and rising energy prices.
- Increase availability of home-grown and locally-sourced food in Eugene.

Envision Eugene The underlying premise of establishing an Urban Growth Boundary is to preserve high value farmland outside the UGB by building denser, more compact urban communities. This concept is the foundation of Envision Eugene and the seven pillars that support the update of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Urban agriculture policies In February 2013, the City council adopted Ordinance No. 20507, amending City code to promote urban animal keeping. The code changes increase the number of farm animals, including chickens, rabbits, miniature goats and pigs, allowed in the city.

Sustainability goals In 2009, the City Council adopted a number of sustainability recommendations from the Sustainability Commission including:

The City of Eugene shall, in conjunction with a wide variety of community partners by January 2010, return to the council with a scoping and resource plan for developing a food security plan which will (1) identify community partners and form a project advisory

committee; (2) review existing policies and food system assessments; (3) develop a market analysis plan; (4) identify benefits and barriers; and (5) determine the budget and timeline to complete the plan and identify resources available, including external funding sources.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

Discussion only.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation from the City Manager.

SUGGESTED MOTION

No motions provided.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. May 2012 letter of recommendations from the Eugene Sustainability Commission
- B. Agenda for ISC Leadership Academy on Urban Ag and Sustainable Food Systems

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Babe O'Sullivan
Telephone: 541-682-5017
Staff E-Mail: Babe.osullivan@ci.eugene.or.us