

## CJP Community Forum #2: Food Goal

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

### Meeting Notes

Shared Agreements

Overview

Multnomah County Efforts

### Attendees

- John Wasiutynski - Project staff, Mult Co Sustainability
- Tim Lynch - Project staff, Mult Co Sustainability
- Jairaj Singh - Project staff, Mult Co Environmental Health
- Nadine Menasche - OSU Extension Master Gardener Program
- Cynthia Chase - OSU Extension Master Gardener Program
- Edward Benoff - Food Loop Northwest
- Hermela Demise - Mult Co REACH
- Diana Meisenhelter - Extinction Rebellion
- Casaundra Johnson - Lift Urban Portland
- Kim Butchereit - OSU Extension Master Gardener Program
- Danita J Macy - OSU Extension - Native Indigenous Programs
- Heidi Noordija - OSU Extension Small Forms
- Alyssa Auvinen - MCHD Public Health
- Annie Kirschner - Multnomah County
- Jonathan Cruz - Mult Co Environmental Health

### **Metrics**

- Local food resilience
- More food forests on public lands
- Food buying clubs - buy in larger bulk, store food, process, etc.
- The percentage of local food consumed locally (and really local, example of Whole Food apples)
- Metrics around the use of local food in institutional purchasing (% of Multnomah County food spend)

- John - We need both a metrics and a strategies
- May - September is the typical production period, but there's opportunity to grow year round that may require more infrastructure, that may run afoul of zoning/permitting piece, also opportunity for local storage of season foods
- Oregon's number 1 cash crop is nursery plants, symbiotic with local shade/planting goals
- Are metrics tied to specific strategies?
- They are supposed to broadly indicate if we are moving towards that goal?
- Expand on what a metric is vs strategies
  - Metrics - how we measure how successful we are (i.e. can compare current metrics to goal metrics)
- Need a slide - to better articulate the relationship between metric and strategies
- Census data is often broken down by population/demographic, can clearly illustrate disparate in the access to the resources / opportunities to farm (8<= black farmers in MultCo
- How is food safety considered? Can we add exposure to toxics under the food vulnerability metrics.
- The Health Department food vulnerability index is really closely linked to food security - Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) / Snap utilization - may not work or be only a limited
- Access to Agricultural education. (Oregon Food Bank bucket gardening for families that live in apartment complexes.) Exposure in education for communities (i.e. CROPS, workforce development, increasing the number of minority group farmers). Exposure to programs that already exist.
- If we can't rely on the federal government for data/indicators, how can we measure more locally? (Phone surveys, etc)
- Amount of public funding towards this goal. i.e. with SNAP benefits going away, what strategies are taking place to fund.

- Thinking of the ways to measure public investments in food security et al, include leverage of non-public resources.
- [Activate Portland](#) is a large community of sustainable ag folks who gather quarterly, teach and learn from each other, resource guides being developed. Opportunity for the County to become more involved in this space.
- The county has the ability to force the connections between food access (healthy/culturally relevant) with the clean / vitality of the soil that the food is derived from. Glyphosate and others that may be used by public agencies locally, to toxic soils and mono crops from imported foods.
- County has lands, recently updated, including toxic sites, strategy to connect County/DEQ/Verde others to action.
- Metric 1 - increase in community gardens - needs to also address the education component of growing foods, access to land isn't enough. Also need to consider the use of smaller options, like patio growing, not just community gardens.
- Multnomah County does not have an active economic development program, Cities purview.
- Measure business growth - restaurants, economic development in regards to food-related businesses; supporting groups who already have workforce development programs
- Important of youth, and adults, getting engaged including through a workforce development lens of food production. Connecting to resources, like lands and space at peoples' homes.
- City of Portland PCEF, [EOA](#)/Portland Economic review right now - tell them that we want food production, sustainability related jobs, not truck/machinery jobs

## **Strategies**

- Question: How important is emissions from a prioritization perspective
- To what degree are pesticides as a percentage of total toxics?

- Consider the importance soil quality, bees and insects habitat health
- Farming can also help reduce GHGs? if done correctly
- Fossil fuels are deposited into the land as part of farming/cultivation, and also need to think of farmworker health, exposure. Think about the full continuum of health impact.
- Land is a resource just as food; health of the land overall
- Considering toxics that are specific to urban areas, like lead, is there an additional screening that we can bring to consideration of safe places for food production, community gardens etc. Looking at historical use, like lead arsenic that was sprayed in orchard cultivation in Cully.
- Soil health - history, farming practices, thinking of the ecosystem services surrounding (or missing) around a site.
- Soil testing is something that folks look for but OSU Extension cannot currently provide, County no longer funds that service. Includes both soil health/fertility (NPK) and residual toxics. Both for farm spaces and small household gardens. Also needs to include an explanation and how to address the conditions.
- OSU Extension, with County funding, is working with Freedmen' Freedom to assess soil on their 5 acre site in Gresham.
- There are soil probes and other strategies that can expedite assessments, but technical assistance/support is still an important part. (typically farm scale, not garden scale though)
- Multnomah County does offer lead testing for children.
- Because this is a climate justice plan, it needs to be thinking about changing the future, like focusing on water catchment systems to support community gardens. Thinking about more heat resistant options, longer term climate food strategies.
- Idea - Strategies - Climate smart farming and gardening,

- Folks in apartments need places to gather (example NAYA property). Complexity for urban native folks to get permission from the original inhabitants of unceded lands. How can we think about bartering, traditional alternatives to commercial approaches? Also need special consideration for the rivers, and the problem of heavy metals. Lands that have been given for traditional practices are often limited but what is sited nearby. Example proximity to methane for Columbia lands not allowing for smudging. Need more voices from more marginalized communities because of the nuances and specifics of how different communities might approach or consider an issue. Recognize that over 380 tribes are represented locally. Important to bring in folks from native food sovereignty coalitions, Future Generations Collaborative being one of them. Barriers to knowledge/access to resources beyond traditional ecological knowledge.
- How do we make sure people know what resources are available to them locally? Increase communication about programs that exist.
- Recognizing that modern, monoculture cultivation is often very limited in the biodiversity of an area compared with traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) approaches. It is important to bring TEK and science together to understand what more expansive benefits can be brought from different practices/thinking.
- Food innovation center/food business are important, thinking about the stress that climate change brings to the “timing” of food, e.g. shortened window of harvest and distribution.
- Idea - identify community/neighborhood leaders who could serve as points of contacts / navigators for folks who are interested in learning or growing food. Ideally folks who could support the needs of culturally specific communities. Echoed by other participants. Neighborhood associations could play a part in this as well, and neighborhood association coalitions like Northeast Coalition of Neighbors, Southeast Uplift etc. Add to that community gardens, especially culturally specific led gardens, possess a wealth of knowledge and can serve as important touch points. Includes communities who may be better prepared / more experienced with warmer climates.
- It is really important that the language used around indigenous communities/control, really needs to be clear about which communities we are working with and who these strategies are.

- Also need refinement around language, indigenous which may apply to global communities of indigenous people, versus Native Americans.
- Last strategy around health foods, consider that even larger stores may cater to culturally specific foods. There is also a need for investing in current business, not just new. Can be a disconnect/ assumptions made about where people currently shop. Seconded from the phone. Can County support the growth of coops and food stands, culturally specific ones that grow out of CBOs, not just public. With caution to support and not inadvertently undermining.
- Strategy analysis - cost of government - need also to be considering what it will save, health improvements that reduce mortality/morbidity, what are the dividends for the community and potentially direct savings for the County downstream.
- Expanding gardens at affordable housing, need for education who are underserved, example seed to supper health food in budget friendly ways, really important, but challenge to grow in raised beds, need assistance, has done really well in the past, going to be an investment from OSU this coming year, important partnership opportunity for the County.
- Bringing indigenous people into this work needs to be a natural part of the work, key strategy, how to bring communities together, finding connections under the umbrella of food.
- Emphasize garden resilience, regenerative gardening, restoring land so it can be better utilized for food production.
- Sometimes Health In All Policies, HIAP, allows multiple departments to support the metrics and strategies from this and other "health" efforts. In a previous place Land Use and Sanitation used Health In All Policies metrics to support strategies targeted by Health
- Idea - One of the metrics should be around chronic disease perhaps? Tricky, very complex.
- Transportation is a major barrier for access to food, even food delivery. Something needs to connect to the threads of food, food access, and transportation.

- Small farms program at OSU just started a “Preparing your farm or ranch for a changing climate”, fee but codes available for discount/free,
- Note - Share link about what will happen on Nov 1st with SNAP.
- Flagging that we have some people who would like to share/collect contact information from those who participated today.

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### **Zoom Chat Notes:**

Lauren Gwin: Thanks for making this meeting open for online attendance. I appreciate all this background and I will follow up afterwards with my Multnomah County Extension colleagues.

Maria Velez: Also access to ag education?

We also talk about OFB’s bucket gardening too for families that live in apartment complexes.

Xitlali Torres: [Economic Opportunities Analysis \(EOA\) | Portland.gov](#)

Babs - Hi! Babs Vanelli here. Please advise: of those participating today, who should I contact about being a guest speaker at the Neighborhood Groups I mentioned earlier. thank you! there are several community gardens in N/NE Portland. (Thank you! [babsvanelli@icloud.com](mailto:babsvanelli@icloud.com)) (Jairaj said he will contact OS team to see if they can share participants names or contacts with her).

Maureen Quinn: Sometimes Health In All Policies, HIAP, allows multiple departments to support the metrics and strategies from this and other "health" efforts. In a previous place Land Use and Sanitation used Health In All Policies metrics to support strategies targeted by Health.

Ladan: Thank you for this great conversation! If anyone is interested to learn more about DEQ's food system team please reach out. Would love to find ways to collaborate: [Ladan.ghahramani@deq.oregon.gov](mailto:Ladan.ghahramani@deq.oregon.gov)

