



**King County**

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks

# LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT







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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The people of King County appreciate the value and benefits of enjoying locally grown food. You see it at farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, wineries and breweries that promote food and beverages proudly made right here in our community.

It's a way to support local farms, eat healthier, reduce our carbon footprint, and reflect our region's distinct culture.

I launched the Local Food Initiative in 2014 to create a stronger, more resilient local food system, and increase access to nutritious, affordable food in underserved communities.

I brought together a Kitchen Cabinet of experts representing local farms, restaurants, groceries, farmers markets and governments to create a roadmap that will better connect local farms and communities.

This annual report includes a report card on our initial progress:

- 267 acres of land that were returned to agricultural production;
- More than 7,300 bags of healthy, locally grown produce that were distributed to 983 King County families through Good Food Bag, Harvest Share, and Farm-to-Go programs;
- The launch of a new, one-stop technical assistance resource for farmers and food entrepreneurs, [FarmKingCounty.org](http://FarmKingCounty.org);
- The more than \$740,000 in grants that were distributed by the King Conservation District to projects and organizations to help support and grow our local food system; and
- The increase of sales by farmers at our King County farmers markets, which topped \$19.7 million in 2016 – an increase of 8.6 percent from 2015.

I want to thank the members of the Kitchen Cabinet and everyone else who contributed to our early success. Together, we're making it possible for more people in King County to participate in our local food economy, creating a more sustainable and accessible source for locally grown food.



Dow Constantine  
King County Executive



# SNAPSHOT OF KING COUNTY LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATORS

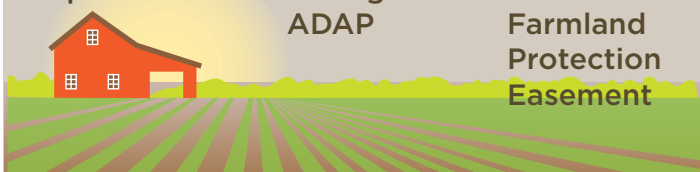
## EXPANDING KING COUNTY LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

### IMPROVING ACCESS TO FARMLAND

**267** acres  
returned to  
production

**67** acres  
restored  
through  
ADAP

**87** acres  
placed  
under  
Farmland  
Protection  
Easement



### INCREASING ACCESS TO IRRIGATION WATER

**10** farmers received  
irrigation water from  
the Snoqualmie Valley  
WID in 2016.



### PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & TRAINING

**4,552** unique visitors  
(page views) to Farm  
King County website

**41** farmers in Fall 2016  
*Cultivating Success* class



### ENHANCING TRAINING & ASSISTANCE FOR NEW & BEGINNING FARMERS

**49** aspiring farmers participated in  
training programs

**22** aspiring farmers joined  
training programs in 2016

**10** aspiring farmers  
graduated/left  
training programs  
in 2016 to start  
their own farms



### INCREASING DEMAND FOR KING COUNTY FARM PRODUCTS

**\$19,799,000** Gross  
farmer sales at King County  
Farmers Markets

**8.6%**  
FROM 2015



### IMPROVING FARM & FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

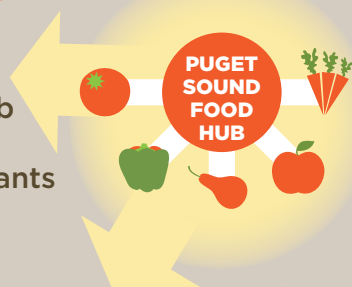
**\$665,061**  
purchased from Hub  
by King County  
institutions/restaurants

**17.6%**  
OVER 2015

**\$28,029**

in sales of King County grown  
food through Hub in 2016

**86%**  
OVER 2015



### REDUCING FOOD WASTE

**970** Residents reached  
through *Food: Too Good To  
Waste* community outreach



**900,000** Media  
impressions via videos  
and messaging posted  
on the *Recycle More*  
Facebook page

# SNAPSHOT OF KING COUNTY LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE INDICATORS

## HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE FOOD ACCESS

### ENHANCING SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENTS

**35** Childcare providers that participated in *Let's Move* curriculum

**400** Children that received healthier foods as a result of the *Let's Move* curriculum



### ENHANCING ACCESS TO DIRECT MARKET OUTLETS FOR PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

**983** families that participated in the *Good Food Bag*, *Harvest Share*, and *Farm to Go* programs

**7,313** bags of produce distributed



### INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AT FOOD BANKS



KING COUNTY  
FARMERS MARKETS



**109,915** pounds  
of food donated



KING CO. FOOD BANKS

### INCREASING NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

**28** out of a total of 42 farmers markets accept Fresh Bucks

**4,280** Individuals participated in the *Fresh Bucks* program in 2016.

**\$131,630** Fresh Bucks used at farmers markets in King County in 2015.










**7%**  
FROM 2015





## REPORT CARD ON TOP 20 PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2017

Food Economy Goal		
1. Address Barriers to Food Production	Land	
	Water	
	Regulation	
	Capital	
2. Increase support for farm incubator programs		
3. Develop one-stop shop for farm technical assistance		
4. Increase food marketing and economic development efforts		
5. Pilot two new projects using King County Healthy Incentives and Park and Rides		
6. Host an event at Marymoor Park to showcase local food		
8. Develop food innovation districts to cultivate new entrepreneurs		
8. Continue to grow institutional demand		
9. Extend Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) to King County		
10. Develop a sustainable and local sourcing toolkit for restaurants and grocery stores		
11. Pilot an imperfect food campaign		(NA)

Food Access Goal	
1. Improve school nutrition environments	
2. Increase local jurisdiction policies that promote healthy food	
3. Work with restaurant sector to promote and increase fruit and vegetable (F & V) consumption	
4. Engage and build capacity in communities to increase F & V consumption	
5. Implement strategies with retail sector to promote F & V purchases	
6. Convene partners to address upstream forces that lead to inequitable food access	
7. Increase the number of KC farmers markets with nutrition incentive programs	
8. Increase access to direct market outlets among priority communities	
9. Increase F & V options available in food banks and emergency meal programs	

### KEY

 On track toward objective

 Moderate progress

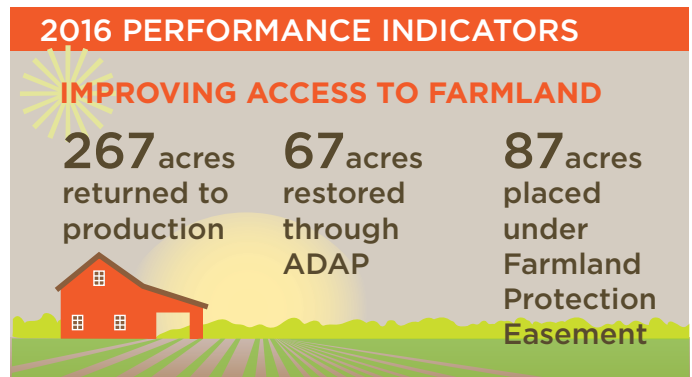
 Not on track

# KEY ACTIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2016



## Improving Access to Farmland

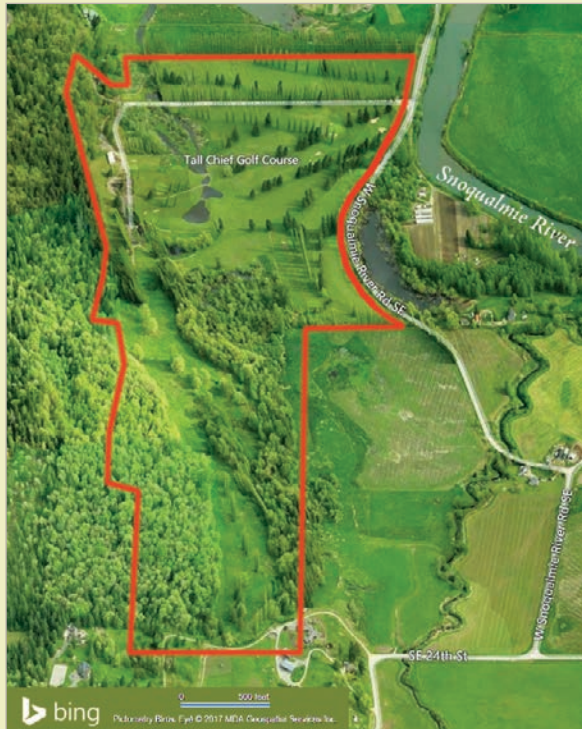
Beginning and expanding farmers continue to be challenged by barriers that limit access to affordable land for purchase or long-term lease. Although there appears to be a reasonable supply of available farmland, much of that land is either not affordable or not appropriate (e.g., too large, no access to irrigation water, no farmer/farmworker housing). Additionally, there is no effective mechanism to match owners of “farmable but unfarmed” land with farmers looking for land to launch or expand their farming business. King County has managed a successful Farmland Protection Program for nearly 30 years, which has protected farmland from conversion to other land uses and reduced farmland values; however, more effective partnerships are necessary among government, non-profit organizations (NGOs) and private landowners to more effectively address land access barriers.



### 2016 Highlights

- Three Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) easements were purchased and three additional offers were accepted but did not close by the end of the year (total of 230 acres).
- ADAP restored 67 acres to a condition where farming is again possible .
- 200 acres of previously unfarmed land was again under cultivation.
- Purchased 25 acres near Carnation that were under consideration for development. Approximately 15 acres of farmland will be carved out via a boundary line adjustment, protected with a FPP easement and then sold to a farmer to ensure that it stays in production.
- Worked with landowners to address land transfer and land use issues on properties protected with an FPP easement to ensure they stay in production or are returned to commercial agricultural uses.

## FAIRWAYS TO FARMS: THE TALL CHIEF GOLF COURSE



In 2015, King County acquired the 191-acre Tall Chief Golf Course in the Snoqualmie Valley. The golf course was under consideration for subdivision into 18 residential lots, which, if developed, would significantly alter the agricultural landscape in that region and potentially add challenges to existing farming operations. The former golf course had great farming potential; the floodplain soils were ideal for agriculture and the upland portions of the property could provide important safe zones from the frequent flooding. Local farmers interested in returning the land to agricultural production were initially unable to compete with developers for the property; however, because the County was able to remove much of the development value from the property via retention of an FPP easement, it was believed that the reduced land value could be supported by

an agricultural business. In 2016, King County sold the property to the Keller Family Dairy, which operates a successful nearby dairy. Almost immediately after purchasing the property, the Kellers planted 45 acres in corn for their dairy and invested significant resources restoring the barn and other infrastructure, and the property is once again contributing to the agricultural economy of King County.

### Next Steps

- Step-up efforts to find innovative, tract-specific options to provide farmers with access to land under reasonable lease or purchase terms.
- Update the county farmland cover database by identifying “farmable but unfarmed” lands and survey landowners to better understand the barriers to restoring agricultural production on their lands.
- Support the development of an effective FarmLink program to better match landowners with prospective farmers.





## Increasing Access to Irrigation Water

Farming requires adequate irrigation. Too many of the county's farms do not have legal access or recognized rights to water in quantities needed to irrigate high-value crops. To help expand access to irrigation water, two efforts are underway to develop irrigation water for agricultural lands in the Snoqualmie River Valley and the Sammamish River Valley. The Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District (WID) was established in late 2015 and work has begun to solve irrigation needs for farmers in the Sammamish River Valley.



### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



#### INCREASING ACCESS TO IRRIGATION WATER

**10** farmers received irrigation water from the Snoqualmie Valley WID in 2016.



## 2016 Highlights

### Snoqualmie River Valley

- The Snoqualmie WID purchased a significant water right from Weyerhaeuser and plans to make that water available to downstream farmers for irrigation purposes.
- The WID developed plans for a first-of-its-kind water auction. This will create a marketplace to facilitate the transfer of water rights between landowners with unused capacity and downstream farmers needing water. The auction process will help establish a defensible value for water and will ensure that existing water rights are not lost due to lack of use.
- The WID is working to establish a water bank whereby water rights can be bought and sold.

### Sammamish Valley Agricultural Area

- The King County Recycled Water Program has purchased tanks, trailers and irrigation equipment for a pilot project to examine if recycled water can be hauled to agricultural fields for irrigation water. Recycled water service will start for the 2017 growing season.
- An assessment of water rights and water needs was completed for the Sammamish Valley, which will serve as the basis for a comprehensive approach to a more efficient distribution of water and, hopefully, an ability for more farmers in the valley to grow high-value crops.
- In addition to enabling existing farms to be more productive, the assessment indicated that approximately 175 acres that are currently not irrigated and not farmed, may be brought back into production if water was available.

## Next Steps

- Continue to analyze delivery strategies to determine cost effectiveness of utilizing recycled water from the Brightwater Treatment Plant to irrigate farmland in Sammamish Agricultural Production District (APD).
- Work with farmers, agricultural regulators and the general public to address concerns about using recycled water for food crops.



## Providing Technical Assistance and Training

The Kitchen Cabinet recognized that farmers require ongoing education and training to ensure they have the business, production, and marketing skills to build successful and viable farming operations. This year, stakeholders across the region developed and implemented a number of new technical assistance and educational services to support King County farmers.

### 2016 Highlights

- FarmKingCounty.org, a new one-stop shop resource guide for farmers, was launched in May 2016. The new website, in conjunction with the technical assistance team supporting the site, provides information on how to start, operate, and grow a successful farm in the region.
- Washington State University Extension offered the first Cultivating Success class in more than five years for new and expanding farm enterprises in King County. The class, which sold-out and now has a waiting list for 2017, offers a series of courses that provide beginning and existing farmers with the planning and decision-making tools, production skills and support necessary to develop a sustainable small acreage farm.
- Washington State Department of Agriculture delivered workshops and technical support on changing regulations and market opportunities such as food safety and institutional sales.
- Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) delivered technical assistance to three co-ops; Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Coop, Cascade Cooperative Farms, and Vashon Island Growers Association.
- Sno-Valley Tilth hosted monthly potluck talks and tours, free educational workshops for beginning farmers, interns, farm employees, and apprentices during the growing season, at the farm incubator known as the Experience Farming Project.

### Next Steps

- In 2017, King County and agency/NGO partners will coordinate outreach and education offerings to serve county farmers better without overlapping workshop dates or topics.
- King County is hiring a new, permanent staff position to work on regulatory and permitting issues on behalf of farmers.
- Develop videos for Spanish and Hmong speaking farmers about the Farm King County website and how to use it.

#### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & TRAINING

**4,552** unique visitors  
(page views) to *Farm  
King County* website

**41** farmers in Fall 2016  
Cultivating Success class



## FARM KING COUNTY: A ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR KING COUNTY FARMERS

Farm King County is a one-stop web-based resource that connects local farmers to services, information, and technical resources that make it easier to farm and grow farm businesses in King County.

The website contains locally relevant technical resources on a wide range of farm and farm business concerns, including:

- *Planning tools and financial resources to grow your farm business;*
- *Information to know before you buy, lease, or build on land;*
- *Assistance on crops, livestock, and soil fertility;*
- *Guides and videos to help you meet market requirements;*
- *Maps and data valuable for farm and business planning; and*
- *Foreign language resources for non-English speakers.*



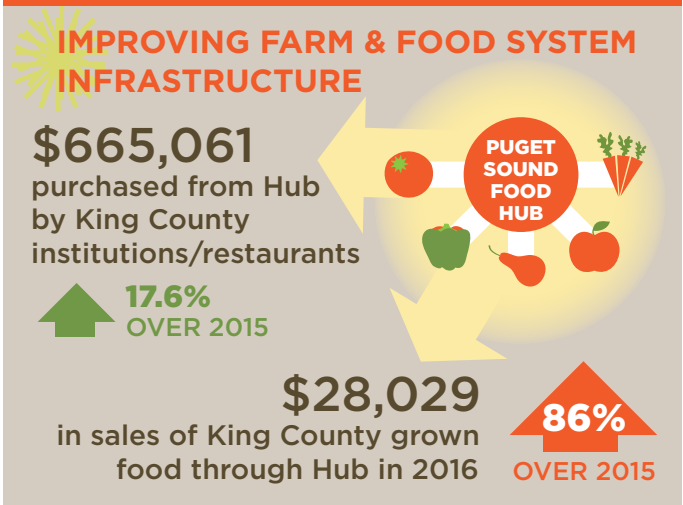
## Improving Farm and Food System Infrastructure



King County farmers and food entrepreneurs depend on appropriately scaled food system infrastructure to bring their products to

market and to grow their enterprises. Infrastructure can include things like farmers markets, warehouse or cold storage facilities to sort, grade and store food and keep it fresh; processing plants to cut fresh produce or create value added products like jams; livestock slaughter facilities; refrigerated trucks to transport local food; or kitchen equipment to prepare it. When that infrastructure is not in place, it affects what farmers can grow/raise, consumers can buy, what and it constrains the ability to grow our local food system.

### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS





## 2016 Highlights

- The Pike Place Market PDA operated five Express Markets in 2016 in an effort to increase the availability of fresh local produce for downtown families, residents, and workers and to allow farmers to expand their customer base through direct market channels. Express Market sales increased by 31 percent from 2015 to 2016. A total of 29 farmers participated in the Express Markets in 2016 and accounted for 63 percent of the gross market sales.
- SnoValley Tilth began a study to assess the viability of a developing a produce processing facility in the Snoqualmie Valley that would allow farmers to retain more value from their crops, extend the sales season, and provide access to additional markets through value added products.
- The Puget Sound Food Hub continued to grow as an option to market, aggregate and distribute locally produced food from farms to restaurants, hospitals, preschools, grocery stores, universities.
- The Cascade Cooperative Farms (CCF) poultry and egg cooperative was launched in the Snoqualmie Valley. The CCF will allow small acreage farms the ability to aggregate, process, and market pasture raised eggs to local consumers.
- A project to bring a USDA Mobile Meat Processing Unit (MMPU) Project to King County was launched in 2016. When completed, the MMPU will allow local livestock operations with a local means to process their animals under USDA inspection, a requirement for sale at farmers markets, grocery stores, and restaurants in the county.

### SNOQUALMIE VALLEY FARMERS COOPERATIVE

During 2016, the Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Cooperative grew to 18 member farms, ranging in size from less than one acre to more than 40 acres in production. It was the second year of the co-op's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, which grew to 75 members across the greater Seattle area. The co-op also sold vegetables to school districts, restaurants, and organizers of special events. The co-op's farmer members continue working to maximize quality and efficiency and hope to increase their marketing efforts significantly during 2017.

## Next Steps

- Conduct workshops for King County livestock producers on MMPU Project.
- Complete Snoqualmie Valley produce processing feasibility study.
- Continue to build the capacity of farm cooperative organizations.

### KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM GRANT PROGRAM

The King Conservation District Regional Food System Grant Program was developed to support the goals of the King County Local Food Initiative, serving as a catalyst for making local food production environmentally and economically sustainable. The program funds projects that contribute to the economic viability of local farmers, encourage new farmers, expand acreage in food production, improve food access, and increase demand for King County farm products. In 2016, KCD awarded \$742,445 in grants for 11 projects aimed at strengthening our local food system.



# Enhancing Training and Assistance for New and Beginning Farmers


The average age of King County farmers is 57 years old according to the USDA Agriculture Census. Training the next generation of farmers is critical to achieving the goal of growing our local food economy. In King County we are fortunate to have several organizations providing training for new farmers to ensure they have the technical production skills and business savvy to start a successful farm operation. Support for these organizations and their farmer recruitment, training and technical assistance programs continued to grow in 2016.

## 2016 Highlights

### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### ENHANCING TRAINING & ASSISTANCE FOR NEW & BEGINNING FARMERS

- 49** aspiring farmers participated in training programs
- 22** aspiring farmers joined training programs in 2016
- 10** aspiring farmers graduated/left training programs in 2016 to start their own farms



ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS	
<b>SnoValley Tilth, Experience Farming Project, Snoqualmie Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded to a second site in 2016 - more than doubling the acreage for new farmers seeking access to land and shared infrastructure.</li> <li>Facilitated lease agreements with private landowners for two program graduates.</li> <li>Added a pasture-raised poultry component to programming.</li> </ul>
<b>Seattle Tilth Farm Works- Red Barn Ranch, Auburn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grew produce for a 425 member CSA program, more than double the shares from 2015.</li> <li>Seattle Tilth Farmers sold at three city farmers markets.</li> <li>Red Barn Ranch farm was Certified Organic.</li> <li>Provided technical assistance for Shared Soil, a collective of 6 incubator farmers who will transition to a 10 acre farm in Enumclaw.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAgE) Collaborative, Sammamish Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched a Student Farm &amp; Farm Incubator in the Sammamish River APD.</li> <li>Transitioned fiscal sponsorship to, and strengthened the long-time partnership with, Viva Farms.</li> <li>Received a two-year \$96,000 KCD Regional Food Systems grant to support incubator.</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

- Improve land access for new and beginning farmers in King County through innovative arrangements with private and public landowners.
- Increase collaboration between farmer training organizations to share best practices and measure outcomes.
- Identify and support strategies to assist “graduates” of farmer training programs to improve their chances of commercial success.
- Identify opportunities to support “on farm” training of new farmers conducted by experienced farmers.

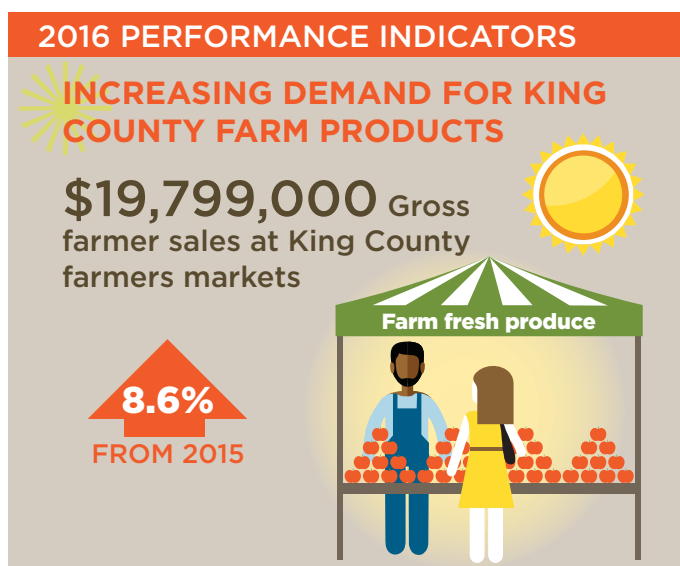
## Increasing Demand for King County Farm Products

Growing existing markets and developing new opportunities for selling King County products is essential if we are to meet our goal of doubling demand for locally produced, healthy food from \$93 million to \$186 million by 2025.

The Kitchen Cabinet identified a multi-pronged approach for increasing demand for local products that included promotion, increased technical assistance, improved infrastructure and support for emerging markets. In 2016, partners made significant progress implementing projects in these areas.

### 2016 Highlights

- Funds from a USDA Farmers Market Promotion Grant were used to run a month long **“Turnip at your Farmers Market This Fall”** promotion on King County Metro buses (photo to right).
- King County hosted the second annual CHOMP! Festival. The event celebrates local food and farmers by providing hands-on fun educational experiences. This year’s event attracted more than 2500 residents and helped connect them to the local food system!
- Savor Snoqualmie Valley was launched by Snoqualmie Valley Farmers Cooperative and the Mountains to Sound Greenway to celebrate and promote local food and farms through events like “Bounty Week”, which connected local restaurants with Snoqualmie Valley farmers.
- With support from the King Conservation District, the Local Institutional Food Team (LIFT) was launched. LIFT members provide technical assistance to purchasers looking for local farm





products and have created an online resource available at <http://kingcd.org/programs-LIFT-home.htm>

- NABC and 21 Acres sponsored and organized several farmer/buyer networking events, including a Snoqualmie Valley Farm Tour that took 25 buyers on tour of Snoqualmie Valley farming operations. The combined events brought together over 80 farmers, local farm community organizers, and local food buyers.
- King County's Healthy Incentives Corporate Wellness program piloted a workplace CSA for employees under its Farm Fresh Local program. In the first year, 100 employees subscribed to the worksite CSA and another 400 participated in other parts of the Farm Fresh Local Program.

## Next Steps

- A regional farmers market promotion campaign will begin in early summer 2017 supported by USDA Farmers Market Promotion Grant funds.
- Continue to expand the programming and attendance for the CHOMP! Festival.
- Expand successful programs like Bounty Week, Harvest of the Month, and Taste Washington to increase the demand for King County farm products.



## Reducing Food Waste

In 2015, food waste accounted for about 26 percent of all the commercially collected waste (from businesses and residents) entering King County's Cedar Hills Regional Landfill. Wasted food means wasted resources – water, oil, chemicals, land – that go into growing, processing and transporting it before it gets to consumers. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions in King County that result from food consumption (from farm to plate) are second only to emissions from personal transportation.

Actions to reduce food waste are continuing to gain momentum as food waste is recognized as a rising problem among food producers, grocers, restaurants and consumers.

## 2016 Highlights

- King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) completed web-based Commercial Food Waste Toolkit that provides resources for businesses to prevent, donate, or recycle their food waste.
- SWD awarded four two-year Commercial Food Waste Grants in 2016 for projects that aim to reduce edible and/or non-edible food



*33% of single-family household garbage disposed in Cedar Hills Regional Landfill is food.*

### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### REDUCING FOOD WASTE

**970** Residents reached through *Food: Too Good To Waste* community outreach



**900,000** Media impressions via videos and messaging posted on the *Recycle More Facebook* page

waste generated by the commercial sector (non-residential) within King County.

- The City of Seattle with the University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition conducted 26 in-depth interviews that focused on the challenges and opportunities in commercial food waste prevention and recovery in Seattle. The full report is now online at [http://www.seattle.gov/util/cs/groups/public/@spu/@garbage/documents/web-content/1\\_051538.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/util/cs/groups/public/@spu/@garbage/documents/web-content/1_051538.pdf)
- A food recovery pilot conducted by the City of Seattle with Environmental Protection Agency Region 10, King County, Seattle Public Schools and regional emergency food providers revealed that school lunches may be a good source of recoverable food. 2016 work focused on planning for a pilot food recovery program in the Seattle Public Schools.
- In an effort to improve public agency collaboration, SWD and Seattle Public Utilities staff convened to identify common objectives, and identify information gaps and most-needed actions.
- SWD continued its popular **Food: Too Good To Waste** outreach program to encourage food waste prevention at home, via tabling at events and social media messaging.

## Next Steps

- Promote the Commercial Food Waste Toolkit widely for maximum exposure, and update to add case studies that provide practical examples of successful food waste prevention.
- Evaluate the potential for continuing the Commercial Food Waste grant program in the 2017/18 biennium.



- Initiate a Commercial Food Waste Characterization Study to identify business sectors with highest potential for food waste diversion. Results will help inform next steps for SWD to implement commercial food waste projects.
- Continue **Food: Too Good To Waste** campaign, including development of Spanish language outreach materials.



The City of Auburn received a grant to encourage its city's businesses to enhance

existing food waste prevention, donation or composting programs or start a new program. The City of Auburn will provide education and training about best practices for waste prevention, composting food waste and/or donation of edible food products. Businesses contacted will include the Auburn School District kitchen departments, restaurants, food manufacturers and distributors, grocery stores and non-profit food donation locations in the city.



## IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE FOOD



### Enhancing school nutrition environments

Many children in King County spend the majority of their day in either a school or a childcare setting. Working within these settings can increase children's access to healthy foods and beverages, as well as building positive eating behaviors. Organizations across the county are supporting a range of efforts to increase the nutritional value of foods offered in our local schools.

#### 2016 Highlights

- Child Care Resources, Horn of Africa Services, and the City of Seattle-Human Services Department collectively worked with over 35 family home childcare providers, impacting more than 400 children through environmental improvements that were made at each site and highlighted supportive healthy eating practices.
- Washington State University King County Extension, Solid Ground and Public Health – Seattle & King County worked with Highline, Kent and Seattle School Districts to improve cafeteria and classroom environments to encourage healthy food and beverage choices.



*In partnership with Childcare Resources, Public Health installed 13 garden beds at family home childcare sites. Providers use the beds to educate children on where food comes from and the importance of eating healthy.*

#### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



#### ENHANCING SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENTS

**35** Childcare providers that participated in *Let's Move* curriculum

**400** Children that received healthier foods as a result of the *Let's Move* curriculum



- DECA students at Global Connections High School in SeaTac surveyed their peers and presented proposed interventions to Nutrition Services staff from the district. As a result of this work, the school added meal options. The students' research and ongoing conversation with Nutrition Services staff will support increasing healthy menu options in the coming year.
- 422 early care and education professionals in King County completed a training course on the benefits of breastfeeding and ways to support breastfeeding mothers and babies in child care settings. The training is maintained by the University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition and supported by the Washington State Department of Health.



## Next Steps

- In collaboration with Global to Local, Global Connections High School will continue working to install a cold case to provide more healthy options at the school. They also plan to create a student led marketing approach to raise awareness about healthy food options available at school.
- Child Care Resources, Horn of Africa Services, City of Seattle-Human Services Department will provide training and support on promoting healthy eating to a new childcare provider cohort from early 2017 through the summer.
- Highline School District and Renton School District will partner with chefs and other partners to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and procure local foods that are low in sodium. The executive chef of Tom Douglas Restaurants will help develop healthy and culturally relevant alternative spice mixes and sauces to support healthy food choices.

## Increasing Nutrition Incentive Programs

In South King County, 1 in 5 families do not always have enough to eat, and cost is a significant barrier to eating healthy, local produce. Nutrition incentive programs like the City of Seattle's Fresh Bucks program help to make fruits and vegetables more affordable by providing bonus dollars to purchase fruits and vegetables. The Fresh Bucks program doubles up to \$10 of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits used at farmers markets and farm stands that accept SNAP benefits.

### 2016 Highlights:

- Eight farmers markets began accepting Fresh Bucks in 2016. The program expanded outside of the City of Seattle to markets in all sections of King County. With more participating markets throughout the county, it is easier for residents to use this incentive.
- The City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment (which runs the Fresh Bucks Program) provided marketing and outreach materials to farmers markets to help promote the expansion. In addition, they partnered with community-based organizations to support peer-to-peer Fresh Bucks outreach activities.
- Fifty-nine families at Harborview Medical Center and Odessa Brown Community Clinic received \$10,940 in additional Fresh Bucks through the Fresh Bucks prescription program. The Fresh Bucks program was launched to provide additional money for fruits and vegetables to families that providers determine would benefit from more healthy produce.

### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### INCREASING NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

**28** out of a total of 42 farmers markets accept Fresh Bucks

**4,280** Individuals participated in the *Fresh Bucks* program in 2016.

**\$131,630** Fresh Bucks used at farmers markets in King County in 2015.

**7%**  
**FROM 2015**



## Next Steps

- Fresh Bucks plans to expand into several more farmers markets in 2017, making it easier for SNAP users to participate.
- To make the program more accessible and increase participation, Fresh Bucks will be expanding the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program to additional clinics.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FRESH BUCKS PROGRAM IN THE WORDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**“Fresh Bucks has made a difference to me because...”:**

“

It helps me eat healthy food I can't otherwise afford.

- Leah

”

“

It made my SNAP benefits go farther. It's a wonderful benefit and it makes a huge difference in what I'm able to purchase.

- Hannah

”

“

Poor people are entitled to healthy food options too.

- Jade

”

“

It allows me to feed my kids a healthy diet while supplementing my cash. I would not be able to purchase these in the amount needed otherwise.

- Kishan

”

“

It helps me put food on the table when I live on fixed income and struggle to make ends meet.

- Joe

”

“

It's more healthy food for less financial stress. I support local farmers and take care of me at the same time. It builds community!

- Lianna

”



## Increasing the Availability of Fruit and Vegetables at Retail

The types of foods King County residents consume depend upon where they live and the choices available to them where they shop for food. Most consumers purchase food from retail stores such as supermarkets, grocery stores, co-ops, corner stores, and convenience stores. The availability of healthful foods in retail stores affects consumers' ability to make healthful dietary choices. Policies and partnerships encouraging healthy food in the retail sector can improve consumer access to healthy foods.

### 2016 Highlights:



*The Safeway in Auburn encourages healthy choices by displaying WIC eligible fruits at checkout.*

- Public Health – Seattle & King County worked with Safeway stores in Auburn and Kent to use behavioral economics strategies to encourage customers to make healthy choices. By placing fruits and vegetables at checkouts, adding signage to displays, and placing a digital scale in the produce department to help consumers calculate cost, the project made it easier and more appealing for SNAP and WIC users to identify and purchase fruits and vegetables.
- In partnerships with OneAmerica, Somali grocery store owners developed a Somali-American Grocery Association. This organization has been working to assist stores in navigating WIC and SNAP certification. With Public Health's support, they conducted a survey of the stores and have identified activities to focus on in the coming year.

### Next Steps

- Safeway stores and some ethnic grocery stores will be launching a fruit and vegetable incentive program in 2017. This will provide discounts or coupons for people with SNAP benefits to incentivize purchasing more fruits and vegetables.
- Building on their successes working with Safeway stores, Public Health will continue to use behavioral economics methods to increase SNAP and WIC usage for fruits and vegetables, including working with WINCO Foods in Federal Way in 2017.
- In 2017, OneAmerica will provide training to Somali grocery store owners about ways to stock, market, and sell healthy foods through product placement, community events, and signage.



## Increasing the Availability of Fruit and Vegetables at Food Banks

Food banks and meal programs provide a significant portion of food to low-income and food insecure individuals. These programs rely on limited budgets for purchasing and receive a large percentage of food via donations, much of which is canned and packaged foods or with a limited shelf life. Research indicates an association between food insecurity and poor diets. This strategy aims to increase the healthy options available through these outlets for our most vulnerable community members.

### 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AT FOOD BANKS

**109,915** pounds of food donated to King County Food Banks by King County farmers markets



### 2016 Highlights

- Public Health – Seattle & King County received a five-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to launch a new partnership with King County emergency food providers (Northwest Harvest and South King County Food Coalition in year one) to increase the availability of healthy foods including fresh produce at food banks and meal programs.
- Elk Run Farm, a former golf course converted into a farm by the South King County Food Coalition, installed an irrigation system, turned an acre of land into raised beds with many volunteer hands, and harvested and distributed over 300 pounds of summer produce to South King County food banks.

### FARM TO FOOD BANK

Over 50 people participated in the first harvest at Elk Run Farm in July 2016. Located on four acres of a former golf course in Maple Valley, the produce harvested on the farm will supply the South King County Food Coalition's 12 food banks with fresh, local produce. The celebration of the first harvest brought together Elk Run Farm staff, community leaders from local Rotary clubs and food banks, neighborhood volunteers and staff from Public Health and the Department of Natural Resources and Parks. "Elk Run Farm is an inspiring example of what can happen when we bring community members, experts in the local food system and Public Health together to ensure our highest-need community members have equal access to healthy food," said Patty Hayes, Director of Public Health – Seattle & King County. Elk Run contributes more to the South King County community than just produce. Over the summer, the farm engaged local student volunteers to learn about farming and food systems. "This farm needs to be a place not just to grow food, but to come together as a community," said Maria Anderson, the farm's manager.



- Farms and gardens across King County donated harvests to local food banks. For example, Solid Ground's Lettuce Link program, in partnership with the City of Seattle, grew and donated 10,658 pounds of produce to three South Seattle based food banks.

## Next Steps

- Northwest Harvest and South King County food banks will implement nutrition standards, procurement practices, and behavioral economic strategies to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Elk Run Farm will expand its production in 2017 by installing bee hives, building a hoop house to support seedling growth, and planting fruit trees and bushes in addition to a second season of summer vegetables.
- Food Lifeline will launch a mobile farm stand at SeaMar's South Park Health Clinic. They will partner with clinic staff to refer patients who are food insecure to the farm stand, improving access to produce.



## Increasing the Availability of Fruit and Vegetables at Restaurants

Restaurants are becoming a larger source of daily caloric intake as more individuals eat out for their meals. In some restaurants, portion sizes are increasing and the food served is not always nutritious. Children consume, on average, 25 percent of their daily calories at fast-food and other restaurants, and nationwide only 3 percent of children's restaurant meals meet expert recommended nutrition standards. Especially in low-income areas with high densities of fast food, many communities are seeking partnerships and policies with the restaurant sector to increase and promote healthy food and beverage choices.

### 2016 Highlights

- Public Health – Seattle & King County convened focus groups across King County and 110 parents shared their experiences in finding healthy foods for their children at restaurants. A majority of parents said they want more healthy options, but are concerned about price and whether their children will eat the healthy foods.
- The SeaTac-Tukwila Food Innovation Network is developing a pilot kitchen for food entrepreneurs to open in early 2017. They renovated a commercial kitchen in downtown Kent to function as an incubator and teaching space for new entrepreneurs. The kitchen will give a space for people to launch their business, as well as receive business coaching, peer learning, financial aid, and other services.

### Next Steps

- In 2017, Public Health staff will interview restaurant owners across the county to understand the challenges and opportunities they face in providing more healthy food options to children. This will be combined with the parent interviews to better understand the current options for families in King County.
- Project Feast, a partner of the Food Innovation Network, will launch a lunch café for culinary training in the Food Innovation Network Pilot Kitchen in Kent. This space will provide real-world learning opportunities for refugees and immigrants interested in starting their own restaurants.

### PARENTS WANT MORE NUTRITIOUS KID'S MEALS

Regardless of language, location, or income, focus groups with King County parents found a significant difference between the foods parents want to order for their children at restaurants and the foods parents currently find in kids' meals. "Sometimes they give pizza with a side of fries," noted a mother from Auburn. "They're offering my three-year-old a soda," commented a mother of two from Redmond. Parents noted that a few restaurants have taken soda off the menu and added more fruits and vegetables, but had more ideas about how restaurants can support families. A grandmother from Kent summed up parents' feelings well: "If they had more healthy stuff, then we could make a healthier choice."





# Improving Local Jurisdiction Policies, Practices and Incentives that Promote Healthy Eating



City and county policies play a role in how our local food system functions. These include elements in plans related to land use, policies around food procurement, regulations on farm stands and urban farming, and many others. Jurisdictions and communities are working to develop policies and practices that support the food economy and improve access to healthy foods.

## 2016 Highlights

- The Living Well Kent Collaborative developed a 15-member Kent Food Policy Council (KFPC) to increase access to healthy, affordable foods by addressing nutrition related health inequities. The KFPC conducted an assessment of the food environment in Kent in order to determine recommended strategies to increase access to healthy, affordable foods, including opening a farmers market in East Hill, a neighborhood in Kent with limited access to produce.
- The City of SeaTac partnered with Global to Local, Forterra, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and Cast Architecture to support improved access to healthy food. They worked together to gather community input on the design of a model community garden as a strategy to increase the benefits of urban agriculture and practical implementation of healthy, affordable food.
- King County adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan that integrated many components of the Local Food Initiative.



*Living Well Kent's Shamso Issak shares the collaborative's efforts to increase access to healthy, affordable foods at a community meeting.*

## Next Steps

- City of SeaTac plans to finalize construction of its first community garden. Registration for plots has opened for participants to plant in the spring of 2017.
- King County Comprehensive Plan staff will begin discussions on monitoring and implementation of recently adopted policies including many from the Local Food Initiative.

# Enhancing Access to Direct Market Outlets for Priority Communities

Direct market outlets eliminate geographic barriers to healthy eating by providing access to fresh, affordable produce in a specific community. Many programs use outside subsidies or incentives to offer local produce at a lower cost. Some direct market strategies incorporate activities and community building events such as taste tests, cooking demos and nutrition talks to build knowledge and support community wide culture change around healthy eating.

## 2016 Highlights

- Community organizations ran farm stands throughout the summer and fall in areas where it is harder to access healthy food. Some examples include the Roots of All Roads (ROAR) weekly farm stand in the High Point Community of Seattle, the Delridge CO-OP weekly farm stand in the Delridge neighborhood of Seattle, and Sustainable Renton's monthly "pay what you can" farm stand at the Renton Senior Activity Center.
- Washington CAN!, in partnership with Tilth Alliance, expanded the Good Food Bag program to serve four sites in Auburn. This program provides half price local produce grown on Tilth Alliance's incubator farm to low income community members in a "community supported agriculture" model.
- 21 Acres expanded its Harvest Share program to a new site in Kenmore providing weekly access to local produce for 35 families.



*ROAR ran a 14-week farm stand bringing healthy, affordable produce to the High Point Community.*

## 2016 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Enhancing Access to Direct Market Outlets for Priority Communities

**983** families that participated in the *Good Food Bag*, *Harvest Share*, and *Farm to Go* programs

**7,313** bags of produce distributed



- SeaMar Community Health Centers, with support from the Healthy King County Coalition, built vegetable gardens at two clinics. The gardens teach patients how to grow food, and the harvest supports patients who are identified as food insecure.

## Next Steps

- Seattle Mayor Ed Murray committed to expanding Tilth Alliance's Good Food Bags to 32 sites of the Seattle Pre-school Program in 2017.
- Living Well Kent and the Kent Food Policy Council will create a farmers market in the East Hill neighborhood.



## Engaging Communities to Support Healthy Eating

Food affordability and access continue to be a challenge for many communities. How they impact each neighborhood and community may be different and requires diverse and local perspectives. It is important for community partners to be engaged and have an active voice in developing and implementing potential solutions.

### 2016 Highlights

- Washington CAN! talked with 678 Auburn residents to better understand their ability to access food. They found that food security is a greater challenge for residents of Auburn than most other cities within King County. Over one-third of respondents ran out of money for food and one in five respondents skipped meals due to lack of money. Washington CAN! is working with decision makers to look at the factors that cause food insecurity like low incomes, the rising costs of housing, geographical distance from food markets, and constraints on time.
- The Healthy King County Coalition conducted a series of community listening sessions to better understand how communities perceive sugar sweetened beverages.
- Food Empowerment Education and Sustainability Team (FEEST) youth interns developed and ran a campaign in the White Center and Delridge neighborhoods to raise awareness about access to healthy foods and encourage healthy eating. The campaign was made available in two schools and on buses throughout White Center and Delridge. FEEST convened multiple events with students to promote the campaign message.

### Next Steps

- FEEST is assessing the impact of each of its three campaign messages to determine which message resonated most with students. Based on the outcome of this assessment, FEEST will decide on a policy, system, or environment change to focus on in spring.



*FEEST's youth developed healthy eating campaign launched in March with stickers, posters, buses, and social media.*





# Improving Food Procurement Policies in King County

Large institutions like cities, schools, hospitals, and large employers can have significant impact on the food system with how they purchase food. The scale of their procurements creates or stifles opportunities for the local food economy. Procurement decisions also determine what food is available within that institution. Shifting food procurement policies can greatly increase access to healthy food as well as support the local food economy.



## 2016 Highlights

- Seattle's Farm-to-Table program supported 80 preschool and child care programs in Seattle to place 438 farm orders worth \$91,169 from 43 pesticide-free farms.
- The City of Tukwila's Healthy Tukwila Project (HTP) is working to improve the food environment by changing what is available in its vending machines. They are removing sugary drink vending machines from their facilities and have added water filling stations throughout the community center facilities. HTP identified healthy snacks for its snack vending machines. They also developed healthy food and beverage guidelines for food provided when City of Tukwila staff and community partners rent space for meetings.

## Next steps

- The Healthy Tukwila Project will conduct trainings on the proposed healthy food and beverage guidelines for their staff in March. Following the trainings, they intend to implement the new guidelines.

# LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



**King County**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

**Local Food Initiative**

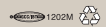
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