



King County Local Food Initiative

A Policy Roadmap for Achieving Regional Food System Goals

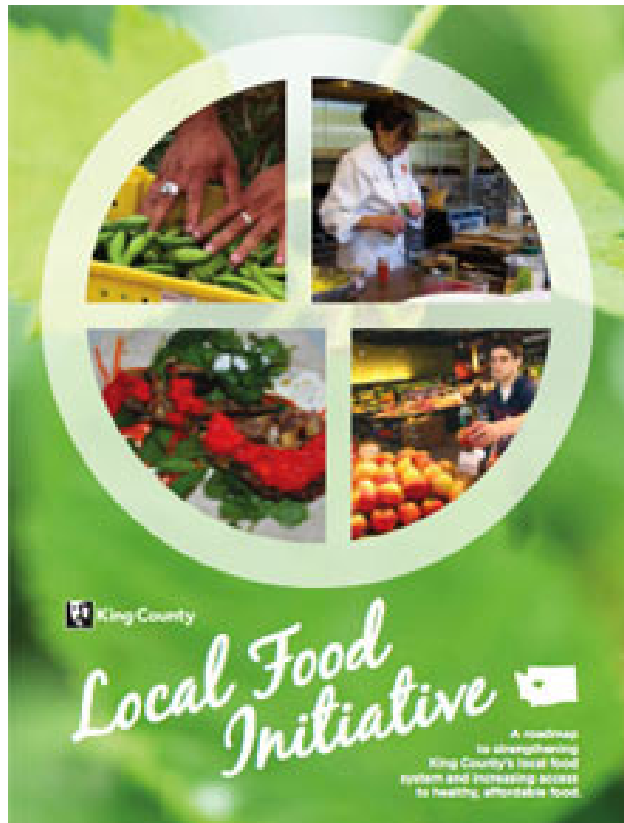
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Agenda

- WHAT IS THE LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE?
- PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTION:
 - FARMLAND ACCESS
 - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
 - INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
 - INCREASING FOOD ACCESS
- HOW DO WE WORK TOGETHER
- EXAMPLE PROJECTS
 - HORSENECK FARM
 - SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY FOOD HUB
- VISION FOR THE FUTURE
- QUESTIONS

Local Food Initiative History



LFI Goals:

The Local Food Initiative aims to (1) build a resilient and sustainable local food system that expands the economic opportunities and viability of local farms and food businesses and (2) increases access to healthy, affordable food for all King County residents

- Developed in 2014 as part of a stakeholder driven process
- 10-year roadmap for achieving food system goals
- Contains targets and action items across a range of food system challenges
- Implementation done by public, private, and non-profit organizations

How do we work together?



LFI Manager

Provides strategic direction around food system priorities, harnessing resources for projects and programs, building strong and sustainable partnerships, and tracking, measuring and communicating progress

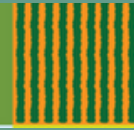
Partners:

Implement and manage projects and programs that contribute to overall LFI goals.

Examples:

WLRD - *Farmland Preservation Program*
Solid Waste - *Food Waste Prevention*
Parks - *CHOMP*

Protecting Farmland, Connecting Communities



One major challenge to maintaining agriculture in KC is the ability of farmers to find affordable land

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Purchase of development rights on high quality farmland keeps land affordable - limits development

WORKING FARMLAND PARTNERSHIP

Multi-stakeholder collaborative that facilitates land connections between farmers and landowners

FARMLAND LEASE PROGRAM

Provides a pathway to farmland for beginning farmers and those that have faced barriers in accessing land

AGRICULTURE DRAINAGE PROGRAM

Provides both technical and financial assistance to help farmers drain lands

Protecting Farmland, Connecting Communities



One major challenge to maintaining agriculture in KC is the ability of farmers to find affordable land

KC FARMLAND LEASE PROGRAM

- Enhance opportunities for farmland access
 - Provide infrastructure to support farm business development and expansion
 - Serve socially disadvantaged & beginning farmers
 - Demonstrate regenerative agriculture practices
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- 5 primary farms
 - Supporting approximately 50 farm businesses in 2022

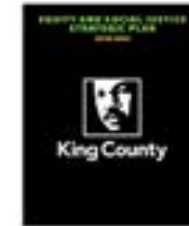


Horseneck Farm in Kent Valley

Project involves transitioning County-owned farm near Kent from a single leaseholder to a shared space, with a focus on communities who have historically faced barriers to land access

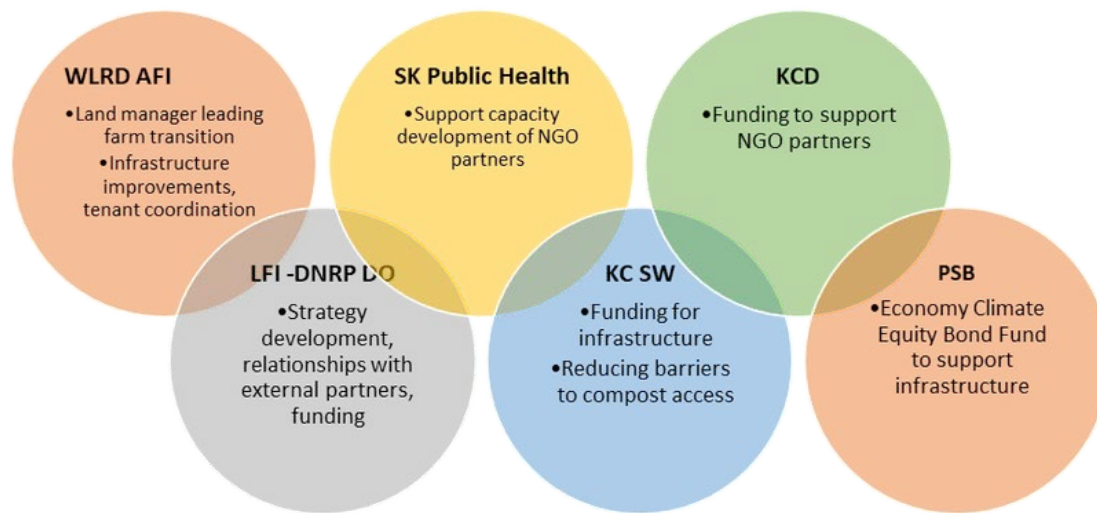


Project supports:



How We Work Together: Horseneck Farm

The project has involved collaboration across a number of different KC Departments and other public agencies



Technical Assistance to Farmers and Food Entrepreneurs

Across the region, service providers deliver training on topics including production practices, business development, new market opportunities, and farmland access



Farm and Food System Infrastructure

- Aggregation, cold storage and processing
- On-farm infrastructure
- Mobile meat processing
- Cooperative development

Much of the regional infrastructure needed to grow our local food economy no longer exists, is in need of improvement, or is not of the proper scale to meet the needs of small farms and food businesses in our region



Shared Use Food Hubs

Kent Food Entrepreneur Center

Will help small businesses grow and connect with target markets, and hunger relief organizations expand their capacity and impact.



South Seattle Community Food Hub

A shared-use, collaborative food facility that brings together food access organizations and regional farm businesses





South Seattle Community Food Hub

Project Objectives

- Increase the capacity and resiliency of hunger relief agencies across the region through shared infrastructure
- Expand access to aggregation, packing, storage and processing infrastructure for regional growers
- Support and promote a more local, just and sustainable food economy by prioritizing BIPOC, Immigrant and Refugee -led and -serving growers and community-based organizations

Project Status

- Facility has been identified (40,000 sq. ft. owned by Food Lifeline)
- Approximately \$5M raised for capital construction
- Project Advisory Committee (PAC) has been actively engaged guiding process
- Timeline:
 - Preconstruction work Q1-2 2023
 - Construction Q3 2023 through Q3 2024
 - Open Q4 2024

New Community Food Hub to Connect Farmers and Hunger Relief Organizations

<https://vimeo.com/780885331>

Increasing Food Healthy Food Access

HOW IS FOOD ACCESS WORK SUPPORTED



- Primarily implemented by NGO and CBO partners
- SK Public Health - Lead implementation partner through grant-funded programs
- LFI - Supports partners in pursuing funding (e.g., Farm to Foodbank), infrastructure projects
- WLRD Ag Team - Supports farmland access for CBOs and NGOs

Support For Farmers Markets

- Training on SNAP, Fresh Bucks and WIC
- Peer-to-peer education and outreach for S. County markets

Healthy Food Banks

- Development of nutrition standards, and healthy food procurement

Stakeholder Coordination and Training

- Bi-weekly King County Emergency Food Coordination call
- Training healthcare providers on food Insecurity

Food Security Assistance Program

- Reduce food insecurity in areas/populations that have lowest income by funding CBOs to distribute food

How We Work Together: Farm to Foodbank

Efforts to develop a strong farm-to-foodbank pipeline have been expanding in King County over the past several years. Projects such as King County Farmers Share and Growing for Good have created a model that allows food banks and other hunger relief organizations to purchase produce directly from local farmers thereby increase the amount, variety, quality, and consistency of local produce available to food insecure King County residents and support local farmers with a consistent, profitable outlet for produce.

KC Farmers Share by the Numbers (2021)

- >150 Farmers Served
- >500 # of Orders Per Month
- >400,000 Disbursed annually

HOW IS F2F WORK SUPPORTED?

- Implementers: Harvest Against Hunger, Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, local farmers, hunger relief orgs
- Funders: King Conservation District, PCC Community Markets, King County CARES Act Funding (2020), King County Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (2021-22)

Communications and Data

A key aspect of local food systems work is promoting partnerships and collaboration through communication and convenings

Annual LFI Report



Regular Convenings of Stakeholders



Monthly LFI Newsletter



Farm King County Data Center



Local Food Connections App



Funding for KC Food Systems Work

KC Food system programs and projects are supported by a broad assortment of funding sources:

- Federal grant programs: E.g., USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development, Local Food Promotion Program, Specialty Crop Block etc.
- The King Conservation District (KCD) Regional Food System Grant Program awards approximately \$700k in grants annually that support the LFI
- General fund support for KC Departments doing work that aligns with and supports LFI goals. E.g., WLRD AFI
- Private philanthropy
- More recently Corona Virus Relief funding (Federal CARES Act and ARPA Funding)

New Project:

KC is a pilot community partner in a project that will result in a food system financing plan for region. Project is a partnership with the Council of Development Finance Agencies and funded by the Kellogg Foundation



Equity and Inclusion



Interrupt Business as Usual

- Agriculture support programs were historically focused on land holders in rural areas = white farmers
- This has required thinking differently about how agriculture and farming are defined and delivered
- More than landlords - partners in farm development

Sharing Power

- Co-manage the farm for success
- Partner on plot location, infrastructure development, support programming

Replace it with Something Better

- Doing more than just leasing farmland - working on community development
- Supporting capacity development for BIPOC-led organizations
- Engaging community in how government works for them
- Model for other communities

Get Comfortable with Discomfort

- Hard conversations about historical land injustices and impact that has had on wealth generation in communities of color
- Building relationships takes a lot of work and time
- The shortest distance to success is not always a straight line
- Still a lot of work to be done to mitigate for past harm

Climate Change and Food Systems

Food systems work touches on all three SCAP sections. Specific areas include:

- Supporting farmland access for traditionally underserved communities
- Strengthening food access and nutrition incentive programs
- Supporting farm management practices that enhance soil health, reduce demand for irrigation water, reduce reliance on chemical inputs
- Explore alternative energy options, and plan for a changing climate





Vision for the Future

Refresh Local Food Initiative in 2023

- Improve alignment with SCAP, ESJ efforts
- Respond to major societal changes that have occurred over last several years - COVID, racial justice reckoning
- Improve coordination and collaboration across County Departments
- Allow us to build on lessons learned
- Integrate new partners engage the full community of stakeholders
- Enable the development of a more robust and meaningful monitoring and evaluation framework
- Integrate the Food Systems Finance Plan that will be completed in early 2023

QUESTIONS?

