

June 1st KC Regional Planning Roundtable

Resources: Community and Urban Gardening



APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning:

<http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm>

“Land Use and Planning Policies to Support Community and Urban Gardening”

(Source: University of California’s Victory Grower’s website)

<http://groups.ucanr.org/victorygrower/files/60611.pdf>

KC Urban Farms and Gardens Tour:

Sunday, June 28, 2009 (Many pre-events listed, as well)

<http://www.urbanfarmstourkc.com/>

Kansas City Food Circle:

(Workshops, networking, calendar of events, support to local farmers)

<http://www.kcfoodcircle.org/>

Kansas City Community Supported Agriculture Coalition:

(A project of the Kansas City Food Circle, created to promote the concept and mission of Community Supported Agriculture)

<http://www.kc-csac.org/>

KC Community Gardens:

(Events and workshop calendar)

<http://www.kccg.org/>

Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture:

(Education and technical assistance to people interested in urban farming)

<http://www.kccua.org/>

Bad Seed: Center for Local Food, Culture, & Community:

(Urban homesteading courses)

<http://badseedfarm.com>

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What If We Really Planned Our Food System?

Newly formed Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition to promote food security through local food policy planning.

By Mary Hendrickson, Ph.D.

We eat every day if we're lucky, sometimes too much, sometimes not the right food for healthy bodies. But most of us don't sit down and really think about our food, about who produced it and how did it end up here? In fact, not much planning for our food goes on despite many of our best efforts; rather, we leave it up to a system of entrepreneurs and interested citizens to get healthy, local food on our tables. But what if we really planned our food system? What if we made sure that we had policies in place that helped local farmers thrive; supported peri-urban land use of diversified orchards and crops and pastures; prioritized urban farms and community gardens, and brought healthy, locally produced food into our schools and hospitals?

In Kansas City, the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition has formed to do exactly that. This group of individuals, organizations, business, and government representatives is "committed to ensuring that there is a healthy, sustainable, and affordable food system for Greater Kansas City" (1). With the guidance and support of KC Healthy Kids (a Kansas City nonprofit), diverse food system stakeholders--such as farmers, school food service directors, educators, institutional buyers, grocers, nutritionists, hunger advocates and others who participate in the Kansas City food system--met regularly for over a year to explore the food system from their particular standpoints. From this dialogue, the idea of a Food Policy Council arose.

Food Policy Councils have developed in many cities, counties and states over the past 20 years as a way to think about food in a holistic way at the community or state level. Essentially they provide a way to plan our food system with the goal that everyone living in a community has the ability to eat healthy, affordable, sustainably produced food. Food policy councils have developed new bus routes that make it easier to access supermarkets, created new marketing channels between farmers and schools, and figured out ways to protect farmland near metro areas to use for food production. Food Policy Councils can be mandated by law, formed by governors or mayors, or developed as a grassroots answer to food system planning. Kansas and Iowa both have state food policy councils, while cities like Hartford, CT, and Nashville, TN, have city-wide ones.

In February 2008, KC Healthy Kids brought food policy expert Mark Winne to Kansas City to explore developing a food policy council. With excitement high, a core group of more than 30 people volunteered to meet to develop a strategic plan for the Greater KC Food Policy Coalition. One year later, a strategic plan for the Coalition was unveiled. It envisions a place where "people of all ages, in all communities, and in all economic segments of the population in Greater Kansas City will have access to healthy, affordable food that nourishes individuals and nurtures communities, the local economy, and the environment." In other words, we want local food production across the KC metro area and its

surrounding rural communities; we want these food products available through local grocers, schools and institutions; and we want everyone, regardless of income or place of residence, eating healthy food. The mission of the Coalition is to “advocate for the Greater Kansas City food system and promote food policies that positively impact the nutritional, economic, social, and environmental health of Greater Kansas City” (1).

The initial focus of the Coalition will be the five Missouri and four Kansas counties included in the Mid-America Regional Council’s service area (the Metro area). First steps are to conduct a community food assessment so we understand the flows of food and money in the area, as well as a policy assessment that will highlight policies and funding to strengthen our local food system. Armed with this information and our existing knowledge, Coalition members will begin the work of educating and informing citizens and policy-makers on policies that can help achieve a sustainable food system. Meanwhile, KC Healthy Kids, which has played a central role in this planning effort from the beginning, is busy finding resources for hiring an advocacy director and developing the infrastructure for the Coalition to achieve its goals.

It’s amazing and encouraging that Kansas City is now going to have a holistic way to coordinate our efforts to build a sustainable food system. At the end of the planning process, KCCUA Executive Director Katherine Kelly and I just looked at each other and clapped in joy. And while the work of developing coherent, comprehensive strategies for ensuring a sustainable food system has yet to be done, this is a moment to pause and be proud that Kansas City is moving onto the map of progressive food cities across the nation!

To learn more about the Greater KC Food Policy Coalition or to get involved, please contact KC Healthy Kids through their website at <http://kchealthykids.org/Initiative-HFPI-Contact/Index.htm>.

(1) <http://kchealthykids.org/Initiative-HFPI-Background/Index.htm>

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