



## CMAP Local Food Chapter Outline

### Preface

The purpose of this food chapter outline is to provide municipal planners with a generalized framework for incorporating local food into a comprehensive plan. Local food strategies and policies can help achieve the overall goals outlined in a community's comprehensive plan.

The CMAP Food Chapter Outline is broken into the following sections:

- Step 1: Defining Local Foods**
- Step 2: Outlining Benefits**
- Step 3: Setting Goals**
- Step 4: Evaluating Current Conditions**
- Step 5: Developing Recommendations**
- Step 6: Next Actions**

This outline will need to be customized for each individual community as not all communities will have the data available or the need to include every component in this document. Each local government should decide which particular components will benefit their community. Furthermore, local food overlaps with other "more traditional" comprehensive plan sections, such as transportation, open space, and environment. Therefore, local food may be a standalone section in a comprehensive plan or may be weaved throughout the plan's other components. Local food may also be included in community's sustainability plan or similar planning effort.

In addition to this outline, a planner will also need to review other research materials, especially in the process of selecting locally appropriate recommendations. Fortunately, there are many resources available to assist on the topic of local food both in our region and throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> This outline is specifically tailored to communities within the seven-county region of northeastern Illinois. Related local issues, data sources, and organizations are included throughout this document for additional assistance. As with other components of a comprehensive plan, public outreach and input will also be needed to ensure that the food-related areas of the plan are in line with the concerns and desires of the community.

The ultimate goal of this document is to assist interested local governments with the implementation of local food strategies in their communities. This starts with the inclusion of local food in their comprehensive plans, moves forward with updating ordinances and codes to reflect those policies, and is truly implemented through projects and programs such as community gardens and farmers' markets.

### About CMAP, GO TO 2040, and Plan Implementation

This food chapter outline is based on the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)'s regional comprehensive plan, GO TO 2040, which includes recommendations on promoting sustainable local

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<sup>1</sup> An appendix with additional resources is provided at the end of this document.

food. CMAP was created in 2005 as the comprehensive regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. On October 13, 2010, leaders of metropolitan Chicago's seven counties voted to adopt GO TO 2040, the region's first comprehensive plan since Daniel Burnham's in 1909. Implementation of the plan is now being led by CMAP. The plan is available at [www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040).

GO TO 2040 is intended to guide development and investment decisions through mid-century and beyond. GO TO 2040 seeks to strategically align public policies and investments, maximizing the benefits of scarce resources as the region adds more than 2 million new residents by 2040. The plan has four themes and 12 recommendations areas:

**Livable Communities.** This theme addresses diverse factors that together shape quality of life in terms of "livability"—what attracts people to a particular community.

1. Achieve Greater Livability through Land Use and Housing
2. Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources
3. Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space
4. Promote Sustainable Local Food

**Human Capital.** This theme addresses factors that determine whether our region's economy will thrive due to availability of skilled workers and a climate in which business creativity can flourish.

5. Improve Education and Workforce Development
6. Support Economic Innovation

**Efficient Governance.** This theme addresses the need for increased effectiveness of governments in the region and beyond, to meet residents' needs regarding accountability and transparency.

7. Reform State and Local Tax Policy
8. Improve Access to Information
9. Pursue Coordinated Investments

**Regional Mobility.** This theme addresses the vitality of our region's transportation system, which is crucial for economic prosperity and overall quality of life. This chapter also includes descriptions of major capital projects that have been carefully selected to help achieve the GO TO 2040 vision.

10. Invest Strategically in Transportation
11. Increase Commitment to Public Transit
12. Create a More Efficient Freight Network

In fall 2010, CMAP received a \$4.25 million grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. On March 9, 2011, following a regionwide call for proposals, CMAP announced the first wave of projects identified for local planning assistance in implementing GO TO 2040 strategies. Projects include the preparation or update of local comprehensive plans, zoning and code updates, studies on topics including housing and water, and many types of plans, as well as assistance with public participation related to challenging projects. As an indication of the significant demand and lack of sufficient capacity for local planning, over 130 applicants submitted more than 220 distinct projects for consideration. The HUD-funded effort is helping fill this gap by making staff resources and grants available to assist with local planning projects that help to implement GO TO 2040, the regional comprehensive plan. Even as these first projects have begun, CMAP is working to prioritize others proposed by municipalities, counties, interjurisdictional

groups, and nongovernmental organizations. The local food chapter outline will be a resource utilized in many of the local technical assistance projects completed through this grant program.

## **The Chapter Outline: Six Steps for Including Local Food in a Comprehensive Plan**

The remainder of this document explains the recommended steps involved in addressing local food in a comprehensive plan.

### **STEP 1: Defining Local Food**

The term “local food” has become a catch-all phrase to describe a variety of different definitions, policies, and actions within a very diverse industry. For this document, local food refers to a product available for direct human consumption that is grown, processed, packaged, and distributed within a certain distance. The distance component is what sets “local” food apart from food that arrives to communities from other regions or other parts of the world. There is much debate about what the ideal distance is to define “local.” Typically the distance ranges from 100 to 300 miles from a community. It can be helpful to set a mileage target as this gives stakeholders a clearer definition of what is considered “local.” However, setting a mileage target can be limiting and may not be necessary to meet the local food goals of a municipality or region. In GO TO 2040, CMAP did not set a mileage target, but instead defined the distance component as “within our seven counties and adjacent regions” making it more a relative term than a set standard.<sup>2</sup>

Ideally, a community would create their own definition of “local food” that would be referenced throughout the planning process. This definition can be formed internally with staff, with partners, through public facilitation or through a combination of these three paths. Once a community has a strong definition of what is meant by the term local food, the discussion can begin about what are the benefits of including their customized version of local food in a comprehensive plan. In some cases, a community will not define local food at all, but simply discuss it in the comprehensive plan. This is an option but is not recommended by CMAP.

Please note that often local food is also defined by policies and strategies such as farmers’ markets, community gardens, urban agriculture, and/or husbandry. These strategies and policies along with the physical local food products form a larger local food system. A local food system is more than the physical food product and includes the land the food grows on, transportation between farm and market, and the creation of markets, among other components. Communities may also wish to define a “local food system” as well as “local food.” For example King County, Washington defines food systems by stating “King County supports food systems that are ecologically and economically sustainable and that improve the health of the county’s residents” and “In addition to the growing of food, the food system includes processing, distribution, food availability, and disposal” in their comprehensive plan.<sup>3</sup>

### **STEP 2: Outlining Benefits**

The decision to include local food into a comprehensive plan likely stems from a combination of several reasons. There may be support from community stakeholders for local food policies and strategies. This support could be triggered for a variety of reasons from general interest to the observation of specific

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<sup>2</sup> GO TO 2040, Promote Sustainable Local Food, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), 2010. <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/local-food-systems>.

<sup>3</sup> 2008 King County Comprehensive Plan with 2010 Update, Adopted October 2, 2008 and updated October 27, 2010. [http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/CompPlan/2008\\_2010update.aspx#chapters](http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/CompPlan/2008_2010update.aspx#chapters)

community issues, such as lack of access to healthy nutritious food. This topic could have also emerged as a strong community desire through general public outreach before and during the comprehensive planning process. In other communities, interest in local food may be generated from municipal officials or staff, who may be interested in local food policies and strategies as a means to achieve other community wide goals such as economic development, land preservation, and/or community character.

For example, during CMAP's GO TO 2040 "Invent the Future" phase of public engagement, issues surrounding local foods such as food access and the environmental impacts of food choices were raised frequently by residents. Furthermore, significant public interest in sustainable local food was also uncovered during research conducted for the food systems report funded by The Chicago Community Trust.<sup>4</sup> Based on this feedback, CMAP elevated local food to one of the key recommendations in the GO TO 2040 plan. Understanding why local food has become a topic of choice in a community will help identify what benefits the community aims to achieve through the inclusion of local food.

The benefits of local food generally fall into one of these three categories: economic, quality of life, and environmental. Including a brief overview of the benefits of local food for your community in the comprehensive plan lays the groundwork for what the community hopes to accomplish through supporting local food. What benefits does your community envision local food will bring? Below are a few examples from each of the three categories.

#### **Economic Benefits**

- Increased and cyclical activity of the local economy through production, processing, and selling directly in the community.
- Turning vacant and underutilized land parcels into tax-paying, profit-producing businesses.
- Improving the quality of vacant and underutilized land parcels (with community gardens, for example), increasing the value of nearby property.
- Creating jobs through increasing production and food access through new food outlets like grocery and corner stores.
- Maintaining community assets such as farmland -- strengthening local food systems can make the preservation of farmland more economically viable than other land uses.

#### **Quality-of-Life Benefits**

- Increased community interaction, culture, and sense of community heritage through local food systems, such as farmers' markets.
- Improving residents' health by offering a variety of food choices in current "food deserts."<sup>5</sup>
- Linking hunger assistance programs with local food systems increases the variety of food choices while supporting local business (for example, farmers' markets that accept LINK cards).

#### **Environmental Benefits**

- Increased stormwater management benefits.
- Potential water quality improvements from reduced pesticide and fertilizer use from sustainable farming practices.
- Potential greenhouse gas emission reduction from decreased food miles.
- Decreased food-related waste through composting.

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<sup>4</sup> Food Systems, June 2009. The Food Systems report was developed by the Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council and City of Chicago Department of Zoning and Planning in collaboration with an advisory committee. The report is commissioned by The Chicago Community Trust to support the 2040 comprehensive regional planning effort led by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

<sup>5</sup> Food deserts are areas that lack access to nearby stores with fresh, nutritious food.

The benefits of a local food system are already widely covered through a variety of local and national sources. For additional resources:

- CMAP: <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/local-food-systems>
- Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs: Growing the Illinois Economy: <http://www.foodfarmsjobs.org/>
- Illinois Dept. of Employment Security: [http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/lmr/oct\\_dec/oct\\_dec3.htm](http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/lmr/oct_dec/oct_dec3.htm)
- Farm Direct: [http://www.illinoisfarmdirect.org/Learn\\_More/buy\\_local.html](http://www.illinoisfarmdirect.org/Learn_More/buy_local.html)
- American Planning Association: <http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm>
- Familyfarmed.org: <http://www.familyfarmed.org/>

### **STEP 3: Setting Goals**

After deciding what benefits will be most suitable for your municipality, setting goals will give direction to the recommendations section of the chapter, influence data collection, and shape the food-related strategies. Goal setting should be done as a public process, gathering input from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. For the food-related goals, public input should be expanded to specifically include farmers, distributors, food outlet (such as grocery store) owners, schools, health departments, and other related non-profits/community groups with similar goals.

Local food goals are more qualitative and describe the how local food will positively impact your community. They are broad in range and define the desired future outcome after local food has become a vibrant asset to the community. For example, the 2006 City of Madison Comprehensive Plan includes the following goal: “Maintain the region’s status as one of the nation’s most productive and economically viable food production areas.”<sup>6</sup> While the City of Richmond includes “Promote expanded access to affordable and nutritious foods for residents through grocery stores, community gardens, urban agriculture and local markets that provide a range of fresh fruits and vegetables to expand nutritional choices” as a local food goal in their comprehensive plan.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, the City of Baltimore states “Establish Baltimore as a leader in sustainable, local food systems” as a goal.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand more quantitative targets and indicators define a specific data points and establish measurable outcomes. A target is a quantitative goal (such as 5 percent of total land use will be urban farms by 2020, measured in acres) based on an indicator (number of acres that are urban farms). Targets and indicators are discussed in more detail in Step 5.

If local food will be weaved throughout the plan instead of having a designated section, there may not be a need for separate goals as local food may be folded into a more general goal such as “Increase the health of residents” or “Expand open space.”

### **STEP 4: Evaluating Current Conditions**

After the goals are established, the next step is evaluating the current condition of local food in your community. Current conditions can include a variety of topics related to local food. In GO TO 2040, the main focus of the local food current conditions section focused on the status of local food production

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<sup>6</sup> City of Madison Comprehensive Plan, 2006.

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/ComprehensivePlan/dplan/v2/chapter6/v2c6.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Community Health and Wellness, City of Richmond General Plan Element 11, pages 11.1-11.18, 2010. Slated for adoption in summer 2011. <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=6791>

<sup>8</sup> Baltimore Sustainability Plan, April 2009.

<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning/OfficeofSustainability.aspx>

and food access in the region, and also included health-related data such as obesity and diabetes rates. However, at the local level these topics may be more difficult to cover because of the lack of local data collection for local food. This is a prominent issue not only for our region but throughout the U.S. If desired, local efforts to collect this data can be conducted using staff, community groups, or other volunteers.

On the positive side, some data are easier to capture at the local level such as socioeconomic and demographic data. Additionally, an ordinance review of local codes and policies that support and hinder local food is most effectively done at the local level. The following pages discuss these topics in more detail.

### **What data could a community include?**

Below is a sample of data that could be used to evaluate the current conditions/status of local food activities and issues. The supporting text addresses why each data topic is useful, potential sources of where that data could be obtained, and how the data can be used in the plan.

Food production and food access data typically are land based and tends to be in the form of an inventory. This is due to the valid assumption that local land is needed for local food production. Similarly how land is used around residential areas affects food access.

#### **A. Food Production Data**

1. **Inventory a community's agricultural land.** This identifies land that is currently in agricultural use. Potential sources of this data can be obtained from the municipal land use inventory, CMAP's land use inventory, or can be derived from current or previous local comprehensive plans. This data general comes in a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) format. If a community does not have local data available, CMAP has a free downloadable land use inventory for the 7-county region.<sup>9</sup> The file will provide land areas that are categorized as agricultural land. This information will give your community an idea of how much agricultural land is within the community.
2. **Inventory the current number of farms in a community.** This identifies the current production capacity. There is not one collective resource for this information. One example of a resource is market websites such as the Illinois Farm Direct<sup>10</sup> that categorize farms by zip code and product. By searching through the zip codes in your community, it is possible to piece together a list of farms. This may not be a complete list but could provide a starting point. The remaining farms can be added through local knowledge of stakeholders and internal data collection. If any rooftop, greenhouses, and indoor farms exist in your community, they should be added as well.

To take this a step further, local research could be conducted to survey what kind of production is taking place. Is it corn and soybeans? Vegetables? This will allow a community to identify not only how many farms but what is being produced to give a more comprehensive view of current production.

3. **Inventory vacant land and parcels.** This identifies potential sites for future local food production including community gardens and farms. This information heavily relies on local data collection and knowledge. Ideally, a community would have an existing GIS inventory of the community's land use and would be able to select out specific vacant sites. The next step would be to take

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<sup>9</sup> Land use Inventory, 2005, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). [www.cmap.illinois.gov/land-use-inventory](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/land-use-inventory).

<sup>10</sup> Illinois Farm Direct, 2011. <http://www.illinoisfarmdirect.org/>.

that base of all vacant properties and then set criteria to help prioritize those properties as to their suitability for local food. The criteria can be set by the community or the community can look to existing criteria set by others; a good example can be found in Reimagining Cleveland.<sup>11</sup>

## B. Food Access Data

1. **Inventory retail local/fresh food outlets.** This identifies current retail outlets for local and fresh food. Retail locations can include farmers' markets, community gardens, local food carts, grocery stores, big box stores, corner markets, etc. Planners are probably already aware if a farmers' market exists in their community. However, it can be good to look at how many farmers' markets there are in surrounding communities as well. For this purpose, the Illinois Department of Agriculture<sup>12</sup> has a list of farmers' markets. To collect data on the other retail outlets mentioned above, local knowledge and data collection will be necessary or in certain cases can be purchased.
2. **Inventory food deserts/low access areas.** This identifies areas that are in need of fresh food. Just as inventorying local food retail outlets allows a community to identify where local food is available, inventorying food deserts or low access areas allows a community to identify where fresh food is not available. Food access usually expands to include not only local food but fresh food as well (fruits, vegetables, etc.). For food access, it is more important to have fresh food, regardless of where it comes from because the purpose is to increase residents' access to fresh, nutritious food, which positively impacts health.

The studies listed below all calculate food deserts or low access areas with similar methodologies, however the level of details vary. CMAP suggests a review of each to decide which is the most appropriate for your community's goals. CMAP used the Chicago State University Study in GO TO 2040 because it was specifically tailored to our region whereas the other two options included national data.

- Chicago State University Study<sup>13</sup>
- Policy Map<sup>14</sup>
- USDA-Food Desert Locator<sup>15</sup>

If a community would like to initiate their own food access/desert study, CMAP recommends further research into the methodologies of the report listed above and well as additional resources.

3. **Inventory of commercial land availability.** This identifies potential sites to support future or expanded grocery stores and other fresh food outlets. Supporting new or expanded retail outlets is one strategy for addressing low access areas and food deserts. Retail outlets include

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<sup>11</sup> Reimagining A More Sustainable Cleveland, December 19, 2008.

[www.cudc.kent.edu/shrink/Images/reimagining\\_final\\_screen-res.pdf](http://www.cudc.kent.edu/shrink/Images/reimagining_final_screen-res.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Farmers' Markets, Illinois Department of Agriculture, 2011. <http://www.agr.state.il.us/markets/farmers/>.

<sup>13</sup> Block, Daniel, Chavez, Noel, and Judy Birgen. "Finding Food in Chicago and the Suburbs, Report of the Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security, Report to the Public," June 3, 2008. The study was funded primarily by a grant from the Searle Funds at the Chicago Community Trust.

<http://www.csu.edu/nac/documents/reporttothepublic060308.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> PolicyMap, Supermarket Study of Low Access Areas (LAA), The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), 2011.

[www.policymap.com/our-data.html#](http://www.policymap.com/our-data.html#).

<sup>15</sup> Food Desert Locator, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2011.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/>.

grocery stores, food cooperatives, big box stores, corner stores, etc. Inventorying available commercial parcels and then matching that data with food desert areas could provide several potential commercial sites that could address food desert issues, as well as provide economic development for a community. These sites can be included in the recommendations section of the comprehensive plan. The data for the inventory would most likely come from the local planning department (land use/existing database) or other government staff.

### **C. Health-Related Data**

In GO TO 2040, CMAP included information on the percentage of overweight and obese residents in the region, as well as some basic national health statistics such as the estimate of people with Type 2 diabetes. However, overweight and obesity statistics are usually not available at the local level. It can still be useful to provide general information about current health trends at the national and county level to provide context and support for local food.

County level obesity and diabetes estimates can be found on the Center for Disease Control website.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, this website provides county level estimates for diagnosed diabetes, obesity, and physical inactivity.

### **D. Socioeconomic and Demographic Data**

Socioeconomic and demographic data can be downloaded on the Census 2010 website down to the Census Block level, the smallest level of Census data.<sup>17</sup> Although this information may already be gathered for the larger comprehensive planning effort, these data are especially helpful for gathering information about populations living in an identified food desert. Often ethnicity, race, age, and median income are included in food desert and low access area studies.

### **E. Ordinance and Policy Review**

Perhaps the most important step a community can take to promote local food is undertaking a full ordinance review. This entails reviewing all ordinances that affect the production, packaging, transporting, marketing, selling, and buying of local food products. An ordinance review helps to identify specific institutional barriers that may be inhibiting the prosperity of local food at the residential, community, and commercial level. While the specific ordinances language is likely to be different in each community, below are few common topics and sample questions to ask as a community gets started.

- Landscaping requirements for homeowners/HOAs: Is having a food garden in the front yard prohibited?
- Land purchase policies: Can land be purchased to produce local food with minimal restrictions?
- Land use policies: Are community and commercial gardens a valid land use?
- Commercial accessory buildings: Are greenhouses permitted?
- Nuisance restrictions: Can a resident raise chickens, bees, or other small animals?

Furthermore, it is also useful to review county ordinances especially the public health ordinances that pertain to processing, packaging, and selling food. These ordinances are designed to protect the health of the county's residents but can present some opportunities to further promote local food without compromising a community's health. Below are the links to each county Public Health Department's food-related ordinances.

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<sup>16</sup> Diabetes Data & Trends, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011. <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DDTSTRS/default.aspx>.

<sup>17</sup> United States Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010. <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>.

Cook County: <http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/public-health-laws>

DuPage County: <http://www.dupagehealth.org/food-safety>

Kane County: <http://kanehealth.com/PDFs/Food/FoodSafety/KaneHealthSanitationDoc.pdf>

Kendall County: <http://health.co.kendall.il.us/Environmental/FoodProtection/foodindcode1.html>

Lake County: <http://www.lakecountyil.gov/Health/publications/Pages/Ordinances.aspx>

McHenry County: <http://www.co.mchenry.il.us/departments/health/Pages/EHFPP.aspx>

Will County: <http://www.willcountyhealth.org/en/do.jsp?id=53>

In addition to reviewing ordinances, a community should be aware of existing Farmland Preservation Programs at the county level. Kane, McHenry, and Kendall Counties all have such programs. Farmland Preservation Programs are potential sources that can be used to protect current agricultural land for future use. Currently the large majority of farms in the seven-county region produce corn and soybeans. Even though agricultural land may not be used for local food production now, it could be in the future if the owner decides to transition. This is important because in order for a community to produce food locally, land needs to be available in the community.

Lastly, being aware of national and state legislation that includes topics related to local food is helpful as it could provide opportunities (grant money) and affect what recommendations your community chooses for the comprehensive plan.

#### **Does your community need to include all of these data?**

It is important to gather data that will be useful for evaluating your community's local food goals (as defined earlier in the process, Step 3). With more data, plan recommendations can be informed decisions and more accurately identify what strategies will be necessary to achieve the community's goals. It should be noted that this document does not include an exhaustive list of potential data topics or sources. Additional information may be needed and available to provide support to the local food goals.

#### **After all the data is collected, what is the next step?**

After a community has finished collecting data on the current conditions of local food, a section should be crafted that pulls together all of the gathered data to form a comprehensive "snapshot" of local food as it exists now in the community.

Page 146 of the GO TO 2040 plan<sup>18</sup> provides an example of a local food current conditions section. Please note that the current conditions of local food could also be included in an expanded version of current conditions for the entire comprehensive plan if local food is not a standalone topic.

#### **Is the current conditions section similar to a community food assessment?**

Community food (security) assessments are becoming increasingly popular for those communities and organizations interested in pursuing local food. A food assessment is a standalone project that looks at the entire local food system from production, packaging, distribution, and retailers to consumers. The assessment collects and analyzes data, collects public input, and implements the findings with the purpose of increasing food security. Often focus groups, food retailer surveys, onsite land use analysis, and food specific public meetings are employed to collect more detailed local food information. This outline includes some of the same data topics and analysis options that are found in a food assessment. However not all food assessment topics such as food affordability, local food infrastructure, household food security as covered. For this reason a comprehensive plan is not meant to take the place of a

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<sup>18</sup> GO TO 2040, Promote Sustainable Food Systems, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), 2010. <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/local-food-systems>.

community food assessment but rather to complement it. If your community is interested in preparing a food assessment along with incorporating local food in your community's comprehensive plan, there are several resources that can help to provide direction.<sup>19</sup>

## Step 5: Developing Recommendations

Although the specific recommendations are going to be largely based on the issues and goals applicable at the local level, there are three basic areas the recommendations are likely to fall in: recommendations that seek to increase production, recommendations that seek to increase food access, and recommendations that seek to raise awareness. These areas are based on the Implementation Action Areas identified in the GO TO 2040 plan's Promote Sustainable Local Food section.

### Recommendations that increase production of local food

These recommendations will answer the question of how a community will support local food production. There are several strategies that can be used to potentially increase production.

- **Create zoning codes and ordinance language that supports (and does not hinder) local food production.** After reviewing the documents for the current conditions section and engaging in outreach to local food practitioners, farmers, and other interested parties, there will likely be a few updates/changes to the codes and ordinances that would maintain food safety standards and benefit both the community and the needs of the interested parties.

Additionally, a community can choose to adopt a local food ordinance. Most recently, these types of ordinances have focused on urban agriculture. One example of how zoning can be used to promote local food production is the creation of local food districts within municipal boundaries. In 2007, Cleveland, Ohio created what are known as "urban garden districts." These districts were established to appropriately locate and protect community and market (commercial) gardens to "meet needs for local food production, community health, community education, garden-related job training, environmental enhancement, preservation of green space, and community enjoyment on sites for which urban gardens represent the highest and best use for the community and market gardens."<sup>20</sup> More information about other municipalities that have adopted local food ordinances is provided at the end of this document.

- **Repurpose appropriate vacant lots and other underutilized land to food production.** Generally, every city has some sites that are not meeting their full-functional potential. Even though not all vacant and underutilized land will be appropriate for local food production, ideally some appropriate sites were identified in Step 2. Those identified sites could be the basis for a plan recommendation as priority local food sites.
- **Create incentives for farmers and practitioners to either increase their current local food production or transition to local food.** These incentives could be in the form of a tax break such as a property tax rebate as was done in Woodbury County, Iowa, or a similar method.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Cohen, Barbara, IQ Solutions, Inc. Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit, Electronic Publications from the Food Assistance & Nutrition Research Program, United States Department of Agriculture, July 1, 2002. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan02013/> and Community Food Assessment Guide, Community Food Security Coalition, 2002. [http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa\\_guidebook.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_guidebook.html).

<sup>20</sup> City of Cleveland, Part Three-Zoning Code, Title VII-Chapter 336-Urban Garden District, complete to December 31, 2010. [http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/clevelandcodes/cco\\_part3\\_336.html](http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/clevelandcodes/cco_part3_336.html).

<sup>21</sup> Welcome to Our Organic & Local Food Friendly Community, Woodbury County, Iowa, 2011. [http://www.woodburyorganics.com/Woodbury\\_Organics/Main.html](http://www.woodburyorganics.com/Woodbury_Organics/Main.html).

The specific incentive would have to be decided on at the local level taking into the consideration the current taxing system.

Another method to consider is working with local institutions such as schools and municipal buildings with cafeterias to procure a certain percentage of local food. Having an official, stable contract with a municipality or school district can incentivize local farmers to produce more food for local consumption. Similar recommendations are already present at the state level. The 2009 Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act<sup>22</sup> established a 20-percent institutional procurement goal for state agencies and a 10-percent goal for state funded institutions such as schools by 2020. The act gives preference and incentives for local food by permitting agencies and institutions to pay a 10-percent premium for contract bids that include local farms or local food products over similar non-local food bids.

### **Recommendations that increase access to healthy and/or local food**

These recommendations will answer the question of how your community will support food access. There are several strategies that can be used to potentially increase access. These are more general ideas that will need to be customized at the local level.

- **Create incentives to increase fresh food retail outlets.** One example of an incentive system is called fresh food financing, an emerging strategy that both supports local food production and provides greater access to fresh food. Pennsylvania has developed a model that other states, like Illinois, are considering. In 2004, the Pennsylvania Food Financing Initiative began as a public, private, and nonprofit collaboration. With an initial state investment of \$30 million, the program leveraged an additional \$165 million dollars in private investment to fund supermarket and fresh food outlet projects in underserved areas. This resulted in access to nutritious food for 400,000 people and created or retained 5,000 jobs.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, Illinois has recently created (but has not yet funded) a \$10 million Fresh Food Fund to increase fresh food access and stimulate supermarket and grocery store development in underserved areas by assisting with land acquisition, equipment purchases and infrastructure.<sup>24</sup> Communities can adopt a complimentary program at the local level to incent developers to build food retail outlets in the communities low access areas. For example, the City of Chicago provided \$5.5 million dollars in assistance by selling city-owned land, appraised for \$6.5 million, for \$1 million to Pete's Fresh Market to open a 55,170 square foot full service grocery store on the near west side. The new store will provide 120 full-time and 30 part-time jobs. Other communities may wish to consider similar types of incentives.

- **Link hunger assistance programs to local food.** Every year nearly 700,000 people in the region rely on food banks and other anti-hunger programs for basic food needs.<sup>25</sup> Linking local food policy with anti-hunger strategies can provide mutual support to both systems. For example, linking urban agriculture programs with food pantries could combine solutions to provide workforce development, increase nutritional education, and mitigate hunger. Similar synergies can already be found in our region. Ginkgo Organic Gardens in Chicago donates all vegetables,

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<sup>22</sup>Illinois Public Act 096-0579, "Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act," Effective Date 08/18/2009.  
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0579>.

<sup>23</sup> Policy Link, The Food Trust, and The Reinvestment Fund, "A National Fresh Food Financing Initiative: An Innovative Approach to Improve Health and Spark Economic Development," 2010.  
[http://www.thefoodtrust.org/catalog/download.php?product\\_id=168](http://www.thefoodtrust.org/catalog/download.php?product_id=168).

<sup>24</sup> The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "Illinois Approves Spending for Fresh Food Fund," 2010.

<sup>25</sup> GO TO 2040 Hunger Strategy Report, 2009. <http://goto2040.org/hunger/>.

herbs, fruit, and flowers, approximately 1,500 pounds a year, to Uptown-area nonprofit organizations such as the Vital Bridges' GroceryLand, a food pantry dedicated to serving low-income residents living with AIDS.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, communities could permit and encourage the use of public assistance (LINK benefits) at farmers' markets and other outlets for local, fresh products.<sup>27</sup> To support this effort, Illinois passed the Farmers' Market Technology Improvement Program Act in 2010<sup>28</sup>, which established a fund to provide financial assistance for equipment (such as electronic benefit transfer [EBT] card readers) and transaction fees to facilitate the use of LINK benefits at farmers' markets and other alternative retail locations. Additional benefits such as "double voucher" programs to increase the affordability of local food at these locations and outreach to recipients to utilize these new locations may also be needed.<sup>29</sup>

- **Support local food demonstration programs.** Communities can support and/or expand the diversity of demonstration programs that provide better food access in food deserts, such as farmers' markets, farm carts and stands, fresh food delivery trucks, food cooperatives, on-site school programs, direct sales from community vegetable gardens, and other alternative retail options. On-site school farms could also be used to increase access and develop a local food curriculum.

### **Recommendations that increase the raise awareness about local food**

These recommendations will answer the question of how your community will raise awareness about local food. There are several strategies that can be used to increase awareness. Awareness needs to be approached broadly, including not only residents but also business owners, public officials, local organizations, and municipal staff.

- **Support for more data collection and research.** Local food is still an emerging topic for planners and the larger policy community. There is often a lack of local food-related data at the local level, as communities probably discovered during Step 4 of this document. The comprehensive plan could recommend that the municipality allocate more resources for local food data collection and research. Perhaps the community would like to recommend that a full food assessment<sup>30</sup> be performed expand the community's local food knowledge. Over the last couple of years, there has been a great increase in data at the national and regional level especially on food deserts. However the most useful data for your community will be collected at the local level. It may also be beneficial to partner with local government agencies, universities, and colleges to collaborate on data collection.
- **Create a public information campaign to support local food initiatives.** A public information campaign can raise the awareness about what is local food and why it is good for your community. For example, information about the community benefits of local food can be posted on your community's website. Furthermore, a community can host an event to celebrate local food. This could even include a tour of a local farm or some other form of agrotourism. A community could partner with a local organization or a school to provide

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<sup>26</sup> Ginkgo Organic Gardens, 2011. <http://www.ginkgogardens.org>.

<sup>27</sup> Illinois LINK Card, Illinois Department of Human Services, 2011. <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30371>.

<sup>28</sup> Illinois Public Act 096-1088, "Farmers' Market Technology Improvement Program Act," Effective date 07/19/2010. <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-1088>.

<sup>29</sup> August Schumacher, Rachel Winch, and Angel Park, "Fresh, Local, Affordable: Nutrition Incentives at Farmers' Markets 2009 Update," Wholesome Wave Foundation, November, 2009. <http://wholesomewave.org/wp-content/uploads/winch-full.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Food assessment is described in Step 4.

information on where food comes from. If your community already has a farmers' market, the market could also be an avenue to interact with the general public. Creativity and knowing what your community's residents and stakeholders will respond to will provide an advantage in this area.

### **Defining Indicators and Targets**

After completing local food recommendations, communities can consider selecting indicators and associated targets to track progress of the chapter. Indicators are data that are aligned with a community's local food goals. Ideally indicators would be publically available data that is produced at regular intervals; however, at the local level, this will be hard to come by unless the data collection is happening internally. Targets are set as the desired outcome that would signify that a goal has been reached. In GO TO 2040, for example, CMAP wanted to measure the region's progress towards a sustainable local food system. One indicator is the percentage of the region's population living in a food desert, which is currently around 9 percent or 700,000 residents. The target is to have 0 percent of the population living in a food desert in 2040. In total, GO TO 2040 had three indicators and one target for local food.<sup>31</sup> Another example is the City of Richmond that includes the "proportion of population within ½ mile of a full-service grocery store or fresh produce market, by neighborhood" as a local food indicator among others.<sup>32</sup> An in-depth look at local food indicators can be found in the Eating Here, Great Philadelphia's Food System Plan.<sup>33</sup>

It should be noted that some communities will simply fold food-related recommendations into larger comprehensive plan topics such as health, quality of life, and environment. To date, this has in fact been the most common approach. Ultimately, it will be up to the community how they would prefer to incorporate local food.

### **STEP 6: Next Actions**

Now that the comprehensive plan is complete, the hard work continues with implementation of the plan. Based on a community's specific recommendations, implementation will be different for each community. However, there are a few circumstances that will be similar -- one of which is identifying funding to assist with implementation. Below are a couple of resources that may be helpful in obtaining funding for local food-related programs and projects.

- USDA Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food's Grants, Loans, & Support: <http://tinyurl.com/29afjfn>
- Fresh Taste's Grants Database: <http://tinyurl.com/44zko8j>

The second similar circumstance could be the need to update your community's ordinances and codes to reflect the plan's local food recommendations. CMAP is currently in the process of producing a model local food ordinance to assist with this component of implementation. It should be completed by mid-2012. In addition, there are several examples of municipal ordinances and codes that are in place right now that support local food. A list of municipalities that have already either updated their existing

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<sup>31</sup>GO TO 2040, Promote Sustainable Local Food, Indicators and Targets, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) page 149, 2010. <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/local-food-systems>.

<sup>32</sup>Richmond General Plan Update, Issues & Opportunities Paper #8: Community Health and Wellness, DRAFT, City of Richmond, 2007. <http://www.healthycommunitiesbydesign.org/docManager/1000000125/Existing%20Condictions%20Report%20August%202007.pdf>

<sup>33</sup>Eating Here Greater Philadelphia's Food System Plan, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, February 2011. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/10063.pdf>.

ordinances and codes or created local food ordinances are listed at the end of this document. They can provide guidance for your community.

As stated above, the ultimate goal of this document is to assist interested local governments with the implementation of local food strategies in their community. This starts with the inclusion of local food in a community's comprehensive plan, moves forward with updating ordinances and codes to reflect those policies, and is truly implemented through projects and programs such as community gardens and farmers' markets. This Local Food Chapter Outline covers the basic steps to include local food in a comprehensive plan. However additional research and modifications will likely be necessary to accommodate local conditions. The Appendix includes additional local food resources.

# Appendix: Resources for Local Food

## Local Food in Local and County Plans

- [Baltimore, Maryland](#)
- [Berkeley, California](#)
- [Cleveland, Ohio](#)
- [Dane County, Wisconsin](#)
- [Evanston, Illinois](#)
- [Kansas City, Michigan:](#)
- [King County, Washington](#)
- [Madison, Wisconsin](#)
- [Marin County, California](#)
- [Richmond, California](#)
- [San Francisco, California](#)

## Local Food in Local Ordinances and Policies

- [Austin, Texas](#)
- [Baltimore, Maryland](#)
- [Boston, Maine](#)
- [Bothell, Washington](#)
- [Chattanooga, Tennessee](#)
- [Cleveland, Ohio](#)
- [Evanston, Illinois](#)
- [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#)
- [San Antonio, Texas](#)
- [Seattle, Oregon](#)
- [Vancouver, British Columbia](#)
- [Washington, D.C.](#)

Many of the above links were compiled from a document produced by the Urban Agriculture Committee Meeting for the Community Food Security Coalition, September 10, 2009.

## Local Food in Current State and Regional Plans and Guides

- CMAP-GO TO 2040: [Promote Sustainable Local Food](#)
- American Planning Association: [Food Systems](#)
- Liberty Prairie Foundation: [Building Communities with Farms](#)
- Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission: [Local Food Assessment and Plan](#)
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission: [Food Systems Planning](#)
- Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force: [“Local Food, Farms, & Jobs: Growing the Illinois Economy”](#)

## Programs and Reports

- [Let’s Move! Campaign](#)
- [Illinois Farm to School Programs](#)
- The Reinvestment Fund: [Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative](#)

- Dave Swenson, Department of Economics, Iowa State University, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture: “[Selected Measures of the Economic Values of Increased Fruit and Vegetable Production and Consumption in the Upper Midwest.](#)”
- Policy Link and The Food Trust: “[The Grocery Gap, Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters Report](#)”
- American Planning Association: [Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places.](#) Planning Advisory Service, Report number 563, 2011.

#### **Local Organizations in Northeastern Illinois**

- [Advocates for Urban Agriculture](#)
- [Angelic Organics](#)
- [Angelic Organics Learning Center](#)
- [Backyard Bounty Chicago](#)
- [Blacks in Green \(BIG\)](#)
- [Center for Urban Transformation](#)
- [Chicago Botanic Garden - Windy City Harvest](#)
- [Chicago Conservation Corps](#)
- [Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council](#)
- [Chicago Honey Co-op](#)
- [Chicago Permaculture Meetup Group](#)
- [Chicago Sustainable Business Alliance](#)
- [Cob Connection](#)
- [Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children](#)
- [Delta Institute](#)
- [Faith In Place](#)
- [Familyfarmed.org](#)
- [Fresh Taste](#)
- [Garfield Park Conservatory](#)
- [Good Earth Food Alliance - W. Central IL](#)
- [Green Chicago Restaurant Co-op](#)
- [Green City Market](#)
- [Greencorps Chicago](#)
- [Growing Home](#)
- [Growing Power](#)
- [Healthy Schools Campaign](#)
- [Healthy South Chicago](#)
- [Illinois Stewardship Alliance](#)
- [Imagine Englewood If](#)
- [Little Village Environmental Justice Organization](#)
- [Midwest Permaculture](#)
- [NeighborSpace](#)
- [OPENLANDS](#)
- [Operation Frontline Chicago](#)
- [Prairie Crossing -- a conservation community](#)
- [Resource Center :: City Farm](#)
- [Seven Generations Ahead](#)
- [Slow Food Chicago](#)
- [Slow Food USA](#)
- [Springfield Locavore](#)

- [Sustain Illinois](#)
- [Sweet Beginnings](#)
- [The Land Connection](#)
- [The Organic Gardener](#)
- [The Talking Farm](#)
- [University of Illinois Extension](#)
- [Urban Habitat Chicago](#)