

Sustainable Food Policy Board

WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation: The Creation of a “Local Food Guide”

Whereas, area sustainable and organic farmers have testified at several meetings of the City of Austin/Travis County’s Sustainable Food Policy Board that their income has dropped with the recent proliferation of farmers’ markets because their customer base has not increased. Farmers report they are having to work double the number of markets to make the same income. (See recent farmer survey citing need for more consumer customers, Sue Beckwith Consulting.)

Whereas, the City of Austin’s Economic Development office found: that Austin’s burgeoning local food scene is a key element in the city’s overall tourism asset package (visitor food spending was about \$2.5 billion in 2012); and the dollar value of locally-grown food was \$1.3 million in 2007;and it recommended that the city provide economic development support to local farmers.

Whereas, there is no organization in Austin dedicated to helping provide all sustainable and organic farmers with marketing support to build healthy communities through connections to local food.

Whereas, Buy Local campaigns in cities, regions and states across the country (e.g., Western Pennsylvania, Portland, Northeast Massachusetts, Central Indiana, Western North Carolina, Georgia,) have successfully increased support for their area organic and sustainable farms with the creation of “Local Food Guides”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board recommends that the Austin City Council allocate \$10,000 from each of three city departments -- Health and Human Services, Economic Development, and the Sustainability Office -- to create the first “Local Food Guide” and public awareness campaign to help City of Austin and Travis County residents buy directly from their local farmers.

In addition, efforts should be made to assess and utilize existing low-cost city communication resources to create an “Ad Council” types of public awareness, such as: easy-to-find farmer information on the city website, inserts in utility bills, social media, emails to city employees.

This campaign will collaborate with regional leaders in food and farming enterprise to ensure surrounding areas and counties support local, sustainable and organic farmers who feed Austin.