



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Sustainable Food Policy Board

Recommendation Number: (20130528-5A4)

SFPB Clarification of Recommendations Related to the Economic Impact Analysis

WHEREAS, the recently released Economic Impact of Austin's Food Sector report found that the aggregate economic activity multiplier for Austin's food sector is 1.86, meaning that a dollar of direct activity creates an additional \$0.86 of indirect and induced activity; that consumer demand for local food products is very strong and growing; and that the expansion of cost-competitive agriculture, as well as increased food-related processing and production, is a logical economic development target for the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Food Policy Board (SFPB) recognizes that recommendations made in the report, such as working toward establishing a permanent mixed-use market, can have significant positive local economic impacts in the long run, primarily if farmers help structure it and the majority of what is offered is sourced from local producers and artisans; and

WHEREAS, in order to reach long-term goals for an economically robust food sector, our local base of relevant resources (e.g., land, infrastructure, training and market development) must be secured and strengthened in partnership with community organizations and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the SFPB recognizes this report focuses on food sector-related economic impact and development, in order to ameliorate issues related to food insecurity, hunger and impact the lives of the 181,765 people living in poverty in Travis County, where children represent 25% who live below the poverty threshold, economic and spatial access to a diverse and sustainable supply of fresh, culturally appropriate foods are urgent needs in parts of Austin and the surrounding areas and ensuring that access must be a priority in order to have a just, healthy and environmentally viable city;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sustainable Food Policy Board recommends that the Austin City Council and the Travis County Commissioners Court allocate the resources and staff direction necessary in the 2013-2014 fiscal year to accomplish the following priorities:

Create infrastructure and facilities, such as cold storage, processing facilities and distribution systems, to help local farms and food manufacturers reach more customers by:

- offering financial incentives - including investment capital - to independently-owned supply - chain businesses that will effectively move local food into mainstream markets;
- helping professional farmers establish a permanent space for a farmer-run market;
- ensuring adequate staffing and program budgets to partner with private, nonprofit, and public

entities to facilitate the successful establishment of regional food hubs that aggregate, distribute, and/or process locally produced food.

Encourage supporting local farmers through incentives, access to land and water, and training to help them increase their customer base by:

- providing opportunities and incentives for institutions, city government, traditional grocery chains and other food retail businesses to purchase locally from area farmers.
- providing guidance and making resources available to local farms and their farmer training initiatives that expand their markets and strengthen their businesses;
- ensuring that farmers have access to a reliable water supply as a primary input;
- developing a new farmer incubator led by experienced, professional farmers in partnership with local organizations that utilizes public land and creates necessary infrastructure for job training, production and sale of agricultural products;
- designating land parcels in the city and county, particularly those that contain prime agricultural soils, to be preserved for sustainable agriculture in perpetuity and by establishing mechanisms to do so with land trusts and other private and public entities.

Implement innovative and proven practices that improve access to healthy and local foods and reduce hunger in our community by:

- creating a long-term, strategic communications plan to promote healthy, local and culturally relevant foods based on proven social messaging, interactive, and health communication best practices in conjunction with underserved communities in Austin and Travis County;
- increasing funding for existing city/county and community food programs and resources that make financial assistance available (e.g., SNAP, WIC) and distribute food to those with difficulty accessing existing retail food establishments due to transportation, income or physical barriers;
- making farmers markets and farm stands sustainable, accessible and affordable venues for getting high quality, culturally appropriate food to all residents throughout the city by minimizing zoning barriers and permitting processes/fees, making technology for redeeming nutrition assistance benefits mandatory and providing incentives through financial, outreach, and technical support;
- partnering with local nonprofit organizations, businesses (e.g., farms and grocers), and institutions to increase availability of sustainably produced and healthy food in areas that currently lack access through mobile markets and farm stands, green carts, and bricks and mortar food retail (including full-service supermarkets);
- strategically improving public transportation, and pedestrian and bike amenities that will remove physical barriers to groceries, farmers markets, and other food retail;
- building a more diverse, skilled and justly paid local food sector and workforce.

Date of Approval: 28th of May 2013

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 10-0 vote

Attest: _____


(Staff or board member can sign)