



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board

Recommendation Number: (20140811-6C6) Healthy Food Retail Initiative

WHEREAS, the Austin / Travis County Community Health Assessment, published in 2013, reported that 8.7% of Travis County's low-income population does not live within a mile of a grocery store, and 2010 food insecurity data indicates that 16.6% of the Travis County population experiences limited or uncertain access to adequate food.

WHEREAS, a report published by Policy Link and The Food Trust entitled *The Grocery Gap* presents data that clearly indicates the link between better access to healthy food and healthier eating, showing that healthy food retail can reduce the economic and other impacts of poor health within a community and can create jobs.

WHEREAS, a case study of The Food Trust's work, *Philadelphia's Healthy Corner Store Initiative 2010-2012*, underscores the importance of healthy food access through corner stores, and suggests offering small incentives, training and technical assistance for store owners, and marketing and promotional support. With an investment in a similar "healthy food retail" initiative in Austin, we can improve access to healthy food while fulfilling stated goals of Imagine Austin and the Austin / Travis County Community Health Improvement Plan and building on ongoing community-based work and assets.

WHEREAS, the Vision of Imagine Austin indicates that a key aspect of livability is that Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods, and includes under the creation of a Healthy Austin Program to promote healthy foods, and to encourage successful formation and patronage of healthy food retail establishments (Imagine Austin, pp. 205-06) as recommended strategies to achieve in the short term.

WHEREAS, the Austin / Travis County Year-2 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) draft includes Strategy 2.2.3 to "incentivize private enterprise to provide healthy, nutritious, and affordable food by establishing full-service grocery stores in low-income communities" as part of the priority area focused on access to healthy foods in our built environment.

WHEREAS, the Austin / Travis County Health and Human Services Department Chronic Disease Prevention and Control program in conjunction with several community organizations and through the

CDC Community Transformation Grant has secured training, technical assistance, and resource materials from nationally-recognized organization The Food Trust in support of a Healthy Food Retail Initiative.

WHEREAS, ongoing efforts associated with the GO! Austin / VAMOS! Austin (GAVA) initiative, the Alliance for African American Health in Central Texas, and Manantial de Salud are building community capacity to improve healthy food access in retail stores by applying Food Trust training in neighborhood based approaches. And, Austin Interfaith Network has identified healthy food incentives for local businesses in South Austin as a funding priority for the City of Austin's FY 2014-15 budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board recommends an investment by the City of Austin of \$121,000 to fund creation and implementation of Phase 1 of a multi-year City of Austin Healthy Food Retail Initiative. This funding includes support for a part-time coordinator in an appropriate city Department, to be determined by the Austin City Manager, as well as materials and supplies for increasing fresh fruit and vegetable retail in 10 corner stores.

Date of Approval: August 11th, 2014

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 7-0 vote

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Martinez", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.