



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020

Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is: to serve as an advisory body to the City Council and Travis County Commissioners Court concerning the need to improve the availability of safe, nutritious, locally, and sustainably-grown food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need, by coordinating the relevant activities of city and county government, as well as nonprofit organizations, and food and farming businesses.

The Board shall:

- a) monitor the availability, price and quality of food throughout the Austin and Travis County areas;
- b) collect data on the food security (i.e., access to an affordable, diversified local food supply) and the nutritional status of city residents;
- c) inform city and county policy makers, administrators, and the public at large about the status of the region's food system and food security;
- d) monitor and analyze the administration of city and county food and nutrition programs;
- e) explore new means for the city and county to improve the local food economy, the availability, sustainability, accessibility, and quality of food and our environment, and assist city and county departments in the coordination of their efforts;
- f) review availability and recommend measures to promote the preservation of agricultural land in the City of Austin and Travis County; and
- g) recommend to the city and county adoption of measures that will improve existing local food production and add new programs, incentives, projects, regulations, or services.

1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

Over the course of the 2019-2020 year, the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board (ATCFPB) conducted a participatory strategic planning process completed in August 2019 to review priorities and create strategic goals tied to the board's working groups and better act on the ATCFPB mandate to evaluate and monitor residents' access to an affordable, diversified local-food supply and recommend measures to improve food security and nutrition. The result of this meeting was adapted working groups, redefined to better achieve the goals and metrics define by each group.

The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing impacts on the food system had large impacts on the board's work. Broadly, the board continued to concentrate on reducing food insecurity, increasing food access, strengthening economic vitality, social equity and natural resource protection in our local food system by engaging community stakeholders and expertise through working groups. However, the pandemic also necessitated shifts from the planned work and strategic directions identified during the annual planning session. A new working group was convened at the start of the shelter in place order in March of 2020 to consider the policy responses to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food system.

The work over the last year and pandemic informed board recommendations to policy makers summarized below. Over the course of the 2019-2020 year, the board made the following recommendation to the Austin City Council:

- Recommendation 20190909-5ii1: Charitable Feeding Organization Permit
- Recommendation 20191125-5aiii3: Food Systems PB and LDC Rewrite
- Recommendation 20200511-3.a.iv.i: Funding for Food and Equity
- Recommendation 20200612_4.c.v.i: COVID-19 Food System Response

And received to following presentations to the board:

- City of Austin, Parks and Recreation Department, Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager PARD Planning, Long Range Plan
- Capital Impact Partners, Olivia Rebanal, Overview of Community Development Financing Institutions and the role of Good Food Funds
- Chris Schreck, City of Austin Economic Development Department
- Dee Dee Quinnelly, City of Austin, Land Development Code Rewrite update
- Office of Sustainability quarterly update
- Office of Sustainability City of Austin Budget Update
- City of Austin Financial Services 2020 Budget Update
- Office of Sustainability City of Austin emergency food access update

The board additionally had five working groups that met throughout the year. They were I) Support for Farms and Farmers, II) Food and Climate , III) Building Opportunities for Food Entrepreneurs, IV) Healthy Food Access for All, and V) COVID-19 Food System Response. Highlights of the working groups are presented below.

I. Support Farms and Farmers Working Group

Co-Chairs: Felipe Camacho and Lorig Hawkins (7/19-3/20)

The compounded work from the previous annual report regarding farmland preservation and creation continues via this working group, through work with city and county staff to identify and access parcels of land for agricultural production.

Recommendation Number 20190513-5iv2a: Consideration of Agricultural Production on County/City Land continues to be the focus of the group.

The group worked to create more accessible meeting locations and times. Utilizing locations east and south of central Austin. Locations such as Travis County Extension Office and The Capitol Area Food Bank. These meetings attracted new participants. Although finding an optimal time of day for meetings continues to be a challenge for agriculture producers.

Finally, there was focus on maintaining the urban farm ordinance as is, during the revision period.

II. Food and Climate

Chair: Karen Magid

The Food and Climate working group spent the last year working on the food system section of the Austin Community Climate plan as members of the Consumption Advisory Group, to develop account for greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the food system, and provide policies and other recommendations that support the local food system, the climate, improve food access, and reduce food insecurity.

The goal for the working group was met over 2019-2020 as the food section of the revised climate plan is now in final edits with the entire plan first draft having been released.

As of July 2020, the food system goal and strategies in the first draft of the Austin Community Climate Plan revision read:

GOAL: By 2030, ensure 100% of Austinites, with a focus on the food insecure, can access a pro-climate, pro-health food system that is community-driven, prioritizes regenerative agriculture, supports dietary and health agency, prefers plant-based over animal-based foods and minimizes food waste.

Strategy 1: Support institutional food procurement

Apply a purchasing framework, support supply-chain infrastructure and build a regional food system network to bolster institutional and corporate food procurement of pro-climate, pro-health options.

How we'll get there:

- Develop a counterpart to the Good Food Purchasing Program for non-public sector organizations that purchase large quantities of food, such as corporations offering in-house employee dining options and hospitals.
- Offer a certification program to recognize institutional and corporate pro-climate, pro-health menus.
- Support a regional food system network to facilitate and coordinate large-scale pro-health, pro-climate food purchasing and distribution from regenerative agricultural producers.

Strategy 2: Promote and fund community-driven food retail programs

Implement community-driven programs to incentivize and promote more affordable and culturally relevant pro-climate, pro-health choices in prepared and retail food options with a focus on minimizing displacement.

How we'll get there:

- Offer economic incentives for local food establishments that offer an increasing minimum percentage of plant-based menu choices.
- Join or develop a program similar to [Zero Foodprint](#) to generate funding to support local food organizations and producers who contribute to a pro-climate, pro-health food system.
- Create a subsidized community-supported agriculture model for local regenerative food producers who employ low-income communities and communities of color.

Strategy 3: Incentivize pro-health, pro-climate food choices

Develop a variety of community-driven programs and tools to equitably engage and empower the full spectrum of Austin's communities to make affordable and culturally-competent pro-climate, pro-health food choices.

How we'll get there:

- Promoting tools, such a menu labeling scheme or a digital application, that provide lifecycle analysis of food items, enhance product transparency and empower consumer choice of pro-climate, pro-health foods.

Strategy 4: Conduct a food waste root cause analysis

Conduct a food waste root cause analysis and implement changes informed by the analysis to increase participation in food reduction practices by 50%. These practices should support the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Food Recovery Hierarchy's highest and best use model and include single-family, multifamily and commercial properties.

III. Building Opportunities for Food Entrepreneurs

Chair: Sharon Mays

The Codes & Ordinances workgroup was renamed Building Opportunities for Food Entrepreneurs workgroup In August 2019 after the Board's annual Strategic Planning meeting. During that meeting the workgroup decided to shift its priorities from Code NEXT to working to support the Food Business community and including its voice in our advocacy efforts. The primary goal for FY2020 was to continue working drafting a Resolution to advocate for Austin-Travis County Food Pantries that are attempting to overcome barriers (lack of knowledge, cost prohibitive, understaffed, etc.) involved with navigating the Food Establishment Permit process. The Workgroup worked with the City of Austin's Office of Design and Development to create a strategy for developing a solution to this issue. Extensive research was done in July and August, including several in-person interviews with stakeholders.

In September 2019 the Workgroup presented the final Recommendation to the Food Policy. It was approved (Recommendation 20190909-5ii1: Charitable Feeding Organization Permit). The Recommendation was approved on Consent by Austin City Council in July 2020.

IV. Healthy Food Access for All

Co-Chairs: Andrea Abel, Emily DeMaria, and Kacey Hansen

FY20 Priorities:

Priorities for FY20 were developed through three visioning sessions which took place at the June 27, July 25 and August 22, 2019 working group meetings. Annelies Lottmann, program coordinator at the Texas Rural Cooperative Center, facilitated the meetings. Annelies worked with the group to identify a top priority.

Top priorities identified:

- Equity and Racial Justice Tool Kit
- Funding for Meal Kit Pilot Project
- City/County contracts expressly incorporate culturally appropriate foods
- Robust Gap Analysis of Healthy Food Access System Needs

The working group chose the Equity and Racial Justice Tool Kit as the one top priority to accomplish and subsequently chose to address the time sensitive land development code.

Working Group Presentations:

- July 2019 - Macy Hurwitz, US Census Bureau on 2020 Census

- August 2019 - Chris Schreck, City of Austin Food Industry Development Program Coordinator
- October 2019 - Anne Dunkelberg, Associate Director, Center for Public Policy Priorities, briefing on “Public Charge” Rule and Impact on Texans

Recommendations to the ATCFPB:

- [Austin Land Development Code Revision, November 21, 2019](#). This recommendation led to the ATCFPB November 25, 2019 [Food Systems and the LDC Rewrite Recommendation](#) to City Council.
- [Regional Food System Equity, April 13, 2020](#). This recommendation led to the ATCFPB May 11, 2020 [Funding for Food and Equity Recommendation](#) to City Council.

V. COVID-19 Food System Response

Co-Chairs: Karen Magid and Joi Chevalier

The COVID-19 Food System Response was convened in March of 2020 to develop policy responses and city and county budget requests to address the immense impact the pandemic had on the food system.

Over the course of March-June, the working group developed a recommendation containing a statement from the board addressing the effects of the pandemic on the food system, and how disparities have been highlighted and widened. The recommendation was passed unanimously on June 12th by the board. - ATCFPB Recommendation 20200612_4.c.v.i: COVID-19 Food System Response Recommendation

After the recommendation was adopted by the board, the working group began outreach and advocacy around the budget requests in alignment with the City of Austin fiscal year 2020-2021 budget. [A summary document](#) was created and signatures from community members and organization in support of the recommendation were gathered. Multiple speakers gave public comment in support of the recommendation’s request for investment in the local food system during two City Council public comment sessions on July 23rd and July 30th.

2. Determine if the board’s actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

The board’s actions complied with their mission statement in that it focused on all aspects of the food system, and how to improve it for all Austin and Travis County residents.

3. List the board’s goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

The board’s priorities for the 2019-2020 annual strategic planning session, included:

- Understanding where the Board has been in the past, what has worked and what hasn’t.

- Discussing overall board identity related to marketing strategy, working with other boards and commissions, recruiting/succession/board sustainability, outreach to elected officials and advocacy of board work
- Identifying priorities of the Board and metrics to demonstrate success.
 - 2020 agenda items identifying for that board overall include:
 - Budget Updates
 - Water issues
 - ARR URO/ Organic Diversion updates
 - Econ Development Food Retail recruitment updates
 - APH – Annual program updates
 - Homelessness updates – food related
 - AISD food overview
 - Climate Plan update
 - Procurement updates
- Identifying work groups (discuss if the “work group” structure is working); defining outcomes of the work groups.
- Discussing meeting structure and what the Board wants to accomplish during monthly meetings this year. Discuss ways to efficiently share information.

Each working group of the board defined their own goals for the year:

- Support for Farms and Farmers: (a) farmland preservation and creation, (b) urban farming
- Food and Climate: (a) addition of food system to Austin Community Climate Plan; (b) connecting food and climate recommendations to on-going efforts and shared priorities with other boards and commissions such as the Good Food Purchasing Program and with the Joint Sustainability Committee
- Healthy Food Security and Access: (a) Equity and Racial Justice Tool Kit
- Building Opportunities for Food Entrepreneurs: (a) creating a clear regulatory environment for local food pantries that enables them to safely offer high-demand products.
- COVID-19 Food System Response: not stood up until March 2020; priority was policy and budget recommendations in response to pandemic effects on food system