

TEAM Delridge (Thrive, Eat, Act, Move), led by the Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, gathered more than 70 neighbors from throughout Delridge for an invigorating community gathering to talk Food and Healthy Food Access at the Southwest Community Center on March 23rd from 6:30-8:30pm.

Food system priorities

Participants discussed food system strategies to improve healthy eating in their neighborhood, and voted on which strategies are most important. In order, these are:

1. Improve healthy eating in schools and places where children spend time, including expanding gardening at schools.
2. Improve retail opportunities for affordable, local, sustainable foods.
3. Create a regional infrastructure for producing & retailing locally grown, healthy foods. Included in this strategy would be the preservation and expansion of rural farm land in the county, region & state.
4. Preserve & expand urban land for growing food, including efforts such as community gardens, home gardening, food production in private developments.
5. Improve and promote healthy eating in community settings.
6. Improve the healthfulness of food in restaurants.
7. Increase the healthfulness of food available from the emergency food system.
8. Increase participation in federal nutrition assistance programs.

Additional comments & insights from participants at the meeting.

What was most interesting about this meeting?

- The great ideas & BIG ideas people had about changing their community
- Cooperatives for small markets to purchase produce, local dairy, eggs, etc at lower costs in larger volumes. This would work well in White Center too- lots of small markets.
- The wonderful cultural and age diversity.
- Great conversations, presentations, & spirit.
- Knowing that I do have a voice about what happens where I live and eat.
- How everyone felt the same way. We are bound to have positive results with like minds.
- The participation, discussion, and exercise.
- Meeting others from the community.
- Learning about the Kellogg Initiative.
- This has been in research for 2-3 years?

General comments about implementation:

- Use the arts to make it (the strategy) fun and engaging
- How do we get people to "buy-in" and change their lifestyles?
- Media/Marketing - having commercials of farms etc. (You-tube of community demonstrating changes)
- If we change the environment of Delridge, how it looks etc. - people will want to change.
- Promote High Point CSA
- Sewer systems change—we are poisoning ourselves
- Make our places look nice

Other large-scale solutions

- Lobby for change in farm subsidies for poor nutritional quality foods
- Start at the state-level and work on up to the federal level
- What about subsidies for small, local farms? Base subsidies on average processing ability.
- Subsidize environmentally friendly farmers – this would be incentive to change farming practices.

Strategy #1: Improve healthy eating in schools and places where children spend time (e.g. childcare centers), incl. Expanding gardening at schools

Seattle Public Schools' Nutrition and Fitness policy/standards:

- What are they?
- Why don't parents know about them?
- Are they being enforced?
- Are they strong enough?
- Are there vegan food options for students (soy milk at least?)
- Can we change the source of food for school lunch programs? (no big agro-business)

Other comments on strategy #1:

- Media problem: Junk food vs. healthy food advertising. Foods like French fries shouldn't be advertised. Kids are trained and brainwashed to think healthy food is weird.
- Every school should have gardens for eating and teaching
- Incentives for healthy corner stores near schools
- Teach kids about 'what's in our food'

Strategy #2: Improve retail of healthy, affordable foods by:

- **More retail options**
- **Increase variety of options**
- **More affordable options**
- It's hard to force local, small markets to sell food that is higher cost
- Small markets need incentives to do this
- They direct connection to local farmers- expand to dairy, etc.
- Create co-ops between smaller markets and with farmers – lower cost with volume
- Incentives! To do so – teach students how to make healthful choices about food at home or school.
- Create a delridge co-op
- Please consider supporting the Delridge produce co-op
- Need to have incentives for small grocery stores so they have less risk
 - Consignment produce
 - Rebates for coolers or space to store perishable food
 - Need free promotion/public relations help to get the word out
- Have the health department check for healthy food (not just temperatures!)
- There is a pilot program happening right now that allows farmers markets to accept food stamps and WIC coupons – contact Washington farmers market association.

Strategy #3: Create regional infrastructure for producing & retailing locally grown, healthy foods. Tie in with preserving and expanding rural farm land in county, region, and state.

- Processing local foods to reduce farmers' costs
- Market research about demand in area/neighborhood/schools
- Tax incentives
- Electric trains and cars for transporting food from farms
- Governing officials to help farms and farmers
- Solar power systems
- Create laws and regulations that require a percentage of land to be in food production
- Improve food processing methods chemicals in our foods

Strategy #4: Preserve/expand urban land for growing food:

- **Community gardens**
- **Home gardens**
- **Food production in private development**
- Tax incentives to land owners to use vacant lots for garden spaces
- Demonstrations on some of these system changes, i.e.: How to start a garden or cooking classes.
- Provide questions/answers about food safety

Strategy #5: Improve healthy eating in community settings

- South Seattle Community College – Good connection to culinary program.
- Who is doing nutrition education?
- How to connect them to where it is needed/wanted?
- Peer training to do education and outreach
- To facilitate implementation: Delridge food & fitness dollars to be used at appropriate places like groceries, fitness clubs, trainers, gardeners, etc. (dollars could be spent locally at businesses and services)
- Need to have hotline (with real people) and websites that help get information out to people to answer questions about all these programs/initiatives
- Have community kitchens with educator to ensure processed foods are safe before they are donated to food banks.

Strategy #6: Increase healthfulness of food at restaurants (including fast food)

- Integrate nutrition education into food safety education for food service workers
- Who will provide technical assistance?
- Educate restaurants on how to buy local (or even homegrown) produce.
- Restaurant incentives for local food to include promotion for restaurants involved.
- Also share information and resources with restaurants on where to find/access local produce and regulations

Strategy #7: Increase healthfulness of food available from emergency food system

- Food safety? How is this checked?
- Community kitchens could process donated food or use extra space?
- Could we use school kitchens for this?
- Who can do food education at food banks? Who pays for this?
- King county needs a farm like Mother Earth farm in Pierce County – run by the Emergency Food Network.

Strategy #8: Increase participation in federal nutrition assistance programs (e.g. WIC, school lunch, food stamps) among those who are eligible

- Translated food stamps & WIC applications
- Increase food stamp minimum to \$50 (at state/federal levels)
- Improve food at schools so kids will eat there.
- There shouldn't be a stigma of welfare check. Give check to mothers/parents to buy good food.
- There is a pilot program happening right now that allows farmers markets to accept food stamps and WIC coupons – contact Washington farmers market association.

What important strategies or ideas you feel are missing and need to be included in our decision making?

- I just wondered if KCFFI is doing lobbying at the state level and what is going on at this level?
- Also, lots of talk about schools- but policies were passed – why not enforced? Why isn't SPS accountable?
- Lot of conversation about the need for nutrition education – but who will provide this even if peer-to-peer- these programs have actually been cut at county levels and in some of the non-profits that used to provide them – so – how?
- Not mentioned, was the great emotional and psychic benefits of growing food.
- Moveable slaughter systems for small meat producers
- Incentives for permaculture or mixed produce/animal production (change subsidies away from corn)
- Preserve farm land in Puget sound – force retail into neighborhoods – mixed use buildings, instead of expanding malls.
- Change zoning, DPD permitting processes.
- I think there's way too much of an emphasis on incentives for developers and corporations to do a better job. I'd much rather see regulation than incentives. If a corner store can get a license to sell lottery tickets and cigarettes, let's make them sell some fresh produce.
- I also think that transportation needs to be considered a much bigger part of the picture of access to healthy food.
- Bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to the local corner stores is great for a drop in kind of thing. But being a mother of a large family, I really think not only quality but also quantity for family that have a harder time making it to some of the affordable stores. So farmers market or a fair priced grocery store would help out so very much.
- Identify what healthy food is. Everyone isn't aware of nutritional foods.
- Find ways to recycle unused food from catering events for instance: Daniel's Catering, community Meeting/Events, Food banks.
- Make junk food expensive, (sugar tax, fat/bad oil tax). Subsidize healthy food and pay for health care with junk food taxes.