



**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
LOS ANGELES URBAN-RURAL ROUNDTABLE**

**Presented to
Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's
Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force**

April 15, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable Participants

Letter of Conveyance

Background

Recommendation 1:

Develop a comprehensive set of food system policies for the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendation 2:

Inject food and agriculture into the public conversation.

Recommendation 3:

Align and leverage the political strength of the City and region to support key federal, state and regional food and agricultural policies.

Recommendation 4:

Create a regional food policy council.

Coordinating Team

Appendix A: Snapshot of the Los Angeles Foodshed

Appendix B: Preliminary Opportunity Matrix

Appendix C: Background Resources

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April 15, 2010

Paula Daniels, Robert Gottlieb and Bruce Saito
Co-Chairs
Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force
1600 Campus Road MS M-1
Los Angeles, CA 90041

Dear Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force Co-Chairs:

Following are the four recommendations to the Los Angeles Food Policy Task force formulated by the 57 members of the Los Angeles Urban Rural Roundtable. Roots of Change funded and staffed this unique body of leaders to support the City of Los Angeles because we are committed to creation of a sustainable food system in this State. Without the full participation of your city and its surrounding communities our goal is unachievable. We pursue such a goal because the future of our State depends on rapid formation of a comprehensive set of food policies that will enable Californians to improve and maintain their health and community resilience in the 21st Century.

I am almost certain that later generations will characterize the next ten to fifteen years as a time of troubles and transitions. Huge economic, social, environmental, and governance challenges abound at the local, state, national and international level. They require unprecedented cross sector collaboration in which government, profit and nonprofit entities share resources, strengths and information over extended periods in order to work through complexity, clarify effective response, and then implement actions. The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable process is one such effort to help one important region reorient government, private and nonprofit activities to conform with emerging realities.

The Roundtable's three meetings and resulting recommendation document are, we hope, merely the first step in an extended period of collaboration between the City and the regional partners, urban and rural, that have demonstrated commitment to creating a vibrant foodshed approach to improving health, increasing jobs, and protecting the environment. We ardently hope that the City will form a food policy council and that the Task Force recommendations to the Mayor include those that follow.

I recently returned from a week of meetings in Washington DC with leaders from the United States' departments of Agriculture, Treasury, Health and Human Services and Congress. Based on these meetings, I am fully convinced that we have a short window of opportunity. The budget and governance debacles presently plaguing California are on the horizon in Washington DC. It is likely that we have a mere six to twelve months to organize ourselves regionally to leverage federal money that will help fund improvements to food access for low income people and market development for regional food producers. Moreover, the energy and water future is very uncertain and as we know, cheap fossil fuels and abundant water have been the primary factors supporting our food production approach. The increase in costs for transportation, storage, and agriculture itself will accelerate in the next two decades.

Thus, the time is approaching when those cities that have direct links to food producers in their region will fare better than those who do not. Now is the moment to prepare our urban centers for the future, by integrating them to the fullest extent possible with the rural regions from which food, water and energy flow. This reality underlies the commitment of Roots of Change to the formation of working relations among the urban and rural stakeholders that feed our State's people.

Organizing into robust partnerships that can mobilize multiple talents and assets from the region and maximize private and public dollars will position us well to effectively use the flow of funds that will soon be available from First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign and its Healthy Food Financing Initiative. Roots of Change is ready, willing and able to work with Los Angeles and its regional neighbors to retool the food system infrastructure and reorient relationships in order to enhance resilience in the face of the shocks that lay ahead. Of all places, California is most well endowed to build a food system appropriate to the needs of people and the planet in the 21st Century. Los Angeles as the state's largest metropolitan center in the midst of a natural cornucopia must lead the way for the state and the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm. dimock', written in a cursive style.

Michael Dimock
President

Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable Participants

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Vanessa Zajfen, Center for Food and Justice, Occidental College

Background

Once upon a time, Los Angeles was the leading agricultural county in the United States. Agriculture continues to be a vital part of the landscape, culture and economy of the surrounding rural regions of Southern California, and the City itself is home to an incredible diversity of food-related traditions and cuisines that are central to the lives of its residents. The City is also home to a wealth of community organizations and movements aimed at improving food access, nutrition and health for its most vulnerable and underserved populations.

But Los Angeles is facing two major crises that have the potential to severely impact the health and well-being of the next generation of Angelenos as well as that of current residents.

First, Los Angeles is experiencing the same obesity and diet-related health crises as the rest of the nation. In spite of the abundance of food produced in Southern California, the Los Angeles foodshed has both food deserts – neighborhoods without easy or affordable access to grocery stores with healthy food choices – and food swamps – neighborhoods with a glut of fast food outlets offering cheap but unhealthy food choices. Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately represented in these areas and bear the heaviest consequences of limited access to healthy food. Recent studies nationwide have demonstrated that low-income, African American and Latino neighborhoods not only have significantly fewer supermarkets and a greater predominance of convenience/liquor stores, but that the produce that is sold in these neighborhoods is frequently of lower quality than that found in more affluent or racially mixed neighborhoods.

Racial and economic inequities in food access have a direct and significant impact on health disparities: Latinos, African Americans, and people living in poverty are two to five times more likely than whites or wealthy people to suffer from obesity and diet-related chronic diseases including diabetes and heart disease. Nationwide, for the first time in American history, today's children are likely to have shorter lifespans than their parents as a result of poor diet and lack of physical activity.

Second, governments at all levels, including the City of Los Angeles, are in financial crisis. The situation is likely to get worse

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What Is Good Food?

The term “good food” used throughout this report refers to food that is:

- ✓ **Healthy**
Nutritious foods that support sound body and mind and freedom from chronic ailment
- ✓ **Affordable**
and accessible to people of all socioeconomic levels
- ✓ **Green**
Produced, processed, distributed and recycled locally in environmentally sustainable ways
- ✓ **Fair**
All participants in the food supply chain receive fair compensation and fair treatment

A healthy, equitable and sustainable **regional food system** is a system of growers, processors, distributors, retailers, and cooks that produces and delivers good food to the residents of that region.

over the next two to three years, with more severe cuts to existing programs and no funding for new programs unless they come packaged with new revenue streams. And of course the fiscal crisis in government is but a symptom of the larger economic downturn, which is forcing record numbers into unemployment, into lines at food banks, and onto the rolls of government food assistance programs.

Out of crisis, however, can emerge unparalleled opportunities for positive change. Envisioning and building a sustainableⁱ regional food system for Los Angeles and Southern California has the potential to transform the health and well-being of the 22 million people living here and to safeguard our food security for generations to come, as well as to immediately create jobs and invigorate the local economy.

In our favor, the federal government still has major funding set aside for food and nutrition services. California is currently leaving some \$2 billion in potential food assistance benefits on the table – dollars that are one of the most effective economic stimulus tools available.

Given today’s fiscal realities, regional collaboration and public-private partnerships are going to be essential to building a healthy, fair and sustainable regional food system – not just to ensure that all of the key food system players are at the table, and that the best ideas are pooled and cross-pollinated, but to leverage our collective political strength across the region and to stretch every scarce dollar to its maximum potential.

The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable has laid out a platform to begin this work, and Roundtable participants look forward to engaging leaders in the City and throughout the region to implement this important action agenda.

About the Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable

In September of 2009, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa launched a Food Policy Task Force charged with identifying ways in which the City of Los Angeles could support the regional food economy and improve access to healthy food in underserved communities.

Building on the success of the San Francisco Urban-Rural Roundtable commissioned by Mayor Gavin Newsom in 2008, Roots of Change worked with leaders of the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force to design a process by which the recommendations of the task force, comprised almost entirely of urban leaders, could be broadened and informed by the perspectives and insights of food system leaders from around the region, including the people who actually produce food in the nine counties surrounding Los Angeles.

Response to the invitation to participate in the Urban-Rural Roundtable was enthusiastic and exceeded expectations. More than 50 people from as far as Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties to the north, San Diego County to the south, and Riverside and San Bernardino Counties to the east, traveled to California State University Channel Islands in Ventura County and Second Harvest Food Bank in Orange County for three full days of meetings in January and February of 2010.

A combination of business leaders, non-profit and community leaders, and government officials represented every aspect of the food system as well as every geographic corner of the region. Participants included farmers, ranchers, food distributors, food retailers and entrepreneurs; chefs and food journalists; institutional food buyers and school food advocates; hunger and social justice activists; public health leaders; architects and planners; environmentalists; and senior representatives of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

Roundtable participants unanimously voiced the shared interests of urban and rural communities in Southern California and underscored the need and the opportunity to work together to create a healthier and more sustainable regional food system.

Participants were asked to identify and prioritize opportunities for action to address four goals:

1. Better Access to Fresh and Healthy Food For All

Help community leaders develop plans and implementation strategies to create the systemic changes necessary to expand access and meet the good food needs of urban and rural residents, particularly moderate and lower income consumers and communities of color.

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2. Regional Agriculture and Food System Economic Prosperity

Expand opportunities for regional agricultural producers, processors, distributors and retailers to profitably develop and access local markets for their products in ways that create jobs and increase the triple bottom line for themselves, their workers and their communities.

3. Regional Agricultural and Environmental Stewardship

Ensure that urban and rural leaders together steward agricultural and natural resources so that our region can continue to supply food and provide vital ecological services for generations to come.

4. Building a Regional Foodshed Identity

Build a regional foodshed identity and maintain diverse landscapes and communities to add value to the food grown in the region.

Each of these four goals sparked intensive discussion among the Roundtable participants. A number of clear priorities emerged as well as several strong cross-cutting themes. The Roots of Change coordinating team synthesized the output from these meetings into four overarching recommendations, each with specific action items, as described in this report.

The recommendations highlighted in this report focus particularly on an action agenda for urban leaders and policymakers. But the recommendations are relevant for leaders, urban and rural, throughout the region, and for the businesses, non-profits, and philanthropic organizations which will be critical drivers and partners in creating a healthy, equitable and sustainable regional food system.

ⁱ The term “sustainable” is used throughout this report to connote systems and practices that can be continued indefinitely into the foreseeable future without reliance upon ongoing depletion of non-renewable resources (e.g., soil, energy, biological diversity) or widening social inequities (within and across communities, countries, or generations). With respect to agriculture, the term can include, but is not limited to or synonymous with, certified organic production practices.

Recommendation 1:

Develop a Comprehensive Set of Food System Policies for the City of Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable recommends that Mayor Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles City Council develop and adopt a comprehensive set of policies and actions around food, nutrition and agriculture to support the health and well-being of the city's residents.

The City can undertake several key actions now that will connect, expand and leverage existing efforts to improve residents' access to good food and create a more sustainable regional food system. These policies could be packaged as an Executive Directive of the Mayor endorsed by the City Council or better yet, a comprehensive food system act crafted in collaboration between the Mayor and the Council.

The scope and diversity of this suite of actions underscore the fact that food is, of course, an essential and pervasive part of urban life. Virtually all of the recommendations are synergistic as well. They will create positive feedback loops such that their combined impact will be greater than the sum of the individual parts. Increased institutional and retail demand for good food will attract investment in production and distribution for local markets; expanded production will create jobs, recirculate money within the local economy, and lower food prices (or at least hold price down); steady prices will stimulate more demand and so on. Increased consumption of fresh and healthy foods will reduce chronic diet-related disease and improve residents' health and well-being, as well as improve their academic performance and economic productivity.

In addition to the specific recommended actions described below, the Roundtable urges the City in all instances to:

- Look first to retain and leverage existing resources and programs, many of which are underutilized.
- Examine and borrow from models within and outside of region for best practices and lessons learned.
- Consider how solutions can address prevalent structural inequities, including those of racial and economic injustice.
- Develop cultural competence. Food is a deeply cultural matter; approaches to food policy must be culturally appropriate to be effective.
- Move quickly and creatively to seize on current federal funding opportunities.
- Seek non-profit, community and foundation partners to support initiatives and pilot projects.

Recommended actions include:

Economic Development

Goal: Create regional food system jobs and increase the economic stability of residents.

- ☐ Advocate and support development of a network of regional food hubs, utilizing existing infrastructure as much as possible, to create efficient, accessible infrastructure and supply chain for regional foods, with information systems to link growers, distributors and markets and facilitate forward supply contracts that lock in supply for buyers and markets for growers.
- ☐ Write a letter to the California congressional delegation asking members to support increased funding for Farm Bill programs that support local and regional food production, processing and distribution, including the Local and Regional Food Enterprise Loan Program, the Value-Added Producer Grant Program, Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher Development programs, Community Food Projects program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services credit programs, and Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension programs.
- ☐ Initiate a joint letter with mayors from across the nation calling on the federal government to increase support for local and regional food production, processing and distribution programs such as those listed above.
- ☐ Collaborate with urban and rural NGO partners to access and leverage federal funding through the Farm Bill for development of local and regional food production, processing, and distribution infrastructure.
- ☐ Create local food hubs in Los Angeles food deserts that provide food distribution and processing infrastructure for local, small and mid-sized farms and employment opportunities for the residents of those communities.
- ☐ Promote Transitional Subsidized Employment Program to food-related businesses.
- ☐ Write an open letter to universities, community colleges and vocational schools in the City and region urging them to retain and expand training in food and agriculture-related fields, to incorporate local sourcing and sustainability into their curricula and campus operations, and to connect with and support local farming and food business incubators.

2. Hunger and Food Security

Goal: Make good food the easy choice for all residents.

Eliminate food deserts and improve neighborhood food environments in underserved communities and communities of color

- ☐ Legalize and permit mobile vendors with incentives for increasing regional, fresh and healthy food sourcing.
- ☐ Incorporate tax incentives and zoning relaxations where applicable to promote locally owned businesses, including coops and mobile vendors, and regional food sourcing, into

programs to attract food retailing to underserved communities and communities of color.

- ☐ Collaborate with economic development and nutrition-related NGO partners that will work with the city to fund the aforementioned and other programs through the USDA-US Treasury Department's Fresh Food Financing Initiative.
- ☐ Ask the California congressional delegation to support Farm Bill programs that target underserved communities and communities of color, including the Local and Regional Food Enterprise Loan Program, which gives priority to projects that benefit communities with limited food access and high rates of food insecurity, and the Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher loan programs, which help women and minority producers develop viable farming operations.

Improve school and institutional food environments

- ☐ Develop and adopt City food procurement ordinance incorporating preference for regionally sourced and sustainably produced foods.
- ☐ Establish local sourcing and nutrition guidelines/criteria for city contractors, vending machines, lease agreements, mobile permits, and events and meetings held on City property.
- ☐ Advocate and support LAUSD and other school districts' policies and initiatives to increase regional food sourcing for school meals and snacks, increase federal funding for local and fresh food purchases, and expand schools' capacity to provide fresh food through access to on-site and off-site infrastructure (kitchens, refrigeration, trucks, etc.) and staff training.
- ☐ Write letter to southern California's Congressional delegation asking them to support enhancements to the Child Nutrition Act currently being considered for reauthorization (e.g. Senator Leahy's Cultivating Farms to School Act or Rep. Holt's Farm to School Improvements Act).
- ☐ Initiate a joint letter with big-city mayors from across the nation calling for enhancements to the Child Nutrition Act.
- ☐ Advocate and support use of fresh and local foods in hospitals and other healthcare and institutional settings.

Increase affordability of good food

- ☐ Provide incentives and rewards (e.g., reduced City fees) for farmers marketsⁱⁱ that accept and promote the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- ☐ Promote the use of existing and new resources to implement SNAP at farmers markets within City boundaries.
- ☐ Expand bonus dollars and other incentives and outreach to increase usage of SNAP, the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP), the new WIC Fruit and Vegetable Check program (FVC) and other benefits at farmers markets.
- ☐ Direct City staff and agencies to work with community activists, promotoras, and other nutrition education programs to communicate health and nutrition information and increase utilization of food assistance programs.

Emergency food assistance

- ☐ Promote and assist Farm to Family and gleaning programs by participating in a gleaning day in the countryside or at an urban garden or farm.
- ☐ Urge the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to adopt a food waste/surplus ordinance.

3. Urban and Land Use Planning for Food and Agriculture

Goal: Support local and sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and recycling through planning, zoning, EIR and permitting processes.

- ☐ Direct City planners to integrate food production, processing and distribution into City and regional planning processes.
- ☐ Conduct comprehensive review of zoning, permitting, environmental health, food safety and other regulations to reduce or remove barriers to establishment of farmers markets, CSAs, community gardens, urban micro-farms, and vertical farms.
- ☐ Support the Food & Flowers Freedom Act to allow the growing and selling of food and fiber from R zoned areas in the City.
- ☐ Support robust Sustainable Community Strategies process and advocate integration of food and agriculture issues to meet goals of AB32 and SB375.
- ☐ Support policies and programs aimed at water conservation, runoff capture and reuse.

4. Urban Agriculture

Goal: Increase direct public engagement in food production and identification with the LA regional food system.

- ☐ Inventory and make available potential sites for urban agriculture, including dual-use areas (e.g., utility easements) and brownfield sites where applicable.
- ☐ Streamline the leasing of municipal property process to expedite community groups' efforts to secure land for food production.
- ☐ Develop and support ordinances, programs, and funding to promote community gardens, victory gardens, urban micro-farms, and foraging grounds for fruit, vegetable, and small animal production and for teaching people how to produce food in urban settings.

5. Environmental and Agricultural Stewardship

Goal: Encourage growers, processors, distributors and retailers in the region to use environmentally sustainable practices.

- ☐ Provide incentives for businesses to adopt sustainable practices by incorporating environmental stewardship and fair labor standards for farm and food workers into City food purchasing criteria, utilizing an existing third-party certification system for sustainable food production practices.
- ☐ Direct city staff and agencies to coordinate response to invasive species (e.g., Asian citrus psyllid) with stakeholders throughout the region.

- ☐ Create incentives to assist small-scale farms located within the city to convert to organic and sustainable farming methods.
- ☐ Write a letter to the state office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in support of conservation funding for farmers and ranchers engaged in long-term, cost-effective environmental management activities, including but not limited to organic transition, the installation of vegetated buffers, cover cropping, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management.
- ☐ Urge leaders around the region to support incentives and policies to promote organic and sustainable farming, preservation of existing farmland and open space, soil conservation, and stewardship of agricultural lands.

6. Food and Food System Literacy

Goal: Increase public awareness and understanding of food and food system issues and empower residents to make healthy food choices.

- ☐ Support broadened use of existing USDA food assistance outreach and administrative funds for nutrition and health education, including expansion of school gardening and cooking programs.
- ☐ Support integration of skills-based food production, preparation, and nutrition education into school curriculum and standardized tests.
- ☐ Urge non-profit and extracurricular programs to incorporate food and regional food system literacy into their programs (Boys & Girls Clubs, 4H, Future Farmers of America, outdoor science and farm camps).
- ☐ Support food and nutrition education for parents and adults via community colleges and non-profit programs.
- ☐ Identify and pursue opportunities to leverage underutilized resources to improve food access in low income communities (e.g., making school facilities available for afterschool food and nutrition programs, food distribution, and sales.)
- ☐ Write the healthcare and philanthropic community to request that they increase funding for education and media campaigns to increase food literacy.

ⁱⁱ The Roundtable did not deliberate or reach consensus on the question of whether policies related to farmers markets should apply to any farmers markets or only to those that are certified by the State of California.

Recommendation 2:

Inject food and agriculture into the public conversation.

The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable recommends that Mayor Villaraigosa use the bully pulpit to integrate food and agriculture into every public conversation about health, the economy, the environment, and social justice.

Los Angeles is poised to join the ranks of several major cities around the country in placing food system issues at the front and center of public policy dialog in their communities. Mayors in each of these cities have stepped forward to develop healthy and sustainable food policies for their cities. Each has strengths, and some are more comprehensive than others. All are increasingly focused on food systems, healthy food access and nutrition enhancement. There is an opportunity to combine the voices of big city mayors and transform the national debate on food system reform. Allies include:

- New York – Mayor Michael Bloomberg
- San Francisco – Mayor Gavin Newsom
- Oakland – Mayor Ron Dellums
- Seattle – Mayor Mike McGinn
- Chicago – Mayor Richard Daley
- Boston – Mayor Thomas Menino
- Denver – Mayor John Hickenlooper

As the Mayor of California's largest and most well known city, Mayor Villaraigosa is uniquely positioned to have major impact on the health, nutrition and rural communities by stepping up and speaking to the need for urban-rural collaboration. His voice will be echoed by other mayors in California, particularly by Mayor Newsom who has developed the most comprehensive policy yet seen through his July 2009 Executive Directive 09-03 Healthy and Sustainable Food For San Francisco.

Mayor Villaraigosa's commitment to providing equitable access to healthy food and support of farmers markets and urban agriculture provide a platform for him to become a national leader on food issues. If he calls for a robust regional agriculture, direct city links to farmers and ranchers, better national farm policy, improved conditions for farm workers and more access to healthy food for low-income people, he will be heard. If his calls are backed up with simple and concrete action through ordinances and policies that improve healthy food access in communities and schools as well as regional farm economics, he will be emulated.

Specific recommended actions include:

- ☐ Integrate food, nutrition and agriculture into speeches about jobs, economy, health, environment, education and social justice.
- ☐ Participate in national, state and regional public forums on food and agriculture.

- ☐ Direct city staff and agencies to integrate food and agriculture issues into existing campaigns, programs, websites, and social media on health, jobs, education, climate change, sustainability, etc.
- ☐ Consider establishing permanent victory gardens at City Hall and the Mayor's residence.
- ☐ Launch a reverse trade mission in collaboration with CDFA to take urban and institutional food buyers to outlying counties to meet with growers.
- ☐ Launch annual event with a media campaign to celebrate the City's and region's good food and recognize good food leaders and accomplishments, and urge existing culinary events (e.g., Dine LA, Taste of LA) to incorporate local and sustainable products and information into their programs.
- ☐ Convene meeting of senior executives of key retailers, distributors, hotel and restaurant chains, large purchasing groups, and trade associations to build support and visibility for regional food sourcing and the good food movement.
- ☐ Call on the federal government to step up and support policies and programs that build local and regional food systems and farm-to-consumer linkages through substantial, dedicated funding for Farm Bill, Child Nutrition Act and other relevant programs.

Recommendation 3:

Align and leverage the political strength of the City and region to support key federal, state and regional food and agricultural policies.

The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable recommends that Mayor Villaraigosa and the City of Los Angeles take the lead in coordinating mayors, city councilmembers, and county supervisors throughout the region to align their lobbying efforts around food and agricultural policy to support the health and well-being of residents in the region.

Leaders in the Los Angeles foodshed collectively represent more than 22 million people. Some state and federal funding is already available for programs that promote the development of local and regional food systems; however, these programs are not as widely utilized as they could be, and total funding remains far from adequate. With the City of Los Angeles leading the way, regional policymakers can educate California producers, businesses and NGOs about available programs and can make a strong case to state and federal policymakers about the need for increased funding. These activities will have a significant impact on state and federal policies that will help create a sustainable regional food system and improve people's lives.

In many cases coalitions are already in place to organize support for critical food and agricultural policies. Los Angeles will not have to break new ground but rather can add a major new political voice to current lobbying efforts via such entities as the Conference of Mayors and the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Specific policies, programs and initiatives that urban and rural leaders should focus their united lobbying efforts on include:

- ☐ Extension of the Transitional Subsidized Employment Program (TSE) to create and retain jobs.
- ☐ Linkage and alignment of food assistance programs (SNAP, WIC, school lunch, elder nutrition) to improve efficiency and increase access to benefits by residents; removal of restrictions on populations that can access benefits.
- ☐ Revision of the Child Nutrition Act to allow and encourage local sourcing of food, increase reimbursements for fresh and local foods, and increase funding for infrastructure to facilitate preparation and distribution of healthy, fresh school meals and snacks.
- ☐ Expansion and strengthening of agricultural stewardship and farmland conservation programs and incentives in the Farm Bill.
- ☐ Expansion of Farm Bill programs that support local and regional food production, processing and distribution, including:
 - Local and Regional Food Enterprise Loan Program, to support and establish new businesses that process, distribute and market foods produced in-state or transported less than 400 miles from the origin of the product.

- Value-Added Producer Grant Program to provide grants to producers to develop business plans, establish marketing opportunities, and acquire capital for processing, marketing, community kitchens, and establishing farmer-consumer networks.
 - Credit programs through USDA's Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services division to fund projects that banks may find too risky, including start-up food businesses and new farming operations.
 - Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension programs.
 - Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher loan programs.
 - Community Food Projects program.
 - Organic transition and other sustainable management assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- ☐ Development of a statewide system for identifying regional and micro-regional food origins, analogous to the American Viticultural Association's appellation system for wine-growing regions, that will enable consumers to identify, choose and value products grown in specific places.
 - ☐ Soda user fee to discourage soda consumption and generate funds for improving access to good food in underserved communities.
 - ☐ Food safety regulations that can be met by growers and distributors of all sizes, and programs and funding that support the capacity of all growers and distributors to meet those standards.
 - ☐ Full funding and strengthening of the Williamson Act to support conservation of agricultural lands.

Recommendation 4:
Create a regional food policy council.

The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable recommends that Mayor Villaraigosa and the City of Los Angeles take the lead in establishing a regional alliance to drive development and implementation of a sustainable regional food system strategy.

The City of Los Angeles has an enormous stake in creating a sustainable regional food system that meets the needs of its residents and supports the local economy. But building a sustainable regional food system will require the full participation and support of stakeholders from all over the region, who likewise demand access to good food and whose economies are inextricably tied to that of Los Angeles. Building trust and meaningful dialog between rural producers and urban consumers will be vital to ensuring a food supply that is resilient, secure, healthy, affordable, green and fair.

A regional alliance will deepen the relationships and broaden the coalition-building that have already been initiated by groups like the Southern California Good Food Network, Hunger Action L.A., the Ag Futures Alliance, and the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force. The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable itself has demonstrated the intersection of urban and rural interests in the food system, the willingness of people in the region to connect across considerable distances, and the value of bringing diverse stakeholders together to share ideas and identify opportunities for collaboration. There are a number of groups in other regions that have successfully bridged the urban-rural gap that should also be investigated as models for this undertaking.

Leadership by the City of Los Angeles will galvanize participation, but the ownership, funding and staffing of the alliance can and should be shared across the region to ensure buy-in and commitment, spread the workload, and reflect the shared interest of all parties in the future of the region.

The regional alliance should be charged with actions that include:

- ☐ Conduct a Los Angeles foodshed assessment in collaboration with public health departments to inventory food system assets, identify key indicators of food system health and sustainability, and establish a baseline for measuring impact of actions.
- ☐ Establish goals, strategy and action plan for creating a sustainable regional food system that is integrated into city and regional plans.
- ☐ Identify, recruit and support champions for key actions.
- ☐ Identify, communicate, and advocate regionwide adoption of model policies for incorporating food agriculture into urban planning.
- ☐ Advise cities and counties on food-related policies.
- ☐ Spearhead and coordinate regionwide state and federal lobbying efforts.

Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable Coordinating Team

Roots of Change

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Appendix A: Snapshot of the Los Angeles Foodshed

Snapshot of the Los Angeles/Southern California Foodshed

Los Angeles Urban-Rural
Roundtable
January 27, 2010



What is a foodshed?

- ◆ A **foodshed** is the area of land and sea within a region from which food is produced in order to deliver nutrition to a population base.
 - A local or regional **food system** includes all the inputs, outputs and processes involved in feeding the population within a foodshed
- ◆ The foodshed concept does not obviate the goal or need to export or import food outside of a region.

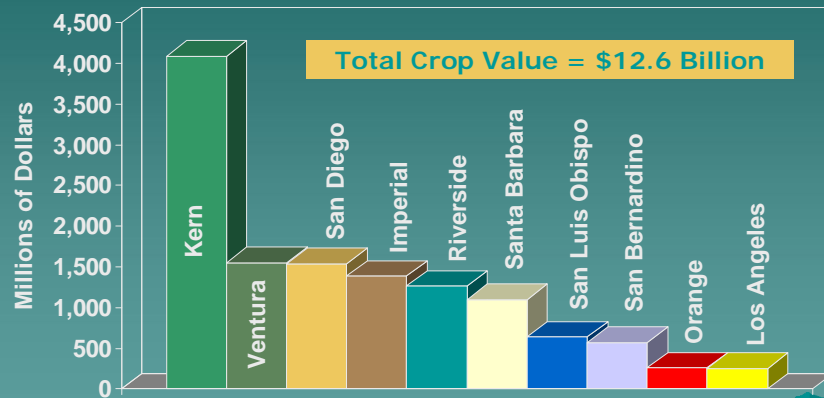


Southern California Food Expenditures

	Population (millions)	Total Food Spending (\$ millions)	Fruits and Vegetables (\$ millions)
Los Angeles	9.9	\$ 25,441	\$ 2,644
Orange	3.0	\$ 7,767	\$ 807
San Diego	3.0	\$ 7,742	\$ 805
Riverside	2.1	\$ 5,419	\$ 563
San Bernardino	2.0	\$ 5,199	\$ 540
Kern	0.8	\$ 2,065	\$ 215
Ventura	0.8	\$ 2,058	\$ 214
Santa Barbara	0.4	\$ 1,046	\$ 109
San Luis Obispo	0.3	\$ 684	\$ 71
Imperial	0.2	\$ 423	\$ 44
Total	22.4	\$ 57,843	\$ 6,012

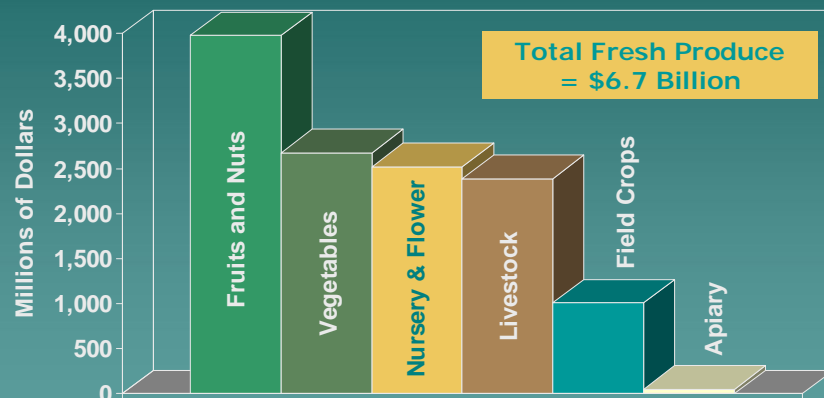
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008, U. S. Census Bureau

Southern California Agricultural Production (2007)



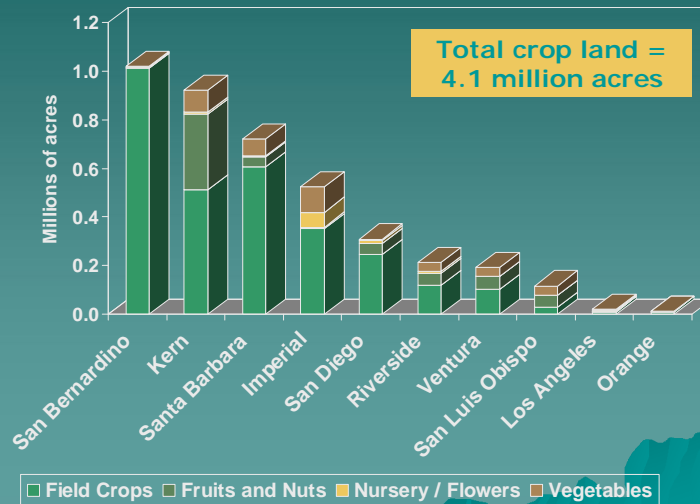
Source: County Agricultural Commission Crop Reports

Southern California Agricultural Production (2007)



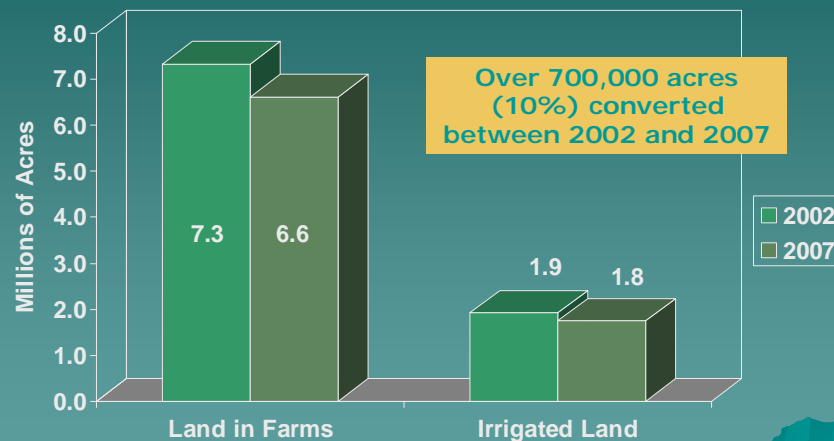
Source: County Agricultural Commission Crop Reports

Southern California Land in Farms by Crop Type

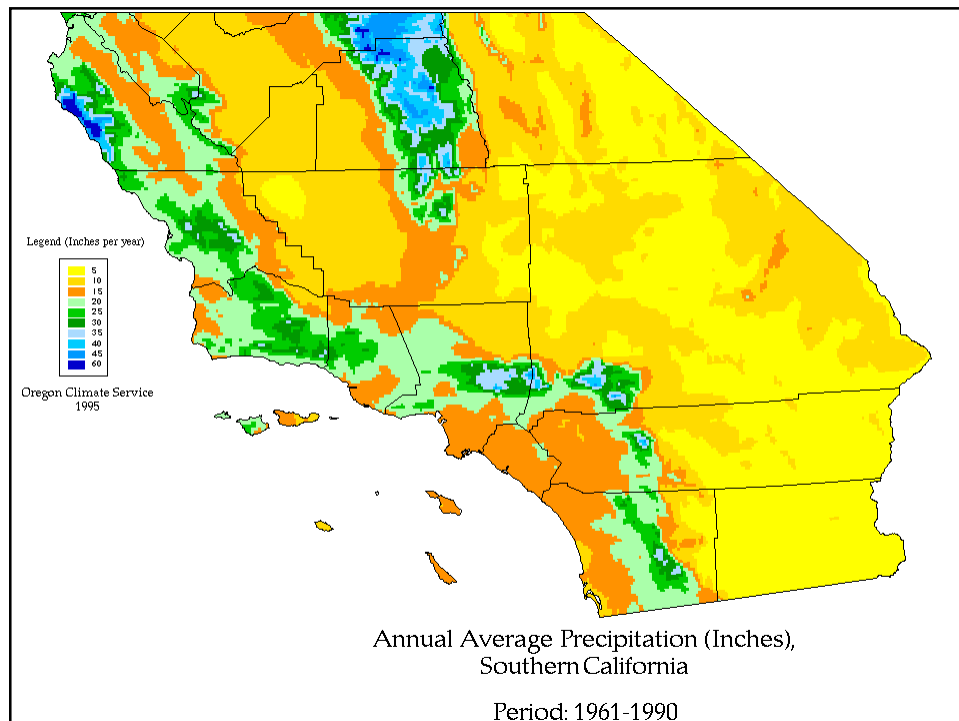
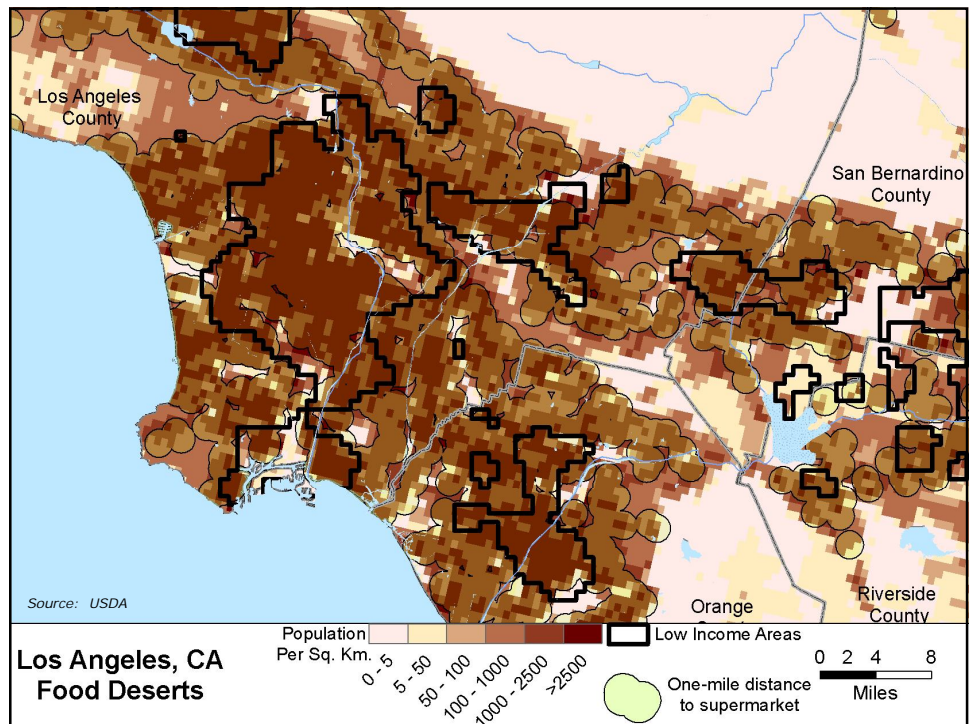


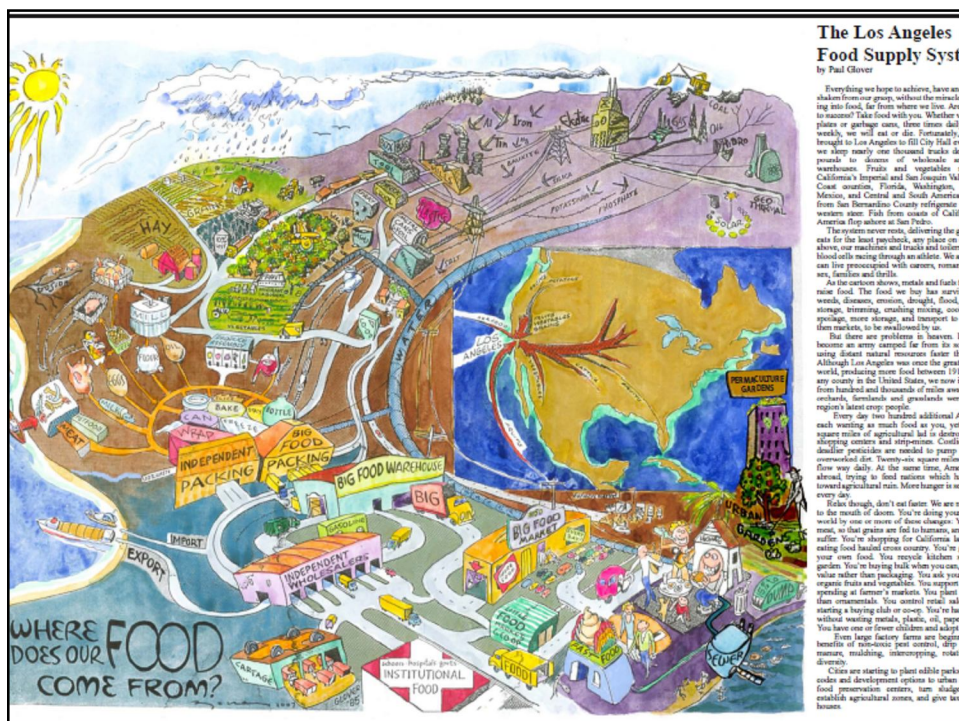
Source: County Agricultural Commission Crop Reports

Southern California Farmland 2002 – 2007



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 2007





Appendix B: Preliminary Opportunity Matrix

The following tables represent a preliminary synthesis of ideas from the Roundtable and other sources which served as input for Roundtable participants' deliberation and prioritization of their final recommendations.

**Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable
Opportunity Matrix
February 2010**

Introduction

The following pages represent a synthesis of preliminary ideas on opportunities to address key challenges to creating a more equitable, sustainable, and economically robust food system for Los Angeles and the surrounding urban and rural region. They are organized (as are the Roundtable working groups) around four key goals:

Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable Goals

Working Group	Goal
Regional Agriculture and Food System Economic Prosperity (“Supply”)	Expand opportunities for regional agricultural producers, processors, distributors and retailers to develop and access local markets for their products in ways that create jobs and increase the triple bottom line for themselves, their workers and their communities.
Better Access to Fresh and Healthy Food For All (“Demand”)	Help community leaders develop plans and implementation strategies to create the systemic changes necessary to expand access and meet the good food needs of urban and rural residents, particularly moderate and lower income consumers and communities of color.
Regional Agricultural and Environmental Stewardship	Ensure that urban and rural leaders together steward agricultural and natural resources in food production in an economically feasible manner for all in the food chain.
Building a Regional Foodshed Identity	Build a regional foodshed identity and maintain diverse landscapes and communities that can distinguish and add value to the food grown in the region.

The opportunities summarized below have been gleaned primarily from the initial meeting of the Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable on January 27, 2010 (highlighted in yellow in the tables below), but have been supplemented with ideas from the deliberations of the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force between December 2009 and February 2010; from the results of the San Francisco Urban-Rural Roundtable in 2009; and from the work numerous other participants in the local and national “Good Food,” sustainable food system, and sustainable agriculture movements.

They are intended to serve as a starting point to facilitate discussion within the LA URRT working groups aimed at identifying key priorities for action by policymakers, businesses, non-profits, and other community stakeholders in the Los Angeles regional foodshed.

The “Timing” column is intended to indicate the timeframe over which each initiative could potentially be launched. The “City Drives” and “City Supports” columns indicate whether the City of Los Angeles and other urban leaders are expected to be the leaders/drivers of an initiative, or to play a supporting role in partnership with businesses, non-profits, and/or rural leaders.

The “Models, Resources & Comments” column offers additional detail from working group deliberations and some models or best practices from within and outside the region. The references are by no means exhaustive, but again are intended as a starting point and food for thought as the working groups develop their recommendations. It is expected that Roundtable participants will have many more suggestions to add here and to forward to Mayor Villaraigosa’s Food Policy Task Force.

Regional Agriculture and Food System Economic Prosperity

Goal: Expand opportunities for regional agricultural producers, processors, distributors and retailers to develop and access local markets for their products in ways that create jobs and increase the triple bottom line for themselves, their workers and their communities.

Analysis

1. **Market opportunity.** Southern Californians spend an estimated \$58 billion on food every year, including \$6 billion on fruits and vegetables. It is unknown how much of this market is served by producers within the region, but national statistics suggest that it is likely to be a small fraction – less than 5% – of the total market, in spite of the abundance of food grown within the region by the \$12.6 billion Southern California agricultural sector. With interest in locally grown foods, food security, and food safety high and growing, there is likely to be significant opportunity for producers in the region, along with regional food processors, distributors, and retailers, to expand their market share within the region.
2. **Triple bottom line.** Investing in a sustainable regional food system can create jobs, improve the lives of farm and food system workers, support economic development in low-income urban and rural communities, conserve natural resources, and improve public health.
3. **Profitability.** Like any other business, food producers need to cover their costs and make a reasonable return on investment in order to stay in business. For products to stay in Southern California, serving those markets must be as profitable as selling the products elsewhere (or of using agricultural land for other purposes, including non-food crops). If the cost of serving markets within the region is higher, the market price for those products will be higher as well.
4. **Barriers to accessing and serving regional markets.** As food production and distribution has become increasingly globalized, centralized, and concentrated over the last 30 years, Southern California, like most places in the United States, has lost much of the infrastructure needed to move food efficiently from local farms to local markets, including a network of local and regional food aggregation and distribution centers that can economically serve small to mid-sized producers and buyers. Other important barriers include a lack of information systems to communicate real-time market information between growers, distributors and markets; the cost of meeting new food safety requirements, especially for small producers; retailers' centralized buying practices and lack of experience or relationships with regional producers and distributors; and buyers' lack of understanding or willingness to pay higher prices for higher-value regionally produced foods.

Regional Agriculture and Food System Economic Prosperity

Goal: Expand opportunities for regional agricultural producers, processors, distributors and retailers to develop and access local markets for their products in ways that create jobs and increase the triple bottom line for themselves, their workers and their communities.

Strategies	Actions	Timing	City Drives	City Supports	Models, Resources & Comments
1. Increase purchase of regional foods by retailers, fast food chains, and institutions, particularly in underserved communities	A. Design, build and invest in a network of regional food aggregation hubs to create efficient and accessible supply chain for regional foods that reduces the infrastructure and transaction costs of buying from small and regional growers and increases diversity and consistency of supply	3-18 months	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hubs may incorporate light processing, retail markets, community kitchens, related services Infrastructure should include sophisticated information systems to link growers, distributors, and markets in real time Develop forward supply contracts to lock in supply for buyers and market for growers (a kind of commercial-scale CSA)
	B. Identify and work with key retailers, fast food chains, and trade associations to build senior management leadership, support, and visibility for regional sourcing	3-6 months	X	X	Center for Food and Justice PolicyLink Fresh Produce and Floral Council: www.fafc.org
	A. Establish city policy on regional food sourcing by government institutions and partners	3-6 months	X		SF Food: www.sfgov.org
	B. Launch CDFA-sponsored trade mission to LA to promote regional producers to city buyers	12-18 months		X	CDFA: www.cdfa.ca.gov
2. Ensure that growers of all sizes are able to meet food safety standards	C. Support safety regulations that do not place small growers at a disadvantage	3-6 months	X		
	D. Support funding to enable small growers to get certification	3-6 months	X		
3. Increase the number of farmers and food entrepreneurs who produce sustainable, regionally-grown food	A. Invest in farmland acquisition to secure dedicated food supply and provide land base for start-up farmers	3-5 years	X		ALBA: www.albafarmers.org SAGE: www.sagecenter.org Farmlink: www.californiafarmlink.org
	B. Invest in training for farm workers and others seeking to establish farming and food businesses	3-5 years	X		San Diego County Planning for Agriculture: www.sdcounty.ca.gov
	C. Invest in food business incubators	6-12 months	X		

Better Access to Fresh and Healthy Food For All

Goal: Help community leaders develop plans and implementation strategies to create the systemic changes necessary to expand access and meet the good food needs of urban and rural residents, particularly moderate and lower income consumers and communities of color.

Analysis

1. **Food deserts, food swamps, and public health.** In spite of the abundance of food produced in Southern California, the Los Angeles foodshed has both food deserts – neighborhoods without easy or affordable access to groceries stores with healthy food choices – and food swamps – neighborhoods with a glut of fast food outlets offering cheap but unhealthy food choices. Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately represented in these areas, both urban and rural, and are disproportionately impacted by diet-related chronic diseases including diabetes and heart disease.
2. **Make good food the easy choice.** Choosing and eating fresh, healthy foods should be easier – more convenient, more affordable, more appealing – than choosing unhealthy foods. Making good food the easy choice requires systemic changes in how and where foods are supplied and marketed in both retail and institutional settings. It requires education, training, and a shift in perspective and focus at multiple levels, from policymakers, planners and regulators to public health officials, public benefits administrators, and economic development agencies, to school boards, administrators and nutrition services workers, to retailers, marketers and financial institutions.
3. **Unhealthy food is not affordable.** Making good food more accessible may increase food costs in the short term and require subsidization to ensure access to those who need it most. However, in the long run a sustainable and healthy regional food system will lower healthcare and environmental costs and increase the well-being and productivity of Angelenos. Conversely, subsidizing the continued existence of a system that promotes unhealthy and highly processed foods has enormous social, environmental, and health costs that are neither affordable nor sustainable.

Better Access to Fresh and Healthy Food For All

Goal: Help community leaders develop plans and implementation strategies to create the systemic changes necessary to expand access and meet the good food needs of urban and rural residents, particularly moderate and lower income consumers and communities of color.

Strategies	Actions	Timing	City Drives	City Supports	Models, Resources & Comments
1. Improve school and institutional food environments	A. Develop and implement Good Food purchasing policies and criteria for RFPs, vendors, including identification of food origin	3-6 months	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets example, lowers costs by increasing demand CFJ, "Transformation of the School Food Environment in Los Angeles": http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/publications/transformation_of_school_food_environment.pdf
	B. Work with LAUSD and other school districts to increase regional and sustainable school food sourcing for breakfast, lunch and snack	6-12 months		X	
	C. Incorporate salad bars with food origin labeling in school cafeterias	6-12 months		X	
2. Improve neighborhood food environments in underserved communities and communities of color	A. Support regulations and incentives to attract grocery stores to underserved areas and restrict convenience stores without healthy food component	6-12 months	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public/private financing partnerships Financing and technical assistance for refrigeration capacity Expedite/streamline permitting process for grocery stores, waive certain fees, relax parking requirements CRA/LA Food Retailers Incentive Program: www.crala.org New bus lines along food routes, good food retail near transit
	B. Enforce existing regulations near schools during school hours	3-6 months	X	X	
	C. Expand social marketing campaigns to lessen the impact of food industry advertising	3-6 months	X		
	D. Support good food-oriented transit	1-3 years	X		
3. Increase affordability of good food	A. Require full EBT participation at Farmers Markets and expand incentive and outreach to eligible participants	3-6 months	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Farmers Market Consortium EBT project: www.rocfund.org
	B. Adopt junk food and soda user fees	6-12 months	X	X	
4. Increase emergency food assistance	A. Promote and assist Farm to Family and gleaning programs	6-12 months	X		
	B. Expand Food Waste Ordinance to County agencies	6-12 months		X	
5. Improve economic stability of residents	A. Promote Transitional Subsidized Employment to LA food businesses (gardens, processing, etc.)	6-12 months	X		TSE Program: www.ladpss.org/TSE.pdf
6. Strengthen nutrition/health and food system literacy	A. Expand school gardens and cooking programs for kids and families	6-12 months	X	X	LA School Garden Program: http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/Comm on Ground Garden Program/School Gardens.htm
	B. Integrate skills-based nutrition education into public school curriculum	1-3 years		X	

Regional Stewardship of Agriculture and the Environment

Goal: Ensure that urban and rural leaders together steward agricultural and natural resources in food production in an economically feasible manner for all in the food chain.

Analysis

1. **Urban interest in regional food security.** Given economic, environmental, and social uncertainties facing the current global food system, Angelenos have a strong interest in maintaining food production capacity in the region and preserving the land and natural resource base upon which that capacity depends. The economic viability of the agricultural sector and stewardship of agricultural resources and the environment are not just the concern or the responsibility of rural communities in the region.
2. **Decline of agricultural production.** Although the nominal dollar value of crop production in Southern California has remained steady or grown and production, at least of some crops, vastly outstrips demand within the region, actual acreage in agriculture has declined as agricultural lands have been converted to urban uses. The cost and availability of water for agricultural uses is also a significant constraint on production in this semi-arid to arid region, and one that is likely to grow as a result of climate change, population growth, and increased competition for water resources within and outside of the region.
3. **Minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing environmental benefits of agriculture.** Agriculture in Southern California confers numerous environmental benefits on both urban and rural communities, including preservation of open space, buffering of wildlife habitats, carbon sequestration, and flood control. However, most agricultural production in the region, as elsewhere, relies on extensive use of fossil fuels and fossil fuel-based pesticides and fertilizers, with attendant direct and indirect environmental costs that for the most part are not reflected in current food prices – in fact, our society’s “cheap” food supply is a direct consequence of our ability and willingness to externalize those costs to other places and to future generations. Consumers and urban and rural communities alike will have to share the cost of transitioning to more sustainable agricultural practices, and compensating producers for their conservation services – via market prices, tax incentives, public investments, and other mechanisms – if producers are to stay in business in the region.
4. **Building political will.** Particularly in today’s fiscal and economic climate, building political will across the region to fund agricultural and environmental stewardship will be challenging. Given that agricultural producers comprise less than 2% of the electorate, and given how much is at stake, it is essential to develop effective ways to engage and educate policymakers and the public.

Regional Stewardship of Agriculture and the Environment

Goal: Ensure that urban and rural leaders together steward agricultural and natural resources in food production in an economically feasible manner for all in the food chain.

Strategies	Actions	Timing	City Drives	City Supports	Models, Resources & Comments
1. Protect and conserve agricultural land and resources in the region	A. Invest in acquisition of farmland and ag conservation easements	3-5 years	X		Sonoma County Ag Preservation & Open Space District: www.sonomaopenspace.org APA Policy Guide on Community & Regional Food Planning: http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm
	B. Incorporate food production into city and regional planning processes	3-6 months	X		
	C. Support state and federal funding for agricultural land conservation	1-3 years	X		
	D. Secure funds for and invest in water conservation, groundwater management and reclamation projects	1-3 years	X		
2. Provide incentives to growers, distributors and other food businesses to use sustainable production and distribution practices	A. Support city, state and federal funding for agricultural stewardship services (e.g., soil conservation and enhancement, transition to organic, on-farm renewable energy generation, flood control, carbon sequestration, habitat protection and enhancement)	1-3 years	X		
	B. Develop or adopt measurement and labeling system to identify, reward and increase consumer demand for sustainable regional growers and food businesses	1-3 years	X	X	Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops: www.stewardshipindex.org
4. Develop regional agriculture and food system sustainability strategy	A. Conduct a regional assessment to inventory food system assets, threats, and environmental impacts	6-12 months	X	X	Potential Food Policy Council role
	B. Establish a baseline and goals and identify key strategies for regional stewardship and environmental performance improvements	1-2 years	X	X	
6. Promote shared urban-rural interest in and responsibility for stewardship	A. Develop public information campaigns on issues that link urban and rural stewardship interests (e.g., invasive pests, water conservation and reclamation, smart growth, food security, local food)	3-6 months	X		CDFA Asian Citrus Psyllid campaign: http://www.cdca.ca.gov/phpps/acp/

Building a Regional Foodshed Identity

Goal: Build a regional foodshed identity and maintain diverse landscapes and communities that can distinguish and add value to the food grown in the region.

Analysis

1. **Rich agricultural history and food traditions.** Los Angeles was once the leading agricultural county in the United States, and agriculture continues to be an important part of the landscape and culture of the surrounding rural regions. The region is home now to an incredible diversity of cuisines and food-related traditions. The foodshed concept presents an opportunity to weave these multicultural food stories and histories into a cohesive regional foodshed identity that elevates the visibility, recognition and value of the regional food system, and celebrates the cultures and traditions it contains.
2. **Role of urban agriculture.** Urban agriculture – from backyard or rooftop gardens to community gardens and micro-farms – can supplement local food supply and increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for families and neighborhoods. It can also be a powerful tool for increasing awareness of where food comes from, and appreciation for the critical and hard work that farmers perform.
3. **Origin labeling.** Labeling that identifies food origins down to the micro-region and farm tells a story, gives consumers a choice, and supports pricing to meet producer costs.
4. **Need for education.** Although there is increasing awareness of the connection between diet, nutrition and health, both policymakers and the public in Los Angeles are almost entirely disconnected from the sources of their food and from any understanding of agriculture (local or otherwise) and its impact on their lives, the economy, the community and the environment. Food and agricultural literacy is needed to increase public support for agriculture and demand for fresh, healthy, locally and sustainably produced foods.

Building a Regional Foodshed Identity

Goal: Build a regional foodshed identity and maintain diverse landscapes and communities that can distinguish and add value to the food grown in the region.

Strategies	Actions	Timing	City Drives	City Supports	Models, Resources & Comments
1. Increase public awareness and understanding of LA food system	A. Integrate ag and food literacy into public school curriculum and extracurricular programs	1-2 years	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games; 4H; FFA; outdoor science and farm camps; farm apprenticeship programs
	B. Develop media campaign involving chefs and celebrities to make agriculture more visible and position LA as a world-class local/regional sustainable food epicenter, from taco trucks to haute cuisine	6-12 months	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recapturing LA's position as leading ag county in the country Elevator pitch: what is a foodshed and why? Crop signs, iPhone apps, social networking, tourism bureau, events USDA "Know your farmer" program: www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer
	C. Support and promote region and micro-region origin labeling (AVA type, COOL for counties)	1-2 years		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wine appellation of origin (AVA): www.ttb.gov/appellation Country of origin labeling (COOL): www.ams.usda.gov/cool USDA FSMIP funding: www.ams.usda.gov/fsmip Buy local campaigns: www.caff.org/programs/buylocal
4. Increase direct public involvement in and identification with the LA food system	A. Support ordinances, programs and funding to encourage micro-farmers, victory gardens, community gardens and foraging grounds	6-12 months	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UEPI, "Planning to support urban agriculture": http://uepi.wordpress.com/2009/06/17/let%e2%80%99s-plan-to-support-urban-agriculture/ "Agriculture in Urban Planning": http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-133761-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Appendix C: Background Resources

Center for Food and Justice, “Fresh Food Distribution Models for Los Angeles”

http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/publications/TCE_Final_Report.pdf

Jewish Federation, “Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles”

<http://www.givelifemeaning.org/files/Blueprint-To-End-Hunger.pdf>

Roots of Change, “A 21st-Century Social Contract Between Agriculture and the Public”

<http://www.rocfund.org/blogs/michael-r.-dimock-s-blog/a-21st-century-social-contract-between-agriculture-the-public>

California State Board of Food & Agriculture, “California Agricultural Vision”

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/agvision/>

Food First, Community Food Security Coalition, “Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned”

<http://www.foodfirst.org/files/pdf/Food%20Policy%20Councils%20Report%20small.pdf>

Frameworks Institute, “How to Talk About Food Systems”

http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF_FoodSystems/How_to_Talk_food_Systems.pdf

Roots of Change, “Definition of a Foodshed”

<http://www.rocfund.org/panels/panels/draft-definition-of-a-foodshed-draft-definition-of-a-foodshed>

PolicyLink, “Healthy Foods, Healthy Communities: Improving Access and Opportunities Through Food Retailing”

<http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/HEALTHYFOOD.pdf>