



Seattle
Office of Sustainability
& Environment

City of Seattle Food Action Plan Update

Community Engagement Report

July 13, 2022

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Executive Summary

Between September 2021 and June 2022, as part of a planning process to update the City of Seattle's updated [Food Action Plan](#), the Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) and the Human Services Department (HSD) consulted community stakeholders with a wide range of backgrounds and expertise in the local food system. The objective was to identify and explore in depth the most important issues, priorities, and actions that would foster an equitable, sustainable, and resilient local food system.

Through multiple engagement opportunities designed for deep conversation and listening, we collected over 100 hours of feedback and insights representing a broad range of perspectives from farmers and growers, food businesses, farmers markets and retailers, community organizers, nonprofit directors, food justice leaders, food and meal providers, and people with lived experience with poverty, hunger, and homelessness. A core value of this planning process is race and social justice. Our community engagement outreach focused on hearing from community leaders who authentically represent or have deep expertise working with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, Native and Indigenous peoples, and low-income residents.

In all, we conducted 21 interviews, 14 focus groups/listening sessions, and 5 surveys. A total of 197 people participated representing 83 organizations or entities. Seven high-level themes emerged from these efforts:

1. **Food & Meal Programs:** Increase access to food and meal programs that are culturally responsive and promote health and food security.

2. **Land Access:** Increase access to land for growing food as well as community and economic development projects that involve food, prioritizing communities most impacted by historically racist policies and practices.
3. **Education:** Expand access to culturally relevant and empowering food and nutrition education for youth, adults, and older adults.
4. **Economy & Labor:** Create an equitable, fair, and healthy local food economy for Seattle workers, businesses, and residents.
5. **Supply Chains:** Foster equitable, environmentally sustainable, and strengthened local supply chains.
6. **Food Waste:** Prevent food waste, rescue (redistribute) surplus food for people who need it and compost the rest into new natural resources.
7. **Environment:** Reduce climate pollution associated with Seattle's food system and support food production that improves the environment.

These findings form the foundation for an updated Food Action Plan, which we are aiming to release by October 2022. This report shares more detail about these findings, as well as key themes and highlights for each stakeholder group we engaged. It also describes our approach to engagement.

Introduction

The City of Seattle is updating its 2012 [Food Action Plan](#). The Food Action Plan outlines strategies and actions the City can take to foster an equitable, sustainable, and resilient local food system that supports healthy, vibrant communities and advances race and social justice.

The time to forge an updated Food Action Plan has never been more important. Persistent racial and social injustices exist in our local food system, from food insecurity and hunger to unfair labor practices to who has access to resources like land, credit, wealth, and technology to what kinds of traditions and knowledge are valued. COVID, climate change, and inflation are making inequities worse and underscore the importance of resilience during emergencies, crises, and shocks.

While the food system challenges before us are big, Seattle and our region are home to a deep network of organizations, coalitions, and community leaders who are forging a hopeful future in which all can participate, prosper, and benefit. Meeting with community stakeholders to understand their food system priorities was an important and foundational step in updating the Food Action Plan. This report summarizes findings from community engagements that occurred between September 2021 and June 2022, centered on community stakeholders who work on food and work with or represent communities most impacted by health, socioeconomic, and environmental injustices.

Background

The Food Action Plan is the City of Seattle's guiding framework for programs and policies to improve our local system while advancing interrelated goals of race and social justice, food security, environmental sustainability, economic development, and emergency preparedness. The process to update the 2012 Food Action Plan began in 2019, paused in early 2020 as the COVID pandemic began, and resumed in September 2021. Multiple City departments are actively involved in the planning process including staff from the departments of Neighborhoods, Finance and Administrative Services, Human Services, Civil Rights, Economic Development, Labor Standards, Planning & Community Development, Sustainability & Environment, Public Health, Public Utilities, and Parks & Recreation.

Meeting with community stakeholders to understand their priorities and aspirations was an important and foundational step in updating the Food Action Plan. **Chart 1** summarizes the stakeholder types purposely invited to participate in Food Action Plan engagements, which were a mix of in-depth interviews, listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys.

Central to this work is an explicit focus on racial equity. Guided by food justice principles developed by the [Environmental Justice Committee](#) (EJC) (see **Appendix D**) and the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative, a core value of the City is to ground the Food Action Plan in the priorities and aspirations of [communities disproportionately impacted by racial and socio-economic disparities](#) and who have traditionally been excluded from the City's policymaking processes.

To live this value, the Food Action Plan interdepartmental team, in consultation with the EJC, designed and executed a community engagement strategy that prioritized Black, Native and Indigenous peoples, people of color, immigrants, and people with direct experience with poverty, hunger, food insecurity, and homelessness. A full list of entities engaged as of June 30, 2022, is provided in **Appendix A**.

Chart 1: Stakeholder types invited to participate in Food Action Plan engagements

<p>Nonprofit Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-hunger/anti-poverty action coalitions• Food justice organizations• Community-based public health orgs.• Local/regional food and farming advocacy groups and coalitions	<p>Local and Regional Food and Farming Enterprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood business districts• Farmers markets, farm stands, and vendors• Farmers and food producers• Grocery stores and food retailers• Chefs, restaurants• Cooperatives & food hubs
<p>Community Advisory Boards and Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental Justice Committee• Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board• Lived Experience Coalition	<p>Government*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City of Seattle departments• Public Health – Seattle & King County• King County departments
<p>Leaders and Influencers from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutual aid networks• Food and Environmental Justice Movements• Urban agriculture• Youth & student leaders	<p>Educational Institutions*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seattle Public Schools• Seattle Community Colleges• Universities

**Results from engagements with government agencies and institutions are not included in this summary report, which focuses on community stakeholders.*

Engagement Approaches

The primary goal of community engagement was to understand participants' perspectives, experiences, and priorities related to the four Food Action Plan goals:

- **Ensure Equitable Food Access:** All Seattle residents—regardless of race, place, housing status, citizenship, or income—have enough to eat and easy access to fresh, affordable, nutritious, and culturally relevant food.
- **Support Locally Grown Food:** Our local food system strengthens the connection between local farmers and consumers, supports gardening, urban farming, and other community food production, prioritizing those communities which were historically excluded from land access and ownership.
- **Ensure Equitable Economy Opportunity & Fair Labor Practices:** Our local food system and land use policies, from farm to fork, create economic opportunities and a valued workforce, centering workers and communities most impacted by racism.
- **Prevent Food Waste & Climate Pollution:** Our local food system protects and improves the environment, prevents food-related waste, and minimizes further impacts on the climate.

Community stakeholders known for their work, expertise, and interests in food system issues were invited to participate. Prior to outreach and engagement, City department staff reviewed dozens of documents from the last 10 years to synthesize community priorities and needs and to inform the development of the engagements. Special attention was paid to reports and information from the last few years during COVID, when food systems issues like economic hardship, food insecurity, supply chain disruptions, and more challenged our city and communities.

A variety of engagement methods were used, including in-depth interviews, focus groups and listening sessions, and a few online surveys. Most engagements were led and facilitated by at least two City food policy and program advisors from the Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) and/or Human Services Department (HSD). Discussion questions and facilitation guides were designed by OSE and HSD food policy staff with additional input from subject matter experts in other City departments and members of the Environmental Justice Committee's Food Justice Workgroup. For three stakeholder engagement sessions (those with BIPOC Farmers & Food Producers, Mutual Aid Food Access Leaders, and Native and Indigenous Food System Experts), OSE hired trusted and representative consultants to help design and facilitate the engagements.

Due to COVID precautions, most engagements were completed virtually using video conferencing, but several occurred in person and outdoors. Dates and times for engagements were scheduled based on the availability of those invited and all participants were compensated at a rate of \$75-\$125 per hour, depending on the engagement format and duration.

While each engagement was slightly different to reflect the different participant groups and engagement formats, all engagements were designed to collect input related to the Food Action Plan goal areas. Discussion questions were sent in advance. Example discussion questions included:

- *What are the most important issues or priorities the City of Seattle should address to make our local food system more equitable, sustainable, and resilient?* (Note: plain language definitions

Engagement Approaches

were provided for terms like “equitable food system”, “sustainable food system”, and “resilient food system”.)

- *What are the most important ways you, your community, or the communities you work with influence and self-determine food access?*
- *What are the most important ways the City can support and increase access to food that is affordable, fresh, local, nutritious, and culturally relevant?*
- *Reflecting on COVID, what strategies and resources do you see as most effective for ensuring food access during future “shocks” to the food system?*
- *What are the most important strategies to reduce our food system’s impact on the environment and help us adapt to climate change?*
- *What do you see as the most important issues or priorities related to economic justice in the food system? What strategies would advance economic justice and fairness for workers in the local food system?*

Summary of Participating Stakeholders

Between September 2021 and June 2022, we held 21 interviews, 14 focus groups/listening sessions, and conducted 5 surveys. A total of 197 people participated representing 83 entities (see **Appendix A** for details). **Table 1** provides a summary of stakeholder groups and engagement details.

Three stakeholder groups have been especially foundational in shaping the updated Food Action Plan and deserve extra mentioned here— the Community Leader Engagement (Line D in Table 1), the Environmental Justice Committee (Line E in Table 1), and the Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board (Line O in Table 1).

- The [Environmental Justice Committee](#) (EJC) advises City staff on integrating the goals of the Equity & Environment Agenda into environmental and climate focused policies and programs which includes food justice. The EJC consists of eight members from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise in working with communities of color, immigrants and refugees, Native and Indigenous peoples, and low-income residents. The EJC Food Justice Workgroup, comprised of four members, has been collaborating with City staff since September 2021 to update the Food Action Plan. Their contributions have included developing Food Justice Values (see **Appendix D**) to guide the update process, advising on community engagement strategies, and co-creating draft strategies and actions for the Food Action Plan.
- In-depth interviews with community leader in 2019 and 2022 were another key phase in our efforts to update the Food Action Plan. These conversations were with community leaders from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise in working with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, Native and Indigenous peoples, and low-income residents. The primary goal of the interviews was to identify and explore in depth the most important issues and priorities the City of Seattle should address to foster a local food system that is more equitable, sustainable, and resilient. Just as the EJC’s Food Justice Values helped to articulate *what* we are trying to achieve through the Food Action Plan, the community leader engagements are a guide in *how* to get

Engagement Approaches

there. A summary of priorities and recommendations from the 2022 community leader interviews is provided in **Appendix B** or you can access the full report [here](#).

- Finally, the [Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board](#) (CAB) is another crucial stakeholder group informing the development of the updated Food Action Plan. The CAB was established by the City Council ([Ordinance 125324](#)) to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on food access and prenatal-to-three programs and services supported by the Sweetened Beverage Tax. CAB members are passionate about race and social justice and committed to centering communities most impacted by health and economic inequities when advising the City and developing budget recommendations. The CAB has been consulted several times in our Food Action Plan update process and closely tracks SBT-funded food access programs including the [Food Equity Fund](#), [Fresh Bucks](#), [Healthy Food in Schools](#), hunger relief efforts, and food and meal programs in childcare and older adult settings.

Table 1: Summary of Participants (September 2021 – June 30, 2022)

Line	Stakeholder Group <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Engagement Details
A.	BIPOC Farmers & Food Producers	<p>Half-day visioning and listening session with 14 individuals representing 13 farms. The session was designed in collaboration with EJC Food Justice Workgroup and a consultant farmer and organizer.</p> <p>An additional in-depth interview was held with a farming association representing Hmong farmers.</p>
B.	Business Associations	Interviews with 3 experts from 2 south Seattle business associations, facilitated by OSE staff.
C.	Community Gardeners & Urban Farmers	Two virtual listening sessions attended by 7 community-based food producers from 6 organizations, and a listening session with 6 community gardeners at the Lake City SHA P-Patch. Live translation and interpretation in Amharic and Chinese was provided at the Lake City P-Patch.
D.	Community Leaders	<p>Community leaders from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise in working with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, Native and Indigenous peoples, low-income residents, and English language learners.</p> <p>In-depth interviews (90-minutes) with 17 individuals representing 16 organizations. Interviews were led by OSE staff and occurred between December 2021 and April 2022.</p>

Engagement Approaches

Line	Stakeholder Group <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Engagement Details
E.	Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) – Food Justice Workgroup	<p>Engagement and collaboration are ongoing.</p> <p>In September 2021, to kick off the planning process, the EJC Food Justice Workgroup members presented the EJC’s Food Justice Values (see Appendix D) to the City interdepartmental team that leads the Food Action Plan. With permission from the EJC, the City team adopted the EJC’s Food Justice Values to guide the Food Action Plan update process.</p> <p>Four in-depth and interactive meetings between September 2021 and June 2022 to co-create a stakeholder engagement strategy as well as Food Action Plan draft strategies and actions.</p>
F.	Farm to Table Providers	Listening session with 6 representatives from 4 organizations.
G.	Farmers Markets of Seattle	Listening session with 6 experts representing 4 farmers market organizations. Designed and facilitated by OSE staff with input from the participants.
H.	Food Businesses	Listening session with 17 representatives from 16 businesses focused on BIPOC-owned businesses. Designed and facilitated by OSE staff.
I.	Lived Experience Coalition	Listening session with 40 people who are or have experienced homelessness. Designed and facilitated by HSD staff.
J.	Meals Partnership Coalition	Survey and follow-up listening sessions with representatives from community-based congregate meal providers. Designed and facilitated by HSD staff.
K.	Mutual Aid Food Access Organizers	Listening session with 7 mutual aid organizers representing 6 mutual aid groups. The session was designed in collaboration with the EJC Food Justice Workgroup and a consultant farmer and organizer.
L.	<i>Native and Indigenous Food System Experts</i>	<i>Listening session planned for July 16, 2022. Designed and facilitated by members of the Indigenous Seattle Working Group and a Native consultant and food system expert.</i>

Engagement Approaches

Line	Stakeholder Group <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Engagement Details
M.	Nutrition & Meal Delivery Providers for Older Adults	Listening session with 28 representatives from HSD’s Aging & Disability Services meal programs focused on older adults (ages 60+). Designed and facilitated by HSD staff.
N.	Seattle Food Committee	Survey and listening sessions with representatives from food banks. Designed and facilitated by HSD staff.
O.	Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group	Ongoing virtual meetings through 2022 with 25 representatives from Seattle Public Schools, City and County agencies, and community organizations to assess gaps, needs, and opportunities for more accessible, sustainable, and equitable school meals, gardens, and education. Convened by OSE with a consultant facilitator.
P.	Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board	Engagement and collaboration are ongoing. Two interactive meetings between November 2021 and April 2022 to brief the CAB on the Food Action Plan, followed by two separate in-depth conversations with three CAB members to review and workshop Food Action Plan draft strategies and actions.
Q.	Youth Food Justice Leaders	Listening session with 3 youth food justice leaders, co-organized with FEEST (Food Empowerment Education & Sustainability Team)

Key Findings

This section summarizes seven thematic areas that emerged from the engagements. These themes are setting the foundation for the draft Strategic Priorities for the updated Food Action Plan.

8. **Food & Meal Programs:** Increase access to food and meal programs that are culturally responsive and promote health and food security.
9. **Land Access:** Increase access to land for growing food as well as community and economic development projects that involve food, prioritizing communities most impacted by historically racist policies and practices.
10. **Education:** Expand access to culturally relevant and empowering food and nutrition education for youth, adults, and older adults.
11. **Economy & Labor:** Create an equitable, fair, and healthy local food economy for Seattle workers, businesses, and residents.
12. **Supply Chains:** Foster equitable, environmentally sustainable, and strengthened local supply chains.
13. **Food Waste:** Prevent food waste, rescue (redistribute) surplus food for people who need it and compost the rest into new natural resources.
14. **Environment:** Reduce climate pollution associated with Seattle’s food system and support food production that improves the environment.

Key themes and highlights by each stakeholder group are provided in **Appendix B**.

In addition to the seven food-focused thematic areas, some global themes also emerged from the community engagement. These were:

- **Address root causes.** We repeatedly heard that the City needs to address the root causes of inequities that show up in the food system – this includes inequity in food access, land access, environmental impacts, workforce and economic impacts, supply chain impacts, nutrition access, and more. The City was urged to think holistically about food system inequities and address causes like poverty, housing, unfair labor practices, structural barriers, and disparities in access to resource and opportunities rooted in historical racist policies and practices.
- **Seattle’s affordability crisis has ripple effects throughout the food system.** We heard that affordability issues that existed before the COVID pandemic have worsened, and that those issues stretch across the food system. The housing crisis and gentrification were repeatedly raised as having negatively impacts on food access and food production.
- **Community-led action can be helped or harmed by City policies and practices** such as permitting and licensing processes, how funding is granted and contracted out, and the type of relationships City departments foster with community organizations.

Key Findings

- **More voices and representation are needed in food programs and policies.** People affected by food insecurity need more seats at the table to influence policy. The City should hire BIPOC community members and people with lived experience for food system roles including advising on culturally relevant foods.
- **City has an important role as connector and facilitator.** There is so much great work happening across Seattle but sometimes it is disconnected, fragmented, or there are other barriers. The City can lean in as a facilitator and connector here, not just as a funder and policymaker.

Summary of the Seven Thematic Areas

1	Increase access to food and meal programs that are culturally responsive and promote health and food security. [Food and Meal Programs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cost of healthy food is a key food access barrier. Increase benefit funding and implementation support for food and cash assistance programs (like Fresh Bucks, SNAP, grocery vouchers, cash assistance) that increase access to affordable, culturally relevant, high-quality, locally produced food.• Lack of transportation is a key food access barrier. Transportation issues (no vehicle, no public transit route) make it difficult for people to access grocery stores or food access programs. Invest in food and meal delivery services (“delivery equity”) and other ways to bring food access resources closer to people that need them.• Invest in BIPOC-led food access programming. Provide low barrier grants and contracts, technical assistance, and other supports that build community capacity and support community cohesion. Support community organizations to establish highly subsidized food retailers/businesses (farm stands, small neighborhood grocers, restaurants) in underserved areas.• Prioritize working with BIPOC- or WMBE-owned businesses in City food and meal programs. This is especially important in the Fresh Bucks program, said numerous participants across different engagement events. Equitably supporting the viability of local food and farm businesses is a part of holistic, community food security.• Support innovative, collaborative, strengths-based community partnerships. Partner with organizations that have deep, trusting relationships and connections to communities impacted by food insecurity. Ensure outreach is inclusive and culturally and linguistically relevant.• Food programs should be person-centered and meet nutrition, medical, dietary, and cultural needs. Prioritize foods that are locally grown, are environmentally sustainable, and that support BIPOC and WMBE growers and food businesses.• Youth and elders are priority populations for food and meal programs. Food programs that serve youth and elders should focus on food that is fresh, nutritious, culturally relevant, locally grown, and equitably sourced. Programs should include complementary food-based education that is empowering.	

Key Findings

<p>2</p>	<p>Increase access to land for growing food as well as community and economic development projects that involve food, prioritizing communities most impacted by historically racist policies and practices. [Land Access]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens and urban farms should be a primary focus for City. These spaces provide a wide array of benefits, including critical neighborhood-level access to fresh, culturally relevant foods, friendships and community-building, and intergenerational and youth empowerment and education. • Increase long-term access to urban and rural land for food production. Provide funding and resources to develop land for growing food, reduce barriers to land ownership, and increase affordability and collective land stewardship models. • Encourage incorporation of gardens and farms into urban land use planning, along with food retail and other food-related uses. • City policies, permitting, and regulations create barriers for community gardens and urban farmers such as by hindering access to potential urban farm spaces, making it difficult to pursue on-site infrastructure improvements, and prohibiting urban farmers and gardeners to sell produce grown on City-owned and public land. • Improve support from City departments to develop urban farms and community gardens. Invest in greenhouses and other needed infrastructure for urban agriculture projects. Provide funding, assistance, training, and other resources to urban farmers, gardeners, and small farmers. 	
<p>3</p>	<p>Expand access to culturally relevant and empowering food and nutrition education for youth and adults. [Education]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund community education on a range of food and nutrition topics. Topics mentioned include food literacy, food justice, food and history (including racism in the food system, understanding foods of oppression), food and culture, traditional foodways, urban agriculture, cooking, health promotion, and food waste prevention. Focus on education specifically for youth and elders. Education should be culturally relevant, empowering, hands-on and skills based. • Prioritize community-led education programs that hire food workers, farmers, food justice leaders, and BIPOC community members to be educators. • Make nutrition and culinary classes available to more students within Seattle schools. Connect classes and students directly to support and work with the school meal program. • Explore food and farm related job programs and workforce development, which can help meet the labor needs of small food and farm businesses. 	

4	Create an equitable, fair, and healthy local food economy for Seattle workers, businesses, and residents. [Economy & Labor]
<p><u>Food Workers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve job quality, benefits, protections, and livable wages for food workers. Focus on populations that persistently and disproportionately work in lower-paying occupations. Support local, regional, or statewide efforts focused on farmworker labor protections. • Increase outreach and education to food businesses and workers about Seattle’s labor laws. • Food sector employees need mental health care programming. Staff have been through traumatic experiences and need mental health support, especially since the pandemic. <p><u>Farmers and Food Business:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small businesses in the local food economy are burdened by staffing, financing, and other resource challenges. Issues include lack of commercial kitchen access, hiring and retaining a workforce, access to capital and small business supports, and high costs for commercial rent. • Small, new, and BIPOC-owned food businesses and farmers need access to grants, financing, and tax relief. Access to subsidies of various types can help increase access to capital for locally owned businesses to both feed the community, provide jobs, and build community wealth. • Facilitate or fund accessible, equitable food facilities and infrastructure that grow the local food economy. Focus on aggregators, food hubs, commercial kitchen access, cold storage, dry storage, and processors that are also intentional about partnering with small, BIPOC farmers. • Improve City permitting processes and provide in-language technical support for food businesses. Farmers markets, vendors, and farm stands reported the City’s permitting processes are burdensome. This negatively impacts small food retailers and hinders neighborhood food access. <p><u>Neighborhood-level food economy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make farmers market spaces more accessible to BIPOC farmers and food producers. • Increase the diversity of stores that carry culturally relevant foods. Access to cultural foods in more places is a key component of equitable food access. • Support community organizations to establish subsidized food retailers and businesses in underserved areas. Examples include farm stands and markets, small neighborhood grocers, restaurants, and other food purveyors. 	

5	Foster equitable, environmentally sustainable, and strengthened local supply chains. [Supply Chains]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard-asset infrastructure is a top priority. Many entities across the food system—from farmers to food businesses to large hunger relief organizations to grassroots mutual aid food access—need access to a variety of hard-asset infrastructure including cold storage, dry storage, commercial kitchen space, and multi-purpose food hubs. Food facilities should use sustainable and green materials, be energy efficient, and produce zero waste. • Farmers, food producers, and food businesses need a variety of technical assistance and ongoing individualized support. These entities would benefit from access to capital, business development coaching, peer mentorship, technical assistance with government permits, licenses, and taxes, and networking opportunities to develop new market opportunities. • Recognize and promote food businesses that source local, sustainable ingredients. The City could have a role in educating consumers about the full ecological, economic, social, and food system impacts of their food purchases, especially comparing impacts of mass-produced and 'imported' products with locally made items. • Use values-based food purchasing in City food programs and encourage other major food service institutions to do the same. Increase purchasing from local, BIPOC or WMBE farmers, food producers, and food businesses in wholesale, public, and institutional food programs. Additionally, prioritize working with food businesses that demonstrate fair labor practices. 	

6	Prevent food waste, rescue (redistribute) surplus food for people who need it and compost the rest into new natural resources. [Food Waste]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent and reduce food waste created by supermarkets. Require supermarkets to donate unused food that is still high quality. • Strengthen food-surplus and food rescue programming. Increase efforts that recover and donate food that is high quality, still fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant. • Prevent and reduce consumer, household, and business-level food waste through education. Education should make the link between food waste and climate impacts. • Invest in zero food waste community projects. Support community-based infrastructure and systems to turn food waste and other organic materials into fertilizer and biogas (compost gas, a renewable energy source). • Improve composting efforts. Work on keeping food waste out of the solid waste stream. Address structural barriers for composting in multi-unit residences. • Educate residents about the safety and quality of Seattle’s tap water (to reduce reliance on bottled drinking water). 	

7	Reduce climate pollution associated with Seattle’s food system and support food production that improves the environment. [Environment]
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure and monitor climate pollution created by the local food system. Then, identify high-impact strategies to reduce climate pollution and environmental harms created by the local food system.• Pay attention to soil and water. Improve soil health through regenerative agricultural practices. Support urban agriculture projects to design crop and soil management systems that improve and maintain soil health over time. Manage water used in urban agriculture to prepare for dryer and wetter seasons and to reduce pollution.• Support action by communities most impacted by climate change. Invest in empowering, BIPOC and youth-led climate adaptation projects.• Increase consumption of locally grown and in-season foods.	

Closing

The City of Seattle is grateful and inspired by the vision, expertise, and wisdom shared by all those who participated in these community engagements. The learnings from these conversations set the foundation and direction for the future Food Action Plan which envisions an equitable, sustainable, and resilient local food system that supports healthy, vibrant communities, advances race and social justice, and is grounded in the priorities of the community leaders who are critical in this work.

Appendices

Appendix A: Stakeholder Affiliations

Line	Stakeholder Group <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Organizations and Entities Represented <i>(Listed in alphabetical order within each row)</i>
A.	BIPOC Farmers & Food Producers	Black Farmers Collective, Clean Greens Farm & Market, Friendly Hmong Farms, Hmong Farmers of Washington Local Color Farm and Fiber, Jacobs Agro, Long Hearing Farm, One Leaf Farm, Organic Seed Alliance, Sariwa Farm, Sky Island Farm, Skylight Farms, Sovereignty Farm @ Chief Seattle Club, Sweet Hollow Farm & Groundwork Food Hub, The Common Acre.
B.	Business Associations	Beacon Business Alliance, Rainer Avenue Business Coalition, U District Business Improvement Area
C.	Community Gardeners & Urban Farmers	Lake City SHA P-Patch Gardeners, Black Star Farmers, Danny Woo Community Garden, Khmer Community of Seattle King County, Seattle Parks Foundation, Solid Ground, and Tilth Alliance
D.	Community Leaders	Asian Counseling & Referral Services, Atlantic Street Center, Black Farmers Collective, Cham Refugee Community, Ethiopian Community in Seattle, FEEST, Horn of Africa Services, Hunger Intervention Program, Lake City Collective, Latino Community Fund, Nurturing Roots, Rainier Beach Action Coalition, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, United Indian of All Tribes, Villa Comunitaria
E.	Environmental Justice Committee – Food Justice Subcommittee	Black Farmers Collective, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, Sustainable Seattle
F.	Farm to Table Providers	Farmstand Local Foods, Nourishian for Life, Solid Ground, Tilth Alliance

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G.	Farmers Markets of Seattle	African Community Housing & Development, Neighborhood Farmers Market Association, Pike's Place Market, Seattle Farmers Market Association,
H.	Food Businesses	Business Impact NW, FareStart, Farmstand Local Foods, Food Innovation Network, Fuse Sauces, HeartBeet Healthy Inc/Cascadia Produce, Karachi Cowboys, Lantern Brewing, Local Yokels, Maria Hines Consulting, New Day Cooperative Distribution, Pacific Coast Harvest, Pot Pie Factory Inc., Safeway, Sea Creatures Restaurants, Seattle Good Business Network, Simply Soulful Café, The Apple Guy/Fruitful Café.
I.	Lived Experience Coalition	Lived Experience Coalition. [Members join through lived experience of homelessness, rather than organization affiliation.]
J.	Meals Partnership Coalition	Community House Mental Health Agency, Lifelong/Chicken Soup Brigade, OSL, Phinney Neighborhood Association, South Park Senior Center, Teen Feed, additional anonymous responses via survey.
K.	Mutual Aid Food Access Leaders	Community Loaves, Plant Based Food Share, Riot Kitchen, Seattle Community Fridges, Soup is Love, and Wa Na Wari/Wasat.
L.	Native and Indigenous Food System Leaders	<i>TBD. Listening session planned for July 16. Designed and facilitated by members of the Indigenous Seattle Working Group and a Native consultant.</i>
M.	Nutrition & Meal Delivery Providers for Older Adults	Asian Counseling and Referral Services, El Centro de La Raza, Filipino Community of Seattle, International Community Health Services, International Drop-In Center, Lifelong/Chicken Soup Brigade, Pike Market Senior Center, Sound Generations, Southeast Seattle Senior Center, Tilth Alliance, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation.

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Line	Stakeholder Group <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Organizations and Entities Represented <i>(Listed in alphabetical order within each row)</i>
N.	Seattle Food Committee	Ballard Food Bank, Byrd Barr Place, El Centro de la Raza, FamilyWorks, Jewish Family Service, Lifelong/Chicken Soup Brigade, Pike Market Food Bank, Rainier Valley Food Bank, Solid Ground, South Park Senior Center, South Seattle College, West Seattle Food Bank, additional anonymous responses via survey.
O.	Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group	City of Seattle department staff (Office of Sustainability and Environment, Human Services Dept., Dept. of Education and Early Learning, Seattle Public Utilities), District 7 PTA, EarthGen, FEEST, Nourishian for Life, Public Health Seattle King County, Seattle Public Schools department staff (Culinary Services, Self-Help Projects, Native Education Program), Solid Ground, Tilth Alliance, United Way of King County
P.	Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board (CAB)	CAB member affiliations: African Community Housing & Development, Bezos Family Foundation, East African Community Services, FEEST, Got Green, Northwest Harvest, Nutrition First, Treehouse, University of Washington, WSU Extension SNAP-Ed
Q.	Youth Food Justice Leaders	FEEST

Appendix B: Summary of Priorities and Recommendations from the 2022 Community Leader Engagement

The community leader in-depth interviews in 2019 and 2022 were the first and foundational phase of community engagement to update the Food Action Plan. These conversations were with community leaders from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise in working with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, Native and Indigenous peoples, low-income residents, and English language learners. The primary goal of the interviews was to identify and explore in depth the most important issues and priorities the City of Seattle should address to foster a local food system that is more equitable, sustainable, and resilient. The findings from these engagements set the foundation and direction for the updated Food Action Plan as well as subsequent stakeholder engagements.

A summary of priorities and recommendations that emerged from the 2022 Community Leader conversations is provided below. The full report is available [here](#).

Summary of Priorities and Recommendations from the 2022 Community Leader Engagement

Root causes of food insecurity

- Think holistically about food system inequities and address root causes like poverty, housing, unfair labor practices, structural barriers, and disparities in access to resource and opportunities rooted in historical racist policies and practices. (Strategic Priority #1, #2, #4)
- Improve job quality, focusing on demographic populations that persistently and disproportionately work in lower-paying occupations. (Strategic Priority #4)

Land Access and Supports for Urban Agriculture and Community Gardening

- Facilitate or fund affordable land leases or accessible avenues to community land ownership. (Strategic Priority #2)
- Provide funding or resources to develop the land and make it suitable for growing food. (Strategic Priority #1, #2)
- Facilitate or fund accessible and equitable avenues to food facilities (such as aggregators, food hubs, cold storage, other storage) that are intentional about partnering with small, BIPOC farmers. Aggregation can be a way for small-scale farmers to sell their products and receive services. (Strategic Priority #4)
- Support agricultural, food, and natural resource training and education for small farmers and urban agriculture growers. (Strategic Priority #2)
- Support community groups to expand and establish new farmers markets and farm stands in underserved areas and where BIPOC growers can cooperatively sell. (Strategic Priority #1, #4)
- Improve the City permitting processes for farm stands, where small-scale BIPOC farmers are more likely to be sell direct to consumers. (Strategic Priority #4)

Summary of Priorities and Recommendations from the 2022 Community Leader Engagement

- Relax City rules about selling produce grown on City-owned and public land. (Strategic Priority #2)

Food and Meal Programs (Strategic Priority #1 unless otherwise noted)

- Support community-led food access programming, to ensure cultural and linguistic relevance and support community cohesion.
- Support community organizations to establish highly subsidized food retailers/businesses (farm stands, small neighborhood grocers, restaurants) in underserved areas. (Strategic Priority #1, #4)
- Increase food benefits (like Fresh Bucks, SNAP, grocery vouchers, cash assistance) and make them as flexible and unrestrictive as possible. Cash assistance is always the best resource, since cash is accepted everywhere and enables people and households to flexibly meet their unique needs.
- Prioritize food and meals that are culturally relevant, locally grown, environmentally sustainable, and that support BIPOC and WMBE growers and food businesses.
- Invest in food and meal delivery services (“delivery equity”) and other ways to bring food access resources closer to people.
- Continue Metro’s pandemic transportation services.
- Increase access to internet and technology (“digital equity”).
- Invest in trusted community organizations to facilitate inclusive and in-language outreach.

School food

- Increase access to school food and meals that are fresh, culturally specific, and locally and equitably sourced. (Strategic Priority #1, #4, #5)

Food and Nutrition Education

- Fund food and nutrition education on a range of topics including food literacy, food justice and racism in the food system, understanding foods of oppression, traditional foodways, urban agriculture, cooking, and health promotion. Education should be culturally relevant, hands-on, empowering, and skills based. (Strategic Priority #3)

Strategies for Effective Emergency Food Response Efforts (Strategic Priority #1)

- Support collaboration and coordination between government agencies, emergency food providers, and transportation providers.

Summary of Priorities and Recommendations from the 2022 Community Leader Engagement

- Enable flexible support systems. For residents, this includes client choice models of emergency food and cash assistance. For emergency food providers, this means offering flexible, low barrier grants and contracts.
- Prioritize effective and timely information sharing with residents with limited English or digital proficiency.

Small food business and community and economic development projects that involve food

- Provide financial and other business supports. (Strategic Priority #5)
- Facilitate access to shared kitchens and small batch food manufacturing. (Strategic Priority #5)
- Prioritize working with BIPOC- or WMBE-owned businesses in City food and meal programs, especially Fresh Bucks. (Strategic Priority #1, #4)
- Support community organizations to establish highly subsidized food retailers/businesses (farm stands, small neighborhood grocers, restaurants) in underserved areas. (Strategic Priority #1, #4)

Fair wages and labor protections for food system workers

- Support efforts focused on farm work labor protections. (Strategic Priority #4)
- Increase outreach and education to Seattle businesses and workers about Seattle’s labor protections and ordinances. (Strategic Priority #4)
- Prioritize working with food supply businesses that demonstrate fair and valued labor practices. (Strategic Priority #1, #5)

Food waste prevention (Strategic Priority #6)

- More closely regulate food waste produced by supermarkets.
- Increase food rescue efforts, focusing on food that is high quality, still fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant.
- Educate residents about the safety and quality of Seattle’s tap water (to reduce reliance on bottled drinking water).
- Improve composting efforts to keep food waste out of the solid waste stream. Address structural barriers for composting in multi-unit residences.
- Invest in community-based infrastructure and systems to turn food waste and other organic materials into fertilizer and biogas (compost gas, a renewable energy source).

Strategies for food system sustainability and resilience

Summary of Priorities and Recommendations from the 2022 Community Leader Engagement

- Food facilities should use sustainable and green materials and be energy efficient. (Strategy #5)
- Support urban agriculture projects to design crop and soil management systems that improve and maintain soil health over time. (Strategy #7)
- Partner with developers to incorporate vertical growing space into cityscapes. (Strategy #2)
- Invest in greenhouses for urban agriculture projects. (Strategy #2)
- Invest in empowering, BIPOC and youth-led climate adaptation projects. (Strategy #3, #7)
- Improve soil health through regenerative agricultural practices. (Strategy #7)
- Manage water used in urban agriculture to prepare for dryer and wetter seasons and to reduce pollution. (Strategy #7)

City Grants and Contracts

- Examine City policies and procedures to assess what is required and necessary versus what is habit. Then, limit reporting, paperwork, and other documentation to what is required and truly necessary.
- Engage with prospective grant applicants before the RFP is released to collect feedback on priorities, application process, and contractual provisions.
- Be flexible with grant funding; allow funds to be used for general operating costs and staffing and recognize that these costs have gone up.
- Offer a range of different grant sizes (\$10,000; \$30,000; \$75,000 and above, etc.).
- Offer multi-year grants.
- Consider collaborative funding models rather than competitive processes.
- Streamline grant programs across departments and look for ways to blend funding to support more holistic and cross-cutting work.
- Cultivate trusting relationships with grantees and avoid punitive and transactional dealings.
- Offer grant opportunities that focus on building community capacity to develop, implement, and sustain their own solutions to problems. Fund activities that strengthen skills and leadership of individuals and communities, enhance the effectiveness of community organizations, and develop and implement a strategic community agenda.

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

A. BIPOC Farmers & Food Producers

- **BIPOC farmers need access to land, infrastructure, markets, and direct funding.** (Strategic Priority #1) The City could also have unique roles in supporting farms and local food producers by:
 - Supporting long-term access to land for food production, with water rights, especially overcoming capital and financing barriers (Strategic Priority #2)
 - Developing hard-asset infrastructure (cold storage, transportation, processing) (Strategic Priority #5)
 - Increasing local food purchasing by wholesalers and public and institutional food programs, and compensate farmers for food access partnerships (Strategic Priority #1, #5)
 - Developing grants, loans, and other accessible financing mechanisms for farmers to better access capital and resources (Strategic Priority #4)
 - Exploring job programs to address farms' labor challenges with production and business administration (Strategic Priority #3)
- **Farmers and food businesses need technical assistance and business support services provided by community partners** (Strategic Priority #5)
- **Consumer education on food, agriculture, history, and culture is key, and BIPOC farmers can be great educators.** Increase public awareness, especially with youth, about cooking, locally grown foods, and why supporting local and BIPOC farms and farmers is important. (Strategic Priority #3)
- **Physical environments (housing, transit) are significantly impacting food access in Seattle.** The intersection of the housing crisis, gentrification, and food access desperately needs attention. (Strategic Priority #1, #2)
- **Fresh Bucks is a valuable program and could be more effective by increasing access and outreach and improving retailer and user experiences.** It is crucial to assess, re-design, or expand based on user, retailer, and community feedback. (Strategic Priority #1)
- **Prioritize BIPOC and community-led solutions for funding, support, and other resources. Decrease barriers to grants and public funding access.** BIPOC farmers are working to organize and collaboratively resource each other in local production and food systems change and need support to continue this momentum. (Strategic Priority #1)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

A. BIPOC Farmers & Food Producers

- **Improve City outreach, engagement, and communications with BIPOC leadership and stakeholders within food justice, food sovereignty, and climate issues.** ([Plan Implementation and Stewardship](#))

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

B. Business Associations

- **Community kitchen spaces are needed to support emerging food businesses and food assistance meal programs.** Having a space to prepare and distribute food can help connect smaller farms/CSAs to restaurant clients, prepare and distribute community meals, etc. This is something that needs to be supported by government & community.
- **Small, culturally specific grocers face competition from online and large retailers and have not benefitted as much from government assistance such as emergency grocery vouchers.** Businesses in Rainier Valley have shared that Costco selling Halal options has impacted their businesses.
- **Neighborhood-based business associations (and other CBOs) need more resources to serve the many needs of their communities.** These associations are helping their communities with a broad range of services—from houselessness to digital access to filling out city permits. They would like to provide more support to businesses interested in accessing government resources and revenue, such as stabilization grants and SNAP/EBT, but do not always have capacity.
- **Businesses are interested in SNAP/EBT, but there are barriers to being able to accept these benefits.** SNAP/EBT tends to be easier to apply for and navigate than WIC, but both are complicated and have reporting requirements that can be difficult for small retailers. CBOs are interested in knowing more about what is needed to apply for SNAP/EBT to support stores in the process.

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

C. Community Gardeners & Urban Farmers

- **Physical environments (housing, transit) are significantly impacting access to and safety in urban farms and community gardens in Seattle.** The intersection of the housing crisis, gentrification, and food desperately needs attention. Transportation barriers create inequitable access to healthy, organic food retailers. [\(Strategic Priority #1, #2\)](#)
- **Prioritize community-led urban farming and gardening efforts for funding, support, and other resources for operations, food production, and education.** Decrease barriers and increase technical assistance to access and manage funding, especially for historically under-resourced communities. [\(Strategic Priority #1\)](#)
- **Improve support from City of Seattle Departments (including Parks and Recreation, Police, Utilities, and Planning and Community Development) for urban farms and community gardens.** Key needs include allowing construction of more on-site garden infrastructure, ensuring public safety in gardens, ensuring affordable access to water, and creating physical space to integrate farms and gardens into current or new development. [\(Strategic Priority #2\)](#)
- **Community gardens and urban farms provide a wide array of benefits,** including neighborhood-level access to fresh, culturally relevant foods, friendships and community-building, and intergenerational and youth empowerment and education. [\(Strategic Priority #2\)](#)
- **The City needs to make urban farming a primary focus.** Assess what park spaces can be converted into affordable farm space to use for community food production. Work with planners and developers to create more physical space to integrate farms and gardens into current or new developments. Use incentives for private developments or homeowners to create food gardens. [\(Strategic Priority #2\)](#)
- **Close food waste loops by growing capacity for neighborhood-level, small-scale composting projects.** Connect consumer and food business waste with urban farms and community gardens. If composting off-site, bring compost back to urban farms for free. Assess and improve soils; remediation for toxic soil in urban areas is especially important and needed. [\(Strategic Priority #4\)](#)
- **Community education on food, gardening, and cooking are high priorities, especially for youth and elders.** The City can support local efforts through more public outreach and by hosting or supporting community and volunteer events to promote the benefits and opportunities for community gardening. Training for community gardeners is another way the City can support. [\(Strategic Priority #3\)](#)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group
F. Farm to Table Providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address root causes of inequity. Avoid band-aid solutions. (Strategic Priority #1, #2, #3, #4).• City has important role as connector and facilitator. Help partners understand landscape of food work within city and help connect partners with different departments. Help lead and navigate collaborative group work. Have active voice in acknowledging role. (Strategic Priority – all)• Maximize nutrition education. Prioritize opportunities for education. Teach history of food and agriculture. Secure translation and interpretation resources. Provide education around food waste for children. Include funding for community engagement. Define clear metrics. (Strategic Priority #3, #6)• Support land ownership and sovereignty. Actively partner with WA Land Trust on farmland access and preservation. Honor sovereignty with tribes. Help connect various city departments who have a role. (Strategic Priority #2)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group
G. Farmers Markets of Seattle (FMoS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support cross sector collaborations. There are opportunities for collaborative partnerships between government, food access programs, hunger relief sector, and social service agencies. (Strategic Priority #1, Plan Implementation and Stewardship)• Fund and support farmers market food access programs. Continue funding and implementation support for food access programs that increase access to culturally relevant, high-quality, locally produced food, including Fresh Bucks, SNAP Market Match, and subsidized CSA programs. Customers and implementing partners need more in-language support to adjust to new program technology (e-benefits). (Strategic Priority #1)• Address access issues for food access program customers. Lack of transportation, language barriers, and mobility issues for disabled customers and elders inhibit access to food access programs farmers markets. (Strategic Priority #1, #2)• Improve the farmers market permitting process. Current City permitting processes are burdensome, confusing, inconsistent, and fragmented. Additionally, recognize farmers markets as an essential service, providing positive economic, environmental, and community benefits. (Strategic Priority #4)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

G. Farmers Markets of Seattle (FMoS)

- **Increase resources for first time farmers and food processors.** This includes technical assistance and grants to support startup costs. (Strategic Priority #4, #5)
- **Provide supports to BIPOC growers.** Supports are needed to address equity issues related to land access and other resource disparities. (Strategic Priority #2, #4)
- **Address vendor resource issues.** Lack of commercial kitchen access, staff hiring and retention, access to capital and small business supports, high cost for commercial rent, and resilience after floods and crop failures are all issues for vendors. (Strategic Priority #2, #4)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

H. Food Businesses

- **Staff retention is a huge issue and is tied most directly to the cost of living in Seattle. Affordable housing needs to be a top priority,** along with accessible workforce development programs and efforts to increase wages across the industry. (Strategic Priority #4)
- **Employees need mental health care programming, after having been through traumatic experiences especially during the pandemic.** Mental health and general health care are critical for low-income and underrepresented workers in food service/food businesses.
- **Explore opportunities to provide more subsidies for equitable and fair food production, paired with equitable food access.** (Strategic Priority #1, #5)
- **Facilitate connections and partnerships between food businesses and hunger relief organizations.** Promote hunger relief opportunities to businesses and share options for tax breaks when businesses donate surplus food. (Strategy #1)
- **BIPOC-owned food businesses need financing and subsidies to increase access to funds, capital, and to build community wealth.** This may include tax breaks and tax relief, such as waiving B&O taxes or licensing fees; employee retention credits, especially for businesses empowering staff, respecting labor laws, or that are under-funded. Other approaches include non-collateralized funding opportunities, or less restrictive, low barrier funding, public-private partnerships, and promoting, incentivizing, or requiring purchases from WMBE businesses. Smaller loans and financing options right-sized for food businesses in incubation are needed, with language access to understand the various funding types (grants, loans, etc.). Family-run businesses also need access to short-term emergency funds to bridge temporary closures. (Strategic Priority #4)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group	
H. Food Businesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide food businesses with hands-on, end-to-end technical assistance and coaching that is tailored to their stage of growth (new and startup, maintenance, scale-up). This can also include paid mentorship opportunities to connect more experienced business owners to less experienced or new business owners. Support developing market channels and facilitate opportunities with local grocery chains, distributors, or connections to other, larger markets. (Strategic Priority #5)• Recognize and promote food businesses that source local, sustainable ingredients. Educate consumers about the full ecological, economic, social, and food system impacts of their food purchases, especially comparing impacts of mass-produced and 'imported' products with locally made items. (Strategic Priority #5)• Support the measurement of environmental and climate impacts in food production and manufacturing, as well as leading methods for reducing those impacts. For example, measure utilities (including energy inputs and waste stream outputs) and provide access to advanced analytical tools to guide decisions about highest impact ways to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by food producers. (Strategic Priority #7)• Food businesses need more access to affordable food-centered infrastructure, especially cold storage and commercial kitchen space. They also need support (such as subsidies, reimbursements, and technical assistance) in making their own commercial kitchen buildouts more affordable. Funds are also needed for staffing and subsidizing operation of food facilities. (Strategic Priority #5)• Improve the permitting processes, especially for food safety permits, for small food businesses and immigrant-owned producers. Current processes to apply for and maintain permits are costly, burdensome, confusing, inconsistent, and fragmented. (Strategic Priority #4)	

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group	
I. Lived Experience Coalition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food should be person-centered and meet nutrition, medical, dietary, and cultural needs. Work alongside people living unsheltered on approaches for healthy, culturally relevant, low-barrier food access. (Strategic Priority #1)• Approaches should be strengths-based and grounded in community. Focus on outreach, education, and mutual aid efforts that engage communities to increase food access and	

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group	
I. Lived Experience Coalition	
	prevent food waste. Create opportunities to cook and share meals together. (Strategic Priority #1, #6)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group	
J. Meals Partnership Coalition	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff need livable wages. Cooks, delivery drivers, meal distributors, food bank staff and other roles are not paid enough. Better benefits and protections around workplace safety, health care, child care, hazard pay, etc. are needed. (Strategic Priority #4)• More voices needed in programs and policies. People affected by food insecurity need more seats at the table to influence policy. Food workers should be considered essential workers. Hire BIPOC community members and people with lived experience for food system roles including advising on culturally relevant foods. Fund training and education. (Strategic Priority #1, #3, #4)• Additional planning can help prepare for the next emergency. Include food systems partners in planning and exercises. Set aside food, storage spaces and funding that can be tapped during a crisis. Understand geographic and population gaps. Identify distribution points. (Strategic Priority #1)• Food should be healthy, culturally relevant, include protein and fresh produce, and meet people’s individual needs. Create low-barrier access, more food hubs, mobile access – especially in low-income communities. Provide local food and support local producers. Expand outreach to underserved populations. More funds to support food costs. (Strategic Priority #1, #2)• Expand customer choice. Expand Fresh Bucks reach, SNAP enrollment. (Strategic Priority #1)• Innovate. Use community-informed and community-led solutions. Connect people to other resources such as financial literacy and job readiness. Develop surplus-food programming. Incentivize turning property into food spaces/gardens. (Strategic Priority #1, 2, 6)
*Note: community engagement done in tandem with N. Seattle Food Committee.	

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

K. Mutual Aid Food Access Leaders

- **Mutual aid efforts need dedicated, accessible space and infrastructure to continue serving the community and scale up.** Space is needed for gathering, organizing, cooking, and serving. Infrastructure and supply needs include cold storage, freezers, water access, and food serving supplies. (Strategic Priority #5)
- **Improve City policies and programs around funding for food access and food waste reduction,** such as requiring grocery stores donate unused food. (Strategic Priority #1, #6)
- **Access to food is being negatively impacted because of City and County policies and regulations.** Flexibility or workarounds with Public Health – Seattle & King County’s enforcement of the WA Retail Food Code is needed for mutual aid food access efforts. Homeless sweeps should be eliminated. Mutual aid groups would like to have an open dialogue with the Seattle Police Department and Seattle Parks & Recreation about the impacts these departments have on the homeless community, in efforts to reduce harms on. (Strategic Priority #1)
- **Land sovereignty and transportation are key to serving food to unhoused communities.** Access to farmland and protecting space to allow mutual aid food and meal distribution are areas the City can have an impact. (Strategic Priority #1, #2)
- **City has a role in connecting various food access and food justice efforts, especially to serve unhoused populations more effectively.** (Strategic Priority #1)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

L. Native and Indigenous Food System Leaders

The Native Foods Listening Session is on July 16, 2022. At the time of writing, this event was still in the future.

The Native Food Listening Session is a convening of Native and Indigenous people with deep expertise and experience in the broad range of topics that intersect with the food system such as traditional foods, plants, and food practices; food access and food sovereignty; economic and small business development; climate change resiliency; community organizing; and more. The event is a collaboration between the Office of Sustainability & Environment and the Indigenous Seattle Planning Workgroup. A separate report with key findings from the session will be made available and help to inform the Food Action Plan and the [Native Neighborhoods project](#).

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

M. Nutrition & Meal Delivery Providers for Older Adults

- **Reduce food waste through education.** Find ways to increase food access without adding food waste. Standardize expectations in RFP language. Reduce barriers to re-using food. (Strategic Priority #3, #6)
- **Increase compensation for front-line providers.** Provide competitive wages. Encourage people impacted by food insecurity to work as providers. (Strategic Priority #4)
- **Address increased demand for services coupled with rising food costs and challenging supply chain issues.** Food is increasingly expensive. Less food is available through donation streams. Purchasing can be unpredictable. Space for storage is expensive or difficult to find. The pandemic has significantly increased need, without necessarily adding capacity for services. (Strategic Priority #1, #5)
- **Elders need resources beyond food.** Food access for older adults, particularly in congregate settings, highlights opportunities to meet other needs such as social isolation, access to benefits, service referrals, and more. (Strategic Priority #1)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

N. Seattle Food Committee

- **Staff need livable wages.** Cooks, delivery drivers, meal distributors, food bank staff and other roles are not paid enough. Better benefits and protections around workplace safety, health care, child care, hazard pay, etc. are needed. (Strategic Priority #4)
- **More voices needed in programs and policies.** People affected by food insecurity need more seats at the table to influence policy. Food workers should be considered essential workers. Hire BIPOC community members and people with lived experience for food system roles including advising on culturally relevant foods. Fund training and education. (Strategic Priority #3, #4)
- **Additional planning can help prepare for the next emergency.** Include food systems partners in planning and exercises. Set aside food, storage spaces and funding that can be tapped during a crisis. Understand geographic and population gaps. Identify distribution points. (Strategic Priority #1)

- **Food should be healthy, culturally relevant, include protein and fresh produce, and meet people’s individual needs.** Create low-barrier access, more food hubs, mobile access – especially in low-income communities. Provide local food and support local producers. Expand outreach to underserved populations. More funds to support food costs. (Strategic Priority #1, #2)
- **Expand customer choice.** Expand Fresh Bucks reach, SNAP enrollment. (Strategic Priority #1)
- **Innovate.** Use community-informed and community-led solutions. Connect people to other resources such as financial literacy and job readiness. Develop surplus-food programming. Incentivize turning property into food spaces/gardens. (Strategic Priority #1, 2, 6)

*Note: community engagement done in tandem with J. Meals Partnership Coalition.

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

O. Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group

The Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group is being convened by Seattle’s Office of Sustainability & Environment, Seattle Public Schools (SPS), and a contracted facilitator. The group includes SPS staff, City and County agencies, and community leaders who are meeting monthly through 2022 to assess gaps, needs, and opportunities for more accessible, sustainable, and equitable school meals, gardens, and food and nutrition education.

Priority recommendations from the group will be available sometime in late 2022. Early themes, highlights, and potential actions discussed by the group as the time of writing include:

- **Increase youth access to school food and meals that are fresh, culturally specific, and locally and equitably sourced.** Key strategies include:
 - **Increase SPS Culinary Services capacity to create scratch-cooked meals** with more staff positions, food purchasing funds, kitchen improvements, staff training and improved job quality.
 - **Consistently engage with students of all ages** to get input on the SPS meal program, menu items, food options, and other student preferences.
 - **Implement universal meals** at as many Seattle Public Schools as possible.
 - **Improve the lunchtime environment** by having recess before lunch in more schools, lengthening time for lunch periods, creating more calm and welcoming cafeterias, and having more volunteers or staff to educate and supervise in the lunchroom.
- **Increase youth access to school gardens and food and nutrition education.** Key strategies include:

- **Make nutrition and culinary classes available to more students** within Seattle schools, especially in underfunded schools. Connect nutrition and culinary classes with the school meal program.
- **Create and fund an SPS district-level position to coordinate school gardens**, and other paid positions to provide garden and nutrition curriculum in individual schools.
- **Empower more teachers to use and integrate gardens as outdoor classrooms** in their curriculum, by providing paid, set-aside time, training, and resources.
- **Require more schools to incorporate access to green school yards** in their schools through district-wide policy change.
- **Provide long-term funding for a full-time staff position for SPS Native American Education** working on food sovereignty and education.

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

Q. Youth Food Justice Leaders with FEEST

- **Increase equitable food access by increasing diversity of stores that carry culturally relevant foods.** Encourage chain stores like Safeway to carry halal meats/foods. Encourage farmer market spaces to be more available to BIPOC producers. [\(Strategic Priority #2, #4\)](#)
- **Increase technical assistance and capacity building support for BIPOC, immigrant and refugee owned food businesses**, such as translation services, business classes, and support for important paperwork. [\(Strategic Priority #5\)](#)
- **Decrease food waste through policies, laws, and incentives** [\(Strategic Priority #6\)](#)
- **Increase consumption of in-season food to combat climate change** on a local level [\(Strategic Priority #7\)](#)
- **Increase access to land and gardening education by and for BIPOC communities**, so they can grow their own foods and culturally relevant crops. [\(Strategic Priority #2\)](#)
- **The City should engage and include youth in program and policy decisions and outreach methods and pay them for their expertise.** [\(Implementation notes\)](#)

Priorities specific to food and education at Seattle Public Schools include:

- **Provide more food options that are appetizing, culturally relevant, and in larger portions.** Collaborate with students to design menus and meals. [\(Strategic Priority #1\)](#)
- **Schools should provide more resources and support to culinary staff**, such as more space to prepare meals, places to sit and have breaks, and better pay. [\(Strategic Priority #1\)](#)

Appendix C: Themes and Highlights by Stakeholder Group

- **Make nutrition and culinary classes available to more students.** Enable students to apply their learning by cooking and creating recipes with culinary staff and learn about waste management. [\(Strategic Priority #s 1, 3\)](#)
- **Improve the cafeteria environment** so that students have enough time to eat their meals and the physical space to sit down and eat. [\(Strategic Priority #1\)](#)
- **Provide more student agency and ownership when it comes to school meals.** For example, regularly engage students for feedback regarding food served; invite students into the kitchen to learn from culinary staff; incorporate student recipes into the menu. [\(Strategic Priority #1\)](#)

Appendix D: Food Justice Values (draft) of the Environmental Justice Committee

Drafted: September 2021

The food system intersects with all aspects of our socio-political reality including health, land stewardship, diversity of culture, housing, the environment, economic opportunity and labor. A healthy food system is interconnected to our community's ability to thrive and be well. Access to nutritious, culturally relevant and affordable food is directly linked to quality of life.

One of the most common ways to address food injustices is through a food security or access framework. While the food access framework helps decision makers address hunger and inequitable access to food, the use of this framework often perpetuates the root causes of food injustice or, at best, leaves them unaddressed. The Environmental Justice Committee asserts that in order to address the root causes of food injustice, a more holistic framework of food sovereignty is needed.

For all people who live, play, learn, worship and work in Seattle to have self-determination in the food system, we must value and recognize:

- 1. We must fundamentally shift how we relate to our food, the people who grow it, and the land on which it is grown.**
 - The food system must be rooted in reciprocity and move away from an extractive economy towards a regenerative infrastructure.
 - Seattle's food system is part of a local and global system and must address root causes of racial, social, and environmental injustices.
 - We must clearly link food to promoting long-term mental and physical health and well-being.
 - Shift our food system to prioritize Black liberation and Indigenous sovereignty including centering Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), land back to local Tribes and reparations.
 - Reimagine food and nutrition education to center cultural food traditions, joy, and reclamation of health.

- 2. Agricultural and food workers in the United States have long been among the most exploited laborers in the country. Just food policies must center workers in the food system and ensure they have safety, the right to organize, dignity, healthcare, and livable wages in their workplaces.**

3. The City must address the historical disinvestment in BIPOC communities that have exacerbated an ongoing lack of access and affordability to land ownership for housing and growing food.

- Urban development must use innovative solutions that do not pit density and affordable housing against access to green spaces and land to grow food and traditional medicines.
- We must restore our traditional and cultural connections to food through access to thriving land.

4. Our food system is part of the climate crisis. Food policies and programs need to be led by and prioritize those harmed first and worst including low-income, BIPOC, Queer, disabled, unhoused and undocumented people.

- We must create pathways for a lighter ecological footprint to foster a circular food economy.

5. Ensure that all people have a choice to nourishing, culturally relevant food. This includes:

- Understanding and having a choice of healthy foods that are affordable, free of toxins, and not highly processed.
- Respecting and centering the various cultures that exist around food
- Recognizing that healing through food is an important aspect for our communities.
- Having reciprocal relationships with foods and sourcing of foods

Definitions and Additional Context: Below are guiding definitions and context for Seattle’s Environmental Justice Committee’s food justice values. We understand that issues in the food system are complex and ever-changing, and believe this framework is a living document with working definitions inspired by local, national, and international organizations and movements organizing for food sovereignty. We encourage readers to do their own learning and exploration of key topics and understand that this is just a starting point for many in-depth conversations, program development and evaluation within the City of Seattle.

- 1. Extractive economy:** An economy based on the removal of wealth from communities through the depletion and degradation of the living world, the exploitation of human labor, and the accumulation of wealth by interests outside of the community and environment (i.e. Big Banks, Big Ag, Big Oil and Big Box stores).

2. **Regenerative infrastructure:** An economy based on reflective, responsive, reciprocal relationships of interdependence between human communities and the living world upon which we depend.
3. **Labor Rights:** The EJC's work is deeply connected to workers, unions, and worker collectives that are calling for an overhaul in the food system towards just labor policies. We encourage readers to follow local and regional organizations leading on these issues and to stay up-to-date on labor rights disputes and build in ways to ensure City programs or procurement contracts can be responsive as a result. Some organizations we look for leadership on these issues include: [Familias Unidas por La Justicia](#), [UFCW Local 21](#) and regionally [Community to Community's](#) organizing in Washington State for a Farmworker's Bill of Rights.
4. **Self-determination:** The process by which a nation, community, or person can control their own destiny, including political status and to freely pursue social, economic, and cultural development. Self-determination is key part of movements for Black liberation and Indigenous sovereignty and with an environmental justice lens, must consider the right to land access, natural resources, and environmental health.
5. **Food sovereignty:** The Environmental Justice Committee is inspired by the global movement for food justice and looks to the Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Nyéléni, Mali in 2007 for inspiration. The six pillars of food sovereignty include: focusing on food for people, valuing food providers, localizing food systems, putting control locally, building knowledge and skills to manage food production and harvesting systems, and working with nature to improve resilience and adaptation.^[1]
6. **Circular Food Economy:** In a circular economy, organic resources such as those from food by-products, are free from contaminants and can safely be returned to the soil in the form of organic fertilizer. Some of these by-products can provide additional value before this happens by creating new food products, fabrics for the fashion industry, or as sources of bioenergy. These cycles regenerate living systems, such as soil, which provide renewable resources, and support biodiversity.^[2]
7. **Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** "Traditional Ecological Knowledge is a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment...." Fikret Berket^[3]

^[1] <https://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290>

^[2] <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/explore/food-cities-the-circular-economy>

^[3] [Knowing home: NisGa'a traditional knowledge and wisdom improve environmental decision making. - Free Online Library \(thefreelibrary.com\)](#)

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