



COG's Role in Oregon's Food System: **How Councils of Government Can Support Regional Food Systems Growth**

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Executive Summary

Oregon offers an ideal environment for building strong regional food systems. The State's unique blend of rich agricultural and aquacultural production; a strong nonprofit sector, including one of the most well-regarded food banks in the Feeding America® network; and two leading research institutions in the areas of forestry, agriculture, and sustainability, has bred a strong local foods movement with engagement from stakeholders across multiple sectors.

Oregon Councils of Government (COGs) have an important role to play in supporting and bringing focus to this work. COGs are uniquely positioned to bring several core competencies to food systems development work, including collaborative governance structures and experience, regional planning expertise, models for public-private partnership, and engagement of hundreds of public officials and local governments.

This *White Paper* summarizes ongoing food systems work statewide and provides an initial set of strategies for COGs to most effectively support food systems development, both at the regional and state levels. While by no means comprehensive, the *Paper* summarizes the food systems issues and trends most relevant to COGs; provides an inventory of ongoing projects and potential partners; and recommends several strategies for COGs' immediate and long-term engagement in food systems development.

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Oregon Councils of Government

The Oregon Councils of Government are listed below, including the Counties that they represent, and their URLs.

- **Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC)**; Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson; www.coic.org
- **Lane Council of Governments (LCOG)**; Lane; www.lcog.org
- **Mid-Columbia Council of Governments (MCCOG)**; Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler; www.mccog.org
- **Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG)**; Marion, Polk, and Yamhill; www.mwvcog.org
- **Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG)**; Benton, Lincoln, and Linn; www.ocwcog.org
- **Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG)**; Jackson and Josephine; www.rvcog.org

Table of Contents

4	Why Councils of Governments
4	Food Systems Context, Issues and Trends
4	Research and Planning
5	Food Security
5	Sustainability and Resiliency
6	Economic Development
7	Recommendations
8	COGs Core Competences and Food System Strategies
8	Research, Evaluation, and Planning
	Adopt common framework for defining "foodshed" regions.
	Adopt a common set of indicators to evaluate regional food systems health.
	Apply for Rural Business Development Grants to conduct an assessment of underutilized food systems assets.
	Create regional food systems development plans.
	Survey COG members to determine priorities and measure engagement.
10	Strategic Organizing
	Establish COG representation from each Region on the Statewide Food Systems Network.
	Embed food systems goals within Community and Economic Development departments.
	Encourage organization of food systems stakeholders in every region.
11	Facilitating Connections to Assets and Information
	Encourage producers to expand into promising new markets.
11	Expanding Assets and Information
	Align COG-administered programs with food systems goals.
	Establish a Food Systems Financing Program.
	Program Components
	Market Developments and Entrepreneurship
	Regional Food Hubs and Processing Facilities
	Transportation
	Rural Retail Infrastructure
14	Models and Partners
14	Sustainability
14	Market Development
15	Networks and Organizing
15	Information, Research, and Planning
17	Funding and Resources
19	Literature Review
19	History of Food System Planning
20	Problems and Issues
	Defining Foods Systems
	Measurement
	Aligning Goals and Strategies: the "Local Trap"
21	Planning Resources and Models
	Informing Decision Making Processes
	Encouraging Sustainable Agriculture Production
	Improving Food Security and Healthy Food Access
	Supporting the Local Food Economy
	Reducing Food Waste
23	Appendices
23	A: Food Hub Financing Resources
24	B: Index of Food System Reports, Websites, and Sources Cited
30	C: Acronym List
33	D: Works Cited

Why Councils of Governments?

Oregon COGs are uniquely positioned to support scalable, market-responsive, sustainable interventions for regional food systems development. They offer existing collaborative governance structures and processes; important local and regional partnerships; and expertise managing large-scale, cross-sector projects. COGs can access and administer major public resources that are too large and unwieldy for smaller organizations to manage. As the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), a COG in Philadelphia, PA, asserted in a recent National Association of Regional Council (NARC) brief, “local governments can compile enough data for informed decision-making, create plans and policies to encourage stable food production, use strategies like zoning and education to improve access to healthy food, support the local/regional food economy, and reduce and reuse food waste.”¹

There is substantial national precedent for COG involvement in food systems development, especially in the areas of planning and assessment; economic development; and policy. DVRPC has a number of food systems planning projects underway in the greater Philadelphia region, each of which support a comprehensive food systems plan for the region. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), serving the greater Boston, MA region and other adjacent regional councils have announced a draft food systems plan after an intensive stakeholder feedback and planning process.

Locally, Oregon’s Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), of Bend, conducted a series of studies to identify market opportunities and test the feasibility of different program models for food systems development. Ultimately, the research and planning process yielded the creation of a food policy council, the launch of a “buy local” marketing campaign, and a food hub feasibility study, among other projects.² The Mid-Columbia Council of Governments (MCCOG), located in The Dalles, has been actively supportive of local foods activities, including the development of the *Veggie RX Program* and participation in the *Gorge Grown Food Network*.

Nationally, NARC, a trade association for COGs has a section of its website dedicated to member case studies and links to public and private resources to support COG involvement in food systems development.

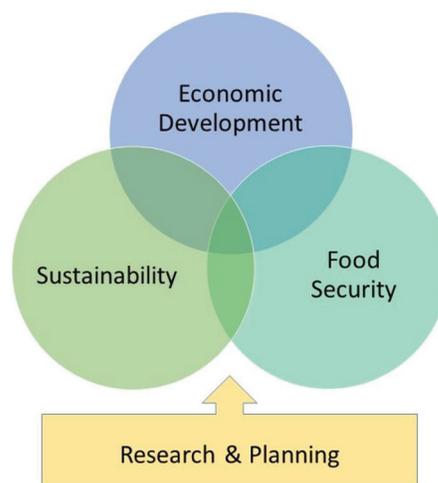
Food Systems Context, Issues, and Trends

In Oregon, there is also much work already taking place in food systems development. This work has generally taken one of four broad approaches: (1) research & planning; (2) increasing food security; (3) promoting sustainability; and (4) encouraging local economic development. More recently, there have been efforts to connect assets between these categories, resulting in a number of models for cross-sector collaboration across the State.

Research & Planning

There has been an enormous amount of research aimed at analyzing the efficacy of existing food systems and interventions from multiple perspectives. These efforts have included, among others (a list of resources consulted for this *Paper* is included as an Appendix):

- Community Food Assessments (CFAs)
- Feasibility studies for various interventions, such as food hubs
- Reports on outcomes of specific projects or grants
- Economic analysis
- Data mapping
- Food security research and data collected by social service agencies



However, apart from a few recommendations made in these and other reports, there are few projects aimed at regional or state-level planning in Oregon and modeling for food systems development in the medium- and long-term. According to "Community Food Systems Indicators Update," a report prepared by Matthew Buck for the Meyer Memorial Trust (MMT) in 2011, “there is no broadly accepted state-level plan that comprehensively addresses sustainable agriculture, economic development and food systems. There is also no existing process or venue for nonprofit, agency, and business leaders to unite in developing such a plan.”

There is now such a venue, in the nascent form of a statewide *Food Systems Network* established in late 2014 and aimed at bringing together organizations engaged in food systems development. Developing and coordinating implementation of a Statewide plan is a long-term objective of the *Food Systems Network*. As this plan develops, the roles of each participating organization will become better defined, projects to meet the Network goals will be identified, and new opportunities for engagement by existing and future members may emerge.

Food Security

Oregon Food Bank (OFB) is undoubtedly the leading state organization in the area of food security. In fact, the food bank has been recognized several times by Feeding America, the national association of food banks, as a national leader, particularly for its work in strengthening ties between traditional food security efforts (food pantries and emergency food programs) and building healthy food systems. OFB brokers and distributes large-scale donated and purchased food product on behalf of its network of regional food banks and local food pantries; serves as the subcontracting organization for *The Emergency Food Assistance Program* (TEFAP) for the state of Oregon; conducts outreach to connect eligible clients to public benefits; and engages in community organizing efforts to develop healthy local and regional food systems.

Traditionally, food security efforts and local food movements have been at odds. The food pantry network relies on low-cost, shelf-stable, processed product from major corporate operations to meet exceptionally high demand for food. Though fresh produce is increasingly available to food banks and food pantries, it is still largely sourced from major distributors and national chains like Walmart®, who rely on large corporate farms to meet high volume requirements. Cost and scale are major factors preventing food security organizations from investing in locally-sourced food.

At the same time, there is growing interest in creating linkages between local food movements and food security programs. OFB and Feeding America have supported farm-to-food bank efforts aimed at generating donations of local food product into the food bank network, and have invested in building a major community organizing initiative (*Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together*, or “FEAST”; see more detail below) to explore ideas for building healthy food systems. As an example, a feasibility study was conducted in the city of Corvallis, OR to explore the potential impact of a new Community Food Center in the south Corvallis neighborhood. Among several other services, the study tested the feasibility of a farmer’s market or farm stand housed at the center in collaboration with more traditional food security programs (free meal site, food bank warehouse, and food pantry).

The *Veggie Rx Program* provides another interesting example of collaborative efforts to link food security and economic stimulus for local producers. *Gorge Grown Food Network* initiated the program to provide income-eligible clients with free vouchers to be redeemed at farmer’s markets (during summer) and grocery stores (during winter) for fresh produce. These vouchers are “prescribed” at participating health care organizations to patients at risk of food insecurity. The program is currently funded by a grant from Oregon Community Foundation and by participating health care organizations.

These new linkages can be seen in the public sector as well. For example, AmeriCorps’ new *FoodCorps* program strives to strengthen ties between public school lunch programs and local food economies, including sourcing local foods and educating students about healthy eating and local food production. The *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* (SNAP) also offers a strong opportunity for leveraging food security resources to support the growth of local food economies. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) estimates that every \$1 invested in SNAP stimulates \$1.79 in economic activity, making it an important agent for economic stimulus.

Sustainability and Resiliency

Sustainability is a major focus of food systems conversations in Oregon; however, it tends to be somewhat narrowly focused on organic and “natural” production practices. This is likely a result of an exploding market for these types of products. Indeed, retail sales of “natural” and “organic” products have consistently outpaced the conventional market even through the recent recession.³ Farmer’s markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) are increasing in size and number, and more major producers are adopting organic production practices to meet consumer demand.

Preparing for climate change, disaster planning, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in food systems are other topics in the sustainability area that have garnered slightly less attention, but are increasingly important. In its report on ten Willamette Valley counties, The Resource Innovation Group points to environmental sustainability as an integral piece of economic development efforts, rather than a separate conversation. Further, the report identified “emergency planning that incorporates food” as a major gap.⁴

One model for mitigating the effects of climate change is the “vertical farm,” a concept that involves growing food in vertical skyscraper structures.⁵ The potential advantages to vertical farms include greater resiliency to changes in climate (because food can be grown indoors in a greenhouse environment); increased absorption of greenhouse gases; greater access to local foods in urban centers; and reduced use of land for agriculture. To date, however, this model has not been widely embraced as a viable option because of limitations in knowledge, technology, capital, and infrastructure. This is particularly true in Oregon, where land is relatively accessible for more traditional climate-independent methods, such as hoop houses and greenhouses.

Economic Development

Food systems serve as strong agents for promoting local and regional economic development. Developing healthy food systems as a catalyst for economic development and job creation may be the most salient argument for coordinating COG involvement in food systems efforts statewide.

Over the past three decades, however, farming at the national scale has become increasingly polarized into very small farms and very large corporate farms, neither of which may make a strong contribution to local economies. Between 1978 and 2007, corporate ownership of farms nearly doubled.⁶ According to Buck’s report to MMT:

The polarization of agriculture into large commodity farms and small direct market farms has created particular challenges for “Agriculture of the Middle.” “Agriculture of the Middle” farms are mid-sized operations where farming is the primary occupation and chief source of income of the owner. With annual sales commonly between \$100,000 and \$250,000, these farms are too small to compete successfully in commodity markets, yet often still too large to sell efficiently into direct markets. As a result, “Agriculture of the Middle” is where the majority of farm losses have occurred in the U.S. over the last several decades.⁷

There are federal resources dedicated to supporting local market development and new and beginning farmers. Buck quotes sources at Oregon State University (OSU) and Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), saying that it is achievable for new farmers to scale-up to \$100,000 in gross annual sales with a focus on direct markets. It is much more difficult, however, to scale to \$250,000, when most farms make at least one hire, or to scale to \$500,000 where the focus of the principal starts to shift from hands-on farming to being a farm manager. The ability of small farmers to make the transitions to \$250,000 and \$500,000 in gross sales are important to growing the local food system and having significant local and regional economic impact.

At the same time, the market for local food is rapidly growing. The volume of both direct-to-consumer (DTC) and intermediated sales from local producers is increasing annually in response to consumer demand.⁸ However, this growth appears to be largely concentrated among a relatively few producers that have been particularly successful developing local markets. The USDA estimates that 85% of local foods producers account for only 13% of local food sales. Further, these 85% generate annual gross income below \$75,000.⁹ Access to processing and distribution infrastructure; access to capital for expansion; understanding of cost and resource inputs; and access to land are all barriers to scaling for “Agriculture of the Middle” producers.

In Oregon, a statewide *Food Systems Network* has been convened, facilitated by Buck, and overseen by a leadership group made up of local, regional and state-wide organizations. That *Network* includes a committee focused on wholesale market development and strategies to support farmers in scaling their operations to capitalize on the expanding local food market -- with a particularly interest in helping farmers scale to \$250,000 or higher in annual sales, the threshold where they generally become economically viable regional job retainers and creators.

From an economic development and job creation standpoint, it is in the best interest of Oregon’s local jurisdictions and regions to support scaling of mid-sized farming operations. It is widely believed among researchers that small- and mid-sized farms create an economic multiplier effect in their local communities, often purchasing inputs from local providers rather than large national and international suppliers. By some estimates, there is a 2.6 “economic multiplier” effect for every dollar generated through local agriculture.¹⁰ According to Buck, this means that shifting just 10% of Oregon’s food sales from export to local markets could result in “as much as \$2.5 billion additional dollars circulating to creating jobs through direct employment by farm and food businesses, as well as induced economic activity through the spending of those businesses and their employees.”¹¹

Recommendations

The range of opportunities for involvement in food systems development is immeasurably vast. It is important to consider the work that is already ongoing in Oregon, and then create engagement plans for COGs that both address gaps in this work and draw from COGs' unique core competencies (see graphic: "COG Core Competencies and Food Systems Strategies").

To this end, the strategies recommended in this *White Paper* relate to (a) regional planning and assessment, and (b) economic development, as these are the areas that will most holistically address the needs of COG's member jurisdictions. The strategic recommendations presented here are segmented into four key competency areas for COGs:

1. Research, Evaluation, and Planning
2. Strategic Organizing
3. Facilitating Connections to Assets & Information
4. Expanding Assets & Infrastructure

Notably missing from these recommendations are strategies directly related to food security. While this area is exceptionally important, there is already a strong community of organizations engaged in this work. By building strong, healthy local food systems, food security will organically be improved through reduction of food deserts, decreased cost of healthful food, and job creation in rural communities.

Councils of Government's Core Competences and Food System Strategies



Research, Evaluation, and Planning

Adopt common framework for defining “foodshed” regions.

Defining “local” and “regional” food continues to be a challenge for food systems agents and researchers. As COGs explore more intensive projects in promoting food systems development, it will be important to construct appropriate and mutually-agreed-upon boundaries around food systems “regions” throughout the state in order to effectively identify common issues and scalable solutions. These may not exactly mirror existing COG-defined regions or Economic Development Districts (EDD), which means it will be very important for COGs across the State to be engaged in conversations about defining these regions. Oregon Food Bank’s *The State of our Community Food System* report offers one useful model for defining these “foodshed” regions. Others have been defined by various regional food policy and advocacy organizations, such as Ten Rivers Food Web, Gorge Grown Food Network, or COIC, which has defined their food shed according to their defined tri-county region.

Adopt a common set of indicators to evaluate regional food systems health.

COGs should agree on a set of measurable indicators to track and report on the impact of food systems work Statewide. These indicators should draw from existing third-party datasets to eliminate the need for primary data collection and to ensure they can be tracked and updated regularly (at least annually), and allow for meaningful benchmarking both within the State of Oregon and with peer regions nationally.

Buck’s “Community Food Systems Indicators Update” report for MMT provides a good rubric for measurable indicators.¹² His recommended indicators draw from third-party datasets that are consistently updated, ensuring progress can be tracked longitudinally, and his rankings systems allows county-by-county comparison for easy benchmarking across COG regions. Buck’s four scoring areas are:

1. Food Access and Insecurity
2. Community Capacity
3. Farm Base
4. Market Linkages

A fifth important area to examine as these indicators are developed is the regional economic impact generated by local food production. As described previously in this *White Paper* (see “Information, Research and Planning”), there are a number of claims of an economic “multiplier” effect of local producers. However, the OSU study (Applied Economics in partnership with COIC) will be the first in Oregon to attempt to quantify that effect. This will be an important project to watch as it develops over the course of 2017, as it may result in a useful tool for communicating the impact of programs supporting local producers.

Once these indicators are agreed upon and adopted, they should be included as appropriate in common COG publications, such as the Oregon Cascades West Council of Government’s (OCWCOG) *State of the Region* report, annual reports, online data centers, etc.

Apply for Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG) to conduct an assessment of underutilized food systems assets.

Even though access to production and aggregation facilities was cited as a major barrier for mid-sized farmers, several studies also pointed to redundancies and underutilization of existing facilities. COGs should conduct comprehensive studies of current food systems assets in their regions, including:

- supply and demand for food products;
- food hubs and other aggregators;
- storage/warehousing facilities;
- commercial kitchens, canning operations, and other processing and value-added production facilities;
- trucking and other distribution infrastructure; and
- retail space.

This assessment should include:

- a map to illustrate accessibility of existing food systems facilities – i.e., distance/availability of facilities to producers who use them;
- an inventory of existing facilities, including: capacity, current output, profitability, and customer base; and
- an exploration of creative opportunities for managing usage of current facilities to meet demand, increase efficiencies, and limit off-season “downtime.” Ecotrust’s report, “Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis,” offers a good example of utilizing beef processing facilities to increase pork production in the off-season.

Once the assessment is complete, it should be widely distributed to food systems stakeholders, including farmers, producers, and retailers to create linkages to resources to fill existing facility needs. Also, the assets identified in the assessment should inform the creation of regional food systems development plans, and guide COGs’ adoption of development strategies.

Create regional food systems development plans.

Using the Statewide plan (to be developed by the food systems network) as a framework and drawing from findings of the assessment of underutilized assets, each COG should create and implement a food systems plan unique to its region. These plans should directly support the goals and strategies outlined in the statewide plan, and should be measured in terms of the Statewide community food systems indicators adopted by COGs. Plans should also be incorporated as appropriate into other relevant regional planning efforts, such as the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) “Rural Development” plans, and should be communicated widely to COG members and partners in an effort to define specific institutional roles and support broad adoption. There are excellent models nationally for these plans, such as the DVRPC’s food systems plan, or COIC’s planning and feasibility study projects.

Survey COG members to determine priorities and measure engagement.

As a first step in the planning process, COGs should develop a statewide, brief survey of members to measure interest in and support for COG engagement in developing regional food economies. At a minimum, this survey should answer the following questions for each COG region.

- What are the most pressing challenges to developing a regional food system?
- What types of food industries are strongest in the region? Weakest? Growing?
- What types of support would be most beneficial to mid-sized producers in the region?

- What sort of role in food systems development should COGs play at the regional and statewide level? Would COG members support committing additional resources to this work?
- What existing assets/projects are COG member jurisdictions involved in? Are there models for success?
- How is it most appropriate to define a food systems “region,” or “foodshed,” for the purposes of planning?

Strategic Organizing

Establish COG representation from each Region on the statewide Food Systems Network.

COGs should actively participate in the new statewide *Food Systems Network*, with a particular focus on contributing to development of a Statewide food systems plan. COG Executive Directors or Community and Economic Development (CED) Directors from each region should have consistent representation, bringing public assets and concerns to the table, as well as helping mobilize local jurisdictions (members) to participate in regional food systems projects.

In Oregon, representatives to the statewide *Food Systems Network* hold meetings virtually monthly, with in-person meetings approximately twice a year, typically in Portland and Corvallis.

Embed food systems goals within CED departments.

Though regional food systems touch parts of every COG department, economic development offers the strongest set of resources and competencies for food systems development work. To ensure forward momentum and accountability after regional food systems plans are developed, COGs should embed food systems planning and development into their CED departments. This could take several forms:

- Examining regional CEDS reports to ensure food systems and local food systems strategies are incorporated as priority areas, and determining whether COGs and their member jurisdictions have the appropriate expertise and resources to implement these strategies. Adding staff as appropriate to support agency-wide food systems planning goals.
- Establishing a Regional Food Systems Coordinator/Program Administrator position, reporting to the CED Director, similar to COIC’s model. This position would be responsible for implementing the initial food systems strategies identified by individual COGs, and eventually for adopting and implementing statewide strategies identified in the statewide plan.
- Creating an intern position, perhaps from OSU’s *Small Farms* program, to guide planning and development work until a clear set of internal goals and objectives is created and/or until funding is available for a full-time Coordinator position.

Encourage organization of food systems stakeholders in every region.

COGs are well-positioned to support organization of food systems work throughout the state through the creation of regional structures and/or standalone organizations. Several of these already exist; the most relevant example is High Desert Food and Farm Alliance, which is supported by COIC. Other examples include Ten Rivers Food Web and several food policy councils (FPC) around the State. COGs might encourage organization and collaboration in several ways.

- Creating standing FPCs within COG Boards of Directors.
- Supporting independent FPCs by sending COG member representatives to meetings and other events.
- Encouraging member jurisdictions to establish FPCs, or other committees focused on food systems development, within their existing boards (e.g., city council or county commission) or as citizen advisory boards.
- Dedicating COG staff and resources to coordinating a regional or statewide network of FPCs. (This might be duplicative with the Food Systems Network.)

This step, the organization of food systems stakeholders in every region, will be important in preserving forward momentum in support of food systems development; keeping food system goals top of mind for COG staff and boards; and generating broad-based buy-in from COG member jurisdictions.

Facilitating Connections to Assets and Information

Encourage producers to expand into promising new markets.

Studies suggest that a number of potential Oregon agricultural markets are currently underdeveloped. In many cases, this is because of perceived (or real) competition from the commodity market; lack of access to capital and processing infrastructure; or hesitation to expand into unfamiliar markets because of lack of knowledge of potential profitability. However, some of these untapped markets show promise.

As one example, the Oregon pork market. According to Ecotrust's "Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis" report, there is a potential regional market for about 120,000 Oregon-raised hogs. Currently, Oregon meets only about two percent of its own demand for hogs for a variety of reasons. There are a number of advantages to encouraging hog farming. For one, processing facilities used by beef are typically underutilized in off-seasons (winter, spring, and summer), and maxed out in the fall season. These facilities could be utilized by pork producers year-round to ensure profitability of production facilities and help manage processing costs for mid-sized farmers. Also, hogs are omnivores, and can be fed a varied diet. Partnerships with wheat/grain farmers to grow hog feed during crop rotation seasons could create additional value in the supply chain. There might even be potential to create a branded regional blend for pork feed, possibly even based on a specialized diet. This approach has been demonstrated by Pure Country Pork in Washington.¹³

Among other potential strategies, Oregon COGs could support producers that want to explore new products and markets by:

- Leveraging a *Food Systems Financing Program* to connect producers interested in new product development to sources of financing (see page 11 for details);
- Promoting access to capital through existing business lending services;
- Providing educational outreach to "Agriculture of the Middle" farmers about emerging or underdeveloped markets, drawing from recommendations in the Ecotrust "Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis" report;
- Conduct regional market data analysis services or feasibility studies on behalf of producers who want to explore the viability of market entry; or
- Providing start-up support services and technical assistance, including legal, fiduciary, or marketing services for mid-sized farmers and producers (or connecting farmers to already-existing resources, such as the OSU *Small Farms Program*.)

Expanding Assets and Infrastructure

Align COG-administered programs with food systems goals.

To create truly sustainable growth in local food systems, COGs should strive to create a culture of commitment to food systems development goals across their organizations and among member jurisdictions. A thorough analysis of COG-administered programs, especially in hunger relief and nutrition, should be conducted to determine where these programs can support food systems development goals.

As an example, COGs could conduct an analysis of food sourcing for *Meals on Wheels* (MOW) programs. Cost will likely always be a major factor in sourcing these meals, and it is unrealistic to expect all food to be sourced locally and/or sustainably. However, the collective bargaining power of a Statewide consortium of MOW programs could be strong enough to inspire the catering vendor to make some changes in how food is sourced. Reasonable goals might be, for example, committing to sourcing ten percent or more of all food locally, or growing the amount of locally-sourced product by five percent each year. Another example might be committing to working with caterers that source local products for COG Board meetings and other events.

Establish a Food Systems Financing Program.

COGs have a unique opportunity to tap into existing public and private economic development programs, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) grants, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) RBDG, and other resources to strengthen infrastructure and access to markets for local producers. Expanding on these assets, COGs should establish a dedicated program within CED departments to facilitate regional investments in four key areas: (1) market development and entrepreneurship; (2) food hubs and processing facilities; (3) transportation; and (4) rural retail infrastructure. This Food Systems Financing Program should include both direct assistance (e.g. COG-administered grants and loans directly to producers) and also technical assistance for producers to access financing (e.g. help applying for USDA Value Added Producer Grants, VAPG).

Program Components

A strong COG-housed *Food Systems Financing Program* might include the following components.

1. Boosting awareness of, and access to, existing small business development and lending programs, such as SBA, by re-tooling outreach materials and strategies to specifically target farmers, producers, and rural retailers.
2. Promoting access to additional public and private resources available to support infrastructure and market development in local food systems. CED/COG food systems staff should become familiar food system funding opportunities and help promote them as part of a comprehensive *Food Systems Financing Program* portfolio.
3. Tracking dollars brought to the region through *Food Systems Financing Program* activities. Including this metric as part of CED department goals, as appropriate.
4. Leveraging relationships with member jurisdictions, EDDs, incubators, institutions of higher education (such as the *Small Farms Program* at OSU), private businesses, and other institutions to connect farmers to sources of capital and investment for developing food systems solutions.
5. Establishing new lending options, with revenue-generating interest returns. To mitigate start-up risk, this could be done as a public-private partnership venture with existing businesses, utilizing grants and shared capital investment during the initial investment period.
6. Pursuing relationships with major private and corporate Foundations to act as a “subcontractor” for carrying out food systems work across Oregon (for example, Meyer Memorial Trust; Howard G. Buffett Foundation; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation).
7. Offering technical assistance to access USDA funding resources, such as the RBDGs and lending programs, or providing referrals to agencies that already conduct such assistance.
8. Exploring opportunities for direct assistance for food systems development projects, including dedicated funds from COG member dues or other revenue.

Market Development and Entrepreneurship

Without a doubt, the most-cited barrier to success for mid-sized farmers is access to capital for infrastructure development. Challenges in aggregation, distribution, processing, and transportation were all identified as major factors in decreasing competitiveness and profitability.¹⁴ Infrastructure, therefore, accounts for three of the four recommended priority investment areas for the *Food Systems Financing Program*. However, infrastructure development alone is not sufficient to grow healthy food systems. Strong market development and business services are also critical. According to Buck’s “Community Food Systems Indicators Update” report to MMT:

An unstated conclusion... could be that entrepreneurship – not processing or distribution – is the real limit on growth of local and regional food systems. Business development incentives, such as access to grants and low-interest loans and technical assistance have roles in stimulating entrepreneurship. Coordination between government agencies (city, state, federal) on policies and programs that support mid-sized and smaller farm and food business development will also be important.¹⁵

COGs and their member jurisdictions are well-positioned to encourage entrepreneurship and market development by connecting agricultural producers to capital for expansion, marketing resources, and business development education. Some of the most appropriate models for investment by the *Food Systems Financing Program* include:

- regional branding initiatives;
- market research and feasibility studies;
- grants for business education in partnership with area higher education institutions, especially OSU's *Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems*.

Regional Food Hubs and Processing Facilities

Food hubs, which once seemed a promising answer to the aggregation and production headaches of mid-sized farmers, have been seeing mixed success nationally. A major food distribution study in California, "Making the Invisible Visible," concluded that the stand-alone food hub model is a very difficult enterprise to sustain, particularly if it is owned by an independent nonprofit organization or relies heavily on subsidies or philanthropic support.¹⁶

Still, food hubs offer tremendous promise to help "Agriculture of the Middle" farmers scale production to meet demand in larger wholesale and retail markets. Drawing from lessons learned from food hub case studies, COGs should support food hub infrastructure development that is market-driven, revenue-generating, and based on a farmer- or business-led ownership model. While grants and subsidies might be part of the initial capital development strategy, it is important to avoid reliance on long-term subsidies as part of the long-term business model to ensure sustainability. Further, including peripheral services, such as processing and washing stations, can help further generate income while also supporting value-added processing.

While the project has yet to launch, the Fry Family Farm's food hub model in Southern Oregon shows tremendous promise for success; it is farmer-led, incorporates an on-site farmstand to build agritourism business, includes commercial processing facilities, and will offer limited transportation options for small farmers.

Transportation

Lack of access to transportation infrastructure is a challenge at nearly every point in the local food ecosystem – producers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and rural retailers all struggle with affordability and access. As strong agents for transportation planning and development, COGs should explore creative ways to enhance transportation capacity within regional food systems.

One unique idea came up informally during the research phase of this *White Paper*. The Oregon Food Bank and its network of 20+ regional food banks have hundreds of trucks on the road throughout the State every day. This fleet transports millions of pounds of product from the central warehouse in Portland to each of the regional food banks and subsequently to community-based food pantries, many of which are in remote, rural communities. COGs might explore with the OFB how to expand or better utilize this network, perhaps on a fee-for-service-basis or during OFB's off-hours, generating revenue for OFB and offering new transport capacity for small and mid-sized producers.

Rural Retail Infrastructure

Rural retailers struggle with the same challenges that local producers face, including transportation costs and aggregation challenges. They also struggle with narrow profit margins and increased competition from major "big box" retailers, who have the ability to negotiate better pricing with suppliers. However, these stores serve as critical economic agents for the small communities they serve. Indeed, according to "Sustaining Rural Communities," a report by the ORB, rural grocery stores employ an average of 14 people, which can have a significant economic impact on a town of just hundreds.¹⁷

Building a stronger link between rural retailers and local producers could serve the dual purpose of mitigating "food deserts" and stabilizing rural job-creating businesses. Retailers need access to capital to expand refrigeration capacity, especially for locally-sourced produce, dairy, and other perishable product. They also need increased access to transportation to farms and processing facilities, especially if they are working with small family farms that lack delivery capacity.

Models & Partners

The following is a truncated list of exemplar project models and key potential partners for COGs exploring food systems development work. For simplicity, this list has been segmented into four key areas: (1) sustainability; (2) market development; (3) networks and organizing; and (4) information, research, and planning. The lists are organized alphabetically.

Sustainability

COGs wishing to engage specifically in food systems sustainability and resiliency work, especially related to climate change, greenhouse gas mitigation, and disaster planning, might examine the following models and potential partners.

Ecotrust works on a variety of projects related to local foods market development, including a Portland food hub, and a number of sustainable land and water use projects. Ecotrust also published the "Oregon Food Systems Infrastructure Gap Analysis."

Oregon Food Bank is member of Feeding America. OFB, it's member regional food banks, and food pantries participate in **National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster** (NVOAD) and its Oregon affiliate (OVOAD). Oregon's regional food banks and local food pantries serve as food resources for their service areas in the event of a disaster.

- In South Corvallis, the team working on developing the **South Corvallis Food Center** has adopted a key disaster-planning component in their approach. They argue that having a food warehouse on the west side of the Willamette River (serving Corvallis and much of Benton County) in case of a major emergency that cuts off access to Linn Benton Food Share's Tangent warehouse.

Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Oregon SWDC).

OSU College of Agricultural Sciences, Sustainable Food and Farming Systems Program offers research and technical assistance for adopting sustainable farming practices.

Oregon Tilth is a leading nonprofit certifier, educator, and advocate for organic agriculture and products since 1974. Tilth's mission is to make our food system and agriculture biologically sound and socially equitable by balancing the needs of people and planet through focus on core areas of certification, conservation, public health, policy, and the marketplace.

Regional Approaches to Climate Change for Pacific Northwest Agriculture is an interdisciplinary project specifically focused on increasing sustainability, and particularly in reducing carbon emissions, in the cereal (grain) production industry in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. (Part of the research team is housed at OSU.)

Market Development

Most of the work in this space focuses on developing regional markets for small local producers – for example, farmer's markets, CSA programs, food hubs, co-ops, regional branding initiatives, and cooperative marketing programs. Following are a few major examples of market development projects around the state.

Central Oregon Food Hub – COIC conducted a feasibility study for the development of a central Oregon food hub, including extensive market analysis and a robust stakeholder feedback process (funded by a USDA RBDG).

Fishpeople – Located in Portland (but with locations around the State, including a processing facility in Toledo), Fishpeople is a "B" Corporation ("triple bottom line" – people, planet, and profit) that produces shelf-stable seafood products, including soups and prepared filets. The company is dedicated to sustainable practices and supporting local/regional producers and provides an excellent case study in capitalizing on the growing demand for local food. See especially: the "track your pouch" app, which provides detailed sourcing information for each ingredient included in a product "pouch."

FoodHub – Based in Portland, FoodHub is a virtual food hub organization, connecting buyers and sellers (B2B) directly through an online portal. Unlike a traditional food hub, there is no physical facility – rather, buyers and sellers connect directly and arrange transactions independently. FoodHub is a project of EcoTrust, which heavily subsidizes the organization to keep it accessible and low-cost.

Fry Family Farms Food Hub – Fry Family Farms, located in Medford, OR, has developed a business plan to construct a food hub serving certified organic farmers in the region. The \$1.2MM project would include a cold storage and handling facility for washing, sorting, and packing; a commercial kitchen; and a farm stand. The *Fry Project* has generated interest and support from at least six area farms wishing to expand into the wholesale market. A number of factors make this project particularly interesting and viable:

- Research has suggested that a farmer-led, for-profit model similar to the *Fry Project* has the highest chance of success compared to other food hub models.¹⁸
- The Fry family has already mobilized support from public and private financing sources for the project, including a potential \$500,000 State of Oregon Regional Solutions Grant.
- The Fry family has a close relationship with Organically Grown Company (OGC). OGC will serve as the primary wholesale distributor for the food hub, filling a critical transportation gap by aggregating truckloads of product with other area producers and delivering to retailers.

Networks and Organizing

Oregon Community Food System Network – In February of 2015, several organizations convened to explore the development of a Statewide Food System Network, catalyzed by the Community Food System (CFS) grant program of the MMT. The 35 organizations in attendance formed an initial volunteer leadership team and identified four strategic areas to focus future efforts.

- Veggie Rx programs
- SNAP match programs
- Wholesale market development
- Access to land

The Network is currently comprised primarily of MMT food systems grantees, but membership will be open to other organizations. A plan for actively recruiting additional members is being developed.

Oregon Food Bank is engaged in a number of community food systems programs, including its *Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together program* (FEAST). FEAST events are facilitated stakeholder meetings designed to “build a healthier, more equitable and more resilient local food system.” Additionally, OFB coordinates county-level *Community Food Assessment* reports, and monitors food systems indicators across several defined regions.

Regional Food Networks and Policy Councils – Food Policy Councils engage stakeholders in the food system to advocate for policies that support local producers. Many of them also serve as “virtual food hubs,” helping connect local producers with buyers; fostering collaboration among farmers and local foods organizations; and building a knowledge base about food systems. There are several food networks and policy councils in operation around the State, including:

- **Gorge Grown Food Network** (Columbia River Gorge)
- **High Desert Food and Farm Alliance** (Central OR)
- **Lane County Food Policy Council** (Lane County)
- **Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council** (PDX)
- **Ten Rivers Food Web** (Willamette Valley)
- **Willamette Farm and Food Coalition** (Lane County)

Information, Research, and Planning

Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council – As a component of its economic development programming, COIC offers planning, research, and technical assistance services to facilitate the development of the region’s food system. As part of that effort, COIC is also currently sharing a staff position with an independent nonprofit organization, **High Desert Food and Farm Alliance**, to support regional food systems development.

OSU Applied Economics Department – The Department of Applied Economics/OSU Extension are exploring a research project to study the local foods economic “multiplier” effect for Oregon Counties. A number of economists have estimated that local and regional producers have a stronger impact on local economies than commodity farmers; this project would be designed to empirically test that theory and quantify the impact of locally-grown and locally-produced foods. The current plan is to pilot the project with COIC.

OSU Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems – The Center combines applied research, extension education, and collaboration to achieve a vision of resilient small farms and vibrant local and community food systems. The nationally known **OSU Extension Small Farms Program** is the heart of the Center: for nearly two decades, the *Program* has provided Oregon’s small farms with the training, tools, and research they need for long-term financial and environmental sustainability. The Program has extension faculty and staff in six regions of Oregon.

- **OSU Small Farm's Cost Study Pilot Project** – Of particular relevance is the *Cost Study Pilot Project*, a collaboration of the OSU Small Farms Center and Oregon Tilth. The Project is a cohort-based analysis of the cost to farmers of growing different crops. The study is being conducted in four regions in Oregon, and will develop a process for farmers to efficiently track and monitor their own input costs. This information will enable informed decision-making about planting, investments in new technology or infrastructure, labor costs, and other important factors that drive profitability and growth.

Funding and Resources

Because of the exceptionally broad, cross-sector nature of food systems projects, the universe of funding opportunities is too vast to list comprehensively here. For example, projects that have food security-related outcomes might attract major funders in the hunger-relief space, such as the Walmart® Foundation, ConAgra® Foods Foundation, Land O'Lakes® Foundation, etc. This list is meant to offer a few examples of public and private funders that might be interested in various aspects of food systems projects.

USDA Community Food Project Competitive Grant Program – Grants focused on food security, access to federal nutrition programs, access to local and nutritious foods, community self-reliance, local foods marketing and market development.

- Grants can be awarded for planning, project implementation, or technical assistance.
- 100% match required.
- Public food program service providers, tribal orgs, and private nonprofits are eligible.

USDA Rural Business Development Grant, which funds technical assistance, feasibility studies, trainings, and other capacity-building initiatives for rural businesses. RBDG funds must be directed for projects benefiting rural areas or towns outside the urbanized periphery of any city with a population of 50,000 or more.

- No maximum grant award; typically range from \$10,000 - \$500,000.
- Grants are made to rural public entities including, but not limited to: towns, communities, state agencies, authorities, nonprofit corporations, institutions of higher education, federally-recognized Tribes, rural cooperatives.
- Important to emphasize economic development/job growth; these are not targeted at farms, but rather business development broadly.
- Conversations with local (Tangent, OR) USDA Rural Development staff revealed that this might be an underutilized opportunity – nearly 100% of applications for RBDG grants were approved during the last cycle.

USDA Value-Added Producer Grant, which provides funding directly to production-based businesses for local food processing (for example, making jams from local strawberries or wine from local grapes).

- \$75,000 available for planning grants; \$250,000 for working capital grants.
- Grants are made to independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.
- 50% match required.

USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP), which promotes local food access through farmer's markets, farm stands, and other direct-to-consumer marketing activities.

- Funds cannot be used to build or expand physical infrastructure at farmer's markets. However, they can be used for equipment that builds capacity of farmer's markets, farm stands, or CSAs.
- \$15,000 - \$100,000 award range. No match required.

USDA Local Foods Promotion Program (LFPP), which provides funding for projects that increase consumption of local foods by developing markets and/or increasing consumer access to local foods. Unlike the FMPP, the LFPP will not support direct-to-consumer activities; rather, it promotes intermediary supply chain projects (e.g., aggregation, regional marketing, etc).

- Two funding tracks: planning (including feasibility studies) and implementation (including marketing activities).
- Eligibility: EDDs.
- \$5,000 - \$100,000 per award. 25% match required.

AmeriCorps Resource Assistance for Rural Environments Program, (RARE) which places AmeriCorps service members for 11 months of service in rural communities to support a variety of activities (including food assessments and food-related business development). OFB has used RARE members to complete community food assessments in several Counties.

- A \$22,000 community match is required to host a RARE AmeriCorps member.
- Public agencies and/or nonprofit organizations are eligible to host a RARE member.

Local Foods, Local Places (technical assistance, not funding), a federal, inter-agency technical assistance opportunity for communities engaging in planning and project implementation for supporting local foods, walkability, and wellness.

Healthy Food Financing Initiative, a multi-agency funding pool targeting regions determined to be “food deserts.” Funding can be used for a variety of purposes, but the biggest pot of funding is through the CED, which supports business activities that encourage access to healthy food in underserved communities. Of particular focus is building retail capacity (grocery stores) in rural areas. Available funding is in the form of grants, loans, and tax credits.

FoodCorps, a new AmeriCorps program focusing on Farm-to-School programming, places service members in school-based sites to help promote healthy and local food knowledge, access, and engagement among school-aged children. Projects include building school gardens, promoting local food sourcing for school cafeterias, and operating education programs.

- Public agencies and nonprofits are eligible to host a FoodCorps member.
- In Oregon, FoodCorps is administered through the ODA.

Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund, one of Oregon’s largest private family grantmaking foundations. Focus is primarily on increasing philanthropy for human services organizations in Oregon, including food banks and hunger relief organizations, but grants have been made for diverse projects and institutions, including universities.

Surdna Foundation, which makes grants to support regional food systems under its “Sustainable Environments” focus area.

- Fiscal sponsor (501c3) required; must have a close, formal relationship with agency administering project.
- \$42,500 (low) – \$375,000 (high). Median ~\$75,000.

Oregon Community Foundation, which supports a number of social service and environmental projects, particularly through the “Community Livability, Environment, and Citizen Engagement” arm of its *Community Grant Program*.

- Other opportunities might exist through Donor-Advised Funds.

Literature Review: Food Systems Planning Resources

History of Food Systems Planning

Historically, the planning community has taken only a peripheral role in food systems planning. This has been largely a result of perceptions that food systems only indirectly impact the built environment, are adequately managed by the private sector, and have little to do with public goods.²⁰ There is also evidence that this lack of interest has been driven by unclear definition of food systems issues and mixed beliefs about the structural mechanisms underlying food issues.²¹

Over the course of the last decade, however, planners have devoted increased attention to food system issues. In 2004, two planning journals published articles promoting food planning as a salient topic for planning organizations. This was followed in 2005 and 2006 with special tracks in food planning offered at the American Planning Association (APA) national conferences.²² Reflecting a growing recognition of the fundamental link between planning activities such as zoning, economic development, environmental and land use planning, transportation, and health, the APA has started offering tools and resources for food systems planning, and a number of local and regional plans have been developed. Further, in 2007, the APA adopted a formal policy on food systems planning, outlining its vision for mobilizing its member planners to invest in intentional food systems planning.²³

As key players in community and regional planning efforts, Regional Planning Commissions and Councils of Government have also begun conducting food systems planning work in earnest. NARC has published a summary list of ongoing food systems planning work and funding opportunities across the country, including at the COIC in Oregon.²⁴

Much of the current literature on food systems planning recognizes both its central role in regional planning processes and its cross-sector implications. Indeed, food systems issues intersect with planning work in the areas of land use, environment, transportation, and economic development.²⁵ Further, successful food systems planning requires broad-based strategies and activities. In its guide to food systems planning, the APA identifies three key types of local planning activities:²⁶

1. **Programmatic efforts**, which include events, programs, and focused activities designed to directly influence food access or food systems (for example, community gardens or farmer's markets).
2. **Policy efforts**, which include making structural and systemic changes to eliminate barriers, promote access to healthful foods, or catalyze food systems growth (for example, food policy councils or passing a soda tax).
3. **Planning and regulatory efforts**, which leverage planning tools and processes to intentionally develop food systems or eliminate regulatory barriers (for example, publishing a food systems plan or changing zoning restrictions).

An interesting case study of this cross-sectoral approach can be found in Vermont's *Hardwick Model*. Named after the hometown of Vermont's Center for an Agricultural Economy, the *Hardwick Model* is a small cluster of seven towns that has gained national recognition for its food systems development efforts.²⁷ In creating its regional food systems plan, the Northeastern Vermont Development Association used the *Hardwick Model* as a template and identified a number of key features that contributed to its success, including:

- A high degree of collaboration among food systems businesses;
- A high degree of diversity of the types of stakeholders within the food chain;
- A focus on food as an economic development tool;
- Inclusion of waste and nutrient management (composting) in the food chain; and
- A high level of support from cross-sector agencies.

Problems and Issues

There are a number of common issues confronted by food systems planners. Clearly defining food systems boundaries, stakeholders, and components; establishing meaningful metrics; and ensuring that strategies align with identified goals are three of the most commonly-cited problems for food systems planners.

Defining Food Systems

Definitions of local and regional food systems vary across institutions and planning processes. Most organizations that engage in food systems planning work have defined geographical service areas, and so, by default, they end up defining their regional food system as within their agency's boundaries. Beyond that, planners vary in their definition of which stakeholders and components make up their food systems, and this is typically reflected within food systems plans in the form of major themes and goals. Some plans focus largely on sustainability issues²⁸; others on economic development.²⁹ Still others focus heavily on access to food and food security.³⁰

One plan created for Vermont offers a heuristic for understanding food systems as made up of seven primary components.³¹

1. Production inputs
2. Production
3. Processing and Value-Added Production
4. Storage, Wholesale Distribution, and Freight Logistics
5. Retail Distribution
6. Consumption and Consumer Demand
7. Waste and Nutrient Management

This heuristic is useful because it is fairly comprehensive – it includes most of the areas identified by other food systems plans, and helps frame our understanding of food systems in a holistic way.

Measurement

A major challenge identified by those engaged in planning work has been in deciding how to measure food systems health and growth. Because of the multi-sector impacts of food systems, it is difficult to identify a concise and meaningful set of metrics to evaluate progress. A number of models exist that might provide useful insights for regional planning.

Vermont's *Northeast Kingdom Food System Plan* offers one model. The plan outlines a performance measurement framework that ties the plan's ten goals to appropriate outcomes and output metrics.³² Locally, in Oregon, there is work underway by Meyer Memorial Trust to develop a comprehensive set of indicators to measure the health of regional and local food systems.³³ The indicators are derived from external datasets so they can be easily monitored and updated at the county level, and a rubric has been developed to facilitate scoring within each indicator.³⁴

Aligning Goals and Strategies: the "Local Trap"

Much of the work of food systems activists has focused specifically on developing local food systems, rather than on industrial-scale systems. This is largely the result of a widespread assumption that food systems of a smaller scale are inherently more just, equitable, and democratic. However, some argue that this assumption is debatable. As Born and Purcell point out, the outcomes of a food system – social justice, ecological sustainability, healthfulness, accessibility, quality, etc. – depend not on the system's scale, but rather on the agenda and orientation of the players within it. In other words, it is possible to have industrial-sized food systems that are socially equitable; likewise, it is possible to produce local systems that are inequitable or unsustainable. Because of the pervasiveness of this assumption, planners tend to assume that catalyzing the growth of local food systems is a worthy goal in and of itself, and pursue strategies aimed specifically at developing small-scale food markets – a phenomenon that Born and Purcell call the "local trap." Instead, the authors argue, planners should focus on the specific outcomes of the food system that they wish to achieve, and then align planning resources across the food system at all levels of scale to realize these outcomes.³⁵

Planning Resources and Models

Despite its relatively short history, there are a number of strong models and tools for conducting food systems planning. In its *Food System Planning Toolkit*, DVRPC organizes food planning tools under five broad goals.³⁶ These areas are listed below, along with examples of each from existing literature and planning efforts.

Informing Decision Making Processes

Data analysis, information gathering, and research tools are the first step in developing a regional food systems plan. A number of tools and models exist to support this stage. Perhaps the most widely used has been the CFA, which evaluates the health of local and regional food systems through a multi-stakeholder engagement process, and identify areas for policy intervention or improvement. A number of CFAs have been conducted nationally and within Oregon, the latter largely under the leadership of the OFB, which has published a guide to conducting Community Food Assessments.³⁷ OFB has also published a summary of current CFAs statewide.³⁸

Other studies have used spatial analysis or geographic information system (GIS) mapping, typically to evaluate food assets or identify food deserts. One project in Baltimore mapped access to healthy food and location of food deserts across the city, ultimately leading to the creation of a *Food Desert Retail Strategy*. A similar map in the city of Toledo, Ohio found that while demographic characteristics (race, income, etc.) were not good predictors of access to healthy food, there were a number of neighborhoods that had low levels of access.³⁹ The Chester County, PA Planning Commission published an interactive *Livable Landscapes Map*, meant to be used as a tool for intentional development and land use planning.⁴⁰ The map was derived from the County's land use policy plan, which incorporated agricultural and local foods planning as part of the broader county-wide goals.

A third type of study, called a *Cost of Community Services* study, calculates the fiscal impacts of various land use decisions (e.g., productive land use vs development). The American Farmland Trust pioneered this type of study and has conducted more than 150 in the New England Region.⁴¹

Encouraging Sustainable Agriculture Production

Most food systems plans identify sustainability as a primary goal. At a minimum, these plans discuss agricultural sustainability in terms of agricultural inputs and preserving farmland – for example, two goals in the Boston, MA food system plan are to “make more land available for farming” and “improve soil health.”⁴² Other plans take a more comprehensive approach to sustainability along the entire food chain, including energy use and transport, environmental impacts of value-added production, and social justice issues for farm workers.⁴³ Whiles cite resiliency – for example, King County, WA's *Local Foods Initiative* identifies climate change as a major threat to its otherwise vibrant regional food system.⁴⁴

In Baltimore, planning for food systems development and agricultural sustainability is built into a comprehensive *Sustainability Plan* for the city. Under its “Greening” goal, the *Plan* identifies several strategies for growing the local food system, including supply- and demand-side interventions, urban agriculture, data collection, and land-use strategies.⁴⁵ Similarly, in Chester County, PA, agricultural preservation and sustainable land use is built into a larger land use policy plan, rather than as a standalone food systems plan.⁴⁶ Other tools for planning for sustainability and agricultural land preservation include:

- Right-to-farm provisions, which protect farmers from common nuisance complaints (e.g., odor, noise, traffic)⁴⁷;
- Zoning for farm labor housing, or ensuring minimum acceptable standards for housing accommodations for farm labor;
- Providing health and human services to farm labor communities⁴⁸; and
- Urban livestock ordinances (“honey and egg” ordinances) and urban agriculture zoning.⁴⁹

Improving Food Security and Healthy Food Access

A number of food systems plans include goals focused on increasing access to healthy and/or local food. However, the specific strategies for addressing these goals vary. A number of plans refer to the importance of the private emergency food network (food banks, pantries) and food rescue organizations (soup kitchens, gleaning organizations) in promoting healthy food access among underserved populations.^{50,51,52} Though these organizations have historically been considered by traditional food system stakeholders to largely be a solution to the waste problem, a number of

food banks and other private nonprofit organizations are engaging in food systems planning and assessment work specifically to promote increased access to healthy food.⁵³ Further, they are using innovative models, like real-time pickup and delivery of produce and other perishable food, mobile food pantries, and *Veggie Rx* programs to improve the supply of healthy and fresh food. OFB's summary of CFAs statewide identifies a number of private and nonprofit responses to food deserts and other access issues.⁵⁴

Some food systems plans also identify the importance of income supports and systemic change in addressing food insecurity. In the Boston plan, one of the food insecurity strategies involves expanding the MA Earned Income Tax Credit and other public programs to increase household buying power.⁵⁵ Other examples of planning tools that can support increased access to healthy food include increasing incentives for SNAP usage at Farmer's Markets; increasing participation in children's summer meal programs; working with retailers to actively promote healthy food to priority populations; creating "feebate" programs to adjust prices to reflect healthful food externalities; and implementing universal school meal programs.⁵⁶ Still others include zoning regulations on fast food and menu-labeling laws; setting walkability standards; and promoting enrollment in federal food assistance programs (e.g. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women's Infants and Children [WIC] and SNAP).⁵⁷

Supporting the Local Food Economy

Investment in regional food systems is also an important economic development strategy. The USDA estimates that 85% of local foods producers account for only 13% of local food sales, and these 85% generate annual gross income below \$75,000.⁵⁸ There is strong evidence of growing polarization in agriculture – growth in the number of small-scale, family-owned farms, and of industrial-scale corporate farms – while the number of middle-tier producers are declining.⁵⁹ For example, in King County, WA, of an estimated \$6 billion spent on food and beverage consumption only 2% is captured by farmers – and many are struggling to stay in business.⁶⁰

Existing food systems plans reflect the importance of developing markets for these "Agriculture of the Middle" farmers, producers, and local retailers. Burlington County, NJ's comprehensive plan includes a number of economic development strategies aimed at increasing the economic viability of farming in the region. These include traditional models such as farmer's markets and CSAs; technical support for business development and ag-specific issues; streamlining the issuance of permits; and consumer marketing to promote local foods demand.⁶¹ Boston's food systems plan identifies workforce development as a key strategy, including improving food system wages and creating jobs by removing regulatory barriers and investing in education and technical assistance.⁶² The OFB has conducted a rural retail study, identifying the loss of rural grocers as a major contributor to economic decline in rural communities and loss of access to markets for local producers.⁶³

Other tools for promoting economic development of local food markets include on-farm direct marketing ordinances, which allow farmers to sell directly on their farm property, farm-to-school programs, and local food procurement policies adopted by municipalities and other local/regional governments.⁶⁴

There is also evidence that investing in infrastructure, or removing barriers to farming capital, might be an important part of regional food planning. In 2015, Ecotrust published a comprehensive food infrastructure gap analysis for Oregon, specifically focusing on assets and infrastructure needed to support healthy food systems development across multiple agricultural industries. Among other findings, the report uncovered a high degree of underutilization of existing farming assets, suggesting that economic development planning agencies might be able to make beneficial connections for farmers with minimal investment of resources.⁶⁵

Reducing Food Waste

Food waste management is a component of many food systems plans, though the tools and models for addressing this issue seem to be somewhat underdeveloped. Composting is the most frequently-cited solution to the food waste problem. A number of food systems plans have built in composting or "nutrient management" incentives and recommendations.^{66,67,68} Composting helps directly reduce food waste, which takes up landfill space and produces greenhouse gases.

There has been some support for upstream solutions as well. King County, PA's *Local Food Initiative* cites several strategies for reducing food waste before it gets to the plate – for example, through increased donations to food banks and food rescue programs; increasing efficiency of catering and institutional food processors; expanding willingness to consume "imperfect foods," such as bruised apples; and strengthening food management practices at grocery stores.⁶⁹

Appendix A: Food Hub Financing Resources¹⁹

Federal Government Funding Options	Planning	Construction	Land	Equipment	Marketing	Working Capital	Training
USDA, Rural Development							
Community Facilities Grant		X	X	X			
B&I Guaranteed Loan Program		X	X	X		X	
Rural Business Enterprise Grant	X	X	X	X		X	X
Rural Business Opportunity Grant	X						X
Value-Added Producer Grant	X				X	X	
Intermediary Relending Program	X	X	X	X		X	
Rural Micro Entrepreneur Assistance Program	X		X	X	X	X	X
Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program	X	X					X
Rural Energy for America Program Grants/Renewable Energy Systems/Energy Efficiency Improvement Program	X			X			X
USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture							
Sustainable Agriculture Research Education							X
Community Food Projects Competitive Grant							X
Beginning Farmers & Rancher Development Program				X			X
Agriculture & Food Research Initiative – Global Food Security	X						
USDA, Risk Management Agency							
Risk Management Education and Outreach Partnership Cooperative Agreements Program							X
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service							
Farmers Market Promotion Program	X			X	X		X
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program	X				X		X
Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program	X				X		X
USDA, Farm Service Agency							
Farm Storage Facility Loan Program	X	X		X			
USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service							
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	X	X		X			X
Conservation Innovation Grants	X				X		X
U.S. Department of Commerce							
Public Works and Economic Development Program		X		X			
Economic Adjustment Assistance Program	X	X		X	X	X	X
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services							
Communities Putting Prevention to Work							X
Community Transformation Grants	X						X
Community Economic Development Grants		X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development							
Sustainable Community Regional Planning Grant	X		X				X
Community Challenge Grant	X		X				X
Community Development Block Grant Program		X	X	X		X	X
Rural Housing and Economic Development Program		X	X	X		X	X
U.S. Department of Treasury							
Community Development Financial Institutions Program	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
New Market Tax Credit (apply to Community Development Entity)						X	

Appendix B: Index of Food Systems Reports, Websites, and Sources Cited

Alphabetized by Author, then Resource Name.

Resource Name	Author(s)	Description	Relevance for COGs	Access
<i>Cost of Community Services Study</i>	American Farmland Trust	Cited resource		American Farmland Trust website http://www.farmlandinfo.org/cost-community-services-studies
American Planning Association website	American Planning Association	Tools and resources now available for city and regional planners		APA website www.planning.org
<i>APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning</i>	American Planning Association	Resource for city and county planners on incorporating food system planning zoning into economic development, environmental, land use, transportation, and health planning	Tools and resources now available for city and regional planners	APA website https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm
AmeriCorps Resource Assistance for Rural Environments' website	AmeriCorps	Cited resource		AmeriCorps Resource Assistance for Rural Environments' website http://rare.uoregon.edu/program-description
"Avoiding the Local Trap: Scale and Food Systems in Planning Research."	Born, Branden & Purcell, Mark <i>Journal of Planning Education and Research</i>	Cited resource		<i>Journal of Planning Education and Research</i> website http://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X06291389
<i>Community Food Systems Indicators Update</i>	Buck, Matthew for Meyer Memorial Trust	Develops a set of indicators to measure and rank the health of OR food systems at the county level, drawing from external datasets	Provides framework for monitoring food systems development by county	By request
<i>Strategic Considerations for Investment in Sustainable Agriculture and Local/Community Food Systems in Oregon</i>	Buck, Matthew for Meyer Memorial Trust	Comprehensive summary of issues related to food systems development in OR, and recommendations for strategic philanthropic investment	Offers ideas for impactful projects; summarizes relevant data and research; identifies potential partners	By request
<i>Burlington County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan</i>	Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders	Cited resource		Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders website http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/DocumentCenter/View/1893
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council website	Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council	Cited resource		COIC's website www.coic.org

COIC Food Hub Central Oregon Food Hub	Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council	COIC's <i>Food Hub</i> website	Resources and information on COIC's food plan, development, and food work in their region	COIC website www.coic2.org/community-development/food-systems
<i>Local Food in Oregon: Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council</i>	Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council; Van Dis, Katrina	Summary of COIC's approach to food systems development; inventories ongoing efforts and research (including Food Hub Feasibility Study) conducted in Central OR region	Offers a model for COG involvement in food systems work, including planning, financing, and implementation of specific projects	NARC website http://narc.org/wp-content/uploads/Food-Systems-Case-Study-COIC.pdf
<i>Landscapes2: Chester County Comprehensive Policy Plan</i>	Chester County Planning Commission	Cited resource		Chester County Planning Commission website http://www.landscapes2.org/ls2online/ls2document.pdf
<i>The Baltimore Sustainability Plan</i>	City of Baltimore, MD Office of Sustainability	Cited resource		<i>The Baltimore Sustainability Plan</i> website www.baltimore-sustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Baltimore-Sustainability-Plan.pdf
<i>Food Desert Map</i>	City of Toledo, OH	Cited resource		City of Toledo, OH website http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0143622811000129
<i>Making the Invisible Visible: Looking Back at Fifteen Years of Local Food Systems Distribution Solutions</i>	Community Alliance for Family Farmers	Cited resource		Community Alliance for Family Farmers website http://www.caff.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CAFF-Lessons-Local-Distribution-102814.pdf
<i>King County Local Food Initiative</i>	Creahan, Kathy et al.	Cited resource		King County, PA website http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/local-food/documents/2015-KC-Local-Food-Report.pdf
<i>Eating Here: The Greater Philadelphia Food System Plan</i>	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	This is the food system plan for the regional planning council of the Greater Philadelphia region.	Offers a model for other COGs, as it great model for incorporating food systems into other programs COG administers for the region.	DVRPC website http://www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/publicationabstract.asp?pub_id=10063
<i>Food System Planning: Municipal Implementation Tool #18</i>	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	Cited resource		DVRPC website http://www.ruaf.org/ruaf_bieb/upload/3304.pdf
"Food systems, planning and quantifying access: Using GIS to plan for food retail."	Eckert, Jeanette and Shetty, Sujata <i>Applied Geography</i>	Cited resource		<i>Applied Geography</i> website http://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2011.01.011

Ecotrust's website	Ecotrust	Cited resource		Ecotrust website www.ecotrust.org
<i>Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis</i>	Ecotrust, funded by Meyer Memorial Trust	Gap analysis of local food aggregation, processing, and distribution infrastructure; recommendations for strategic investment in infrastructure and market development.	Specific focus on "Agriculture of the Middle," or medium-sized regional producers with highest potential to create local economic impact (jobs, inputs, etc). Specific case examples & ideas for immediate, high-impact projects.	Ecotrust website www.ecotrust.org/media/Food-Infrastructure-Gap-Report1.pdf
<i>Map the Meal Gap</i>	Feeding America	Interactive map of county-level food security rates, including estimates of federal nutrition program (FNP) usage	Measures county-level food security, providing easy benchmarking in COG regions	Feeding America website http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2013/overall
Fishpeople's website	Fishpeople	Cited resource		Fishpeople's website www.fishpeopleseafood.com
FoodCorps' website	FoodCorps	Cited resource		FoodCorps' website https://foodcorps.org
FoodHub's website	FoodHub	Cited resource		FoodHub website www.food-hub.org
Fry Family Farm's website	Fry Family Farm	Cited resource		Fry Family Farm website www.fryfamilyfarm.org
Gorge Grown Food Network's website	Gorge Grown Food Network	Cited resource		Gorge Grown Food Network website www.gorgegrown.com
<i>Veggie RX Program</i>	Gorge Grown Food Network	This OR program is a vegetable and fruit prescription program designed to address food insecurity and increase the intake of fresh produce.	Example provided as one option to get more local fruits and vegetables to the underserved populations	Gorge Grown Food Networks website www.gorgegrown.com/veggierx/
High Desert Food and Farm Alliance's website	High Desert Food and Farm Alliance	Cited resource		High Desert Food and Farm Alliance website http://www.hdffa.org/
<i>Local Food Initiative</i> website	King County, PA	Cited resource		<i>Local Food Initiative</i> website http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/local-food/documents/2015-KC-Local-Food-Report.pdf
LCOG's website	Lane Council of Government	Cited resource		LCOG website www.lcog.org

Lane County Food Policy Council's website	Lane County Food Policy Council	Cited resource		Lane County Food Policy Council's website www.fpclanecounty.org/
<i>Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan</i>	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Cited resource		Metropolitan Area Planning Council website http://mafoodsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/MLFSPFull.pdf
Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund's website	Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund	Cited resource		Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund website http://www.mcmfundgiving.org/grants.php
MAPC's website	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Cited resource		MAPC website www.mapc.org
MCCOG's website	Mid-Columbia Council of Governments	Cited resource		MCCOG website www.mccog.com
MWVCOG's website	Mid-Willamette Council of Governments	Cited resource		MWCCOG website www.mwvcog.org
<i>Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission: Food Systems Planning</i>	National Association of Regional Councils	Cited resource		NARC website http://narc.org/wp-content/uploads/Food-Systems-Case-Study-DVRPC.pdf
<i>Local Food in Oregon: Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council</i>	National Association of Regional Councils	Cited resource		NARC website http://narc.org/wp-content/uploads/Food-Systems-Case-Study-COIC.pdf
NARC's website	National Association of Regional Councils	Cited resource		NARC website www.narc.org
<i>Regional Food Systems Programs Resources Guide</i>	National Association of Regional Councils	Cited resource		NARC website http://narc.org/wp-content/uploads/Food-Systems-Resources-Guide-082812.pdf
NVOAD's website	National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	Cited resource		NVOAD's website www.nvoad.org
<i>Regional Food System Plan for Vermont's Northeast Kingdom</i>	Northeastern Vermont Development Association	Cited resource		Northeastern Vermont Development Association website http://www.nvda.net/files/FINAL%20OnLine.pdf
OCWCOG's website	Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments	Cited resource		OCWCOG website www.ocwcog.org

<i>Report on Activities and Findings of the Willamette Food Processing Consortium</i>	Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments; Albany-Millersburg Economic Development Corporation; The Business Enterprise Center; Linn-Benton Community College Small Business Development Center	Report on key findings of a one-year project to create a support network for food processing businesses. Funds from USDA RBDG provided training & technical assistance, including a boot camp, 1:1 mentoring and coaching, workshops, and seminars.	Offers a model for COG and EDD engagement in organizing and supporting food processors. Lays the groundwork and provides a framework for continued business development work specifically in the Mid-Willamette Valley region.	By request
Oregon Community Food System Network's website	Oregon Community Food System Network	Cited resource		Oregon Community Food System Network website http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sfn/sp15network
Oregon Community Foundation's website	Oregon Community Foundation	Cited resource		Oregon Community Foundation website http://www.oregoncf.org/grants-scholarships/grants/community-grants
<i>Conversations Across the Food System: A Guide to Coordinating Grassroots Community Food Assessments</i>	Oregon Food Bank	Cited resource		OFB website http://www.jhsph.edu/custom/mod_clfResource/_includes/cfm/index.cfm?resource=156
OFB's website	Oregon Food Bank	Cited resource		OFB website www.oregonfoodbank.org
<i>Sustaining Rural Communities: A Report on Grocery Stores in Rural Oregon</i>	Oregon Food Bank and Kansas State University	Summary of economic challenges and solutions facing rural grocery stores, drawing from responses to a statewide survey of store owners	Outlines several CED-related issues specific to rural grocers; offers recommendations for rural grocery sustainability	OFB Website http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/building-food-security/community-programs/rural-grocery-stores
<i>The State of Our Community Food System</i>	Oregon Food Bank and Masterson, Spencer	Overview of county-level CFAs completed by OFB and recommendations for increased efforts. (Individual county assessments also available.)	Offers definition for food systems regions and identifies region-specific issues; though regions do not necessarily mirror COGs	OFB Website http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/building-food-security/community-programs/community-food-assessments
Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWDC)	Oregon SWDC	Cited resource		Oregon SWDC website www.oregon.gov/ODA/SWCD
Oregon Tilth website	Oregon Tilth	Cited resource		Oregon Tilth website https://tilth.org
OVOAD's website	Oregon Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster	Cited resource		OVOAD's website http://ovoad.communityos.org/cms

OSU Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems' website	OSU Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems	Cited resource		OSU Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems' website http://centerfor-smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/
OSU College of Agricultural Sciences <i>Sustainable Food & Farming Systems Program</i> website	OSU College of Agricultural Sciences	Cited resource		OSU website http://horticulture.oregonstate.edu/content/sustainable-food-farming-systems
OSU Extension Small Farm's Cost Study Pilot Project's website	OSU Extension Small Farm's Cost Study Pilot Project	Cited resource		OSU Extension Small Farm's Cost Study Pilot Project website http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sfn/sp15costs
OSU Extension Small Farms Program's website	OSU Extension Small Farms Program	Cited resource		OSU Extension Small Farms Program website http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/
Pacific Northwest Agriculture's <i>Regional Approach to Climate Change</i> website	Pacific Northwest Agriculture	Cited resource		Pacific Northwest Agriculture website www.reacchpna.org
Portland / Multnomah Food Policy Council's website	Portland / Multnomah Food Policy Council	Cited resource		Portland / Multnomah Food Policy Council's website https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/42290
"Community and regional food planning."	Pothukuchi, Kami, et al.	Cited resource		<i>PasMemo</i> website http://archive.clas.wayne.edu/Multimedia/DUSP/files/K.Pothukuchi/pasmemo0907.pdf
<i>A Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning: Transforming Food Environments, Facilitating Healthy Eating</i>	Raja, S., et al. American Planning Association	Cited resource		American Planning Association website https://www.planning.org/publications/book/9026878/
<i>Willamette Valley Food Systems: Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Mitigation and Preparedness, Food Security, and Economic Development</i>	The Resource Innovation Group (RIG) (Veazey, Liz et al.)	Analysis of efforts in Mid-Willamette Valley region to increase sustainability in food systems, particularly in reducing carbon emissions and preparing for climate change.	Identifies areas for better collaboration and coordination between public and private entities. Identifies gaps and "leverage points" for greater efficacy.	RIG Website http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/climate-preparedness-pubs/
RVCOG's website	Rogue Valley Council of Governments	Cited resource		RVCOG website www.rvcog.org

"Stakeholder and Policy Maker Perception of Key Issues in Food Systems Planning and Policy Making."	Sadler, Richard, et al. <i>Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition</i>	Cited resource		<i>Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition</i> website http://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2013.845867
South Corvallis Food Center's website	South Corvallis Food Center	Cited resource		South Corvallis Food Center website www.southcorvallisfoodbank.org
Surdna Foundation's website	Surdna Foundation	Cited resource		Surdna Foundation website http://www.surdna.org/what-we-fund/funding-overview.html
Ten Rivers Food Web's website	Ten Rivers Food Web	Cited resource		Ten Rivers Food Web website http://www.tenriversfoodweb.org/
Local Foods, Local Places' website	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Cited resource		Local Foods, Local Places website www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places
<i>Regional Food Hub Resource Guide</i>	USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service	Cited resource		USDA website http://ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-database/knowledge/FoodHubResourceGuide.pdf
USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program's website	USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program	Cited resource		USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program website https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/community-food-projects-cfp-competitive-grants-program
<i>Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems</i>	USDA Economic Research Service	Tracks major economic trends in local/regional food markets, with particular emphasis on consumer motivations and market development. Identifies measuring local economic impact of investment in food systems as an area needing increased attention.	Offers evidence for a growing local foods market; highlights successful models for marketing local foods like food hubs; offers market analytics and tools. National in scope.	USDA Website http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ap-administrative-publication/ap-068.aspx
USDA Economic Research Service's website	USDA Economic Research Service	Cited resource		USDA ERS website www.ers.usda.gov
USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program's website	USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program	Cited resource		USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program website www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp

USDA Local Foods Promotion Program's website	USDA Local Foods Promotion Program	Cited resource		USDA Local Foods Promotion Program website www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp
<i>Running a Food Hub: Lessons Learned from the Field</i>	USDA Rural Development	"How-to" guide for starting and sustaining a food hub drawing from several case studies.	Contains evidence-based best practices and tools for operating food hubs; includes list of several successful food hub models with contact information	USDA Website http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/07/15/lessons-from-the-field-a-new-series-for-food-hub-development/
USDA Rural Business Development Grant's website	USDA Rural Business Development Grant	Cited resource		USDA Rural Business Development Grant website www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants
USDA Value-Added Producer Grant's website	USDA Value-Added Producer Grant	Cited resource		USDA Value-Added Producer Grant website www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants
Healthy Food Financing Initiative's website	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Cited resource		Healthy Food Financing Initiative website http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/community-economic-development/healthy-food-financing
<i>Hardwick Model</i>	Vermont Center for an Agricultural Economy	Cited resource		Vermont Center for an Agricultural Economy website www.hardwickagriculture.org/
Willamette Farm & Food Coalition's website	Willamette Farm & Food Coalition	Cited resource		Willamette Farm & Food Coalition website www.lanefood.org

Appendix C: Acronym List

APA	American Planning Association
CAFF	Community Alliance with Family Farmers
CED	Community and Economic Development
CEDS	Community and Economic Development Strategy
CFA	Community Food Assessment
CFS	Community Food System
COIC	Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
COG	Council of Government
CSA	community supported agriculture
DTC	direct-to-consumer
DVRPC	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
EDD	Economic Development District
ERS	Economic Research Service
FEAST	<i>Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together</i> Program
FMPP	USDA <i>Farmer's Market Promotion's Program</i>
FNP	Food Nutrition Program
FPC	food policy councils
GIS	geographic information system
LFPP	USDA's <i>Farmer's Food Promotion's Program</i>
LCOG	Lane Council of Government
NARC	National Association of Regional Councils
MAPC	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
MCCOG	Mid-Columbia Council of Governments
MOW	Meals on Wheels
MWVCOG	Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments
MMT	Meyer Memorial Trust
NVOAD	National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
OCWCOG	Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
OFB	Oregon Food Bank
OGC	Organically Grown Company
OSU	The Oregon State University
OVOAD	Oregon Voluntary Organizations in Disaster
RARE	AmeriCorps <i>Resource Assistance for Rural Environments</i> Program
RBDG	Rural Business Development Grants
RIG	The Resource Innovation Group
RVCOG	Rogue Valley Council of Governments
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration
SNAP	<i>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</i>
SWDC	Sewer and Water Districts
TEFAP	<i>The Emergency Food Assistance Program</i>
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
VAPG	Value Added Producer Grants
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women's Infants and Children

Appendix D: Works Cited

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