

Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council

Policy Platform

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The Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council influences policy that fosters food security for all community members, and promotes a healthy, equitable, and sustainable local food system, with consideration for economic justice, economic vitality and environmental impact. In service to this mission, the SFPC is working to advance the following policy priorities, which are expected to create the greatest impact in advancing the Denver Food Vision of creating a more Inclusive, Healthy, Vibrant, and Resilient Denver.

Healthy Food Access and Affordability *Policy goals support opportunities to offer healthy food to underserved populations at an affordable cost.*

Food Rescue and Recovery (“Healthy” priorities 1 and 2, “Resilient” priority 2) Improve the efficiency and capacity of food recovery and redistribution systems that increase healthy and equitable food access, including support for farm-to-food assistance programs (e.g. Farm to Pantry, Farm to WIC) and encouraging/enabling pop-up food pantries in neighborhoods during the pandemic.

Healthy Food in Public Facilities (“Healthy” priority 3, “Inclusive” priority 1) Reduce or eliminate sales of unhealthy items in public facilities and vending, and ensure policies include language to have affordable, local options.

SNAP Utilization (“Healthy” priority 2) Increase enrollment in and utilization of SNAP at food sale sites, especially for immigrant/refugee populations in Denver, including support for the extension of the Pandemic-EBT (PEBT) (federal) and the education and outreach about how to use and access P-EBT (State/City), especially while students are in distance learning (federal regulation).

Healthy Food in Schools (“Healthy” priority 3) Increase access to healthy foods in schools including early childhood education centers, K-12, and universities and colleges.

Healthy Food in Neighborhood Plans (Integration into City Plan priority) Align food policy and strategies within the development of neighborhoods plans (such as West Area Plan) to ensure our priority policies are embedded in long term city plans.

Food Businesses *Policy goals build the infrastructure and supportive environment to*

create a thriving bioregional food economy in Colorado with a focus on local businesses.

Food System Infrastructure (“Vibrant” priority 1) Develop and enhance regional food system infrastructure, including aggregation and storage facilities, commercial kitchens, food retail locations, and public market spaces to better support Denver food-based businesses and strengthen connections between businesses and Colorado farms.

Food-Business Permitting (“Vibrant” priority 2) Streamline city permitting processes for food-related businesses across all agencies, especially for microbusinesses over larger, corporate businesses. Promote policies that support education/training for food entrepreneurs around policies and permitting processes that affect them.

City Food Procurement (“Vibrant” priority 2) Continue advocating for city food procurement efforts (Good Food Purchasing Program mayoral advisory submitted in Nov 2019) and influence other institutions to preferentially purchase from local and/or healthy food and beverage businesses.

Promotion of innovative food culture (“Vibrant” priorities 1 and 2) Actively encourage efforts to promote Denver as a regional “food destination” through efforts such as supporting high-performing food businesses and public relations campaigns. Ensure this work also protects against gentrification and lack of food affordability in certain neighborhoods.

Access to capital for businesses. Support and develop initiatives and policies that increase available investment, grant and capital to local food producers, processors, and intermediaries that are supporting a vibrant and resilient food system. Increase the availability of capital that is patient, flexible, risk tolerant and most importantly understands the non-financial returns that a resilient regional food system provides.

Food Production *Policy goals encourage the expansion of multiple forms of urban agriculture in Denver and surrounding areas.*

***Land Access and Use in Public Areas** (“Resilient” priority 1, “Inclusive” priority 2) Preserve land dedicated to urban food production through zoning changes, public land/green space policy, financial incentives, landscaping standards, the formation of land banks and land trusts, conservation districts, and other policies.

***Enabling Food Production Policies** (“Resilient” priority 1, “Inclusive” priority 2) Modify land-use regulations to maximize responsible food production in a variety of means and contexts, including green roofs in food insecure areas. Encourage the addition of language in the Green Buildings Ordinance (passed in 2018) to support food production on green roofs.

Production Incentives (“Vibrant” priority 1, “Resilient” priority 2, “Inclusive” priority 2) Reduce financial barriers and offer financial incentives that encourage food production within the city. Develop or seek tax incentives, grants, and loans to support community-based food hubs and infrastructure.

Supporting Undocumented Farmers and Farm Workers (“Vibrant” priority 1) Increase wages for and ensure fair representation of migrant and undocumented farm and food workers. Advocate for programs that expand education and training, and facilitate land ownership for undocumented food system workers around rights and resources.

Education for Food Production (“Healthy” priority 4, “Vibrant” priority 2, “Inclusive” priority 2) Support programs and policies that teach food production skills for a variety of audiences, from elementary school students to aspiring professional farmers. More and better technical assistance for producers and farmers (soil science, economic management, etc.)

Regional Agriculture (“Vibrant” priority 1) Support regional infrastructure for production. Connect better to regional agriculture and education opportunities at National Western Center. Connect to regional producers and policy and advocacy groups to support farms in adjacent areas.

Agricultural Land Protections Protect and preserve agricultural land uses, through methods like zoning, easements, and conservation practices. Ensure water conservation, and water rights policy and practices on a regional level.

Pollinator Protection (“Resilient” priority 2) Promote residential and public efforts to protect pollinators and provide pollinator habitats.

Composting Food Waste (“Resilient” priority 2) Ensure that every residence, business and urban farm in Denver has access to composting services, and incentivize the composting of food waste and other organic matter.

Healthy Food Policy Education and Promotion *Policy goals support an increased public understanding of which policies will be most effective for improving nutrition, growing and preparing food, and creating sustainable and just food systems.*

Alignment of definitions and messages (“Healthy” priority 4) Encourage shared definitions of “healthy” and “local” among city departments and other public-facing institutions, and promote a clear, consistent, standard message for healthy food education and promotion. This may include cooperating with the Good Food Purchasing Program local coalition and the Healthy Food for

Denver's Kids initiative already working on these definitions.

Public Awareness ("Healthy" priority 4) Increase public awareness around policies and systems changes supporting healthy eating, through public campaigns (for residents, community organizations, and multi-sectoral groups) and integrating standard messaging into school curricula and adult classes.

Classes and Training for Structural Racism Embedded in the Food System ("Healthy" priorities 3 and 4)

Increase trainings and resources for organizations, decision makers and community groups and shift resources to expand awareness in city facilities about the impacts of structural racism in the food system. This may include ensuring new city programs include equity trainings and other provisions in their creations.

Healthy Food Incentives ("Healthy" priority 3) Decrease overall public consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and foods high in salt, fat, and/or sugar.