



Summary of “FoodWorks: A Vision to Improve NYC’s Food System”

**The full report can be found at: http://council.nyc.gov/html/action_center/food.shtml. For ideas and recommendations, contact Sarah Brannen, Senior Policy Analyst at the NY City Council at 212.788.9144 or sbrannen@council.nyc.gov.

5 sections

1. Agricultural production
2. Processing
3. Distribution
4. Consumption
5. Post-Consumption

The report includes:

- **12 goals** that can be achieved through improvements along each phase of the food system
Example → increasing regional food production and creating a healthier food environment
- **18 strategies** that can be employed to meet each goal
Example → strengthening regional supply channels
- **59 proposals** or tangible initiatives that we will work to implement in the coming months and years
Example → expanding and supporting farmers markets

Note: Some proposals have specific legislation recommendations, others focus more on partnerships. They vary from being very concrete to somewhat vague in terms of the action that will be taken for each proposal.

1. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

2 goals, 4 strategies, 19 proposals

Goal 1: Preserve and increase regional food production

Strategy 1: Strengthen regional food supply channels

→ Support direct farm-to-consumer for small scale farms, farm to farm to institutions and commercial outlets for mid-sized farms, and enhance existing channels like the wholesale farmers market

Proposals (7):

- Reorient federal farm subsidies to support healthy, sustainable food production → City Council will advocate for changes in the federal Farm Bill
- Improve the New York State Farmland Protection Fund → State program that helps prevent farmers from selling their land for development
- Encourage new farmers → Supports

- Build a permanent wholesale farmers market → Supports
- Expand and support farmers markets → *Ensure farmers markets have adequate, high traffic, and stable space; city should leverage its resources and voice to support markets of all sizes*
- Expand the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) program and acceptance of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits at farmers markets → *City helps expand EBT at Greenmarkets*
- Expand and support community supported agriculture (CSA) → *City Hall CSA, encouraging large businesses to start workplace CSAs, exploring senior center and NYCHA*

Strategy 2: Leverage the city's economic power to support regional producers.

→ *City Council can advocate for state and local policy change to further encourage regional food procurement*

Proposals (2):

- Track and encourage regional food procurement → *City Council to introduce legislation (1) requiring city agencies to report the sources of the food served in their meal programs;(2) requiring guidelines be developed for agencies to encourage procurement of NYS food; (3) resolution calling on State to enact legislation that would allow City to preference food purchasing for food produced in foodshed states*
- Support farmers in the upstate watersheds → *Supports, partnering*

Goal 2: Increase urban food production

Strategy 1: Better use existing space for urban food production.

Proposals (8):

- Protect community gardens → *City Council will pursue policies to achieve long-term garden conservation along with the addition of new gardens*
- Ensure urban farms are counted in the Census of Agriculture → *City Council will partner with organizations on an outreach and education campaign to get more gardeners to participate in USDA annual census, which counts as farms any that produce at least \$1000 worth of product that year*
- Create a searchable database of city-owned property → *City Council will introduce legislation that requires Mayor to create database*
- Identify city-owned properties with roofs suitable for urban agriculture → *Mayor should expand study of potential for rooftop solar panels on city-owned buildings to expand to include vegetative green roofs*
- Waive the Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) requirements and height restrictions for certain rooftop greenhouses → *City Council will pass legislation to exempt greenhouses from building height restrictions, and call on Departments of Buildings and City Planning to develop waiver program for greenhouses on buildings already at FAR limits*
- Change the state green roof state tax credit to encourage food-producing green roofs → *City Council will pass a resolution calling on State to expand definition of green roofs to include those that grow edible plants, and partner with State officials to pass State legislation changing the tax credit definition*
- Change water rates to encourage green roofs → *City Council calls on Water Board to change wastewater billing....*
- Streamline the green roof permit application process → *City Council recommends that Mayor's Office of Long-Term Sustainability work with relevant Departments to review current process and develop best practices to facilitate rooftop agriculture*

Strategy 2: Restore food and horticultural knowledge.

Proposals (2):

- Ensure garden education is available citywide → *City Council will invest in garden education centers*
- Support urban agriculture technology development → *City Council will partner with universities*

2. PROCESSING

3 goals, 4 strategies, 7 proposals

Goal 3: Generate growth and employment in the food manufacturing sector

Strategy 1: Make affordable space available.

Proposals (3):

- Build a commercial kitchen incubator for start-ups → *City Council has invested in La Marqueta building in East Harlem*
- Develop new industrial space for food manufacturing businesses → *City Council has assisted food manufacturers in finding space, set up Small Manufacturing Investment Fund of \$10 million, and Hunts Point redevelopment presents promising hub for local food manufacturing*
- Revitalize New York City's market system through the New Yorkers 4 Markets initiative → *City Council campaign will raise profile of the four original retail market spaces (La Marqueta, Arthur Avenue, Moore Street Market, Essex Street Market) and invest in their revitalization*

Strategy 2: Provide technical assistance to food manufacturers.

Proposals (2):

- Create an online resource center for food manufacturers → *City Council will partner with Department of Small Business Services to create one-stop resource page for food manufacturers*
- Establish a workshops series to assist food manufacturers → *Supports*

Goal 4: Increase regional products processed in and for New York City

Strategy 1: Facilitate urban-rural linkages.

Proposal (1):

- Hold a regional food business-to-business (B2B) conference → *City Council will organize conference to connect regional producers*

Goal 5: Reduce the environmental impact associated with food processing in New York City.

Strategy 1: Help businesses reduce energy consumption.

Proposal (1):

- Help food manufacturers access energy efficiency programs → *Efforts will include better publicizing NYSERDA programs through workshops at B2B*

3. DISTRIBUTION

1 goal, 2 strategies, 4 proposals

Goal 6: Improve food distribution in New York City through infrastructure enhancements, technological advances, alternative transportation, and integrated planning

Strategy 1: Expand on the current vision for the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center to maximize its potential.

Proposals (3):

- Redevelop the Hunts Point Produce Market → *City must invest in this market, which currently supplies 60% of city's produce but is over capacity and needs new space*
- Increase rail service through the Hunts Point Distribution Center → *City will ensure Produce Market redevelopment includes new rail terminals (rail only 3% current delivery); City pursuing federal transportation grants*
- Transform the Hunts Point Distribution Center into a hub for citywide food system improvement strategies → *City Council calls on Mayor and EDC to incorporate key food systems goals (health, environment, jobs, etc) into their plans for Hunts Point*

Strategy 1: Diversify and improve food transport.

Proposal (1):

- Identify optimal distribution routes and modes for food distribution within the region and city → *City should work with its state, federal, community and business partners to identify targets for improving food transport throughout region, and map key parts of the food distribution system NYC*

4. CONSUMPTION

4 goals, 5 strategies, 20 proposals

Goal 7: Create a healthier food environment

Strategy 1: Expand fresh food retail in under-served areas of the city.

Proposals (4):

- Aggressively market the FRESH Program → *City Council will continue to market FRESH*
- Support efforts to expand food co-operatives → *City Council will partner with organizations and communities to assess the feasibility of expanding co-ops, building community capacity and launching new co-operatives*
- Improve bodega infrastructure → *City Council will explore ways to provide infrastructural support; by working (who??) with wholesale farmers, regional products can find a new retail outlet with these bodegas*
- Improve the Green Cart program by expanding the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) service → *City should identify ways to support EBT on Green Carts citywide, once pilot has concluded*

Strategy 2: Better support food outlets that provide fresh and healthy foods.

Proposals (2):

- Pilot a food retail workforce development program → *City Council is partnering with the Hope Program to pilot new food retail training program GroceryWorks to create stable workforce and career path, and will train 100 unemployed people in first year*
- Create neighborhood healthy food guides → *A food map could be created; Community Boards and community organizations could assess their neighborhood food environments to advocate for key changes*

Strategy 3: Discourage unhealthy food consumption.

Proposal (1):

- Discourage consumption of fast food → *City Council will review best practices nationally and internationally*

Goal 8: Strengthen the safety net of hunger and nutrition programs

Strategy 1: Improve federal food programs and remove local barriers to enrollment.

Proposals (10):

- Strengthen the federal Child Nutrition Act to improve school meals → *City Council will continue to advocate for stronger federal Child Nutrition Act*
- Improve the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 1. Increase federal benefit amounts to reflect higher costs of living → *City Council will continue to advocate for increased federal funding for SNAP programs*
 2. End finger imaging for SNAP applicants → *The policy should be eliminated*
 3. Continue SNAP outreach through agency data matches and grocery stores → *City Council is partnering with grocery stores to conduct outreach to more New Yorkers who may be eligible for WIC and SNAP*
- Improve the WIC program
 1. Enact federal legislative changes to the WIC program → *City Council will continue to advocate for a federal change that requires children to be recertified every six months, to push for every year*
 2. Help WIC vendors by translating the vendor book into multiple languages → *City Council urged NYS DOH to commit to translate vendor handbook into multiple languages and revising its website for better vendor accessibility*
- Mandate breakfast in the classroom for high-need schools → *DOE should mandate breakfast in classroom in schools with high portion of low-income students*
- Improve the summer meal program
 1. Establish a process to make sure summer meal sites are identified earlier and outreach has begun in advance of summer recess → *DOE should establish protocol for earlier identification*
 2. Identify and expand on high-utilization sites → *DOE should identify which types of sites have higher utilization than others (NYCHA, parks, pools, schools, community centers, etc) and expand them to other neighborhoods*
 3. Produce a list of nearby summer meal sites for parents receiving SNAP or TANF with children → *City should target outreach to parents to expand knowledge of programs*

Goal 9: Improve the nutrition of institutional meals

Strategy 1: Expand the capacity of city agencies to cook whole foods for nutritious meals.

Proposals (2):

- Agency kitchen capital investment and staff training → *Short term, investment in institutions that are ready and able to begin cooking whole foods should be pursued; City should commit to long-term infrastructural improvements in sites that serve high volume of meals*
- Expand salad bars in schools → *City should expand this program, currently 586 of 1500 public schools have salad bars*

Goal 10: Increase quantity and quality of opportunities for food, nutrition and cooking knowledge

Proposal (1):

- Maximize SNAP-Education funding → *Local organizations and agencies should partner with State officials to review SNAP-Education program*

5. POST-CONSUMPTION

2 goals, 3 strategies, 7 proposals

Goal 11: Decrease waste throughout the food system

Strategy 1: Improve the net environmental impact associated with food procured by city agencies and institutions.

Proposals (3):

- Reduce packaging on food procured by city agencies → *City Council will introduce: (1) legislation requiring Mayor to establish guidelines for city agencies to reduce packing of food they procure, and companies will be encouraged to follow the guidelines; and (2) resolution calling on State to authorize City to regulate amount and type of material used to package city purchased goods*
- Identify alternatives to polystyrene foam in city food programs → *City Council, with DOE and Pratt Institute, will launch a design challenge for students nationally*
- Discourage bottled water consumption → *City Council has passed new legislation requiring city building owners to provide potable water; should also encourage more drinking fountains*

Goal 12: Increase resource recapture in the food system

Strategy 1: Increase residential, commercial, and governmental composting.

Proposals (2):

- Establish a voluntary household composting program → *City Council in partnership with Greenmarket will expand the Union Square Farmers Market compost program to 3 additional Greenmarkets*
- Explore citywide composting of food waste → *City Council will continue to explore future policies to encourage composting (2010's Local Law 42 requires the City to conduct a study of various options for increasing residential, commercial and governmental composting, by 2012); City is also exploring new technologies anaerobic digestion and thermal processing*

Strategy 2: Increase recycling of waste related to food processing and packaging.

Proposals (2):

- Encourage restaurant grease recycling → *Supports; City Council already passed legislation requiring heating oil sold in NYC to contain at least 2% biofuel*
- Increase citywide recycling of food-related packaging → *City Council recently amended Local Law 19, requiring Sanitation to recycle all rigid plastics once a new facility opens in 2012; programmatic improvements are needed*

TRACKING OUR RESULTS

2 proposals

Proposals (2):

- Establishing a Food Policy Council → *City Council calls on Mayor to create NYC Food Policy Council*
- Reporting on city food system data → *City Council will introduce legislation that will allow us to better understand current state of food system, monitor changes, provide foundation for future work*