



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 3/1/2011 to 2//29/12  
(report of board's work from March, 2009- February, 2011 attached)  
(This report is due in the first quarter of each fiscal year for the previous year.)**

### **Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board (Official Name of Board or Commission)**

**The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:**

ORDINANCE NO. 20081120-058

#### **PART 2. The City Code is amended to add a new Section 2-1-170 to read: § 2-1 -170 SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY BOARD**

(B) The Board shall serve as an advisory body to the City Council and Travis County Commissioner's Court concerning the need to improve the availability of safe, nutritious, locally, and sustainably-grown food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need, by coordinating the relevant activities of city government, as well as non-profit organizations, and food and farming businesses.

(C) The Board shall:

- (1) monitor the availability, price and quality of food throughout the Austin and Travis County area;
- (2) collect data on the food security (i.e., access to an affordable, diversified local food supply) and the nutritional status of city residents;
- (3) inform city and county policy makers, administrators, and the public at- large about the status of the region's food system and food security;
- (4) monitor and analyze the administration of city and county food and nutrition programs;

- (5) explore new means for the city and county to improve the local food economy, the availability, sustainability, accessibility, and quality of food and our environment, and assist city and county departments in the coordination of their efforts;
- (6) review availability and recommend measures to promote the preservation of agricultural land in the City of Austin and Travis County;
- (7) and recommend to the city and county adoption of measures that will improve existing local food production and add new programs, incentives, projects, regulations, or services.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

SFPB's scope is far-reaching and involves advising policymakers on two intersecting areas: local food systems and food access and wellness.

Local food systems-related work includes strengthening locally-based, self-reliant food economies; integrating sustainable food production, processing, distribution consumption, and waste recovery and enhancing the economic, environmental and overall health of Austin and Travis County.

Food access and wellness includes supporting the tenant that good food is a human right; ensuring that nutritious and affordable food can be easily accessed in a respectful manner; and acknowledging that there is no excuse for hunger in Austin and Travis County.

## **STRUCTURE**

SFPB is guided by a chairperson, vice chairperon, working groups (formerly standing committees), and SFPB's Executive Committee. Until March 2011, SFPB met monthly to address the broad areas of "Food Production and Business" and "Food Access and Wellness." In March 2011, SFPB transitioned to a more participatory format after a council resolution allowed boards and commissions to create issue-related working groups involving community experts and stakeholders.

### **1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

*(Reference all reports, recommendations, letters or resolutions presented to the City Council on mission-specific issues. If some of the elements of the mission statement were not acted on by the board in the past year, the report should explain why no action was taken.)*

- Food Security reports from Celia Cole, Center for Public Policy Priorities
- HHSD Director Introduction and plans for collaboration

- COA HHSD reports on related activities/budget
- Travis County Bond reports
- SNAP working group and recommendations
- Composting working group and inclusion of organics chapter in Austin Resource Recovery master plan
- Food Day Proclamation and collaboration with city staff
- Participation in Office of Sustainability - STAR Community Index meetings

### **MARCH**

Farmers Market Permit changes recommendations to council – March 28, 2011 meeting  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=150099>

### **JUNE**

SFC USDA FMPP letter – June 27, 2011 meeting  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=154547>

HHSD CDC CTG letter – June 27, 2011 meeting  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=154546>

### **OCTOBER**

Drought letter to council – October 23, 2011 meeting  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=159424>

As the worst drought in Texas's history tore through our farming community, the Water Working Group, led by Board member Katie Kraemer, convened meetings of growers to address the most pressing issues. Result? Recommendations to City Council to strengthen the city's commit to provide farmers with access to affordable water and reduce hardship by providing financial assistance for water and utility bills.

Austin Water, working with the Sustainable Urban Agriculture Coordinator, Jake Stewart, established policies to follow-up on Board recommendations, including allowing farmers to waive stage 2 water restrictions, as needed.

### **NOVEMBER**

Imagine Austin Recommendation Letter to Austin City Council and sent to Planning Commission members and Citizens Advisory Task Force Members – November 28, 2011 meeting  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=161010>

After a thorough review, SFPB chair Paula McDermott and the Imagine Austin Working Group, led by Board member Michelle Murphy-Smith, provided research and policy recommendations to raise the role of local food throughout the comprehensive plan. They also recruited additional participants in the Imagine Austin process.

This effort informed the decision making process of city planners, Citizens Advisory Task Force, relevant Planning Commission work groups, and ultimately, City Council prior to final approval.

## DECEMBER

2012 Farm Bill Letter - February 27, 2012 meeting

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=164307>

Recognizing the importance of local efforts to support federal policy related to sustaining food systems, SFPB worked with Council staff and Mayor Lee Leffingwell's office to draft a letter supporting inclusion of specific measures in the 2012 Farm Bill. The Mayor's letter to Representative John Carter, who serves on the Farm Bill committee, and other state representatives expressed Austin's support for:

- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act;
- Local Farm, Food, and Jobs Act;
- Expanding Access to Farmers Markets Act to increase purchases of local and healthy foods through the SNAP program;
- Limitations on direct farm subsidy payments;
- Realigning subsidies to reward farmers for climate friendly methods;
- Ensuring that effective conservation programs remain in place, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative and the Conservation Stewardship Program; and
- WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, eliminating the state match required for both programs.

### Community Outreach

Food Chat consisted of four participatory activities, designed to allow people to share their knowledge, ideas, and opinions about the food they eat. These participatory activities were focused on solutions and designed to be inclusive, especially for people who do not normally participate in the process of city government.

Participants contributed ideas and concerns about increasing access to fresh, healthy food and helped guide the priorities of the Board. All activities at the Food Chat were conducted in Spanish and English, and an online survey was created for those who could not attend. Food Chat Working Group members Shirene Garcia, Marla Camp, Erin Flynn and Katie Kraemer volunteered their time to organize and publicize this event, which coincided with national Food Day celebrations throughout Austin.

In addition to this event, SFPB board members raised awareness for local food policy issues around Central Texas by presenting at:  
Blanton Museum screening of "Dive," Austin

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance Conference, San Antonio  
International Association of Culinary Professional policy panel, Austin

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

*(If any of the board's actions were outside the scope of the mission statement, the report should explain the non-compliance issues.)*

All the board's actions comply with the scope of our mission. Due to lack of staff, budget, and resources, the board is unable to monitor all that is laid out in its creating ordinance. The board's actions will eventually lead to putting the resources in place to do so.

Toward that intent:

The City of Austin created the Conservation Program Coordinator position for Sustainable Urban Agriculture in PARD, supported by SFPB in 2010 and 2011, which was filled by Jake Stewart in May 2011. Board chairperson Paula McDermott participated in the interview process at the request of city staff. Since May 2011, Stewart has supported sustainable urban agriculture in Austin, through facilitating the creation of community gardens on city-owned land and beginning the process to identify and make available public land for farming. He regularly attends SFPB meetings and working groups. He hired a part-time staff person in February 2012.

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

*(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)*

**2012-2012 Austin Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board**

**Goals/Objectives**

Recommend policies that facilitate:

**1. equitable access to healthy food that will end hunger in Austin and Travis County;**

1.1 Identify and map food deserts and provide incentives and support for grocery stores of different scales, farmers markets, food carts and other mobile vendors to locate and thrive in underserved communities. [Rid area of food deserts]
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*Food Desert Stakeholder Identification Group*

*Food Desert Best Practices and Resources Group*

**2. the high availability and consumption of local, fresh, and quality sustainably-produced food;**

Central Texas SNAP Participation Work Group (existing)

2.2 Remove zoning and policy barriers and create incentives to improve and rebuild local food production, processing, and distribution systems appropriate to location and scale.

Zoning Research Group

Better Foods in City/County Venues Work Group (existing group)

**3. culture of good food as a fundamental right [local governments help create conducive environments];**

3.2 Coordinate with the sustainability office, other city and county staff, and local/regional environmental groups to ensure that the issues involved with supporting a sustainable local food system are incorporated in any relevant plans, initiatives, or activities

Imagine Austin Work Group

Austin/Travis County Earth Day Work Group (existing group)

**4. robust and just local economy through the strengthening all five sectors of the food system; and**

Food Surplus & Salvage Working Group (existing group)

4.4 Foster local capacity to help implement food systems-related recommendations and plans.

Food Systems Policy Capacity Building Work Group

Food Systems Retail Work Group

Water Sustainable Use and Conservation Work Group

**5. the preservation of agricultural land and family farming in Austin and Travis County.**

Urban Agriculture Work Group (existing group)