

Vision for a San Mateo County Food and Farm Bill

Recommendations for the San Mateo County Food Systems Alliance

Prepared for San Mateo County Health
by Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)

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I. Overview of Project

The San Mateo County Health as a member of the San Mateo County Food System Alliance contracted with Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE) to lead research and stakeholder engagement to develop a shared vision for supporting a strong and resilient food and farm system in San Mateo County. This report is the project outcome: a vision document to guide development of a Local Food and Farm Bill that will guide County priorities and identify and allocate resources towards supporting a food and farming system that is economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially equitable and reflects the values and priorities of San Mateo County residents.

This report is organized in seven sections. Following the overview, Section II describes the approach utilized by the SAGE team and the analytical frameworks used to arrive at the programmatic, organizational, and cross cutting recommendations. We considered a number of different frameworks for presenting the final vision document. Interview and research indicate that a strategic planning and food systems framework is the effective way to present the analysis and findings. This section includes an introduction to the “collective impact model” as a way to organize continuing work.

Sections III through VI discuss discreet, program-level recommendations organized in terms of food supply chain sectors: land and rural communities; production; processing aggregation and distribution; and markets and healthy food access. In each of these four sections, the sector-level analysis includes an examination of utilization of current Federal Food and Farm Bill funded programs, suggestions for goals and metrics and a set of recommendations for action. Finally, Section VII discusses cross cutting recommendations with an emphasis on developing institutional capacity beginning with framing an agenda, defining success, and expanding the context of the work to include bi-county and multi-county efforts.

The most important finding of this report is that there is no lack of vision for ways to improve the overall food and farming environment in San Mateo County. Rather, what is lacking is an effective structure for leveraging existing programs and resources and for harnessing civic enthusiasm in order to make meaningful progress towards large and small goals. Accordingly, this final report focuses first on for building more effective partnerships and collaborations, and then on the specific projects these partnerships might undertake.

Throughout the rest of this document, the reference to “the community” and the values of “the community” is intended to speak broadly of the residents of San Mateo County, in their various capacities as residents, voters, consumers, business owners, workers and public servants. The term “the community” is also distinct from “the County” which is used to mean the County of San Mateo as a political arm of the State of California.

This report reflects the efforts of many people. We would like to thank the staff of the San Mateo County Health Department, all of the members of the Food Systems Alliance, Genevieve Taylor of Ag Innovations, and the Stanford FEED Collaborative (Food, Entrepreneurship, Education, Design) at the Hass School of Business.

II. Approach and Analytical Frameworks

This section describes the project phases and the analytical frameworks SAGE utilized in its research, and considers options for adopting a collective impact model to coordinate efforts across San Mateo County's food system. This section also includes proposes preliminary measures and outcomes for success.

Approach

SAGE conducted three phases of research and analysis:

1. Initial assessment of best practices for framing this work and initial assessment of current program utilization and opportunities. This work was summarized in an early memo, and is incorporated into this final report.
2. Four stakeholder outreach sessions to hear from various stakeholder groups their perceptions of needs, opportunities and preferred methods for enhanced collaboration.
3. Final synthesis and analysis of findings including a formal economic analysis and equity analysis. This final report includes SAGE's findings and recommendations related to the purpose of this project. The economic and equity analysis is a separate report and addresses the economic cost and benefits of the proposals in this report, as well as conditions of equity and inequity in the food system.

Summary of Stakeholder Sessions

The four stakeholder outreach sessions were organized around four primary areas – agricultural transitions, farm to school, urban farming and gardening, and healthy food access – and are described in greater detail below. Detailed meeting notes for each forum are summarized in Appendix D.

Forum on Agricultural Transitions

This forum was for agricultural stakeholders to address the issues, programs, resources and recommendations discussed in detail in Sections III and IV. The clear outcome of the forum was that both farmers and ranchers, and the professionals who advise them on legal and financial issues, would like more program assistance on issues including estate and succession planning and establishing new farm and ranch enterprises on existing agricultural lands.

Forum on Farm to School

This forum was for educators, school garden, and school lunch professionals to discuss opportunities to enhance farm to school programs across San Mateo County. The clear outcome from the forum was that individual schools and even individual school districts do not have current capacity to make policy changes, or raise new funds to make significant improvements or expansions of farm to school programs. A secondary finding was that there are opportunities for efficiencies across schools and school districts if there were capacity to coordinate occasional need with occasional excess capacity.

Forum on Urban Farming and Gardening

This forum brought together gardening enthusiasts, garden educators, nonprofits, and health and wellness professionals to discuss opportunities to enhance the environment for urban farms and gardens in the San Mateo County. Even more than at other forums it was clear from this forum that

there is no shortage of enthusiasm and ideas, but little in the way of organizational leadership to harness the enthusiasm to create policy changes or sustainable programs.

Forum on Healthy Food Access

This forum was for anti-hunger and wellness advocates to address the recommendations discussed in detail in Section VI. The strongest statement to come out of the forum was agreement that more regular, facilitated communications across the many separate but related organizations would benefit all efforts.

Strategic Planning Framework

The analysis used throughout this project was informed by best practices from strategic planning and non-profit program management and evaluation. In particular, the resources from the Kellogg Foundation and the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas informed the approach. The proposed framework for presenting issues and analysis and for stakeholder engagement is as follows:

Vision Statement

A vision statement is defined as a concise statement about the desired future. The Food Systems Alliance has several phrases in its mission and other documents that serve as an overall vision statement.

Goals and Measures

Goals are defined as broad statements of long term purpose or intended results and measures as objective evidence of progress towards goals. Based on our analysis of five elements of the food system and cross cutting issues and stakeholder needs we propose several possible performance measures for each area of analysis. Measures are also discussed below in the "Collective Impact Model" section.

Program Recommendations

The various program recommendations are developed using a logic model to describe how proposed activities will bring about desired outcomes. This logic model is utilized throughout Sections III to VII to organize thinking around various food systems areas and has five components:

1. Statement of need or opportunity expressed in relation to research, community opinion, and best practices.
2. Proposed program or intervention strategy.
3. Outcomes anticipated as a result of the program or intervention strategy, including proposed short and long term measures to define success.
4. Preliminary assessment of resources needed to conduct the program and likely sources of funding.
5. Proposed evaluation methods.

Food Systems and Farm Bill Frameworks

In conjunction with this strategic planning model and the logic model described above, a food systems framework can be used to analyze four areas of the food system in San Mateo County: 1) land and rural communities; 2) production; 3) processing, aggregation, and distribution; and 4) markets and healthy food access. Land and production are addressed separately to reflect the distinction between land ownership and the ownership and operation of a farming or ranching business. Processing, aggregation, and distribution are addressed together as the underlying issue is the efficiency of infrastructure and transportation. Markets and healthy food access, or the final point of consumption, are addressed here and also in our separate "Economic and Equity Analysis" report.

The Federal Farm Bill is the primary framework for analyzing the adequacy of current program approaches and current utilization of existing programs in San Mateo County. By using the Farm Bill as a framework, the scope of inquiry is limited to programs that originate with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds and authorities, including several important programs administered through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). There are a few Federal and State programs originating in Commerce, Transportation, and other agencies that can be used to support food systems work. For the most part, these programs do not address issues not already addressed by the Farm Bill, although they can provide some types of supplementary funding. (One example is the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) a designation and type of funding partnership granted by the U.S. Economic Development Administration). Given the limited scope of this project, other programs outside of the Farm Bill are not examined as a part of this assessment of issues, program solutions, and existing funding.

Across the four areas of the food and farming system in San Mateo County, this framework and analysis identifies a total of 15 potential programmatic actions. Where new programs requiring additional operating funds are proposed, probable sources of funding are identified. The programmatic recommendations are detailed through Sections III through VI and are summarized in Appendix A.

Collective Impact Model

Research and analysis of best practices for organizing the work of a food policy council indicates that the collective impact model is well suited to the diverse, complex, and inter-related nature of the problems associated with encouraging an equitable food and farming system, and the diverse actors affecting the various parts of the food and farming system.

There are five elements to a collective impact model, which are assessed in relation to the FSA's current assets and discussed in further detail below:

1. All participants have a common agenda for change including a shared understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
2. Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all the participants ensures shared measurement for alignment and accountability.
3. A plan of action that outlines and coordinates mutually reinforcing activities for each participant.
4. Open and continuous communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

5. A backbone organization with staff and specific set of skills to serve the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.



Comparing Elements of the Collective Impact Model with Current FSA Assets

Collective Impact Model Elements	Corresponding Food Systems Alliance Assets
Common Agenda	FSA Strategic Planning to Address
Common Progress Measures	See “Defining Success” Below
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	See “Mutually Reinforcing Activities” Below
Communications	Dependent on Mutually Reinforcing Activities and Backbone Organization
Backbone Organization	See “Options for Adopting a CIM” Below

Common Agenda

The Food Systems Alliance has begun the process of internal strategic planning to formulate an agenda for its continued work in San Mateo County. This report will also serve to inform a common agenda. For purposes of this section, the common agenda is thought of as the program, or the program activities that will accomplish the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan. The recommendations for programs and program activities are detailed in Sections III through VI below.

Common Progress Measures

Developing progress measures is a way to define success and is closely related to developing a common agenda as discussed above. In many cases developing a specific measure requires substantial research and much political wrangling. Possible measures for each of the parts of the food and farming system are discussed in Sections III through VI below.

The *North American Food Sector Scan, Part II: A Roadmap for City Food Sector Innovation and Investment* includes an investment evaluation tool and a risk management tool to assess different food sector innovations. The investment evaluation tool assesses the investing or spending of public funds to support the creation or expansion of local, sustainable food ventures. The risk management tool determines and manages the level of risk associated with these investment decisions. Each tool comes with an Excel worksheet for inputting and analyzing data provided by the city.

The USDA's AMS *Economic Impact Toolkit* helps communities better measure the expected economic impact of planned local food system activities, and thereby supports better-informed policy and regulatory decisions on the local, state, and federal levels. This toolkit includes seven modules to guide and enhance the capacity of local organizations to make more deliberate and credible measurements of local and regional economic activity and other ancillary benefits. The first four modules discuss using primary and secondary data to create a local food assessment. Modules five through seven provide a more technical set of practices and methodologies to conduct rigorous economic impact analysis. The customizable nature of the Toolkit supports the development of specific economic, infrastructure, or regulatory strategies that correspond with individual communities' entrepreneurial ambitions and social/environmental priorities related to food production, manufacturing, and distribution.

It should be noted that the tools recommended in the *North American Food Sector Scan, Part II: A Roadmap for City Food Sector Innovation and Investment* are more closely geared to cities, whereas the USDA *Economic Impact Toolkit* has so far been primarily used by regions and states. However, both resources provide information on how to guide specific investment decisions for local food initiatives. These toolkits can also be used to help evaluate the impacts of a city's or county's and future food systems work, which is a critical measure of effectiveness; and can also help build local and regional knowledge about what works where, and why.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

This refers to multiple actors with programs that address similar problems in different but supportive ways. As the detailed notes to the four stakeholder forums indicate, in each of the sessions participants found that they would benefit from closer collaboration with other programs so that similar work is leveraged rather than duplicated.

Communications

One of the key functions of the collective impact model is to facilitate real time communications and effective, coordinated action across all of the actors and programs. As detailed in the notes from the four stakeholder forums, improved communications was identified by each of the stakeholder groups as a top priority. How communications are facilitated is a function of mutually reinforcing activities and the backbone organization.

Backbone Organization

Key to the collective impact model is a single "backbone" organization. At this point, that is the County Health. The only other entity participating in the Food Systems Alliance with existing capacity sufficient to take on the administrative and coordinating role of a collective impact model is Second

Harvest. If neither the County nor Second Harvest are willing or able to take on a central coordinating role, then the Food Systems Alliance will need to consider the benefits of incorporating as a 501(c)(3), or finding a fiscal sponsor to enable it to function as a 501(c)(3).

Key functions of a “backbone” entity are:

1. Receiving and re-distributing funds, including grants, contracts, and private donations.
2. Providing payroll and other human resource related services to allow staff to be hired.
3. Coordinating communications across all organizations towards the agreed upon agenda.
4. Collecting and making available data related to progress towards the agreed upon measures.

Options for Adopting a Collective Impact Model

Given the five characteristics of a collective Impact model and how they relate to San Mateo County, there are two primary alternatives for coordinating efforts across the food system. Both alternatives are discussed below, with each characteristic area addressed individually. Two matrices compare the functionality and effort required to initiate each alternative.

Option 1: Collective Impact Model with a County Staff Person in Coordinating Role

Common Agenda

County staff person would provide leadership, facilitation and support to assist the Food Systems Alliance in developing a common agenda for all participating organizations.

Common Progress Measures

County staff person would provide leadership, facilitation and support to assist the Food Systems Alliance in agreeing upon key indicators and measures of success.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

County staff person would use the common agenda and common measures to provide leadership and coordination across programmatic activities of participating organizations.

Communications

County staff person would coordinate communications across participating organizations.

Backbone Organization

In this model, the County would not serve as the backbone organization, so key functionalities would be missing, the most significant of which is the ability to raise private funds to leverage public funds.

Option 2: Collective Impact Model led by the Food Systems Alliance, functioning as a Sponsored Project of and establishes 501(c)(3) Entity

Common Agenda

A staff person on payroll through the sponsoring organization would provide leadership, facilitation and support to assist the Food Systems Alliance in developing a common agenda for all participating organizations.

Common Progress Measures

A staff person on payroll through the sponsoring organization would provide leadership, facilitation and support to assist the Food Systems Alliance in agreeing upon key indicators and measures of success.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

A staff person on payroll through the sponsoring organization would use the common agenda and common measures to provide leadership and coordination across programmatic activities of participating organizations.

Communications

A staff person on payroll through the sponsoring organization would coordinate communications across participating organizations.

Backbone Organization

In this model, the sponsoring organization would be able to raise private funds to leverage public funds. It could also receive line-item public funds as is the case with the Vermont Farm to Plate project and its support from the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

Comparing the Functionality of the Two Collective Impact Model Options:

Key Functions of a Backbone Entity		Option 1: County Staff	Option 2: Sponsored Project
1	Receiving and re-distributing funds, including grants, contracts, and private donations	No	Yes
2	Providing payroll and other human resource-related services to allow staff to be hired	No	Yes
3	Coordinating communications across all organizations towards the agreed upon agenda	Yes	Yes
4	Collecting and making available data related to progress towards the agreed upon measures	Yes	Yes

Comparing the Effort to Initiative the Two Collective Impact Model Options:

Key Tasks to Accomplish		Option 1: County Staff	Option 2: Sponsored Project
1	Identify sponsoring entity and negotiate a contract	No	Yes
2	Fundraise to support staff, program activities, and sponsoring organization’s overhead charge	No	Yes
3	Continue to develop the capacity of the FSA to function as an advisory/oversight board	Yes	Yes
4	Continue to consider the benefits of incorporating as a 501(c)(3)	Yes	Yes

Defining Success

Specific measures of success will need to be established in the context of whichever leadership approach is adopted. In most cases, determining actual numerical measures of success will require additional research and may take substantial effort. However, exemplary agriculture and food action plans from other regions can provide good models for such metrics. Below are broad statements describing what success might be; these statements can be used as starting places for developing more specific measures of success in the future.

Agriculture and Agricultural Lands

- Farmland and ranchland remains in productive agriculture uses.
- Appropriate conservation projects are funded and implemented everywhere they are needed.
- The number and diversity of individual farming and ranching enterprises is steady or increasing.

Processing and Distribution Capacity

- There is sufficient aggregation and distribution capacity to support in-county agricultural production.
- Specialized storage and distribution capacity is sufficient to address healthy food access needs of all residents.
- Food processing businesses make an important contribution to employment and quality of life in San Mateo County.

Healthy Food Access

- Meaningful programs exist to address all forms of food insecurity, including lack of purchasing power, lack of access to healthy grocery stores or farmers markets, and lack of meaningful kitchen access.

Cross-Cutting Initiatives

- Thriving Farm to School programs exist across the county.
- Thriving urban farming and gardening programs are in every community in the county.
- Strategic use of the “As Fresh as it Gets” and “Get Healthy San Mateo” initiatives is used to build community support for a connected food and farming system in the county.

III. Land

This section, land and rural communities, is the first of four analytical sections focusing on a particular area of the food and farming system in San Mateo County. First, this section describes the existing conditions of agriculture and agricultural lands in San Mateo County, as well as opportunities to address various needs including preserving land for agriculture, maintaining the tax base for rural communities, and providing transition assistance to new and beginning farmers. The second part of this section looks at the current utilization of Federal Farm Bill framework programs to promote conservation and makes recommendations for establishing performance goals and metrics. Finally, three recommendations for program actions include the anticipated impacts, resources needed, and possible methods for evaluation.

Existing Conditions

Preserving Land for Agriculture

The 2012 Ag Census reports that San Mateo County contains 48,160 acres of farmland, including 8,477 acres of cropland, of which 4,033 acres were harvested. This represents 334 individual farming or ranching operations. The California Department of Conservation farmland mapping project identified 5,122 acres of crop land and 48,907 acres of grazing land in San Mateo County in 2012, and identified increases and decreases to crop land and grazing land resulting in a net change in total agricultural lands from 54,029 acres in 2012 to 53,975 acres in 2014.

Of these agricultural lands, remaining agricultural lands on the San Mateo Coast are protected from development by the zoning restrictions in the San Mateo County General Plan and enhanced by the efforts of the Mid-Peninsula Open Space District (MidPen) and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).

The most effective tool for ensuring the long term protection of agricultural lands is an agricultural conservation easement. Agricultural easements are also important tools for facilitating land transfers as they can, if properly funded, inject public cash into a private operation to address expenses of estate taxes or modernizing facilities and operations as a new generation takes over.

Agricultural conservation easements typically maintain the land in private ownership with the right to develop transferred to a land trust in charge of monitoring compliance with the terms of the easement. The Marin Agricultural Land Trust pioneered the model and continues to set best practices for maintaining agricultural lands in private ownership.

An agricultural conservation easement is like a regular conservation easement in most respects but differs significantly in that it allows commercial activity to continue and keeps some of the productive value of the land on the tax rolls. American Farmland Trust has a repository of information on agricultural easements.

A second approach is the outright purchase of agricultural land and transfer to a land trust or government agency. This option usually results in land coming out of production and being converted to recreational uses. In addition to eroding the property tax base of the surrounding community such conversions can chip away at the overall strength of the local farm economy, since fewer farms lead to fewer farm service providers which makes it harder for remaining farms to stay viable.

The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) Farmland Access is an exemplary model of how to address the issue of sales for non-agricultural purposes. Under this program the VLT makes an outright purchase of a farm, and then requests interested farmers to submit proposals for their use of the farm, and then sells the farm (retaining an agricultural conservation easement) at an affordable price and desirable terms to the farmer whose proposal was chosen. Many of VLT's agricultural conservation easements include a right of first refusal to re-purchase the farm if a potential buyer is a non-farmer. When this option is exercised the property is later re-sold at agricultural value to farmers with solid business plans.

Peninsula Open Space Trust responded to community demand for more focus on agriculture in 2016 and created a "Farmland Futures" initiative to focus resources and expertise on the issue of preserving working agricultural lands. It has a goal of protecting 26 farms by 2026 and has currently protected four farms. POST's fundraising goals to accomplish this are to raise \$24M for land or easement purchases, and an additional \$1M for infrastructure improvements on preserved or purchased farmlands. As a part of this strategy POST is working to develop favorable purchase options to ensure that new and beginning farmers can build equity.

Typically a land trust incorporated as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization partners with a special district authorized to receive public funds to maximize public-private investments for conservation goals. In Sonoma County the Sonoma Land Trust partners with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. As the name implies, in Sonoma County the district has a special mandate to focus on preserving agricultural lands for agricultural uses.

In San Mateo County POST partners with Mid-Peninsula Open Space District (MidPen). MidPen has some programs specific to agriculture, including a MoU with Farm Bureau to consult regarding the potential impacts of prospective land purchases on existing agricultural operations.

[Maintaining the Tax Base for Rural Communities](#)

When property is transferred to public or not-for profit ownership for recreational or open space purposes it is removed from the local property tax base. Agricultural conservation easements can reduce the property tax value of property, but do not remove the property from the tax base altogether.

Compiling data about trends in the County tax base for its rural communities was beyond the scope of this project. MidPen is already engaged in a best practice with respect to restoring the tax base of lands purchased within the La Honda – Pescadero Unified School District. To compensate for lands purchased in the School District boundaries and within the Coastside Protection Area the District pays a service fee to compensate for lost tax revenues that would have been received by the School District.

[Transitioning Assistance for New and Beginning Farmers](#)

Compiling data about trends in the County for the number, success and specific needs of beginning farmer was beyond the scope of this project. While rural professionals have become generalists as rural economies have diversified, the unique legal issues associated with agricultural and land-based enterprises only continue to increase. Even licensed accountants and attorneys often miss major issues unique to agricultural operations such as Internal Revenue Service rules for cost capitalization

of pre-productive expenses in vineyards, orchards and manufactured products, or the proper sequencing and utilization of well-known USDA programs such as EQIP, and Value Added Producer Grants or REAP. Without knowledge of the special (usually highly advantageous) provisions and programs for farms and ranches, estate planners cannot provide the most strategic advice either to the exiting landowner or to the entering farmer or rancher, who will need to modernize the business model in order to have adequate cash flow to pay for the access to land and equipment while generating current profits. Therefore, technical assistance with estate planning and new enterprise planning are critical resources for new and beginning farmers.

Program Utilization

Agricultural Lands Preservation

USDA NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands. ACEP is available to state and local governments and non-governmental organizations to assist in protecting working agricultural lands and to limit non-agricultural uses of the land.

➔ *In 2015 and 2016 no ACEP resources were deployed in San Mateo County. The RCD recently submitted a proposal in partnership with POST to bring ACEP resources to San Mateo County.*

The California Department of Conservation Farmland Conservancy Program (FCP) administers a number of programs to acquire permanent and temporary agricultural land conservation easements and to provide technical assistance with land conservation. These programs are funded with through the budget process and with dedicated tax and bond sourced funds. Local Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) are special districts of the state of California, set up under California law to be locally governed agencies with their own locally appointed or elected, independent boards of directors. The role of the RCDs is to implement projects on public and private lands and educate landowners and the public about resource conservation including watershed planning and management, agricultural and forestry conservation, and non-agricultural conservation projects.

➔ *FCP has completed one agricultural easement project in San Mateo County, in 2007 with the Monterey County Agricultural & Historical Land Conservancy. FCP has also funded 39 technical assistance projects between 1997 and 2014, none of which included a significant component of work in San Mateo County.*

➔ *Local measures and local philanthropy play a more significant role than state and federal programs for purchasing permanent protections on San Mateo County agricultural lands.*

Technical Assistance and Financing

The USDA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP) provides funds for technical assistance in lands transitions.

➔ *To date there have been no BFRDP proposals submitted or funded with a significant component of work specifically targeted to San Mateo County. Several Projects originating in Santa Cruz County serve beginning farmers in San Mateo County.*

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides guarantees for contract land sales to beginning farmers. These loans can provide cash flow to retiring farmers and often allow aspiring farmers to purchase land with a smaller down payment and lower interest rate than a conventional real estate loan.

➔ *This program has not been utilized in San Mateo County in the past two years.*

Assistance for Rural Communities Infrastructure and Business Development

The USDA Rural Development Rural Utilities Service has grants to help communities reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources through funding for organizations that provide technical assistance or training to improve the planning and management of solid waste sites. Coastal areas south of Half Moon Bay are eligible.

➔ *The USDA does not provide data on unsuccessful applications. There are no current RD well or wastewater projects in the County.*

The USDA Rural Development Rural Business Cooperative Services has Rural Business Development Grants to support technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. Most of Coastal San Mateo County is eligible for these grants.

➔ *The USDA does not provide data on unsuccessful applications. There are no current RD business development projects in San Mateo County, but awards have been made to agricultural projects in neighboring counties and to organizations that serve San Mateo County.*

Rural Development's Housing Community Facilities Grants support the development of essential community facilities, however most coastal communities are likely ineligible due to high median income.

➔ *The State of California Department of Housing and Community Development has similar programs, but does not appear to have funding for community infrastructure at this time.*

Recommendations for Establishing Goals and Performance Measures

Based on the available data the following would be viable metrics to use to establish goals and performance measures:

1. Maintain acres in cropland at 2014 levels.
2. Maintain acres in livestock grazing at 2014 levels.
3. Increase number of acres with agricultural conservation easements.
4. Increase program utilization for USDA rural development programs.

Land and Rural Communities Recommendations

RL.1 Support Real Estate/Succession/Transition Assistance

Proposed program or intervention

Forums to provide land owners and agricultural operators with information about estate planning and retirement including strategies for transferring ownership or operations to new and beginning farmers who are not family members. Vouchers to assist in paying associated legal and accounting fees.

Anticipated impacts

Short term effects will be more transition plans and more transition plans created by people with knowledge of farm and ranch transition strategies. Long term outcomes will be more acres successfully transitioned with the explicit intent of keeping the acres in agricultural production and fewer acres lost to agricultural production due to lack of business transition planning.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding:

Fee for a qualified attorney and or accountant with expertise in farm and ranch transitions to provide one or more continuing education sessions to area professionals, and companion sessions to provide information to land owners and operators: \$5,000/session.

Funds to cover vouchers for partial payment of legal and accounting fees. Minimum program \$500/voucher time for 100 users is \$50,000. Payment to a qualified organization to organize program, conduct outreach and facilitate education sessions is \$5,000.

Sources of funds

Most of these expenses could be covered by successful applications to USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, or to the Western Region Risk Management Education Program. Other administrative costs cannot be funded with current federal Farm Bill programs so would require private fundraising or new budget authorities for the County. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 can help address financing; see discussion in Section VII below.

Evaluation methods

1. Pre- and post-attendance surveys of people utilizing the sessions would reveal perceived utility of the sessions.
2. Voucher redemptions would be a clear indicator of the number of new transition plans created.

RL.2 Enhance Farmland Access Program on Conservation Lands

Proposed program or intervention

Encourage POST and MidPen to prioritize land access for beginning farmers as an integral element of their farmland preservation strategy.

Anticipated impacts

More land available for new and beginning farmers, while more agricultural lands will remain in production in the long-term.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

No additional resources needed.

Evaluation methods

1. Pre- and post-attendance surveys of people attending the sessions would reveal perceived utility of the sessions.
2. Voucher redemptions would be a clear indicator of number of new transition plans created.

RL.3 Increase Support to the RCD through the Agricultural Resource Coordinator

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Support a part time grant writer to increase funding to the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (SMCRCD). The SMCRCD may receive private funds and may apply for and receive government grant funds. This is the same strategy as the second Cross Cutting Recommendation to hire an Agricultural Resource Coordinator, discussed in Section VII.

Anticipated impacts

Increased capacity for the RCD to provide leadership in farmland conservation including both increasing the number of permanently protected acres and increasing the rate of adoption of conservation practices. Long term effects will be increased and accelerated permanent protection of farm and ranch lands.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

See analysis of Agricultural Resources Coordinator Position in the Economic and Equity Analysis Report.

Sources of funds

Will require fundraising or new budget authorities for the County. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 can help address financing; see discussion in Section VII below.

Evaluation methods

The efficacy of this intervention would be assessed by evaluating the increase in funding due to efforts in which the grant writer was substantially involved.

IV. Production

This section, production, is the second of four analytical sections focusing on a particular area of the food and farming system in San Mateo County. First, this section describes current agricultural revenue data and the existing soil and water conservation measures, labor issues, pest management, and access to support systems that play an integral role in production in San Mateo County. The second part of this section looks at the current utilization of Federal Farm Bill programs related to production and makes recommendations for establishing performance goals and metrics. Five recommendations for expanding technical and business assistance, implementing a matched savings program, and enhancing farmworker housing, insurance offerings conclude this section. The anticipated impacts, resources needed, and possible methods for evaluation of these recommendations are also discussed.

Existing Conditions

The production acreage and value of crops in San Mateo County show a slight decrease between 2014 and 2015. According to the San Mateo County Crop Report, the total market value of agricultural products sold in 2014 was \$148,727,000. In contrast, the total market value of agricultural products sold in 2015 was \$130,275,000. The market value of crops, including row crops and nursery and greenhouse products, was \$144,864,000 in 2014 and \$126,197,000 in 2015. The market value of livestock, poultry, and their products was \$3,863,000 in 2014 and \$4,078,000 in 2015. Despite this downward trend, there are many areas along the production chain that could be addressed to enhance the market values of agricultural products.

Soil Conservation

Many upland areas have degraded and eroding soils. Better management techniques are cost-effective but since they are a radical departure from how ranching has been done, adoption is a slow process. Even though new techniques may be more profitable, they need to be demonstrated before they will be adopted.

Best practices are demonstrated on several ranches in San Mateo County and in nearby counties. Mob grazing is now well established in commercial operations in several neighboring counties, notably San Benito County. In Marin, the Marin Carbon Project Rangeland Compost Protocol is in trial on three ranches.

Best practices for increasing adoption are to incentivize early adopters to adopt and incentivize slower adopters to adopt. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is a cost-sharing program that provides technical assistance and expense reimbursement (up to 90% for some qualifying farmers) for implementing approved conservation strategies. EQIP is a best practice for spurring adoption of conservation strategies.

The San Mateo County NRCS office is only staffed with one person and as a consequence, though Federal funds are available to San Mateo County land owners, applications cannot be processed quickly, staff cannot assist with implementation, and staff cannot outreach to additional landowners.

Water Conservation

Generally good irrigation practices are in use on row crops. On rangelands, however, there is significant room for improvement, with opportunities to install additional water tanks. The RCD and NRCS are working on a strategy to install ponds for off-stream storage so ranchers will not need to take water off the creeks in the dry season. The companion strategy is soil restoration on uplands soils so they will be more productive with less water. Developing off-stream storage is a best practice as supported by Trout Unlimited and American Rivers both partners with the RCD and NRCS to implement this strategy.

As with soil conservation, the key impediment to accessing Federal dollars to assist with implementation is that the San Mateo County NRCS office is understaffed. For both soil and water conservation measures, the methods are known, the dollars are available, but the means of getting the dollars is not. The best practice for addressing this gap is to provide supplemental funding to the NRCS through the local RCD. This practice is used in Alameda and Santa Cruz counties.

Labor

The 2015 Agricultural Crop Report showed the value of San Mateo County's agricultural production dropped by \$20 million, in significant part due to the lack of farm workers. The lack of farm labor is due both to federal immigration policy and other economic factors, but in particular the high cost of housing and the limited availability of housing make San Mateo County less able to compete for agricultural laborers.

The USDA Rural Development's Rural Housing Services provide a number of financing options to assist communities in developing low-income housing, including programs specifically designated for farm labor housing and farm laborers to own their housing. Rural Development also provides technical assistance to design and implement appropriate projects. Best practices in the area of farmworker housing are discussed in detail in the forthcoming report commissioned by the San Mateo County Housing Department, and begin with commissioning a study of housing need as has already been done.

Pest Detection, Management, and Exclusion

One of the significant roles of the County Department of Agriculture is the detection, management and exclusion of pest species including invasive weeds and harmful insects. This work is primarily funded through Farm Bill-authorized USDA programs and related budgetary appropriations administered through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) department of the USDA. Much of the County Department of Agriculture's work in this area is related to nursery crops and the presence of the San Francisco International Airport. Individual farmers and ranchers benefit from federal, state and local efforts to assist in pest and weed control, and may receive some educational or financial assistance through Cooperative Extension or through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. Since individual farmers and ranchers rarely interact directly with APHIS, and since the County Department of Agriculture's interaction with APHIS is not closely related to local food systems, we do not analyze the utilization of APHIS program resources in San Mateo County, and include individual farmers' and ranchers' pest control efforts in our discussion of NRCS programs.

Access to Critical Support Services

Ag Credit

There do not appear to be any particular challenges with access to credit for larger agricultural operations in San Mateo County. However, smaller, typically new and beginning, operations are usually unable to find appropriate credit options without technical assistance. Commercial lenders do not have experience lending to agriculture. Farm Credit lenders have agricultural expertise, but do not make small loans. The USDA Farm Service Agency is the “lender of first opportunity” for farmers who cannot find credit elsewhere, but the agency has limited staff for outreach and technical assistance and relies to a great extent on local partnerships to do that work. San Mateo County is serviced by an FSA office in Salinas, that also services Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, both of which have significantly more small farms than San Mateo County.

Risk Management

Growers do not perceive value in the current Federal crop insurance offerings, but this does not mean that growers are not subject to causes of loss that are insurable under the Federal Crop Insurance Act generally including loss due to pest, disease, weather and of particular interest to the nursery industry, quarantine.

Other Business Services

As the number of farms and ranches in San Mateo County have declined, so have the number of business services oriented to agriculture. San Mateo County producers must import (or drive to) inputs, equipment, and related technical services.

In the area of business and legal advice, there are plenty of accountants and attorneys located on the coast, but none with a significant practice focus on agriculture, as agriculture is no longer a big enough part of the economy to support such concentrated professional expertise. Indeed, across the country there are fewer and fewer accountants and attorneys with detailed and specialized knowledge of agriculture, yet nothing about agriculture has become simpler.

New (immigrant) and beginning (inheriting or first generation) farmers in particular need access to specialized business advisors who understand niche agriculture including accounting, taxation, finance and legal issues. Even sophisticated operations using licensed accountants and attorneys often have problems related to lack of insight into Internal Revenue Service rules for cost capitalization of pre-productive expenses in vineyards, orchards and manufactured food products, or the proper sequencing and utilization of USDA programs.

Program Utilization

Conservation Practices

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance to land owners to develop conservation plans and helps them to apply for funding to implement the approved practices in their plans. The primary program for helping farmers to implement conservation practices is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a cost-sharing program that typically reimburses 75% of the cost of implementing approved conservation strategies.

NRCS program utilization for 2015 included \$470,635 for all EQIP, no additional money for all other NRCS, served 4,715 new acres, and 8 customers. In comparison, program utilization for 2016 included \$482,085 for all EQIP, no additional money for all other NRCS, served 933 new acres, and 4 customers. The wide variation in acres from 2015 to 2016 is because there were 3 new rangeland contracts obligated in 2015, and only one small one in 2016.

Agriculture Credit

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides direct and guaranteed loans for operating expenses, equipment, storage facilities and farm ownership including down payment loans and has special set-asides for beginning farmers and ranchers.

➔ *In 2016 the FSA made five direct loans and one guaranteed loan in San Mateo County.*

The Farm Credit system is a federally chartered network of borrower-owned lending cooperatives specializing in farm and ranch loans. Nationally Farm Credit provides about a third of all financing for agriculture. There are no Farm Credit members with offices in San Mateo County. However, it may be of interest to note that as of May 2016, San Mateo County had \$20M invested in the Farm Credit System.

➔ *American Ag Credit services the region and currently has 43 loans in San Mateo County for a total volume of approximately \$26 million.*

Risk Management

The Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) administered by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) of the USDA develops and re-insures Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) products which are sold through private insurance brokers. The MPCI program generally covers production risks and some price risks, and includes hundreds of different products customized to reflect the particular risks of individual crops in individual counties, and a new Whole Farm Revenue Program offering protection against production and price risks based on the farmer's historic income tax return filings.

MPCI products available in San Mateo County include:

- Apiculture – Rainfall Index
- Livestock Gross Margin for dairy cattle and swine
- Livestock Risk Protection for feeder and fed cattle, swine and lamb
- Nursery
- Pasture, Rangeland, Forage - Rainfall Index
- Whole Farm Revenue Protection
- Written agreements - growers may request by written agreement to be covered by a policy available in a neighboring county. Santa Cruz County has coverage for apples and strawberries, thus potentially making this coverage available in San Mateo County.

➔ *In 2015 and 2016 there were one and two policies sold in San Mateo County.*

The Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is administered by the Farm Services Agency of the USDA. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters.

➔ *In 2015 and 2016 four producers signed up for NAP.*

Technical Assistance with Business Issues

The USDA's beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), Risk Management Education Program, and Farm Service Agency cooperative agreements are three of several programs that provide funds for technical assistance with business planning for small and beginning farmers and ranchers.

➔ *In 2015 and 2016 there were no significant programs directly benefiting San Mateo County farmers with technical assistance provided by these USDA funds, however several projects funded in related counties are available to San Mateo County farmers.*

Rural Development

The USDA Rural Development Rural Housing Services has a number of programs to provide technical and financial assistance to farmers and ranchers and to communities to develop housing for the agricultural workforce.

➔ *Current Rural Development resources to develop farm worker housing are unutilized, however the County has commissioned a report on the subject and will likely begin to apply for assistance next year.*

Recommendations for Establishing Goals and Performance Measures

Based on the available data, the following would be viable metrics to use to establish goals and performance measures:

1. Maintain and increase the inflation-adjusted real value of agricultural products.
2. Increase and improve the quantity and quality of the agricultural workforce housing measuring against baseline data provided in the BAE report.
3. Increase utilization of USDA NRCS programs measured in acres, dollars and customers served.
4. Increase the availability of technical assistance for new and beginning farmers and ranchers measured in funded hours of technical assistance available to San Mateo County farmers and ranchers.

Program Recommendations

RP.1 Increase Technical Assistance to Facilitate Access to Conservation Programs

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Fund a full-time engineer and a part time soil conservationist at the RCD.

Anticipated impacts

Accelerated adoption of conservation practices by supplementing NRCS staff and accelerating adoption of soil and water conservation practices for long term sustainability.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

1. Full time engineer: \$100,000 + 25% benefits = \$125,000.
2. Part time soil conservationist: \$45,000 + 25% benefits = \$56,250.
3. Training, travel, technology and overhead: \$18,750.

This would require private fundraising or new budget authorities for the County.

Evaluation methods

1. Pre and post surveys of people attending the sessions would reveal perceived utility of the sessions.
2. Voucher redemptions would be a clear indicator of the number of new farms seeking needed legal and accounting services.
3. Long term tracking of participant success would require additional funds.

RP.2 Increase Availability of Farmworker Housing

The San Mateo County Department of Housing commissioned a study on farmworker housing conducted by BAE Economics. SAGE was also a sub-contractor on the report. By way of reference, the entire study should be considered as a key strategy for improving conditions for farmworker housing in San Mateo County. In Section VI on Markets and Healthy Food Access, recommendation 3 gives additional also additional recommendations (not included in the BAE report) regarding addressing nutrition issues in the planning and design of new farmworker housing.

RP.3 Enhance Business Planning Assistance

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Forums to provide beginning farmers and ranchers with technical assistance in business planning. Included would be counseling on credit options for beginning farmers and technical assistance with loan applications and referrals to lenders who make small loans.

Vouchers to assist in paying associated legal and accounting fees.

Anticipated impacts

New farms will have better business plans, better access to appropriate credit, and better cash flow and long term wealth creation. The long term success of new farms established on existing farmlands as existing farmers retire.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

1. Cost to a qualified not for profit or Extension to provide technical assistance: \$5,000 per grower annually, times 15 growers per year = \$75,000.
2. Cost of vouchers to pay part of necessary legal and accounting fees.

The cost of providing technical assistance could be covered in part by successful applications to USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and related programs at the Farm Service Agency and the Risk Management Agency. The cost of vouchers and associated administrative costs cannot be funded with current federal Farm Bill programs so would require private fundraising or new budget authorities for the County. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 can help address financing; see discussion in Section VII below.

Evaluation methods

1. Pre and post surveys of people attending the sessions would reveal perceived utility of the sessions.
2. Voucher redemptions would be a clear indicator of the number of new farms seeking needed legal and accounting services.
3. Long term tracking of participant success would require additional funds.

RP.4 Implement Matched Savings Program for Beginning Farmers

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Offer participants in the technical assistance program described above the option to participate in a matched savings account.

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts (IDA) Pilot Program in 15 states, including California. California FarmLink not only administered the program in California, but provided technical assistance to develop the program in other states. Congress has not subsequently appropriated funding to continue the program, but the administrative infrastructure is in place, so it could be offered in San Mateo County without incurring substantial administrative overhead.

Anticipated impacts

New farmers will have additional incentives to participate in technical training programs and will receive direct cash assistance to be used towards a carefully planned strategic asset acquisition. The long term success of new farms established on existing farmlands as existing farmers retire.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

1. Cost to a qualified not for profit or Extension to provide technical assistance: \$1,200 per grower annually, times 15 growers per year = \$18,000.
2. Cost to administer: 10% (paid to a non-profit) = \$2,000.

This program would require private fundraising or new budget authorities for the County.

Evaluation methods

1. Pre and post surveys of people utilizing the program would reveal perceived utility of the sessions.
2. Redemptions would be contingent on submitting a business plan, so there would be data to indicate who the matching funds were used.
3. Long term tracking of participant success would require additional funds.

RP.5 Initiate Proposal for New and Improved Insurance Offerings

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Submit a new insurance proposal to the Risk Management Agency through the 508(h) process.

State and local governments and nonprofit and for-profit organizations may be reimbursed for costs to develop insurance products for the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). These proposals are known as Section 508(h) submissions for the authorizing section of the Federal Crop Insurance Act. Organizations usually submit a concept proposal first, and then if that is approved enter into a cost reimbursement contract to develop the full product. The final product is reviewed by the FCIC and will only be accepted if it is found to be in the best interests of producers, and in accordance with sound insurance principles, including actuarial soundness.

Anticipated impacts

There is an opportunity to educate farmers about what does and does not work for them within the current risk management offerings. A positive long term impact would result from a new and more useful risk management tool could be created to assist farmers.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

A contractor with expertise in developing 508(h) products would be useful. A well-known firm of this type is Watts & Associates with a number of successful 508(h) submissions and substantial experience in California and in the nursery industry. The FCIC Board may approve an advance payment for the Concept Proposal for a portion of the expected research and development expenses to aid in the development of the 508(h) Submission.

The 508(h) Submission process allows private parties to be paid for 'reasonable' research and development expenses incurred during development of the product, and up to 4 years of maintenance expenses. After the maintenance period, the submitter may continue to maintain the product in later years charging a fee to cover maintenance expenses, or turn the product over to the FCIC.

Evaluation methods

1. Acceptance of the product by the FCIC.
2. Adoption of the product by growers.

V. Processing, Aggregation and Distribution

This section is the third of four analytical sections assessing the processing, aggregation, and distribution capacities in San Mateo County. First, this section describes the existing conditions of this sector by summarizing key findings from the 2014 report funded by the FSA, and examining needs related to infrastructure including wholesale markets, farmers markets, commercial kitchens, and aggregation facilities. The second part of this section looks at the current utilization of Federal Farm Bill programs to support processing, aggregation and distribution and makes recommendations for establishing performance goals and metrics. Two recommendations conclude this section – exploring the creation of an aggregation facility and improving farmers market management – including their anticipated impacts, resources needed, and possible methods for evaluation.

Existing Conditions

Findings from “Aggregating, Distributing, and Marketing Local Foods in San Mateo County, California” Report

The needs and opportunities associated with processing, aggregation and distribution were explored in an in-depth report “Aggregating, Distributing, and Marketing Local Foods in San Mateo County, California” funded by the FSA and conducted by the Community Alliance with Family Farmers in 2014. Below is a summary of key findings from that report and analysis of why the recommendations have not been implemented.

While larger farmers are able to sell their products through conventional markets, smaller farms are often shut out of higher value markets for reasons, including: lack of food safety certification, inconsistent and seasonal supply, and high prices. Additionally, all San Mateo County farms are at a competitive disadvantage in terms of access to labor and highways. Smaller farms may be even farther from transportation routes, and thus have few or no options to deliver via a third party carrier. Also, consumer demand for several key products Brussels sprouts, and fava beans is low compared to other products which do not do as well in San Mateo County.

Because of the difficulties in accessing high quality wholesale markets, most small farms sell directly, including being their own distributor. For this reason, farmers markets are a particularly important market outlet. With respect to access to institutional markets, including school-based feeding programs, the key issue is that there is no uniform, appropriately packed or processed, and food-safety certified aggregated supply. In other words, institutional buyers are willing – the problem is on the supply side.

The CAFF report indicated farmer interest in an aggregation facility to facilitate distribution, a commercial kitchen to allow them to expand into value-added production, and improved Farmers Market infrastructure to increase direct-sales opportunities. SAGE concurs with these priorities, all of which are demonstrated best practices that have been implemented in many communities and are well-supported by existing USDA programs.

They key to implementing any of these recommendations is identifying the individuals or institutions who will take on the work. Leadership for this sort of development usually comes from a not-for-profit, a for-profit investor, or an economic development agency. San Mateo County does not have

an economic development agency or other obvious possible lead actor for such infrastructure investments. Various San Mateo County actors could play a support role by offering staff time to assist with grant writing, by offering staff time as a part of the match requirements, and in implementation by prioritizing the project with County planning officials.

Golden Gate Produce Terminal

The Golden Gate Produce Terminal in South San Francisco is a world-class market for wholesale produce from California and around the world. Although San Mateo County only grows a fraction of the produce it consumes, grocers, restaurants and institutional food service companies throughout San Mateo County are able to source high quality fresh and diverse produce that is aggregated and distributed through this terminal.

Farmers Markets

There are many certified farmers markets in San Mateo County. The degree of community engagement varies depending on who runs the market. The following markets appear to follow best practices for promoting farmers, providing recipes and seasonal activities, marketing programs like Market Match, clearly advertising accepted payment methods, and promoting healthy food access to all:

- Pescadero Grown: run by Puente; has an active and current web site, which publicizes information about the Market Match program.
- Coastside Farmers Market Association: runs farmers markets in Half Moon Bay and Pacifica; has an active and current web site, which publicizes information about the Market Match program.
- East Palo Alto Community Farmers' Market: run by the not-for-profit organization Collective Roots; has an active and current web site, which prominently displays that payment methods accepted (including cash, credit cards, Cal Fresh/EBT, FMNP WIC checks, FMNP senior checks, and Fresh Checks).

These farmers markets could improve their in best practices in a variety of ways:

- Portola Valley Farmers Market: appears to be independently run; web site does promote independent farmers and seasonal eating, but does not include information about payment types accepted.
- Daly City Farmers Market: run by the California Farmers' Markets Association based in Walnut Creek; web site is not current and does not mention Market Match.
- Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association: based in Concord, the PCFMA runs the 25th Avenue Farmers Market and San Mateo College Farmers Markets in San Mateo, the Belmont and San Bruno Farmers Markets, the Kaiser Permanent Farmers Markets in Redwood City, Menlo Park and South San Francisco; PCFMA maintains minimal web presence for the markets but does clearly state that they accept EBT and WIC payments. PCFMA also administers Market Match payments discussed in greater detail in Section VI, Markets and Healthy Food Access.
- Brisbane and Foster City Farmers Markets: run by West Coast Farmers Market Association in Redwood City; web site is minimal and payment methods are not discussed.
- The Cities of Burlingame, Millbrae and San Carlos each have farmers markets with minimal web presence and no information about payment methods accepted.

Commercial Kitchens

Commercial kitchens are fully permitted spaces that can be used for catering businesses or to manufacture packaged food products for sale. Some are full service operations that produce and pack to the customer's specifications, some can be rented for the customer to use in conjunction with licensed kitchen staff, and some come with additional supportive services to help the customer launch a new product and a new business. This last type is the most useful to farmers and small food entrepreneurs who would be interested in sourcing local products at good prices.

- ➔ *The City of San Mateo is home to KitchenTown, a state of the art commercial kitchen and food business incubator. KitchenTown offers founders of food startups production space, equipment, and the opportunity to interact with a community of like-minded peers, industry experts, and investors, to help scale their businesses.*
- ➔ *The City of Pacifica is home to a similar, but smaller, commercial kitchen and food business incubator called Pedro Point Creative.*

Aggregation Facilities

Larger farms have their own facilities for washing, grading, and packing. Commercial distributors normally pick up from these sites. Smaller farms that cannot afford to build marketing infrastructure can benefit from working together to develop a shared facility. In addition to having access to adequate packing and cooling infrastructure, once farmers are co-invested in an aggregation facility, they can plan together to grow and sell crops in larger volume, thus becoming more attractive to distributors. Some aggregation facilities are combined with commercial kitchens and are referred to as "food hubs."

- ➔ *There is no aggregation facility for the use of coastside farmers.*

Program Utilization

Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) Programs

The Farmers Market Promotion Program can be used to develop permanent infrastructure at a Farmers Market, including awnings and parking, and for promotional campaigns including awareness of how SNAP benefits can be redeemed at Farmers Markets.

The Local Food Promotion Program funds development of feasibility studies and implementation plans (usually in two phases) to develop new businesses and infrastructure to promote and support local foods.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is an AMS program administered through the California Department of Food and Agriculture and funds programs that support educating specialty crop producers in attaining higher value markets for their products. It also supports training new and beginning farmers in specialty crop production and marketing and some programs to teach farming at the high school and college level to promote careers in farming specialty crops.

- ➔ *None of these programs have current dollars in San Mateo County.*

Rural Development Programs

The Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG) program is a direct grant to for-profit producers to fund expansion into value-added activities including processed products and agri-tourism.

➔ *There is one current VAPG award in San Mateo County to Farm Fresh Solutions, LLC for \$20,000. It appears to be associated with Tunitas Creek Ranch in Half Moon Bay.*

Recommendations for Establishing Goals and Performance Measures

Based on the available data, the following would be viable metrics to use to establish goals and performance measures:

1. Increase in number of aggregation facilities on the coast.
2. Increase in number of commercial kitchens on the coast.
3. Increase in the number of farmers markets promoting farmers, providing recipes and seasonal activities and promoting healthy food access to all.

Program Recommendations

RF.1 Form an Aggregation Facility Exploratory Committee

Proposed program or intervention strategy

1. Find an organization willing and able to apply for funds to produce a feasibility study on an aggregation facility.
2. Seek funding and conduct a feasibility study to determine capital needs, breakeven cash flow, ideal corporate structure, and related funding or investment strategy.

Anticipated impacts

Identification of potential leadership for new agriculture- related investments. In the long-term, a new organization could be established to lead infrastructure development and possibly also educational efforts.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

None initially, but requires time commitments from the FSA. Funding could be obtained from the Agricultural Marketing Services Local Foods Promotion Program in conjunction with local “slow money” investments or philanthropy.

Evaluation methods

1. Short term success will be measured first by successful fundraising for a feasibility study, and then if warranted, an implementation plan.
2. Long term success would be measured by increased profitability of farms using the aggregation facility, or by the number of new farms created because of the opportunities supported by the aggregation facility.

RF.2 Connect FSA Members with Local Officials about Opportunities to Improve Farmers Market Management

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Identify and meet with local officials with decision-making power over farmers markets. Provide actionable information about the benefits of improving the farmers markets and strategies to do so, including contracting with a new farmers market manager and seeking new funds.

Anticipated impacts

Meetings would provide an opportunity to learn how individual city decision-makers view their farmers markets and the FSA. In the long-term, this would strengthen the reach of the FSA by engaging local governments and improving farmers markets throughout San Mateo County.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

None initially, but requires time commitments from the FSA. Future sources of funds include the Agricultural marketing Services Farmers Market Promoting Program, in conjunction with the sponsorship of local business and philanthropy.

Evaluation methods

1. Short term success will be measured by the willingness of local leaders to consider new and improved farmers market management.
2. Long term success will be measured by the increase in the number of farmers markets promoting farmers, providing recipes and seasonal activities, marketing programs like Market Match, clearly advertising accepted payment methods, and promoting healthy food access to all.

VI. Markets and Healthy Food Access

This is the final analytical section; it looks specifically at markets and healthy food access in San Mateo County. First, this section describes the existing market and access conditions including food insecurity, fresh produce access, and healthy and culturally appropriate food access. The second part of this section looks at the current utilization of Federal Farm Bill programs such as CalFresh and SNAP, Community Food Projects, Market Match, and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, and makes recommendations for establishing performance goals and metrics. Four recommendations to enhance nutrition and food access, particularly for farmworkers and those on the coast, conclude this section along with a discussion of anticipated impacts, resources needed, and possible methods for evaluation of these recommendations.

Existing Conditions

Although San Mateo County is one of the wealthiest counties in the Nation, many residents are food insecure, and in many areas of San Mateo County residents are physically distant from access to healthy food.¹ In this context, “healthy food access” means access within a reasonable period of time, at a reasonable price, to a reasonable quantity of foods including fresh, frozen, and canned produce, and raw or cooked staple products such as potatoes, beans and grains, provided those items have not been processed with large amounts of additional sugars and fats.

Food Insecurity

Utilization of federal programs is a poor indicator of actual need in a populous and demographically and geographically complex county like San Mateo. The difference between program utilization and actual need reflects two key issues: 1) qualifying income is set too high (because it is based on Federal poverty guidelines), and 2) there is insufficient outreach capacity to reach diverse populations and geographically remote populations.

The basic model for fighting hunger is leveraging Federal Farm Bill programs (administered through the State) with local efforts typically coordinated by a food bank that coordinates multiple partners to source and distribute food, and to provide outreach and technical assistance to help organizations, individuals, and families access resources.

In San Mateo County this role is primarily filled by the Second Harvest Food Bank. Second Harvest performs three main functions:

1. Sourcing food through purchases and donations from growers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, food drives, and USDA allocations. USDA allocations are administered through Food and Nutrition Services, which allocates bulk purchases (made by Agricultural Marketing Services) according to various Farm Bill program eligibilities and requirements.
2. Distributing food through partnering organizations such as soup kitchens, pantries, rehabilitation centers, shelters, senior centers, and children's recreational and tutoring programs. Program access guidelines require partnering food distribution organizations to demonstrate that at least 70% of the clients they serve live at or below 200% of the Federal poverty line.

¹ Access to Healthy Food. Available at <http://www.getthehealthysmc.org/healthy-neighborhoods-data>

3. Outreach and technical assistance to help partnering organizations develop capacity, and to help individuals in need apply for assistance programs.

Second Harvest estimates that they only serve about 50% of the people who need food assistance.

Healthy Food Access

Though closely related to food insecurity, healthy food access is a separate issue. The USDA Food Atlas and related studies shows various metrics for evaluating the food environment and focuses on what are known as “food deserts” or areas where individuals are physically distant from grocery stores or other sources of food, or only have immediate access to stores that sell very little fresh food. The Food Atlas is a helpful tool, but fails to fully describe the additional challenges of people who live in remote and rugged areas and may lack access to functional kitchens.

Fresh Produce Access

The Healthy Corner Store Initiative works with small stores to increase their offerings of fresh produce. Mobile produce markets drive to remote communities and offer produce for direct sale. Various farmers markets and farmers market associations pushed for regulatory changes to allow nutrition program benefits to be used at farmers markets and now directly by farmers for CSA boxes. Now the challenge is to take full advantage of this opportunity. There are two key challenges: 1) buying direct from farmers may still be more expensive than buying at a grocery store, and produce is generally more expensive than other sources of calories, and 2) federal benefits programs require benefits to be redeemed electronically. This allows program users the dignity of appearing to pay for the transaction with a debit or credit card – but imposes an additional cost on organizations working to connect program benefits directly to local farmers.

One approach to the issue of cost for programs is to raise private funds to double or triple the value of a Federal benefit dollar when spent on fresh produce at a farmers market. This program is known as Market Match in California. Getting machines into farmers markets has long been the focus of the AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), which provides funding for Farmers Markets to purchase machines and implement a program to redeem benefits on behalf of farmers at the market. The program also requires that any market applying for FMPP funds either have machines in place or include a program to implement with their first application.

Other approaches to fresh produce access and distribution include partnerships between food banks and farms and community gardens, and mobile produce distribution programs that deliver fresh produce into low access neighborhoods.

Healthy and Culturally Appropriate Prepared Foods

Access to prepared food is not a luxury for people who have no access to kitchens or who perceive that they have no discretionary time to devote to buying and preparing food. National “fast food” franchises provide cheap and convenient alternatives to home cooking, however accessing food through these franchises often leads to poor dietary choices and long term health problems. One alternative is the food truck. While some food trucks provide low quality foods, many provide simple and traditional foods which provide healthy meals and maintain cultural connections. Food trucks are also a great source of independent, entrepreneurial income for operators.

The Food Trust has been a national leader in developing solutions to difficult healthy food access problems and is piloting a Healthy Food Truck Certification program. The Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Council piloted a program to provide grants and favorable loans to new food cart operators who will provide healthy, locally-sourced menu items in a wide array of culinary styles.²

One of the key barriers to entry and success for food truck businesses is access to technical assistance with business issues and finance and access to commissary (commercial kitchens and related cleaning and storage spaces specifically tailored for food trucks in off-hours).

Portable commercial kitchens in re-purposed shipping containers can be an innovative solution where land cost is high and long term need is uncertain. Food truck commissaries sometimes turn into night-time food-truck courts, providing a lively social environment and access to a variety of inexpensive foods. In some cases, a food truck commissary can be part of a food hub.

Program Utilization

CalFresh/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Data on CalFresh/SNAP utilization is readily available, but it is a questionable metric for two reasons. First, it does not account for food insecurity experienced by people who do not qualify for SNAP because they have monthly income above the qualifying Federal limits – though far below what is needed to live in San Mateo County. Second, it does not account for shortcomings in program outreach and difficulties with accessing the program. The California Association of Food Banks is leading a major initiative, “The Alliance to Transform CalFresh,” to address administrative issues with the program that are believed to contribute to low utilization rates throughout the State.

Community Food Projects

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Community Food Projects (CFP) program funds planning, training, and technical assistance. The primary goals of the CFP program are to: 1) meet food needs of low-income individuals; 2) increase food self-reliance of low-income communities; 3) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; and 4) meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agricultural needs, including needs related to infrastructure improvement and development, planning for long-term solutions, and creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

➔ *Current (2105) awards do not include projects in San Mateo County. The 2016 awards have not been announced yet.*

Market Match

As previously discussed above, Market Match is an incentive program offering farmers market customers a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$10 when they use their CalFresh benefits at participating farmers’ markets.

² The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition. Available at <http://cccfoodpolicy.org/working-group/health-nutrition>

- ➔ *There are eight farmers markets in San Mateo County that accept both CalFresh and Market Match benefits, eight markets that accept neither, and three markets that accept CalFresh but not Market Match.*³

Healthy Food Financing Initiative

The California Healthy Food Financing Initiative (CHFFI) was signed into law in 2011. In 2014, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) was authorized under the Federal Farm Bill. The program leverages Federal, State, philanthropic, and private funds to provide financing for developing and equipping grocery stores, small retailers, corner stores, and farmers markets selling healthy food in underserved areas, and to inspire innovation in healthy food retailing.

- ➔ *San Mateo County grocers receiving CHFFI funds are El Rancho Markets and Milagros de Mexico.*

Produce Mobile

Second Harvest's Produce Mobile Program sets up once a week at 24 locations throughout San Mateo County and makes fresh produce available for free without eligibility restrictions. The program uses specially customized refrigerated trucks with canopies and side doors that open to let users select the produce they want. This model allows for distribution in inclement weather and in parking lots and neighborhoods lacking infrastructure.

- ➔ *Second Harvest's evaluation surveys indicate that over 80% of recipients eat less produce than they would like due to cost, but recipients do eat more fruits and vegetables since joining the Produce Mobile Program.*

Recommendations for Establishing Goals and Performance Measures

1. Conduct a thorough survey about discretionary income, available time, and kitchen access to determine the threshold for choice among San Mateo County residents when it comes to their diet. Note: this idea comes from the FEED interns report; see details in Appendix B, pages 2-6.
2. Increase the number of farmers markets accepting CalFresh and Market Match benefits.
3. Increase utilization of HFFI funds with innovative new access projects.

Program Recommendations

RH.1 Develop a Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Create a new nutrition program available to San Mateo County residents who qualify for public health programs, but not existing nutrition programs. Qualifying benefits would be a voucher for a "co-payment" on produce purchases and certain qualifying kitchen amenities, such as a butcher knife, a colander, and a cutting board. Co-payment rates could be scaled to income. Note: this idea is distilled from the FEED interns report; see Appendix B, pages 10-17.

³ Data from The Ecology Center, the organization that runs the Market Match program in California.
http://ecologycenter.org/fmfinder/?address_input=san+mateo

Anticipated impacts

Expanded access to nutrition programs for those above the current cutoff. Stronger institutional connections between public health and nutrition programs can be expected in the long term.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

Initially, this proposal needs San Mateo County Health Department staff time to explore possible partnerships for implementation. A partnering organization is a key resource to identify, and may include food banks such as Second Harvest. Initial program design and implementation could be funded by a Community Food Projects grant. New funds and fundraising efforts would be needed to fully implement the program. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 can help address financing; see discussion below.

Evaluation methods

One of the most promising aspects of this proposed program is that it would be possible to obtain utilization and health data and conduct meaningful long term analysis to determine the health effects of the intervention.

RH.2 Develop a Healthy Food Truck Program

Proposed program or intervention strategy

This program has two concurrent strategies:

1. Healthy Food Truck Certification: a San Mateo County program to provide discounted permits and less strict zoning restrictions on food trucks that provide a certain percentage of healthy food and operate in areas known to have access needs, including remote coastal areas. This zoning change would require some revisions to Chapter 5.5.2 of the County Code of Ordinances covering mobile food vendors.
2. Healthy Food Truck Finance and Technical Assistance: a non-profit or Small Business Development Center-led program to provide food truck operators assistance with compliance and with preferential access to technical assistance with business plans, access to credit, and access to grants.

Anticipated impacts

Expanded access to healthy and culturally appropriate foods for those who are confronted by the challenge of cooking for themselves. Additional longer term impacts include increased entrepreneurial opportunities for those with limited education and capital as well as an enhanced food culture in San Mateo County. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 are applicable to the goals associated with this strategy; see discussion in Section VII below.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

Initially, this proposal requires San Mateo County Health Department staff time to explore the parameters of the program and possible City-level partnerships for implementation. A partnering organization is key to implementation, and could include the Small Business Development Center. Initial program design and implementation could be funded by a Community Food Projects grant. Small Business Development funds could also support technical assistance and lending funds could be sourced through community development financial institutions and the CHFFI. Instituting a grant program would require private fundraising and an organization to

administer the program. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 can help address financing; see discussion in Section VII below.

Evaluation methods

1. Increase in number of food trucks offering healthy food options.
2. Increase in opportunities for food insecure individuals to purchase healthy prepared foods.

RH.3 Develop Farmworker Housing with Strategies for Addressing Nutrition

Proposed program or intervention strategy

Develop farmworker housing that requires developers of new agricultural workforce housing to specifically consider best practices such as providing kitchen access in shared housing for low income residents and incorporating relevant state-of-the-art innovations into their design.

Anticipated impacts

By integrating strategies for addressing nutritional gaps, new farmworker housing with development requirements will address the challenges of shared kitchen access. In the long term, San Mateo County could be seen as an innovative developer of shared housing models designed with the nutritional needs of residents in mind.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

No additional resources needed at this time, except for an evaluation study of the proposed program.

Evaluation methods

This proposal suggests a one-time infrastructure innovation, not an ongoing program. Evaluation of the proposed housing model would be helpful, particularly if housing is developed in stages. Evaluation of the effectiveness of such a housing model would involve a partnership between Housing and Health departments, and could not begin until sometime after the new housing was occupied.

RH.4 Form an Exploratory Committee for Mobile Commercial Kitchen/Food Truck Commissary Serving San Mateo County Coast

Proposed program or intervention strategy

In line with the needs identified above in the Markets and Healthy food Access section, this strategy recommends forming an exploratory committee to conduct analysis of a mobile commercial kitchen and food truck commissary in two steps:

1. Find an organization willing and able to apply for funds to do a feasibility study on a mobile commercial kitchen and food truck commissary serving the San Mateo County coast.
2. Seek funding and conduct a feasibility study to determine capital needs, breakeven cash flow, ideal corporate structure, and related funding or investment strategies.

Anticipated impacts

Identification of potential leadership for new food-related investments. In the long term, a new organization could be established to lead infrastructure development and possibly also educational efforts.

Resources needed and likely sources of funding

No additional resources initially, but requires time commitments from the FSA. Initial program design and implementation could be funded by a Community Food Projects grant or by USDA Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise and Value Added Producer Grants. Additional funds could come from the CHFFI, private investment and philanthropy. Note: Cross Cutting Recommendations 2 and 3 can help address financing; see discussion in Section VII below.

Evaluation methods

1. Short term success will be measured by successful fundraising for a feasibility study, and then if warranted, an implementation plan.
2. Long term success would be measured by an increased number of independent food businesses and increased number of healthy prepared food options on the coast.

VII. Cross Cutting Recommendations

In addition to the 14 programmatic actions across four primary food supply chain sectors described above, this section of the report looks at the food system as a whole and makes cross-cutting recommendations to address the idea of a *connected* food and culture.

These cross-cutting recommendations are informed based on initial analysis of program utilization as well as the four stakeholder engagement sessions.

The first five of these recommendations are coordinator positions. The purpose of these coordinator positions is to secure funds from existing public and private sources to develop programs that will make meaningful progress towards the vision, sufficient to demonstrate the value of investing in San Mateo Food and Farming as an integrated whole, and sufficient to mobilize public support to ensure continued (and increased if warranted) funding.

The remaining four cross-cutting recommendations propose strategies to help enhance existing programmatic efforts as well as strengthen partnerships with local and regional partners.

Cross Cutting Recommendations

CC.1 Create a County-wide Food and Farming Integration Coordinator Position

Create an overarching organizational structure sufficient to implement a collective impact model to harness, support, and leverage existing and new activities related to enhancing the food and farming environment in San Mateo County by hiring a county-wide Food and Farming Integration Coordinator.

CC.2 Create an Agricultural Resource Coordinator Position

Create additional dedicated support for program resources related to conservation practices on agricultural lands and programs that support the economic viability of family-scale farming and ranching by hiring an Agricultural Resource Coordinator. (This is most likely continued support for the agricultural ombudsperson position).

CC.3 Create a Farm to School Resource Coordinator Position

Increase dedicated support for coordinating, leveraging, and enhancing farm to school activities across the county by hiring a Farm to School Resource Coordinator.

CC.4 Create an Urban Farm & Garden Access Coordinator Position

Increase dedicated support for coordinating, leveraging, and enhancing urban farming and gardening programs across the county by hiring an Urban Farm and Garden Access Coordinator.

CC.5 Healthy Food Access Innovations Coordinator

Increase dedicated support for coordinating, leveraging, and enhancing healthy food access programs across the county by hiring a Healthy Food Access Innovations Coordinator.

CC.6 Strategically Plan for the Use of the “As Fresh as it Gets” Label

As a part of the other initiatives managed using the collective impact model, create a strategic plan for enhanced use of the “As Fresh as it Gets” label. “As Fresh As it Gets” is anchored by a brand/logo owned by the Office of the County Agricultural Commissioner. This program has been implemented

in partnership with the Farm Bureau (a 501(c)(5) and the Visitors and Conventions Bureau (a 501(c)(6). The lack of a 501(c)(3) organization in the partnership for program implementation suggests some reasons as to why the program has not accessed funding sources commonly used by other local branding programs, and why the label does not yet have a strong tie to health and wellness programs and messages.

Strategic planning includes internal research, planning and decision making as well as external stakeholder engagement. This effort should be initiated by the Agricultural Commissioner's office and then expand to include the Health Department, and if indicated, also reach out to engage broader stakeholders to consider how the brand could be used to elevate the role of San Mateo County agriculture in promoting health and wellness. This effort could also be linked to an emerging effort, a collaboration involving ABAG, SAGE and others, to create a regional farm and food brand and communications campaign.

Key questions to guide this strategic planning include:

1. What is the true purpose of the brand?
2. How do current programs fulfill that purpose?
3. How does the current ownership of the logo and RFP process affect maximum utilization of the brand?

CC.7 Strategically Plan for the Use of the "Get Healthy San Mateo" Initiative

Possibly related to the effort around the "As Fresh as it Gets" program above, or as a separate effort, the Health Department should initiate an effort internally to conduct preliminary analysis of the "Get Healthy San Mateo" Initiative. If indicated, the Health Department should then reach out to a broader group of stakeholders to consider if or how to unite health and wellness messages with the "As Fresh As It Gets Program" or with a different message related to connecting health and wellness to food and agriculture.

CC.8. Strengthen Partnerships with Santa Clara County

Both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties face similar challenges with food and farming, and both are home to innovative efforts to enhance the food and farming environment. As indicated in the notes from the Healthy Food Access Forum, there are a number of initiatives underway in Santa Clara County which would fit well with the needs and goals of San Mateo County. Significantly, Second Harvest operates its programs across both counties, and Santa Clara County has far more agricultural land and food producing capacity. Therefore, Santa Clara County would be a strategic partner for initiatives to promote more consumption of local, healthy food.

CC.9 Incorporate the Joint Work of the Nine Bay Area Counties into San Mateo County Efforts

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is currently working on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which will be submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration in fall 2017. SAGE is working with American Farmland Trust and ABAG to ensure that the food and farming sectors are considered in region-wide planning for economic development, transportation, and regional resilience. There will be ample opportunities throughout this work for San Mateo County to collaborate with the other Bay Area counties to seek investments for infrastructure, technical

assistance and branding that all help support a resilient local food system while enhancing the San Mateo County food and farming environment.

Economic and Equity Analysis and Anticipated Impacts

The costs and benefits of these proposed positions are discussed in detail in the separate Economic and Equity Analysis Report.

Assuming qualified candidates, the five coordinator positions will help to raise sufficient funds for developing sustainable programs for San Mateo County, which will noticeably improve the food and farming environment and increase equity across the food system.

It will take at least one year to raise any meaningful funds for these coordinator positions, an additional year to develop pilot programs, and two to three additional years to evaluate, course-correct and establish a sustainable funding cycle. Therefore, it is important to conceptualize these positions as having a four to five year initial timeline so that they have sufficient time to succeed in their respective areas.

If successful, strategic planning for the "As Fresh As It Gets" label and "Get Healthy San Mateo" initiative will feed back into the common agenda developed under the collective impact model.

The effect of partnerships with Santa Clara County could include enhanced resources to support local farmers and ranchers with educational programs, technical assistance, and processing and distribution capacity. There are also opportunities to improve the effectiveness of farm to school programs and health food access programs by partnering with sourcing and distribution capacities located in Santa Clara County.

Similarly, partnering with other Bay Area counties to coordinate efforts to invest in critical infrastructure to advance the food and farming environment is likely to result in economic and transportation efficiencies for San Mateo County.

Resources Needed and Likely Sources of Funding

Each of the coordinator positions is estimated to require around \$250,000 in funding annually between salary, program costs, and a fully loaded overhead. Funding for these positions will not come from any established Farm Bill program, but many come from private donations and foundations, if there is a compelling statement of need, and if the FSA can demonstrate sufficient organizational capacity to manage funds and staff. The most likely way to build towards the capacity needed to raise funds for all five coordinator positions is to build in the established "Agricultural Ombudsperson" position and identify an existing County staff position that can dedicate at least 50% time to the overall coordinating and fundraising role. The remaining four recommendations for strategic planning and strengthening of relationships can be accomplished with existing staff and budget resources.

VIII. Conclusion

This report concludes a year-long partnership with the San Mateo County Food Systems Alliance to develop a vision for a food and farming system in San Mateo County. As stated throughout, there is no lack of vision, but attaining the vision requires particular capacities which are not currently within the Food Systems Alliance. Accordingly, the recommendations in this report put forth specific actions that can bring the vision into reality.

The primary recommendation for how the many actors who contribute to improving the overall conditions for food and farming in San Mateo County should work together is to adopt a "collective impact" model. There are two suggestions for possible ways a collective impact model could be adopted using current budgets and capacities, or without a significant new investment in budgets and organizational infrastructure.

There are a number of recommended actions associated with each part of the food system, and nine cross-cutting recommendations address the desire for a connected food and farming system and focus on efforts which would unify interests in healthy food access with interests in agricultural production in San Mateo County.

While it is important to look at the food and farming system as a whole, and to look across all of government to ensure that policies do not contradict each other, in the end the food system is made up of many separate parts from field production to consumption, and most of the time the individual actors are not thinking in terms of systems, but in terms of individual motivations. Similarly, the effort of the Food System Alliance to create holistic policy is of great importance to San Mateo County as a whole, but the actual implementation of those policies usually comes down to individual grant writers and program managers.

The discussions and recommendations in this report are intended to provide food systems leaders in San Mateo County with an understanding of the specific mechanisms and actions that will support meaningful efforts to improve the overall conditions for a thriving and equitable food and farming system. How these recommendations are adopted and implemented will be the work of Food Systems Alliance members in the coming years.

Appendix A

Recommendations Summary: Resource Needs and Timeline

Recommendations are actionable "now" if nothing limits the FSA from taking action.

Recommendations are actionable "soon" if lead implementation partners and likely sources of funding can be readily identified.

Recommendations are actionable "later" if the program is sufficiently novel that it would be difficult to identify partners and models.

	Description	Resource Needs		Timeline		
		Paid Staff Time to Initiate	Leadership Conversations Only	Now	Soon	Later
Land and Rural Communities	RL.1 Support Real Estate/Succession/Transition Assistance <i>Forums to provide land owners and agricultural operators with information about transition strategies, perhaps with vouchers.</i>	√			√	
	RL.2 Enhance Farmland Access Program on Conservation Lands <i>Encourage POST and MidPen to prioritize land access for beginning farmers as an integral element of their farmland preservation strategy.</i>		√	√		
	RL.3 Increase Support to the RCD through the Agricultural Resource Coordinator <i>Support a part-time grant writer to increase funding to RCD.</i>	√			√	
Production	RP.1 Increase Technical Assistance to Facilitate Access to Conservation Programs <i>Fund a full-time engineer and a part time soil conservationist at the RCD.</i>	√			√	
	RP.2 Increase Availability of Farmworker Housing <i>Act on BAE report recommendations.</i>		√	√		
	RP.3 Enhance Business Planning Assistance <i>Forums to provide beginning farmers and ranchers with technical assistance in business planning. Vouchers if funded.</i>	√			√	
	RP.4 Implement Matched Savings Program for Beginning Farmers	√			√	

	<i>Offer participants in the technical assistance program described in RP.3 the option to participate in a matched savings account.</i>					
	RP.5 Initiate Proposal for New and Improved Insurance Offerings		√			√
	<i>Submit a new insurance proposal to the Risk Management Agency through the 508(h) process.</i>					
Processing, Aggregation and Distribution	RF.1 Form an Aggregation Facility Exploratory	√			√	
	<i>Apply for funds to do a feasibility study on an aggregation facility.</i>					
	RF.2 Connect FSA Members with Local Officials about Opportunities to Improve Farmers Market Management		√	√		
	<i>Identify and meet with local officials with decision-making power over farmers markets.</i>					
Markets and Healthy Food Access	RH.1 Develop a Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program	√				√
	<i>Create a new nutrition program available to people who qualify for public health programs but not existing nutrition programs.</i>					
	RH.2 Develop a Healthy Food Truck Program	√		√		
	<i>Create a Healthy Food Truck Certification Program (County) and TA and grants program (others)</i>					
	RH.3 Develop Farmworker Housing with Strategies for Addressing Nutrition		√	√		
	<i>Develop farmworker housing that specifically considers best practices such as providing kitchen access in shared housing for low income residents.</i>					
	RH.4 Form an Exploratory Committee for Mobile Commercial Kitchen/Food Truck Commissary Serving San Mateo County Coast	√			√	
	<i>Form an exploratory committee to conduct analysis of a mobile commercial kitchen and food truck commissary.</i>					

FEED Interns: Investigation into Healthy Food Access within San Mateo County

Lauren Brown and Erica McCoy



Overview

This summer we worked with the FEED Collaborative based at Stanford University in joint collaboration with SAGE, Sustainable Agriculture Education, to create a vision for a local food and farm bill in San Mateo County, California. Our task was to focus on healthy food access and investigate potential gaps and opportunities that could be filled to address this issue. After ten weeks of background research and stakeholder engagement we have compiled six recommendations for the county to consider for implementation. Every recommendation includes: background information that will provide you with how and why it was created, baseline metrics that will help to determine structure and success of the recommendation, gaps and opportunities that it can help address, goal metrics that aim to improve baseline metrics as well as address issues outside of baseline metrics, implementation plans/ideas, and case studies that provide examples of similar programs that can potentially be a reference point during implementation of each recommendation. The recommendations are in order of priority for implementation however we know that there are many avenues to success and image that with further investigation that this is subject to change. As this is the first iteration of our recommendations there is still opportunity to improve upon or shift these ideas to even better address healthy food access within San Mateo County. This report ends with some additional ideas that need further exploration and some examples of how we envision our recommendation helping different users.

Recommendation #1: Conduct a thorough survey about discretionary income, available time and kitchen access to determine the threshold for when people have choices about their diet.

Background:

Programs like CalFresh, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered through the California department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) address the biggest problem facing low-income individuals and families: the amount of discretionary income that can be spent on food. Discretionary income is money available after all taxes, rent, bills, utilities, and insurance have been paid for a given month. While food is a necessary item like rent, it is often perceived as a lower necessity item, similar to the need for medication¹. CalFresh and WIC aim to supplement discretionary income for individuals who meet highly specific and definitive eligibility requirements (including a gross income below 200% of the federal poverty line (FPL), a net income below 100% of the FPL, and restricted valued assets²). These requirements only assess monetary assets and income, not environmental or societal factors that may be barriers. However, while one of the largest factors, discretionary income is not the only factor that affects access to food.

¹ Choosing between Medical Care and Food <https://healthleadsusa.org/2013/01/new-study-shows-more-americans-choosing-between-medical-care-and-food/>

² CalFresh Eligibility and Issuance Requirements <http://www.calfresh.ca.gov/Pg841.htm>

Available discretionary income, available time to grocery shop, cook, and clean, and access to kitchen facilities and cookware are all critical components of healthy food access for low-income individuals and families. No evaluations of these metrics within the county were found in preliminary research and stakeholder engagement. There are other indicators evaluated by the county, including food access³, income levels⁴, livable wage levels⁵, housing access⁶, and housing displacement rates⁷ that indicate issues regarding time and kitchen access may be highly critical restrictions that are not being addressed.

Time is a critical component for living a healthy lifestyle. In order to prepare healthy fresh meals, an individual would need to spend time grocery shopping, planning, and preparing meals. If time is a limiting factor, individuals are more likely to turn to fast food restaurants and processed food items in the grocery store that take little preparation, time or clean up⁸. Time also tends to be a greater limiting factor for those working minimum wage jobs.

Consider the minimum wage versus the living wage in San Mateo County. A single adult working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year at a \$9/hour minimum wage job would make an annual income of only \$18,720⁹. However, the minimum annual income necessary to live in San Mateo County is \$30,777, resulting from a living wage of \$14/hour⁹. This is mostly the result of a housing crisis throughout the Bay Area¹⁰ that has caused housing prices to skyrocket. The average rent in San Mateo County for a one-bedroom apartment is \$2640/month¹¹. Even what are considered traditionally middle class families are struggling to live within San Mateo County,

³ Healthy Neighborhoods in SMC: Access to Healthy Food
<http://www.gethealthysmc.org/healthy-neighborhoods-data>

⁴ Healthy Economy in SMC: Median Household Income
<http://www.gethealthysmc.org/healthy-economy-data>

⁵ Livable Wage Calculation for San Mateo County, CA
<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06081>

⁶ Healthy Housing in SMC: Median Rent <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/healthy-housing-data>

⁷ Healthy Housing in SMC: Displacement <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/healthy-housing-data>

⁸ Why Low-Income and Food Insecure People are Vulnerable to Obesity.
<http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity/why-are-low-income-and-food-insecure-people-vulnerable-to-obesity/>

⁹ Living Wage Calculation for San Mateo County, CA: Typical Expenses
<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06081>

¹⁰ How the Bay Area Became America's Symbol for a Housing Crisis
<http://www.spur.org/news/2016-04-26/how-bay-area-became-america-s-symbol-housing-crisis>

¹¹ Rent Trend Data in San Mateo County, CA <https://www.rentjungle.com/average-rent-in-san-mateo-rent-trends/>

not to mention the many poor families, people of color, and undocumented individuals struggling to live in San Mateo County¹².

For a single adult working a minimum wage job, they must find supplemental income or affordable housing, which typically comes from a second job or alternate housing arrangements. This results in many time and kitchen access restrictions that affects healthy food access and needs to be addressed differently than income restrictions. Having two full time jobs, long commutes for work or needing to use public transportation to get to the nearest full grocery store are all limitations on an individual's time. With multiple household living arrangements, multiple single adults or multiple families living within one household, creates limitations on kitchen access, space, and food security. Sharing a fridge reduces storage space, increasing the likelihood of theft and can be a source of stress that could reduce an individual's likelihood to prepare fresh food.

An additional demographic that is likely to struggle from limited time and limited kitchen access, is coastal farm workers living in temporary housing. Long hours do not leave time for workers to learn how to cook, clean, or shop for fresh food. Crowded living conditions limit kitchen access and create vulnerable food storage environments. Preliminary findings suggest that over 40% of farm workers living in overcrowded conditions along the coast compared to just under 6% for urban settings¹³. Awareness of all limitations to healthy food, not just income but time and kitchen access as well, will help programs target pockets of people with similar needs or limitations more effectively.

Baseline Metrics:

Metrics that currently evaluate healthy food access are based on programs that assist with food distribution and supplemental income for purchasing food. An example of this is the current SNAP/Calfresh edibility requirements that are based solely on gross income and net income in comparison to the federal poverty line, and some assets including liquid resources and non-liquid resources¹⁴. For individuals and families with low discretionary income, there are metrics on how many people are reached from programs such as Calfresh, WIC and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. As of 2015, there were 29,524 individuals utilizing Calfresh¹⁵, 11,680 individuals utilizing WIC¹⁵ and over \$113 million spent on food distribution and programs in 2015 by Second Harvest¹⁶ providing food for individuals and families. The Calfresh and WIC programs do not target time or kitchen access limitations.

Gaps & Opportunities:

One of the largest gaps in food insecurity evaluation is the omission of factors other than income that do affect food access. With a survey that evaluates income, time and kitchen access, we can

¹² Segregation Shaped the San Mateo County Housing Crisis

<http://www.reimaginerpe.org/20-2/rein/san-mateo-segregation>

¹³ Preliminary Draft of San Mateo County Agricultural Workforce Housing Needs

¹⁴ Eligibility and Issuance Requirements <http://www.calfresh.ca.gov/Pg841.htm>

¹⁵ Nutrition & Food Insecurity Profile San Mateo County <http://cfpa.net/county-profiles>

¹⁶ Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 <http://www.shfb.org/annualreport>

categorizes food insecure people by their highest needs. There would be eight categories of needs that would then help program directors better target the type of people they are aiming to help.

↓ Disposable Income (I)		
	↑ Time (T)	↓ Time (T)
↑ Kitchen Access (K)	↓I ↑T ↑K	↓I ↓T ↑K
↓ Kitchen Access (K)	↓I ↑T ↓K	↓I ↓T ↓K

↑ Disposable Income (I)		
	↑ Time (T)	↓ Time (T)
↑ Kitchen Access (K)	↑I ↑T ↑K	↑I ↓T ↑K
↓ Kitchen Access (K)	↑I ↑T ↓K	↑I ↓T ↓K

It would also be possible to map the location of people within these eight categories to target people by their location. This could be helpful in mapping routes for produce delivery trucks, healthy food trucks, food distribution sites and community kitchens to serve the people who need the assistance most.

Additionally, it would be important to gather qualitative information about their perception of choices. A key goal for improving a food system and food access should be to get people to a place where they perceive they have choices about their diet and lifestyle. Collecting this information could help track the success of healthy food access programs and identify over time the programs that give individuals more autonomy over their diet and health.

Goal Metrics:

The overarching goal metric is to increase the number of individuals who feel that they have choices regarding their diet, health and lifestyle. Families who are barely making ends meet or those who do not have time to cook and have to grab fast food do not have choices over their diet and lifestyle. Getting people to a place where they have the ability to make decisions not only makes them feel more empowered but also improves their standard of living.

It would also be successful to see people have fewer constraints. For example, if an individual who has low discretionary income, low time and low kitchen access moves so that only time is a constraint that would be an improvement. Smaller metrics more specific to available time and kitchen access could include increasing the number of individuals with access to a kitchen and with access to cookware. It could also include number of healthy fast food meals from culturally appropriate food trucks provided per month and the number of people served in a community cooking class.

Implementation:

- Administration
 - Funded by the Department of Health
 - Survey to be developed by a professional in collaboration with the Food Systems Alliance

- Logistics
 - To be advertised and distributed to individuals in county health clinics
 - Possibility of expanding to other hospitals and community centers to reach a broader cohort of people
 - Possibility of collaboration with university students like at Stanford University
 - Internships to synthesize, analyze and create useful tools for utilizing the data collected
 - Would help to minimize costs

Previous Research:

SNAP: Examining the Evidence to Define Benefit Adequacy

Chapter 4: Individual, Household, and Environmental Factors Affecting Food Choices and Access¹⁷

- “Households are subject not only to an income constraint but also a time constraint. Thus, according to **household production theory**, households combine time and market goods to produce commodities for consumption in the household. In the context of food choices, food consumption requires not only money expenditures for purchasing food but also time expenditures for purchasing, preparing, and consuming food and for cleaning up after preparation and consumption. Therefore, **the full price of consumption is the sum of the direct and indirect prices for food, where the direct price is the purchase cost, and the indirect price is the value of the time requirements.**”
- “The amount of time individuals spend preparing food for consumption in the household is affected by household and individual **factors such as earnings; labor force participation; the number of children in the household**; and sociodemographic characteristics such as education, ethnicity, and gender. **Having multiple jobs, inflexible hours, and night work, for example, is associated with limited time for choosing and preparing healthy foods.**”
- “With the exception of foods purchased in prepared form, for example, one or more individuals within the household **must have the necessary knowledge and physical ability to prepare foods from ingredients and sufficient time available** for all the activities involved in food preparation; moreover, the household **must have the necessary equipment to refrigerate, prepare, and cook foods.**”
- “Environmental factors affect the types of foods available for purchase, the cost of those foods, and the **means of transportation** (a personal vehicle, a social network, or public transportation) that can be used to acquire the foods”

¹⁷ Individual, Household, and Environmental Factors Affecting Food Choices and Access
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK206912/>

Recommendation #2: Community Outreach Coordinator(s)

Background:

When we first began this endeavor we started the process of creating a vision for a local food and farm bill we did a thorough literature review. We conducted research into programs from the federal level down to the county level. We looked how these different programs were being utilized within county in order to find the gaps and opportunities that we might be able to fill. Additionally we looked into the non-profit organizations that were doing work within the county. This initial work provided some perspective on what was currently happening in the county. As we shifted our focus to healthy food access within the county and dived further into our research we began to realize that a significant amount of work regarding this issue had already been conducted however a lot of this work has not been able to infiltrate the county on a community level. We noticed that some of this work has become siloed and has not been shared with other local organizations or county departments. We found information such as the Get Healthy San Mateo site and the San Mateo County Food Assessment that the Food System Alliance (FSA) conducted both of which seemed to be under utilized. We began to see that there might be potential to build a better network of information.

Continuing forward as we conducted our stakeholder engagement we learned that there is a need for grassroots engagement with the community and that organizations need an avenue to create community participation. When meeting with the urban agriculture extension agent, we were surprised to learn we were the first people from San Mateo County to contact him in two and a half years.¹⁸ We also observed county employees who work in different departments but in related areas that met for the first time although they have worked within their departments over six months. When speaking with an FSA member we asked them why they thought the Food Assessment was under the radar. Their response was they thought poor advertising was a main factor.¹⁹ Additionally when we spoke to a local nonprofit we learned that they lacked relationships necessary to reach the community and that they needed an avenue in which to engage and share.²⁰ We began to see a pattern and after synthesizing our research with our stakeholder interviews we created the recommendation of two market outreach coordinator positions. One coordinator will work with the county government while the other will work with local businesses, organizations and NGOs. Their goal is to build a network among local government, agencies and communities to help create transparency, awareness and clear communication. We envision these coordinators to play a key role in encouraging collaboration towards the successful implantation of our other recommendations.

Baseline Metrics:

In thinking about the role of this potential position we wanted to establish some baseline metrics that we could use to establish success. First we want to establish a way to gauge how often

¹⁸ Interview with Rob Bennaton- UC Urban Ag Extension Agent

¹⁹ Interview with Peter Ruddock- CA Food Policy, FSA

²⁰ Interview with Sustainable San Mateo

collaboration is occurring and where it is happening. This will allow coordinators to identify untapped avenues for collaboration across different departments and organizations. Additionally as we envision these coordinators to be the point people behind the implementation of our other recommendations and there are baseline metrics for them to improve upon through successful implementation. Two of these metrics include SNAP/WIC utilization and county health rates in particular obesity/diabetic rates. There is potential for coordinators to help address issues with advertising SNAP/WIC to the public so that they have a proper understanding of eligibility requirements. There is also the opportunity for a coordinator to invest in those who are rejected from these programs so that they may properly address the need within the county regarding healthy food access. Someone in this position has the ability to direct people the county knows are in need but cannot receive federal food assistance to the program(s)/recommendation(s) that they can receive and will have the greatest impact on them. With the successful use of these recommendations the county has a chance to lower obesity/diabetic rates through the increase of healthy food access. This is because healthy eating helps to promote a higher quality of health.²¹ We believe that some of our recommendations will lead to people having more time on their hands therefore they will have a higher ability to exercise. Our recommendations have the potential to give people autonomy over their quality of life and healthy living life styles.

Gaps & Opportunities:

A Community Outreach Coordinator has the opportunity to develop a county network that will provide members with avenues to one another in particular to members of the community. The network will include internal & external stakeholders (e.g. county officials, local politicians, local organizations/NGO, community leaders, and local citizens. This will ultimately fill the gaps where information can be lost or misinterpreted thereby leading to transparency amongst stakeholders and constituents. The goal is to increase and encourage collaboration for a strong and successful local food system.

Goal Metrics:

In addition to improving baseline metrics we have some goal metrics for the coordinator(s) to work on that we believe will help to build a successful network. The first is to improve and increase community participation in development process of the vision bill as well as in the utilization of food assistance programs (both federal and created from the vision). We want to build trust amongst constituents so that they will apply for these programs and receive their benefits with the hope that it will encourage them to participate in future grassroots policy making. Furthermore we envision the community outreach coordinator(s) to help with community engagement at events that may be held surrounding various aspects of the food system. They may also help other organizations doing nonprofit work outside of the food system providing them with contacts and avenues to the community in order to increase participation.

Implementation:

²¹ PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR A HEALTHIER NATION
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/publications/pdf/pp-ch7.pdf>

- Administration- Two different avenues
 - Contract to have joint authorities within county; funding will come from housing, transportation and health departments.
 - Recommend Health Department as supervising authority
 - Hired by the FSA
 - Staff member for FSA therefore already connections to stakeholders inside and outside of the county
- Logistics
 - Two market outreach coordinator positions.
 - One coordinator will work with the county government while the other will work with local businesses, organizations and NGOs. Their goal is to build a network among local government, agencies and communities to help create transparency, awareness and clear communication.
 - We envision these coordinators to play a key role in encouraging collaboration towards the successful implantation of our other recommendations

Case Study:

The methods being used to create this vision for a local food and farm bill are similar to a multi stakeholder governance model. We believe utilization of this model will help to create a food system that is inclusive and sustainable as it has been successful for others. Our vision is for community coordinator(s) to use this model during implantation as well as future creation of new recommendations. The model is defined below from a reference source that details and outlines the processes and importance of this model.

“The Commission in Global Governance (1995:2 in Burger and Mayer 2003, pg 50) defines governance as ‘the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest.’”²²

²² Governance and Multistakeholder Processes
https://www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/sci_governance.pdf

Recommendation #3: A low-cost produce basket program promoted through San Mateo County Health Clinics.

Background:

San Mateo County is on average a much wealthier county than many U.S. Counties. The median household income in San Mateo County is \$88,122²³, compared to the average U.S. household income of \$53,656²⁴ and the federal poverty line for a family of four at \$24,300²⁵. However, this does not mean that San Mateo County residences are more food secure. According to Get Healthy San Mateo County data, the Modified Retail Food Environment Index still shows large areas with poor access to healthy food²⁶. Most households must make well above the poverty line to even live in San Mateo County, mostly to account for high housing costs. As a result, hunger and food insecurity looks different than hunger is expected to look in San Mateo County.

When speaking with Cassius Lockett with the county Health Department, he pointed out that we already have contact with people who no longer qualify for food assistance programs like WIC and CalFresh but are still coming to county health clinics and covered by Medicaid²⁷. To target these people would be easy to do seeing as they are already identified as people with needs. To be eligible for CalFresh, a household must not exceed a gross income of 200% of the federal poverty line for the household size, and must pass the net income test²⁸. The resultant must not exceed 100% of the federal poverty line⁶. Medicaid coverage has expanded with Obamacare and now presents a window of people who are receiving some benefits regarding insurance²⁹, but are not receiving assistance for food. Children from birth through age 18 are eligible with family incomes up to 266% of the federal poverty line³⁰. Children would be the point of entry into families in need over more healthy food options between 200% of the FPL and 266% of the FPL.

Baseline Metrics:

The results of the proposed survey on discretionary spending, time, and kitchen access would help get a better sense of the needs from people who no longer are eligible for food assistance programs. Nonprofit organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank provide significant quantities of food for San Mateo County each year, including fresh produce. Second Harvest works with

²³ Household Income and Average Income in San Mateo County

<http://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/CA/San-Mateo-County-Demographics.html>

²⁴ Typical American Family Earned \$53, 656 Last Year

<http://money.cnn.com/2015/09/16/news/economy/census-poverty-income/>

²⁵ Federal Poverty Line <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-FPL/>

²⁶ Access to Healthy Food <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/healthy-neighborhoods-data>

²⁷ Interview with Cassius Lockett with the County Health Department

²⁸ Eligibility and Issuance Requirements <http://www.calfresh.ca.gov/Pg841.htm>

²⁹ Affordable Care Act <https://www.medicaid.gov/affordablecareact/affordable-care-act.html>

³⁰ California Medicaid <https://www.healthinsurance.org/california-medicaid/>

330 different non-profit agencies and 700 different food distribution sites³¹ to feed 73,000 hungry residents a month³². Over 50% of the food they provide is fresh produce as well³³. The number of people reached each month, as well as the quantity of fresh food, by nonprofit organizations and other non-federally funded programs like CalFresh and WIC is a great baseline metric on which to improve.

Gaps & Opportunities:

While Second Harvest Food Bank does make a huge difference in hunger in San Mateo County, they are only serving about 50% of the people who need food assistance. County assistance can add to that impact. Second Harvest Food Bank are currently looking at increasing their income eligibility to serve people up to 200% of the poverty line¹⁰. This movement shows that there is a need for more assistance for people up to 200, 300, even 400% of the federal poverty line in San Mateo County.

Second Harvest also has a program called produce on wheels in which 14 vans have designated stops throughout the county for two hours once a week. For example, one location could be Thursdays 2-4pm. It is assumed that more than just income limits access to healthy food, of which the survey would confirm, and that time and kitchen access play key roles. Therefore, this program builds on existing Second Harvest programs by reaching people up to a greater income level, reaching people at different times of the day, and reaching people through different outlets (health clinics) to have an even broader impact on hunger and health together.

Money, time and knowhow often restrict families' ability to buy fresh foods. Fresh produce is more expensive and perishable, and getting to go to a grocery store or farmers market can be almost impossible for those strapped for time. There are many more barriers including a lack of cooking skills with fresh produce, lack of cookware and kitchen access. A subsidized produce box would reduce costs, stress about grocery shopping, and even cooking knowledge. With food distributed by Second Harvest Food Bank, healthy recipes made by nutritionists are included. Recipes should also be included in the subsidized produce boxes, and can also be tailored to be culturally and ethnically appropriate recipes.

A subsidized produce box would increase consumption of locally grown food in California. Californians are really lucky that they are able to source almost all of their food from within the state and within the crop's appropriate season. Local food assistance efforts should support California farms.

Goal Metrics:

For those under 200% of the federal poverty line and therefore served by Second Harvest Food Bank, improve from 50% of those in need served to 70%. For those families between 200% and 266% of the federal poverty line whose children are covered by Medicaid, aim to serve 50% of

³¹ Second Harvest Food Bank: About Us <https://www.shfb.org/aboutus>

³² Interview with Susan Takalo with Second Harvest Food Bank

³³ Interview with Terry Witzel with Second Harvest Food Bank

those in need. If expanding outside of those served by Medicaid, have similar goal metrics for each bracket of poverty: <200%, 200-266%, 266-355%, and 356-455%.

Implementation:

- Administration
 - Partner with nonprofit organization to raise money via individual donations, corporation donations and/or government grants; to organize sourcing of produce; and to work with HSA and DPH
 - An example of state money being used to subsidize fresh produce for those with low access: New York³⁴
 - In collaboration with Department of Health
 - To advertise and recruit in county health clinics
 - In collaboration with the Human Services Agency for access to mobile CalFresh enrollment vans
 - Vans can be used to help get produce boxes to harder to reach areas
 - Can target community centers in high need areas and transportation sites for increased access
- Logistics
 - Advertised at clinics to target those on Medicaid that no longer qualify for food assistance
 - Program would start with just targeting children covered by Medicaid with family incomes up to 266% of the federal poverty line
 - Possibility to expand to other hospitals and include income brackets that determine buy-in cost for subsidized produce box
 - Would be ideal to eventually reach individuals and families up to 400% of the federal poverty line
 - Sourcing to be partnered with Feeding America
 - Produce to be sourced within California but outside of the county
 - This program will not rely on San Mateo County farms because there is not enough production in the county and there is already more demand than supply. Demand is not price-sensitive and therefore would not be affordable or sustainable.
 - Sourcing from outside of the county would keep prices down, still encourage local eating as California is unique in its ability to produce enough food in-state, and maintain the sustainability of the program.
 - For distribution, partner with HSA CalFresh to use outreach vehicles

³⁴ Governor Cuomo Announces FreshConnect Grants to Help Provide Low-Income and Underserved Communities with NY Farm Product
<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-freshconnect-grants-help-provide-low-income-underserved-communities-ny>

- Also a possibility to apply for funding via USDA’s Farmers Market Promotion Program for to launch and maintain a mobile market³⁵

Case Study:

1) Community Food Works in Washington, DC – Subsidized SNAP CSA³⁶

- “As a sub-grantee on Wholesome Wave's national FINI award, Community Foodworks created a subsidized SNAP CSA at the Columbia Heights Farmers Market, where customers who receive food stamps (SNAP) are eligible for a reduced price fruit & veggie bag each week (**\$8 EBT reduced from \$33 retail.**)”
- “In its pilot year, over 40 needy families enjoyed a 75% discount on their weekly fruits and vegetables. For \$8 of SNAP, they took home enough fresh food to feed at minimum three adults, were introduced to new items (like tomatillos and fairytale eggplant!) and were able to enjoy some seasonal fruits (raspberries, blackberries, apricots) that would have been too costly to purchase otherwise.”

2) FoodShare Toronto’s Good Food Box Program³⁷

- “The Good Food Box delivers top-quality fresh produce through 200 volunteer-run drops in which neighbors meet and form communities. Customers pay the cost of the produce and some of the delivery costs, starting at just \$13, while other costs are subsidized. They deliver 50,000 bountiful boxes every year, serving 7,000 families and saving them an average of \$9 per month.”
- “The GFB is a non-profit enterprise that is run like a bulk-buying club, with centralized buying and coordination. It also relies on funding from individual donations, foundations and government grants”
- Goals: Increase food security, prevent chronic diseases and build healthy communities
- Factors that lead to success: Community engagement, intersectional partnerships, political commitment, healthy public policy, and asset-based community development

Recommendation #4: Fruit & Veggie Prescription Program

Background:

During our stakeholder interview we learned that SNAP utilization within the county has been decreasing while the food bank usage has increased.³⁸ As we investigated this phenomenon further we began to realize that people above the cut off for food assistance programs were still

³⁵ In Rural Oregon and Washington, Healthy, Local Food Goes on the Road http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=KYF_Compact Case Studies Gorge.html

³⁶ Program <http://www.community-foodworks.org/programs/>

³⁷ FoodShare Toronto’s Good Food Box Program <http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/GFB-program>

³⁸ Interview with Maria De Anda – Human Services Agency, SNAP

struggling with food insecurity. Traditionally food assistance programs such as SNAP only use income and household size as their factors for eligibility.³⁹ While this may work as a national standard it does not necessarily apply directly San Mateo County due to the high cost of living. In comparison to a national living index of 100 San Mateo County has a living index of 188.⁴⁰ The current minimum wage of San Mateo County is ten dollars an hour, which can lead to people working multiple jobs and up to fifty hours a week just to make the bare minimum yet they are still above food assistance cut offs. The cut off for SNAP is 130% of the poverty line, which is incredibly low in comparison to the county standard. While Second Harvest Food Bank has definitely put in some great work towards helping people supplement their diet they only reach people who are up to 200% of the poverty line.⁴¹ Despite these programs there is still need within the county in regard to healthy food access. It was after speaking/brainstorming with Cassius Lockett from the county health department that we envisioned combating this issue through the implementation of a fruit and veggie prescription program.

The goal of the fruit and veggie prescription is to target the need of adults that no longer qualify for food assistance programs but are still food insecure or have a diet that contains large amounts of unhealthy processed foods. This program is aiming to treat a similar issue as the subsidized produce box, but by targeting adults. While the main target of this program are adults who no longer qualify for food assistance help we believe this program has the potential to also include those that do; just because someone is on SNAP does not mean they are food secure. This program would be implemented through the county health clinics and has the potential to branch into private hospitals. Users will be provided fresh produce prescriptions that will help to supplement their weekly food budget. All prescription will have monetary co-pay that will be based on income. These prescriptions will be redeemable at local farmer's markets and grocery stores. Additionally this program will have a co-pay system for kitchenware. This will help address healthy food access and processing by increasing fresh produce access and cookware access. Both Multnomah County, Oregon and Seattle, Washington have launched similar programs. This program has the potential to target public health rates among adults in the county through healthy diets. In 2013, 77% of adults were either overweight or obese according to the BMI Index in the Get Healthy San Mateo data.⁴² Giving individuals and families the ability to make choices about their diets by addressing their needs regarding income, time and kitchen access can help increase healthiness in San Mateo County.

Baseline Metrics:

The main baseline metrics we are considering with this program are county health rates, cost of living and minimum wage. As stated previously in 2013, 77% of adults were either overweight or obese according to the BMI Index in the Get Healthy San Mateo data. Food and nutrition directly affect our health and some doctors view eating healthy as a way to treat ailments. It is considering this perspective that we believe this recommendation can help to target health issues

³⁹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility>

⁴⁰ <http://www.areavibes.com/san+mateo-ca/cost-of-living/>

⁴¹ Interview with Susan Takalo- Second Harvest Food Bank

⁴² Get Healthy San Mateo Data <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/health-data-0>

within the county. There is a correlation with people of low income with health issues such as diabetes and obesity within the United States.⁴³ However within San Mateo County people who would be considered middle class by a national standard are among the lower income of people due the large wealth disparity. By promoting healthy food access through this program we can potentially help to address health issues within the county. Taking into consideration the cost of living and minimum wage of the county we can target those who are in need within the county and potentially establish the threshold for which this program could reach.^{44,45}

Gaps & Opportunities:

This program has the potential to help address the gap of those that are in need of help gaining access to healthy food and do not qualify for traditional food assistance programs such as CalFresh. The goal is for this program to be utilized through healthcare services and the county has the opportunity to help people they already have access to and know are in need. While the goal is to target those not on food assistance programs there is an opportunity to expand and include those on programs as well. Food assistance programs such as SNAP are meant to supplement people diets and help to lower food insecurity however that does not mean that someone on food assistance program(s) actually become food secure.⁴⁶ These programs are limited and often involve a lot of red tape. There is value in adding below who qualify for SNAP and are below 130% of the poverty line as additional resources could potentially allow them to focus less on food access and more on job opportunities, education and/or healthy living to better their quality of life. The ultimate goal all of these recommendations are to increase the amount of choices people have so that they may have autonomy over their quality of life and healthy living. This hopefully will lead to people becoming higher on the food chain and being able to eventually self-sustain themselves.

Goal Metrics:

As we have established from our baseline metrics we want to focus on helping improve upon county health rates however the current data for Get Healthy San Mateo is from 2013. There is a

⁴³ The Influence Of Income On Health: Views Of An Epidemiologist

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/21/2/31.full>

How Are Income and Wealth Linked to Health and Longevity?

<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000178-How-are-Income-and-Wealth-Linked-to-Health-and-Longevity.pdf>

⁴⁴ Living Wage Calculated for San Mateo County <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06081>

⁴⁵ The county is considering increasing minimum wage <http://www.sfexaminer.com/san-mateo-likely-adopt-15-per-hour-minimum-wage/>

⁴⁶ Measuring the Effect of SNAP Participation on Food Security

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/measuring-effect-snap-participation-food-security-0>

SNAP Food Security In-Depth Interview Study

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SNAPFoodSec.pdf>

need to update this data and create a way to easily have annual updates so that we can measure success of this program. Additionally this program has the potential to help increase sales at farmer's markets, local stores and grocery store which will help to add to the local economy.

Implementation:

- Administration
 - Housed in the Health Department
- Logistics
 - Prescriptions will be targeted at adults and will be valid at participating farmer's markets and grocery stores
 - Need to build partnership with farmer's markets and grocery stores
 - Farmer's Markets in San Mateo County
 - <https://therealestatebeat.wordpress.com/2014/02/19/list-of-farmers-markets-in-san-mateo-county/>
 - Potential to expand to include usage at healthy food trucks created from the healthy food truck program
- Advertised/administered at clinics (targeting those on Medicaid that no longer qualify for food assistance)
 - Potential for it to also include people who are on SNAP
 - All prescriptions will require a monetary buy in or "co-pay" that will vary based on economic thresholds
 1. Fresh produce prescription
 - Potential to expand into private hospitals
 1. This could also lead to increasing the cut off for qualification
 2. Kaiser Permanente Healthy Living Programs
 - a. https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health/care!/ut/p/a0/PY7LDoIwEAC_xYPHujwaIN4U-w0KF7JpFtrQV5Zqwt8rF48zySQDI7xgDPiXC2YbA7ofD5pCJr46O9OWd0cicVwY_QZPGGFMjItHGEIUGrWhwyFnqx3BIKXsikfbC3lvKIGWqhC3WlWi6ytV9E2pWlkewZqmzUTO-p0nppmYiWFY0yXyci4Moctm_x9A8r6r_e30Bd3yjF0!/
 - b.
 3. List of all Hospitals & clinics within the county
 - a. http://www.freeclinics.com/cit/ca-san_mateo
 - b. <http://gis.oshpd.ca.gov/atlas/places/list-of-hospitals/county/san-mateo>

Case Study:

- Multnomah County, Oregon has a fresh produce prescription program that is recently up and running. Their vision, goals and plan are close to what we envision this program to look like with San Mateo County. As such we believe this is a good reference to consider during implantation, however the agricultural set up of Oregon is vastly different than San Mateo County. This is why these prescriptions will be redeemable at farmer's

markets and participating grocery stores instead of direct to the farmer or a CSA program.

- <http://koin.com/2014/10/28/doctor-prescription-for-healthy-food/>
- [file:///Users/Erica/Downloads/Improving-Access-to-Healthy-Food%20\(2\).pdf](file:///Users/Erica/Downloads/Improving-Access-to-Healthy-Food%20(2).pdf)
- The City of Seattle—along with Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic, Harborview Medical Center, and Seattle and King County farmers markets and farm stands—has launched Fresh Bucks Rx, a program aimed at improving health outcomes for low-income patients with diet-related disease. This program is relatively new and may be a helpful reference for the county if they choose to implement a fresh produce prescription of their own.
 - <http://greenspace.seattle.gov/2016/07/seattle-launches-fresh-produce-prescription-program/>
 - <http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-launches-fresh-produce-prescription-program/409705056>
 - <http://www.king5.com/news/health/some-seattle-doctors-now-prescribe-fresh-fruits-and-veggies-to-patients/284184019>

Recommendation #5: Provide concrete resources and partnerships for school districts to implement garden-based nutrition, science and social science curriculum. This multi-dimensional curriculum will encompass local history, agricultural importance, and healthy eating.

Background:

In order to be eligible for all SNAP Education resources, including nutrition and garden education curriculum and a partnership with the University of California Corporative Extension Agents, schools must have 50% or more students eligible for free or reduced lunch⁴⁷. Mary Vollinge and Virginia Bolshavoka with the UC Corporative Extension are having a large impact on the schools in which they work with. In order to keep their effect strong, they are not looking to expand their efforts at this time but are striving to have a greater impact at the locations they are currently serving.

In the wealthier San Mateo County, only 61 out of 193 public schools, including all grade levels K-12, meet the eligibility criterion⁴⁸. For the majority of public schools (68%), there is no evenness in the nutrition and garden education that students receive throughout the county. Building a more robust garden system from the current infrastructure⁴⁹ and with 52% of public

⁴⁷ Interview with Mary Vollinge (UC Nutrition Education Agent with SNAP Ed)

⁴⁸ Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch in San Mateo County
<https://data.smcgov.org/Education/Percent-of-Students-Eligible-for-Free-and-Reduced-/azby-ux3x/data>

⁴⁹ Public and Private School Garden Map Produced by the SMC FSA

schools have gardens⁵⁰ is possible given the quantity of resources that exist. Yet, it is a difficult given the lack of organization of all the local resources and the lack of standardized goals that help reach San Mateo County specific goals. SNAP Education has a great foundation for what countywide nutrition curriculum could look like. One of their most successful efforts is tastings in the lunchroom of new fruits and vegetables for students to try¹.

Fred Crowder, the agriculture commissioner, also recognizes the importance of the role urban agriculture and community/school gardens can play in increasing appreciation for agriculture along the coast. Expanding the working knowledge of citizens about how food is grown, A better understanding of the state of agriculture in the county and within the state will help gardener more support for the farmers on the coast.

Baseline Metrics:

The San Mateo County Food Systems Alliance has set a goal that there should already be a garden in every school⁴. School gardens helps lead to higher academic achievement, supplement core classroom lessons, reinforce academic standards-based concepts through real-world applications, addresses eating habits, creates agricultural literacy and helps students be healthier⁴. With a number of funding resources being under utilized in the county, this is a metric that should be continually worked for to increase the number of schools with gardens from 52% to 100%.

Gaps & Opportunities:

Only about half of schools have a garden to use as an interactive learning space. A countywide school garden plan should provide access to resources that schools and school districts were previously not aware of to enhance their resources available. There are also many creative and fun ways to involve the parent community with the school garden by developing fundraisers and volunteer activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle.

There is underutilization of gardens as a space to learn about local history, agricultural importance, and healthy eating in the county. First, gardens are a great place to incorporate local history through the use of native plants, traditionally grown fruits and vegetables, and different growing techniques. Second, it's important to recognize the time and effort it takes into growing significant portions of crops, as well as the importance of different types of crops, including nursery and floriculture. This can be discussed at a local level, a state level, and a global level. Lastly, the garden is a great place to discuss healthy eating and active lifestyles.

It teaches students the process of producing food and an opportunity to try new fruits or vegetables they may have not tried at home or in the cafeteria. When students are more knowledgeable about their food, they are able to make healthier choices. It also invites students to be more aware of where their food comes from and value the agricultural workers who help

<http://batchgeo.com/map/f7ff1af074357d12000bf6eb9c97a1ed>

⁵⁰ http://www.aginnovations.org/uploads/result/1431289386-fd6d23df93d7f9531/SMFSA_Garden_Brief.pdf

bring food to the table. This is important for San Mateo County where the agricultural production isn't significant in terms for how much is available per capita, but is important in terms of environmental protection, the economy, and some specialty crops that grow well along the coast. This recommendation has the potential to bridge the urban and rural communities, which will hopefully unify the county and lead to a stronger food system.

Goal Metrics:

Building from the baseline metric of having a garden in every school, all districts should goals for specific grades regarding nutrition education benchmarks, science benchmarks and social science/history benchmarks. Before and after surveys could be used to evaluate the success of specific curriculums or programs to improve on a year-to-year basis. The examples included are models of how gardens can incorporate science, nutrition, and history into a robust curriculum.

Examples include:

- 6th graders learn about when California used to be a part of Mexico.
 - This history lesson is paired with learning about the cultural importance of traditional foods grown in the southwest.
 - Paired with a tasting of fresh corn. Includes a discussion of all the corn byproducts produced in the U.S. and how that affects nutrition. Learning how to read the different parts of a nutrition label could exemplify how there are many corn items masquerading under different names.
 - Survey could evaluate which products students think contain corn before and after they learn about food processing.
- 7th grader about farming including the local coastal topics such as the role of nursery farms and floriculture, the ecosystem services coastal farms provide, etc.⁵¹
 - Paired with a tasting of the most commonly grown crops in the county from the previous year like brussels sprouts, leeks, or fava beans (which are also vegetables that students have less exposure to).
 - Discussions include how fresh food affects the health of people and their lifestyles.
 - Students are responsible for prepping the garden bed, planting and initial care of a plant in the garden. This could be as minimal as 1 hour per week in the garden to not take away too much class time.
 - Survey would evaluate students' preferences towards these vegetables, towards vegetables in general, and their knowledge of farming in San Mateo County

Implementation:

Administration

- a) Gather resources to develop a guide for school districts and schools to build a robust garden system. This process would take little work, as the guide should only be an expansion of the model provided by the California School Garden Network Steps to a

⁵¹ Example Curriculum: Food Land & people <http://www.foodlandpeople.org/resources/flp-conceptual-framework/> & <http://www.foodlandpeople.org/ordering/gardenwise/>

Garden⁵². It should also include resources to include local history, local agricultural importance and local healthy lifestyle guidelines to make it more relatable and applicable to San Mateo County. At a kick off event hosted by the Food Systems Alliance with district or school staff members, available resources, next steps, and goals for the curriculum at different grade levels should be presented. The FSA's role is to encourage cross collaboration across schools and full utilization of resources.

- b) Initial Funding:
 - a. Applying for grants at California School Garden Network⁵³
 - b. School Food Authorities using funding from cafeteria to operate school garden or other farm to school activity⁵⁴

Logistics

- c) Utilizing Existing Curriculum Resources: California specific resources designed to meet Common Core benchmarks
 - a. California Department of Education Resources: Nutrition to Grow On⁵⁵
 - b. California Gardens for Learning: Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden⁵⁶
 - c. California Department of Education: Farm to Preschool Program⁵⁷
 - d. California School Garden Network: Steps to a Garden – Step 4 Teach in a Garden⁶
- d) Creating New Resources
 - a. Fun fundraisers and volunteer events that emphasize a healthy lifestyle
 - i. Send in family recipe that includes for example to make school cookbook that is sold for fundraising; cook offs, etc.
 - ii. Encourage family participation and volunteer days
 - iii. During the summer, families can volunteer to take care of a specific garden bed to keep the bed functioning over the summer, utilize the space, and provide fresh fruits and vegetables to families

Case Study:

Ohlone Elementary School is an alternative school in Palo Alto that emphasizes corporation and collaboration, multi-dimensional learning, and meaningful, relevant curriculum⁵⁸. As a tool, they

⁵² Steps to a School Garden <http://www.csgn.org/steps>

⁵³ California School Garden Network: Grants <http://www.csgn.org/grants>

⁵⁴ California Department of Education: Farm to School and Garden Expenses <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbsnp082015.asp>

⁵⁵ California Department of Education: Nutrition to Grow On <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/documents/ntgocomplete.pdf>

⁵⁶ California School Garden Network: Gardens for Learning <http://food-hub.org/files/resources/GFLBook.pdf>

⁵⁷ California Department of Education: Farm to Preschool <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/farmpreschool.asp>

⁵⁸ Ohlone Elementary School: Core Values <http://ohlone.pausd.org/our-core-values>

often use role-playing and project based learning to bring learning to life. At the school, they also have a full farm including a native garden, a fruit and vegetable garden, a greenhouse, and a barn with some small farm animals⁵⁹. While this is much more than just a simple school garden, they do tryout new ways of incorporating learning into the garden environment that are highly applicable to school gardens in San Mateo County. Ohlone Elementary School also has a history of sharing their success with project-based learning and using role-playing to create a more engaging learning environment⁶⁰.

Examples of interdisciplinary learning in the garden includes Native American history taught in connection with the native plants garden and ecosystem services are taught in connection with the insects and birds found throughout the garden. This last spring, students in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University worked with Scott Miron, one of the farm directors, to develop new curriculum about the beehives recently acquired for the farm⁶¹. The concept was to incorporate local history of native and invasive bees, the agricultural importance of bees, and their necessity to producing fresh fruits and vegetables⁶².

Ohlone Elementary School serves as an example of school curriculum that effectively has incorporated traditional subjects like science and history into an interactive setting. They have also included nutrition and environmental education within their curriculum. Collaborative environments are highly productive learning environments⁶³, and school gardens are great environments to blend learning goals from more than one subject. Ohlone Elementary could serve not only as an example for school garden implementation but also as a resource for collaboration and inspiration.

Recommendation #6: Food Truck Program to bring prepared food and snacks to those with low time and kitchen access

Background:

From our research and stakeholder engagement we have learned that while SNAP utilization has decreased within the county that food bank usage has increased. Due to the high cost of living in San Mateo county people may no longer qualify for food assistance programs but they may still be in need. This lead us to further explore the limitations and obstacles people face when it comes to healthy food access. The goal of healthy food trucks is to bring delicious, healthy and culturally appropriate prepared food into areas where people have low kitchen access. This is a cross cutting recommendation that falls into the healthy food access, distribution and processing

⁵⁹ Ohlone Elementary School: The Farm <http://ohlone.pausd.org/farm>

⁶⁰ Sharing What We Do <http://ohlone.pausd.org/sharing-what-we-do>

⁶¹ Curriculum developed as a part of the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) course at Stanford University, *The Theory and Practice of Environmental Education*, with Professor Nicole Ardoin.

⁶² Curriculum provided upon request by Lauren Brown

⁶³ Collaborative and Constructive Learning of Elementary School Children in Experimental Learning Spaces along the Virtuality Continuum http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-322-89884-5_12

buckets. Since our target audience is not necessarily income based we also plan for these trucks to accept EBT this way we can address low kitchen access in association with healthy eating across the board. Additionally this program can also help to address people who have little time for cooking and/or grocery shopping due to their busy work schedules. We can potentially help reduce stress of users and provide them with free time to either spend with family or improving their health through exercise. This program could help give people more choices and ultimately improve their quality of life.

Baseline Metrics:

This program is going to rely heavily on survey results from our first recommendation. The survey result will help us find the pockets of people who struggle with low time and kitchen access. We also want to consider the cost of living with in the county to help develop the pricing with food trucks so that it will be affordable for the most people. We are also considering how many people are using different food assistance programs and if this program will help them to become more self-sustainable.

Gaps & Opportunities:

There are two different avenues for opportunities with this program the first one being with users. Food trucks will provide users with healthy and affordable prepared meals to those users with low time and kitchen access. The trucks can also help get healthy food to users who do not know how to cook these meals for themselves. In addition to trucks that have prepared meals we think there is an opportunity to create healthy snack carts as well for kids and families. Instead of the ice cream man we want children to get excited to for the fresh fruit man.

As these trucks will be for profit business the second avenue of opportunity is with entrepreneurs who will be running these trucks. We believe this program has the opportunity to create more jobs for those that are unemployed or struggling in the county. There is potential to move truck owners from low income into a higher financial bracket improving their overall quality of life. While these food trucks will be targeting people with low time and kitchen access they will be open to all within the county and therefore will help bring healthy food to all. We also want this program to accept EBT so that trucks can provide healthy prepared meals to SNAP users as well.

Goal Metrics:

For our goal metrics we want to see how many new jobs each food truck creates. These jobs will help boost the economic success of those working as well as within the county system. When considering the sustainability of these recommendations we want to consider the equity and economic viability in addition to the over all goal of increasing access to healthy food. The other metric want to use to measure success is the amount of meals served to those targeted. This will allow the county to see if this program is making a positive impact and if it is not they address it properly. Issues with usage as this program could be as simple as advertising. We envision the community outreach coordinator to play a role in making sure the community is aware of these food trucks.

Implementation:

Administration

- Funding Potential
 - To come from outside the county departments such as local organizations, NGOs or businesses.
 - Potential partners
 - Samaritan House
 - Second Harvest Food Bank
- County to oversee approval of food trucks
 - Licensing, menu, etc.

Logistics

- 1) Coordinated County Services for Permitting.
 - a) Perhaps a discount on the full bundle of permits and licenses to help decrease start up costs. Having a discount on all annual permits and licenses will help entrepreneurs to become self-sustainable and successful. Additionally this will help allow truck owners to charge a lower price for food.
 - b) Menu must be pre approved and follow specific nutritional guidelines such as the 2015 Dietary Guidelines. The county health department may be able to help determine these guidelines.
 - i) Trucks must also serve ethnically appropriate prepared food.
 - (1) Ideally meals will be aimed at a particular ethnic group
 - (a) I.e. Hispanic or Asian- though we must remember there are different culturally appropriate food within these groups.
 - (b) Aim to have trucks provide something most will enjoy
 - (c) Provide users with a healthy and affordable prepared meals
 - ii) Snack Carts will help provide healthy snacks to children and they families.
 - (1) Primary focus is on serving fresh produce but may also provides snacks such as a healthy granola bars or trial mix.
 - c) Agreement that the county will make a specific route in addition to other stops food trucks and snack carts may take.
 - i) Stops will be based on pocket areas of low time and kitchen access identified from our recommended survey results.
 - ii) Snack carts will target neighborhoods and school bus routes.
 - (1) May also be found at community areas such as parks.
 - 2) Coordinated educational program for small business entrepreneurs.
 - a) Existing resources through the Small Business Development Council and other non-profits serving entrepreneurs.⁶⁴ <http://californiasbdc.org/>
 - b) Business guides to help entrepreneurs create a successful plan in order to be self-sufficient and sustainable.

⁶⁴ U.S. Small Business Administration

<https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/osbdc/resources/11409>

- i) Guides may also be available to help with the implementation process.
 - (1) Sourcing resources such as kitchen utensils and appliances.
 - (2) Applying for permits and licenses.
- 3) Funding avenues to help entrepreneurs fund and launch their own food truck business.
 - a) Micro-loans through non-profits and credit unions⁶⁵
 - i) San Jose based opportunity fund <http://www.opportunityfund.org/>
 - b) Sponsorship from local businesses and companies the county may partner with.
 - i) There may be value in connecting with Second Harvest to utilize some of their benefactors.
 - c) Different levels of funding based on proposed plan
 - i) Snacks vs. Meals or combined
 - d) Potential to get subsidized food costs to ensure low cost product for users and success for entrepreneurs.
 - i) Utilize connects and food sourcing network developed by our fresh produce box recommendation
 - ii) Partnership with grocers such as Costco
 - (1) Provide food truck owners with wholesale prices.

Case Study:

1. Mobile Vending examples in California. Includes Novato in Marin County and San Jose in Santa Clara County. While these trucks do not provide prepared hot meals it does show that there is success in mobile vending in other forms therefore there is
 - a. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/eBrief%20Mobile%20Vending%20-%20FINAL.PDF>
 - b. <http://www.communitycommons.org/groups/salud-america/changes/food-trucks-cook-up-healthy-foods-for-schools/>
2. The California Restaurant Meals Program allows eligible homeless, disabled, and/or elderly (ages 60 and above) CalFresh benefit recipients to use their CalFresh benefits to purchase hot, prepared food from participating restaurants. The county does not currently participate and may want to investigate this further however this program shows that there is precedence for a need to provide healthy prepared meals.
 - a. <http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/clientinformation/calfreshrmp.shtml>

Additional Recommendations for Exploration

Below are a few ideas that we did not have enough time to explore but with further investigation we believe there is potential to create some impactful and viable programs/changes.

⁶⁵Microlending takes off in the Bay Area; small businesses reap the rewards
http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_19310003

- 1) Add bus routes with additional stops near farmers markets and healthy food stores (at appropriate times & days of the week)
- 2) Community kitchens in partnership with the two produce options (as a distribution center, a location to take cooking classes with quick, healthy, bulk meals to take home like lasagnas and casseroles, and open kitchen access)
 - a. These kitchens have the potential to host nutritional/cooking classes and become a distribution center for food and kitchenware. We want to equip people with meals that are healthy, quick and easy to make. We think these community kitchens can potentially collaborate with the fresh food prescriptions
- 3) “Pan Pals”- kitchen connection system in which people with no kitchen access are connected with persons who have a kitchen but are either elderly or disabled and therefore lack the ability to cook. A person with no kitchen access would come to another person's home and prepare a meal for everyone. This has to potential to be a cultural exchange as well as create community bonding.

User Flow Chart

Below are a two example scenarios of potential types users of these recommendations with examples of which programs may be the most helpful to them as well as how they may impact their lives. All prototype users will be identified using our survey as they have been below in these scenarios. This chart is meant to help envision how recommendations may support users.

Users	Rec. #2 Outreach Coordinator	Rec. #3 Fresh Produce Box	Rec. #4 Fruit & Veggie Prescriptions	Rec. #5 Interdisciplinary Garden Ed	Rec. #6 Healthy Food Trucks
A single mother that is above the 130% SNAP cutoff but her two kids are on Medicaid			When taking on of her kids into a clinic she learns of the prescription program she qualifies for. After using once she is excited at how helpful it was and easy to use.	Her children begin to learn about healthy eating and food system encouraging her to feed them better food.	
A young male adult in their 20s that is in between jobs	After meeting at a local event with free food they are directed to	Realize this program may not be best suited for him, as they have			He hears about new healthy food trucks in the county and

	inquire and fresh produce boxes.	limited kitchen access and not a lot of time to cook.			begins to take advantage. Meals are delicious, fast and affordable. Leaving him time to job hunt.
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Appendix C

Crosswalk Original RFP to Final Deliverables

The original RFP stated that we would, at a minimum, address nine elements of the food system. The elements required by the RFP are cross-walked to the food systems framework as follows:

	RFP requirements		Addressed in Section
1	Food security and access	VI	Markets and Healthy Food Access
2	Garden-based education & career technical training and workforce development	VII	Cross Cutting Initiatives
3	Nutrition, public health and health equity	VI	Markets and Healthy Food Access
4	Supply chain and food cycle infrastructure	V	Processing, Aggregation and Distribution
5	Business development and entrepreneurship	III, IV	Land and Production
6	Agricultural viability	III, IV	Land and Production
7	Natural resource management	III, IV	Land and Production
8	Soil conservation	III, IV	Land and Production
9	Environmental quality, sustainability and resilience	III, IV	Land and Production

The original RFP requested a prioritized list of recommendations by element with metrics informed by best practices and with associated implementation strategies including identifying funding sources. The elements required by the RFP are addressed in Sections III through VI first with a discussion of existing conditions and best practices, then with an analysis of current Farm Bill program utilization and suggested metrics, and finally with program recommendations including possible sources of funding.

Section VII contains cross-cutting recommendations and focuses on capacity building to develop and implement a Vision for a San Mateo County Food and Farm Bill. As detailed in Sections III through VI there current Federal Farm Bill programs are not fully utilized in San Mateo County.

We reviewed County planning documents and the County Code of Ordinances and found nothing to indicate that local policy issues or obstruction or inaction by County government plays a significant role in limiting San Mateo County from realizing its full potential for a food and farming system that reflects community values. Nor did we find significant opportunities that appear particularly well suited to government leadership. Rather we found that there are many opportunities to leverage public funds and private philanthropy, but no clear structure to engage local leaders in coordinated action to establish and further county-wide goals.

Appendix D

Notes from Stakeholder Sessions

1. Agricultural Stakeholders: February 16, 2017, Half Moon Bay
2. Farm to School Stakeholders: April 17, 2017, San Mateo
3. Urban Farming and Gardening Stakeholders: May 31, 2017, San Mateo
4. Healthy Food Access Program Leaders: June 27, 2017, San Mateo

Forum 1: Agricultural Stakeholders
February 16, 2017 in Half Moon Bay

Presentation by FarmLink on Estate Planning/Family Farm and Ranch Transitions

- Family Communications
- Financing
- Legal tools
- Easements

Stakeholder Session

What do Aspiring Farmers/ Ranchers want/need?

- Freedom to do new things.
- Budget models – need to know how much money they need.
- If they cannot live on the land then they need a place to live.
- If working with a retiring farmer then do the natural heirs to that farm know about the agreement between the retiring farmer and the aspiring farmer?
- Can the aspiring farmer change the business model?
- Can there be a trial period?
- What happens if either party needs to exit the agreement?
- Who carries or shares the risk?
- Is there a pathway to land ownership?
- A resource navigator to help connect to the various resources and experts.
- Workshops to get us ready to meet with the professionals.
- Someone to translate specialized language to plain English.

What do Retiring Farmers/Ranchers want/need?

- Someone to continue the business.
- Employees to be protected.
- To stay on the land for life.
- To stay involved in the operation as long as possible.
- Financial assistance with estate/transition planning.
- Workshops to get us ready to meet with the professionals.
- Someone to translate specialized language to plain English.

What support do professionals assisting with a transition need?

- Funding to develop tools for group clients – pre-work tools (NRCS need).
- Access to experts who speak financial language (NRCS need).
- Forums like this to connect people to experts.
- Ways to find resources easily for financing, land buying, leasing, etc.
- Agriculture ombudsperson services – hard to get access to information from County offices for planning.

- A network of service providers.
- Communications and outreach tools to get more people to events like this.
- Presentations to estate planning attorneys – do outreach through the local bar.
 - Do a preliminary presentation to the estate planning council and then do a CLE/CPE at the Ritz.
- Workshops on regulations and permitting – or an agriculture regulations open house.
- Webinars for younger generation.

Other ideas and discussions

- “This kind of forum is inherently helpful.”
- “It is kind of like disaster planning – no one wants to do it but it is needed.”
- “Farmlink has been a lifeline helping me know what I don’t know.” (From someone who inherited unexpectedly)
- NRCS gives landowner extra points if they have a transition plan – how to connect with this incentive?
- POST would love to sponsor additional forums like this one.

Forum 2: Farm to School

April 17, 2017 in San Mateo

Presentation by Community Alliance with Family Farmers

1. Santa Cruz – Wellness parcel tax funds full time school garden coordinators and cafeteria positions and money to buy local and coordinate curriculum with garden and cafeteria.
2. Sonoma – County Health Department funds a grant writer to coordinate farm to school fundraising and programing. County and schools go in on projects together to make big robust programs.
3. Manteca – Food service coordinated with school gardens and the high school learning farm. High rates of school lunch participation. Farm program sources into cafeteria so kids are proud to eat what they grow. Kids are involved in menu planning through culinary education program.

Stakeholder Session

What would it take to get more school farm education and local procurement in San Mateo County? What are current barriers? What is needed?

- Money for educators for school gardens.
- Agree, matching funds would also be helpful.
 - County match would be very helpful to help meet grant programs.
 - Parents love but they do not raise enough as it is to fund supplemental education.
 - Garden = science education, but parents can't support it.
 - School farm is grant funded and direct fee.
 - Grants do not require match but there is not enough grant funding to cover.
 - Hard for them to make the case - people do not understand the case - could use help from the county in making the case.
- Our teachers have mentioned the need/desire to bring back culinary education.
 - Practicality of teens and pre-teens knowing how to prepare.
 - Feeling competent to provide form themselves as they go on to college, etc.
 - For some it is a career path.
 - Some schools still have small cooking class facilities but not much.
 - Teen parent program at Redwood High has a small program.
 - If she has a magic wand she would incorporate culinary program at all levels.
 - "Comfort in the kitchen" so kids are comfortable in the kitchen and with the idea of feeding themselves real food not just a snack.
 - College kids on their own are in shock.
 - Any data on retention in higher education if kids know how to eat?
 - Food What? May have data on retention for kids who can cook.
 - Pacific Elementary in Davenport may have long term data on this.
 - Ties all the core curriculum into a cooking class.

- The straight nutrition curriculum is not adequate.
- It is just one day and taught through physical education.
- Even if you had a fuller curriculum it needs to be hands on.
- After school adults have no idea of gardening - we are two generations divorced from gardens and cooking.
- Lots of times the culinary program and the school garden or farm or not connected so there is a lot of opportunity to coordinate there and increases participation in both.
- It would be good to find out how many schools still have kitchen facilities (home economics-style kitchens).
- What levels of leadership would help?
- Grant writers – people in the schools are not grant writers.
 - A county position focused on grant writing to bring money into the county.
 - Food service directors are not here because they are too busy.
 - Can't write the grant.
 - Can't do the grant reporting.
 - Could support school gardens and innovations.
 - LCAP training - helping districts to understand how to capture LCAP opportunities - there are known strategies for moving LCAP money but people don't know the strategies.
 - Support for wellness coordinators on how to use the money – technical assistance to wellness coordinators so they know how to move the dial.
 - School Board members in San Mateo County spearheaded a survey of students.
 - Alan Sarber - district wide survey found students wanted fresher foods, more variety, more salads etc. but despite that great input it never materialized into change. Why not?
 - Nora would give me a one on one on, why the survey did not result in action?
 - Bond money is going into refurbishing cafeterias and kitchens.
 - As the remodels are being completed now is the time to re-engage the students.
 - Now is the time to engage the students in planning.
 - Something as simple as the students saying they don't want their food in plastic they want it in a paper box.
 - Worried that there will be a beautiful new dining facility but still poor quality food.
 - All the food service people could use more assistance in their work.
 - Students are more demanding than ever.
 - They are only a high school district.
 - One thing that stood out on the survey was wait time - no time to wait in line plus also eat.
 - Students would rather socialize that wait in line.
 - Relates to how the school day is structured - sometimes the whole school goes through in half an hour - solution should be in the design of the day

as much as the design of the building but there is no money for staffing to redesign the day.

- What if we really need a longer lunch? What does that mean in terms of staffing?
- Monterey has an example of outside support on feasibility study that showed that real plates saved money even after hiring the dishwasher - but only really savvy food service directors can do that on their own - food service directors are expected 2b business people plus nutritionist plus front line staff and then innovate and write grants - it just isn't possible.
- Food issues is linked to mental health but resources are being diverted to putting out mental health fires.
- If there was a grant writer the schools would have to tell the grant writer what they want - grant writer can't just show up with money.
- Also you need a somewhat competitive environment so food service directors want to excel.
- Spotlight on success. Schools want media to show successes.
- Grant writer has to go to each of the schools and get the schools needs and provide support to the schools directly and network the schools with each other when appropriate.
- Some funds would be administered direct to the school.
- Some have to go through a nonprofit that does the federal reporting and subcontracts the money to the schools.
- For garden based education it is about outside organizations raising money.
- For procurement the issue is the food service directors and food service staff.
 - Physical limitations of time and space to serve appropriate food .
 - Baseline staffing.
 - Also a real problem with substitutes - nowhere to go if someone is out sick.
 - You could get food service staff to come to meetings if you could come up with a plan for them to be able to share staff if someone is out sick.
 - Number one thing to do is increase student participation - that is the only way to get budgets up inside the school cafeteria.
- Marketing. There are times when the schools are doing a fabulous job but students and parents are not aware. Could benefit from help with media and getting the message out so people know. La Honda switched to plates but there was no outreach and so students threw the plates away.
- Cafeteria needs help doing outreach to parents so the parents know that the school lunch is good and they do not need to pack a lunch for the kids.
- Any school that has a coordinator - that it is the best advocate for getting students to eat the meal.
- Needs also to have action plans to help people collaborate across schools and within schools.
- people want to see action items and progress.
- Food Corps has a good template for how to move to action.

Forum 3: Urban Farming and Gardening Stakeholders

May 31, 2017 in San Mateo

Presentations from urban farming and gardening advocates about efforts in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Stakeholder Session

Framing

On the Bayside SMC is an urban county, defined by near full employment and a lack of available land.

Challenges

- Time
- Energy
- Access
 - Lack of land
 - Challenges of public land and teens
 - Liability
 - Competition with other programs like soccer
- Esthetics
 - Models for trimmed gardens that also provide food and habitat

Economics

- Wealth (convenience over long term).
- Urban farming works great in places with weak economies and urban blight – San Mateo County does not have either of these challenges.

Funding

- Who will fund?
- How will funding be sustainable?
- \$50 million of CalFresh going unused in the County - how do we use that?

Ideas/solutions

1. Agriculture ombudsman position should be 50% time at Ag Commissioner and 50% at Office of Sustainability.
2. Using the Hetch Hetchy right of way as a lateral community garden and a pollinator pathway.
3. A working group to make progress on all of these issues and solutions and to cross connect resources and resource seekers.

Misc. discussion

- Use of pesticides and herbicides in urban situations.
- Kelxy - importance of understanding not judging when it comes to landowners, talk about what is easy and effective, alternatives, esthetics.
- Churches need to be part of this conversation.

Centralized information

- So much to navigate - we need one place for info.
- Exchange people who have no time but have land with people who want to garden but don't have land.
- Extension - we have this - but we need to do a better job of marketing.
- Crop circle - there are apps for these things.

Fruit trees

- You see burdened fruit trees all over - we need a gleaning program.
- Village Harvest is the organization.

Food waste

- Why does food shelter have to pay to dispose of spoiled produce? Should go to compost.

Government structure

- It is 20 cities plus the county.
- It can be done but you have to talk to everyone.
 - Plastic bag ban - this is how we did it - we had to go city by city and then to the county.
- You have to think about the network and how to connect.
- Council of Cities - these ideas have to go past them before they will work at the county level.

Cumulative effects and benefits

- Need a funded position not burdened by fundraising that is devoted to understanding cumulative effects and benefits and getting the ball rolling on solutions.

Forum 4: Healthy Food Access Program Leaders
June 27, 2017 in San Mateo

Presentation of “out of the box” thinking from FEED interns

Stakeholder Session

What are new and exciting programs you would like to see?

- Subsidized CSAs
- Mobile Access
- How to optimize medical screening with food access.
 - Kaiser Veggie RX program includes nutritional classes and vouchers for Farmers Market for whole family.
 - County Clinic has new diagnostic questions to get at food access.
 - Some work from Harvard on how to get insurance companies to pay for healthy food in a medical context.
 - Boston Hospital has a great model.
 - Center for Hunger Free Communities at Drexel has done lots of work on models for a veggie prescription program.
 - County sees about 100k people in the County Health but does nothing to systemize food insecurity into the medical record.
 - This is low hanging fruit as clinic clients are food insecure.
 - Not just health officials – often it is the teacher who sees the food insecurity – teachers should be able to prescribe also.
- Community kitchens need to be tied to community gardens – stuff gets grown but then there is no way to process it.
 - Could use school cafeterias in off hours.
- Food waste – connect excess prepared food to feeding centers – get the cafeterias at Google, FaceBook etc. to send excess prepared foods to feeding centers.
- Sonoma County Ceres program has high school kids gardening, cooking and delivering meals to cancer patients.
- Pilot Project: SPUR/FINI grant for Double Up Bucks at grocery stores in San Jose – we need to get that to SMC.
 - Supervisor Ken Yaeger put money in the Santa Clara budget for the required matching funds
- Hunger on the Coast – there is a guy who drives a mobile grocery on the coast but he sells junk food as well as good food – anything to be done to improve this situation?
- What is a healthy food? Do we have a definition? We need one before working with food trucks.

- Need to find areas where there are commercial kitchens and do programming from there.
- Farmers Market tasting is still a problem because of fees for inspections. It is too hard to do cooking demos. A farmers market operator should not be saddled with these fees.
- Veggie Valet program connected bus stops to the farmers market .
 - Have talked about getting As Fresh As it Gets to pay costs to get to farmers market on public transportation.
- Regulators and Advocates – these roles need to be separate but coordinated and not totally at odds with each other.
 - The County does not hire the kinds of people who think about getting out in front of the regulatory burden.
 - There is a need for County employees who can spot problems and advocate back inside of the County to remove barriers.
 - Farmers Market managers end up acting as regulatory ombudspersons – that’s not how it should be.
 - Same issue with food trucks – it is a great idea but so much regulation – who helps the food truck operator to navigate all the regulation?
 - La Concina as a model for helping food businesses to grow.
 - Need a “foodbudsperson.”
- Food banks often default to good groceries but don’t think about food preparation.
- Mobile food trucks don’t reach that many people.
- Need to think about ideas that are actually scalable.
- Need for a network of information about what people have and what people need
 - A network board to connect people with time to people with kitchens.
- On the coast: A certified kitchen trailer – can be used by farmers and people who receive subsidized food but don’t have kitchen facilities.
- Ensure that kitchens are part of plans for new low income housing on the coast.

What next steps would you like to see?

- Important to understand regional and national context. There is a lot to gain from being more engaged in regional initiatives.
- Oakland, SF, LA all have good teachings to offer.
- Recognize that the margins on food are razor thin
- Regional convening?
- CA Food Policy Council?
- Start with a win and build from there.
- Start with the coast – that is the area with greatest need.
- Need for a unified voice from all the different agencies and organizations working on this.
- CalFresh has a “No Hunger” workgroup – similar to this group.

- Second Harvest goes to many overlapping meetings.
- Everyone is maxed – no one has capacity to start a new initiative – nothing new without a new FTE or a new mandate/job description.
 - Can carve out from existing jobs but that is just the time to get to the meeting and coordinate – someone needs to convene and set agenda and take notes etc.
 - Santa Clara County model – Silicon Valley Joint Venture houses a point person for their anti-hunger work.
 - Office of Sustainability has a waste reduction mandate – to the extent that anti-hunger programs can be cast as waste reduction programs there is capacity there.
 - Congressional Hunger Fellow from 2008 made some recommendations – we should find those again.

Conclusions

- Make innovative connections.
- Continue the conversation.
- Get going on pilots – and make one or more of them on the coast.