



Sustainability Stewards of Broward

Food Systems Planning and Food Recovery

Workshop Summary

The Sustainability Stewards of Broward (SSB) is a collaborative peer network, bringing municipal staff and other interested parties together to discuss best practices in sustainability occurring in Broward County and the greater South Florida region.

The December 11, 2014 Sustainability Stewards workshop was FANTASTIC! We had 46 local planners, farmers, health professionals, business leaders and elected officials join us for a half-day workshop centered on Food Systems Planning and Food Recovery/Rescue. The workshop which was co-hosted by Broward County's Environmental Planning and Community Resilience Division and the City of Dania Beach.

The morning started with a tour of the PATCH urban farm (market garden & community garden) in Dania Beach's Community Redevelopment Area. Now in its second year, Dania beach's PATCH is taking off its training wheels and is ready to expand to a city or CRA near you! Garden Manager Dion Taylor gave us a tour and explanation of why the PATCH business model works and could be expanded regionally to support a local food system.

Back at City Hall, fabulous presentations and discussions ensued.

Together, we learned...

Why access to healthy food matters:

- Food Deserts are defined as a census tract with substantial low income populations that have low access to affordable, healthful food.
- Currently, diabetes is the 7th highest cause of death in the United States and accounts for \$245 Billion in direct and indirect medical costs.
- Estimates suggest that by 2050, 1 in 3 Americans will develop diabetes, a largely preventable disease caused by health determinants such as food insecurity.
- In Broward County, Diabetes Deaths are 57% higher in food deserts.

What our opportunities are locally:

- There are over 29 thousand acres of agricultural, vacant private and public lands available in Broward County that could be utilized to grow local food.
- In a recent Food Policy Assessment conducted by the Health Foundation of South Florida, Broward rated 42.5 out of 100. So we are not starting from scratch, but we have lots of room for improvement!

How planners can help:

- Over the next year and a half, Broward County is going through a complete overhaul of our Comprehensive and Land Use Plans. Focus groups are exploring ways to make the county policies more user-friendly and in line with our current needs and vision. This workshop adds to the list of public outreach events, but stay engaged to have your voice heard #BROWARDNEXT
- Planning options to consider:
 - Flexible Policies and Zoning can allow for community gardens/urban farms in open space or allow for temporary or conditional use of vacant lots.
 - Support Local Food Production/Processing/Distribution by offering farmland tax incentives, allows farmers' markets in public spaces, provide business incubators, etc.

- Ensure Social Equity by providing low income communities with transportation access, neighborhood grocery stores, and an effective emergency food infrastructure.
- Fold food system planning into Land Conservation and Green Infrastructure planning.
- Incorporate health into the comprehensive plan, including food and active living, or create a stand-alone element focused on health indicators.
- Protect agricultural land in the Land Use Plan and expand support for commercial and non-commercial agricultural activities on all land uses, especially public vacant land.
- More recommendations will be included in the Food Policy Assessment final report. Stay tuned!

And how, once we have it, we can help others not waste it!

- Americans waste 33% of the food produced, so there are huge opportunities in every step of the food system to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and feed more people, especially those who need it most.
- The hospitality industry is realizing their part of social equity and getting involved in programs like the Food Recovery Network.
- Over 1,000 Hospitality students from FIU volunteer during the annual South Beach Food and Wine Festival, rescuing as much as 4,000 pounds of food and delivering to food banks for consumption within 24 hours to the local population in need.

Potential follow-up actions the group could take:

- Work with Broward NEXT to determine potential for inclusion of policy recommendations coming out of the Health Foundation of South Florida's Food Policy Assessment into the new Broward County Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan.
- Use the STAR framework to reinforce the connection between food access, active living, and health (Goal area 6).
- Share the PATCH model and explore opportunities for expansion throughout the region.
- Use the STAR framework to make current programs more effective (for example, reversing rule that restricts food grown in public school garden projects from being served in school cafeterias)
- Create a SSB sub-team who can work on creating template code and zoning guidelines, and work with a few Broward cities to implement as a pilot. Any volunteers? Any cities considering an update?
- Pull transit, MPO, DOT, into the discussion around food. In solving the problem of access, we can grow food closer to where people live, we can provide better transportation/routes to the food, &/or we can bring the food right to the people. Maybe Bus hubs can become first Food hubs?
- Do your part to connect resources and rescue available food. See if your cafeteria, local restaurants, agency vendors and community events collect unserved food for pick up by local food banks. If you want to start a volunteer base to assist large events you are running, call John to get important tips for success!

Please keep in touch with each other to keep advancing the conversation and making our work more effective and reach deeper into the community. A list of the attendees will be attached. Also, if you have additional ideas or questions, our speakers have kindly made themselves available for event follow-up. Their contact information is below.

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Thank you again to our wonderful speakers and participants. Fantastic information and ideas were presented, and the group left inspired to take new concepts and best practices back to their municipalities to implement. By sharing our knowledge, experiences, and thoughts we advance all of our programs and help to move sustainability forward in our entire community.

The workshop agenda, summary, and presentation documents will be posted on the County's GoGreen webpage, under [Sustainability Stewards](#). If you were not able to attend, and would like the PowerPoint presentations emailed to you, email me at jhorwitz@broward.org.

Together, through the Sustainability Stewards of Broward, we are making Broward a more energy efficient, climate resilient, and sustainable community. We hope to see you at the next informative and inspiring event!

Jill Horwitz

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