



A 10 Year Plan For Vermont's Food System

November 15, 2011



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

The Touchstone: Original F2P Tasks and Goals

In 2009, the Vermont Legislature and Governor Douglas tasked VSJF with crafting a 10 year strategic plan for strengthening the state's food system based on 3 goals and a broad scope of work.

The primary goals of the legislation are to:

- 1. Increase economic development in Vermont's food and farm sector.**
- 2. Create jobs in the food and farm economy.**
- 3. Improve access to healthy local foods for all.**

Strategic Planning Process

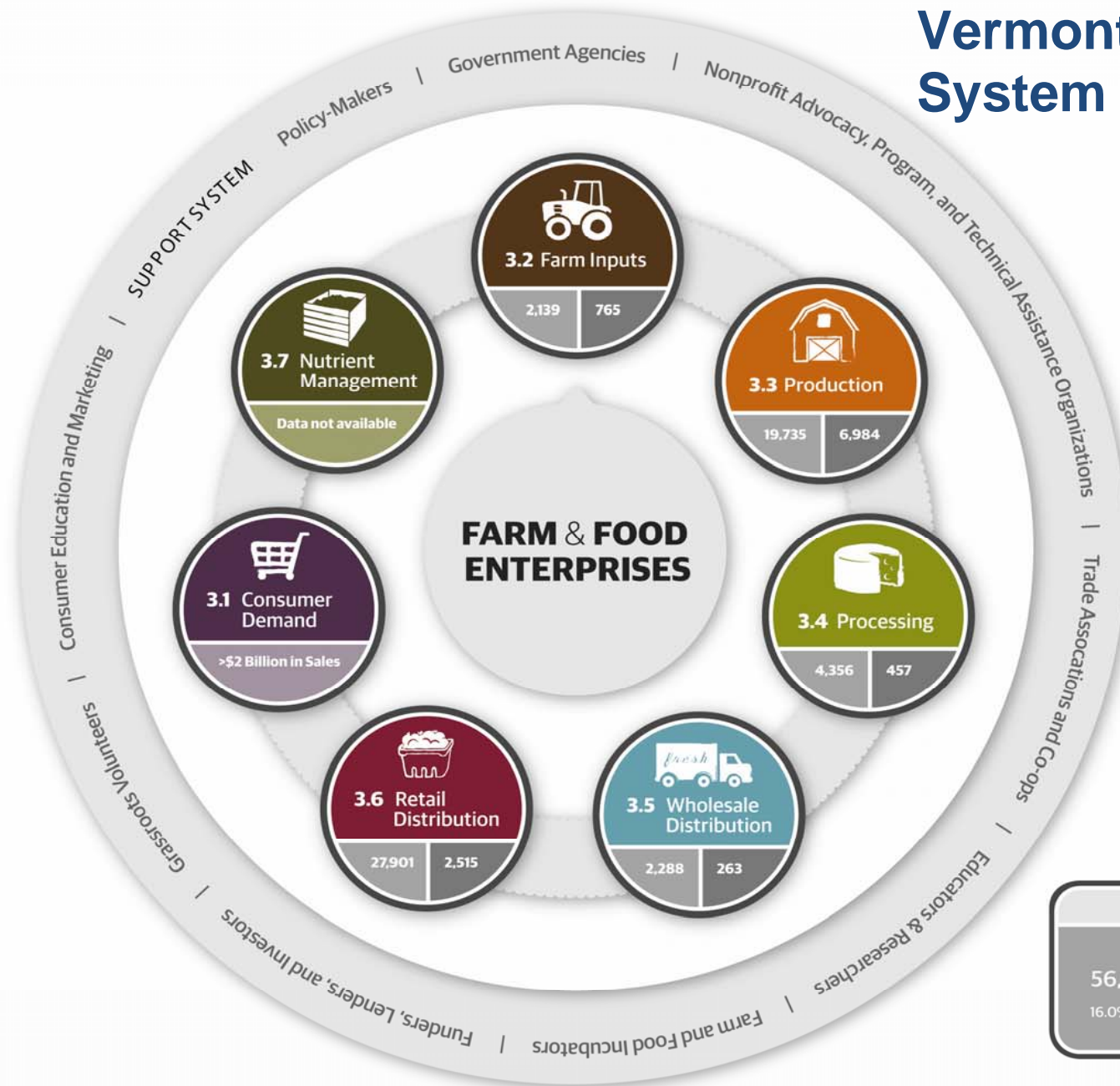
- Planning has been **data driven along with broad stakeholder input** - 24 focus groups & 8 regional summits (~800 people) and over 200 in-depth interviews (~ 400 people)
- A whole systems approach -- **Soil to Soil**
- Includes **all types** of agricultural production
- Addresses **all scales** of agriculture and food enterprises -- micro, small, medium and large scale operations
- Includes **all markets** – with particular emphasis on local markets (VT + 30 miles) + the regional market (New England, NY, southern Quebec)

What's in the plan

- **Quantification** of the size, etc. of our current food system (# of farms, jobs, etc.)
- **Current conditions and analysis** of each part of the food system written for all audiences – Food system elements and cross-cutting issues
- **33 Goals** with specific **indicators** and **metrics**
- **60 Highest Priority Strategies** in the Executive Summary
- **Economic Impact Analysis** to show growing our food system will create jobs and improve the local economy



Vermont's Food System



TOTAL JOBS & BUSINESSES

56,419 total

16.0% of private jobs

Businesses
10,984 total

12.9% of private businesses

Data Sources

- Vermont Department of Labor,
- The U.S. Economic Census,
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey (CEX),
- The U.S. Census Bureau's Commodity Flow Survey (CFS) (a joint project of the Census and Bureau of Transportation Statistics),
- USDA Census of Agriculture,
- USDA Economic Research Service (ERS), historical series
- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), historical series
- Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA – U.S. Department of Commerce),
- U.S. Census Non-employer Statistics,
- National Establishment Time Series (Walls & Associates),
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS – U.S. Department of Labor),
- Annual Survey of Manufactures,
- Monthly Retail Trade Survey (Census),
- Consumer Price Index,
- National Resource Conservation Service,
- Survey results from F2P surveys and other organizations (e.g., Vermont Fresh Network)

Diverse Engagement

Farmers, Food System Businesses, Consumers, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Conservation Districts, Land Trusts, Extension, State Agencies, Regional Development Corporations, Policy Makers, Local Food Groups/Food Councils, Regional Food Hubs, Distributors, Waste Management/Compost Organizations, Universities & Colleges, Schools, Farm to School Groups, Hospitals & Institutions, Non-profits, Farming Associations (e.g., NOFA), Coop Markets, Dairy Coops, Trade Associations, Technical Assistance Providers, Community Action Groups, the general public, and MORE!

The Food System

- 3.1 Consumer Demand
- 3.1 Farm Inputs
- 3.3 Food Production
- 3.4 Food Processing
- 3.5 Whole Distribution
- 3.6 Retail Distribution
- 3.7 Nutrient Management



Cross-cutting Issues

- 4.1: Food Security in Vermont
- 4.2: Food System Education
- 4.3: Food System Labor and Workforce Development
- 4.4: Food System Technical Assistance and Business Planning
- 4.5: Financing the Food System
- 4.6: Food System Energy Issues
- 4.7: Food System Regulation
- 4.8: Leadership, Communication, and Coordination Across the Food System



2020 Goals and Indicators – A Sampling

Goal 1: Consumption of Vermont-produced food by Vermonters and regional consumers will measurably increase.

Indicator 1A: The percentage of Vermont food products consumed by Vermonters will increase from 5% to 10%.

Goal 3: All Vermonters will have access to fresh, nutritionally balanced food that they can afford.

Indicator 3A: The number of food insecure Vermonters is decreasing.

Goal 7: Advance agriculture as the highest and best use of prime agricultural land and soils of statewide significance.

Indicator 7A: Acres and percent total of Prime Agriculture Soils and Soils of Statewide Significance in and/or conserved for active agricultural production is increasing.

Highest Priority Strategies – Two Examples of Sixty

OBJECTIVE: Maximize the resources available to provide technical assistance to farmers and food entrepreneurs.

STRATEGY: Provide specialized scaling-up technical assistance and business planning services for farmers and value-added food entrepreneurs seeking to serve larger markets. Survey farmers to identify those interested in scaling up production specifically for institutional markets.

OBJECTIVE: Support and evaluate ongoing state, federal, and other technical assistance programs to ensure the adoption of best practices.

STRATEGY: Expand the Farm Agronomic Practices and Nutrient Management Programs to support the increased use of soil erosion reduction practices and alternative manure application techniques, such as soil aeration.*

Economic Impact Potential

Vermont's major agricultural and food product output totaled \$ 2.7 billion in 2007.

- direct impact of a 5% increase in production equals \$135 million in annual output per year from 2011 to 2020
- with multipliers, total output would increase by an average of \$177 million per year from 2011 to 2020
- personal income would increase by \$110 million per year

If a Vermont family were to double its local purchases, it would mean increasing purchases of local goods from \$321 to \$642 per year. This would be about \$9.92 per person per month (based on 2.7 persons per household).

For every 5% increase in production, total food sector employment increases by an average of 1,500 jobs.



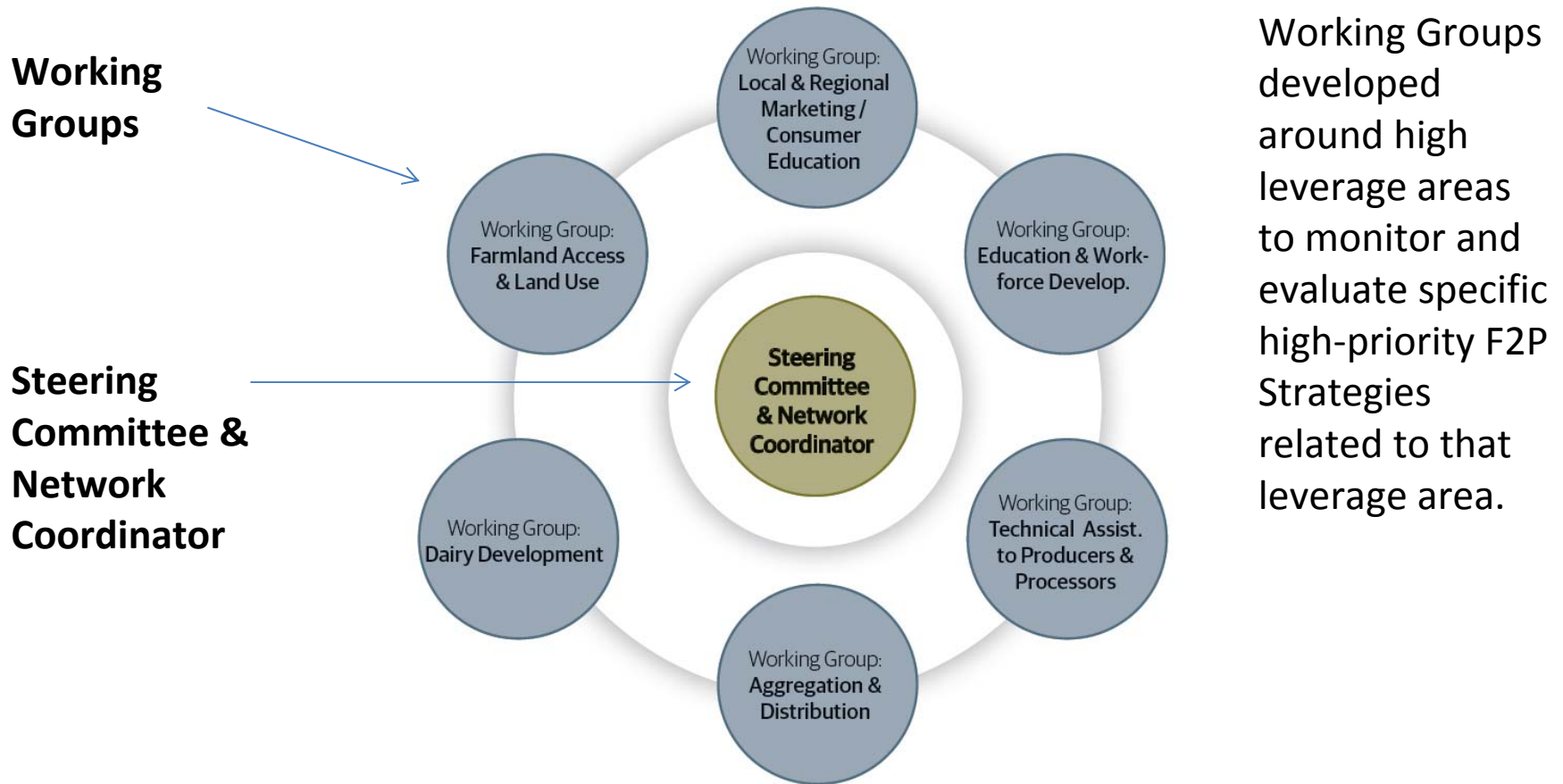
How do we implement the F2P Strategic Plan and achieve the goals?

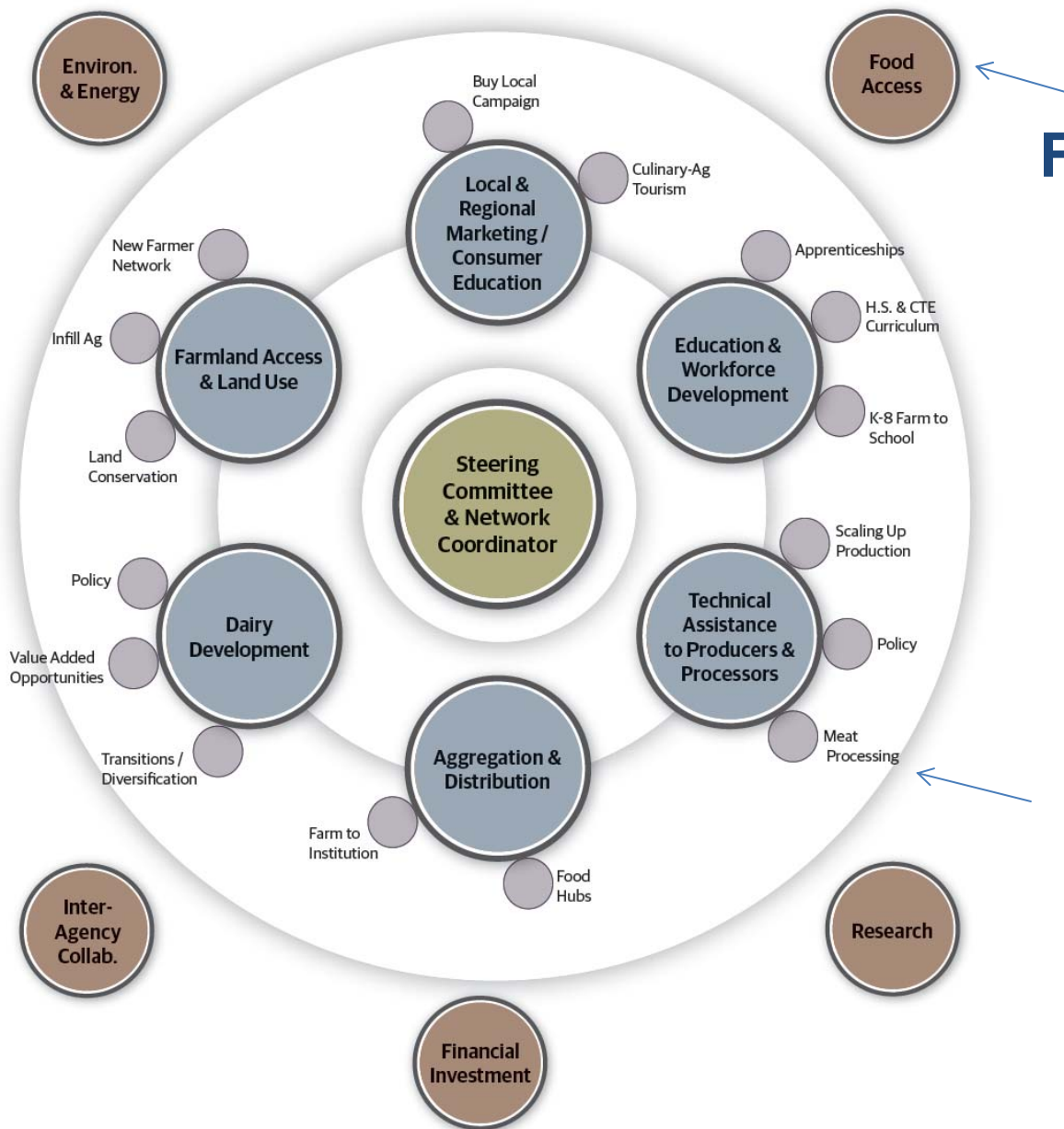


Purpose of the Network

- Enable **coordinated collaboration among organizations** across Vermont to **achieve the thirty-three goals** of Vermont's Farm to Plate Strategic Plan
- Enhance the **participating organizations' ability to meet their goals.**
- Members: Non-profit organizations, farms, food system businesses, local/regional/state government, etc.

Network Structure: How will we organize ourselves?





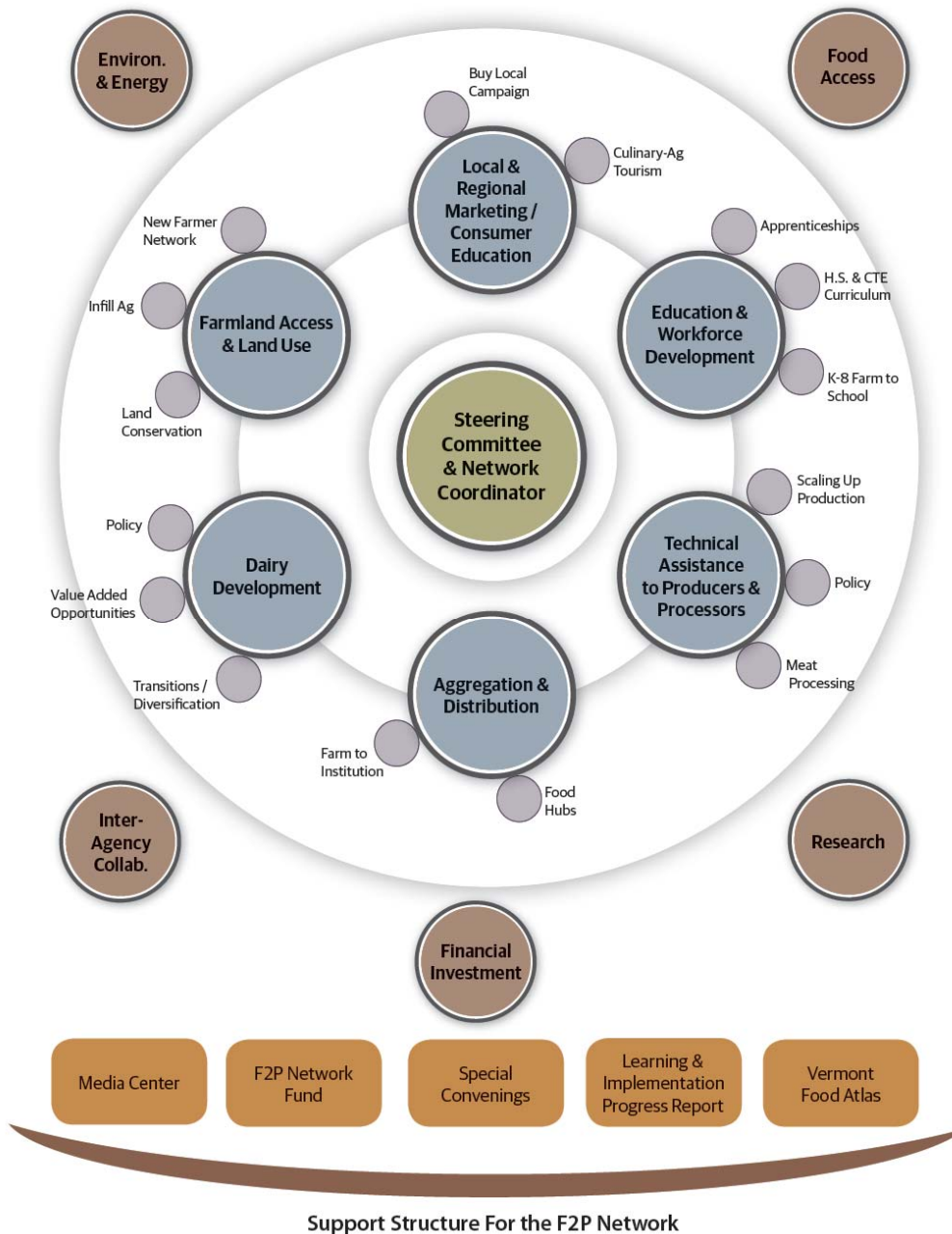
F2P Cross-cutting Teams

Groups with existing networks and natural affinities will address cross-cutting themes across working groups and leverage points

Working Group Task Forces

Multi-organizational teams to carry out strategies

F2P Underpinnings: Essential coordinated support and resources for the Network



F2P Network Fund

Special Convenings

Learning &
Implementation Progress
Report

Vermont Food Atlas &
The Commons



Key Lessons Learned

- ***Food systems development is economic development*** -- Support from economic development groups is important to developing local and regional food systems.
- ***Diverse participation*** – There are many voices and perspectives to integrate into a comprehensive food system plan. Food system stakeholder groups include agriculture, economic development, funders, social justice, health, food security, education, conservation, food system business owners and workers, and more. Consumers are also an important stakeholder group. An effective food system planning process is designed to capture these interests and develop shared mental models as a result.
- ***Top down and bottom up*** – Many planning participants noted the desire for decentralized, community-based, local control. However, there was also a strong sentiment that much of the work currently being done around food systems development is uncoordinated, and that coordinated efforts would ensure efficiency and maximized impact. Planning participants noted the need for buy-in from the bottom-up, community level and the top down as well – key leaders and elected officials.

Lessons Learned

- ***Social networking*** -- Many actors across the region did not always know what others were doing. Planning participants often noted that the sessions were great “networking opportunities.” Thus, planning becomes partly about networking, developing relationships, capacity building, and building trust.
- ***Data and Performance Measures*** – In this case, there is a great deal of county-level production data, but very little local level data available for food systems. There is also no way to accurately measure consumption of local food, so these methods must be developed. This suggests that a stronger partnership between planners, food system stakeholders and members of the research community need to be forged. Also, it is important to connect measures to goals developed with broad input.
- ***Governance Network for Implementation*** – No one organization can implement a food system plan. Designing a network to monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation provides a way to not only to continue to gain valued input, but also to ensure strategies being implemented are compatible with the overall plan goals and do not work against each other.



farm^{to}*plate*

STRATEGIC PLAN



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