

**San Francisco Food Alliance Meeting  
October 19, 2005 (3:00 – 5:30 pm)  
Mission Police Station, Community Room**

Introductions

Britt Adamus (Department of Human Services, Congressional Hunger Fellow), Ilana Bar-David, Thea Carlson, Melanie Cheng (Om Organics), Christopher Cook, J.D. Francis (Urban Services YMCA/OMI Family Resource Center), Park Guthrie (Life Learning Academy Organic Opportunities), Susana Hennessey-Lavery (SFPDH Tobacco Free Project), Paula Jones (San Francisco Food Systems), Stefan Lynch (UCSF School of Nursing), Stacey McCarthy (Earl's Organic Produce), Bu Nygrens (Veritable Vegetable), Stacey Parker (Garden for the Environment), Leah Rimkus (San Francisco Food Systems), Michelle Ross (TransFair USA), Zoë Rossing, Dyeshia Sampson (San Francisco Food Systems), Sue Trupin (SF General Hospital), Suzy Varadi (Meals on Wheels), Cory Wechsler (SF State University Urban Studies), Christine Wong-Mineta (SFPDH WIC Program), Zetta Wells (San Francisco Food Systems)

Summary of draft problem/priority areas

- The purpose of the meeting was to select the top 2-3 priority areas for the SF Food Alliance to work on over the course of the next year.
- A total of 13 draft problem/focus areas and recommendations were previously compiled based on the 2005 San Francisco Collaborative Food System Assessment as well as the information collected during the SF Food Alliance Round Table in August.
- This list of 13 problem/focus areas was sent via email to approximately 65 participants of the Round Table and to the 25 members of the SF Food Alliance in order for all to vote on their top five highest priority areas. A total of 16 people sent back their votes and the top vote-getters (in order, with the last four as a tie) were the following issue areas:
  - Lack of access to healthy food in certain neighborhoods of San Francisco
  - Underutilization of food assistance programs, including food stamps, school breakfast, and child and adult care food program, due to barriers such as low reimbursements, lack of public awareness and understanding among immigrant communities, and low capacity of agencies to administer and expand programs
  - Lack of consistent funding and support for garden education programs and supportive gardening education materials in the community and in schools
  - Lack of widespread knowledge and awareness of the opportunities and mechanisms for buying directly from farms and supporting sustainable farmers among businesses, institutions and individual residents
  - Underutilization of food stamp benefits at farmers' markets and other outlets of local, farm fresh foods
  - Increasing proportion of the population lacking knowledge and skills in food production preparation and nutrition
  - Lack of sustained, consistent support for food policy activities and lack of implementation and accountability around food related recommendations and policies

- Lack of extensive knowledge about the food system (including relationships between production and retail, access and food assistance, nutrition and gardening) among city agencies, city contractors and individual residents
- Low utilization of city and county owned open space for food and agriculture production

#### Current actions and activities in problem/priority areas

- Paula and Leah presented brief information on actions and activities which are currently happening in some of the priority areas to better understand where the needs are in San Francisco. Other meeting attendees contributed additional information.
  - Lack of access to healthy food in certain neighborhoods
    - The SF Redevelopment Agency is in the process of making the Bayview an official “redevelopment zone.” Once approved, this may free up some funding to use for food retail priorities. Paula has worked with Redevelopment to pull out food-related priorities of the community into a food blueprint or draft plan. The environmental impact review needs to be passed before Bayview becomes an official redevelopment zone.
    - Groups in Visitacion Valley have advocated for a grocery store in the neighborhood. Urban Ecology led a project to create a Neighborhood Plan around the empty Schlage lock facility. This plan includes a grocery store.
    - Groups on Treasure Island have been considering the possibility of organizing to change MUNI route in order to pass by Safeway or another grocery store, since there is only one bus that travels to/from the island and does not stop at a grocery store.
    - San Francisco Islands Association (brand new group) is considering starting a cooperative grocery on Treasure Island.
    - Life Learning Academy on Treasure Island just started community supported agriculture (CSA) and is distributing shares to 25 families.
    - There has been interest from the Mayor’s Office in bringing healthier food to Treasure Island.
  - Underutilization of food assistance programs
    - The Board of Supervisors recently-created Food Security Task Force will focus on maximizing the use of federal dollars via food assistance programs. This group will meet within the next two weeks and continue convening for two years to develop a plan.
    - Governor Schwarzenegger just approved \$18.2 million that will be used to subsidize school breakfasts with an additional \$0.10 to support the inclusion of fruits and vegetables.
    - San Francisco Unified School District has a Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee that is partially-focused on increasing the use of the school meal programs. SFUSD recently started a pilot “Grab and Go”

breakfast pilot at Balboa High School and has doubled the number of students served by the breakfast program there.

- San Francisco is hosting a Congressional Hunger Fellow for six months, who will focus on developing a plan for outreach around the Food Stamp Program.
- Lack of consistent funding and support for school garden programs
  - San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance (SFGSA), San Francisco Gardening Resource Organization (SFGRO), Growing Green Kids, SFUSD Director of Educational Gardens may be working on this issue. This needs to be explored further.
  - San Francisco's Garden for the Environment is funded by a garbage tax, which is funneled through the Department of the Environment and creates \$1 million in grant funding per year. Because this amount was cut 1/3 last year, some programs funded by Department of the Environment may be in danger.
- Lack of widespread knowledge about buying direct from farms
  - This community education is happening through the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA) and Om Organics. This needs to be explored further to better understand their target population, reach, etc.
  - There is a good amount of coverage on this issue in the SF Chronicle.
  - Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) has done a lot of this work in other regions, but not in the Bay Area.
  - Department of Public Health has started to create some purchasing guidelines to help department employees support not only nutritious options, but sustainable food options as well.
- Underutilization of food assistance at farmers' markets
  - Paula and Dyeshia have worked on this issue. Starting next month, Alemany Farmers' Market should be accepting and processing EBT/food stamp benefits for the first time in history.
  - Paula and Dyeshia have mailed food stamp/farmers' market promotional materials to the homes of food stamp recipients and to various community based organizations throughout the city. SF Department of Human Services mailed brochures to all food stamp households.
  - More could be done to promote this option on a one-on-one level.
- Lack of consistent support for food policy and accountability in implementing previously passed
  - The Board of Supervisors' newly-created Food Security Task Force is charged with creating a strategic plan in the next two years, however nothing is planned after that in terms of implementation and enforcement.
  - San Francisco Food Systems included an appendix in the SF Collaborative Food System Assessment which provides a summary of food-related policy and recommendations passed from 1996 through the present. This illustrates

that we already have plenty of policies and recommendations, but that implementation and enforcement are still needed.

- Lack of extensive knowledge about the food system among city agencies, city contractors and residents
  - The SF Food Alliance Round Table in August was a good example of education and training around the food system for city agencies, contractors and residents. It doesn't appear that anyone else is doing this.
  - Department of Public Health has started to create some purchasing guidelines to help department employees support not only nutritious options, but sustainable food options as well.
- Low utilization of city and county owned land for food production
  - Department of Public Works has a street parks program to encourage neighborhoods to adopt street green spaces as community gardens, however irrigation is an issue in a lot of areas.
  - Laguna Honda Hospital may be developing a farm/green space through its new design and rebuild.
  - Sunol Grade is outside of San Francisco, but owned by the city and county and is being examined as a potential agricultural space.
- Paula also provided an update on San Francisco Food Systems, stating that funding to specifically support the Alliance has decreased due to a change in allowable activities supported by our grant with the California Nutrition Network. Because of this, staff assistance and resources to the SF Food Alliance will be reduced. Thus, selection of priority focus areas and future actions of the Alliance should take this into consideration.

#### Selection of voting criteria

- Susana provided a list of about 20 potential criteria that a group could use for voting or making a decision and asked that all meeting attendees vote on their preferred three criteria.
- After a vote, the four criteria that received the overwhelming majority of votes included the following:
  - Enthusiasm within the SF Food Alliance
  - High Need
  - Practical
  - Meaningful

#### Discussion and vote on priority focus areas for the SF Food Alliance

- Meeting attendees broke off into self-selected small groups to discuss the pros and cons of working on each of the major problem/focus areas, considering especially the voting criteria listed above.

- In the end, the areas that best met the voting criteria and that generated the most interest and enthusiasm among meeting attendees were the following:
  - Lack of extensive knowledge about the food system and lack of awareness of the opportunities and mechanisms for buying directly from farms and supporting sustainable farmers among city agencies, city contractors, businesses, institutions and individual residents (16 votes) *Note: two related areas were combined in order to create this one.*
  - Lack of sustained, consistent support for food policy activities and lack of implementation and accountability around food related recommendations and policies (12 votes)
  - Low utilization of city and county owned open space for food and agriculture production (7 votes)
  - Lack of access to healthy food in certain neighborhoods of San Francisco. (5 votes)
- Based on the vote described, the SF Food Alliance will focus on one or more of the four final areas as a collective and may, potentially, start smaller committees or working groups to address more specific or focused issue areas if there is enough energy and leadership to carry it.
- Prior to the next meeting, members of the SF Food Alliance will further research what other organizations and groups in San Francisco are doing or planning to do around our high priority areas, in order to support and not duplicate existing efforts.
- The SF Food Alliance could potentially invite speakers to update on their activities at future meetings or visit other organizations doing work of interest.

#### Next steps

- The next SF Food Alliance meeting was scheduled
  - **Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 pm until 6:30 pm.**
  - During the next meeting, we will brainstorm more specific actions and activities that the SF Food Alliance can work on in these top problem/priority areas.
  - Location is to be determined and will be announced via the sffoodsystems email list.