

DENVER FOOD ACTION PLAN



DENVER
PUBLIC HEALTH &
ENVIRONMENT

JUNE 2018

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

June 25, 2018

It is with great pride that I announce the Denver Food Action Plan. This Plan was developed in collaboration with multiple city agencies and highlights the excellent work being done across our city.

The best of government occurs when our collaborative efforts respond to, reflect and advance the community's vision of what makes a better food system. The purpose of this Action Plan is to share city driven and supported efforts that will help us achieve the Denver Food Vision.

As with any major project, long term efforts need to be broken down into smaller steps so we can work toward and celebrate successes along the way to achieving our ambitious vision by the year 2030. Success will require aligning city agencies and, most importantly, connecting with and supporting the hundreds of community and business-driven efforts happening across Denver.

I am asking you to declare your support as part of this action plan. Your declaration of support will enable us to map and better connect to efforts across the city. It will help us know who to reach out to when we are building neighborhood specific solutions and help us share best practices across sectors.

As noted in the Denver Food Baseline Report and the Denver Food Vision, the opportunities and the challenges presented by our food system, including access to affordable healthy food, are not equitably distributed across our city. We have prioritized efforts to focus on underserved neighborhoods with low healthy food access and to advance initiatives that improve food access along with economic mobility – through living wage jobs, entrepreneurship, business ownership, and new community wealth building tools.

I have charged the city's Manager of Food System Development to continue leading an Interagency Food Working Group with the primary task of building and implementing a collective impact structure that better aligns efforts, communicates successes and challenges, and attracts resources to support the vision.

Together we will continue to create a world class city with a strong food system that helps to make Denver a more inclusive, healthy, vibrant, and resilient community!

Respectfully,



Michael B. Hancock
Mayor





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INTRODUCTION



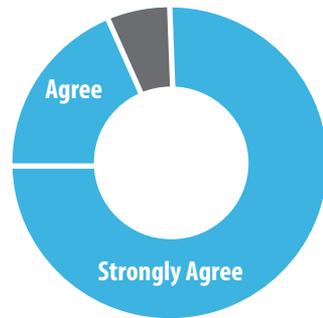
Over the last two years, the City and County of Denver completed an ambitious effort to develop its first long-term strategic vision for the future of food in the City and the metro area. The resulting [Denver Food Vision](#), released in October 2017, seeks to create a more inclusive, healthy, vibrant and resilient Denver. The Vision details 12 key priority areas for implementation, along with specific strategies to impact 12 measurable winnable goals by the year 2030.

Vision: A food system that helps create and sustain a more **INCLUSIVE**, **HEALTHY**, **VIBRANT** and **RESILIENT** Denver.



The Denver Food Vision is the result of an extensive public engagement process that generated 6,059 comments from more than 1,050 businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and members of the public. Comments were collected through 24 engagement events held over the

past two years. In December 2016 a draft of the Denver Food Vision was released for public review and comments collected through the public events and online surveys indicated that 94 percent of respondents agreed this is the right vision for Denver.



93.5% Agreed this was the right Vision for Denver

This document, the Denver Food Action Plan, outlines strategic actions and projects led by the City and public partners that will help advance the Denver Food Vision. It is anticipated that a subsequent Action Plan will be developed for the year 2025, but the full implementation of priorities will occur through the collective efforts of residents, nonprofit organizations, business owners, industry leaders, financial partners, the City and many others. A Declaration of Support is available on our website for partners interested in collaborating to achieve the Denver Food Vision.

INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS A FOOD SYSTEM?



FOOD CONSUMERS

Consumers drive the majority of the food system through their purchases, investments, and engagement in related public policy.

FOOD PRODUCERS

This includes farmers and ranchers; suppliers of critical inputs (land, water, seeds, technologies, capital); and community, school and home gardeners.

FOOD PROCESSORS

Processors modify foods through preparing, packaging, and freezing foods to create snacks, ready-to-eat foods and beverages.

FOOD DISTRIBUTORS

Distributors, aggregators, wholesalers, and brokers store and deliver farm and grocery products to processors and retailers.

FOOD RETAILERS

Retailers sell or provide food to consumers. Retailers include supermarkets, convenience stores, specialty markets, institutional food service, farmers' markets, restaurants, schools, family nutrition programs and hunger relief centers like food pantries.

WHY IS THERE A FOOD PLAN?

In Denver alone, there are more than 2,200 businesses and nearly 500 non-profits already involved in the food system. In 2015, Denver City Council and Mayor Michael B. Hancock discerned that a comprehensive, citywide plan was needed to help spur greater alignment and impact across the wide range of stakeholders, and to focus the role of government in advancing the Denver Food Vision.

Several additional forces also helped spur the creation of the Denver Food Vision. First, Denver's Sustainable Food Policy Council advanced recommendations on specific changes to zoning, land use and licensing policies.

Second, issues around food became an increasing priority across a wide array of community engagement events hosted by the City.



“Collective impact – the idea that organizations representing diverse sectors must actively commit to a common agenda to **SOLVE COMPLEX SOCIAL PROBLEMS”** – *Collective Impact Models*

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

One of the unique and distinguishing features of the Denver Food Vision is that it includes the overlap between diverse elements of the food system. Managing these tensions requires new ways of thinking, organizing, and aligning efforts and investments. Fortunately, the challenge of creating and expanding solutions to complex problems is not unique to food or unique to the Denver community. Others have pioneered methods for greater collaboration and coordination, through a model

called “collective impact.” Collective impact is being leveraged globally to address complex issues ranging from child care and affordable housing to sustainable agriculture and food system development. To improve the city’s food system, Denver will pursue a collective impact approach, that includes all five conditions for success: a common agenda, shared measurement, a backbone support organization, continuous communication and mutually reinforcing activities.

Table 1.1 Conditions for Collective Impact in the Denver Food System¹

Conditions for Successful Collective Impact	Denver’s Food System
Common Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denver Food Vision
Shared Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2030 Winnable Food Goals • Supporting Indicators (from Vision)
Backbone Support Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denver Food System Baseline Report • Periodic food system progress reports • Efforts to secure additional financial resources • Community and industry engagement
Continuous Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Food Plan Update e-Newsletters • Website: www.denvergov.org/foodplan • Presentations at community and public meetings • Updates and engagement through social media #DenverFoodPlan
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denver Food Action Plan • Interagency Food Working Group • Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council • Declaration of Community Support • ...and you!

¹Described Stanford Social Innovation Review (2011)

THE CITY AS A BACKBONE ORGANIZATION



To achieve the greatest impact by the year, the City will continue to function as a backbone organization to support food system development activities. Successful collective impact requires a backbone organization that provides system-supporting functions difficult for individual organizations and businesses to fund and support. To that end, the City will continue to provide:

- Data collection, evaluation and reporting
- Resource development (including writing grants and seeking funding for collaborative, system initiatives)
- Partner and stakeholder convening to assess progress and identify new opportunities
- Targeted technical assistance and operational capacity development
- Ongoing communication and updates through e-newsletters, City websites, public presentations and social media

A strong backbone organization encourages collaboration and aligns efforts leading to greater impacts and more efficient use of resources.

PROJECT SELECTION

As part of the collective impact model, this Action Plan identifies mutually reinforcing activities currently led by City agencies and public partners. These projects help to improve the Denver Food System and further the Denver Food Vision. Since this is the first Denver food action plan, the work to address food waste and recovery in partnership with the Natural Resource Defense Council and The Rockefeller Foundation is being highlighted. Additional projects will be released in the following months that effectively builds on existing momentum, capacity and expertise. Additional details and release of new projects are available on our website: www.denvergov.org/foodplan.

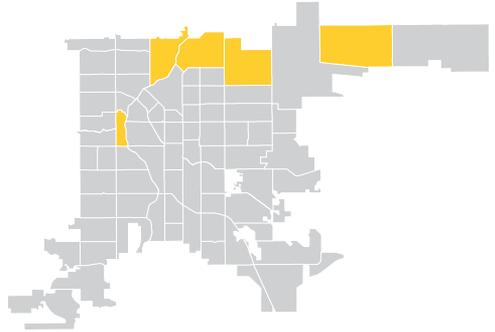
The Denver Food Action Plan is a living document that will be updated periodically. New projects and deliverables will be added as new resources and partnerships become available.

FOCUS NEIGHBORHOODS

The Denver Food Vision includes an ambitious target to have 75 percent of the positive changes directly benefit undeserved and/or low-income neighborhoods. To align with other City strategies, the focus neighborhoods for the Denver Food Action Plan are Elyria Swansea, Globeville, Montbello, Northeast Park Hill, Sun Valley and Westwood. While many projects work across the City, priority will be given to those

servicing focus neighborhoods and demonstrating specific progress toward the Denver Food Vision.

Focus Neighborhoods



ACTION PLAN PROJECTS

Action plan projects, being led by the City and other public partners, are the foundation of the Denver Food Action Plan. Public projects face many similar limitations to nonprofit and community projects, namely limited budgets, staff, and resources to expand to meet the full scope and scale of the community needs. As a living document, the projects included in the Denver Food Action Plan will continue to be updated as new resources and partnerships become available. Please see Project Pages available at www.denvergov.org/FoodPlan for more details.

If you would like to support an existing project, contribute to a new project, or join the email list for quarterly newsletters, please email denverfoodplan@denvergov.org.

IMPACTS

The following summarizes the intended combined impact of the projects included in the Denver Food Action Plan and contribution to the 2030 Winnable Goals.

WINNABLE GOAL

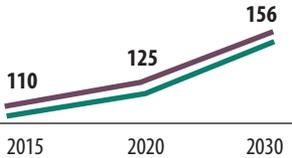
5 low-income or underserved neighborhoods reach self-defined goals for a Complete Food Environment



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
0	2 in 2020	5 in 2030

WINNABLE GOAL

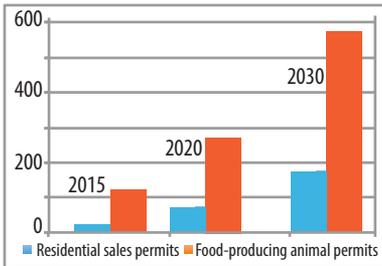
44% increase number of community and school gardens



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
Community Gardens		
2015: 110	2020: 125	2030: 156
School Gardens		
2015: 102	2020: 118	2030: 150

WINNABLE GOAL

413% increase in number of permits for residential sales of fresh produce/cottage foods and food-producing animals



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
Residential sales permits		
2015: 22	2020: 73	2030: 175
Food-producing animal permits		
2015: 124	2020: 274	2030: 575

WINNABLE GOAL

55% reduction in number of food-insecure households



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
18.2% in 2011	13.4% in 2020	8% in 2030

IMPACTS

WINNABLE GOAL

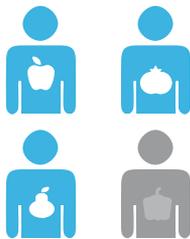
36% increase in SNAP enrollment for eligible populations



BASILINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
59% in 2013	68% in 2020	80% in 2030

WINNABLE GOAL

75% of youth and adults eat at least 1 serving of fruit and vegetables per day



BASILINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
In 2015, 64.6% of adults ate more than 1 serving of fruit per day.	68%	75%
In 2015, 83.0% of adults ate more than 1 serving of vegetables per day.	87%	95%
In 2015, 40.8% of children ate more than 1 serving of fruit per day.	52%	75%
In 2015, 39.0% of children ate more than 1 serving of vegetables per day.	51%	75%

WINNABLE GOAL

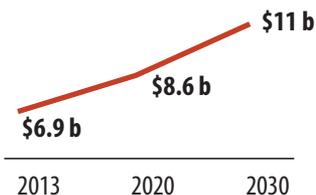
57% reduction in the number of children drinking sugary drinks daily



BASILINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
13.0% in 2015	10.5% in 2020	5.5% in 2030

WINNABLE GOAL

59% increase in size of the Denver food economy



BASILINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
\$6.96 billion in 2013	\$8.62 billion in 2020	\$11B in 2030

IMPACTS



WINNABLE GOAL

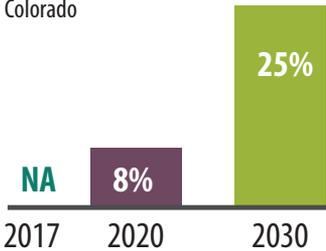
59% increase in size of the Denver food economy



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
\$0 (only tracking new capital)	\$33 million by 2020	\$100 million by 2030

WINNABLE GOAL

25% of food purchased by public institutions comes from Colorado



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
Unknown	8% of institutional food purchases in 2020	25% of institutional food purchases in 2030

WINNABLE GOAL

99.2 acres (0.1% of Denver acres) preserved in active agricultural production



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
143 acres in 2012	124 acres by 2020	99.2 acres by 2030

WINNABLE GOAL

57% reduction in tons of residential food waste collected by the City



BASELINE	2020 FORECAST*	2030 TARGET
20,000 tons in 2008	16,291 tons in 2020	13,200 tons in 2030

DECLARATION OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This action plan only includes projects led by the City and public partners. However, the City recognizes that most efforts happening to support a strong food system in Denver are being led by private businesses, nonprofits, community organizations and dedicated entrepreneurs like you!

The purpose of this Declaration of Community Support is to identify partners already working to advance the Denver Food Vision as

well as those who would like to be more engaged.

Your Declaration aids the City in identifying, mapping and connecting efforts across Denver. Your Declaration also demonstrates momentum and support for the Denver Food Vision. Lastly, Your Declaration will help the City better connect you with in neighborhood engagement and/or funding opportunities that could help advance your work.



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DENVER FOOD MATTERS

CONNECTING TO THE VISION

Winnable Goal:

- 57% reduction in tons of residential food waste collected by the City

Priority: Resilient

- Reduce amount of food going to waste in the City and County of Denver

Strategies:

- Support consumer education and reduce the amount of food going to waste in the City and County of Denver
- Encourage businesses to reduce food waste and celebrate expanded food donation efforts
- Expand residential and commercial composting opportunities to reduce bulk and emissions at landfills

PROJECT NAME: Food Matters
PROJECT DURATION: 2 year pilot, then continuous implementation
PROJECT LEAD: Natural Resources Defense Council

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Food Matters project is exploring work with the City and County of Denver to advance strategies that have a significant impact in reducing the amount of food being wasted, prioritizing preventing food surpluses and feeding more people. The City and County of Denver is deeply engaged with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to integrate multiple strategies to prevent wasting food, rescue surplus food for those in need, and recycle food scraps. NRDC will partner with city officials over the next two years to engage stakeholders, while identifying, designing (or modifying as needed), adopting, and in some cases implementing programs and policies to address food waste.

CASE STUDY // SUPPORTING RESEARCH

An estimated 40% of the U.S. food supply goes uneaten each year. This takes an enormous environmental toll in terms of water, energy, agricultural chemicals, and labor that go to waste when food is discarded. At the same time, too many Denver residents are food insecure. Increased donation and re-purposing of food that would otherwise go to waste can play a vital role in meeting our community's food insecurity challenge and increasing the efficiency of the entire food system.

PROJECT LEAD

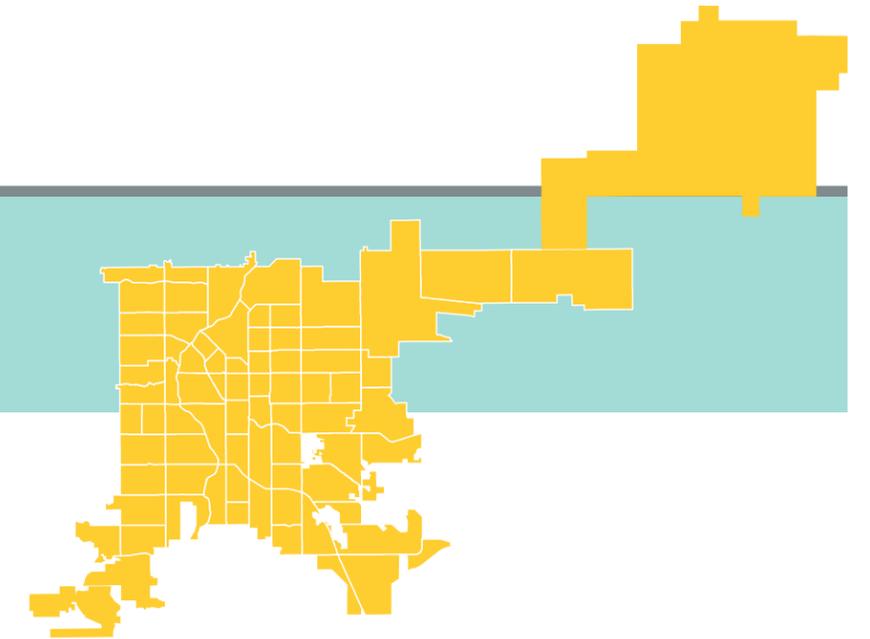
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
 DENVER DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT PARTNERS

DENVER PUBLIC WORKS
 TBD

FUNDING DETAILS

FUNDING: \$200,000
SOURCE: THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION



PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Households:

- Increase household food scrap recycling by diverting food waste

Neighborhoods:

- Increase neighborhood participation in the Sustainable Neighborhood Program and pilot neighborhood level food waste diversion

Businesses:

- Increased number of food service businesses in the Certifiably Green Business Program
- Increased amount of food waste prevented

2018

Deliverable: Wasted Food Prevention

- Consumer education
- Business engagement
- Health inspector education

2019

Deliverable: Surplus Food Rescue

- Food donation policy change
- Stakeholder engagement (e.g., businesses)
- Philanthropic investment to reach food donation potential

2020

Deliverable: Food Scrap Recycling

- Sustainability plan for residential composting
- Sustainability plan for commercial composting pilots
- TBD

THEN

Deliverable: Sustainability & Continued System Alignment

- Stakeholder/partner engagement to sustain efforts
- Ongoing City level support for Food Waste and Rescue initiatives
- TBD



DENVER FOOD IN COMMUNITIES

CONNECTING TO THE VISION

Winnable Goal:

- 5 low-income or underserved neighborhoods reach self-defined goals for a complete food environment

Priority: Inclusive

- Invest in building community-driven complete neighborhood food environments

Strategies:

- Engage diverse community organizations, institutions, neighborhoods, and residents to develop neighborhood food plans as part of qualifying city neighborhood and small area plans that outline the ideal features of an equitable complete food environment
- Develop maps and other tools that highlight neighborhood assets, gaps and opportunities for creating complete food environments in Denver's low and moderate-income neighborhoods (prioritize neighborhoods that are currently food deserts)

PROJECT NAME: Food in Communities
PROJECT DURATION: 3 years
PROJECT LEAD: Denver Department of Public Health & Environment

PROJECT PARTNERS: Jefferson County Public Health
 Tri-County Health Department
 Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council
 Local community food coalitions

FUNDING DETAILS: FUNDING: \$2 Million
 SOURCE: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Cancer, Cardiovascular, Pulmonary Disease (CCPD) Grant Program

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In partnership with Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) and Tri-County Health Department (TCHD), the Food in Communities project aims to expand equitable or fair access for everyone - to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant foods in focus areas in Adams, Denver, and Jefferson Counties. The goal of the project is to strengthen complete neighborhood food environments through programs and policies that address food access and food insecurity. This is defined as community-defined set of food resources that together provide for the food needs of all community members, integrating the culture and values of each neighborhood (e.g., grocery stores, farmers' markets, school gardens, etc.). This work will be done by first working in partnership with community members to identify assets and needs related to food in their communities and collaborating with new or existing neighborhood groups to design and test food access, food justice, or food business pilot projects. The project team also supports local food policy councils or coalitions to advocate for food policies that support community food needs and priorities.

CASE STUDY

Improving the health of communities and expanding access to fresh, healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food by transforming neighborhood food environments through policies and system changes is a major priority of the City. By changing the neighborhood context in which people live, work, learn and play, people may be able to eat a more healthful diet and experience positive health outcomes and experience reduced food insecurity. This place-based approach will change neighborhoods through policies, systems, and environmental changes as well as on-the-ground pilot food projects guided by and for the communities being served. For example, space and opportunity to grow food, walkable access to healthy foods in local stores, cooking lessons for local cultures all contribute to a complete food environment and a great neighborhood.

PROJECT OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- Increase in new or enhanced food access points in participating neighborhoods
- Increase in supportive food system policies and laws
- Increase equitable access to fresh, affordable, culturally relevant food in participating neighborhoods
- Increased investment in neighborhood food environments

2019

Deliverables

- Resident and stakeholder engagement
- Neighborhood food environment mapping and action planning

2020

Deliverables

- Food policy council education and technical assistance
- Implement neighborhood pilot projects

2021

Deliverables

- Sustainability plan for neighborhood projects
- Food system and policy change

THEN

Deliverables

- Stakeholder/partner engagement to sustain efforts
- Ongoing City level support for food access
- Framing community food work in all Denver neighborhoods