





MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

THROUGH: Susana Carbajal, Chief of Staff 

FROM: Zach Baumer, Chief Sustainability Officer 

DATE: April 9, 2024

SUBJECT: Update on Austin/Travis County food planning efforts

Background

On June 10, 2021, City Council passed [Resolution No. 20210610-039](#) related to food planning. Over the last two years, City staff have been working closely with Travis County, the Austin Travis County Food Policy Board, project consultants, the Community Advisory Committee, and hundreds of committed community members to create a draft plan. This memo provides an overview of the work completed thus far, an update on the current public input process, and next steps.

Progress to Date:

The food plan project team has completed the following tasks:

- Reviewed national and international best practices of food system planning.
- Reviewed relevant existing City and County plans to inform the development of food system metrics and strategies, including the Austin Climate Equity Plan.
- Developed and published the [Austin Food Supply Chain Vulnerability Assessment](#), including engagement with supply chain stakeholders and development of recommendations.
- Developed a Community Advisory Committee composed of members of the Food Policy Board and other community stakeholders to provide leadership for the overall planning process.
- Hosted quarterly City of Austin and Travis County executive leadership team meetings, providing all relevant City and County directors with updates on the planning process.
- Implemented a broad multi-lingual engagement strategy, incorporating diverse community voices, including community members most negatively impacted by the current food system and essential workers from the food system's production, distribution, consumption, and waste reduction sectors. The project team has received more than 2,000 comments from community members as a result of more than 40 public food planning events, including Listening Sessions, World Cafes, tabling at community events, conversation circles with community groups and partners, and virtual public meetings.

- Coordinated five Issue Area Groups to assist in developing goals and strategies for the food plan. More than 150 community participants participated in a series of 20 workshops.
- Coordinated the Community Advisory Committee, Issue Area Groups, and Food Ambassadors, collectively contributing 2,524 hours to the planning process.
- Completed a first draft of the food plan and posted it for review and comment on the City's digital community engagement site, Public Input.

Public Comment Period and Next Steps

The draft of our community's first comprehensive food system plan has been completed and [posted on the City's Public Input site](#). The public comment period began on March 18 and is open through April 19, 2024. The project team seeks broad public input to review the draft plan online and provide feedback and have developed a [social media kit](#) to help amplify this effort.

The project team hosted a virtual Public Review Meeting on April 3 and is [holding a second meeting on April 17](#). This meeting will have language interpretation and other accommodations by request. Public feedback will be considered and incorporated into the final plan, and the Community Advisory Committee will approve a final plan in the next two months. Once the Community Advisory Committee approves the plan, it will be presented to City Council and the Travis County Commissioners Court in the summer of 2024.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this memo, please contact Edwin Marty, Food Policy Manager with the Office of Sustainability, at Edwin.Marty@austintexas.gov.

cc: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager