

## MEMORANDUM

To: City of Burien  
From: CPPW Food Access Team  
UW Northwest Center for Livable Communities, Urban Food Link, and SvR Design  
Date: October 3, 2011  
RE: **Policy and planning recommendations for increasing healthy food access in Burien**

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Burien is already taking many positive steps to improve access to healthy food in the city. With additional supportive policy language in its Comprehensive Plan and implemented within the land use code, the City can formalize and solidify its commitment to making Burien a place where residents have many opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles. This memo is designed to help development of healthy food access policies by summarizing our team's work with the city to date and pointing out specific resources for future use.

The attached table describes opportunities for improving food access in Burien. These recommendations are based on the findings of the *Burien Food Landscape Assessment* coupled with issues and opportunities identified by and discussed with City of Burien staff in earlier meetings. The table begins with a list of items that were previously noted by City staff. The second part of the table describes opportunities and the related strategies that can be taken to address additional issues arising from the findings of the *Food Landscape Assessment*. The recommendations cover the following topics:

1. Allow healthy food uses near residential areas
2. Establish farmers market policy language
3. Ensure farmers market viability
4. Establish community garden policy language
5. Prioritize transit and pedestrian access to food retail, particularly from low-access areas
6. Facilitate community gardening on private, vacant land
7. Improve small retailers' knowledge of public health permits
8. Create a healthy school food zone
9. Monitor the balance of healthy to less healthy food stores
10. Ensure commitment to healthy food access beyond CPPW funding

The table indicates where actions involve Comprehensive Plan amendments, land use code and zoning modifications, or other actions such as resolutions, technical assistance, or further study. The final column suggests resources from the *Food Access Planning and Policy Guide*, the Model Language document, and other places that will be useful as the City continues this work. In addition, the City expressed interest in common definitions and model ordinances; the Model Language document provided by the Northwest Center for Livable Communities provides ordinances and definitions for "community gardens," "farmers markets," "urban agriculture" and related uses that are considered as best practices across the field.

Issues and Opportunities	Comp. Plan	Zoning	Other	Recommended Policies or Strategies
Items from the Food Landscape Assessment previously discussed with or identified by Burien staff				
1. Allow healthy food uses near residential areas		X	X	<p>The city can increase the availability of healthy food near residential development by increasing the neighborhood commercial zoning in these areas <i>or</i> by locating such uses at access points to residential developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning: Consider allowing small retail clusters in or near neighborhoods or near pockets of existing mixed uses.</li> <li>• Zoning: Ensure fruit/vegetables stands (mobile or fixed) as an allowed use all/most areas.</li> <li>• Business incentives: Incentivize fruit/vegetable stands or healthy mobile vending locating in priority areas (e.g., through reduced permit fees, streamlined permitting process).</li> <li>• Development incentivizes: ground-floor retail and open space for food-related uses in new developments (commonly higher density), which can include food retail, small grocery, farmers market, community gardening areas, or small/temporary or less intensively used food retail uses such as mobile vending or produce stands. The same can be done for open-space in neighborhood commercial that can be used for produce stands and farmers markets.</li> <li>• Existing programs: The Healthy Foods Here program is currently working with small grocers and convenience stores and could provide support to existing stores (funding available through March 2012).</li> </ul>
2. Establish farmers market policy language	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: Promote establishment of farmers markets as a land use (Public Health Law &amp; Policy, <a href="#">Establishing Land Use Protections for Farmers' Markets</a>, Oakland, December 2009).</li> <li>• Zoning: As a legally defined and allowed use as of right (i.e., rather than by permit), farmers markets gain greater stability, increased location options, and reduced permitting requirements (NWCLC Model Language, p. 15).</li> <li>• Require/encourage retailers to accept federal nutrition program (SNAP and WIC) benefits.</li> </ul>

3. Ensure farmers market viability		X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess locations of markets in neighboring cities and conduct market study if there is demand for a second farmers market. Contact: Karen Kinney, King County Agricultural Program</li> <li>• Review Food Landscape Assessment to identify areas of need and whether current zoning allows farmers markets as a land use in those areas.</li> <li>• Facilitate joint-use agreements for potential sites such as school or church parking lots; offer farmers market sites on city property at no or minimal cost (e.g., parkland, community centers, city plazas).</li> <li>• In locations where a traditional market may not flourish, consider alternative farmers market formats such as fruit/vegetable stands or mini farmers markets, and where such uses are allowed in the land use code (example small format farmers market permit is available in the NWCLC Model Language, p. 18).</li> </ul>
4. Establish community garden policy language	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: Include language about support for and prioritization processes for new city-supported garden locations (e.g., in underserved areas), which frames gardens as food access in addition to recreational uses.</li> <li>• Zoning: Allow community gardens as a permitted use in all or most zones (NWCLC Model Language, p. 22).</li> <li>• As outlined in the model language above, require soil testing for new community garden development and urban agricultural uses.</li> <li>• Conduct inventory of vacant (public and private) land available in the city and prioritize lands by area of need. Suggested methods include those by Megan Horst (<i>Growing Green</i>, UW Masters Thesis, 2008) or King County. Communicate these prioritized land opportunities to potential community garden groups or farmers markets.</li> </ul>

5. Prioritize transit and pedestrian access to food retail, particularly from low-access areas	X		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: Establish a goals and standards for neighborhood access to retailers of fresh produce or within a reasonable distance from transit-oriented development.</li> <li>• Other plans: Include similar goals in a Transportation Master Plan or Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and cross-reference with goals of Complete Streets work to increase bike, pedestrian, and transit access to stores.</li> <li>• Review whether adequate transit or shuttle alternatives are available from residential neighborhoods and elderly populations to nearby supermarkets and farmers markets.</li> <li>• Facilitate discussions with full service supermarkets about the benefits of a store-run shuttle or transit coupon program between the store and low-access areas. Suggestions for working with stores to support shuttles are detailed in the <i>Food Access Planning and Policy Guide</i>.</li> </ul>
Additional considerations identified by the Food Landscape Assessment				
6. Facilitate community gardening on private, vacant land			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and facilitate temporary or interim land use agreements between landowners and community groups or residents who are interested in gardening on public or private, vacant land (NWCLC Model Language, p. 27).</li> </ul>
7. Improve small retailers' knowledge of public health permits			X	<p>Some food retailers operate without a public health permit; these businesses tend to be immigrant-owned and are unaware of the permit requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitting and licensing: Within the City's business licensing system, include information for food retailers that a county public health permit is legally required (in most cases) and how to apply.</li> </ul>

8. Create a healthy school food zone	X	X		<p>Currently, there are 13 convenience stores and 15 fast food restaurants near schools in Burien. This is an opportune time to protect this city's food environment near schools. The City can work with other Highline cities and the school district to form a comprehensive approach as a Healthy Highline Communities Coalition initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: Adopt goal to create healthy eating environments where children learn and play, such as schools and parks.</li> <li>• Zoning: Adopt a "healthy school food zone" (NWCLC Model Language, p. 43).</li> </ul>
9. Monitor the balance of healthy to less healthy food stores	X		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: set goal for keeping current Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI) from rising and use it periodically as an assessment tool. Burien currently has over two and a half times as many convenience stores and fast food retailers than healthy food retailers, and the City can set a goal to keep this ratio (2.67) from rising.</li> <li>• Support new and existing healthy food retailers, which will increase the RFEI score. See recommendations for businesses and farmers markets above.</li> </ul>

<p>10. Ensure commitment to healthy food access beyond CPPW funding</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The following strategies include best practices for doing so as well as additional actions that can be taken to continue the work of the CPPW grant. These actions and policies can lay the groundwork for additional grant funding for healthy eating and active living.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: Adopt a community “health” or “food system” element or integrate goals into existing elements (<i>Food Access Planning and Policy Guide</i>).</li> <li>• Comprehensive Plan: Include statements in plan’s vision and overarching objectives that highlight healthy food access goals for all of the Burien community, through supermarket access, small grocers, farmers markets, corner stores, community gardens, etc.</li> <li>• Other plans: Food access goals can be included across other city plans, such as a Transportation Master Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plans, or sub-area plan.</li> <li>• Pass a Healthy Food Resolution and/or create a long-term action plan (NWCLC Model Language, p. 2). Such resolutions allow the City to frame food access and educate citizens on the importance of and its commitment to this topic.</li> <li>• Initiate an inter-departmental team in the City to coordinate efforts and develop strategies regarding food systems issues and opportunities. This can involve monthly meetings where staff share efforts, trouble-shoot common public concerns and request, and strategize for greatest impact.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Puget Sound Regional Food Policy Council by providing public comment on the City’s needs and interest in regional coordination and support, attending meetings, etc.</li> </ul>
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