

Food Policy Updates

Mara Momenee | COT Food Policy Manager | 9.25.25

Agenda

1. Changing Policy Landscape
2. Listening Tour Recap
3. Progress to Date
4. Ask for Support
5. Open Testimony
6. Questions



Changing Policy Landscape



Key Takeaways

Grant Terminations
Impacting OH Work

USDA Restructuring
Causing Uncertainty

Changes to Food Security
Support Systems

Weakening of
Environmental Protections

We need to pivot at the local, regional, and state level to address community food needs.

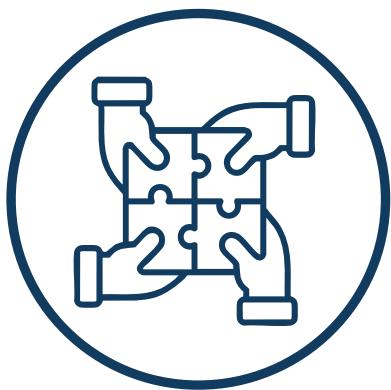


Listening Tour Recap

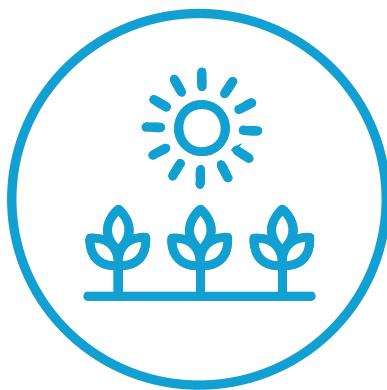


5 Emerging Themes

- » 56 informal interviews conducted with over 60 food systems stakeholders
- » 5 main themes of insights to help guide work (will evolve with additional input)



1. Planning +
Collaboration



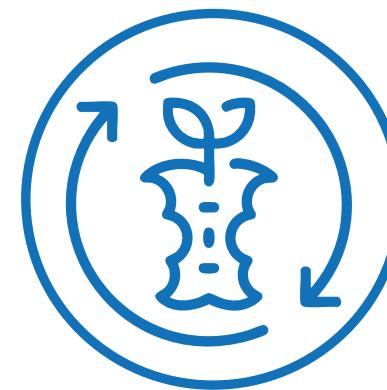
2. Food
Production



3. Food Processing,
Distribution +
Markets

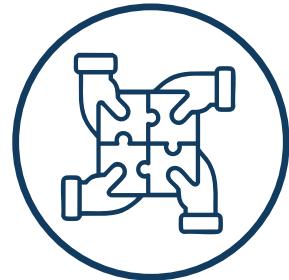


4. Food Access +
Nutrition



5. Sustainability

1. Planning + Collaboration



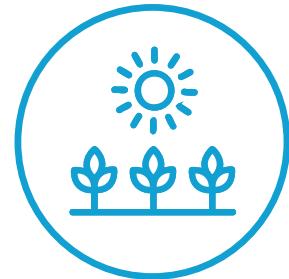
Barriers

- No collaborative plan + structure
- Funding capacity + grant support
- Outreach fatigue + distrust
- Needs are up + funds are down
- Accessibility of engagement + policy process

Opportunities

- Community planning opportunities
- Data sharing + care coordination
- More food gatherings + celebrations
- Food policy council revival
- Funding alignment + collaboration
- Information sharing support

2. Food Production



Barriers

- High tunnel permitting + regulations
- Water access + farm input needs
- Farmer knowledge on where to start
- Land access + tenure
- Aging farmer population
- Soil contamination
- Farmworker justice

Opportunities

- Vacant lot + building reclamation
- Innovative growing models
- Farmer cooperation
- Farmer education + experiential learning
- Fiscal support

3. Processing, Distribution + Markets



Barriers

- Business tech + regulatory needs
- Farmer competition + pricing support
- Processing infrastructure + capacity
- Transportation + logistics
- Food rescue uncertainties
- Lack of full service grocery stores

Opportunities

- Alternative retail models
- Support new infrastructure + farmer input
- Shared kitchens + entrepreneurship support
- Institutional purchasing
- Workforce development
- Food rescue + value added goods

4. Food Access + Nutrition



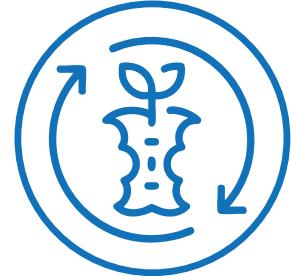
Barriers

- Quality, culturally appropriate options
- People don't know how to use produce
- Kitchen equipment
- Navigating systems + work requirements
- Neighborhood safety + investment
- Issues reaching target populations
- Need to change the narrative

Opportunities

- Active transportation planning + coordination
- Community hubs for distribution + programming
- Produce prescriptions + incentives
- Workforce opportunities
- Community ownership models
- Food rescue to help meet increased need

5. Sustainability



Barriers

- Losing farmland to development
- Food packaging + waste
- Environmental degradation
- Maintenance capacity for projects
- Funding is often grant dependent

Opportunities

- Composting at multiple scales
- Environmental education + incentives
- Volunteer + intern opportunities
- Co-location of programming
- Food rescue to decrease waste

Progress to Date



USDA Grant Proposal

- » Applied for USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership Grant to support the creation of a Greater Toledo Food Policy Council
- » Intention is to co-create the best model for Toledo's food system stakeholders and priority areas



Food Policy Audit

- » Accepted into the 2025 CARAT Cohort with the North American Food Systems Network
- » Audit is in-progress and will result in a baseline report that will help guide the future food policy council efforts



 ENSOTERRA Lane County, OR	 Cleveland & Cuyahoga County, OH	 Indianapolis, IN
 Greater Sacramento, CA	 Essex County, NJ	 City & County of San Francisco, CA
 Toledo Metro, OH	 GREAT PLAINS FOOD BANK Cass County, ND & Clay County, MN	 Greater Omaha, NE
 Central Northside Pittsburgh, PA	 Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties, MD	 Yavapai County Quad Cities Area, AZ

High Tunnel Permitting

- » Collaborated with Plan Commission + Building Inspection to ease the permitting process for urban agriculture
- » Finalized the protocol for easing the SUP process and exempting agricultural structures from the building permit process
- » See Plan Commission for access to the new certificate of zoning compliance form!



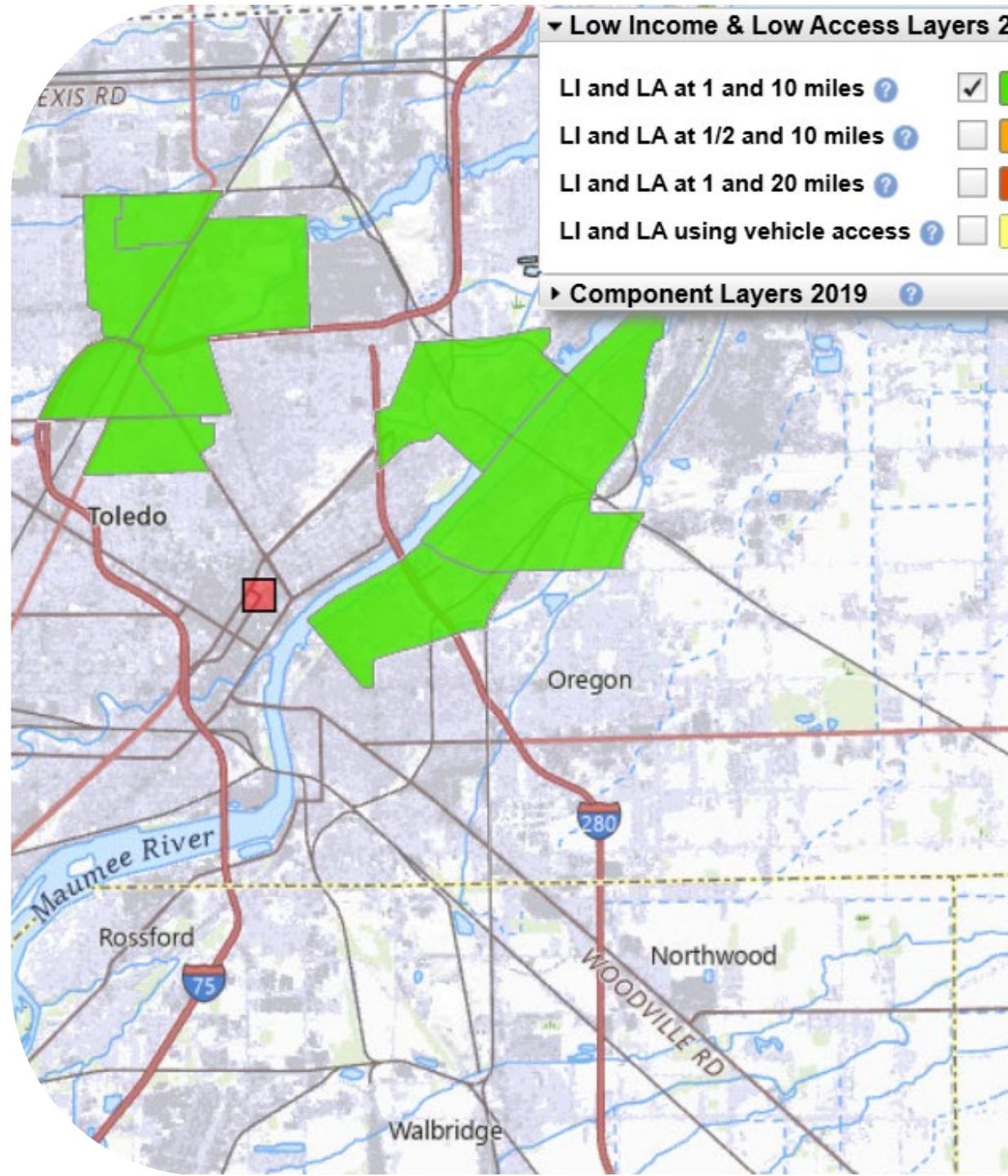
Microgrant Proposal

- » Requested funds for a flexible grant program for urban farmers and small-scale food distribution models
- » Awards of \$1,000 - \$3,000 to be used for a variety of eligible categories
- » Hoping to launch in unison with Farm-a-Lot and offer one-stop shop via my new City webpage



Healthy Retail

- » Passed Dollar Store study + spacing
- » Conducting Healthy Food Overlay study with Plan Commission
- » Partnering with UT Honors Community Engagement class to compile retail best practices



Other Initiatives

Sustainability
Overlap + Initiatives

Supporting Healthy
Small Market Pilot

Exploring Workforce
Development
Opportunities

Soil Testing Resources
+ Partnerships

Food Rescue
Support + Scaling

Nutrition Education
+ Lead Poisoning

List-serv to Share
Resources + Events

Continue Listening +
Coalition-Building

Open to Other
Opportunities!!!

Ask for Support





1 Honor DHCD's Budget Request



2 Support the Food Policy Council

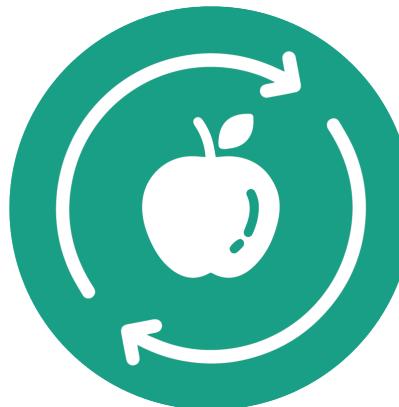


3 Ask the Mayor to Sign Toledo onto the
Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

Open Testimony



Questions?



Thank you!

Mara.Momenee@Toledo.oh.gov | 419.245.1677